

Factors Contributing to the Decline of Arabic Language

for Secondary Native Arabic Students Studying Ministry Curriculum at
International Schools in Dubai

العوامل المساهمة في تراجع مستوى اللغة العربية
لدى طلاب الثانوية العرب الذين يدرسون مناهج الوزارة في المدارس الدولية في
دبي

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Abstract

This dissertation project is a contribution to the issue of proficiency of Arabic language among native speakers. The paper investigated some factors affecting proficiency of Arabic language for Arab secondary students studying the Ministry's Curriculum at International schools that offer British curriculum in Dubai. The study identified the reasons for that from the points of views of various stakeholders: students, parents and teachers. A combination of quantitative and qualitative data was collected, analyzed, validated and interpreted using systematic techniques. The research presented a wealth of suggestions from past studies and brought attention to some government initiatives. The researcher hopes to add more insight into this subject and argues that if schools continue to neglect mastering Arabic, there will be serious threats to the language that endanger Modern Standard Arabic language in the local community. The research strongly argues and defends the hypothesis that enhancing the Arabic language and maintaining its standard is a shared responsibility. The paper concludes with recommendations for enhancing the Arabic language.

The goal of the current study is to raise awareness to the danger of using English as the medium of instruction at a very early age. The study draws attention to various suggestions that are addressed to the Ministry of Education, to KHDA and to private schools in order to contribute to the development of Arabic Language in UAE. It suggests techniques to enhance the instruction of Arabic in the Emirati context. Planners at the Ministry of Education, KHDA and at the Ministry of Higher Education can use the results of this study to assist in designing futuristic goals or curricula. In addition, the results of this study can help Arabic language teachers in Emirates understand the extent and effectiveness of self efficacy and innovation in instruction on their teaching outcomes.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Human beings develop communication strategies through languages which are one of the most sophisticated manifestations of humanity. They are vital tools of communicating thoughts and ideas. The brain, which produces great ideas and translates them into words, is a reflection of the superiority of man over other creatures (Tuaima & Al-Attiyyah 2008 & AlBatal 2007).

Arabic Language possesses a rich heritage dating back to the pre-Islamic Era. Today it is the native language for over 200 million people around the world, and the liturgical language for over a billion Muslims around the world (Ryding 2005).

1.1 Significance of the Study to the researcher

As an interested and enthusiastic Arabic teacher who works in an international school, the researcher has always been genuinely concerned over the poor level of Arabic language and the continued decline in students' progress in their mother tongue.

1.2 Background of the Problem

Low standards of Arabic in Dubai International private schools are increasingly becoming a worry to many parents and educators. According to the Knowledge and Human Development Authority in Dubai (KHDA) annual report published in 2010, a government survey has revealed that 95 % of parents at Dubai schools are concerned about teaching Arabic language at their children's schools. For more than five years, Arab parents in UAE have been expressing concerns about their children's standard in Arabic. The Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) sent an online questionnaire to 80,675 parents. Results showed that around 12 %

of parents at both public and private schools felt that their child's Arabic language skills were not progressing strongly enough (Attwood 2010).

The results asserted some accusations to Arabic teachers and schools in terms of the lack of interest on their part to improve their teaching skills, approaches and professional development. This study seeks to identify the reasons for this problem as perceived by some stakeholders.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to gather information about the factors influencing the development and proficiency of Arabic as a first language for Arab students studying the ministry's curriculum in secondary schools that offer International curriculum. The study aims at drawing attention to the serious impact of the deterioration in the level of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) in private schools in Dubai, and motivating all stakeholders and decision makers to act upon that.

1.4 The research questions

The study will be investigating the answers to certain questions from the points of view of three participant groups: Students, Teachers and Parents. These questions are:

- What are the factors affecting the weak level of proficiency and development of Arabic language of secondary Arab students, studying the ministry's curriculum in international schools in Dubai?
- Is there a relationship between students' Achievement in Arabic Language Test results and their IQ / general abilities test scores?
- What are the views of different stakeholders in that topic?

1.5 Statement of the Problem

Much research has been conducted to discuss the various problems of Arab learners of English as a second language, however, there has been very few recent studies and publications discussing the factors affecting the development and proficiency of Arabic as a first language for Arab students who are immersed in studying English as a second language in International schools in Dubai.

Proficient speakers are people who understand a language in most day to day situations and who speak it well enough to be able to express most of what they want to say (De Houwer, 2009). They are proficient speakers of local Arabic, but very weak in written and spoken modern standard Arabic. Some students who are studying Arabic in international schools feel that learning Standard Arabic is similar to learning a new language. Those regard Arabic as a third language after their local mother tongue and English. The term used to describe this phenomenon is referred to as 'diglossia'; which will be discussed further in this research.

1.6 Background of International Schools in Dubai

According to the KHDA report (2009), Dubai embraces a cultural environment that supports a large and diverse expatriate population, in addition to its local people. Owing to that variety, Dubai has one of the most privatized education systems in the world as there are 13 different curricula offered at 148 Schools in order to cater for the multiple varied needs of the residents. There is considerable disparity amongst schools in terms of the programs offered, the quality of education they provide, and the demography of students who attend.

In Dubai, there are 79 public schools administered by the federal Ministry of Education and 148 private schools.

The majority of UAE national students attend costly paid private schools despite the availability of a free public education offered by the Ministry. UAE national parents choose private schools for their children for many reasons that will be discussed later.

On the other hand, the majority of Arab expatriate families register their children in private schools in Dubai because admission to public schools is restricted to local students, and with some limited exceptions that involve a very limited number of expatriate students whose parents have a special status like teachers at public schools. More than 87 % of the entire school student population is enrolled in private schools in Dubai.

Data collected By KHDA and published in the 2010-2011 annual school report indicated that 28,983 Emirati students attend 22 private schools in Dubai. From 2003 to 2012, the number of Emirati students in government schools increased by 15 % while in private schools, it has increased by more than 75 %. However, two thirds of Emirati students (22,141) go to just 22 private schools out of the 148 private schools in Dubai.

According to a qualitative research report by Kenaid (2011), Emirati parents who choose private education in Dubai over free public education, have many reasons for that; which they expressed during focus groups' meetings. Most parents indicated that they were seeking high quality education for their children, which they felt many private schools and international programs offered and prepared students for universities. Some parents preferred private education to government education for socio-economic reasons. Other reasons were: more qualified teachers and leadership, better English language instruction, smaller class sizes which ensure more individual attention to students, more controlled and safe environment that limits opportunities for misbehavior, better facilities and resources, extracurricular activities, ability to stay in the same school

from KG through grade 12, and other reasons. Higher Education in UAE and the Gulf region is also rapidly shifting to English as universities from the U.S., Britain and Australia set up campuses in the area.

1.7 Importance of the study to the field of education in UAE

This study is extremely important as the issue under investigation is a serious concern to the Arab community at large and to UAE government in particular. Arab educators, school teachers, university teachers and many other stakeholders have been raising warning flags for this issue.

A number of conferences have been held over the last fifteen years in UAE, gulf countries and in various parts of the Arab world to discuss actions to deal with this issue. Arabic Language Society conference titled "Together for protecting our Arabic language" was held in Sharjah in 2001. A conference titled "Arabic and Education: A Futuristic Perspective for Development," was held in Abu Dhabi in 2008. Recently, a conference was held in Qatar in February 2012, and organized by Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, Qatar University and Western Michigan University under the title "The Challenges of Teaching Arabic in the 21st century". Speakers and attendees discussed the challenges of teaching Arabic as a first and second language, and discussed methods to overcome those challenges. Another conference, was held in Lebanon in March 2012, titled: "International conference for Arabic Language: Arabic is an international language, responsibility of the individuals, the society and the state."

Abu Dhabi conference "Arabic and Education: A Futuristic Perspective for Development" (2008), addressed the negligence of Arabic on many levels as a consequence of the retreat in the use of language by native speakers, and claims by some people that it is hard or inappropriate to the needs of the contemporary generations and to the knowledge and

scientific requirements. Weakness of Arabic mastery is also blamed on teachers, teaching methods, poor academic curricula within schools, and other reasons.

This concern over Arabic language was also expressed by parents as indicated by the results of the KHDA parents' survey results (2009) as described by Hundley (2010) who reported that "Arabic has fallen behind English and Hindi to become only "the third most-spoken language in the United Arab Emirates." He also added: "Arabic is being replaced by English in the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, prompting concerns about the preservation of national identity and culture. The loss of Arabic would also mean a loss of "their sense of national identity." Arabic language in general is not an "endangered language" as there are "more than 300 million native speakers" of Arabic around the world; in fact, it is one of the world's major languages." However, it is likely to be endangered in countries like UAE and Qatar as Hundley (2010) envisages.

1.8 What is Modern Standard Arabic?

Ball (2010) distinguishes between an official language and a national language. In UAE, Arabic (or Modern Standard Arabic) is considered the official language while the Emirati dialect (Ammiya) is the language spoken by locals in their everyday life and is invading many local TV programs.

There are three types of Arabic: Classical Arabic (the old Arabic, language of sophisticated poetry and literature, Local dialect (Ammiya) and Modern Standard Arabic. Unless indicated otherwise, during this research there will be reference to Arabic - that is Modern Standard Arabic, not the Classical Arabic. Myeasarbic (2012) defines Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) as the official written and spoken Arabic language that is used in literature and the media. It is mainly used on television, in

government offices, in conferences and seminars. It is also used in all official gathering and religious assemblies such as Friday prayers. Books, newspapers, magazines, official documents, private and business correspondence, street signs and shop signs are all written in Modern Standard Arabic which can be spoken and written in the same form. It is taught at schools, universities and colleges. MSA has developed out of Classical Arabic, the language of the Quran. It is simpler than the old classical Arabic, and since it is a standardized language, its spoken form is used as a lingua franca across the Arab world. Modern Standard Arabic, which is part of Classical Arabic, is one of the greatest treasures of the Arab culture (Myeasyarbic, 2012).

Chapter 2: Literature Review & Related Studies

This chapter will be shedding light on a number of issues and topics that are strongly linked to learning languages in general and Arabic in particular. These issues and topics play a considerable role in investigating this research and are strongly related to some hypothesis and arguments.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This research is directly related to the Emirati society and Arab culture. However, the study will not be focusing on the demographical or socio-economical factors; but rather on other factors. To demonstrate a broad understanding of students, teachers and parents in educational research in the Emirati setting, it was mandatory to research fields such as anthropology, ethnography, and sociology, review pertinent methodologies, understand their applicability to education, and interpret their findings more appropriately. This chapter presents a number of concepts that are strongly related to the research, and are used as a base for the research methodologies. The researcher utilized the ethnographer's intuition, and has been examining the cultural scenes and what goes along with it for years.

The Oxford dictionary (2004), Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), Johnson and Christensen (2008) as well as other ethnographers and psychologists, regard 'ethnography' as a part of cultural anthropology and define it as scientific analytic descriptions of integral cultural scenes. These descriptions present the shared beliefs, practices, folk knowledge, and behaviors of people. Since human cultural behavior is complex and fascinating, ethnography facilitates the understanding of behavioral actions and patterns. It is intended to help understand the multiplicity of human cultures.

Ethnographers regard human actions in various social contexts and look for several meanings about these actions: such as the study of languages, loss of cultural elements, the influence of external elements, religion, style of upbringing children, religion, gender roles, songs, folk games and recreation. The background provided previously in this research detailed some of those aspects and their implications within the Emirati society.

2.2 Language acquisition

Language acquisition is one of the most remarkable, astounding and captivating aspects of human development as expressed by Lightbown and Spada (1999).

Consider the words of Allah (God) in Surat AlRahman- as he describes himself and he details facts about some of his creation: “[Allah], the Gracious, taught mankind the Quran, created man and taught him eloquent speech” (Holy Qur’an, 31. 1- 4). Human speech has always been the focus of studies by many psycholinguists. Psycholinguistics is a science that studies language processing as a behavioral phenomenon. That includes: language production, comprehension and language acquisition. It covers the cognitive processes that allow the brain to generate grammatically correct and meaningful sentences out of words (Chater & Christiansen 2009).

Many linguists and researchers including Cummins (2000) believe it is the responsibility of family and parents to provide basics for language acquisition and nurture its development.

Al-Atiyyah (2008) affirms that Language is one of the most fundamental aspects of human culture and a significant tool for cultural and educational development. It is the repository of human intellect. In fact, it is the intellect itself as there can be no abstract intellect without linguistic symbols.

Language is a means for developing understanding and communication between humans. The stature of a language and its ability to survive and develop is directly related to the well-being of a nation.

The norm for students in most cultures is to find the acquisition of L1 easier than L2, (Chater & Christiansen, 2009). Many researchers and scholars assert that literacy is most effectively achieved in the mother tongue (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). However, in the case of many Arab students who took part in this study, this is not the case as they perceive MSA as a new input to them.

Linguists and psychologists studied language acquisition and development from multiple dimensions in order to reveal some complex elements related to language. However, this research is not discussing linguistic difficulties or pronunciation or dynamics of vocalization and production of sounds, and morphemes; it is focusing on the general mastery and fluent expression in oral communication and written Arabic. These students are fluent speakers of local Emirati dialect.

2.3 Endangered languages

Woodbury (2000, p.1) defines an endangered language as “one that is likely to become extinct in the near future.” Many languages are diminishing and are being replaced by other languages that are more broadly used either globally or in the region, such as English in the U.S. and Canada or Spanish in Mexico.

Linguists, who work with communities around the world that want to preserve their languages, can use what they've learned about other endangered languages to help communities preserve their own languages.

Native language and culture have a distinguished and essential role in Aboriginal communities across Canada. Many communities perceive their

language and culture as exceptionally unique, and they have kept them existing firmly in the face of more than 150 years of colonial ruling.

According to McIvor et al (2009), all indigenous languages in Canada are endangered and critically at risk of extinction. At one time, there were 450 Aboriginal languages and dialects in Canada belonging to 11 languages. In the last 100 years alone, at least ten of Canada's Aboriginal languages have become extinct. Native or aboriginal people in Canada, USA, Australia and around the world strive to preserve their language as McIvor et al (2009) and Ball (2010) affirm that the native languages contribute to a great extent in the preservation of the culture, and safeguarding the physical and mental health of its people since language is used in spiritual rituals and circulation of traditional medication. There are a lot of commonalities in that aspect if compared with the rich Arabic language. Cummins (2000, p.3) believes that knowledge of first language enhances confidence and boosts self-image and self esteem.

2.4 First & Second Language

Ball (2010) defines mother tongue as the language which a child acquires in early years and has become the natural tool of thought and communication. When discussing first and second language acquisition, Lightbown and Spada (1999) confirm that when children go to school, there is a substantial difference in the amount of linguistic knowledge they develop and the type and extent of the vocabulary they eventually acquire in the two languages. There is little evidence that learning more than one language in early childhood slows down the child's linguistic or cognitive development. Lightbown and Spada (1999) also discuss an issue with immigrant children who are exposed to English as a second language (majority language) for extended periods of time. This seems to be quite true in the case of students in the study, who are submerged in the second language (English) for long periods.

According to Ball (2010), there has been scientific rigorous proof that teaching children in their first language (L1) is highly advantageous. Starting instruction in a second language (L2) is recommended after at least six years of schooling in children's mother tongue. UNESCO and other worldwide agencies that are concerned with children's rights and education, and linguistic diversity strongly support using a child's native language for instruction, at least in the early years of official education. Robust researches demonstrated that developing L1 skills through literacy, actually leads to better academic outcomes in L1, easier literacy learning, and better outcomes in second language education, as Ball (2010) affirms.

