

Winter 2018

Strategic Contemplation as One Saudi Mother's Way Of Reflecting on Her Children's Learning Only English in the United States: An Autoethnography and Multiple Case Study of Multilingual Writers at the College Level

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Strategic Contemplation as One Saudi Mother's Way
Of Reflecting on Her Children's
Learning Only English in the United States:
An Autoethnography and Multiple Case Study
of Multilingual Writers at the College Level

A Thesis
Presented to
Eastern Washington University
Cheney, Washington
The United States of America

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree
Master of Arts: English
With an Emphasis in
Teaching English as a Second Language

By
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Winter 2018

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Abstract

This thesis is two single case studies that represent the emic and etic views of the parenting choices of the researcher as well as 12 multilingual writers who were not parents but who offered their opinions in simulated journals that appear unedited in the thesis. The mother/researcher of two boys discusses the challenges she faced when trying to introduce the heritage language, Arabic, to her children, one of whom was born in the United States. Both were raised in the United States outside their home country for almost seven years while the parents were government scholars earning degrees. This is also autoethnography and literacy narrative in which the researcher traces her education in a Quranic girls' school in Dammam, Saudi Arabia and her experience as an English Literature major in her home country. In raising her children as monolinguals in the United States, she reflects on the consequences her decision not to teach her children Arabic. She explains that they identify as American and have only American friends, resulting in the non-acquisition of the parents' heritage language, Arabic. The researcher's parenting and teaching philosophies do not include an Arabic-only rule at home or punishment for not speaking Arabic, as some of the 12 subjects recommended.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank God for giving me the strength to live through the hardships in this life and blessing me with many opportunities to achieve my dreams.

To my family, especially, my mother who believed in me and encouraged me through my personal life and my academic years, I offer my deep appreciation for your secret prayers at night for my little family and me.

A special thanks goes out to my husband and my beautiful children for their inspiration to write this thesis. My life is rich because of you.

I take immense pleasure in expressing my sincere and deep sense of gratitude to my thesis chair, supervisor, mentor, and professor, Dr. LaVona Reeves, the Director of the MATESL Program at Eastern Washington University. Her guidance, knowledge, patience, time commitment, and support throughout the course of the master's program and this research project helped me to meet the goals I set when I arrived here and began daily writing in her classes. I could not have done this without you.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to my professor and the second thesis committee member, Dr. Tracey McHenry, for her helpful guidance and extraordinary charisma that I enjoyed during her classes.

Finally, I would like to thank King Salman and the late King Abdullah Al Saud scholarship program for providing us with this great opportunity. From me and on behalf of all the students, thank you.

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Vita

Chapter 1

Introduction

Literacy Narrative

A long green dress, black shoes and long white socks, and a long braid down the back tied in a white bow made up the customary uniform for any girl attending the Quranic School in my city, Dammam, located in the eastern region of Saudi Arabia. I went to a public Quranic girls' school from grades 1-12, where primarily Islamic materials and memorization of the Quran were the focus of the curriculum and the everyday schedule. We were required starting in the first grade to memorize a number of verses from the Quran every day, and then we would add more verses gradually until we could memorize a whole page in one day as we reached 7th grade. By the time we reached 9th grade, we knew the whole Quran by heart, and by 12th grade we had covered the whole Quran twice. Daily, we would recite it to the teacher in the first two classes every school day. We usually had seven, forty-five-minute classes, from 7 A.M. until 1 P.M., and most of them were religion related. When reciting, we would pay extra attention to the rules and methods of Quran recitation: how to pronounce each individual syllable, how to pause and how to articulate consonants and vowels. And we would be graded based on those criteria. Because I loved school and I worked to be an A+ student, I got high grades throughout the twelve years of Quranic school, which pleased my mother. Each night before going to bed, I would read and memorize the pages I was assigned from the Quran and practice reciting them first thing in the morning in the car while going to school in a short fifteen-minute ride. Listening to its interpretation, lessons and values hidden between the lines; listening to its beautiful recitation with a variety of girls' voices, tones, and rhythmic patterns; listening to its great parables about the prophets being told by my expert teachers, I naturally loved and embraced the Quran, which became a big part of my life growing up. The recitation coming from all three floors and the spirituality of the Quran just filled the silence of my school's classrooms, and anyone could hear us from afar, as they passed by.

Unlike any of my peers or girls I knew, I grew to love Western culture and the English language, although English was not being taught in my school until 7th grade, and nothing about Western culture was introduced in the national core curriculum for English

all the way through 12th grade, as Western culture was not perceived as having a favorable influence on the young in Saudi Arabia. Some of us, however, were watching American movies and listening to English songs with our parents' approval at home. I was mesmerized by the English language from an early age: watching the only English channel that was on TV then, renting movies, and listening to the one English radio channel. One day I decided I needed to increase my English vocabulary, so I bought a big English-Arabic dictionary called "Oxford." Since all 500 girls were given a cash award at the end of the school year, I used some of that money to buy it, which made it easy to learn English vocabulary just by opening the dictionary and looking up new words or searching for definitions to new words I had just heard. Quickly, I would see the definition, the pronunciation, and an example of how it is used in text. Even today, my love of the English language has never diminished.

In college, I majored in English literature for four years, and we studied works of Shakespeare, English drama, poetry, and literary criticism. Our professors were primarily from Egypt, India, and Saudi Arabia, and they did do some lecturing in English with some explanations in Arabic. The professor I remember the most was Dr. Wafiah Murce, an Egyptian who taught drama and whom I recall so well because she spoke English with us and made it interesting for us.

In 2010, I got married, finished the Bachelor of Arts in English Literature, and came to the United States with my husband and my two-month-old son in 2011. Holding on to that little dream to study English more intensively, I thought it was the perfect time to strengthen my English language skills. With life's hardships standing in the way, however, it took me three years to register in the English Language Institute because I had given birth to another son. My mother insisted that I continue my studies and enroll in a master's program. I was so hesitant with two little boys and not enough English background. After much thinking, I decided it was a good time to continue my studies and apply for the Master of Arts in English with an emphasis in Teaching English as a Second Language. I put my children in the university daycare center, and I arranged for an interview with the TESL program director, Dr. LaVona Reeves, and I was accepted. Fall 2015, I took my first classes in the program, Second Language Acquisition and Composition for Multilingual Writers. I was as nervous as a kindergartner on the first

day of school. Everyone made a self-introduction, leaving a remarkable first impression, and I was praying to leave the same impression. The idea that I had to speak English in front of native speakers was terrifying. I kept practicing inside my head how to introduce myself and how to pronounce each word so when it was my turn, I would be ready. “My name is Razan, mother of two boys, and it is my first class in the program. My name is Razan, mother of two boys and it is my first class in the program. My name is Razan, mother of two boys and it is my first class in the program.” After hearing from other students—some of whom were already teaching at the university, I had my turn, and I managed to pronounce each word with a big smile. I bought big, heavy, expensive books and tried to read them. Soon, I wrote papers that were 15 or 20 pages long for the first time. I attended all the classes, never being absent. I struggled at the beginning and had many doubts and thoughts of withdrawing, but my mother kept me going, and I wanted to challenge myself and not live with regret of not completing the degree. Because this is a writing intensive program, class after class, my writing improved tremendously. Now, I know more about punctuation, grammar and academic writing. I pushed myself to the limit, and my future was shining bright in front of me. After much time I realized I had taken the biggest step in my life. In the TESL Program, I learned what I had not learned in many years studying English literature in my local university in Saudi Arabia. Being a graduate student broadened my perspective remarkably. I not only studied English, but also gained knowledge of cultures, social issues, critical literacies, rhetoric, and language acquisition.

My Children

The hardest part was my children. Since we came to the United States, they have been cut off from the heritage language (Arabic) and immersed in the American language and cultures. Ahmed, my elder son, was two months old when he came here. Ahmed and I stayed at home while my husband went to language school in Portland. For six months, I did not make any friends or talk to anyone. I accidentally knew from Facebook that one of my childhood friends lived in the same city. At first, I thought she would not remember me since we had not seen each other or talked since elementary school, but I sent her a message through Facebook immediately. Much to my surprise, she responded within minutes, and she invited me to the mosque, where the local Muslims gathered

every Friday, which is our traditional day of worship. During the following year in Portland, my friend, her Muslim friends, and I met with our children about once a week. We all spoke Arabic together, but my son did not speak any language yet. In fact, he did not speak any language until about age three and a half. After living in Portland for 18 months, we moved to Cheney, Washington where I began studying at the English Language Institute Level 5, and then I enrolled in the graduate preparation “PREP” program in order to prepare for the master’s program while matriculating in university classes for two quarters. My children went to the university day care center, and since then, they were surrounded by English speakers most of the time and made friends with Americans. This was beginning of their acquisition of their first language: English.

Statement of the Problem

In the United States the number of Arabic speakers increased dramatically since 9/11 with the Persian Gulf War and with the more recent war in Syria, so many are political refugees. At the same time, the Saudi Culture Mission (SACM) has sent more than 100,000 students to be educated here, and many have come with families and have children who were born here while parents were students on government scholarships.

Non-acquisition of Heritage Language

As a linguist, I am very interested in language acquisition, and as a mother, I was excited that my two sons—Ahmed who is now six, and Abdulazziz, who was born in the United States and is now five—would be acquiring English and would be integrated into the American school system. Back home, my parents and in-laws encouraged me to create an environment in which the children would become fluent English speakers. Together, my husband and I decided that we would speak English at home with the children, and they were speaking English at the university daycare and later in elementary school in Cheney.

Even when face timing our parents, the children and grandparents used English and used us as translators because the children really did not know Arabic—neither to speak nor to comprehend. At the same time, we both figured that when the children heard us speaking Arabic together at home and everywhere we went, that they would just pick it up somehow. This, however, did not happen, and now we find ourselves preparing to return permanently to Saudi Arabia with two children who know almost no Arabic.

Researcher's Assumptions

TESOL requires scholars doing this kind of ethnographic research to disclose their assumptions prior to collecting and analyzing data.

1. I assumed that somehow because we live in the United States and we speak Arabic exclusively to one another as a married couple, that the children would become bilingual naturally.
2. I assumed that if I started teaching them Arabic and reading Quran to them from age three or four, they would learn Arabic just as I did.
3. I assumed that even though they were slow to learn Arabic from me at home while in pre-school, that once they entered elementary school, they would make friends with children who spoke Arabic, and they would eventually pick up Arabic from playing with their Saudi friends at school.
4. I assumed that exposing them to Arabic speakers their age outside of school and inviting Arabic-speaking children to our home for play days would interest my children in learning the language.
5. I assumed that once we return to Saudi Arabia, where everyone will be speaking Arabic, they will be forced to learn Arabic, even on short visits.

This, however, was not the case. We went back in Saudi Arabia during the winter break of December 2017 and New Year's 2018 only briefly prior to the completion of this thesis. During this short break, both boys struggled to play with their eight cousins because their cousins do not speak English, so they could not communicate in either language. They were playing soccer outside and electronic games inside their grandparents' houses, and most of the time my children played together, not with their cousins due to age and gender differences as well as language problems.

