

An Investigation into the factors influencing Arabic speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai British School

در اسة استقصائية للعوامل المؤثرة في مدى إتقان الطلبة العرب للغة العربية في مدارس دبي البريطانية

by

ALAAEDDIN MEHY AL AHMAD

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION

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Abstract

Despite the fact that Arabic is the official language of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), as a modern and cosmopolitan nation it is far from the only language spoken there. Therefore, there are schools where the instructional language is other than Arabic, although primarily English. However, those Arabic-speaking students attending non-Arabic schools become less proficient in the Arabic language and continually fall behind their peers in Arabic schools. This is despite the fact that both groups of students are native Arabic speakers, and that both groups of students attend Arabic classes that use the same curriculum and textbooks. Given the high number of British as well as other non-Arabic schools in Dubai, this is a significant issue as many Arabicspeaking students are failing to achieve proficiency in their native language. Thus, the aim of this study is to investigate the factors influencing Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools. The theoretical framework that underpins this study is based on three theories: Language Variation, Linguistic Environment and Language Management. In order to answer the research questions, one of which was based on each theory, an explanatory a sequential mixed-method approach was used to best support, refine and triangulate the quantitative with the qualitative data. The schools selected for this study were five British and two Arabic schools. The participants of this study comprised 211 students from grades 2, 5, 7 and 10, in addition to 39 Arabic teachers, 12 leaders and 83 parents from both types of schools. The instruments used in the quantitative analysis were a set of questionnaires administered to the students, teachers, leaders and parents. Furthermore, samples of the students' work were analysed quantitatively, as well as qualitatively through thematic analysis. The final part of the qualitative analysis consisted of semi-structured interviews with the teachers, leaders and parents. The primary findings of the study are that while all the students' proficiency was negatively influenced by the factor of language variation of the Arabic language, such an influence was felt more by the students in the British schools. This is likely due to the difference in linguistic environment experienced by the students in the British schools, relative to those in the Arabic schools, and which this study significantly correlated with decreased proficiency. Furthermore, this study found that many of the students, parents, teachers and leaders felt that because of this difference in proficiency, the Arabic classes mandated by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) are not appropriate for this group of learners. Of the factors studied, only the final one offered a viable solution, which could potentially mitigate some of the negative influences of the first two. Obviously, reversing the language variation of Arabic is impossible, while changing the language of instruction at British schools to Arabic would defeat the very purpose of their existence. While neither factor can be changed, both of their effects can be compensated for at the language management level. Therefore, this study recommends that British schools should have their own policies, curriculum and grading criteria, taking into account both the degree to which the British school students are impacted by language variation and the difference in their linguistic environments. While the precise design of that curriculum and criterion is beyond the scope of this study, it seems likely that a design that takes these important factors that influence the proficiency of Arabic-speaking students into account will be an improvement over any design that does not.

ر غم أن اللغة العربية هي اللغة الرسمية في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة، إلا أنها ليست اللغة الوحيدة التي يتم التحدث بها. وبوصفها دولةً عصريةً، هناك العديد من المدارس في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة التي تكون فيها لغة التدريس غير العربية كاللغة الإنجليزية والتي تحتل المقام الأول في هذا الصدد. حيث أن الطلبة العرب في هذا المدارس الناطقة بغير العربية إن صبح التعبير هم ببساطة أقل كفاءة في اللغة العربية من نظر ائهم في المدارس الناطقة بالعربية، على الرغم من أن كلا المجموعتين من الطلاب العرب لديهم نفس المنهج التعليمي وعدد مقارب من الحصص الدراسية، و نظرًا لوجود هذا العدد الكبير من المدارس الأجنبية والبريطانية بالتحديد، فإن هذه مشكلة تكمن في أن العديد من الطلبة العرب لا يصلون إلى مستوى الكفاءة اللغوية في لغتهم الأم، وبالتالي، فإن الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو استقصاء العوامل التي تؤثر على كفاءة الطلاب العرب في اللغة العربية في المدارس البريطانية في دبي. يستند الإطار النظري الذي تقوم عليه هذه الدراسة إلى ثلاث نظريات أساسية: التباين في اللغة، البيئة اللغوية وإدارة اللغة. للإجابة على أسئلة البحث، والتي استند كلٌّ منها إلى نظرية محددة، تم استخدام نهج الطريقة المدمجة المتعاقبة لدعم البيانات الكمية وصقلها وربطها مع البيانات النوعية بشكل أفضل. المدارس المختارة لهذه الدراسة خمس مدارس بريطانية ومدرستين عربيتين. المشاركون في هذه الدراسة بلغ عددهم قرابة ال 211 طالبًا من الصفوف: الثاني، الخامس، السابع والعاشر بالإضافة إلى 39 مدرسًا للغة العربية واثنا عشر رئيس قسم للغة العربية و83 ولى أمر من كلا النوعين من المدارس. أما الأدوات المستخدمة في التحليل الكمي فهي عبارة عن مجموعة من الاستبيانات الموجهة للطلاب والمعلمين والقادة وأولياء الأمور. كما تم تحليل نماذج من أعمال الطلاب كمياً ونوعياً. يتكون الجزء الأخير من التحليل النوعي من مجموعة من المقابلات مع معلمين وقادة وأولياء أمور . من أهم النتائج الأساسية للدراسة هي أنه في حين أن كفاءة جميع الطلاب تتأثر سلبًا بعامل التباين اللغوي للغة العربية، فإن هذا التأثير له تأثير أكبر على مستوى الطلبة العرب في المدارس البريطانية. ويرجع ذلك على الأرجح إلى الاختلاف في البيئة اللغوية التي يعاني منها الطلبة في المدارس البريطانية. علاوة على ذلك، وجدت هذه الدراسة أن العديد من الطلاب وأولياء الأمور والمعلمين والقادة يشعرون أنه بسبب هذا الاختلاف في الكفاءة، فإن منهج اللغة العربية الذي تفرضه هيئة المعرفة والتنمية البشرية ليس مناسباً بما فيه الكفاية لهذه المجموعة من المتعلمين. ومن بين العوامل التي تمت در استها، فإن العامل الأخير فقط يقدم حلاً قابلاً للتطبيق، والذي يمكن أن يخفف من بعض التأثير السلبي للعاملين الأولين. حيث إنه من الواضح أن إيجاد حل لظاهرة التباين اللغوي أمر أشبه بالمستحيل، وتغيير لغة التدريس في المدارس البريطانية إلى اللغة العربية سيلغي الأساس الذي قامت عليه هذه المدارس. وبناءً على ما سبق، يمكن تعويض تأثير العاملين الأولين من خلال بعض التعديلات المتعلقة بالعامل الثالث و هو إدارة اللغة. لذلك، توصىي هذه الدر اسة بضرورة أن يكون للمدارس البريطانية سياساتها ومناهجها ومعايير التقييم الخاصة بها، مع مراعاة الدرجة التي يتأثر بها الطلاب العرب في المدارس البريطانية بظاهرة التباين اللغوي والاختلاف في بيئاتهم اللغوية.

Dedication

This PhD research Thesis is dedicated to all members of my family. Firstly, to my father's soul, who always was encouraging me to complete my journey of learning. Secondly, to my mother, who always prays for me and wishes me the best. To all my brothers and sisters. To my wife, who always encouraged me with her honest and supportive words. To my angel Lara, to my son Mohieddin. This work is also dedicated to my friends, Dr Yaser Ibrahim, Dr Yousef Bakkar who were a great source of inspiration and support.