2.5. Dominance of English

The wide spread of English language over time came as a result of a number of reasons some of which are: colonization, industrial trade, political domination, academic excellence, business power and such. While English has no official status or significant importance in many countries around the world, it vividly coexists with other languages in a bilingual or multilingual environment in other countries. (Baker, 2011)

The UAE is one of those countries where English is widely spoken by local Emiratis and by the majority of the expatriate residents. As (Baker, 2011) articulates, the international prestige of English and English speaking nations and the popularity of Anglo- American culture has given English language associations of status, power and wealth. It is the primary language of international communication, science, technology, medicine, computers, research, books, business, tourism, trade, diplomacy, mass media and even movies.

2.6 Code switching

Code switching is defined by Nilep (2006) as the practice of selecting or altering linguistic elements so as to contextualize talk in interaction. In linguistics, code switching is the concurrent use of more than one language or language variety in conversation. Multilingual people who speak more than one language sometimes use elements of multiple languages in conversing with each other. Arab youth in schools and universities use code switching extensively nowadays, especially during electronic social interactions. That could be a factor in the decline in the level of Arabic or an outcome to the weakness of the language as the researcher argues.

2.7. Views of Contemporary Arab Educators

Arabic Language organizations and Arab scholars across the World agree on the significance of the language. Tuaima and Al-Atiyyah (2008) and AlNassar (2009) affirm that Arabic language is the religious, cultural and national destiny for the Arab Nation. It is the language of Quran, the strong pillar in the Arabism and Arab nationalism. Mastering Arabic is a necessity for the development of the Arab World and the unity and advancement of the Arab Nation from the Arabian Gulf to the Atlantic Ocean.

Al-Atiyyah (2008) listed a number of factors that he believed contribute to the weakness in Arabic. He brought attention to the existing “ancient” teaching methods which pose another threat to the Arabic language. Techniques that depend on lecturing methods turn the student into a non-responsive entity whose mind is stuffed with grammatical rules and injunctions that are irrelevant to his life.

During an Arabic language conference, Tuaima and Al-Atiyyah (2008) presented a paper aimed to review the reality of the contemporary status of the Arabic language and the actual dimensions of the crisis that threatens its future at the general and educational levels. It also highlighted the hidden and apparent potentials of the Arabic language that could enable it to overcome this crisis and compete with other languages.

His research paper consisted of two main parts: the risk of extinction and the vital necessity for survival. The paper lists the principal factors threatening the language with extinction such as; the invasion of foreign languages, the decline in the linguistic standards of education, the negative role played by media and present-day life, and the lack of development in the language to meet the demands in various disciplines of knowledge.

Tuaima (1998) conducted studies related the weakness in the Arabic language standard for Arab students. His findings and conclusions were in agreement with many other scholars and educators. According to AL Nassar (2009) & Tuaima, (1998), as well as many other educators of Arabic, the factors behind the weakness in Arabic language among Arab learners in all language aspects including reading comprehension, oral communication and written expression are: absence of communication in MSA at home and in the community, the widespread use of local dialects in the Arab world, the poor design of the Arabic curricula, the tedious book design, ineffectiveness of assessment methods, the insufficient training and qualifications of teachers, the lack of self efficacy and motivation of teachers. Other factors are related to students themselves: lagging self efficacy and intrinsic motivation, lack of seriousness in perusing excellence in Arabic, inclination towards using English, in addition to the media and society at large. Al Nassar (2009) recounts that [Almaatouq, 1994] adds to the previous list other factors such as: Intellectual conflict of

the Arabic cultural scene, cultural fluctuation in the society, uncivilized shifts, limited number of Arabic classes (less time on task), cramming of curriculum, large number of subjects offered, abandonment of the use of MSA by teachers in class, the desertion of both simple and advanced reading in Arabic by students.

Al-Atiyyah (2008) refers those factors to outdated teaching methods. He also claims that patterns of teaching that still depend on old techniques pose another threat to the language; especially if it depends on direct passive lecturing. That style turns the student into a non-responsive entity, whose mind is overfed with rules and injunctions.

Following study and research, Tuaima (1998) attributes the weakness of Arabic language in schools to the lack of using visual and kinesthetic supportive material, and new technology in teaching. The wide gap between the curriculum content and actual life, divergence between the MSA and the Arabic taught at schools, overflowing of out of date grammar, which students find hard, and negligence of creative writing.

Shahata (1995) conducted a study to investigate factors contributing to the deficiency in Arabic language for University students. It was found out that family was key reason behind that when it came to societal factors, while teachers were main reasons when it came to education.

2.7.1 Diglossia

According to the literature review, local dialects in the Arab world (Ammiya) are the mother tongue, and Modern Standard Arabic (Fusha) is considered second or sometimes third Language after English. Investigating this issue is extremely fascinating as we deal with a third language or diglossia. ALBatal (2007) and Farghaly (2010) maintain the definition of [Ferguson 1959, 1996] about diglossia, which is “a phenomenon whereby two or more varieties of the same language exist

side-by-side in the same speech community. Each is used for a specific purpose and in a distinct situation. Using the wrong variety in a situation is usually ridiculed.” They affirm that Arabic exhibits a true diglossic condition where at least three varieties of the same language are used in confined situations. Classical Arabic is the language of religion and is used by Arabic speakers in their daily prayers while Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), is used in schools and university and at some businesses and government offices. Colloquial Arabic or dialects (Ammiya) are used by people during their daily informal communication. Therefore, the majority of Arabic speakers manage to understand different dialects; in addition to the ability of uneducated Muslims to understand the Quran.

2.8 Language proficiency

Different organizations and pedagogues came up with varied definitions to Language proficiency or linguistic proficiency. Most of them seemed to agree that it is the knowledge of a language or the ability of a person to speak, communicate or perform in a specific language. Additionally, there is a relation between fluency and language competence or language proficiency. According to Chomsky (2006), language competence is the perfect language system that enables speakers to produce and understand unlimited number of sentences in their language, and to differentiate their grammatical structure. Proficient speakers have the ability to produce accurate and fluent speech, using a variety of communication strategies.

Dogil and Reiterer (2009) assume that all native speakers who are not suffering from any language or cognitive disorder should exhibit equal proficiency in general abilities in speech production; while rhetorical abilities involving verbal intelligence and syntactic constructions could vary, yet indicate the level of proficiency and talent in the native language.

Unfortunately, this cannot be applied to all Emirati Arabic native speakers as their native dialect is different from the modern standard Arabic in vocabulary, expression and grammatical use. The research will later elaborate on this point.

2.9 Bilinguals and Monolinguals

The issue of bilingualism and language development has been adequately studied in a number of theoretical and empirical researches; however, here we are investigating a third language, a lingua franca. In the UAE children start speaking the local Arabic or home dialect. Later they start learning two languages: Arabic and English in primary school, yet most of them fail to perfect either one (Hundley,2010). So are our Arab students in private schools considered bilinguals?

‘Simultaneous bilinguals’ are those children who hear more than one language from birth. ‘Sequential bilinguals’ are those who learn a second language later as Lightbown and Spada (1999) proclaim. Some parents, teachers and health professionals believe that bilingual input could be a threat to children’s development according to De Houwer (2009).

“Bilingual education typically enables a student’s two languages to attain higher levels of competency.” (Baker, 2011, p. 15). He also relates that Peel and Lambert 1962), concluded that "bilingualism provides greater mental flexibility, the ability to think more abstractly and more independently ... providing superiority in concept formation”. He adds that bilingualism enhances the development of IQ.

A number of private schools in Dubai affirm that they offer bilingual programs that balance the provision of Arabic and English. Yet the parents’ statements during a focus group with Kenaid (2011) revealed that most of these schools succeed in one language over another.

2.10 Self esteem and plural ethnic identity

Learning language is such an advantageous matter within societies; however, changing the language of the nation has great impact on various aspects. Cummins (2000, p.4) summarizes that:

“In an era of globalization, a society that has access to multilingual and multicultural resources is advantaged in its ability to play an important social and economic role on the world stage. At a time when cross-cultural contact is at an all time high in human history, the identities of all societies are evolving. The identities of societies and ethnic groups have never been static; and it is a naive illusion to believe that they can become static-fixed as monochrome and mono-cultural museum exhibits for posterity- when the pace of global change is as rapid as it is today”.

Hamers and Blanc (2000) go into details about different kinds of bilingualism, and refers to Mackey's (1970:1976) typology in which the latter distinguishes 90 types of bilingual education. Hamers and Blanc (2000) add that bilingual education lacks theoretical foundations and tends to ignore some social, historical, socio-structural, cultural, ideological and social determining factors. A psychological and interdisciplinary approach, which takes all those factors into consideration, is required to realize success in bilingual education.

Bilinguality often co-occurs with socialization, according to Hamers and Blanc (2000), who refer to 'Anomie', breakdown of social bonds and emotional disorder. There are fundamental psychological differences between cultural groups that speak two languages. Youth who are speaking English and neglecting Arabic are alienating themselves from their cultural bonds and might gradually experience loss of identity

because they are breaking the main tool for social communication which is Arabic language, and that leads to breaking social ties.

2.11 Parents Role at Home

Cummins (2000) discussed the importance of preserving mother tongue for immigrants. He asserted that schools should build on the culture, experience and knowledge that children bring to the classroom from their homes, and instruction should always promote children's abilities and talents. He firmly believes that it is a misconception to think that retaining own culture and language; make students less capable of identifying with the mainstream culture and learning the mainstream language of the society.

Unequal language skills and development were observed by some researchers in many children. Students' skills in L2 were more advanced than their skills in L1 (their mother tongue). Majority of students are able to express their thoughts and feelings and ideas in English in a richer and more elaborate way than they can in their first language. Where is the role of the parents at home?

Chadwick (2012) emphasizes the role of parents in motivating independence and creative thinking skills in their children. It is their responsibility to interact with their children and provide them with tools that prepare them for lifelong learning. Language is one of these skills.

2.12 Language & IQ

Ridely (1999) discusses the definition of intelligence. He considers it to be thinking speed, reasoning ability, memory, vocabulary or mental energy. Ability testing is a very prominent method in educational psychology

intended to provide an objective measure of the individual differences in cognitive abilities.

Robust studies confirmed that there is a strong correlation between a person's IQ and general performance or scholastic achievement. Lightbown and Spada (1999) conducted a number of studies and tested a number of theories in the language field. One hypothesis was: "People with high IQs are good language learners". They indicate that in general learners with a variety of intellectual abilities can be successful language learners. Therefore, in this research results of MIDYIS & YELLIS tests were used to compare results of students in Arabic. Overall Arabic results of thirty nine local Grade 10 female students from one school in Dubai were tracked for 3 years and compared with the results of MIDYIS & YELLIS test results.

2.13 Academic Environment

School premises, classrooms, students, teachers and what goes on there, shape the academic environment. A number of issues that are related to students and teachers, such as academic learning time, behavior and attitude of students, enthusiasm of teachers, need to be validated through presence in the academic environment and lesson observation. Following are review of related bodies of literature. Danielson and McGreal (2000), define 4 domains of professional practice, one of which is the classroom environment which includes, respect, rapport, managing behavior. Marzano et al (2003) discuss classroom management issues and provide practical ideas to help teachers better manage their classrooms environment.

2.13. a. Lesson Observation

Despite of the fact that observing classrooms is costly and time consuming, it is a dependable tool to capture natural educational behavior.

The empirical and theoretical literature review indicates that, observing lessons, classrooms, teachers and students, is a very authentic method of gathering information and knowing how teaching and learning occur.

“A classroom observation is the best, and the only, setting in which to witness essential aspects of teaching- for example, the interaction between teacher and students, and among students. An astute observer can note how the teacher structures the physical environment, how the teacher engages students in learning, how he establishes and maintains standard of conduct.” (Danielson & McGreal 2000)

During observation, researchers can examine how research participants act in natural and structured environments (Jonson & Christensen 2008).

Montgomery (2002) identifies various teaching methods, and concludes by pointing out the ineffectiveness of the style of secondary teachers who adopt teacher and content centered methods through direct verbal diffusion of the material to be learned.

A number of issues influence the teaching style. “ Teachers’ own background, personality, interests, knowledge, intentions and preferences will influence much of what occurs, such as the strategies they employ in different situations the timings and nature of their questions and explanations, their responses to misbehavior, indeed what they perceive to be deviant behavior” (Wragg 1999).

It is necessary to distinguish engagement in learning activities from social engagement in order to understand the full impact of classroom organization on student behavior (Finn, Pannozzo & Achilles 2003).

2.13. b. Teacher & student talk time

Teacher and student talk time have been a concern for many researchers for a long time, as Wragg (1999) refers to an old study by Stevens (1912) and says, “It was found that teachers talked for about 64 % of the time and pupils for 36 %, and two to four ‘lower level’ (i.e. largely requiring the recall of information) questions were asked each minute.”

“Academic engagement and social engagement are strongly related to academic performance. These are precisely the processes that contribute to learning in the classroom. When a student is not engaged in learning, she or he is less likely to acquire the material presented. When antisocial behavior disrupts the teacher or other students, learning is impeded for the entire class” (Finn, Pannozzo & Achilles 2003, p, 111).

2.13. c. Academic learning time/ Time on task

Huitt (2005) and Peters (2004) define different levels of school time: Calendar school year, time of teacher’s physical presence in school or in class, time of students’ physical presence in school or in class, actual instructional uninterrupted time, allocated time or hours for subject teaching, and length of the day. Peters (2004) finds that students’ achievement strongly correlates with time spent on task. When students are highly motivated and purposefully engaged in learning, their levels of success and achievement are more likely to increase. Similarly, in middle school, students experience a lack of interest in schoolwork. That’s when teachers’ role is mandatory in ensuring having a good lesson plan that utilizes different methodologies in order to maximize the benefit of time on task. At the middle level especially, students are distracted by other external influences, but during each lesson, they know that need to stay on task for their own benefit. This point was the focus of observation in this research.

d. Motivation & Stimulation

(Lightbown and Spada, 1999) believe that teachers can make the classroom a supportive environment to stimulate students and engage them in relevant activities where they can feel successful; however they have no influence over a learner's intrinsic motivation. Additionally, Lightbown and Spada (1999) believe that the most important factor in second language acquisition success is self-efficacy and motivation of the learner.

Children also have a role in this process, as they are the ones who usually make the choice to stop learning their ancestral language and use the dominant language exclusively. Unfortunately, many feel that when they have learned the majority language, they must also stop using their own native language.

e. Attitude & Behaviour

Attitude and behavior issues are part of the students' culture in many schools. Research has shown that teachers' actions in their classrooms have twice the impact on student achievement as do school policies (Marzano et al, 2003).

Some of the challenges that Arabic teachers are faced with is behavioral issues such as disrespect, negative approach to studies, and lack of motivation. All that and more leads to misbehaving in classes, creates major attitudinal conflicts and creates barriers between learners and teachers.

f. Teachers' efficacy

Coaching for increased teacher efficacy (both self-efficacy and instructional efficacy) has been an essential component to various

educational reforms such as No Child Left Behind Teachers with a high level of instructional efficacy believe more whole-heartedly in children's ability to be successful and devote more time and effort to teaching. (Shidler 2009)

Because of the close proximity, direct contact and long lasting influence of teachers on students, school management or leaders need to focus on developing teachers' quality and .performance

A number of psychologists, including Bandura (1994), defined self efficacy as: the inner belief in oneself that he or she has; or the capabilities and potentials to succeed. It is having the determination and motivation to achieve high levels of performance that can positively influence their lives and the lives of others. Bandura (1994) also named four psychological processes through with self-efficacy affect our daily functions: Cognitive Processes, Motivational processes, Affective Processes and Selection Processes.