There were also cultural misunderstandings. On this visit home, I took them to their cousins' school to pick up their female cousins, and my boys were very surprised when only girls in pink uniforms came out of the school, and asked, "Where are the boys?" I too was shocked that my boys somehow had not realized that boys and girls do not go to school together in Saudi Arabia. In the EWU university daycare, preschool, and public school, they were always with both boys and girls. As a result, they have spoken only English. For them, English is their first and only language, so it is difficult to apply

the term to these children because it begins to feel as if English is their heritage language. Clearly, they were “exposed” to Arabic on a daily basis because their father and I were speaking Arabic exclusively with each other but English with them. Oftentimes, they were playing when we were discussing family matters in Arabic, so they were not really exposed much to Arabic, in fact. We had no Arabic television or books or videos or cartoons. Every night, however, I played some verses from the Quran and did a little competition for memorizing a short verse, and they could win a prize. My older son tried, but he could not pronounce every word, starting at around age four, but his speech was somewhat delayed in both languages. He was going through an extended silent period at home, but when he went to daycare at age three, he did start picking up some English which he did not use so much at home with us—possibly because we were speaking Arabic only at that time. Soon, however, it was English only at home, and they were not picking up Arabic at all.

Kouritzin (2000) shared her experience as a Japanese mother who wanted to maintain and transfer the Japanese heritage language to her children: “My husband and I wish to ensure that our children grow up bilingual, speaking, reading, and writing not only English but the other heritage language, Japanese” (p. 311). She documented her daughter’s journey to learn Japanese through journals when her daughter paid a visit to her mother’s home country for the first time. Like Kouritzin, for me it was the recent trip to Saudi Arabia that made me more concerned about re-entry issues when we return in fall 2018, having lived in the United States since fall 2011 when my husband started studying English in the language institute on campus. This concern will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4 when I revisit the assumptions I had made prior to beginning this project and confirm them or explain how I was misguided to make the assumption.

Purpose Statement

In order to reflect on my life as a parent, the purpose of this thesis is to

- 1) present and analyze the case study of two Saudi boys’ language learning and my role as their mother;
- 2) analyze other international students’ and permanent residents’ responses to the case study scenario; and

- 3) engage in “strategic contemplation” on our parenting decisions to determine what other options may have been available and to resolve the HL problem within myself.

Research Questions

Through strategic contemplation, literature review, and data analysis, I aim to answer the following three questions.

- 1) How do children learn and maintain their heritage language outside their home country?
- 2) What are the options available for the parents to introduce the heritage language to their children and how effective are they?
- 3) Which is preferable—for the children to be bilingual or monolingual in this case?

These questions will be answered in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

Research Methods

To explore and answer the research questions, I chose several research methods which will be defined in detail at the beginning of Chapter 3: case study, critical ethnography, auto ethnography, phenomenological philosophy/methods, and narrative inquiry. Further, I engage in Kirsch and Royster’s “strategic contemplation” as explained here as an alternative and feminist way of doing rhetorical analysis and cited in Aldoshan (2017):

In addition, revisionary rhetoric, bell hooks’ marginal rhetoric, Royster & Kirsch’s ‘strategic contemplation’ & ‘social circulation’ are all examples of theoretical lenses through which I continue to analyze our life on the margins. ‘Recognizing that feminist rhetorical practices have been honed particularly on historical rescue, recovery, and (re)inscription, we use this first term of engagement, critical imagination, to illuminate some important questions designed to clarify the scope, nature, and principles of our work’ (cited in Aldoshan, p. 39).

While Aldoshan examined the material conditions of his illiterate mother’s life as a widow raising children alone in Saudi Arabia, I examine my own life as a mother raising two sons in the United States cut off from my family and culture of origin in many ways.

But what I aim to do is reclaim and re-inscribe or reinterpret the experience in such a way that I can own my decisions and show the value of our lives in the United States—to express my deep concerns while describing our lives here (Micciche, 2014) as language learners steeped in a positive acculturative process.

Thesis Overview

is a brief review of literature about becoming bi-literate and bilingual in the United States and options for learning and maintaining the heritage language, such as immersion and dual-language schools like those in Eugene, Oregon. Chapter 3 includes research methods, data collection of 12 simulated journals written by multilingual writers at the college level, and analysis of these journals with commentary on the patterns the researcher found in the journals on the subject of heritage language loss in Saudi children being raised in the United States for more than five years and then returning to Saudi Arabia as monolingual English speakers. Chapter 4 includes (1) tentative answers to the research questions, (2) discussion of the assumptions as related to the findings, and (3) the researcher's reflections on what was learned. Chapter 5 is the conclusion, including a brief summary of the findings, limitations, recommendations for future research, and the researcher's final reflections on what she learned from telling her story as a mother and from the 12 multilingual writers.

Review of Literature

The United States is known for its diversity as people from different countries come in large numbers every year to the USA seeking change in their lives: immigrants looking for asylum, employees searching for permanent jobs, students enrolling in universities hoping for a better education. After they settle, they often start their families, and many responsibilities come with this growth, providing not only material needs, but also physical and learning needs. Raising children, being away from their home country, and living in a foreign country with little exposure to the native language can be a challenge for both parents and children (Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016; Clarke, 2003). How can children born in the United States be introduced to their heritage language (HL)? Gass and Selinker (2008) define heritage language speakers as “those who have been exposed to a language of personal connection” as cited in Lavine (p. 23, 2011). Gass and Selinker offer another definition: “heritage language acquisition is a form of second language acquisition and a form of bilingualism. Heritage language learners have knowledge of two languages (the home language and the language of the environment/school), and they are usually dominant in the second language” (p. 23). But how can they learn the language of the host country equally and successfully, knowing that children’s parents and their schools are the main factors that contribute to the successful learning of the first and second language?

For children to learn a second language along with their first language is a complicated process, yet it can be successful. Studies have shown that childhood is the perfect period to learn and acquire other languages quickly and easily, also known as “the sensitive period,” which is defined as “the period during which a child can acquire language easily, rapidly, perfectly, and without instruction” (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 145). Along with age, there are certain characteristics that support second language acquisition—internal characteristics like motivation and external ones like the quality and quantity of the input and instruction.

Second language acquisition takes place if there is input or interaction. Input can be in the form of listening to the TV, movies or radios. Or it can be in the form of

conversation with native speakers or a teacher. However, children may not speak the target language in the first months of learning, which scientists refer to as the silent period, explained by Ellis (1994), as the period when the language learners are not speaking yet but taking in a lot of go through while learning the target language. The learners go through this period to develop more competencies in the target language before they speak the target language. Many of the researchers who have done studies in that subject matter, found it was difficult for them to collect data from their subjects as they refused to speak in the target language in the first months. Many adults and children, especially children, go through this silent period as a way to observe, listen and gather information on the target language in order to speak it (pp. 82-83).

Bilingualism at home-parental choice

There are different levels of bilingualism depending on the frequency of exposure to the HL in the home by the parents and outside by the school. Some parents choose to teach their children the heritage language exclusively at home and delay the exposure to the English language until a certain age (Kouritzin, 2000; Gogonas, 2012; Lavine, 2011). In the home, parents have the choice to decide how much exposure to HL their children can have. In the special case of Richard Rodriguez (1982), his parents chose to discontinue the HL at home because the nun came and ask them to speak only English with Richard though the parents continued to speak Spanish in private with each other. As a result, he became monolingual and knew only the English language. On the other hand, another example for a balanced bilingual is Sanchez 2016, she grew to be a balanced bilingual because of her parents' encouragement at home, Sanchez narrates, "our parents were happy that we were in the United States, and they were excited for us to learn English and do well in school, they also wanted us to stay in touch with our *idioma* (language) and to be proud of where we came from" (p. 75). She didn't receive formal instruction in Spanish, but her parents' love for Mexico, their encouragement and dedication to teach her Spanish made her became balanced bilingual. Listening to legendary stories from her home country while growing up, recited by her parents with so much love, had left a remarkable and positive attitude toward HL.

She is proud of her ethnic identity and her culture and that is why it is essential for her to stay connected to her roots and retain the heritage language. Her parents spoke only Spanish and that was also a positive trajectory to learn HL so she could

communicate with her parents and other family members. She would speak English at school and switch to Spanish when she came home. In her thesis, Sanchez uses code meshing in by always using the Spanish words for mother, father, parents, sister, brother, language, and Mexico. This is a way of showing her pride in her language and culture that she has maintained as an American citizen of Mexican descent.

Table 1 shows how successfully children acquire the minority language and heritage language at home from their parents. If the two of the parents spoke the minority language, which is the HL at home, 97% their children will become successfully bilingual. Terms are used that include minority /heritage language and majority/school language.

Table 1. Parental home language choice patterns and children’s active bilingual use

Parent 1 speaks	Parent 2 speaks	Proportion of children who speak two languages.
Minority Language	Minority Language	97%
Minority Language + Majority Language	Minority Language	93%
Minority Language + Majority Language	Minority Language + Majority Language	79%
Minority Language	Majority Language	73%
Minority Language + Majority Language	Majority Language	34%

(adapted from Table 7. as cited in Estrada-Loehne (2017).

This table represents how successfully children acquire the minority language and heritage language at home from their parents. If two of the parents spoke the minority

language, which is the HL at home, 97% of their children will become successful bilinguals. As Kouritzin (2000) points out, teaching a HL to our children is a personal and difficult choice to make at times. Kouritzin (2000) and Lavine (2011) delayed the English language exposure to their children, but they both felt that the majority language communication parents have with their children lack sincerity and affection. These challenges for parents were expressed in Estrada-Loehne (2017): “One stressor young adults may experience in the home is when two or more languages are being spoken; the children may not feel as connected to the parents and thus they may tend to have superficial dialogues instead of critical thinking conversations” (p. 11). Kouritzin (2011) expressed this disconnect as well:

(English is the language of my heart, the one in which I can easily express love for my children; in which I know instinctively how to coo to a baby; in which I can sing lullabies, tell stories, recite nursery rhymes, talk baby talk.)

In Japanese, there is an artificiality about my love; I cannot express it naturally or easily. The emotions I feel do not translate well into the Japanese language, and those which I have seen expressed by Japanese mothers do not seem sufficiently intimate when I mouth them. (p. 314)

It is imagined by many parents that all majority language communication is superficial and artificial and far away from real emotions, and that can create distance in the relationship. Wong Fillmore (2000) writes: “When children do not speak their parents’ language, communication between parents and children may also be adversely affected” (as cited in De Houwer, 2015, p. 169). De Houwer asserts “Although parents may differ in their acceptance of dual-lingual conversations, parents who initially had no problems with their child answering in a language other than the one they were addressed in may start to become worried when children are aged three or four and are speaking only a single language” (p. 172). By this, he means the majority language, not the heritage language, which may never be acquired at all in many cases, despite parents’ efforts.

For children to be successful bilinguals (Hein, Tan, Aljughaiman, & Grigorenko, 2014). they have to hear the minority language more frequently, De Houwer (2015) argues that “not only relative input frequency may be of importance (which language is

heard more often), but also absolute input frequency (how much is actually spoken to children in each language)” (p. 169). Not only the input quantity but also the quality of language input may have an effect on bilingual children’s proficiency in each language (p. 178). The child has to hear and practice the two languages in order to develop successful bilingualism. Slavin & Cheung (2005) explain, “without native language instruction, English language learners are likely to lose their native language proficiency, or fail to learn to read in their native language” (p. 247). Both languages are equally important in literacy competence.

Bilingualism at School

The United States government has made plans to support dual language learners: “DLLs – children who have a home language other than English and are learning two or more languages at the same time, or learning a second language while continuing to develop their first language” (US Department of Health and Human & Department of Education, 2016, p. 1). Dual Language Learners could be Arabic-speaking children who are learning English or French, and possibly also English-speaking children who are learning Spanish or Russian or Arabic. It appears that the United States government is making great efforts to support and preserve different languages and culture as well; however, we still see language attrition.