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ABBREVIATION

MSA	Modern Standard Arabic
RD	Regional dialect
KHDA	Knowledge and Human development authority
UAE	United Arab Emirates
US	United States of America
MBRF	The initiative of the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al
Maktoum Foundation	
МОЕ	Ministry of Education
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
BUID	The British University in Dubai

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to investigate the factors influencing Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) in Dubai's British schools. This chapter firstly presents definitions of the key terms used in the study. Then, the statement of the problem is highlighted, combined with the main aim and the three objectives, thus identifying the gap in Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in MSA identified in the Knowledge and Human Development Authority's (KHDA) reports, international proficiency tests and a growing body of literature. Furthermore, this chapter sheds light on the researcher's motivation for pursuing this study. Finally, a justification is presented for the study's significance by reviewing several studies conducted in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that targeted the field of Arabic education for non-native speakers, in order to underscore the uniqueness of this study.

1.2 Definition of Key Terms

The purpose of this section is to clarify how the key terms will be utilised and their given context in the proposed study, to provide the reader with a more robust understanding.

Language Variation refers to the variation in a language, wherein it is split into multiple dialects. These variations may be the product of regional divisions, class divisions, or other situations that lead to a split between linguistic communities. Most frequently, one form is considered the 'high' or 'standard' form, and used in more formal, professional and academic situations, while the lower form or forms are used in less formal situations. In Arabic, the high form is MSA, while the low forms are several different regional dialects (RDs) (Al Ahmad 2018). **Modern Standard Arabic** refers to the high form of Arabic that is taught in schools and is used in most formal and professional communication. It is also the form of Arabic whose proficiency is most frequently discussed in the literature (Al Ahmad 2018).

Regional Dialect refers to a collection of regional forms of Arabic that are used on a daily basis in most informal situations. They are distinct from MSA, and in some cases are distinct from one another. The RD is typically acquired naturally, without formal instruction (Alsobh, Abumelhim & Banihani 2015).

Linguistic Environment refers to the language(s) predominantly used in a specific environment. The linguistic environment in Dubai's British schools is dominated by the English language, although a minority of students use RDs of Arabic, as well as other languages (Topçiu 2015).

Dubai's British Schools are a group of schools that use the British education system, including British curricula and standards. All subjects are taught in English, except for Arabic and Islamic studies, with limited sessions for Arabic-speaking students (British Schools in the Middle East 2020).

Arabic-speaking Students are those who speak a dialect of Arabic as a first language, and use some form of Arabic as a primary mode of communication in non-formal settings, such as at home. Legally, for the purposes of the KHDA, this term also includes anyone who holds a passport from a country where the official language is Arabic (KHDA 2020).

Proficiency refers to the level of mastery of a language, as consistently measured against established criteria (Thomure 2019).

Language Management refers to the manner in which the usage of a language is controlled by an institution. Typically, such institutions are governmental, and frequently they are connected to the education system. In Dubai, Arabic language instruction is managed by the KHDA through the process of adopting curricula, standards and the number of sessions dedicated to teaching the language (Alkutich 2017).

1.3 The Statement of the Problem

The statistics published on the KHDA website indicate that the 71 British schools in Dubai are inspected annually by the Dubai School Inspection Bureau. These schools were rated based on student proficiency in all subjects as follows: outstanding (n=14), very good (n=16), and good and acceptable (n=41) (KHDA 2019). The statistics showed that none of the Arabic departments in the 71 schools achieved the level of 'outstanding' or 'very good' in terms of student proficiency in the Arabic language (KHDA 2020), as seen in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1: The ratings of the Arabic departments regarding Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools.

The ratings of the British	Outstanding	Very good	Good and acceptable
schools in Dubai against			
the KHDA criteria	14	16	41
The ratings of the Arabic	Good	Good and acceptable	Good and acceptable, and
departments of these			weak
schools			

These statistics published on the KHDA website indicate that the Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in the British schools is the weak point across all subjects (KHDA 2019). Within the same context, although Arabic-speaking students make up the majority of students in some outstanding British schools, the performance of those students in English is better than their performance in the Arabic language (KHDA 2019). There are three likely explanations for this phenomenon. One possibility is that language immersion significantly improves student achievement in the target language, as students who learn all of their subjects in English gain proficiency in the language far more rapidly. Another explanation is related to the language variation that characterises the Arabic language, as the students may not speak MSA outside of school, but rather a RD that is significantly different to MSA. Because of this variation in the languages, MSA becomes virtually a foreign language that requires constant practice and the benefit of immersion. According to Taha (2017), variation in the Arabic language presents a

challenge for students switching between an RD and MSA. As a result, MSA is seen as the least preferred subject for students in schools (Alzeny 2016). Within the same context, the distance between MSA and RD is set to interfere directly and consistently with the acquisition of language (Ribeiro Daquila 2020).

The third possible explanation has little to do with language, and instead focuses on motivation. The parents of the students in both types of schools have already demonstrated a clear preference for one language over the other, simply through their choice of school. It is thus likely that the parents care about the students' proficiency in that particular language. If a student's parents do not consider the study of one of those languages to be important, it is unlikely that the student will be motivated to put forth a lot of effort.

Regardless, it is a matter of fact that Arabic-speaking students in British schools are achieving more effectively in English than Arabic (Alahmad 2018). This leads to the need to investigate the different aspects of the problem described above. One of the factors that might result in hindering Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools is the linguistic environment at school and its tremendous impact on the students' levels in the Arabic language. Because the language of instruction is English for all subjects except Arabic and Islamic studies, the students are almost entirely immersed in the English language. Thus, they have little opportunity to practise Arabic. Although the students may use Arabic for informal social interactions, they tend to use RDs rather than MSA. The learning environment is what takes place through teacher–student and student–student interaction (Sağlam & Salı 2013). Since Arabic-speaking students in British schools are expected to use English only during the school day, in the long run this situation will inevitably negatively impact their level in the Arabic language (Alahmad 2018).

Furthermore, the Progress International Reading Literacy Study, which measured students' proficiency in their native language, showed that of the 45 countries that participated in 2011, including several Arab countries, the UAE ranked 34th. This shows that the UAE still performs below the international scale average (Thomure 2019).

Upon reviewing the literature related to teaching Arabic, it is apparent that there is a growing gap in student proficiency in Arabic throughout the Arab world in general, and in the UAE in particular (Taha 2017). It has been argued that this growing gap is related to the

language variation that characterises the Arabic language and hinders the progress of students in improving their proficiency (Horn 2015). Variation in Arabic appears to affect the learners' proficiency by reducing their awareness of the phonological formation of words, which is essential to the acquisition of phonics (Horn 2015). Furthermore, it has been claimed that language variation in Arabic produces significant difficulties for the Arabic-speaking community, as well as significantly adding to the hindrance of educational improvement in the Arabic language (Alsobh, Abumelhim & Banihani 2015). Variation in the Arabic language is represented in the phenomenon of 'diglossia', which is a sociolinguistic term belonging to a state where two language varieties occur at the same time and are utilised under several conditions in the society (Rafha 2018). The two varieties in the Arabic language are the RD and MSA. Brito (2017) argued that the linguistic environment significantly influences language improvement. Accordingly, it is challenging for Arab students to become higher achievers in the Arabic language because they are required to use only MSA. This challenging situation is perceived as an expected result because what they use at home and their daily life is, to some extent, different from what they learn at school. These problems lead, in turn, to inadequate language competence as well as lowering the level of self-confidence among Arabic-speaking students (Ibrahim 2011). Children's initial language environment is of great importance to the acquisition of their vocabulary. A milestone study found that decreased exposure to language given by parents significantly influenced children' language improvement (Onnis, Truzzi & Ma 2018). Additionally, much research has investigated whether the gap between MSA and the RD could be the only barrier in the process of learning Arabic (Ibrahim 2011). It is believed that changes in the learning environment are significant towards student learning. The more students use the target language, the more effectively they acquire and vice versa (Wu & Zhang 2017).