Chapter 3: Research Design & Methodologies

Details of the applied research methods and data collection are thoroughly discusses in this chapter.

3.1 Data Collection- Mixed Method

“Educational research is about providing solid evidence for your conclusions, and evidence is greater when you employ a logical mixing strategy.” (Jonson & Christensen 2008, p. 34).

Past experience researches and theories in the educational field support the principle that no one approach will be best in all circumstances, as Ball (2010) confirms. An array of data has been collected to gain a full picture of this subject. The literature suggests that both qualitative and quantitative methods are legitimate to conduct this investigation. Johnson and Christensen (2008) affirm that mixing methods in research is an excellent way to conduct high quality research, and affirm the superiority of using mixed methods as opposed to the mono-method. Effective Mixed methods enable the researcher to investigate situations in considerable depth and from various perspectives, and put all the observations into a complete descriptive focal point. Triangulation was used since it is regarded as a powerful mixed method which facilitates validation of data through verification from more than two sources.

The variety of methodologies – three methods- aimed at embarking upon different angles of the subject and ensuring accurate results that can be generalized to various fields. The variation in sampling aimed to identify, evaluate and better comprehensively understand the view points of different stakeholders in relation to the research questions.

Three instruments comprised qualitative and quantitative methods. The first one was quantitative. Existing data at school (A) were used. Students' achievement test results in Arabic were compared with intelligence/ Aptitude tests: MIDYIS & YELLIS (details about these tests will follow). The second one was qualitative; three questionnaires were designed seeking the opinions of students, parents and teachers. The third one involved six classroom observations.

3.2 Reliability & Validity

Johnson and Christensen (2010) point out the importance of reliability and validity in data collection.

Reliability and Validity of the first method was robust as the MIDYIS & YELLIS tests are standardized test that are internationally recognized and widely used. MIDYIS is a skills test that is broadly used in United Kingdom to evaluate students' skills and is used as a predictor to their GCSE grades in Grade 11. It consists of four sections: vocabulary, mathematics, verbal skills and non-verbal skills.

To substantiate reliability and validity, all three surveys were reviewed by three of my fellow Masters colleagues and by my Dissertation supervisor. In addition, two members of the senior management team at my school volunteered to review the surveys from a managerial point of view. I was able to conduct pilot surveys. Five parents of my friends volunteered to complete the parents' questionnaire. Three students from my Grade 11 class answered the students' survey. All participants and reviewers agreed on the clarity of questions and the utter relevance to the existing educational setting. The length was also appropriate. Very few changes were made to the wording. Some changes had to be made to the format and layout of the paper such as font size and spaces.

As for the classroom observation, all criteria were previously used by the researcher and validate by university professors.

This research proved to have a political validity as it addresses the interests and viewpoints of multiple stakeholders in the research process (Johnson & Christensen 2008).

3.3 First Method: Comparing Arabic test results with MIDYIS & YELLIS standardized test

According to Dogil and Reiterer (2009) a speaker's performance can be tested and evaluated in different ways and task types such as reading, comprehension, speaking and grammar.

In this study the researcher study tracked the same sample of students in order to observe the development of Arabic language proficiency.

Johnson and Christensen (2008) affirm that test-retest reliability ensures consistency and stability of test scores over time. Therefore, MIDYIS & YELLIS were used as they are given to the same group over a period of 4 years. The purpose of using this method was to investigate any correlation between students' IQ / general abilities and Arabic test results. The researcher was given access to all the information pertinent to students' results in MIDYIS & YELLIS and Arabic tests for a group of female students from Grade 10 for 3 consecutive years at this secondary school.

Correlation between students' achievement in Arabic and their Aptitude test results were compared. The MIDYIS & YELLIS tests measured students' general abilities and academic achievement, and described students' patterns of school and social competence over time, including their school achievement, academic progress, and future expectations.

3.3. a. Participants & Instrumentation

All students who participated in the study are mainstream female students from the same age group (Grade 10), studying at the same school, and who do not suffer from any specific cognitive disorders; however, some of them are very weak in general rhetorical abilities and verbal intelligence.

For the first part of this qualitative method, the results of 38 female students in Grade 10 (Group 3) were tracked over a period of 3 school years. The averages of the results of Group 3 students in grades 8, 9 and 10 were compared and contrasted with the results of YELLIS standardized test, and MIDYIS aptitude test. For the second part, the results of Group 3- were compared with previous Grade 10 students from the same school called groups 1 and 2. The total number of students participating in this section was 113 female students.

The researcher decided to use a relatively large sample for all methods to ensure a representative distribution of the population and to be considered representative of groups of people to whom results will be generalized or transferred.

3.3. b MIDYIS & YELLIS Tests

MIDYIS is a UK innovative standardized test (Middle Years Information System) which is administered for Grade 7 students to give predictions and form a baseline for Value Added measures in secondary schools. YELLIS Attitudinal Questionnaire, provides a wide range of performance indicators for students aged 14-16 and covers areas such as attitudes to school, lessons and homework, quality of school life, feeling safe at school, home background and educational support from parents/guardians, career plans and aspirations for the future. Feedback from the YELLIS questionnaire takes the form of a set of Attitudinal

Comparison Graphs that illustrate how the responses of students to the Attitudinal Questionnaire differ when compared to all YELLIS students in the same cohort.

The YELLIS test results illustrate the range of ability of the students in Grade 10 during 2011/2012 at (A) secondary school. The cohort at this school is measured by the YELLIS Baseline Test. The percentage of students is classified in quartile bands. Band A is the highest quartile band and contains all students scoring 61 % or more. Band B is the next highest quartile band and contains all students scoring 52 % or more but less than 61 %. Band C is the next highest quartile band and contains all students scoring 43 % or more but less than 52 %. Band D is the lowest quartile band and contains all students scoring 43 % or less. Any school with an absolutely average cross-section of pupils will have 25 % of its students in every band.

The available sample in this analysis included 113 local (Emirati) female students. Three groups of Grade 10 students over 3 years (2009- 2010) / (2010-2011) and (2011-2012) were chosen. The researcher wanted to ensure that the results are highly accurate and that the general characteristics of the three groups are representative of the majority of Secondary School population. The groups were compared in order to come up with a general result that can be applicable to all students' population.

3.3. c. Accessing & filtering the information

Since school (A) encourages its teachers' personal development and supports educational research, the researcher was given access to all the spreadsheets and documents related to the targeted groups. Printing and transferring materials outside school were not allowed in order to ensure confidentiality.

Selected data was later entered on a spreadsheet with the averages of the Arabic exams. Descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted using The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Correlations were calculated with Pearson r to determine the relationship between students' general abilities and the average of their three Arabic tests of student achievement.

3.3. d. Limitation of the method

It was extremely accommodating to work on all the pre-existing data available through a standardized test and end of year Arabic exams. However, the process of collating selecting and filtering the data and information was extremely time-consuming. The researcher had to transfer averages of grades with selected numeric values of MIDYIS and YELLIS into one spreadsheet to enable using the SPSS, which hindered by time was spent to collate test grades from different

3.4 The Second Research Method: Questionnaire

The purpose of using questionnaire is to gain data that support or defeat hypotheses and facts through objective measurement and quantitative analysis as Johnson and Christensen (2008) affirm.

a. Participants

Participants who took part in the survey were from 4 secondary private schools in Dubai that offer British curriculum to Arabic students. Questionnaires were completed by 58 parents, 60 students and 32 Arabic teachers. 92.3 of parents were Emiratis, 72.4% of them were fathers, and 17.2% were mothers. 83.1 % of them were at a post secondary level of education.

All students who completed the questionnaire were grade 10 students; 89.1 of them were Emiratis; while 100% of the teachers were non-Emiratis; 62.2% of them were females and 37.8% were males. 45% of them were above 50 years of age, and 70.3% of them had more than 10 years of teaching experience.

Since being acquainted with the participants is important, I decided to carry out my surveys at schools that I am familiar with; schools I have been to either to teach or to deliver or attend workshops. The fact that I had earlier contacts with these schools was a great asset. Heads of schools and Heads of Arabic departments were my valued contact people.

b. Design of the Questionnaires

Three anonymous paper questionnaires were designed to collect views of students, parents and secondary Arabic language teachers about issues related to Arabic language standard in International Schools. Parents' and teachers' questionnaires were reviewed by the dissertation supervisor and translated into Arabic. Copies were made and distributed to participants. The total number of the distributed questionnaires was: 100 for students, 100 for students and 50 for teachers. The returned questionnaires were; 60 from students (20 boys and 40 girls), 58 from parents and 32 from teachers. Participants were mainly from 4 secondary international schools which offer British curriculum to native Arabic students. (Appendix B).

The questions aimed at testing certain hypothesis about the factors that influence the weakness in Arabic language, and attempted at investigating the reasons for the weakness of Arabic language through learning the view points of the three stakeholders mentioned above. Descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Correlations were calculated with Pearson r to determine the relationship between different given variables.

To determine what questions to include in my questionnaires, I used my literature review as a base. In addition, I drew on the informal and formal discussions, comments and concerns I came across while conversing with different stakeholders: my students, teacher colleagues, community personnel, and parents. At various times, that provided me with deep knowledge about the educational setting around me and enabled me to decide which variables to observe. These data proved to be a reliable indicator to what is socially and personally important to the participants.

Some of the questions were: Do students enjoy Arabic lessons? Are they keen to learn? How often do they use Arabic in communication? How influential are the outside societal surroundings and environment on students' affiliations and attitudes? What is the level of their concentration during lessons? Are teachers enthusiastic and passionate about teaching? Do teachers use a wide range of innovative teaching methodologies to motivate students? Are teachers and parents aware of what their students/ children feel about learning Arabic?

Each questionnaire included more than 30 questions; 35 for students, 36 for parents and 37 for teachers. Some questions aimed at establishing rapport, and some were related to demographical background and description of the participants such as gender, age group, education, nationality and years of teaching experience and such. Extra space was provided for extra comments at the end. As part of the ethical research obligation, participants were promised that high level of confidentiality would be granted, firstly, through anonymity of questionnaires; then through concealment of the names of schools which were not going to be revealed or used in or outside the research. Furthermore, the information and opinions will not be directly attributed to a specific person or school.

C. Administering the Questionnaires

In two schools, the researcher was able to physically administer the students' questionnaires, and hand the questionnaires to students to pass to parents. In the two other schools, the researcher passed all questionnaires to Arabic heads of departments who distributed them to parents, students and teachers and asked them to complete them at their convenience and return them after 3 days.

The questionnaires that were distributed to students and teachers aimed at addressing three areas: The teacher, the learner and the teaching methods. Issues investigated were related to the Arabic teachers in terms of resources, classroom management and ability to motivate; the learner in terms of motivation, attitude to learning Arabic and general behavior in Arabic class; the teaching methods in terms of variety, effectiveness, novelty and motivation of the learner.

d. Limitations

The first limitation is that the researcher could not access all the participants directly. In the case of school DS and AS papers had to be submitted to the contact people and be retrieved from them without being able to physically administer those questionnaires.

The researcher was overly ambitious to aim at getting over 100 replies from parents, 100 from students and 60 from teachers. However, collecting data was time consuming; it extended over a period of two months. Getting the questionnaires back from participants had some logistical constraints. It required repeated visits to 3 schools and many phone calls to the contact people, who had to ensure retrieving surveys from stakeholders. It was a disappointment to see that the sector that was

lowest in response percentage was the teachers'. The researcher was able to obtain 89 % of targeted students' questionnaires, 62 % of parents' questionnaires and 50 % of teachers' questionnaires.

The researcher realized that each questionnaire could have used less but more parallel questions without exceeding 20 questions in order that to facilitate comparison; even though taking the questionnaire did not require more than 10 minutes.

3.5 Third method: Classroom Observations

a. Participants & Instruments

For convenience, classroom observations took place at the researcher's school where class visits are very frequent for professional development and during co-teaching. The researcher informed the Senior Management Team about the purpose of these class visits and approached the teachers who welcomed the visits. Six Arabic female classes from grade 8 to 10 – that were taught by three teachers were observed- for 40 minutes each over a period of two weeks. All classes consisted of 7 to 12 students who followed the curriculum of the Ministry of Education. All teachers had more than 15 years of experience in teaching Arabic. The researcher was determined to limit the focus on certain points only; related to classroom management and teaching since they were stated in the literature review as some factors to the low level of achievement in Arabic. This observation took note of issues such as Classroom activities that stimulate and engage the learner, probes and questions to stimulate learning, learner's ability to think and take active role in learning, Teacher talk time, level of focus, attitude and behavior issues such as, boredom, irrelevant talking and motivation.

The researcher was a naturalistic observer who recorded observations without intervening. Formative, qualitative and quantitative observation methods were used. (See Appendix C). The researcher developed an observation instrument after researching several ones used by schools and universities. The forms used included check lists and took some written descriptive notes. Observations were transferred to simple grids.

b. Limitation of the observation method

Visiting classrooms and observing teachers and students is definitely a very powerful tool to examine some good practices that take place inside classes. However, there are some limitations. It is very challenging to make objective judgments about attitudes and inference of behavior of teacher and student. The conclusions were made to the best of the ability of the researcher who got training and experience in classroom observation.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

This chapter discusses research findings and results after analyzing the raw data which came available through the research methods.

4.1 Analysis of the first research method

It is rather impossible to create entirely equivalent conditions for all the participants in a study; yet the researcher attempted to ensure consistency as much as possible. All female students were Emiratis and came from the same school. Their socio-economic backgrounds are very similar. Variables were relatively the same. The research hypotheses were that the only difference in results could depend on IQ or general abilities characterized by the MIDYIS & YELLIS results.

As mentioned earlier, initially, the results of 38 female students in Grade 10 (Group 3) were tracked over a period of 3 school years. The averages of the results of Group 3 students in grades 8, 9 and 10 were compared and contrasted with the results of YELLIS standardized test, and MIDYIS aptitude test.