Some parents choose for their children to be successful bilinguals and that require joint efforts from both home and school as explained in the government document: “High-quality, intentional, and consistent exposure to the home language and to English can set children on a positive trajectory toward school success and bilingualism” (p. 9). Because successful learning of the second language is intertwined with the first language acquisition, this exposure can lead to successful bilingualism, as was true for all of Mrs. Comales’ children in Estrada-Loehne’s single case study. Parents can help introduce and maintain their children HL at home by making engaged interaction with their children and providing opportunities for their children to practice their HL freely with exposure to the two languages. Other parents choose to send their children to schools prepared to teach children their HL, immersion schools. Such schools exist in some of the major states or states with large populations of the HL community, such as Texas, California,

Florida, and New York which have large Hispanic populations and offer bilingual, dual language, and immersion programs by law.

Immersion Schools

There is no denial that school is a crucial and critical factor in developing DLL's skills, and parents can find teaching the HL challenging without the help of the school (Lavine, 2011; Kouritzin, 2000). Most of the parents who raise bilingual children report their desire for their children to have access to their heritage language at school to maintain their HL, but this is often impossible. The city of Eugene in Oregon State, however, has a large number of public immersion schools. Yujin Gakuen Japanese Immersion School was the first Japanese immersion school in the nation. On its website, the school describes its program: "Students are taught in Japanese 50% of the day and in English for the other 50%" and the immersion programs "prepare students, through a bilingual, bicultural, integrated curriculum, to be responsible citizens in an increasingly global and technological society" (web). This is for not only students in elementary, but also for students in middle and high school.

Along with Spanish and French, the Chinese immersion program is the last addition to the school, recently established in the fall of 2017. In Eugene's Chinese immersion school, we see the following:

- 1) Students learn simplified Chinese characters (jianti hanzi).
- 2) Expressive and receptive language development is emphasized in all stages of the program.
- 3) Program model is committed to and provides a rigorous and supportive approach to academics in both Mandarin and English.
- 4) Our school places a high value on parent input, involvement and support.
- 5) With strong community partnerships, we are providing culturally authentic, academic and global citizenship experiences for all students.

And as result, students will become fluent in the two languages and develop appreciation for the Chinese culture.

In immersion school environments, children will have the opportunity to strengthen their cognitive linguistic awareness in their HL and develop their language skills, even if the school instruction is given in two languages. Much research has been done to examine the development of the second language and its relation to the first language in bilingual education with instruction in both languages (Cummins, 1998) and in immersion programs. In such schools, children will have the opportunity to broaden their perspectives and learn about different races, nationalities, and cultures. Socially, they will be good communicators because they will have the advantage of learning another language that will help them become adept in two languages and more advanced linguistically and cognitively compared to their peers who are monolingual.

Bilingual students spend most of their weekdays in school with their teachers, so teachers play major roles in bilingual-student learning by creating a friendly atmosphere inside the classroom. The development can be achieved through different methods and teaching techniques such as incorporating the cultures of the bilingual students into the class activities and including their heritage languages in the writings to show support. The teacher can play a big role in communicating the students' needs to the community, school staff and other teachers. To measure learning effectiveness, teachers should evaluate and assess student-learning development individually in order to improve teaching in the future. Good teachers will hold responsible to adapt such methods to help bilingual students develop their second language successfully and maintain their mother tongue at the same time.

Assimilation can be defined as “the change in an individual or a culturally similar group that results from contact with a different culture. At the individual level, changes can occur in one’s sense of identity, values, and beliefs” (McBrien, 1998. p. 331). In acculturation, however, immigrants “are able to retain cherished values of their homeland while adding the language and some customs of their new home” (p. 331).

Immigrants who left their country as adults can usually speak the HL better than anyone else in the family and community. We are interested in the struggle they have been through, their love for their country and culture and HL remain precious to them. Many like Sanchez, Aguilar and Estrada-Loehne claim both languages and cultures as their own and feel equally comfortable in both worlds in the United States, particularly in

Washington, an English-Plus State (Reeves, 2005). Most immigrants who live in the United States showed an inclination for acculturation, because values and cultures are important to preserve and retain.

Arabic Language in the U.S.

60% of Arabic speakers in the United States are Christian; however, Muslim Arabic speakers are 40%. For those 40% often choose acculturation, because it is important for them and their children to preserve their roots and their heritage language. Acquiring and/or maintaining the Arabic language is important because it is intertwined with religion, cultural values, and Arabic identity as Arabic is the formal language for the Arab-Muslim community around the world. According to Arab American Institute, “Today, it is estimated that nearly 3.7 million Americans trace their roots to an Arab country...Between 1992 and 2012, a total of about 1.7 million Muslims entered the U.S. as legal permanent residents” (Pew Research Center). The Arab Muslim community is increasing in number and in influence. Arabic language is in their hands. Arabic language along with Islamic values should be taught to children from an early age, from one generation to another, regardless of where they were raised. As all Islamic rituals are in Arabic, two of the most important pillars of religion, praying and reading the Quran, are conducted in Arabic (Gogonas, 2012).

Acquiring the heritage language, especially Arabic, can be difficult for several reasons. One reason is that the Arabic language has two forms—standard and dialect form. Standard Arabic is the formal form, which is used in the media and in writing. The other form is the dialect form, which is used in speaking only, and they are different from each other. Another reason is the alphabet. These differences in the Arabic language forms are of great concern for most parents and can be a tremendous challenge for children or language learners: “the two forms of Arabic are phonologically, morphologically, and syntactically different. For example, certain vowels such as /ε/ and /o/ exist in spoken Arabic but not literary Arabic” (Eviatar & Ibrahim, 2002, p. 452). Also there are certain Arabic phonemes that do not exist in English and other languages, Allaith and Joshi (2011) further explained,

There are several Arabic phonemes which do not exist in the English language:
/ʔ/, /ħ/, /x/, /sʕ/, /dʕ/, /tʕ/, /ðʕ/, /ʕ/, /ɣ/, and /q/; and a few English consonantal

phonemes which do not exist in the Arabic language /g/, /p/, /v/, and /ʃ/—note that /g/ and /ʃ/ do exist in some spoken dialects, but they do not exist in Standard Arabic and hence they do not have a written form (p. 1094).

Arabic Language Immersion Programs

There are many programs that offer the Arabic language inside the United States, such as summer intensive programs, university classes, online courses and Arabic programs funded by the federal government (Bale, 2010, p. 142). One of the major organizations that promote Arabic language is the Arabic Language and Arab Culture (ALAC) program. It “provides opportunities for K-12 students from varied backgrounds to learn Arabic and become familiar with the Arab world’s history and culture. QFI has a unique, systematic approach to expanding the teaching of Arabic in publicly funded schools in the Americas. Since the program was established in 2009, the number of public and public charter school Arabic programs has increased by 33%, reflecting a significant demand for Arabic language instruction at the K-12 level...QFI created Al-Masdar, an online, open source website for Arabic education resources” (web). This organization has many programs in public and public charter schools across the United States, such as New York, California, and Oregon.

Challenges Facing Arabic-Speaking Parents in the U.S.

Learning and maintaining the mother tongue for Arabic-speaking children in a foreign country, such the United States, which has a wide variety of languages and cultures, is a process filled with challenges and obstacles. The clash of cultures and identities can lead the children to ignore their HL in favor of learning the school language (English) or fail to successfully learn either language. Parents and schools are equally responsible to guide the children through this process and help support their development of both languages when it is possible. This thesis investigates the differing beliefs of students who may someday raise children bilingually in the United States.

Chapter 3

Research Methods, Data Collection, and Analysis

Chapter 3 includes research methods, data collection of 12 simulated journals written by multilingual writers at the college level, and analysis of these journals with commentary on the patterns the researcher found in the journals on the subject of heritage language loss in Saudi children being raised in the United States for more than five years and then returning to Saudi Arabia as monolingual English speakers.

Research Methods

The present study includes elements of case study, critical ethnography, autoethnography (Lee, 2012), phenomenological philosophy/methods, and narrative inquiry.

Case Study

This thesis is primarily two case studies related to one another: (1) the researcher/mother's case of raising her sons in the United States and (2) 12 multilingual writers' views of heritage language maintenance and loss when the majority language—in this case English—becomes the only language the children have learned, despite parental efforts to help them acquire Arabic. TESOL defines case study for our purposes here:

a single case study is often done with a language learner or a language teacher with the aim to better understand how the subject is learning or teaching the language and what the subject perceives as important to the process. Provide sufficient contextual information about the case, including relevant biographical and social information (depending on the focus), such as ESL learning/teaching history, L1 background, years of residence in a new country, data collection site(s), or other relevant descriptive information pertaining to the case and situation. (TESOL.org, 2016, web)

The case study can be a class, which is what we have in this thesis, but it is also the case of an English teacher—the researcher—as a teacher, mother, and scholar in the United States.

Critical Ethnography

TESOL asks researchers to do the following in their research, and we followed these guidelines (TESOL.org, 2018) in this action research layered case study:

- “Emphasize emic—or participant—attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and practices, as the objective of ethnography is to come to a deeper understanding of how people in particular contexts experience their social and cultural worlds.”

Here the instructor, Dr. Reeves, and I examined our beliefs and tried to understand our own and her 12 students’ life experiences, values, and solutions to the scenario based on my own life situation.

- “Practice reflexivity, a process of self-examination and self-disclosure about aspects of your own background, identities or subjectivities, and assumptions that influence data collection and interpretation.”

We spent several months reflecting on the 12 writers’ responses to the scenario I provided them in the data collection and they reflected on in their final reflection essay for the course. Prior to and during that period, we also discussed at length my experience raising the children here in the United States, and we engaged in the feminist practice of strategic contemplation which is encouraged in feminist rhetorics such as that of Kirsch and Royster (2011) and Aldoshan (2017).

- “Approach data analysis and findings through an inductive and recursive process. Expect patterns, categories, or themes to evolve as data collection proceeds rather than imposing them a priori.”

I color-coded the themes that were immersing in the essays and created tables that appear in this chapter. These themes were not imposed from the beginning, but were discovered in the process. At times, I had difficulty locating the exact words related to

the importance of the heritage language, but I went at this indirectly and through much iterative work, I found it to be a major theme.

- “Note that because of its firsthand, experiential nature, ethnographic knowledge is necessarily tied to particular contexts and periods of time.”

The context is present time looking back over the seven years we have lived here in the United States, and I have provided much context for the readers and the 12 writers in the study.

- “However, most contemporary ethnographers view it as important to acknowledge the instability and ever-evolving nature of the cultures under study, and to explore their nestedness in and interdependence with broader sociocultural contexts.”

We have explored the “nestedness” TESOL asks for in that we have gone back and read again and again the different perspectives of the 12 writers and have given their full essays for review by the readers and have given their voices the spaces they need to be understood. We present them as written as rough drafts not expected to be revised because the end of quarter had arrived and time did not permit revision. We wanted the intact voices of these writers to be there to represent their lived experiences and their thoughtful responses.

- “Note that while ethnographic reports may present abstractions and generalizations about attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs of the cultures under study, many ethnographers acknowledge and represent heterogeneity and diversity within the cultures or cultural scenes under study.”

This we did in that we presented a wide range of perspectives from the Saudi writers as well as diverse perspectives of the Asians and Ukrainian, and Iraqi writers.

- “Give evidence that you have interpreted the tensions implicit in the research with complexity and openness, particularly (but not exclusively) in critical research.”