Upon reviewing the literature related to the field of teaching Arabic to native speakers in the UAE in general, and Dubai in particular, and according to Hanani (2009), Litz and Scott (2016) and Taha (2017), there has been limited research targeting Arabic education. Therefore, research is still required to shed light on the approaches through which Arabic is taught in order to understand how the process of teaching Arabic can be efficiently developed in the context of Dubai's British schools. Such research might contribute to enhancing Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language. The gap in student proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools depicted by the statistics published in the KHDA website is consistent with that detailed in the literature concerning the gap pertaining to the language variation and its influence on students' proficiency in Arabic. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the factors influencing Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in the context of Dubai's British schools in order to acquire a better understanding of teaching Arabic, provide a set of recommendations that may contribute to bridging the current gap in proficiency, and shed light on this overlooked area of research.

1.4 Aim & Objectives

1.4.1 Research Aim

The aim of this study is to investigate the factors influencing Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools in order to acquire a better understanding of the phenomenon with a view to providing stakeholders with a set of recommendations that may assist in bridging the gap in the students' proficiency.

1.4.2 Research Objectives

1- To understand how the variation in the Arabic language influences Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in Arabic in Dubai's British schools.

2- To gain insight into the influences of the linguistic environment at Dubai's British Schools on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language.

3- To determine the perceptions of the leaders, teachers and parents regarding the influence of the language management of Arabic on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools.

The researcher proposes that the achievement of the three research objectives will fulfil the aim of this study. In order to more efficiently achieve these objectives, they are converted into questions that will guide the process of data collection. Within the context of research, it has been argued that identifying research questions is of great importance. Furthermore, to obtain the precise question demands a clear understanding of that which is being investigated (Khoo 2005). Moreover, it is recommended to keep the questions simple but challenging enough to be engaging (Khoo 2005). Specifying research questions is a vital step in research as it narrows the research aim and objectives down to the particular field that the study approaches. It has been argued that research questions control the preference of methodology, techniques, sample, sample size, data gathering tool and data analysis methods (Doody & Bailey 2016).

1.5 The Significance of the Study

In the UAE in general, and in Dubai in particular, several studies were conducted targeting the field of teaching Arabic to non-native-Arabic-speaking students. For instance, a case study conducted by Sakho in 2012 at the British University in Dubai investigated the impact of a number of variables, most of which were individual ethnographic variables, on designing Arabic learning materials for non-Arab students in a particular international school in Dubai. In this study, the principal target audience was Arabic teachers (Sakho 2012). On the level of curriculum delivery, Alkutich (2017) conducted a study concerning the restrictions of Arabic curriculum delivery as a foreign language in the UAE. The research aimed to investigate the constraints that challenge the teaching and learning of Arabic as a foreign language, such as teaching speaking skills and understanding student differentiation, and focused on the learning resources, classroom projects, and teaching practices (Alkutich 2017). Razem conducted a study in 2020 that highlighted the attitudes of non-Arabic-speaking students' parents towards implementing Arabic as an additional language in Dubai, and found the importance of engaging the parents of expatriate students.

Although those studies all involved the teaching of Arabic within schools in Dubai, they all focused on the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language to non-native Arabic students. While the lessons learned from these studies are relevant, they deal with a completely different type of student. This study differs as it focuses on Arabic being taught to native Arabic-speaking students, a topic that even fewer studies have addressed. One such study was conducted among primary school students at the British University in Dubai in 2018 by a Master of Education researcher (Al Ahmad 2018). However, that study only focused on primary school students, while the current study will also include secondary sc2hool students. Furthermore, Al Ahmad's (2018) research involved a case study, while this study will reach further, and be more data-oriented. This research may thus be seen as an expansion of the previously discussed literature. It will not only expand the scope, but will also provide a more robust body of data than previous studies. In addition to the quantitative and qualitative analysis of students' work, the current study will include questionnaires and interviews with the parents, leaders, teachers and students. By analysing more data, both in terms of the depth and breadth, it is hoped that this study will be especially valuable to both educators and administrators.

This study will not only provide insight into learners of all ages, but also illuminate the influence of the linguistic environment in schools such as the British ones where English is the

dominant language used for tuition. Furthermore, this study reviews the managing role of the KHDA in teaching the Arabic language in this context by highlighting the influences of the curriculum, standards and the number of Arabic sessions dedicated to teaching Arabic-speaking students. The researcher considers highlighting the role of the KHDA and the linguistic environment as being of great significance, since most of the previous research overlooked these two main factors in the process of teaching and learning Arabic.

Furthermore, one of the significant elements that distinguishes this study is the holistic approach implemented through highlighting the role of the parents, students and teachers and leaders in the process of teaching the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools. It is worth mentioning that most of the previous studies concentrated on the role of administrators, as well as teachers, and focused on younger learners. Studying learners at various stages of the learning process will thus provide insight into the factors that influence their proficiency.

In addition to studying an area that has been previously neglected, it is a topic that is of great importance both to the UAE and the entire Gulf region. Because of their significant levels of interaction with foreign nations, the Gulf nations are home to numerous schools with instructional languages other than English. In Dubai alone, the KHDA monitors schools using more than 15 different foreign languages, in addition to Arabic. While the focus of this study is Dubai's British schools, the students of these other foreign language schools are facing similar challenges (KHDA 2019), this study should help to provide insight into some of these challenges. It may be of particular value to the KHDA and other educational institutions across the Gulf region who are responsible for improving the quality of the Arabic education delivered to students.

1.6 Rationale of the Study

It is widely accepted that Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools is below the expected levels and criteria adopted by the KHDA when compared to the other subjects, mainly English (KHDA 2020). As stated above, Arabic-speaking students achieve better in English than Arabic. This complicated situation has drawn the attention of stakeholders in order to acquire a better understanding of this phenomenon.

Since the researcher is an Arabic language teacher in a British school and has spent eight years teaching Arabic in the field, which has contributed to providing a complete picture of Arabic-speaking students' different educational needs in the Arabic language, this background provided the rationale

to target this overlooked area of research in order to develop a set of recommendations that might help in bridging the gap in students' proficiency. Within the same context, it has been observed that during the Arabic sessions, students frequently ask the researcher (in his role as a teacher) to allow them to use English to express their thoughts. To a lesser extent, the students demand to use RD rather than MSA, even though the latter is compulsory for use in the field of schooling. This infers the reduced amount of vocabulary they have, which might be associated with the linguistic environment at the school, as well as at home, alongside the extent of exposure to MSA in their daily lives. In this regard, it is of great importance to shed light on the influence of the linguistic environment on students' as well as parents' language preferences. In this regard, Duursma et al (2007) stated that the amount of language used by parents at home is linked to children's linguistic ability. This echoes previous research conclusions that native language preservation across generations is influenced by the language employed at home. Somehow, the linguistic environment at school plays a primary role in shaping students' language preference, which influences the language used at home. For example, in the context of this study, those Arabic-speaking students who are fully immersed in English in their linguistic environment at school are more likely to use English at home, as it is not only the language they use extendedly in schools, but also that of technology (e.g. YouTube) and television shows. Furthermore, when the father favoured talking in English this led, on average, to higher rates in English vocabulary in the students, and vice versa. Accordingly, the aim of this research emerges from the necessity to acquire a greater understanding of the factors influencing Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools in order to provide stakeholders with valuable recommendations that might assist in bridging the gap in Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language.