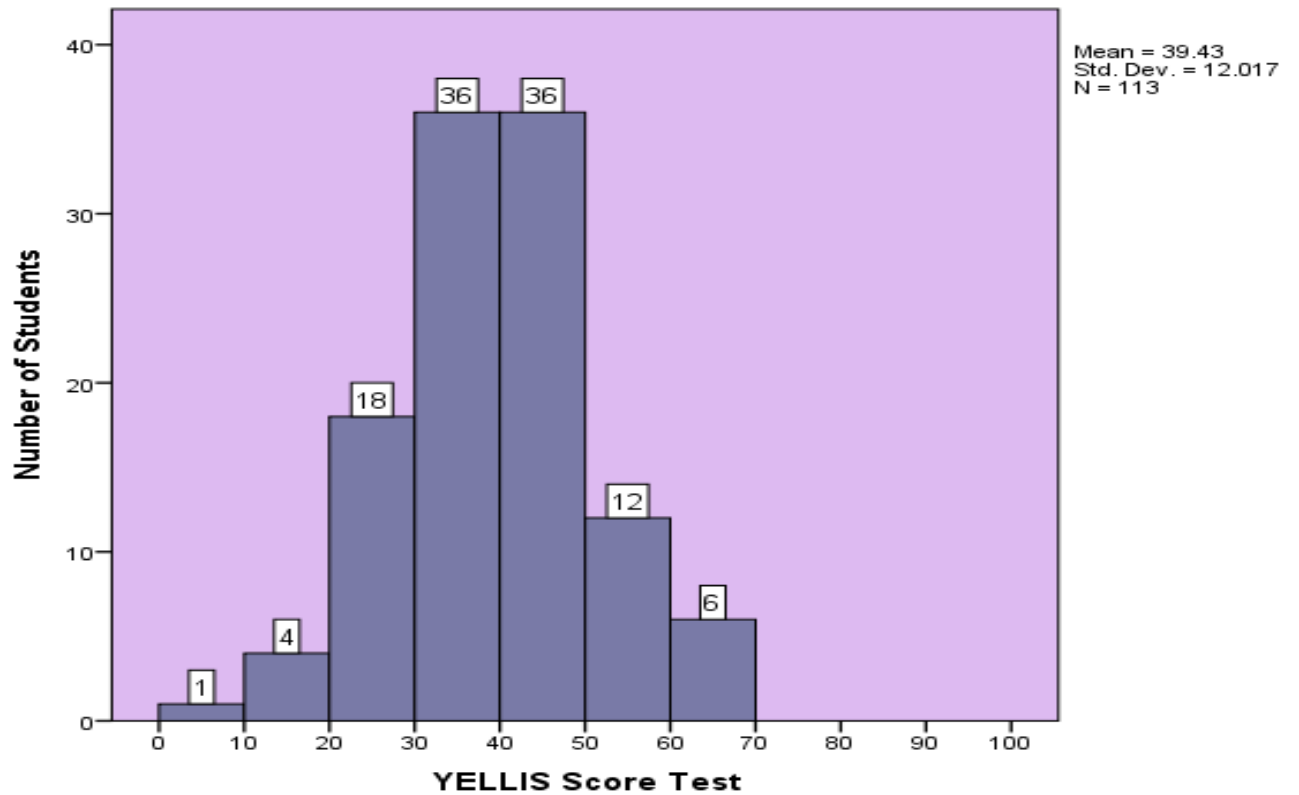
For the second part, the results of Group 3 students were compared with previous Grade 10 students from the same school referred to as groups 1 and 2. The total number of students participating in this section was 113 female students.

Table (1) below shows results of the three groups in YELLIS and their averages in Arabic test:

Group	YELLIS Score Test	Arabic
1 (2009-2010)	41	70
2 (2010-2011)	41	76
3 (2011-2012)	36	60
Total	39	69

Table (1)

Post hoc comparisons were used to test the relationship between dependent and independent variables within the three groups. This sample proved to be of normal distribution. (See graph 1)



Graph 1

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
YELLIS Score Test	Between Groups	527.239	2	263.619	1.853	.162
	Within Groups	15647.077	110	142.246		
	Total	16174.315	112			
Arabic	Between Groups	5101.994	2	2550.997	13.034	.000
	Within Groups	21529.546	110	195.723		
	Total	26631.540	112			

Table (2)

ANOVA Test was used to decide whether the difference in mean among the three groups is statistically significant. ANOVA test revealed that there exists no statistical significant difference in mean among the three groups in the YELLIS test ($F(2, 110) = 1.853, p = 0.162$).

Moreover, ANOVA test reveals that there exists statistical significant difference in mean among the three groups in the Arabic language test ($F(2, 110) = 13.034, p < 0.001$).

Scheffe test (table 3) shows that the achievement of group 3 students is significantly below their counterparts in the other two groups.

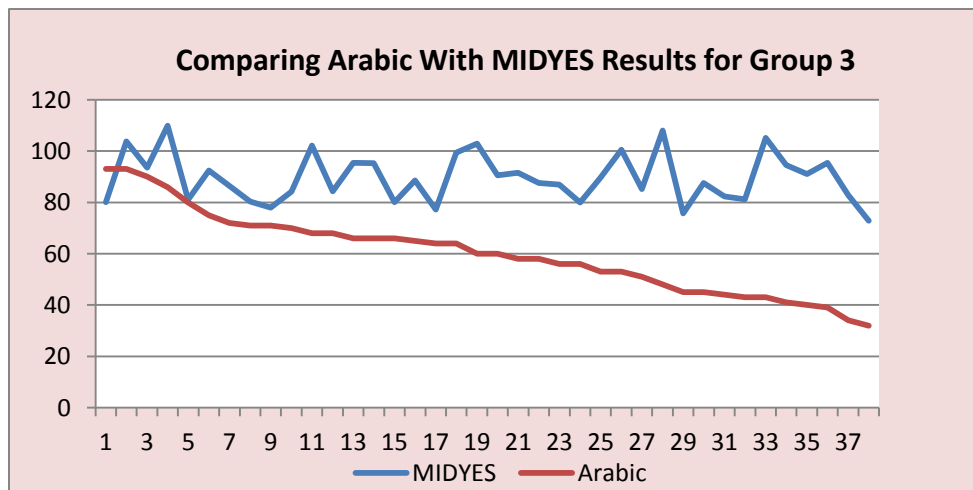
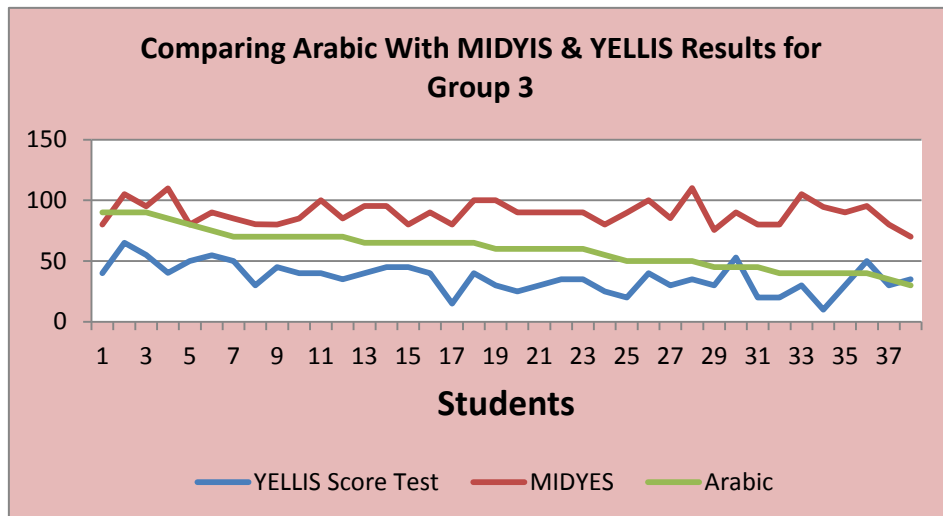
Arabic / Scheffe

Group	N	Subset for alpha=0.05	
		1	2
3	38	60.00	
1	37		69.70
2	38		76.29
Sig		1.000	.129

Table (3)

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

- Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size= 37.660
- The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type 1 error levels are not guaranteed.



Statistics

		YELLIS Score Test	Arabic
N	Valid	113	113
	Missing	0	0
Mean		39.426106	68.65
Minimum		8.5100	32
Maximum		69.2000	98
%iles	25	32.100000	59.00
	50	39.260000	68.00
	75	46.930000	80.00

Statistics

>60 Y & >70 Arabic

ye 90			
N	Valid	6	5.3%
	Missing	107	94.7

Only 6 students at 5.3 % rate who achieved 70 in Arabic scored over 60 in YELLIS.

Correlations

		YELLIS Score Test	MIDYES	Arabic
YELLIS Score Test	Pearson Correlation	1	.240	.588**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.074	.000
	N	38	38	38
MIDYES	Pearson Correlation	.240	1	.147
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.074		.189
	N	38	38	38
Arabic	Pearson Correlation	.588**	.147	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.189	
	N	38	38	38

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Pearson correlation test revealed that there is no significant correlation between the achievement of students in group 3 in Arabic and MIDYIS test scores.

Multiple Regression analysis was also conducted for the three groups. It was apparent that MIDYES scores were not a significant predictor in this model.

Multiple Regression for 2011/2012 Group

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.585 ^a	.342	.304	13.33951

a. Predictors: (Constant), MIDYES 1112, YELLIS 1112

The adjusted R Square value tells us that this model accounted for approximately 30 % of variance in Arabic – acceptable model.

ANOVA^b

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	3237.718	2	1618.859	9.098	.001 ^a
Residual	6227.993	35	177.943		
Total	9465.711	37			

a. Predictors: (Constant), MIDYES 1112, YELLIS 1112

b. Dependent Variable: Arabic 1112

This table reports an ANOVA, which assesses the overall significance of this model. As $P < 0.01$ this model is significant.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	30.368	20.756		1.463	.152
	YELLIS 1112	.785	.190	.583	4.136	.000
	MIDYES 1112	.014	.236	.008	.060	.953

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	30.368	20.756		1.463	.152
YELLIS 1112	.785	.190	.583	4.136	.000
MIDYES 1112	.014	.236	.008	.060	.953

a. Dependent Variable: Arabic 1112

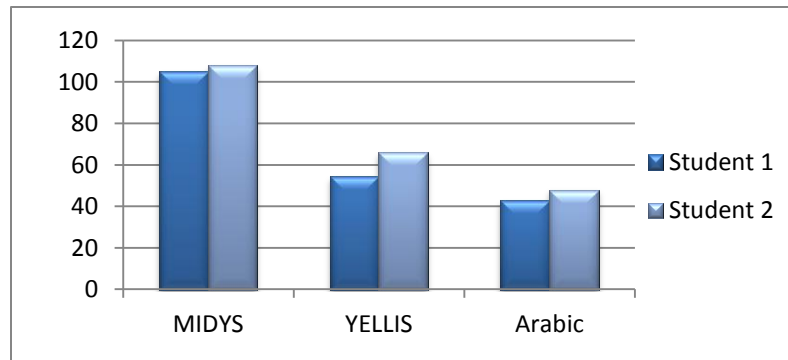
Using the enter method, a significant model emerged ($F(2, 35) = 9.098$, $p < 0.001$).

Adjusted R Square = 0.304. Significant variable is shown below:

Predictor variable	Beta	P
YELLIS 1112	0.583	$P < 0.0005$

4.2 Summary of the MIDYIS & YELLIS test results

Before conducting the study, the researcher had an interest in finding out if there was a relation between students' intelligence or general abilities test and their academic achievement in Arabic. However, results proved that there is no significant correlation between the two variables (graph 2). Students' results in general abilities and aptitude test were not indicative to their low level of achievement in Arabic. They were not a factor to why the level of Arabic at secondary international schools is below the expected levels and in comparison to the students at the Ministry of Education schools. 92 % of the students scored average and above average in the MIDYIS & YELLIS tests; however, 38 % of the total number of students still scored low grades in Arabic.



Graph (2)

Duckworth and Seligman (2004) stated that “Intellectual strengths (e.g., long-term memory, ability to think abstractly) and nonintellectual strengths (e.g., motivation, self-discipline), surely both contribute to a student's academic performance.” However, the main finding here is that cognitive general ability and aptitude tests MIDYIS & YELLIS taken by grade 10 female students do not correlate with students' Arabic grades despite the fact that they correlate sometimes positively with their grades in other

subjects. Two students in particular, who scored 43 and 48 in Arabic, were amongst the students with the highest MIDYIS score.

Students' results in general abilities and aptitude test were not indicative to their low level of achievement in Arabic. Therefore, it can reassuringly be concluded that the students' level of general ability is not a factor to their low results in Arabic. In fact, this leads to consider other factors such as effort, motivation, curriculum design and other earlier mentioned factors.

4.2 Analysis of the Surveys

4.2.a. Parents Survey

The questions addressed three major areas: Teachers, students and methods. Some survey results and comments were extremely fascinating. Results showed that 64 % of parents believed that the level of Arabic at their children's schools was good, while only 19 % felt it was weak.

Teachers

Parents seemed to be satisfied with the teachers' effort as 95 % indicated that the Arabic teachers make genuine effort, although 83 % only felt that they Arabic teachers succeed in motivating students. Additionally, 70.7% believed that lack of variety in teaching methods is a factor to why students are weak in Arabic.

Students

Parents seemed totally biased to their children as 100 % of them believed that their children do their homework, behave well and show respect during Arabic classes. 94.8 % thought that their children liked learning

Arabic. 91.5 % believed that their children loved learning Arabic, yet 77.6 % only indicated that their children enjoy Arabic lessons. Only 53.4 of parents indicated that their children read stories in Arabic outside school which obviously does not reflect a positive perception of the language. 75.9% believed that lack of motivation of students was one of the factors, in comparison to the teachers who believed lack of motivation was a major factor at 96.9 %. However, 51.7% of parents admitted that their children communicate with their friends in English and write messages in English as well. Could it be that the majority of parents who send their children to private international school feel that their children's Arabic is adequate and is up to their expectations?

Time on task

Although not the main reason for the poor level of Arabic, as described by parents, time on task was an important issue. 56.9 % of parents expressed their concern about the low number of Arabic lessons during the school day.

Curriculum

Additionally, 65.5 % felt that there was a gap between the curriculum and the contemporary life. Many written comments categorized the curriculum amongst the factors of the weakness of Arabic. That comprised weakness, incoherence, cramming, irrelevance and difficulty of the curriculum.

Main Reasons

The factors that rated highest in the negative influence of the Arabic language in parents' opinions were: Media, internet and electronic devices at 91.4%, the increased distractions of entertainment in students' lives at 84.9% and changing culture of student and shifting to English at 82.8%.

As for the disparity between MSA (Fusha) and local dialect (Ammiya), 70.7% regarded that as a factor.

Furthermore, in their written comments, 50 % of parents indicated that excelling at any skill – including Arabic- is the responsibility of the school and the teachers. Parents also felt that it was hard for students to maintain Arabic due to the multiple ethnicities in the UAE society.

4.2. b. Students' Questionnaire

Arab identity

Students' responses reflected deep cultural awareness, and tight sense of belonging and conformity to the expectations of the society in the Arabic-Islamic frame. 96.7 % said that they cared about Arabic because it is their mother tongue. 100 % said that they cared about Arabic because it is the language of Quran. More than 95 % of them affirmed that thinking in Arabic was an important part of who they were. More than 83 % believed that Arabic was important for their social life and future career. Therefore, we cannot argue that students do not realize the significance of the Arabic language in society. Nevertheless, some parents and teachers indicated in their written comments that the students do not realize the importance of the Arabic language. There could be a problem with the application of the notion to the action.

Difficulty of understanding vocabulary

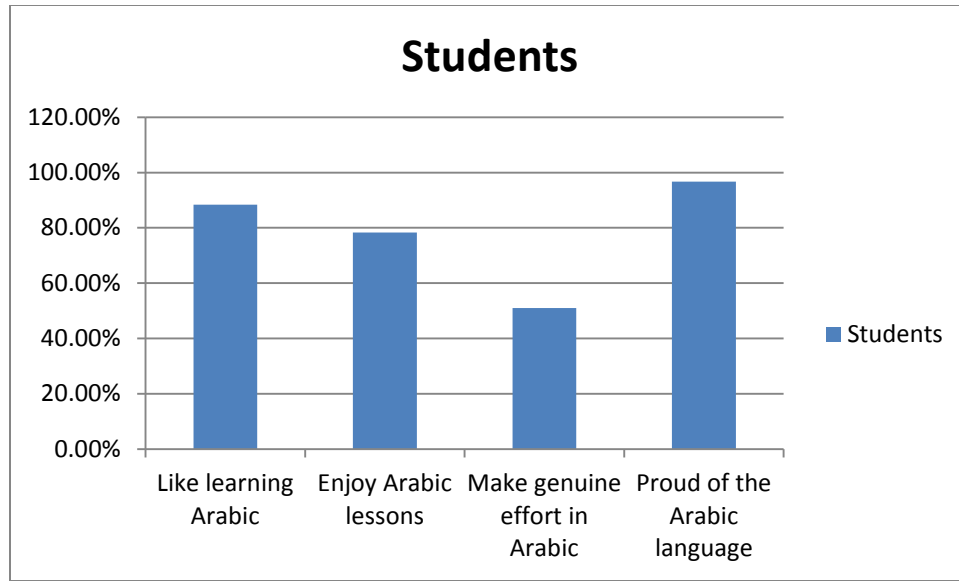
Students acknowledged a certain level of deficiency in their level in Arabic as responses revealed that only 56.7 % were satisfied with their level in Arabic. Also, 55 % of the students use Arabic sometimes to write messages; while 85 % of the time they use English letters most of the time to write Arabic messages.