This we did with total honesty about the problems I faced as a mother, linguist, and scholar raising two sons outside their homeland. In Chapter 4, I will offer diverse views as recommended and will discuss the “tensions” between my views and choices as a mother and the 12 multilingual writers’ views which in many cases were different from my beliefs and my way of handling the situation.

- “between insider (emic) and outsider (etic) perspectives. Your relative outsider status and generalized etic perspectives can offer interpretive angles that are not available to the insiders.”

I was both insider and outsider in this project because I had taken English 112 and had interned in this class as well. I was an insider in American culture and Saudi culture, but I occasionally felt like an outsider in the United States, trying to explain those feelings to readers as well as my children’s self-identifying as insiders in the United States and as Americans. When the children went to Saudi Arabia this past winter break, they felt like outsiders, and their family members could not communicate with them in English very well. Nor could they communicate with the family and other Saudis, so one girl on the playground asked me, “Why are they speaking English?” But I did not answer because I did not know what to say.

- “between macro- and micro-perspectives on the culture. Though the strength of ethnography is its localized, detailed, grounded perspective, global forces from ideological, economic, and geopolitical structures influence local culture.”

The 12 writers included Saudi scholarship students, an Iraqi refugee, a Japanese exchange student, and a Chinese who had graduated from high school in the United States, so the Iraqi, the Ukrainian, and the Chinese writers had micro perspectives of being bilingual in the United States, while the Saudis had micro perspectives of Saudi culture.

- “between present and past...critical ethnography considers culture as open to historical influences and itself shaping history...”

I considered the past seven years and looked at the present situation carefully from many perspectives before drawing any conclusions. My thinking changed over time as I came to terms with my children's learning of English only here.

- “between interpreting and explaining. Critical ethnography recognizes that culture-as-ideology can lead to certain misinterpretations of social life.”

I tried my best not to misinterpret what the 12 writers told me or what I had experienced myself.

- “Similarly, a culture that is merely lived out is not always open to critical reflection for insiders.”

I felt this constraint, but I felt free in the end to own the experience and not to worry about the outcome. I did, however, do critical reflection on my own decisions and carefully considered the 12 writers' lived experiences and suggestions. I will discuss this in greater detail in Chapter 4.

- “With sufficient respect and sensitivity to the community, you may attempt to explain some of the questions/contradictions left open in the informants' interpretations of things.”

My thesis chair and I felt that the answers to the research questions were very tentative, and we reflected on this tentativeness in our discussions over the three months in which we met to discuss the data. This is summarized in Chapter 4.

- “between the parts and the whole of the culture. To explain away the tensions in a culture is to impose a consistency and uniformity on the community that serves to stereotype, essentialize, and generalize its culture reductively.”

We were especially careful not to cast any writer in a way that did not honor his or her experience and opinion. We never put all Saudis, for example, in a certain category—we recognized their diversity and their separate lived experiences.

- “Thus, a critical interpretation represents the culture in all its complexity, instability, and diversity.”

In the discussion in Chapter 4 and reflections in Chapter 5, I tried to capture the complexity of the cultures from which the 12 writers originated and never essentialized them in any way.

- “between the different subject positions of the researcher. Adopt a reflexive approach; interpret your own biases, backgrounds, and identities (e.g., of scholarship, ethnicity, class, gender, region) both in the field and outside; and acknowledge the ways they shape the research and cultural representation.”

This was not difficult for me because I took on three subject positions and stated that from Chapter 1: mother, teacher, and researcher. I also disclosed my assumptions and biases throughout the thesis, particularly in Chapters 1, 4, and 5. In the literacy narrative in Chapter 1, I discussed my schooling, religion, region, and gender as it applied to the present study. I made sure to explain that this was my experience and only mine, though other Saudi girls and women may have had similar experiences. Clearly, my beliefs and background influenced the choices I made for my children and the ways I have raised them in the United States.

- Indicate the social implications of the cultural description. Interpretation in critical ethnography values not only the validity of the study (e.g., enhanced by triangulation of data or the sophistication of methods used), but also the social usefulness of the research and the ways it addresses issues of social justice, human development, and ethical integrity.

Issues of social justice, human development, and ethical integrity are addressed in Chapter 4 and later in Chapter 5, particularly regarding the children’s rights not to be forced to learn Arabic against their will, the parents’ rights to make choices about language for their children, and ethical issues that underlie those decisions. My children, for example, often asked, “Why do we have to learn Arabic? Nobody here speaks Arabic.”

Phenomenological Research

Like Aldoshan (2017), the present study employs a phenomenological method: “an inductive, descriptive research approach developed from phenomenological philosophy; its aim is to describe an experience as it is actually lived by the person” (Mligo, 2013, web). There is “the assumption that there is an essence [meaning] or essences to shared experience. These essences are the core meanings mutually understood through a phenomenon commonly experienced. The experiences of different people are. . . analyzed...for example, the essences of loneliness, the essence of being a mother,” (2002, web). The phenomenon studied in this project is raising children in the United States when the first language becomes the majority language: English, not the parents’ native language: Arabic, despite the fact that the parents spoke Arabic with one another both inside and outside the home.

Narrative Inquiry and Intercultural Research

Trahar (2009) defines this method: Narrative inquiry then has evolved from the growing participatory research movement that foregrounds a greater sensitivity to social and cultural differences. “Narrative inquiry embraces narrative as both the method and the phenomena of study” (Pinnegar & Danes, 2007, p. 4, cited in Trahar, p. 40) and ‘characteristically begins with the researcher’s autobiographically oriented narrative associated with the research puzzle’ (Candlin & Connelly, 2000, p. 40, original emphasis). She then explains how she employs autoethnography:

In my research, I acknowledged the importance of accessing and understanding participants’ different social constructions of reality examining issues in depth through exploratory, open-ended conversations, prioritising holistic understanding situated in lived experience. The study also drew upon related methodological and theoretical perspectives derived from the field of international and comparative research, combined with recent advances in critical theory. (Trahar, 2009, p. 40)

The research design came to draw increasingly upon research perspectives and strategies developed and applied by writers such as Clandinin and Connelly (2000). Methodological strategies developed by such scholars prioritize autobiographical experiences and conversations “between theory and the stories of life contained in the inquiry” (p. 41). The goal is to tell the stories and the related stories as I have done in this project.

Data Collection & Setting

This case study was conducted in fall quarter 2017 in English 112, Composition for Multilingual Writers. In this writing class, students were given a scenario and questions to answer and write down their thoughts. Dr. Reeves and I worked together to create this scenario for the students in order for them to have a full understanding of what they had been asked to answer. In the last week of the quarter, Dr. Reeves incorporated this essay prompt into the lesson as the students completed their study of the biography of Eleanor Roosevelt. As part of their final exam, they had to write this journal and submit through canvas. 20 students completed the journal but only 12 are included here because only 12 signed the consent form (Appendix A) to allow me to publish their short essays in this thesis. This was a convenience sample since the thesis chair taught the class and collected the data for the researcher.

Figure 1: Journal Prompt

Simulated Journal

Respond to this situation and tell us what you would do and why.

You now have two children ages 5 and 6, and they have been here for six years and speak only English because the older one came to the U.S. at two months, and the younger one was born here. Since they went to the EWU Children's Center for about 4+ years, they were communicating in English there and at home as a result. You and your spouse speak mostly English to them, but you speak your heritage language with one another, and the children don't mind but are sometimes curious about your conversations.

You will be going back home in about one year, so you want them to start to learn the heritage language.

Paragraph 1. In the U.S.

1. What could you do to teach them your first language in the U.S. to prepare them to go back to your home country?
2. How do you feel about the situation? Explain how you feel in detail.
3. What problems might you face if you now try to introduce the heritage language at this time in the U.S.? Identify at least two problems and explain how you will handle these problems.

Paragraph 2. Back home in your country

4. What problems might you and your children have when you get back home?
 - a. Identify at least one major problem you and your children will face back home.
 - b. Explain how you will handle this problem back home and why.

Data Presentation & Analysis

The journals appear unedited in this chapter. To honor the writers and give voice to their lived experience and their views, we include their entire essays first and present summaries of their thoughts in the tables that follow the essays. The names were changed to maintain anonymity as promised in the consent form. After each essay, I comment on and summarize writers' key points. I analyzed the 12 essays for common themes in January 2018, and I color coded and presented the themes to my thesis chair, who was the instructor in the class and who assisted with the interpretation of the data collected. I then created tables to aggregate the themes. We followed the procedures for case studies outlined by TESOL and explained above.

Writer 1: Ayman

I will teach them Arabic at home for 2 hours every day because kids are so smart and they all learn a lot. I will give them 5 words or 10 every day. I will chose 2 days at home to speak Arabic for they can learn as much as they can and if they did that I will give them a small gift such as I will go out with them to play football or I will go with them to the place that they like. I feel good because they will have 2 language and I know they will be great in both of them because they are kids and smart. If I will try to introduce the heritage language at this time in the U.S. I will talk with them in Arabica at home for 2 hours or more than in the weakened I will let them to talk with family back home that will help them more. Second, if they don't have enough time I will let them watch TV in Arabic and before they will go to bed I will read a story in Arabica for them and I hope that will help them.

Paragraph 2. Back home in your country:

I might face some problems with my children when I back home they will not understand every things in Arabia and they will ask me to explant for them and that will make them mad because they can't say what they want. One major problem me and my children will face back home which is freedom the roles is so different from my country to USA. For example, in USA you can do anything you want but it should be not bad and it will not hurt people, but in my country it is different we have to do what the kind say. I will handle these problems since I was in USA and I will teach them that about every country that they have different rules.

Researcher's Commentary

Ayman seemed positive about his children having the opportunity to learn two languages, but he clearly wanted them to learn their heritage language before going home to Saudi Arabia. He suggested four different ways to introduce their first language: (1) to set a number of new words each day for them to learn; (2) to have two Arabic-only days a week at home; (3) to reward them for speaking Arabic; (4) to read stories to them in their Arabic.

He also identified two problems that might occur back in Saudi Arabia: (1) he as the father will have to explain everything to them which will make them “mad” when they cannot express themselves, which is categorized under the major theme of miscommunication (Table 2); and (2) they will have to adjust to the lack of freedom and the different rules in Saudi Arabia. Both of these are categorized as “culture shock” in Table 3.

Writer 2: Nora (who takes on my identity and speaks in first person)

I have been studying in the U.S for six years, and I have two children, six and five years old. My native language is Arabic, but my children speak only English. If I want to talk to them, I talk to them in English, so they can understand what I am saying. However, now, I want to teach them Arabic to prepare them to go back to our country, Saudi Arabia. [Simulated Journal Prompt] First, I will confirm them that they need to learn Arabic same as their father and me because they hear us talking to each other in Arabic all the time, and they sometimes get curious. This will encourage them to learn and to help me on teaching them. Second, I will make a list of 14 Arabic vocabulary to learn, for each week a new list so that they can learn at least two words every day. I know it will be hard on them, but this will be my responsibility to help them because I could teach them when they were one year old, but I did not. I believe that they will learn Arabic faster than me when I was learning English because they are at young ages, and their ability to learn a new language is more significant. Third, I will encourage them to ask me about anything or any word they want to know in Arabic at any time, by giving them a prize after asking me, such as sweet or toy or read a story for who asked more. I may face some problems in the beginning, but I will try to solve them. For example, they may mix between the two languages, and they will get confused. To handle this problem, I will make sure that when they speak, they use only one language in their sentences. For instance, if they want to say, “mom I want to drink مويه,” which means “water.” They cannot mix the Arabic and English like that. If they say it mixed, I will ignore them until they say it correctly. In short, I will try to do my best to make them learn as much as possible before we go back to our country.