CHAPTER TWO BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

2.1 Overview of the Arabic Language

The Arabic language shapes and influences how Arabs understand, judge and associate with the world (Abed 2007). Moreover, it influences the characteristics and the nature of Arabs' thoughts and judgments, and therefore constitutes an essential component of a person's identity as a person and, more importantly, as a member of a group and a community (Abed 2007). The Arabic language is the lifeblood that flows through Arabs' veins and through the thoughts of the people of the 22 countries of the Arabic-speaking world, thus producing the plans of an entire civilisation (Gallagher 2011). The Arabic language represents and reflects the historical and spiritual practices of Arabs and, as such, is the single most crucial element of Arabs' identity. This is also true of the many non-Arabs who speak Arabic both as a first or second language. Arabic-speaking communities can be found outside of the Middle East that are not exclusively Arab. Furthermore, Arabic is used, to some degree, by all Muslims. Thus, even for people for whom Arabic is not their native language, it still serves as a link to the larger Muslim community.

The Arabic language is characterised by its flexibility and stability over more than 1,500 years. It might be the only language that has not undergone significant modifications, since educated Arabs are still capable of reading ancient books and classical documents with relative comfort, despite the variations in letter patterns (Dajani, Omari 2012). On the other hand, and according to Ahmed (2010), in recent decades the Arabic language has been inactive compared to other languages that have been given priority on political, business and educational levels. Statistics reveal that even though the Arabic language is amongst the most widely spoken languages in the world, appearing in 6th position and having 256 million speakers, it does not appear within the first ten languages studied throughout the world (Mat & Wan Abas 2016).

2.2 The Development of Modern Standard Arabic

Arabic has been identified as a member of the Semitic language group (Morrow, Castleton 2007). According to Aboelezz (2015), Semitic languages are a collection of languages related to the Afro-Asiatic group. Furthermore, the Semitic group is the most Easterly-based group in the Afro-Asiatic family that includes the Levant, the Fertile Crescent, and the Arabian Peninsula. The Arabic language incorporates several languages in the north of Africa, as well as in the Middle East. Furthermore, Arabic was generated from Afro-Asiatic languages that contain Hebrew and Ethiopian, among several others. It was also reported that the Semitic sub-family of languages includes unknown members such as Phoenician, threatened languages such as Aramaic, and survivors such as Hebrew and Arabic (Aboelezz 2015).

It has been argued that the growth of the Arabic language could be classified into five phases: Old Arabic, Early Arabic, Classical Arabic, Middle Arabic, and Modern Arabic (Aboelezz 2015). The samples that remain from the first phase (approximately the 7th century BC to the 3rd century AD) are minimal and provide little data about the construction of the language. In the context of shedding light on the origins of the Arabic language, it is worth mentioning that the most recently discovered sign of Arabic as a distinguished language appears to lie in an engraving that dates back to the 1st century AD (Aboelezz 2015). Prior to that, it had been recognised that the oldest known paradigm of the Arabic language was a type of writing located in the Syrian desert in the 4th century AD (Mat & Wan Abas 2016). Janet (2011) asserted that the state of the Arabic language in the Arabian Peninsula at that time is unknown. However, evidence based on inscriptions indicates that Arabic was utilised in separate areas in the Arabian Peninsula before the emergence of Islam. Moreover, it was reported that the earliest appearance of Arabic as a language in the Arabian Peninsula was in the 7th century AD (Al-Huri 2016).

Geographically, there are three areas in which the Arabic language was distributed. The first is the area where the Arabic language was spoken before the emergence of Islam in the northern and central Arabian Peninsula. The second area is the massive stretch of the province into which Arabic shifted as a result of the Islamic conquests in the south areas of the Peninsula. The third area is situated outside the geographical stretch of the Arabian Peninsula, the so-called 'peripheral enclaves' (Janet 2011).

Al-Huri (2016) remarked that in the group of Semitic languages, the Arabic language alongside Hebrew is the most reviewed due not only to the awareness of academics of Semitic languages with the Arabic language and the related resources of data about its history, but also its evident stability, and particularly its recognition of a declensional mode. The Semitic origins of the Arabic language and its fundamental variations from Indo-European languages are revealed in its phonological, morphological, and syntactic constructions. These variations and their cultural embeddedness are what encourage researchers to study Arabic in various areas of linguistics. For example, the verb system with its origins reflects a feature of Classical Arabic that is both captivating and precise in its construction and linguistic philosophy (Ryding 2014). Moreover, evidence indicates the existence of the Arabic language through ancient times based on the documents composed by ancient civilisations, the foremost example amongst them being The Epic Gilgamesh which is dated to 4,000 BC and formulated in a Sumerian script, which some orientalists consider to be developed from the Arabic language (Yaacob 2014). According to Yaacob (2014, p. 282):

the Semitic languages which as postulated by schlozar consisted of Acadian, Aramaic, Syriac, Phoenician, Babylonian-Assyrian, Arabic and Hebrew. However, a group of linguists argue that Arabic had assumed its classical form not shortly before seven century C.E but actually already during ancient times and [as] such has to be considered the main stem from which all other Semitic languages evolved later on.

The following example in Table 2.1 indicates that Arabic was the mother of all Semitic languages, as claimed by a group of linguists (Yaacob 2014).

Arabic	Hebrew	Syriac	Ancient Phoenician	Babylonian Assyrian
Ma 🖬	Mā	Mā	Mi	Mi

Table 2.1: An example showing that the Arabic language is the mother of all Semitic languages.

Table 2.1 shows that the Arabic word for 'what' is "Ma". It is clear that the word "Ma" is used in exactly the same form and pronunciation in both Hebrew and Syriac, with a minimal difference in the last vowel of Phoenician and Assyrian (Yaacob 2014).

It is stated that a break does not punctuate the history of the Arabic language, particularly between the Old and the New Arabic. Most scholars of Arabic would manage to

recognise that New Arabic describes a new kind of language, similar to that of the Romance languages vis-à-vis Latin, even though they may differ from how it appeared. Several of the characteristics of New Arabic are the same as Old Arabic and can be practised for the restoration of pre-diasporic Arabic (Versteegh 2010).

It has been stated that the Arabic language reflects and positively measures the strengths and weaknesses of Arab civilisation that represent the construction, growth, and reforms of the Arabic language Abed 2007). The growth of any civilisation is intrinsically connected to the development of the language recognised in that civilisation, and significant linguistic changes frequently follow the rise of civilisations (Abed 2007). The Arabic language is the language of the Holy Qur'an, as well as the language of a unique culture that influenced the world for numerous centuries in the disciplines of science, philosophy and the humanities, thus signifying a central component both in developing and representing Arab educational identity. It is the most notable and defining characteristic of Arab culture and society and, arguably, is the only fundamental part that grants Arabs some spirit of identity and of relating to one nation (Abed 2007).

2.3 Outside Influences on the Arabic Language

Historically, the Arabic world has been exposed to various types of invasions, including military, commercial and cultural. The colonisers dominating the Arab world sought to obliterate the indigenous cultural identification by imposing their languages and eliminating the Arabic language. For instance, French colonialism endeavoured to impose the French language among all Arabic countries under its authority. Within the same context, Zaytoni (2013) described "the French colonisation which has worked hard to fight the Arabic language, marginalise it and replace it with French". Moreover, Egypt was exposed to British colonisation in the years between 1882 and 1922. During the era of colonisation, the British endeavoured to obliterate the Arabic language through setting anti-Arabic policies such as establishing around 20 English schools. Furthermore, the coloniser changed the language of curricula in primary and secondary schools to English (Yacoub 2015).