As for the classroom and the teaching of Arabic, only 56 % of students felt motivated sometimes. More than 85 % of the students felt that learning Arabic requires a lot of work, and 76.7 % indicated that methods of teaching Arabic were boring although 87.7% agreed that teachers are enthusiastic about teaching Arabic.

As for students' written comments, their views about Arabic lessons varied between positive and negative comments. Many students expressed their willingness to learn Arabic, but they felt discouraged by the length of the curriculum, the irrelevance of the content, and the tedious teaching methods. Students admired the social part of the Arabic lesson and the attractive stories told by teachers. However, some of the most frequent statements were: grammar is the hardest part of Arabic, lessons are boring, curriculum is hard and long with lots of old stories.

A number of students indicated that during Arabic reading, they are so busy decoding unfamiliar words that it leads to frustration and takes away the joy of reading since lack of fluency and comprehension get in the way. This supports some of the findings of Dakwar (2005) who conducted a study involving elementary students in Palestine, and confirmed that when asked about learning MSA, children's responses supported the claims made by several researchers that learning Fusha entails instances of de-contextualization. Children perceived Ammiya and Fusha (Local dialect and MSA) as two different systems.

In some of their written comments, students suggested easier curriculum, shorter lessons, more up to date content, and more activities to be included to make the curriculum more fun.



Graph (3)

4.2.c Teachers' Survey

50 % of the teachers indicated that the level of Arabic at their schools is good, 22 % felt it was acceptable, 6 % felt it was below average, and 22 % felt it was weak.

75 % of the teachers were happy with their students' results, and only 53 % of them believed that their students read in Arabic outside school.

Teachers and students seemed to agree on the level of focus as 68 % of teachers felt that the level of focus is not high, but rather acceptable; while 67 % of students admitted that they usually lose focus in Arabic class.

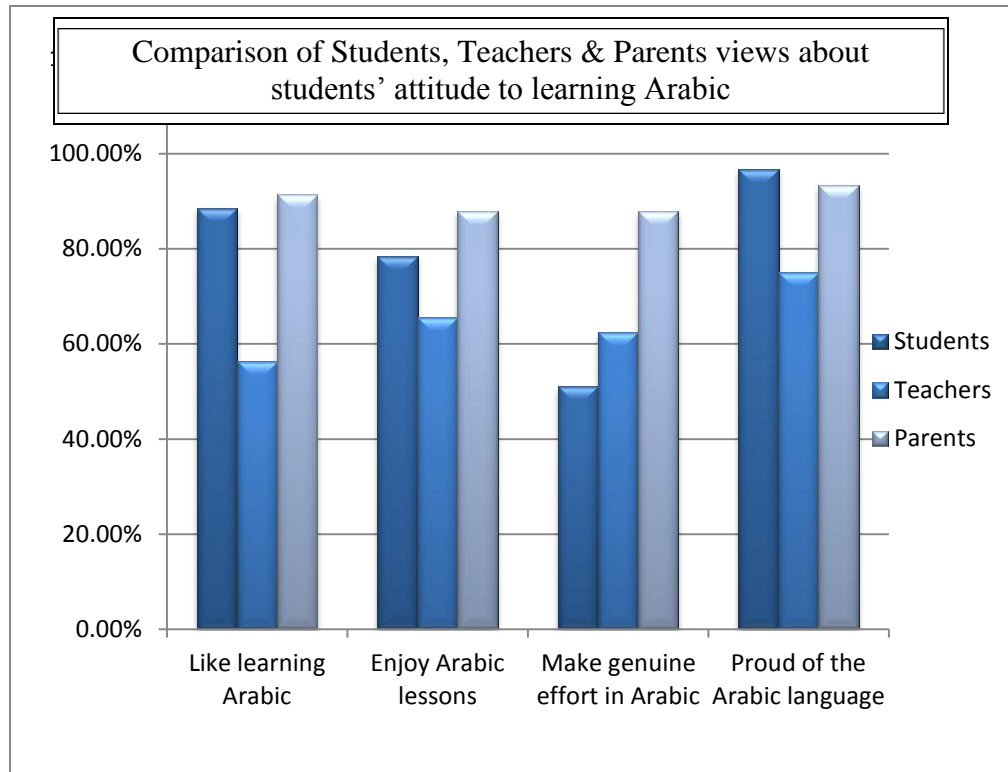
4.3 The three stakeholders

Upon comparing the three stakeholders' responses regarding attitude and behavior towards Arabic (table 4), it is fascinating to note that there are areas of disagreement or false conception. For example, parents seem to have high perception of their children's efforts in Arabic as 87.9 % believe that their children make genuine effort, while teachers believe that only 62.5 % of the students make genuine effort; a fact that students enforce as only 51 % indicate that they make genuine effort. Also, based on their daily interaction of students and close observation, 75% of teachers believe that students are proud of the Arabic language, and only 65% of the teachers believe that students realize the value of Arabic language for their social life.

Statements about Students	Students' Responses	Teachers' responses	Parents' responses
Like learning Arabic	88.4%	56.3 %	91.4%
Enjoy Arabic lessons	78.3%	65.5	87.9%
Make genuine effort in Arabic	51 %	62.5 %	87.9%
Achieve good grades in Arabic	88.4%	75 %	86.2%
Write Arabic messages in English letters	85 %	78.4%	51.7 %
Realize value of Arabic for social life	86.7%	65.4%	84.5%
Proud of the Arabic language	96.7%	75 %	93.3%

Table 4

The following table compares some responses amongst the three stakeholders. It is further clarified by graph in graph (4).

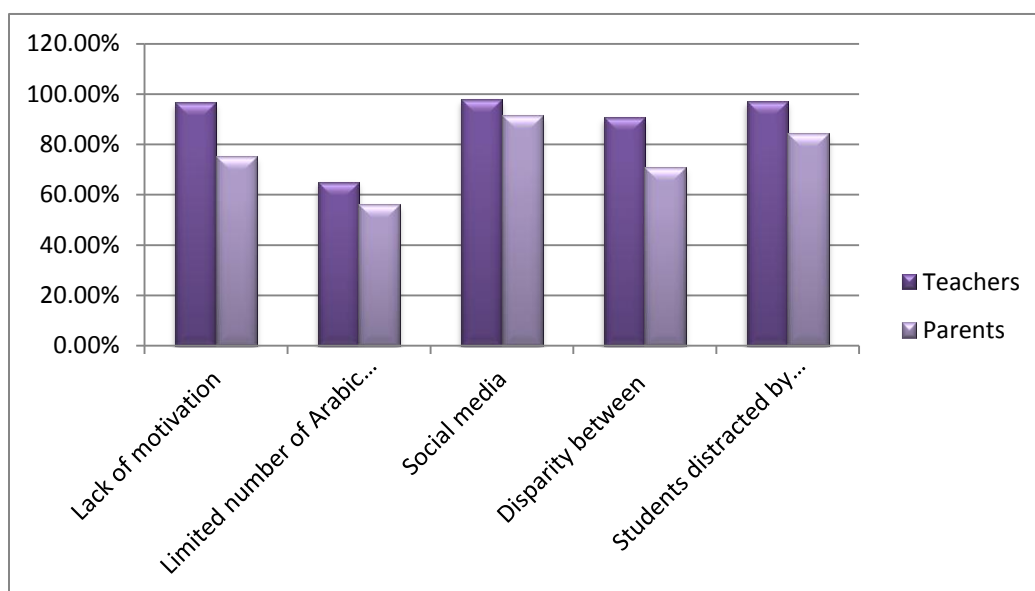


Graph 4

While disparity between parents' perception of their children's level in Arabic and the reality expressed from the teachers' points of view was obvious, it was noted that parents and teachers seemed to be in close agreement on at least 4 factors that are behind the low level of Arabic on the other hand. This is explained in the following table.

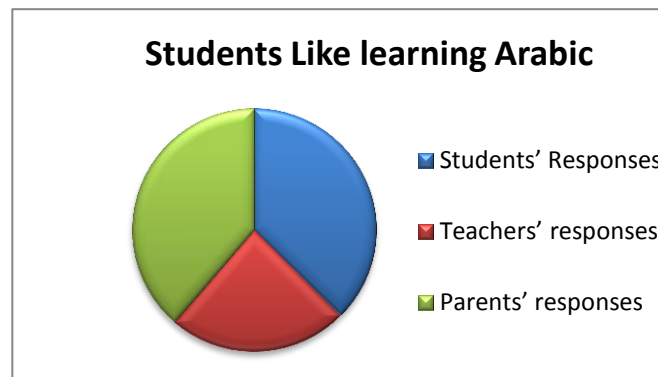
Area	Teachers	Parents
Lack of motivation	96.6%	75.9 %
Limited number of Arabic hours at school	65 %	56.9 %
Social media	97.7%	91.4%
Disparity between MSA & dialect	90.7%	70.7%
entertainment distracted by in their lives	96.9%	84.3%

Table 5



Graph 5

According to the survey, students claim that they like Arabic (graph 5), and that they are proud of their language, but they do not make the required effort to express that pride, therefore, the teachers believe that only 28 % of them feel proud of their language all the time, while 47 % feel proud some of the time. Also, Students feel that the curriculum is far from real life while only 48.4 % feel so. Students and teachers (84.4 %) agree that methods of teaching Arabic can be boring sometimes.



Graph (6)

While many teachers confirmed that the reason behind the weakness in Arabic was the dominance of English language in a multiethnic society, incoherent curriculum design, outdated teaching methods and materials, ineffective assessment methods, they suggested using more motivating methods and incorporate technology in teaching Arabic.

4.4 Discussion

That response of this parents sample is creating a gap between the concrete reality and the reported results. Teachers notice daily deterioration in various language skills; starting from poor handwriting, reading comprehension, reading fluency and lack of motivation. Students are complaining about complicated grammar, tedious classes and difficult composition writing. Teachers and students seem to agree that the level of Arabic needs to be improved as it is currently, good or below average, but

not excellent. The majority of students admitted that their level in Arabic is poor; however, most of them were not interested in improving that.

Apparently, parents, who chose to enroll their children in private international schools where English language is the primary medium of communication seem to be relatively satisfied with their children's level in Arabic. Parents who complain about the weakness of Arabic seem to do so motivated by intrinsic worries about the heritage, the culture and all the associated values. Yet, they are pressured by the requirements of the global society, to choose English language over Arabic. Kenaid (2010) discussed the reasons behind choosing private schools by the majority of Emirati parents. Apparently, parents want English focused education to prepare their children for the future, however, Arabic- their first language and mother tongue starts to slip away replaced by English.

A number of issues have been noted by parents, teachers and students as a factor to the weakness of Arabic. They can be stated as follows: Crammed irrelevant outdated curriculum, poor introduction of the content of the syllabus, inefficient methods of teaching grammatical rules and lack of differentiation in abilities.

4.5 A look at classroom observation

Academic engagement and social engagement are strongly related to academic performance. These are precisely the processes that contribute to learning in the classroom. When a student is not engaged in learning, she or he is less likely to acquire the material presented (Finn, Pannozzo & Achilles 2003).

From an observer's point of view, there is a strong connection between teaching methods of Arabic and students' active involvement and meaningful response. Students usually interact effectively in an

environment where teachers are facilitating opportunities for students to be active learners and help them develop skills that promote independence in learning. Students observed in this study were more focused and engaged in classes that promoted independence and creative thinking; whereas students were exceptionally bored in teacher-centered classes with limited stimulating activities. This supports the literature presented earlier in chapter 2.

Classes 2,3,4 and 5 were vocabulary and reading lessons. Classes 1 and 6 were grammar lessons. Four teachers taught the 6 classes.

One teacher out of four used multiple teaching methods and approaches to teaching vocabulary, reading and grammar. For the reading lesson, she gave lots of opportunities for students to read vocabulary words and lines from the book and from the pre-prepared cards. She used group work and brainstorming to stimulate students to look for main ideas in the reading text. As for teaching grammar, she used power point presentation to explain the rule, got students to highlight in their books. She used colour coded words and cards; she used the interactive board and allowed students to come to the board and use it.

In the other four classes, teachers used the marker pens and the board for the majority of the time to explain vocabulary and grammar. Cards were used once by a teacher in class 5.

Teacher's style and teaching materials were adequately motivating to students in two classes, where appropriate probes and questions were provided to stimulate learning. The teacher used constructivist approaches in those lessons, as she was encouraging the learners to think and take an active role in their learning through group work, activities with cards, vocabulary games, mini competitions, and peer evaluation. Videos displayed were short and relevant followed by worksheets. This was missing in the other 4 Arabic classes.

4.6 Teacher- student talk time

Teachers' talk varied between lecturing, explaining and reading, asking questions, answering questions, giving commands, giving praise, criticism, and correcting behavior. Limited number of high-order questions was asked by teachers and students. Students supported each other in some cases by guiding and explaining things to each other, or reminding one student to behave well when she was being loud.

Teacher-student talk time was clearly observed in all classes. It was intensely used in two classes, and solely used in one class which obviously had a negative impact on the learners, who were extremely bored and lost interest in the lesson. They were whispering to each other, slouching over desks and 5 students in 3 different classes put their heads down for sometime indicating tiredness.

The teacher in class (6) did not implement any activities that could motivate students or challenge them. She had poor classroom management skills. She did not have clear rules for her students. She could have used more creative methods to engage students in purposeful tasks instead of having them as passive learners. With more than 20 years of experience, the teacher was undoubtedly well prepared for the content of the lesson; that was all what she seemed to be prepared for. She could not manage students' behavior well, and consequently she was not in control of her class. Her focus was to finish the planned lesson. This teacher used traditional teacher centered teaching style; whereas the other five teachers were trying hard to incorporate varied teaching styles in their classrooms to provide for students in a world where learning in classrooms settings has become very challenging. "The student population has changed as learner won't sit quietly through dull presentation and motivation in an important consideration in both management and instruction" (Jacobsen, Eggen & Kauchak 2006).

In classes with higher ability students, and in classes with various teaching activities, teachers were able to achieve more, and motivate students to participate. In 3 classes out of 6 students were bored, talkative, wanted to laugh and tried to waste time. In each class, there were one or two students who did not have the right equipment (books, copybooks or homework done). In some classes, students were not fully focused; however, the teachers had to carry on with the lessons to complete it. In 3 classes, students kept on ignoring teacher's comments and remarks on behavior; although they were constantly reminded of classroom rules and expectations. Low level of disruption and irrelevant comments and giggles were continuously observed in 50 % of the classes.