When we are back home, we will face so many problems. One of them is when my children want to talk to my family, they have to speak Arabic very well, so my family could understand them. Another big problem that I am worried about is that in The Arabic language there are many accents. It's hard to teach my children all of them, for that my children will suffer. In fact, my father family has a different accent than my mother family, so my children will not understand most of Arabic, and they also will feel different and lonely because of culture shock. Everything is different there. They will have difficulties in communicating with children who have the same ages. More than that, the problems that I will face. My children will have no one to talk to other than my husband and me, and they will always be spending the time with me, not with my family. Another problem is when I will teach them to pray and read Quran, it's all in formal Arabic language, and it's different too, but I must inform them because, in Islam, the age of starting is ten years old, but they have to practice it before this period. All in all, I will try to be with them, and support them to learn and communicate with others and make them getting used to the new culture. After two years of hard working, they will be okay. As they always say, ("الوقت هو دواء كل شيء") "Time heals everything."

Researcher's Commentary

Nora is keen on having her children learn the HL for religious reasons—to pray and read the scriptures. Like Ayman, she also makes good suggestions: introducing lists of words—two a day and enforcing an Arabic-only rule at home, but every day, not just two days a week as Ayman suggests. Nora identifies three problems that might occur when she go back to Saudi Arabia: (1) miscommunication with the family and children who are at the same age that lead to isolation (2) difficulty teaching Arabic as it has so many dialects (3) worrying about teaching the children the formal form because of religion rituals that require knowledge of formal Arabic at a young age.

Writer 3: Anwar

During my life in the U.S in the last year for me to graduate and back home I will try to learn my children our heritage language. I would buy activities books which they learn the heritage language and another book for trying to read. I would spend our free time on learning our language. I feel this is a big problem. I made a big mistake. Since we came to U.S until today I should to teach them our language step by step. We all will feel of stress because we do not have a long time to learn carefully. I will feel my children will not absorb what is going on? Why they must to learn this language? I feel they will confuse. I might will face identifying letters problem and speaking fluently problem. Because of the different between our heritage language and English, they might face difficulties on learning. They will feel it is too difficult to learn. The speaking problem is I will be afraid of they will not speaking fluently. I will feel sad of this situation because it is their native language they should be fluence on speaking. I might will working hard on this problem to handle it faster.

My children and I might face culture shock problem when we back home. For me it will be a long time I never live with my family in my home country. Too many things will be different such as the lifestyle. For my children they will have a big culture shock more than me because they never live on our home country. They do not know about the traditions and the lifestyle. Before we back home, I will try to identify them about our traditions and culture. They must know. I feel we will face another problem, we must visit our relatives' weekly such as grandparents, aunts and uncles. During our life in the U.S we do not have relatives to visit them weekly but, we visit our friends. May be my children will not accept this situation because they will feel of differ. During our life in the U.S we go outside every weekend to mall or parks. I will handle this situation by give them time to go outside and go to visit our relatives. I will tell them the life always change and try to make them accept every change in their lives.

Researcher's Commentary

Anwar feels that her children should have learned their heritage language from the beginning, as it is important for them to grow up knowing the language and the culture as well. She also suggested a way to introduce HL to her children: to buy books in HL language and to spend more time learning the language. Anwar identified a major problem when going back to her country, which is the difference in lifestyle, (Culture Shock Table 3) her children will have to adjust to a new lifestyle and traditions such as family weekly visits.

Writer 4: Jawaher

I am an Arabic student who is studying in the U.S. Since I came to the U.S, I saw lots of Arabic children who back home and cannot speak their parents' native language. Immediately, I started to think about my two children, and they are between ages 5 and 6. How I will avoid this problem when I have to go to my country. I know that it is good to have more than language, but I know that they will have a hard time with speaking in Arabic. Therefore, I have two problems which are what I will do now in the U.S, and in my country when I back home.

I must prepare my children to go back to Saudi Arabia. It is correct that it is hard to teach them Arabic especially they are only communicating in English. However, I am trying now by more than one way. The first way, I found an Arabic teacher, so after they back home from the daycare at noon, they take a rest then went to her. The second way, my husband and I started to talk with them in Arabic and help them to pronounce the words correctly. The last way, I make them watch Arabic cartoons, and sometimes with English translation. I feel guilty that I neglected them all these years. Even though that I know that it because my studying and almost all my time in the university and doing assignments, but it should be that my children are the first thing in my priorities. I feel sorry that I did not focus on this problem before. Besides, I am aware that it is hard to them and me, but nothing is impossible, and we have to try. I know that I may face

several problems such as if they do not practice Arabic almost daily, they will forget it. For example, my native language is Arabic, so when I visit Saudi Arabia, I forgot some words in English because the heritage language there is Arabic, and I do not practice the English a lot. I will handle this problem by giving them gifts if they practice it at least on time a day, and show me that. In addition, they may feel shy when they try to speak Arabic in front of people who speak it very well for fear of making mistakes, and someone starts laughing at them. For this problem, I have to encourage them by telling them that no one can stop in your stairs when you [make mistakes].

Researcher's Commentary

Jawaher appears to be the most concerned out of the 12 participants. She admitted that teaching her children Arabic in America is difficult. She thinks of solutions to fix this problem: (1) send the children to a private Arabic tutor (2) start to communicate in Arabic with them inside and outside the house (3) let her children watch Arabic cartoons on TV. She feels guilty and sorry for neglecting the HL. She identifies one problem that might occur when going to Saudi Arabia: her kids might face the fear of speaking or making mistakes in front of Arabic native-speakers. She said encouragement and rewards are a good start for them to keep learning.

Writer 5: Salem

The first thing I would do to teach them their native language before going back home is to send them to a language school at a designated consulate where there are usually different classes including language courses being taught to the citizens of the country and their dependents in the foreign country. This I believe is the best way to ensure they get a reliable source of information and good quality education.

I and my spouse would also try to converse with them in the heritage language at home to make them feel comfortable getting to know the language at the beginning and to review with them what they were taught in school. This issue of my hypothetical children not speaking their first language would concern me to a great extent because I find that this situation is going to be difficult for them when they arrive in the country by finding themselves not being able to communicate with their peers which might have negative outcomes on their well being especially at such a critical phase of their lives in their first childhood years. An alternative method I may consider is by hiring a nurse or a nanny who could speak the language fluently to speak with them and get them practice the language during babysitting times. As far as difficulties go, I may encounter two main problems when sending the kids to a language school or hiring a nanny for them. One is money since I am a university student who has many financial obligations such as paying for tuitions, rent, bills etc, this is only going to add to the financial burden. The other problem is timewise. I am going to have to set extra time for the kids getting them to their school and spending time with them at home teaching them the language which may distract me from focusing on my studies.

Researcher's Commentary

Salem believes the best way to teach the HL is in school. He suggested two ways to teach the HL to his children: (1) send them to immersion school or hire a native-speaker nanny (2) try to communicate with his children in the HL. But he seems more concerned about money and time. He also identifies one problem that might occur when going back home: miscommunication and its effect on his children's well being (Table 4)

Writer 6: Fadwa

If I have two children and they live in United for a long time. I will be worried about them for many reasons. As a first, I will understand how it is difficult to live in a culture that does not relate to their original culture any way and at the same time I'm requiring from them to transform the culture in a short time. As a result, I will prepare my children to move to a new place from they are children. First, I have to explain the all situation for them since they are children. Also, I will start to teach them basic words of my first language but not when I decided to move, it has to occur from they were kids because I study English as a second language and I know how it is so hard to dive into a different language just in a short time. In addition, I will put some rules, which is speaking just Arabic language in home, my children will punish if they do not do it. By that way, they will learn easily and improve their skills of the language slowly. If I need helping to teach my children, I will call tutor to do it. Learning Arabic language is very important to me even that it is more important than English language because it is the language for Quran, Islam, and pray. As a result, I will not allow my kids to lose their religion or their parent's language. The problems that will face me while I'm trying to introduce the language for my babies is none because It is not something that they have never heard about, it is common. When I contact my mother or anyone in my relative, children will hear just Arabic language and they absolutely will communicate with my family. Moreover, when I meet my friends in United States who are from Saudi Arabia, my kids will hear just Arabic language.

I have seen many Saudi's guys who did not teach their children Arabic language and I saw how they faced many difficulties when they get home. As an example, when their grandmother or grandfather met them, children could not understand them, or speak with them. Also, kids could not play with other children because they have different language and culture. As a result, I promised myself to not leave my children for the Arabic language. As I mentioned in the first paragraph, I do not have problems when I get home. However, every language has vernacular. Sometimes, my mom talk by the public language, so my children may face difficulties to recognize the meaning but it is not a big issue for them because they have learned the basic vocabularies. I trust that everything solves by time so my kids will understand but slowly.

Researcher's Commentary

Like Nora, Fadwa considers the Arabic language very important because it is the language of her nationality and religion. She suggested ways to introduce the HL to her children: teach the children the HL from an early age not just before going home. Enforce an Arabic-only rule, and they would be punished if they don't follow the rule. If she needed help she would use a tutor. She thinks there would be no problem when going home because her children are prepared and familiar with the language. One concern she feels is the dialect her family uses might confuse her children. Her journal affirms many important themes.

Writer 7: Dalal

The first thing that I want to do is to teach them the difference between English language and my first language which is Arabic. I should try to connect my language with my culture because I don't want them to be shock if we go back to Saudi Arabi. In addition, I will try to teach them how to pronounce the word in Arabic. In fact, I will try to teach them Arabic alphabet because I think this is the most important thing to do. If they study the alphabet they will know a little bit of Arabic. I will be happy and feel happy because I know that I tried to do my best to make them know my first language. I think in the beginning it will be hard, but by the time it will be easier. In this situation, in the beginning, I will be nervous and think about what should I do. In fact, what problems may I face? if I face problems, the first thing I will do is try to find an easy way to teach them my first language. Indeed, I feel like I did something very important because they have to know their first language and how it is important to them to learn it. I will feel amazing that I learn my children and I will feel proud too. When my children go to my home country I don't want them to feel like they are strange. If they learn some Arabic they will know what other people talking around them and they will know what people want from them. I think the problem that I will face to teach my children is that maybe I don't have time to teach them because they will be almost all the time in school and they used to communicate with people with the English language, so it might be hard for them to learn another language. The second problem that I may face is when they ask me why we should learn your first language. I will try to explain to them why they should learn my first language and how my first language it is important, and this language is their first language too, so they have to learn it.

If we go back to my home country for me I don't think that I will face a lot of problem with my children. In fact, I think that my children will face a problem with the culture because our culture is very different from the American culture and every country has some different things in their culture. For example, in Saudi Arabia in the sleep time they will sleep late and wake up late because the different in time. In this situation I will try to make them understand our culture and how different it is. For instance, in Saudi Arabia the weeding start at 9 or 10 Pm and ends almost at 1 or 2 Am. In addition, because

they are young children they will not understand very well what is happening around them. Even if I teach them some Arabic they will still know a little bit. For this reason, if they go out with some children they will be not able to understand everything. Maybe some children will make fun of them without they known and that is not good. In the end I think that is the time is the solution to everything.

Researcher's commentary

Dalal believes that the heritage language is important for her children to learn. She suggested to start with the alphabet of the HL, but she may face two problems: time as the children will spend most of their time in school and will be speaking English and (2) what to say when her children ask her why we should learn the HL. She identifies two problems when going home. Like many others, culture shock is a major theme in the journals, she provides two examples: weddings and bedtime customs. Another problem is her children will not be able to understand Arabic completely and that will put them in the position of being made fun of by Saudi children.