In the same context, Léglise, Migge (2008) stated that several studies concentrated on bringing attention to the linguistic situation as well as the inequalities in societies that had appeared in previously colonised countries due to European imperialism's increase around the world, and how they proceeded to attack the linguistic and social formation of these countries, in particular the policies related to the local language. Furthermore, there is no doubt that the colonial systems of education performed an influential role in building the coloniser's language in its dominant location. Colonial education systems supported amongst others the political, economic and educational plans of the colonial powers. Ahmed (2010) reported that one of the factors that contributed to hindering the prosperity of the Arabic language during the colonial era was the imported education with its strong emphasis on the English language. As a result, the Arabic language was neglected in favour of the colonial language. Furthermore, it is evident that during the colonial era, people were required to master the language of the coloniser in order to gain employment.

Using RD was promoted by colonisers to ensure that Arabic speakers could not proficiently use Classical Arabic. In the early 1900s in Cairo, William Wilcox attributed the lack of Egyptian innovation to a claim that MSA was weak and negatively influenced Arabs' innovation and creativity in the field of education. He also claimed that the RD provided its speakers with more flexibility and a vast range of vocabulary and expressions (Al Allaq 2015).

Despite the attempts of colonisers, passion for learning Arabic grew through colonisation changes, as well as through the explosion of oil resources in the Arab regions. Following the recognition of the Arabic language by the United States (US), the passion for learning Arabic was also enhanced: "The lingual gambol which brought the data technology revolution and the extent of the World Wide Web [internet] in the last decade of the twentieth century has added to the development of Arabic" (Dajani 2015, p. 2).

The Arabic language consists of 26 consonants; each one has three different unique shapes that must be used at the beginning, middle and end of any word. Furthermore, four different vowels are used above or below the letters. The function of these four vowels is of great importance due to their role in the process of recognising the accurate meaning of the word, as well as the tense of verbs.

2.4 Modern Standard Arabic and Regional Dialects

The Arabic language has two primary forms: the variety of spoken Arabic language, which is known as the RD, and the other form which is known as MSA. MSA is used in formal settings such as broadcast media and the field of education, while the RD is used in daily conversation (Leikin, Ibrahim & Eghbaria 2013). There are four principal RDs of Arabic spoken in the Arab world, with dialectic differences in various countries: al Moroccan (North Africa), Egyptian (Egypt and Sudan), Levantine (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Palestine), and Iraqi/Gulf (Examining the origins of Arabic ahead of Arabic Language Day 2020).

Variation in the Arabic language (MSA and RDs) influences the level of Arabicspeaking students' proficiency in their native language (Leikin, Ibrahim & Eghbaria 2013). This essentially means that the MSA that students learn in school is their second (or possibly third) language because it is different, in many aspects, from their mother tongue, an RD of Arabic. This language variation is far more profound than the difference in accents found in many languages. This can be illustrated through the following example showing how the phrase "أريد", which means 'I want', is used in different Arabic countries. In the UAE RD, the word vowel sounds, but with different consonants. Syrians, meanwhile, use "أريد" "beddi", which shares its final vowel sound with the other two. The word used in MSA, however, is "أريد" "oredo", which bears no similarity to any of the RD words.

Figure 2.1 shows how one word has different pronunciations around the Arabic countries depending on their RD.



Figure 2.1 Different pronunciations around the Arabic countries depending on the RD.

To expand on this point, the RD varies from one country to another. For instance, the word for 'car' in a few Arabic countries is سيّار "sayyara", but in other countries it is "عَرَبِية" "arabeyya". It is reported that the RD and MSA do not have identical phonological inventories, with a small number of phonemes being realised differently (Boudelaa & Marslen-Wilson 2013). This complex situation of the Arabic language represents the existence of two main varieties, referred to as diglossia (Al Ahmad 2018).

2.5 The Influence of Diglossia on Learning Arabic

It has been argued that the diglossic situation in Arabic has negative impacts on the acquisition of the necessary competency in the two varieties of Arabic language (Leikin, Ibrahim & Eghbaria 2013). It is worth noting that the usage of RDs plays a role in hindering students' proficiency in the Arabic language and expands the gap between the two forms (Al-Huri 2012). In the same respect, many researchers emphasised the role of the first years of children's lives in shaping their linguistic abilities and skills. Within the same context, Onnis, Truzzi and Ma (2018) stated that in the first years of life, children improve their language skills through interactions with their family and other social settings, which allow them to understand and communicate actively. Arab children acquire RDs from their linguistic environment and learn MSA in schools; this is theorised by many scholars to have an influence on students' mastery of MSA because what they acquired in their social settings in the preschool period is different in many respects from what they learn academically in schools (Haddad 2012). Arabic-speaking students growing up in an Arabic-speaking society need to learn both the RD practised in everyday life and MSA for writing and formal purposes.

This diglossic situation presents particular difficulties for experts involved in the evaluation of students' emergent learning skills, such as speech-language pathologists, reading experts and teachers (Khamis-Dakwar & Makhou 2014). Despite an immediately increasing number of published works on the Arabic language and reading attainment that consider Arabic diglossia, most if not all possible Arabic language and reading evaluation devices do not qualify the analysis of the primary outcome of linguistic overlap (or lack of) on students' proficiency in the language (Khamis-Dakwar & Makhou 2014).

CHAPTER THREE CONTEXTUALISATION

3.1 The Context of the Study

In this study, the target context is Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in a group of Arabic and British schools in Dubai. All Arabic language instruction in Dubai is under the purview of the KHDA, who are the monitoring entity for all private schools in Dubai, including the British-medium schools (KHDA 2019). According to Bdeir (2019), there are about 185 private schools with 17 different curricula in the emirate of Dubai, with approximately 280,000 students from around 180 nationalities.

The Dubai School Inspection Bureau (DSIB) team are responsible for administering an annual inspection of the private schools in Dubai. Annually, the DSIB team manages 4 to 5 days of inspection in Dubai's British schools in order to ensure that the teaching and learning process is aligned with the framework established by the KHDA (2019, 2020). By the end of the inspection, the inspectors leave the school with a set of recommendations that aim to promote the teaching and learning process (Alkutich 2017). Within the recommendations, there is a section assigned to the Arabic language that aims to reform how the language is being taught and promoted. Within the same context, according to Thomure (2019), Dubai's private schools are inspected annually. The reports and ratings of those inspected schools are published on the KHDA website, where an 'outstanding' rating indicates that the school performs and produces excellent work on a series of elements including the school's culture, classroom environment, educational criteria and curriculum delivery, safety, provisions for special needs students, and students' achievements and progress in all subjects (Thomure 2019). The inspection reports are intended to provide an in-depth review and analysis of the production and performance of Dubai schools. These reports include a 'parent report' section that provides parents with specific information about the quality of education produced by their child's school, thus assisting them to make knowledgeable choices (Thomure 2019). Furthermore, each report covers specific information about the quality of provisions possible for children with special needs, as well as the quality of the early years' education. The data included in the annual school are intended to help parents to cooperate with schools as associates in their children's learning, while promoting the school's development (KHDA 2020). To expand, the inspectors are specialised in inspecting the Arabic departments and focus on the quality of teaching Arabic compared to the other

departments in the same school. Further, they measure the students' progression during the sessions they observe and during the previous year by reviewing the students' books, videos of students' speaking, assessments and other metrics to measure the students' progression through the year. The Arabic language inspectors issue their report linked to the Arabic language based on a framework mandated by the KHDA .It is worth stating that the standards adopted are derived from different leading countries in education such as the United Kingdom, and are considered the foundation for organising the teaching–learning process of the Arabic language in all private schools in Dubai, and not only the British schools. The KHDA has one set of standards relating to the Arabic language, which is employed in all types of private schools in Dubai including the Arabic, American, and British schools (Al Ahmad 2018).