In three classes, students were not very enthusiastic, they were not purposefully engaged or encouraged to read to find answers and analyze them. Poor behavior was appropriately addressed in 2 classes out of 4 where a poor behavior was observed. Questioning techniques and probes were intensely used in 3 classes. Praise was differently used.

Materials: white board, interactive board, markers, worksheets, questions and diagrams, video tape, internet Text books, copy books and reading cards. Three teachers used questioning techniques to provoke thinking, and led students to discover facts, and made inferences from them.

The following table (6) summarizes the comparison between the 6 classes. More details will follow. See Appendix C.

<i>ND. Not Demonstrated NI. Needs Improvement S. Satisfactory O. Outstanding</i>									
Class	Stimulating Probes & questions	Motivating engaging activities	Learner takes active role in learning	Teacher Talk time	Teacher's efficacy	Students bored fidgeting talkative	motivated engaged Students	Misbehavi or & interruption	Level of focus*
1	O	O	O	O	O	ND	O	ND	H
2	O	O	O	O	O	ND	O	ND	H
3	S	S	S	O	S	NI	S	ND	G
4	S	S	NI	NI	NI	NI	S	O	S
5	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	O	NI	O	NI
6	ND	ND	ND	NI	NI	O	ND	O	P
*	High	Good	Satisfactory	Needs	Poor				

Table (6)

4.7 Motivation

High motivation and engagement in learning have consistently been linked to increased levels of student success. Students who stated that Arabic classes were boring require motivation and stimuli. Class observations in this studied concluded that motivation can be extrinsically generated through teaching methods, materials and group support if it is not intrinsically manifested.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions and or Recommendations

This chapter recaps some previously discussed concepts and associates them with the findings of the study.

5.1 Concerns about the Language

Language of the Emirati local people has shifted immensely during the last 20 years, and lead to the current pattern of language. Average and below average ability local students studying in schools where the main language of instruction is English are risking the loss of their mother tongue language, their Arab-Muslim- local identity and culture as well as social engagement with the society; yet many parents are still not aware of that.

Evidently all the factors previously asserted by scholars in the past, still exist. In addition, we have novel factors that are negatively influencing Arabic language and heritage.

5.2 Dominance of English

According to the World Bank Report (2007), the command of international languages, particularly English, is becoming an asset for adopting technology and for communicating. The issue of mother tongue-based instruction is extremely crucial on various levels: social, technical, political, and ideological. Ball (2010) confirms that more parents are inclined towards giving more attention to learning English as it is regarded nowadays as a universal language and a vehicle of the main medium of trade and business. They want their children to attend private schools and learn in English whether they are gifted or having any learning difficulties or developmental disorders. Unfortunately, this is the case for Many Emirati families. The dominance of English in society pressed parents to believe that English has become a major

global language that their children must master whether to succeed in their future careers or to acquire socioeconomic prestige in the society. The politics council initiative came as a call for cultural revitalization.

5.3 Importance of mother tongue/ first language

Progressively, it is obvious that the language of instruction at the beginning of a child's education at such a crucial moment for future learning should be the mother tongue. Some of the findings and results of this research are represented by the statements of Baker (2011), Ball (2010), and Cummins (2000), which draw attention to the importance of acquiring the first language. Proficiency in language skills in the first language can be transferred to second language. Students who are literate in their first language progress more significantly than those who don't, provided they are immersed in the right program, taught by well-trained teachers and provided by the required resourceful materials. They add that teachers and parents with the correct attitude contribute to the success and development of first and second language.

Ball (2005) brings attention to the fact that everywhere in the world children are learning languages at home that are different from the prevailing language used in their societies. These children go to school with their valuable mother tongue, but they are required by school systems to acquire a national or international language. She also adds: "UNESCO has encouraged mother tongue instruction in early childhood and primary education since 1953. Yet, monolingualism in official or dominant languages is still the norm around the world."

In the early years of school, mother tongue is frail and easily lost. If the child is encouraged to learn one or more other languages as media of instruction, then support for mother tongue development is missing too soon. Competency in that language is lost. Continued use of L1 into

adolescence is an essential factor of children's long-term proficiency to the point of developing academic proficiency in that language. Then proficiency is transferred to L2 if the adequate motivation and exposure subsist. Cummins' (2000) findings are echoed in research by Riches and Genesee (2006), who focused on the interaction between first and second language literacy. They found that "strong first language skills, especially first language literacy skills, were associated with long-term success in second language abilities for minority language children."

A good body of research and theory confirms that children learn best in their mother tongue as an introduction to and complement of bilingual or multilingual education. World Bank (2005) report affirms that mastering first language supports the gradual introduction of L2, and reflects more positively on students' academic achievement. Evidence from different countries demonstrates that extensive use of L1 in bilingual programs in the primary years results in better mastery of L2 (World Bank, 2005).

5.4 Drawbacks of Globalization

There are many benefits to Globalization, yet there are some drawbacks as Cummins (2000) states. Societies are striving to prepare their individuals to be productive citizens in the Knowledge economy. Change will continue to happen in response to the demands of the knowledge economy in the global community. The Emirati society is no exception.

Hanif (2008) indicated that globalization and developments on various levels influenced all aspects of the Emiratis lives, and led parents to focus on seeking education for their children in languages other than Arabic. He also added: "Arabic mass media have also resorted to using foreign words and colloquial terms. As a result, the importance and role

of our Arabic language has retreated significantly, in terms of practicality and use.”

Private schools understand the necessity of constructive change. They aim for innovation to meet the changing requirements of the rapidly growing society in Dubai, and to equip students with the necessary qualifications that the new knowledge economy is imposing locally and internationally. However, not being able to master the mother tongue is indefensible in view of many parents and society figures who view that leading to changing the cultures, losing identity, facing difficulties segregating with the adults in the local society, and creating a gap between generations.

5.5 Arabic in Private International Schools

Kenaid (2011) affirms that while parents stressed the importance of English language, they also expressed their deep concern about the retreating level of Arabic language and Islamic Education. Most parents expressed concern over the dilemma they face in private schools. Parents want a balanced curriculum between English and Arabic languages. Eventually, most parents sacrifice Arabic and do not give it much attention since it is not going to be used at university level in many specializations. However, all Emirati government employees require strong Arabic for work and communication.

5.6 Culture

Chater and Christiansen (2009) assert that “recent research suggests that language evolution is a process of cultural change, in which linguistic structures are shaped through repeated cycles of learning and use by domain-general mechanisms.” They state – as many other psycholinguistics and sociologists researchers - that “culture (including

language) is the product of past learning from previous generations”, and that the acquisition of any cultural form, during development, requires considering how that cultural form arose through processes of cultural evolution.

Their deferential argument to the issue can be applied to the case of Arab children who speak local Arabic dialects (Ammiya) and are expected to excel at modern standard Arabic. It can be claimed that Arab children face a problem of “induction”, where the objective is to coordinate with others, rather than to model the structure of the natural world.

5.7 A Collective Responsibility

From what has been discussed earlier, we conclude that the development of Arabic Language is a collective responsibility. There has to be collaborative efforts between home, school, Media and Ministry of education to magnify the magnificence of Arabic language – especially since it is the language chosen by God for the Quran. It is important that students and adolescents in all school levels feel that in their hearts, and take pride in it, understand the impact of neglecting the language on the development of nations and the preservation of the culture, heritage and identity.

Cummins (2000) believes that it is the responsibility of educators and policy-makers to work on the development of national identity in order to respect and protect the rights of all citizens including children, in addition to the cultural, linguistic, and economic resources of the nation. Hampering children from developing their mother tongues means neglecting a wealthy linguistic source of the nation.

5.8 Parent's Role

Since the family is the primary socialization unit for language proficiency. It is important for families to encourage their children to read in Arabic, visit libraries, book shops and provide opportunities for language proficiency.

“Children who have the opportunity to learn multiple languages from early childhood and to maintain them throughout their lives are fortunate indeed and families that can offer this opportunity to their children should be encouraged to do so” (Lightbown & Spada, 1999).

It is important for a bilingual children's mother tongue to master their first language, for their overall personal and educational development (Cummins, 2000). Parents should establish a strong home language policy and provide meaningful opportunities for children to purposely use their mother tongue in meaningful contexts, in order to reduce the amount of language loss (Cummins, 2000).

5.9 Relevant Recommendations

5.9.1 Language Policy

A comprehensive, clearly defined language policy that governs Arabic education in UAE is required. Al Batal (2007) discussed a number of issues related to teaching Arabic in USA, such as the inconsistent quality of language training available in Arabic programs, unqualified teachers and shortage of trained teachers. He added that addressing the Arabic Language deficiency and improving proficiency in the students' population will require a comprehensive language policy and a national plan for action. He discussed many reasons for teaching Arabic for Arabs in the United States. Some of these challenges seemed justified to a certain extent since they are taking place in USA. What justifications do we have here in the Arab World?

Many voices call for differentiation in education, and encourage diversity in the multi cultural, multi-ethnic society that exists across the country; yet preserving the Arabic language and identity is outside the debate. Government and policy makers should consider supporting children's rights to mother tongue education. Equitable opportunities for academic achievement, and Arabic language acquisition should be offered. In Addition, they should invest in public campaigns, aimed at raising awareness to the importance of the Arabic language.

5.9.2 Arabic Natural Language Processing

Farghaly (2008) suggested making use of the Arabic Natural Language Processing (NLP) method to facilitate language acquisition. This approach can work on transferring knowledge and technology to the Arab World by translating, summarizing, and retrieving information in Arabic for Arab speakers at a low cost. It can modernize, revitalize and fertilize the Arabic language. Arabic NLP needs a more formal and precise grammar of Arabic than the traditional. This will formulate easily accessible Arabic resources and information; make retrieval, extraction, summarization, and translation available to the Arab user in order to bridge the gap between users of Arabic in the Arab world and their peers in more technically advanced countries by making information available to Arabic speakers in their native language.

5.9.3 Teaching Approach & Learning environment

Students in this study complained about boring lessons, old content of the text books, and de-motivating approaches. All elements of the learning environment should be supportive and motivating for students to excel. Similarly, schools need to have major initiatives to improve the learning environment. That is not confined to modern facilities and fancy text books. Radical instructional flexibility and relevance is required; shift

from formal traditional instruction to innovative more student- centered approaches and active learning paradigm are essential in order to create independent learners. Constructivist approach to teaching and up to date methodology, improve students' learning rates. Teachers should be highly qualified and well-trained to be more positive and more passionate about their profession. Training programs for in-service Arabic teachers is a debatable issue. Pre-service teachers' training programs should be given priority. Tests and tasks should be constructed in a way that the targeted abilities are accurately investigated. Ball (2010) relates how UNESCO emphasizes the necessity of hiring skilled early childhood educators and teachers who are fully fluent in L1 and who have access to affluent language resources. In addition, children must be highly motivated and constantly encouraged to categorize learning their first language as apriority.

a. Time on task

As mentioned earlier in this research, Peters (2004) believes that time on task is the most important factor in student achievement. In this study most parents understood that their children were exposed to Arabic less frequently during the day as English was the main media of instruction

b. Students' attitude towards learning Arabic

There is a need to bring serious attention to the negative attitude of students towards learning MSA. Students find learning English and other subjects more stimulating especially after grade 7. Negative attitude and de-motivation is highly correlated with teaching approaches and material. It is mandatory for the policy makers to revise the curriculum design and implement a different approach to teaching Arabic. Materials should be more motivating and engaging. The ministry should initiate a

section for developing teaching materials and that is not exclusive to books. It means, cards, games, audio and video support material.

In this study, 85% of the students indicated that they use English letters to write Arabic text messages on mobile phones and computers while engaging in various sorts of social chats. They resort to code switching in their verbal communication with people around them of all ages as well.

5.9 .4 IT in education

Using technology in education has become so vital. In the Singaporean experience, Luke et al (2005) draw attention to the major initiatives in planning that began in 1977: Thinking schools, learning nations (TSLN), and to the use of IT in education. TSLN was aiming for more instructional flexibility and relevance, more student- centered approaches, active learning paradigm in order to create independent learners. Similarly, schools need to have major initiatives and pose similar queries to the questions framed by Luke et al (2005): The first question: what institutional factors need to contribute to academic achievement, be it socio-demographic, community, culture or linguistic. The second question would be how to enhance the teaching and learning in classrooms. The third question would be what are the end products for the education that schools are providing? The last question is how will educational outcomes prepare students to face the pressing demands for the highly competitive knowledge society?

5.10 ISESCO Recommendations

Owing to the gracious link between Arabic language and Islamic religious teachings, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) came up with a list of recommendations during its annual symposium 2012 - with which this research totally conforms.

Some of these recommendations are: “the linguistic and cultural homogeneity should become a strategic objective for Arab speakers from all races, and a trustworthy guardian of the very constituents of the Arab and Islamic identity.” In addition, they called for the promotion of the feeling of pride in Arabic language and Islamic culture and therefore, to take all measures to promote and develop the teaching of Arabic to spread preserve the identity of the Muslim nation. The recommendations were very inclusive in terms of encouraging the involvement of all the institutes in the society to call for the adoption of necessary legislation (Al-Atiyyah 2008).

5.11 Recommendations of the Arabic & Education conference

Participants at Arabic & Education conference (2008) investigated the vital issue of the status of Arabic language, and worked at identifying the challenges facing Arabic language learning; presenting studies on the subject; and reviewing a number of successful experiences in the Arab world and elsewhere, where Arabic has been preserved and protected from distortion.

5.12 Local Emirati Initiatives

Arabic & Education conference (2008) came up with a number of recommendations for enhancing the Arabic language in UAE. Recently, in April 2012, during the development of this research, series of Arabic initiatives were born in response to the recommendations of the government in UAE. A new specialized institute -focusing on Arabic- has been established at Zayed University to reinforce the language across the region and the world. Special attention will be given to developing the Arabic language curriculum at all levels (Khaleej Times 24 April 2012, p.6).

The initiatives aim at establishing the UAE as a universal 'centre of excellence' for Arabic language in order to promote the use of Arabic language in Dubai. This project comes in line with the UAE Vision 2021 that aims at a widespread development while promoting national identity. The government believes that nurturing the Arabic language is important to endorse the Emirati national identity and cultural unity for future generations. It was declared that the Emiratis national identity is intimately linked to the Arabic language; which serves as an effective medium to express values, culture and heritage. Promoting the language will enable the future generations to connect with their roots, society and values more effectively (Alkhalij Times 24 April 2012, p.1).

Some of those initiatives are: promoting Arabic as the language of science, setting up of a dedicated educational facility at Zayed University to endorse Arabic education for non-Arabic speakers, and establishing a Faculty of Translation at the Mohammed bin Rashid Media College. Zayed University facility will network with international universities and educational centers to enable student transfer to the UAE for learning Arabic.

It is estimable to observe how UAE government is taking great interest in the preservation and improvement of the Arabic language. However, many of these plans are still theoretical or not directly impacting school students.

5.13 Further Questions

A major objective for future research will be to identify the specific educational, social, economical and cognitive limitations that have influenced the shift of language through cultural development. However, some questions could be: Is the weakness in Arabic language a burden that Arabic teachers should carry alone, or is it a collective

responsibility? Are most Arabic teachers unqualified and underpaid? To what extent is the community able to support students' learning and defeat all the external factors that are negatively reflected on students? What is the practical direct and indirect influence that the government's initiatives can have on modifying students' poor attitude to learning Arabic? How can those initiatives help support teachers' instruction in Arabic classrooms in UAE secondary schools?