Writer 8: Amal

Having children whose speak more than a language is my dream. Of course, they learned English because they spend most of their childhood in the USA. So, when the time is nearby to go back to Saudi Arabia which is my country, I make rules in order to make them speak my original language which is Arabic. The first rule is never speaking any language than Arabic. This will make them more familiar with the language. Of course, it will be hard for them because Arabic is different from English. There are many letters that it's exist in Arabic not in English which is a big problem. There are 28 letters in Arabic that I will teach them before we go back to have them prepare for it, and I will teach them how to pronounce each letter. The most important part in life is how to communicate by speaking or writing. I will be focusing in the speaking at first because it's the easiest one. Writing is the hardest because in Arabic we write from right to left which is the opposite in English, and this is one example of the problems that I will face when I interduce my language to my kids. However, I will be interested and scared. I will be happy and interested to show my children my culture. Arabic is part of me, so I will be willing to make it part of my children as well. On the other hand, I'll fear of my children because they are learning to different languages which are English and Arabic at the same time. I'm scared that they are going to be confused, and their brain may get some kind of missed up confusion which lead to speaking none sense.

My children communicate with nonspeaking English is the major problem when we go back to Saudi Arabia. I remember a story about one of my friend. She has a son who is 3 years old and left him with his grandmother while my friend was in a wedding of one of her cousins. After a while, the son got thirsty and wanted to drink water, but his grandmother couldn't understand what he was saying. The grandmother tried to call the

mother but no respond until long time the mother answered and translated what the son was saying. I always imagine the situation happened to me and my children and sometime the worse because my children don't speak our original language. However, to prevent this kind of situations from happening, I would make sure my children speak Arabic and teach them how to use a translator when they need it.

Researcher's commentary

Amal is one of the few who show enthusiasm that their children are learning another language, but that doesn't prevent them from learning and focusing on their heritage language. She introduces three ways to teach the HL to her children: 1) HL-only rule which is a minor theme I found in the journals. 2) Focus on the alphabet and speaking, she mentions some differences between English and Arabic regarding phonemes. 3) Writing would be the last step. She expresses her fear for her children to be confused and misunderstood when they go back to their country.

Writer 9: Sofia

Because we are returning back home in one year, I will enroll my children in a Russian school. Also, I would begin to speak to them only in Russian. When children interact with other children that speak another language, they will learn it faster. I would encourage them to practice reading books that are in Russian, starting from an easy level. Firstly, I would feel overwhelmed. know that my children will be very confused and frustrated, trying to learn a new language. But I will do everything I can to try and teach them their heritage language. Because of this event, I know my children will be very shy and stressed. That is why I am going to try and make them comfortable. Another problem is the culture. In Russian schools are organized differently. They are organized one through 11. They are all in one building. And the kindergarten is for children ages from One to six. To solve this problem I will teach my children all of these things.

At home, my children will probably have a hard time understanding their surroundings. The signs will all be in Russian. Everyone will be speaking Russian. But over time my children will learn and understand. If in any case they get lost then they will probably struggle to interact with someone else. All of these problems will face us but If we stay together I think we will survive. In conclusion, I think they will learn the Russian language over time. It will be a struggle at first but in the future, we will look back and smile. I hope they like it in Russia. I think it is a beautiful nation and my kids will like it there. Wish us good luck we are going to need it.

Researcher's commentary

Sofia suggested three ways to teach the HL to her children: 1) HL-only rule as Amal suggested too, 2) reading books in the HL and interacting with other native speakers, and 3) enrolling the children in HL school. She says it is hard for children to

learn a second language and it is also hard for the parents emotionally because parents struggle and feel frustrated sometimes. When going back home, her children might face culture shock. Culture shock is a major theme (Table 3) identified by at least five other writers.

Writer 10: Tahani

For me. I would like to make at least 2 hours every day to teach them Arabic letters. However, I would like to change my TV channels to Arabic channels especially the cartoon, so they can save some Arabic words in their mind. In addition, I could buy Arabic grammar books for their age and try to teach it to them. important thing I can do is go to some friend's house who have children at the same ages as my kids who recently came to U.S. by letting my children communicate with Iraqi children, their brain might develop to understand Arabic contestation and pronounce the words. Try to make Iraqi environment in home between us because that help my kids to not feel weird when they go back to their home country. This might be very hard for them to learn a new language, a new environment, a new life. I will try my best to make them feel that they belong to both U.S and Iraq no matter what happened. Every night I will read a story about my country and my life story as well to make them feel excited to see their other country.

It will be very difficult to go back to my country with my children. We might die, no body know when we going to die. It is extremely dangerous for me and my children to face a new world. I might be face a new thing that I never face it before I was living back to Iraq. My children will be going to speak some English words with other children and that what make them in dangerous situation because other kids will notify their parents about having an American kid in their neighborhood. Most Iraqi families will not accept having an American child between them. it is very shame for them to see an American people surround them. another major problem will be un expecting bombing might make our lives at risk. I never bring my children to their home country and it will be my responsibility to keep them safe. However, I will handle this situation by talking to my children about how other people might not love you. If my children face any problem they will come to me and I will try my best to keep them at my friend's home.

Researcher's commentary

Tahani believes in her heritage language, as it is connected to her culture and home back in Iraq. She thinks that English will cause problems her children when they go back home for political reasons. She suggested four ways to teach her children the HL: 1) schedule 2 hours each day to learn the letters, 2) change the TV channels to Arabic ones, 3) buy Arabic grammar books, 4) let her children visit children their age who speak the HL language too. She also wants to create a heritage environment inside the house to

raise her children bi-culturally. She is not considering going back home because of political issues and she remains afraid for her children to be killed if they return to Iraq, which is very disturbing to me as a parent.

Writer 11: Sara

I could teach them my first language in the U.S. by speaking with them, so they can learn and understand us of what we are talking about, and there is another way is when they born in U.S, they can hear us my first language more and when they going to grow up they can understand my first languages and learn it. Because in kindergarten, they teach them in English and speak with them, so they can learn English. about and I feel about this situation excited and happy with them whatever they speak with me in English or in their first language I feel happy that they can speak English very well and I feel sad if they can't speak their first languages. Last, the problems might I face if I try to introduce the heritage language at this time in the U.S of how to teach them of how to teach them and its might have a Difficult to pronounce the characters and rules and it might take a long time and My children would accept my language that I want to teach them, and I will handle these problem by make a bigger effort and teach them and they would love my language through talking about my country and Heritage of civilization and tell them my story in my country, so they would like to visit my country and like to learn and speak my first languages.

Back home in your country. First, the problems might you and your children have when you get back home is that there is no freedom in my country and the circumstances of my country is difference of the circumstance in America and different language, People, Laws, Education, Customs and traditions, and environment and I will handle this problem by Support them and encourage them to they can live in my country, and the first thing they would see, that is a different country and its hard in the first time to try or learn, but they would learn it about month or more so they can learn and live easily, and they would have an experience in their life. Because, it's benefit for them, when they would visit and live in another country with different language, People, Laws, Education, Customs and traditions, and environment.

Researcher's commentary

Sara wants her children to grow up hearing their HL inside the house as a way to learn their HL. She also suggested focusing on pronunciation because they will be studying English and speaking English in school most of the time and that will affect their HL. When going home she might face problems such as no freedom and difference in circumstances, which fall under the theme culture shock (Table 3). She is willing to do everything she can to let her children live an easy, safe life.

Writer 12: Aimi

I want to teach a couple of easy phrases when I start to teach English. For example, “これは何ですか” means “What is this?” in Japanese. This phrase must help learning Japanese terms. After that, I would tell “ありがとう”, it means “Thank you”. If my children could use these two phrases, they can ask question to other Japanese people. However, I think that this situation would not happen in me case. If I would have American partner, and get children in America, I would try to both Japanese and English to my children. The biggest problem of studying Japanese in America is practicability of Japanese in America. Today, English is one of the major languages in the world, on the other hand Japanese is very minor language. Most of American students studying Japanese lack motivation. Therefore, my children would learn English with motivation if I always speak Japanese to them.

The problem which would be happened when I and my children go to Japan is culture shock. At the beginning of this fall quarter, I faced many cultural differences. My children would experience same things like me. I think the solution of this problem is to always tell difference, and to teach not to be afraid of making mistakes. Especially, I learned to overcome fears through this English 112 class. I wish my children could overcome big cultural differences with facing fears like I did in America.

Researcher’s commentary

Aimi seems the most practical of all writers in that she wants to teach her children important Japanese phrases so that they will be able to communicate their needs when they return to Japan. She has a positive attitude toward the errors her children will make in Japanese and wants them to know that making mistakes is normal and helpful in some ways. She plans to tell them about the fears she faced in the United States when she arrived and together they will overcome all obstacles when they return home to Japan.

Methodology

As is common in this kind of classroom action research, Dr. Reeves, who was the thesis chair and the instructor in this class, and I read the essays many times and began to see commonalties in the 12 narratives. Then I began to color code each theme that was arising. A theme was considered a major theme if it was found in six or more journals, and a minor theme if it was found in three to five journals. After I read the journals, I provided commentary at the end of each journal to summarize each writer’s point of view and the problems they might have when they go back home, connecting the similar ones and highlighting the themes. The analysis took me several reviews over two months. I was going through each journal to code and categorize the writers’ views. The coding of

the themes began in February and continued through mid March as I met weekly with Dr. Reeves. The writers expressed interesting views and strong opinions through simulated responses to my real-life scenario.

In summary, the following are major and minor themes found in the 12 writers' journals:

- 1) Expose children to HL (n=12)
 - 2) Difficulty learning HL outside one's country (n=9)
 - 3) Culture shock (n=7)
 - 4) Miscommunication and misunderstanding (n=7)
 - 5) HL for religion (n=2)
 - 6) HL only rule (n=4)
 - 7) Encouragement (n=4)
 - 8) Punishment & rewards (n=4)
 - 9) HL is important (n=5)
 - 10) Happy to learn two languages (n=5)
-

Tables 1 through 4 present the four major themes: Exposure to HL, Re-entry Culture Shock, Difficulty Learning HL Outside of One's Country, Miscommunication & Misunderstanding. The tables include the writers, their country of origin, gender, and their quote that exemplifies the themes

Table 1: Theme 1 Expose children to HL

Writer	Country of Origin/Gender	Quote
Nora	Saudi female	"...they need to learn Arabic same as their father and me because they hear us talking to each other in Arabic all the time, and they sometimes get curious. This will encourage them to learn and to help me on teaching them. Second, I will make a list of 14 Arabic vocabulary to learn, for each week a new list so that they can learn at least two words every day."
Anwar	Saudi female	"I will try to learn my children our heritage language." "I would buy activities books which they learn the heritage language and another book for trying to read. I would spend our free time learning our language."