3.2 An Overview of the Education System of the UAE

The UAE comprises seven semi-autonomous emirates positioned at the north-east point of the Arabian Peninsula. The country was established in December 1971 (Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan 2020). Arabic is the only language mentioned in the UAE's constitution, stipulating that it is the first language of the majority of the people, the language of the majority religion, Islam, and a lingua franca for foreigners and locals alike (Gallagher 2011). Since its union as a country, the UAE has managed earnings and profits from the rich oil resources to invest in various sectors such as infrastructure, tourism and education (Kennetz & Carroll 2018). Within the same context, the discovery of oil has led to massive immigration, mainly to Dubai and Abu Dhabi, where more than 89% of the current population is foreign-born. Due to the clear need for international schools (Ribeiro Daquila 2020), the UAE also placed greater emphasis on Arabic as the national language (Thomure 2019).

It has been argued that the sector of education in the UAE has undergone a tremendous increase since 2000 (Ribeiro Daquila 2020). The UAE has focused more on modernising its education system than most other Arab nations (Warner, Burton 2015). The field of education has grown as a critical contributor to the country's aims. Sheik Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nayhan stated that the most prominent use that can be made of natural resources is to invest in creating generations of educated and qualified people (Warner, Burton 2015). Moreover, in 2007, more than one-third of the UAE's budget was spent in the field of education, totalling \$2.7 billion (Warner, Burton 2015). This figure increased in 2011 when the allocation for education and

social development grew to 46% of the national budget. By 2016, the budget for education had increased to AED 6.5 billion and passed 10 billion the following year (Budget 2020). This concrete performance reflects a substantial emphasis on the financing, investment and strengthening of the field of education (Thomure 2019). The UAE focuses on strengthening humans through investing in educated people. This is part of the UAE's 2021 Vision of making the country one of the best nations in the world (Warner, Burton 2015).

The educational system in the UAE has witnessed vital growth since the establishment of the country in 1971. By forming the Ministry of Education (MOE), formal schooling began in 1972 (Thomure 2019). On the other hand, informal schooling that uses the RD instead of MSA as a medium of instruction has recently emerged in a reduced number of establishments such as the Al Ramsa institute that specialises in teaching through the Emirati dialect (Ribeiro Daquila 2020). Its founders, Ms. Al Fardan and Mr. Alkaabi, have published more than 20 books in the Emirati dialect. Their goal of establishing this institute is to familiarise the Emirati children with their culture and dialect (Ribeiro Daquila 2020).

In order to promote the field of education, the MOE authorised several bodies to manage the educational process in each emirate. Accordingly, there was the establishment of the KHDA in 2007 as a result of Law No. (30) that was promulgated in 2006 (Alkutich 2017). One of the KHDA's duties is the promotion of education, including the Arabic language. To expand, several initiatives have been introduced, and many plans have been supported over the years to assist and attain solutions for accelerating the improvements of the Arabic language statutes and standards adopted in formal settings (Thomure 2019). Recently, the UAE has been at the forefront and worked hard to design, plan and promote Arabic language initiatives to preserve the language, and improve as well as modernise the pedagogical principles of instruction (Alahmad 2018).

The UAE has tested several schools of thought, approaches and models over the years in order to develop the educational system in general, and the process of teaching Arabic in particular; for example, bilingual education and teaching in Arabic, with the English language only taught as a foreign language in the early years (Litz & Scott 2016). Later, a variety of other improvements in other fields were included such as STEM, along with significant changes affecting teachers and the administration. In the last few years, a standards-based approach has been trialled whereby the texts included for teaching Arabic were licensed from authentic Arabic children's literature (Thormure 2019), and a simplified version of the literature-based approach for teaching Arabic in early education, while national standardised testing was added in 2018 (Thormure 2019). Currently, the MOE remains generally focused on maintaining a modern education system (MOE 2020). Compared to other countries the educational development campaign has been a short one, although it has been both ambitious and promising.

3.3 Government Initiatives

The UAE leadership has been conscious of the value of the Arabic language. This is visible in the support of non-Arabic-speaking students to study the basics of the Arabic language in private schools (Al Allaq 2015). The UAE has addressed Arabic language education as a priority in previous years. As mentioned earlier, several initiatives and projects have been placed into practice in order to raise the profile of the Arabic language (Al Ahmad 2018), some of which have influenced the field of teaching Arabic positively, while other influences are yet to be seen (Thomure 2019). In this regard, it is worth noting the reading challenge initiative, which provides students with opportunities to read and then discuss in a competition format organised annually by the KHDA. The aim of this challenge is to make reading Arabic books a habit and motivate Arab students to read in Arabic and improve their proficiency (Arabic Reading Challenge 2021). In 2016, more than 3.5 million participants from 15 Arabic countries engaged in this challenge, with more than 50 million books read (Arabic Reading Challenge 2021).

Such initiatives will lead to greater success in the field of education (Al Ahmad 2018). According to Al Ahmad (2018), the UAE government has identified the distressing situation of the Arabic language in the Arabic world in general, and in the UAE in particular, which is reflected in the low proficiency of Arabic-speaking students. Accordingly, the UAE Cabinet authorised the formation of a Consultative Council for the Arabic Language in 2012 (Gokulan 2020). This decision echoes the vision of mindful leadership. It reveals efforts by the national government to protect the identity of the UAE represented in the Arabic language, and to promote the Arabic language in the UAE through innovative schemes and approaches as per best practice (Al Allaq 2015). Some educators consider that in order to enhance Arabic language education in the UAE, several plans need to be put in place (Thomure 2019). First, regarding Arabic language teachers' preparation, it is recommended that schools will need to train in-service teachers who are willing to be a part of the development plan (Thomure 2017).
Second, the process of modernising how the Arabic language is taught became a priority for the MOE in the UAE. The MOE has been working to offer several beneficial training and development programmes aimed at promoting the process of teaching and learning the Arabic language in schools.

The UAE launched various plans and projects to raise the profile of the Arabic language such as the Kalima Project that translates and publishes into Arabic over 100 of the most popular books of literature and science from different foreign languages (Al Allaq 2015). Moreover, in 2014, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashed Al Maktoum created the Mohammed bin Rashid Arabic Language Award, which encourages outstanding participation in assisting the Arabic language and acknowledges its supporters, besides highlighting flourishing and exceptional experiences in advertising and teaching the Arabic language (Al Allaq 2015). Furthermore, Sheikh Al Maktoum recognised five aspects in which the Arabic language should be improved: education, media, Arabisation, technology, and the preservation of the Arab linguistic culture (Al Allaq 2015). It has been stated that this award is a significant move towards improving and maintaining the Arabic language, along with its precious Arabic culture.

Corresponding with the World Arabic Language Day, also recognised as the UN Arabic Language Day, which is celebrated annually from the 18th of December, the week-long initiative that is also backed by other countries such as Kuwait and Bahrain involves several events and projects intended to increase knowledge and awareness about the value of practising the language and to guarantee that it is utilised on all programmes and platforms (Thomure 2019). In 2013, the hashtag of this initiative reached 70 million people, and 200 million in 2014, while in 2015 it reached 500 million (Arabic for Life 2014). The initiative has been capable of generating more resources in Arabic on the internet, and with 155 million Arab internet users in its fourth year, investigations attempt to examine matters linked to the Arabic language and the difficulties it encounters, while presenting members with a chance to interact with others (Mary & Achkhanian 2020).