Is the world really changing, the societies are different, and the new generations have different perception of themselves and of the world? Were children 30 years ago really more serious and more inclined towards preserving their language and identity than the children today, or is the comparison unrelated and inequitable? Is it true that children and youth are demonstrating a new trend- as a result of the influence by multiple external pressures and exported cultures manifested in poor motivation? Are we doing our children a favour by exposing them officially to a second language before mastering their mother tongue?

5.14 Conclusion

Earlier in this research, the researcher presented some previously established hypothesis and conclusions by different scholars and researchers to the factors behind the weakness and the low level of Arabic language amongst Arab students in the past. It is fascinating to note that these factors are similar to what educators claim today.

Upon reviewing relevant literature, and examining data available through survey results, questionnaires and classroom observations, the researcher was able to conclude a number of factors that contribute to that.

Firstly, it is mandatory to state that results show that level of general ability is not a main factor for the weakness in Arabic as previously. Some of the factors for the weakness in Arabic language among students in secondary schools nowadays are claimed to be: lack of exposure to standard Arabic caused by the domination of local dialect (Ammiya) in daily communication, introducing English at an early age, and tendency to focus more on improving English as the majority of subjects are taught in English at private schools, the changing culture of students as they watch movies in English and write to each other in “msn” language, the power of media and modern means of communication, severe lack of motivation and disinterest in pursuing education, the rigidity of the outdated Arabic curriculum and the poor delivery methods in teaching at secondary schools in particular. The outcome of that is poor vocabulary and poor written and verbal expression.

Furthermore, the reasons for the weakness in Arabic language are overlapping, and the spread of this phenomenon is inconsistent across the Arab world. For example, it is not an issue in Syria or Jordan. It is governed by a range of variables such as the level of intellectual and national awareness, the educational level, the economical and social conditions and civilization change which the society interacts with.

Finally, the researcher would like to echo the advice of an Arab educator: Taha-Thomure (2008) who believes it is crucial for the policy makers to ensure “writing a well articulated set of standards and guidelines, establishing quality teacher training institutes, developing research based instructional materials, allocating proper funds to the Arabic language teaching and educating parents through a national campaign on the best child rearing practices. All of this will be truly possible and attainable if we dedicate the right resources, human and financial, to such a well

deserving goal: the preservation and advancement of the Arabic language and identity.”

In conclusion, the platform for this discussion will still be open. The research presented a series of suggestions from past studies and government initiatives. The responsibility now lies in the hands of the Ministry of Education and the KHDA to implement those plans and ensure the actual achievement of those luminous initiatives. The government should focus efforts and resources on the existing plans before expanding them as well.

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Appendix A

Scores of Grade 10
students (Group 3)
in YELLIS,
MIDYIS & Arabic
tests

YELLIS Score Test	MIDYIS	Arabic
43	80	93
66	104	93
54	94	90
40	110	86
51	81	80
55	92	75
49	86	72
28	80	71
46	78	71
40	84	70
37	102	68
35	84	68
42	95	66
47	95	66
44	80	66
39	89	65
16	77	64
42	99	64
31	103	60
25	91	60
32	92	58
34	88	58
37	87	56
24	80	56
21	90	53
40	101	53
26	85	51
34	108	48
28	76	45
53	88	45
22	82	44
23	81	43
31	105	43
10	95	41
29	91	40
47	95	39
27	83	34
34	73	32

Group 1 2009-2010 Student Number	YELLIS Score	Arabic	Group 2 2010- 2011 Student Number	YELLIS Score	YELLIS BAND	Arabic	Group 3 2011-2012 Student Number	YELLIS Score Test	YELLIS BAND	MIDYES	Arabic
1	50	73	38	48	C	90	76	27	D	83	34
2	37	61	39	22	D	62	77	32	D	92	58
3	59	71	40	33	D	70	78	37	D	87	56
4	34	55	41	48	C	80	79	37	D	102	68
5	69	90	42	38	D	71	80	28	D	80	71
6	46	80	43	52	C	89	81	47	C	95	39
7	27	78	44	43	C	63	82	24	D	80	56
8	43	67	45	35	D	71	83	42	D	95	66
9	30	55	46	18	D	58	84	31	D	103	60
10	31	68	47	42	C	84	85	22	D	82	44
11	47	80	48	35	D	76	86	34	D	73	32
12	39	68	49	62	B	93	87	26	D	85	51
13	49	65	50	44	C	67	88	23	D	81	43
14	44	67	51	37	D	59	89	43	C	80	93
15	50	75	52	51	C	94	90	10	D	95	41
16	37	71	53	57	B	80	91	34	D	88	58
17	39	63	54	41	C	90	92	28	D	76	45
18	29	67	55	45	C	89	93	21	D	90	53
19	36	61	56	37	D	76	94	51	C	81	80
20	39	90	57	33	D	75	95	55	B	92	75
21	52	79	58	44	C	85	96	40	D	110	86
22	44	74	59	33	D	78	97	16	D	77	64
23	23	65	60	56	B	86	98	35	D	84	68
24	56	84	61	42	C	80	99	54	B	94	90
25	41	71	62	9	D	51	100	31	D	105	43
26	34	63	63	33	D	70	101	39	D	89	65
27	44	67	64	35	D	88	102	47	C	95	66
28	34	59	65	42	C	82	103	42	D	99	64
28	46	49	66	26	D	77	104	53	B	88	45
30	17	49	67	69	A	96	105	66	A	104	93
31	27	64	68	32	D	70	106	34	D	108	48
32	50	78	69	40	C	86	107	44	C	80	66
33	21	57	70	50	C	59	108	49	D	86	72
34	47	70	71	30	D	68	109	29	C	91	40
35	46	78	72	62	B	98	110	46	C	78	71
36	36	77	73	39	D	63	111	40	D	101	53
37	62	96	74	35	D	65	112	40	D	84	70
			75	59	B	97	113	25	D	91	60

Appendix B : Stakeholders Survey

Parents' Survey

This survey is part of a research about the level of proficiency of Arabic language for Arab students in Private schools that offer International programs

1. I am filling this questionnaire as a: mother father brother sister other					
2. Age group: 20 -30 31-40 41-50 51-60 over 60					3. Nationality:
4. Education level Less than grade 12 Grade 12 college university masters Ph.D					
5. How many daughters do you have at our school?			6. What year?		
7. The levels of students at school is Excellent good acceptable poor					

Please tick the number that best expresses your opinion about your child's attitude towards Arabic

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Agree 4. Strongly disagree

Statement: My Daughter/Son	1	2	3	4
8. My daughter likes Arabic				
9. Is keen to learn and makes genuine effort				
10. Achieves high grades in Arabic				
11. Spends quality time studying Arabic				
12. Reads stories in Arabic outside school				
13. Enjoys Arabic lessons				
14. Shows respect / behaves well during Arabic classes				
15. Does homework as required				
16. Realizes the importance of Arabic to her education				
17. Realizes the influence of Arabic language on her social life				
18. Takes pride in Arabic language				
19. Communicates with us in Arabic at home				
20. Prefers to communicate in English over Arabic				
21. Uses English letters to write Arabic messages to her friends				

In my opinion:

22. Arabic teachers make genuine effort in teaching Arabic				
23. Arabic teachers stimulate students to do well in Arabic				

9) Please choose 1 to 4 to rank reasons for the poor performance in Arabic in any school:

1. Not true at all 2. Somewhat true 3. true 4. Very true

The poor level in Arabic is due to:	1	2	3	4
24. Lack of motivation of students				
25. Focus on other subjects being taught in English				
26. Dominance of English language among students				
27. Influence of media, internet and electrical devices on limiting the <u>use</u> of Arabic language				
28. Negative influence of the use of electrical devices on the ability of verbal communication				
29. Changing culture of students (they watch English movies and read English books)				
30. Limited number of Arabic hours offered at school				
31. Irrelevance of the curriculum to contemporary life				
32. lack of enthusiasm of some teachers				
33. Limited variety in teaching methods				
34. Difference between spoken Arabic and simple standard Arabic				
35. The increased distractions of entertainment in students lives				

Please add other factors that you believe contribute to the decline of the level of Arabic: (Use back of page if you need to)

Any suggestions for improvement

Thank you very much for answering this questionnaire!

رأيكم يهمنا

استبانة لأولياء الأمور

نشكركم شكرًا جزيلاً لمشاركتكم في هذه الاستبانة تتعلق بتدريس اللغة العربية لطلبة المرحلة الثانوية الذين يدرسون منهج وزارة التربية في المدارس التي تتبع المنهج الأمريكي أو البريطاني.

1. أنت تعبى هذه الاستبانة كـ : أب أم أخ أخت غيره					
الفئة العمرية: 20-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 أكثر من 60 3. الجنسية					
4. آخر مرحلة تعليمية: أقل من الثانوية العامة / ثانوية عامة / شهادة كلية أو معهد / شهادة جامعية / ماجستير / دكتوراه					
5. كم ابن / ابنة عندكم في مدرستنا؟ 6. في أي صف؟					
7. باعتقادي أن مستوى الطلبة في اللغة العربية في المدرسة ممتاز جيد مقبول ضعيف					

الرجاء اختيار العبارة التي تتفق مع رأيكم

1. أوافق تماماً 2. أوافق بعض الشيء 3. لا أوافق 4. لا أوافق أبداً

العبارة	1	2	3	4
8. ابني / ابنتي يحب تعلم اللغة العربية				
9. ابني / ابنتي يبذل جهداً حقيقياً في تعلم اللغة العربية				
10. ابني / ابنتي يحقق درجات جيدة في اللغة العربية				
11. ابني / ابنتي يقضي وقتاً جيداً في تعلم اللغة العربية				
12. ابني / ابنتي يقرأ قصصاً باللغة العربية				
13. ابني / ابنتي يستمتع بحصص اللغة العربية				
14. ابني / ابنتي يظهر الاحترام وتحسن التصرف خلال حصة اللغة العربية				
15. ابني / ابنتي يقوم بأداء الواجبات المطلوبة في اللغة العربية				
16. ابني / ابنتي يدرك أهمية اللغة العربية في التعليم				
17. ابني / ابنتي يدرك أهمية تأثير اللغة على الحياة الاجتماعية				
18. ابني / ابنتي يفخر باللغة العربية				
19. ابني / ابنتي يتواصل معنا في البيت باللغة العربية				
20. ابني / ابنتي يفضل التواصل مع الأصدقاء باللغة الانجليزية				

				2. ابني / (ابنتي) يكتب رسائل للأصدقاء باللغة العربية
--	--	--	--	--

برأيي:

				2. مدرسو ومدرسات اللغة العربية يبذلون جهدًا حقيقيًا مع الطلبة
				2. مدرسو ومدرسات اللغة العربية يعملون على تحفيز الطلبة ليجتهدوا في اللغة العربية

- الرجاء اختيار العبارة التي تتفق مع رأيكم: تعود أسباب ضعف الطالبات في اللغة العربية إلى:
1. أوافق تمامًا 2. أوافق بعض الشيء 3. لا أوافق 4. لا أوافق أبدًا

				24. ضعف الحافزية لدى الطلبة
				25. التركيز على اللغة الانجليزية في المدرسة
				26. تخاطب الطلبة يكون غالبًا باللغة الانجليزية
				27. تأثير وسائل الإعلام الإنترنت ووسائل الترفيه و أجهزة الاتصال في الحد من استخدام اللغة العربية
				28. التأثير السلبي لأجهزة التواصل الحديثة على التواصل الاجتماعي الشفهي
				29. تغير توجهات الطلبة الثقافية (القراءة ، الأفلام ، الأغاني بالانجليزية)
				30. قلة عدد حصص / ساعات اللغة العربية خلال الأسبوع
				31. بعد المنهج عن الواقع
				32. عدم التنوع في طرق التدريس
				33. عدم حماس بعض المدرسين
				34. الاختلاف بين اللغة العامية واللغة الفصحى
				35. كثرة الملهييات في حياة الطالب

رجاء إضافة أي ملاحظات أو أسباب أخرى ترون أنها من أسباب ضعف بعض الطلبة في اللغة العربية

Staff survey

This survey is part of a research about the level of proficiency of Arabic language for Arab students in Private schools that offer International programs

1.School Name			
2. Position	Arabic Teacher / Supervisor /Principal /Other: ----- ---	3. Male /Female	
4. level you teach	Primary / Secondary		
5. Age Group	25-35	36- 50	50-60 over 60
6. Years in the Education field	1-5 16 -20	6-10 more than 20	7.Nationality:
8. Hours of Arabic lessons at school per week	Grade 7: Grade 10:	Grade 8: Grade 11:	Grade 9: Grade 12:

9) In my opinion, the level of most Arab students -in International Schools- in Arabic is:

Poor Below average Acceptable Good Excellent

In general, students in Arabic classes at my school:

- | | | | | |
|--|-------|--------|------------------|--------|
| 10) Are keen to learn | Never | Rarely | Most of the time | Always |
| 11) Make genuine effort | Never | Rarely | Most of the time | Always |
| 12) Achieve high grades | Never | Rarely | Most of the time | Always |
| 13) Engage in many activities in Arabic in school | Never | Rarely | Most of the time | Always |
| 14) Do extra reading in Arabic outside school | Never | Rarely | Most of the time | Always |
| 15) Enjoy Arabic lessons | Never | Rarely | Most of the time | Always |
| 16) Show respect / behave well during Arabic classes | Never | Rarely | Most of the time | Always |

17) Do homework as required				
Never	Rarely	Most of the time	Always	
18) Realize the importance of Arabic to their education				
Never	Rarely	Most of the time	Always	
19) Realize the influence of Arabic language on their social life				
Never	Rarely	Most of the time	Always	
20) Take pride in Arabic language				
Never	Rarely	Most of the time	Always	
21) Prefer to communicate in English over Arabic				
Never	Rarely	Most of the time	Always	
22) Use English letters to write Arabic messages to their friends				
Never	Rarely	Most of the time	Always	
23) Students' level of focus and concentration during lesson is:				
Very high	acceptable	low	extremely low	

When it comes to teaching Arabic, personally.....

24) I'm passionate about teaching				
Never	Rarely	Most of the time	Always	
25) I feel successful at my job				
Never	Rarely	Most of the time	Always	

Please choose 1 to 4 to rank reasons for the poor performance in Arabic in any school:

2. Not at all 2. Just a little 3. To a certain degree 4. Very true

	The poor level in Arabic is due to:	1	2	3	4
26	Lack of motivation of students				
27	Focus on other subjects being taught in English				
28	Dominance of English language among students				
29	Influence of media, internet and electrical devices on limiting the <u>use</u> of Arabic language				
30	Negative influence of the use of electrical devices on the ability of verbal communication				
31	Changing culture of students (they watch English movies and read English books)				
32	Lack of support of parents				
33	Lack of support of school management				
34	Irrelevance of the curriculum to contemporary life				
35	Limited number of Arabic hours offered at school				
36	lack of enthusiasm of some teachers				
37	Limited variety in teaching methods				
38	Difference between spoken Arabic and simple standard Arabic				
39	The increased distractions of entertainment in students lives				

Please add other factors that you believe contribute to the development or decline of the level of proficiency of Arabic for Arab students: (Use back of page if you need to)

Thank you very much for answering this questionnaire!