Ayman	Saudi male	<p>I will teach them Arabic at home for 2hours every day...I will give them 5 words or 10 every day. I will chose 2 days at home to speak Arabic for they can learn as much as they can”</p> <p>“I will let them to talk with family back home that will help them more. Second, if they don’t have enough time I will let them watch TV in Arabic and before they will go to bed I will read a story in Arabica for them and I hope that will help them”</p>
Fadwa	Saudi female	<p>“I will start to teach them basic words of my first language”</p> <p>“I will call tutor to do it”</p>
Jawaher	Saudi female	<p>“I found an Arabic teacher, so after they back home from the daycare at noon, they take a rest then went to her. The second way, my husband and I started to talk with them in Arabic and help them to pronounce the words correctly. The last way, I make them watch Arabic cartoons, and sometimes with English translation.”</p>
Salem	Saudi male	<p>“send them to a language school at a designated consulate where there are usually different classes including language courses being taught to the citizens of the country and their dependents in the foreign country...I and my spouse would also try to converse with them in the heritage language”</p> <p>“hiring a nurse or a nanny who could speak the language fluently to speak with them and get them practice the language during babysitting times.”</p>
Dalal	Saudi female	<p>“I will try to teach them how to pronounce the word in Arabic. In fact, I will try to teach them Arabic alphabet because I think this is the most important thing to do”</p>
Jawaher	Saudi female	<p>I found an Arabic teacher, so after they back home from the daycare at noon, they take a rest then went to her. The second way, my husband and I started to talk with them in Arabic and help them to pronounce the words correctly. The last way, I make them watch Arabic cartoons, and sometimes with English translation.”</p> <p>at them.”</p>
Salem	Saudi male	<p>“send them to a language school at a designated consulate where there are usually different classes including language courses being taught to the citizens of the country and their dependents in the foreign country...I and my spouse would also try to converse with them in the heritage language”</p> <p>“hiring a nurse or a nanny who could speak the language fluently to speak with them and get them practice the language during babysitting times.”</p>

Amal	Saudi female	“I will be focusing in the speaking at first because it’s the easiest one. Writing is the hardest”
Sofia	Ukrainian female	“I will enroll my children in a Russian school...I would begin to speak to them only in Russian...I would encourage them to practice reading books that are in Russian”
Tahani	Iraqi female	“I would like to make at least 2 hours every day to teach them Arabic letters...change my TV channels to Arabic channels especially the carton...I could buy Arabic grammar books for their age and try to teach it to them. important thing I can do is go to some friend’s house who have children at the same ages as my kids”

Table 2	Theme 2	Difficulty learning HL outside one’s country
Writer	Country of Origin/Gender	Quote
Nora	Saudi female	“I know it will be hard on them...I will try to do my best to make them learn as much as possible before we go back to our country”
Fadwa	Saudi female	it is so hard to dive into a different language just in a short time.”
Anwar	Saudi female	“They will feel it is too difficult to learn”
Jawaher	Saudi female	“It is correct that it is hard to teach them Arabic especially they are only communicating in English.”
Dalal	Saudi female	“hard for them to learn another language.”
Amal	Saudi female	“it will be hard for them because Arabic is different from English...I’m scared that they are going to be confused, and their brain may get some kind of missed up confusion which lead to speaking none sense.”
Sofia	Ukrainian female	my children will be very confused and frustrated, trying to learn a new language.”
Tahani	Iraqi female	“This might be very hard for them to learn a new language”
Aimi	Japanese female	“Japanese is very minor language. Most of American students studying Japanese lack motivation.”
Sara	Iraqi female	“I could teach them my first language in the U.S. by speaking with them”
Aimi	Japanese female	“I want to teach a couple of easy phrases when I start to teach English.”

Table 3	Theme 3:	Culture shock
Writer	Country of Origin/Gender	Quote
Anwar	Saudi male	My children and I might face culture shock problem when we back home”
Ayman	Saudi male	“the roles is so different from my country to USA.”
Dalal	Saudi female	“my children will face a problem with the culture because our culture is very different from the American culture”
Sofia	Ukrainian female	“Another problem is the culture.”
Tahani	Iraqi female	“Try to make Iraqi environment in home between us because that help my kids to not feel weird when they go back to their home country.”
Sara	Iraqi female	“the circumstances of my country is difference of the circumstance in America and different language, People, Laws, Education, Customs and traditions, and environment”
Aimi	Japanese female	“when I and my children go to Japan is culture shock.”

Table 4 Theme 4: Miscommunication and misunderstanding		
Writer	Country of Origin/Gender	Quote
Nora	Saudi female	“when my children want to talk to my family, they have to speak Arabic very well, so my family could understand them” “They will have difficulties in communicating with children who have the same ages.”
Ayman	Saudi male	“they will not understand every things in Arabia and they will ask me to explant for them and that will make them mad because they can’t say what they want.”
Fadwa	Saudi female	“children could not understand them, or speak with them. Also, kids could not play with other children because they have different language”
Jawaher	Saudi female	“for fear of making mistakes, and someone starts laughing at them.”
Salem	Saudi male	“be difficult for them when they arrive in the country by finding themselves not being able to communicate with their peers which might have negative outcomes on their well being”
Dalal	Saudi female	“they will be not able to understand everything. Maybe some children make will make fun of them”
Jawaher	Saudi female	“for fear of making mistakes, and someone starts laughing at them.”
Amal	Saudi female	“My children communicate with nonspeaking English is the major problem when we go back”
Sofia	Ukrainian female	“my children will probably have a hard time understanding their surroundings.”

Tables 5 and 6 present the six minor themes found in the data analysis.

Table 5: Minor Themes 1-3
Theme 1: HL for religion
Nora “when I will teach them to pray and read Quran, it’s all in formal Arabic language, and it’s different too, but I must inform them because, in Islam, the age of starting is ten years old, but they have to practice it before this period.”
Fadwa “because it is the language for Quran, Islam, and pray”
Theme 2: Encouragement
Nora “ this will encourage them to learn”
Jawaher “I have to encourage them”
Sofia “I would encourage them to practice reading books”
Sara “I will handle this problem by Support them and encourage them”
Theme 3: HL only rule
Nora “I will make sure that when they speak, they use only one language in their sentences.”
Fadwa “is speaking just Arabic language in home,”
Amal “The first rule is never speaking any language than Arabic.”
Sofia “I would begin to speak to them only in Russian”

Table 6. Minor Themes 4-6

Theme 4: Punishment & rewards #
Nora “by giving them a prize after asking me, such as sweet or toy or read a story for who asked more”
“I will ignore them until they say it correctly.”
Ayman “I will give them a small gift such as I will go out with them to play football or I will go with them to the place that they like.”
Jawaher “. I will handle this problem by giving them gifts if they practice it at least on time a day, and show me that. In addition”
Fadwa “my children will punish if they do not do it.”
Theme 5: HL is important:
Nora “I want to teach them Arabic to prepare them to go back to our country”
Salem “children not speaking their first language would concern me to a great extent”
Fadwa “I will be worried about them” “it has to occur from they were kids” “Arabic language is very important”
Dalal “they have to know their first language and how it is important to them to learn it.”
Sofia “I will do everything I can to try and teach them their heritage language.”
Theme 6: Happy to learn two languages
Ayman “I feel good because they will have 2 language and I know they will be great in both of them because they are kids and smart.”
Sara “excited and happy with them whatever they speak with me in English or in their first language I feel happy that they can speak English very well”
Amal “Having children whose speak more than a language is my dream”
Aimi “I would try to both Japanese and English to my children.”
Jawaher “I know that it is good to have more than [one] language”

Clearly, all 12 writers engaged deeply with the scenario presented to them, and as a mother and researcher I benefited greatly from reading, reflecting on, and categorizing the major and minor themes that immersed in their thoughtful and incisive essays. I will reflect more on what I learned as a mother and researcher in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. Their insights provided valuable information for all parents experiencing the problem of re-entry with children who have not learned the heritage language while living abroad for extended periods of the language acquisition years.

Chapter 4 Discussion and Reflection

This chapter includes (1) tentative answers to the research questions; (2) discussion of the assumptions as related to the findings, and (3) the researcher's reflections on the case study.

Research Questions

- 1) How do children learn and maintain their heritage language outside their home country?

Based on the research and what I have read from the 12 journals, I can say that parents and school are major parts in teaching the children the HL. In addition, children's personalities and the environment play important roles in acquiring the HL. It is important to know that some children cannot learn the HL when living abroad because they have never learned the HL anywhere, so maintenance is not an issue. Despite my efforts as a parent to teach my children their HL, I have come to a place of peace with my decision to not force the HL on my children, and my children's preference for communication in English, including at home with their father and me.

- 2) What are the options available for the parents to introduce the heritage language to their children and how effective are they?

In this town, there are no opportunities for the Arabic-speaking children to learn Arabic in school, although there are many options outside the state such as immersion schools and dual language schools like the ones in Oregon State and other states. Summer courses and online courses are also available for everyone at every age. Children also have other options like language camps where they go to camp with a big group of children and teacher of the TL and study the language during that period. Watching TV and media in the HL could interest young children and motivate them to learn the parents' language. Playing with other children who speak the HL in a playgroup or on a play date could be constructive for children to pick up some HL words from their playmates.

- 3) Which is preferred: for your children to be bilingual or to be monolingual? Why?

For us, I prefer for our children to be bilingual because it is advantageous in many aspects, cognitively and socially. I will try to maintain English when they go back to Saudi Arabia and learn the Arabic language. It would be challenging to balance the two

languages, but eventually it is our children's choice to be bilingual or monolingual, not ours.

Assumptions Prior to Data Collection & Findings

- 1) I assumed that somehow because we live in the United States and we speak Arabic exclusively to one another as a married couple, that the children would become bilingual naturally.

This assumption is inaccurate as seen in Table 1 in Chapter 3.

We spoke the minority language at home with each other, not particularly with the children. Therefore, the case in which the two parents spoke the minority+ the majority language together in the home can be applied to my case. Thus the percentage of children who became bilingual was 79% as reported by De Houwer (cited in Estrada-Loehne, 2017). Unfortunately, my children did not fall into this category. The choice we made as parents was to delay the proper instruction for the HL because we wanted our children to have the opportunity to experience the two languages and learn the majority language and minority language simultaneously, with more stress and proper instruction on the majority language (English in the United States). And that resulted in my children learning to speak only the majority language (English) and dismiss the minority language (Arabic) in favor of the majority. We simply cannot understand how this happened when 79% of other families, seemingly in our situation, managed to insure the acquisition of both languages.

- 2) I assumed that if I started teaching them Arabic and reading Quran to them from age three or four, they would learn Arabic just as I did.

This assumption also was incorrect. My eldest son was slow in the process of speaking; he started to speak at the age of three. By the time he was three, he was already in the daycare center surrounded by English speakers most of his time. It was unrealistic for me to expect my children to learn Arabic the same way I did because I was in Saudi Arabia at their age. Their situation is completely different than mine. They have grown up in an English-speaking country, where Arabic is considered a minority language. The little instruction they were given in Arabic by me and my husband was not effective compared to what I had had by their age when I was in kindergarten with Arabic-speaking girls and boys in Dammam.

- 3) I assumed that even though they were slow to learn Arabic from me at home while in pre-school, that once they entered elementary school, they would make friends with children who spoke Arabic, and they would eventually pick up Arabic from playing with their Saudi friends at school.

Unfortunately, this assumption was also incorrect. My children did not have any Arabic-speaking friends at their school. There were some Arabic speakers in their public school, but they did not become friends and most of my children's friends were English speakers. This is because my children began to consider themselves Americans, and in fact the younger son was American by birth. It seems that my older son was subconsciously with the louder American boys and loved playing and chatting with the American neighbor children. He loved imitating their ways of speaking and nonverbal behaviors, calling them "bro" and using their vernacular: "Wadup, Bro?" In order to fit in, both boys followed their peers as role models in both language and behavior.

Interestingly, they told their father and me, "We don't want to play with Arabic kids because they don't speak English. They are not American like us. They are different."

- 4) I assumed that exposing them to Arabic speakers their age outside of school and inviting Arabic-speaking children to our home for play days would interest my children in learning the language.