Numerous initiatives have been demonstrated to be successful and useful not only in the UAE, but also elsewhere in the Arab world (Thomure 2017), although the real educational influence of these initiatives is yet to be seen. This will require some longitudinal analysis and tracking of the influence of these initiatives on the teaching and learning of the Arabic language, and on the youth's knowledge about their language (Thomure 2019; Mary & Achkhanian 2020), The initiative of the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation aims to encourage and strengthen the use of the Arabic language across the world and has reached millions of Arabs with its hashtag, while it attempts to maintain its purpose in awarenessraising and promoting the Arabic language (Mohammed Bin Rashid Award for Arabic Language 2020). The Foundation has led to the most advanced edition of the initiative ("BilArabi" or 'In Arabic') to encourage Arabs to show their support for maintaining the language by practising it as their principal method of conversation and communication over social media (Mary & Achkhanian 2020).

3.4 The Role of the KHDA

The KHDA oversees the management of the process of teaching and learning in Dubai's private schools, including the British ones, and has the authority to inspect schools in all subjects, including the Arabic language (Alkutich 2017), which is a priority for the KHDA since it is the official language (Thomure 2019).

Through the language management of Arabic, the KHDA has tested various approaches to promote the status of the Arabic language with the purpose of maintaining it. Nevertheless, it still encounters challenges in improving the teaching and learning process of the Arabic language, with students still underperforming (Speaker 2018). To improve the inspection process and achieve its goals, the KHDA and the inspection team, in cooperation with an organisation of school principals, agreed to the establishment of the 'What Works' initiative in September 2012. What Works comprises a range of experiences and events in which teachers and leaders from private schools are encouraged to participate and share their best practices in the field of schooling. Moreover, the What Works initiative is entirely sponsored by the KHDA but operated by schools, as the goal is to shift from competition to collaboration through the shared work across the private schools in Dubai in order to improve the teaching and learning process in all schools (Alkutich 2017). The purpose of the initiative is to provide schools with opportunities that will lead to improved practices in the field of education, which is part of Dubai's strategic plan in education (What Works 2018).

It has been stated that the objective behind originating the policy of school inspections is to track the progress of the teaching and learning process in Dubai's private schools, and also to work with those schools to improve the quality of teaching and learning, thus aiming to raise the profile of education in the UAE, including the Arabic language (Al Ahmad 2018). The Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and the ruler of Dubai, Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, declared a tool for achieving the UAE Vision 2021 when he announced the UAE National Agenda for 2021 in 2014, which aimed to generate an excellent

education policy and practice in which all institutions would be converted into active and smart teaching and learning environments (Warner, Burton 2015). As stated in his declaration, the National Agenda comprised eight pillars that would establish the grounds for the future growth of the UAE (Warner, Burton 2015). One of these pillars was the field of education, under which eight practical signs would map out the development and progress of the sector approaching the National Agenda. Under the National Agenda, the aim was to guarantee that 90% of pupils from grades 1 to 9, in both public and private schools, would have a high level of skills in the Arabic language (Thomure 2019).

In Dubai, all private schools must teach Arabic for native learners and Arabic for nonnative learners to cater to the linguistic demands of the linguistically diverse student groups. Therefore, Arabic departments have one report and rating for both Arabic- and non-Arabicspeaking students. It is worth mentioning that the adopted rating scale has five levels: outstanding, very good, good, acceptable, and weak (KHDA 2020).

Although Arabic is the official language of the UAE, the authorities also determined that Arabic is the language of all governmental institutions and chose 2008 as the year of 'national identity', where the Arabic language was emphasised (Gallagher 2011). Furthermore, there is challenge in terms of how Arabic is taught in schools, and an 'urgent overhaul' of its education methodologies is needed. It is, therefore, necessary that the Arabic language curriculum and educational managers in the UAE are authorised to design and execute such modifications; regrettably, though, more care and support has been placed on the teaching and learning of English (Gallagher 2011).

This focus on English is not solely the decision of the government. In the UAE, young people are surrounded by English, and use it frequently. It is used for recreational, as well as academic pursuits, and English is a prerequisite for many of the best jobs (El Masri 2012). Students thus view the learning of English as a valuable endeavour. Schools, in turn, must provide English education to their students. As a result, learning MSA is not viewed so positively. While schools require all students to learn MSA to some degree, for many students their instruction in MSA is minimal (Gallagher 2011).

One major issue here is that parents are faced with a difficult choice when it comes to selecting a school for their child. They may choose a school where their child's language of instruction will be Arabic, English or another language. The downside of this choice is that while the student will still learn Arabic in an English school, as well as English in an Arabic school, they are not likely to have a high proficiency in the second language of instruction, especially when compared to students for whom it is the primary language of instruction, as

the curriculum and assessment criteria are the same. Thus, even if a parent values the Arabic language and wishes their child to learn it, choosing to send their child to an Arabic-medium school likely means severely limiting their child's attainment in English, which could significantly impact their future prospects.

3.5 Educational Initiatives in Schools

On the level of teachers' preparation, the MOE has demanded that Arabic teachers pass a test in order to be licensed and authorised to teach in the country (Taha 2017). The test consists of two parts: the first part is subject knowledge, which measures the teachers' familiarity and knowledge in the Arabic language; and the second part is the pedagogical aspect, which concentrates on the teaching methods and strategies (Thomure 2017). This decision is expected to influence teachers' performance in the classroom, which of course will impact the students' proficiency in the Arabic language (Thomure 2019). Furthermore, school inspections, launched in 2009, provide evidence-based experiences concerning the quality of Arabic language education.

Due to the numerous challenges facing Arabic education, the stakeholders in the UAE need to come together and find solutions (Taha 2017). In 2012 Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum approved a high-powered panel that provided an evidence-based record in 2013 suggesting plans to modernise the teaching and learning of the Arabic language by 2021, along with five areas incorporating curriculum improvement, reading, teacher coaching and training, the role of media, and teaching Arabic for both Arabic- and non-Arabic-speaking students (Arabic for Life 2014). The record sheds light on issues from a survey of academics, and learners in several Arab countries, whereby over 70% of teachers and students considered that they have problems with grammar (Arabic for Life 2014). Within the context of raising awareness to boost the learning of Arabic, the government of the UAE excreted efforts to put into place several initiatives that might help students (Gokulan 2020).

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum also started a free educational programme for 50 million pupils in different parts of the Arab world at the World Government Summit in 2017. His Highness stated in this regard that the priority for the UAE is education (Gokulan 2020) He also stressed the importance of the Arabic language in enhancing the process of civilisation in order to bridge the cultural gap in the Arabic world (Gokulan 2020). The UAE's MOE began an Education 2020 policy, which is a series of bold five-year schemes intended to make meaningful qualitative development in the educational system, particularly in terms of how educators teach, and students learn (Gokulan 2020). Furthermore, smart learning applications, fresh teachers' regulations, accrediting and evaluations systems, as well as curriculum review, including the teaching of Arabic, are all components of the approach.

In 2011, Dubai developed a group of standards for the Arabic language as a core subject in schools. The standards-based seven approaches were described for the use of shared standards that were accurate and systematised across all schools and aligned to a particular limit with the means possible in schools. The growing experience and expertise in the field of teaching and learning the Arabic language is driving several stakeholders to consider modern methods that have not produced any effects to date. It is expected that by increasing awareness, this will stimulate the improvement of the teaching and learning of the Arabic language, and progression in a field that has been inactive for years. Future research in the area of Arabic language education in the UAE is of great significance due to its role in highlighting the current situation and suggesting the best solutions (Al Ahmad 2018).

With this insight, leadership, resources and management, the UAE aims to become the leading country in preserving and raising the profile of the Arabic language and how it is taught. It is public knowledge in the UAE that the current vision is encouraging and inspirational, but keeping focus will be required in order to guarantee efficient and beneficial long-term outcomes (Thomure 2019). The MOE encourages connections and partnerships across the universities in the UAE to establish courses, training workshops and postgraduate programmes aimed at training and providing Arabic teachers with the best practice and equipping them with the most updated strategies and teaching methods (Plecki, Elfers & Nakamura 2012). The main goal of this initiative is to provide the field of Arabic education with qualified Arabic teachers (Thomure 2019).