استبيان لمعلمي و معلمات اللغة العربية
هذا الاستبيان جزء من بحث في رسالة ماجستير تتعلق بتدريس اللغة العربية في مدارس المنهاج
البريطاني أو الأميركي.
نرجو تعاونكم في الإجابة عليه مع الشكر

1. اسم المدرسة	
2. المهنة	معلم أو معلمة لغة عربية / مشرف / مدير / غير ذلك
3. ذكر / أنثى	
4. المرحلة التي أدرسها	المرحلة الابتدائية / المرحلة الثانوية
5. الفئة العمرية	أقل من 25 / 25 - 35 / 36 - 50 / 50 - 60 / فوق الـ 60
6. عدد سنوات التدريس	5-1 / 6-10 / 11- / أكثر من 20
7. الجنسية:	
8. عدد ساعات اللغة العربية في الأسبوع لكل من الصف:	
الثالث	الرابع
الخامس	السادس
الثامن	السابع
التاسع	العاشر
الحادي عشر	الثاني عشر

(26) برأيي أن مستوى الطلبة العرب عموماً في المدارس التي تدرس المنهج الأميركي أو البريطاني:

ضعيف دون المستوى مقبول جيد ممتاز

*** بشكل عام .. هذا هو تصرف الطلبة في مدرستنا في حصص اللغة العربية:

(27) حريصون على تعلم اللغة العربية

دائماً أحياناً نادراً أبداً

(28) يبذلون جهداً حقيقياً

دائماً أحياناً نادراً أبداً

(29) يحققون نتائج مرتفعة

دائماً أحياناً نادراً أبداً

(30) يشاركون في كثير من الأنشطة باللغة العربية في المدرسة

دائماً أحياناً نادراً أبداً

(31) يقرؤون قراءة خارجية باللغة العربية

- (32) دائماً أحياناً نادراً أبداً
يستمتعون بحصص اللغة العربية
- (33) دائماً أحياناً نادراً أبداً
يظهرون الاحترام ويحسنون التصرف أثناء حصة اللغة العربية
- (34) دائماً أحياناً نادراً أبداً
ينجزون الواجب المنزلي كما هو مطلوب
- (35) دائماً أحياناً نادراً أبداً
يدركون أهمية اللغة العربية في دراستهم
- (36) دائماً أحياناً نادراً أبداً
يدركون تأثير اللغة العربية على حياتهم الاجتماعية
- (37) دائماً أحياناً نادراً أبداً
يشعرون بالفخر تجاه اللغة العربية
- (38) دائماً أحياناً نادراً أبداً
يفضلون التخاطب باللغة الانجليزية بدلاً من العربية
- (39) دائماً أحياناً نادراً أبداً
يستخدمون الأحرف الانجليزية في كتابة الرسائل العربية لأصدقائهم
- (40) دائماً أحياناً نادراً أبداً
مستوى تركيز و انتباه الطلبة داخل الفصل
- عالٍ جداً جيد/ مقبول منخفض متدنٍ جداً
*** شعوري الشخصي بالنسبة لتدريس اللغة العربية:
- (41) لدي شغف بمهنة التدريس
- (42) دائماً أحياناً نادراً أبداً
أشعر بالنجاح في مهنتي
- دائماً أحياناً نادراً أبداً

- الرجاء اختيار الأرقام من 1 إلى 4 فيما يتعلق بأسباب ضعف الطلبة في اللغة العربية
3. ليس صحيحاً أبداً 2. العبارة فيها بعض الصحة 3. العبارة تميل إلى الصحة 4. العبارة صحيحة تماماً

العبارة	صحيحاً تماماً	تميل إلى الصحة	بعض الصحة	ليس صحيحاً أبداً
26				ضعف الحافزية لدى الطلبة
27				التركيز على المواد الأخرى التي تدرس باللغة الانجليزية
28				تخاطب الطلبة يكون باللغة الانجليزية
29				تأثير وسائل الإعلام، الانترنت، ووسائل الترفيه وأجهزة الاتصال في الحد من استخدام اللغة العربية
30				التأثير السلبي لأجهزة التواصل الحديثة على التواصل الشفهي
31				تغير توجهات الطلبة الثقافية (القراءة ، الأفلام ، الأغاني بالانجليزية)
32				عدم الدعم الكافي من الأهالي
33				عدم دعم الإدارة المدرسية لتطوير اللغة العربية
34				بعد المنهج عن الواقع
35				قلة عدد حصص / ساعات اللغة العربية خلال الأسبوع
36				ضعف الحماس لدى بعض المعلمين
37				عدم التنوع في طرق التدريس التي تكون مملة أحياناً
38				الاختلاف الكبير بين اللغة العامية واللغة الفصحى
39				كثرة الملهيّات في حياة الطالب

رجاء إضافة أي عوامل أخرى ترونها سببا في ضعف اللغة العربية أو كتابة أي اقتراح يتعلق بالموضوع.

شكراً جزيلاً لمشاركتكم في هذه الإستبانة

Students' Survey

This survey is part of a research about the level of proficiency of Arabic language for Arab students in private schools that offer International programs.

Please answer the following questionnaire:

1. I study at ----- School

2. I am in Year 9 10 11 12

3. Level of my father's education:

Less than grade12 High school College
University Higher education

4. Level of my mother's education

Less than grade12 High school College
University Higher education

5. How many hours per day do you spend using the computer/laptop/I-pad/ mobile or similar devices?

Less than 2 hrs 2- 4 hrs 4-6 hrs more than 6hrs

Chose the level of statement that best describes your opinion
 1. Not true at all 2. Fairly true 3. Completely true

	Statement	Not True at all	Fairly true	Completely true
6	I am fluent in spoken Arabic			
7	I am satisfied with my level in Arabic at school.			
8	I like Arabic language			
9	My written Arabic is good			
10	I usually lose focus in Arabic lessons			
11	I enjoy Arabic classes			
12	Thinking in Arabic is an important part of who I am			
13	Arabic will be useful for my future career			
14	It is important for me to be good in written Arabic			
15	I care about Arabic because it is my mother tongue			
16	I care about Arabic because it is the language of Quran			
17	I use Arabic in writing letters and messages			
18	Learning Arabic is important for my social life			
19	learning Arabic requires a lot of work			
20	I write Arabic messages using English letters			
21	There are limited activities to do in Arabic classes			
22	Methods of teaching in Arabic classes are boring			
23	I prefer watching movies and shows in English rather than Arabic			
24	Arabic teachers are enthusiastic about teaching and communicate this to students			

Choose the statement that best describes your opinion:

25. During Arabic lessons:

<input type="checkbox"/>	I feel motivated all the time
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes I feel motivated
<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not feel motivated at all

26. Arabic lessons are: (Circle 2 at least)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Fun	<input type="checkbox"/>	boring
<input type="checkbox"/>	enjoyable	<input type="checkbox"/>	easy
<input type="checkbox"/>	challenging	<input type="checkbox"/>	hard

27. Tick the box that describes you

<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not make good effort in Arabic because it is not important.	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not make enough effort in Arabic, but I need to improve.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I make good effort.	<input type="checkbox"/>	I make excellent effort.

28. Compared to other school subjects, I give this much time to Arabic

<input type="checkbox"/>	Not a lot of time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Little time
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enough time	<input type="checkbox"/>	a lot of time

The things that I like most about Arabic lessons are:

The things that I like least about Arabic lessons are:

Other Comments

Thank you very much for answering this questionnaire!

APPENDIX C (OBSERVATION GRID)

LESSON OBSERVATION

Teacher	Grade/Level
Observer	Set/group
Subject	No. present
Location	No. absent
Date and time	

Layout of room / Teaching Area

Environment

Context (What the lesson is about and where it is in the teaching scheme):

Objectives (What the teacher expects the students to be able to do at the end of the lesson):

	Content	Observed	Not observed	Comments
	Lesson in context			
	Clear objectives			
	Subject knowledge			
	Content appropriate to course and level			
	Logical sequence to activities			
	Appropriate depth			

	Students	Observed	Not observed	Comments
	Sustain concentration			
	Kean and interested			
	Actively engaged with tasks			
	Appropriately challenged			
	Listened well			
	Participated well			
	Think and learn for themselves			
	Input is encouraged and valued			
	Understand tasks and expectations			
	Worked independently for some time			
	Were inspired and challenged			
	Asked relevant high-order thinking questions			
	Showed responsibility towards learning			
	Good behavior and attitude			
	Appropriate student talk time			
	Took care with their written work			
	Allowed to move around for a purpose			

	Classroom Management	Observed	Not observed	Comments
	Clear orderly start to lesson			
	Encouraging learning environment			
	Good structure of the lesson			
	Logical sequence to activities			
	Appropriate level of noise/voices			
	Appropriate grouping of students			
	Effective seating arrangements			
	Resources accessible and well-used			
	Smooth transitions between activities			
	Students aware of classroom procedures			
	Poor behavior addressed appropriately			

	Appropriate implementation of school policies			
	Appropriate time allowed for noting homework			
	Work in small groups or in pairs			
	Students raise hands			

	Teacher	Observed	Not observed	Comments
	Secure subject knowledge			
	Used a variety of teaching methods			
	Good tone and volume of voice			
	Appropriate talk time			
	Provides a positive learning environment			
	Encourages progress through praise and reward			
	Teacher intervenes to develop learning			
	Circulates around to help			
	Enthusiastic and inspiring			
	has a suitable, positive relationship with students			

	Procedures, Material and Teaching	Observed	Not observed	Comments
	Made connections with previous lesson			
	Pacing is suitable and maintained			
	Relevant use of ICT where applicable			
	Effective use of ICT where applicable			
	Appropriate /location of teacher			
	Appropriate teacher- talk time			
	Suitable non-verbal communication			
	Flexible and sensitive response to needs			
	Appropriate questions/responses/discussion			
	questions extend knowledge and understanding			
	Appropriate variety of material & activities			
	Encouraging and ensuring pupil participation			
	Orderly conclusion to lesson			

Assessment

	Formative oral / during lesson			
	Appropriate feedback & assessment			
	Written assessment			
	Peer assessment			
	Homework			

Other Positive Practices Observed

[illegible]

Areas that needs improvement

[illegible]

Other Comments

This image shows a full page of white paper designed for handwriting practice. It features 18 horizontal dashed lines spaced evenly across the page, providing a guide for letter height and placement. The lines are thin and light gray, set against a plain white background. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

Appendix D

More written comments from class observation

Teacher in class 1 was very well organized. She used a youtube video about palm trees, cards and games. The variety of activities kept students interested and purposefully engaged. Students were given opportunities to discuss things and ask questions during the observation of tree parts.

Teacher in class 6 was teaching a grammar lesson. She was conducting direct teaching for 40 minutes. She wrote the title on the board and brought students' attention to it as an objective for the lesson. She was standing in the same position the whole time, and kept on explaining grammar (comparatives) by writing with a blue marker on the whiteboard. The grade 11 students did not show any interest from the beginning. They kept on talking and making jokes most of the time. Teacher moved one student from her place as a result of excessive talking. Teacher checked occasionally for understanding during the teaching time by asking, "Did you understand?" During the last 20 minutes, students were asked to open the text books and complete the grammar drills/questions. The students needed help, and did not know what to do. The teacher had to re-teach most of the points. Since the lesson time was about to finish the teacher assigned the 3 pages of the book as homework. No cards, other material or IT technology were used. Four out of the seven students did not say anything during the whole lesson.

Appendix E: Stakeholders Comments

Students' comments

Like most	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arabic lessons make me closer to my language. Full of new things • Teachers way of teaching and moving the whole class • Challenging friends • The teachers' efforts to improve me in Arabic and make me love grammar • Stories • Methods of teaching • Writing letters and composition • Writing Poems • Reading poems • The different kind of lessons, some of the stories are interesting. • Stories • I'am sorry, but nothing (2) • Nothing really • Reading poems • Stories are interesting • The variety in what we learn: literature, writing, discussions.... • Sometimes lessons are fun • Discussing temporary issues (in English we learn old things) • The teacher tries to be friendly with us • Teachers are like our second mothers (3) • It improves my skills and abilities in Arabic, and allows me to know a lot about my precious language. • I can talk with my friends • Stories / stories / stories (8 times) • New interesting stories by teachers • We can talk to the Arabic teachers and say our opinion, and discuss things • Presentations, 2 • Arabic Stories • Watching videos related to the topic we study • Topics we study • That we can talk in Arabic • When they are fun and challenging
Like least	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grammar 12 • Arabic Grammar

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grammar is pretty hard and boring • I'rab إعراب 5 (grammar) is a bit hard • Lazy students • Homework • Some lessons get so boring. Also the Arabic lessons mostly philosophical and the class does not include interesting videos or presentation or competitions... etc. • I find Arabic boring. I enjoy other lessons much more. • Curriculum is long, that pressures us • The whole Arabic lesson (2) • We do not benefit from the stuff or subjects they teach us a lot (irrelevance) • Some students get bored from the lessons • Teachers' ways in teaching are so boring... no activities • A lot of information , many information, there are a lot of information (5) • When I don't understand grammar • Lessons are boring, very boring • Methods of teaching are somehow boring. • Arabic is very hard • Not enough practices • Books have old stories • Very hard, very hard, very hard. The curriculum is very hard and complicated. • The books have very old stories. They are very hard, very hard • No movement in class • Writing composition
Other comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciate Arabic teachers' effort which has amazingly improved me • I like my Arabic Teacher • Teachers in my school are very nice and very loyal • Please try to make Arabic more interesting. I find English easier and more fun, and that is not something I'm proud of. • I am not very good in Arabic language • I hate Arabic • Arabic subjects are not that fu, but teachers are nice • This paper is about Arabic, yet written in English. Ironical • We should have fewer topics for the tests. • Make more spaces for us to write on the lines provided in the ministry's books • There is too little place in the book for writing answers. Using electrical devices to make studying more interesting. • All of / most of our school is weak in Arabic, so the problem is

	<p>not from the girls , it's from the system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They should make the classes mixed ability so people can push themselves. • The curriculum is so boring and they do not have enough space in the books to write • The curriculum need to be change and improved • I feel embarrassed when I am with my brothers and sisters and friends outside school who go to government school and can speak better Arabic • I love Arabic . change the curriculum to make us better at it, we are in the 21 st century • We want more sophisticated education at schools. Aim high • Include more activities during Arabic Classes
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Staff Comments

Factors contributing to the weakness in Arabic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak and incoherent curriculum • Insufficient teaching materials – absence of engaging attracting teaching methods, inefficient evaluation methods
Factors that endorse the level of Arabic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kind of resources, teaching methods, parents' involvement. • Using English for communication at home and with the maids. • Parents encourage using English more than Arabic. • Weakness starts from KG 1 & KG 2 ??? • The multilingual society. It is not only the disparity between MSA and local dialects. • Not enough support from parents.
Suggestion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make methods of teaching some language skills more interesting • Increase support of school management • Use electrical devices and internet in a positive way to have a good influence • The curricula have to change. Focus should be on quality in on quantity to allow teaching various language skills.

Parents Comments

Factors contributing to the weakness in Arabic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My children speak English at home! • Multi ethnicity in Dubai push children to speak English (3) • The little number of Arabic classes 3 • The myth about the difficulty of Arabic grammar • Focus on memorization • Crammed curriculum 2 • Fascination with English language, imitating others • Arabic exams are very complex and long (2) • The materials used for the curriculum do not exhibit the beauty of Arabic • More focus and attention is given to English • Focus in UAE is on English for business and travels
Factors that endorse the level of Arabic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents should encourage their children to speak Arabic • Methods of teaching Arabic should be more interesting • Teaching methods should be varied and creative • Good Arabic stories and content appropriate to the levels
Suggestions/ Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching is the responsibility of schools • More attention should be given to Grammar! • Our children are not aware of the importance of their language