This assumption cannot be confirmed since they did not have an opportunity to have play dates with Arabic-speaking children their age. In the city where we live, there are many Arabic-speaking families. However, their children were not the same age as my children, and I could not set up any play dates. I invited my adult Arabic friends to my house, but they did not speak any Arabic with my children because my children could not understand them.

- 5) I assumed that once we return to Saudi Arabia, where everyone will be speaking Arabic, they will be forced to learn Arabic, but this cannot be confirmed since we were back in Saudi Arabia during the winter break of December 2017 and New Year's 2018 only briefly prior to the completion of this thesis.
- 6) This assumption is partially correct. Their grandparents spoke only Arabic to them and forced my children to repeat certain words after them such as "I want, give me, backyard, supermarket" in Arabic. Though painful to watch, I must say that my

children eventually learned some of the words and started speaking a little Arabic with an American accent, which made it funny for the whole family.

In addition, during this short visit to Saudi Arabia, both boys struggled to play with their eight cousins because their cousins do not speak English, so they could not communicate in either language. They were playing soccer outside and electronic games inside their grandparents' houses, and most of the time my children played together, not with their cousins due age and gender differences as well as language problems. In Saudi Arabia, I took them to their cousins' school to pick up their female cousins, and my boys were very surprised when only girls in pink uniforms came out of the school, and asked, "Where are the boys?" I too was shocked that my boys somehow had not realized that boys and girls do not go to school together in Saudi Arabia. Needless to say, I was quickly becoming my sons' cultural broken in the HL country. In the EWU university daycare, preschool, and public school, they were always with both boys and girls. As a result, they have spoken only English because, for them, English is their first and only language, so it is difficult to apply the term to these children because it begins to feel as if English is their heritage language.

Even though they were "exposed" to Arabic on a daily basis because their father and I were speaking Arabic exclusively with each other, we switched to English with them when we saw confusion on their faces. Their faces told us "We don't speak your language." Oftentimes, they were playing when we were discussing family matters in Arabic, so they were not exposed much to Arabic with no Arabic television or books or videos or cartoons in our home. Every night, however, I played some digital verses from the Quran and did a little competition for memorizing a short verse, and they could win a prize. My older son tried, but he could not pronounce every word, starting at around age four, but his speech was somewhat delayed in both languages. He was going through an extended silent period at home, but when he went to daycare at age three, he did start picking up some English which he did not use so much at home with us—possibly because we were speaking Arabic only at that time. Within a year or so, however, English became his first and only language. My second son, in contrast, was stubborn, and he actually refused to speak Arabic to anyone. If we spoke to him in Arabic, he would answer in English. If I insisted that he should speak only Arabic, he refused to

speak Arabic and would get mad and just stop talking in any language. He would cross his arms, frown, and walk away, suggesting that was the end of the conversation.

Recently, my two children are showing some interest in the Arabic language, and they sometimes ask me, “What is that called in Arabic, Mama?” or “let us play the guessing game to get some treats and rewards!” So I give them an English word, and they give me the word in Arabic or the other way around. After the game, they ask me for a reward, and that is fine with me because they seem so motivated and feel a little bilingual during the game.

My greatest concern at the moment, however, is that my children now are school age, and when we go back to Saudi Arabia in about eight months, it will be difficult for us to enroll them in school at first because sometimes there is a small entrance test to measure their ability to recite the Quran in Quranic schools and to prove their readiness in regular public schools. I will have to send them to an international school where they will be learning Arabic as a second language for a year or two.

Reflections on the Case Study

After reading the L2 writers’ journals and their suggestions to teach the heritage language for their children, I realized that I am not on the same page with any of them. This may be because none of the participants have children, and their concerns are hypothetical, though some said they knew of Arabic-speaking families with similar situations. Reality is different. Since I have children of my own and I have lived through this experience, I can assure everyone who is going through the same experience with their children that what they planned for their children— whether to be bilingual or monolingual, to delay the exposure of the heritage language or introduce it earlier—is their choice. And sometimes even the best plans may not work as expected, but that does not mean they have failed as parents or that their children are not as smart as the rest of their peers. In fact, in some ways they may be more creative (Lambert, 1963) and adaptable than peers who have not been exposed to other languages and cultures.

As I close this chapter, I want to respond to three of their suggestions: watching TV in Arabic, enforcing an Arabic-only rule at home, and punishing for using English at home or not following the Arabic-only rule. First, I thought it would have been good for

them to watch movies or cartoons in Arabic, so I provided some, but they preferred English because they said they could not understand the Arabic being used, even in children's cartoons online and on YouTube. The pictures and images alone were not enough to hold their attention for more than five minutes before losing interest. Next, I considered having an Arabic-only rule at home, but they said they did not know enough Arabic to follow the rule, though they tried to please me by saying, "Good morning" and "I love you" in Arabic with an American accent. Finally, punishing the children for not speaking Arabic was never an option because I prefer to reward good behavior but not punish the children for not speaking Arabic. Enforcing such a rule could turn the children against the Arabic language and culture and speakers of Arabic. When I asked my younger son to reply to me in Arabic, he just got angry and refused to speak in any language for a few minutes. Eventually, he did explain in English, "I don't know how to say it in Arabic, and I can't repeat what you say because it's too hard for me, Mom."

Chapter 5

Conclusion:

Summary, Limitations, Future Research, and Final Reflections

Chapter 5 is the conclusion, including a brief summary of the findings, limitations, recommendations for future research, and the researcher's final reflections on what she learned from telling her story as a mother and from the 12 multilingual writers.

To our surprise, the 12 writers whose work is included in Chapter 3 had very strong feelings about teaching the heritage language to their hypothetical children. As a parent, I learned from their thoughtful and compelling responses to my situation. What moved me the most was that they seemed more knowledgeable and more determined to teach the heritage language than I was at their age.

Limitations of the Study

In the writers' journals, I have collected many opinions and intellectual thoughts, but as a result I wanted to ask certain participants some follow-up questions regarding their journals and to ask them to explain specific statements. Further, interviewing successful bilingual children about the best ways to learn the language could be helpful to parents and teachers because most of the literature has no children's perspectives on the issue of the heritage language.

Further Research

I chose case study to tell my own story of my decisions as a parent and a teacher and to discover what the 12 multilingual writers thought about my case. It was also phenomenological because we were focusing on the language development of my two children who did not pick up Arabic at home while living in the United States for about seven years. This was truly the phenomenon under investigation, and it took courage to put myself out there, knowing that I had probably made major mistakes as a parent. For this reason, it would also be very valuable to continue the case as the children re-enter the heritage language country, having lived in a foreign country for many years and not maintaining their HL. Hopefully, I will

discover that my choices for them were beneficial, did not cause re-entry trauma, and actually provided a foundation for their learning of Arabic. For this reason, there is also a need for research about the schools in Saudi Arabia who welcome such cases of monolingual children who do not speak Arabic. In addition, we need more autoethnographies of successful bilinguals living in Saudi Arabia—both children and adults. Though it is difficult to acquire IRB consent for minors, if it could be done, children such as my own could be interviewed or could do some activities such as socio-drama, the empty chair, or puppet plays in which researchers could indirectly ask questions that children would role play by expressing another person's thoughts. It would be very informative to videotape the puppet plays and then to share these plays with the parents and possibly teachers to give them some insight. On another note, teachers with children like my own in class could be interviewed to see what they recommend parents do at home to support their children's learning (Ortega, 2013; Palmer, El-Ashry & Leclere, 2007). Lavine (2011) found that some teachers believed that families should be speaking only English at home as was recommended by the nuns who visited Richard Rodriguez's house and asked the parents to speak only English with their children.

Final Reflections

I recall the first time I chose the topic for this thesis and how I was really concerned about my children's HL acquisition. As I began to write and explore more resources and read about similar experiences, I came to the conclusion that children's learning ability is different. Parent's choices are different. The life and the environment we experienced are different from others' lived experiences.

Because all children are different and respond differently to situations, it is unfair to force learning on children. It is also unwise for parents to expect their children to be perfect or to be like the parents. What works with one family may not work with other families. Bilingualism can be beneficial, not only for children but also for adults. I have concluded that it is never too late to learn a new language, and I am no longer discouraged that my children are not bilingual yet.

My children eventually will learn Arabic, probably the hard way (Tannenbaum & Yitzhaki, 2016), when we resettle in Saudi Arabia in December of 2018. I do hope, however, that they will not forget English while learning Arabic because for the past seven years, they have identified as Americans with only American friends. One wonders if and when that will change. How long will it take for them to feel Saudi? Will they feel more Saudi as they begin to learn Arabic in their parents' homeland? Or will they always feel part American or primarily American? My husband and I have talked about returning to the United States someday when our sons are college age, so that they can earn degrees in the United States as my husband and I have done.

Soon they will have a sister who will also be born in the United States. My daughter, who is due in July of 2018, will have a different experience from her brothers' but similar to mine, as she will start learning her heritage language, Arabic, inside her home country surrounded by her family members who speak Arabic. She will enroll in a Quranic girls' school in Saudi Arabia and memorize the whole Quran by heart just like her mother. And I hope someday I will be able to pass by her school and listen to the girls reciting the Quran, knowing that my daughter is one of them.

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Appendix A. IRB Consent Forms
Heritage Language Concerns of Saudi Parents Living Temporarily in the United States
Consent Form

Principal Investigator:	Responsible Project Investigator
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Purpose and Benefits: This research explores language choice in parents raising children outside their homeland. As part of the course requirements, students will be taught the lessons related to language choices made by Eleanor Roosevelt’s parents as described in the course text, *Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life Of Discovery*. After reading about the language choices, you will write journals about a scenario in which parents have made a language choice for their children. They will write about the benefits and challenges of delaying the teaching of the heritage language while living away from the homeland. My research involves an analysis of students’ journals from the English 112 course and I am conducting this research to fulfill the requirements of my master’s degree in TESL. This project analyzes students’ opinions about delaying the heritage language.

Procedures: The data for my research are your normal class assignments; therefore, you are not being asked to do or provide anything for the research that you are not already doing for class. In other words, I am asking you to allow me to include the information contained in your journals and responses to class activities in my master’s thesis. Your decision to let me use your course work for my research is totally voluntary. Though completion of the assignments is expected as they are part of the normal classroom activities, having your work used for research is not a requirement. Your decision to not participate in this study will in no way affect your grade in English 112 or your standing at Eastern Washington University.

Risk, Stress or Discomfort: The risks of participating in this study are not expected to exceed those encountered in daily life. You will receive clear instruction regarding the in-class games and writing. These activities will be part of the class that all students will participate in, but your own writing will appear in the thesis only with your permission. Though completion of the assignments is required as they are part of the usual classroom activities, you will not be required to submit your work to me if you choose not to participate in this thesis project. It is totally voluntary. Your decision to not participate in this study will in no way affect your grade in English 112 or your standing at Eastern Washington University.

Other Information: Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any time without penalty. The data collected will be kept confidential. Only Dr. Reeves & I will know your name. Your name will not be used in the thesis, but your written work will be referenced by a designated number or a new name no one can connect to you. Some of your writing will appear in the thesis, but without your name. You will also have the option to refuse to allow specific writings to be included in the thesis. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant, you may contact Ruth Galm, EWU’S Human Protections Administrator, at (509) 359-7971 or rgalm@mail.ewu.edu. Please return the form whether you are participating or not.

_____ Razan Alansari
 Primary Investigator’s name Primary Investigator’s signature Date

Yes, I will participate.
 The study described above has been explained to me, and I voluntarily consent to participate in this study. I have had an opportunity to ask questions. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. I understand I will receive a copy of this consent form.

Vita

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