It is expected that significant progress will take place in the field of Arabic language education in the UAE (Al Ahmad 2018). The area of research on Arabic language classrooms and the practices occurring within them is of great importance, due to the role of research in shedding light on areas that need to be developed, and in order to ensure best practices that students can benefit from. Therefore, leadership is an added point that requires urgent consideration (Thomure 2017). Furthermore, Dubai schools' leaders and headteachers are required to integrate Arabic into different subjects such as music and physical education (Al Ahmad 2018). Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum took the responsibility for guaranteeing that everything is in place at the policy level in order to support the sector of

education in general, and the Arabic language in particular (Thomure 2017). His Highness also guaranteed that the national legislature in general, and the government of Dubai in particular, designated all the supplies and human resources necessary so that all plans and initiatives related to the Arabic language can continue and develop (Thomure 2019).

According to Thomure (2019), there are several challenges that negatively influence teaching Arabic in Dubai's schools in general, and in the British ones in particular. The first challenge is the lack of Arabic teachers' expertise, as well as the absence of an appropriate curriculum that meets all students' educational needs (Al Ahmad 2018). It has been claimed that Arabic teachers require in-depth training on how to teach Arabic to native speakers in order to create and design learning and linguistic practices that build on pupils' learning day by day (Thomure 2019). The second challenge that influences the teaching of Arabic is the quality of the Arabic language curricula and the sources utilised in schools. It is worth mentioning that most curricula available in schools are textbook-based, grammar-based, and are not well aligned with 21st century skills or the other subjects in school. Furthermore, there is a paucity of Arabic digital resources compared to other subjects. Recently, there has been progress in the creation and variety of Arabic children's books and resources, but there is more scope for children's literature to be employed as a primary language learning device in schools. This study is an attempt to fill a research gap in the field of teaching Arabic to the Arabic-speaking students in Dubai's British schools. It intends to investigate the influences of three factors in Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language: (i) the language variation in the Arabic language, whereby the researcher will investigate the influence of variation in Arabic, represented in the existence of MSA and RD, on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language; (ii) the influence of the linguistic environment in Dubai's British school on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency, since English is the dominant language and Arabicspeaking students are only exposed to the Arabic language during limited sessions; and (iii) the influence of the language management of Arabic, which is related to the role of the KHDA in adopting curricula, standards or sessions dedicated to teaching Arabic. Each of these factors potentially influences language learning through language-related factors, such as increased difficulty and reduced opportunities for practice, as well as non-language-related factors such as student motivation and parental expectations.

CHAPTER FOUR THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research that informed this study, both in terms of providing a theoretical framework as well as insight into similar studies. The section on the theoretical framework details the three theories that guide the research, while the literature review assesses previous research and explains how this study fits into the larger body of research.

The three theories that comprise the theoretical framework for this study are Language Variation Theory, Sociocultural Theory and Language Management Theory. Language Variation Theory relates to the splitting of a language into multiple dialects, which is a significant factor in the Arabic language. Because of this split, students studying the language find themselves speaking multiple dialects within different contexts, or linguistic environments. Sociocultural Theory highlights the role of the linguistic environment in shaping students' ability in the process of language learning, while Language Management Theory concerns the role of educational authorities in controlling linguistic environments, particularly within the classroom.

Although no studies specifically address all of the factors that influence the proficiency of Arabic-speaking students in Dubai's British schools, some of the major factors influencing language learning have been thoroughly studied within other contexts (Al Ahmad 2018). Diglossia, a split between two forms of a language, is a prominent feature of Arabic, as well as other languages, and adds to the complexity of learning a language. In the case of Arabic, the split is between MSA and the RDs. Because of this division, Arabic students find themselves in a complex linguistic environment, which significantly influences their proficiency in language learning as their experience of their language is split between their home environments where they speak RD and their school environment where they learn MSA (Thomure 2019). The school environment in Dubai is controlled almost entirely by the government as a result of language management, and is the responsibility of the KHDA.

In addition to reviewing the factors that will be the focus of this study, the literature review also addresses the concepts of diglossia and proficiency, as well as similar studies in other countries. Because this study seeks to understand factors that influence proficiency, it is necessary to quantify proficiency in a manner that can be assessed empirically. Multiple forms of assessment are reviewed along with the student-level and class-level criteria used by the KHDA. Similar research from around the globe is also reviewed, focusing on three countries that share some similarities, in terms of their linguistic situation, with Arabic-speaking students in Dubai's British schools: China, Switzerland and Greece.

4.2 Theoretical Framework

In this section of this study, the integration of the following three theories will be used to form the theoretical framework:

- 1- Language Variation Theory (William Labov 1972)
- 2- Sociocultural Theory (Lev Vygotsky 1978)
- 3- Language Management Theory (Bernard Spolsky 2009)

The researcher proposes that the synergy across these three theories will construct and guide the framework of this study. Language variation occurs due to the sociocultural diversity in different contexts (Labov 1972). This sociocultural diversity, and the interaction it fosters, is a necessary aspect of language learning (Vygotsky 1978). Another role of sociocultural diversity is language management, which requires cooperation and engagement between all the stakeholders in the community (Spolsky 2009). Therefore, the convergence of these three theories will embrace the aspects that each theory lacks individually.



Figure 4.1 The integration of the three theories in this study.

In attempting to identify the major factors that influence the proficiency of Arabicspeaking students in the Arabic language, it is necessary to study the various aspects of their language growth that determine their relationship to the language. The three aforementioned theories overlap and form a framework that allows us to understand how language learners Students experience the language at every level. Because of the variation of the Arabic language, there is a distinction between the RDs of Arabic spoken in students' homes and the more formal variety, MSA, that is used in their schools. For this reason, the schools represent a distinct linguistic environment. This is further complicated for students in Dubai's British schools, for whom the dominant language within their linguistic environment is English. Therefore, the KHDA is responsible for setting the curriculum and standards by which all Arabic-speaking students in Dubai are assessed. All three of these factors influence Arabicspeaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language.

4.2.1 Language Variation Theory

Language Variation Theory describes how languages present variation at almost all aspects and levels of the linguistic forms: phonetic and phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic (Labov 1972). Labov (1972, p. 188) stated that "it is common for a language to have many alternative ways of saying the same thing". This variation has revealed that all languages are innately changeable, including examples of constant variation which can continue to be passed down in a spoken language for centuries. Language Variation Theory asserts that languages are especially likely to vary from one country to another. Even in the same country, we might find several regional variations, and then some more subtle variations within individuals (Labov 1972).

Language Variation Theory had its practical origins in 1963, the year in which William Labov presented the first research on the topic at the seasonal conference of the Linguistic Society of America. This is also the year in which he published "The Social Motivation of a Sound Change" (Labov 1963). Interest in investigating language variation has increased since the 1960s, in part as a result of the methods and approaches that investigate the impacts of dialects, and to a lesser degree as a response to Chomskyan linguistic theory that had ignored the study of language in its social setting (Ammour 2012). It has been stated that no one can understand the growth of language development without taking into account the social life of the community in which it happens, or in other words, social strengths are frequently working upon language, rather than from some distant point in the past (Labov 2011).

Language variation that is related to society extends back to a unique approach, although the structuralists emphasised the importance of society for language in the early years of the 20th century. Arguably, the underlying hypothesis of sociolinguistics is that the variation we can witness in a particular language is not accidental. A variation in a language is socially meaningful. It is evident that the task of the sociolinguist is to quantify this variation and to provide a principled record of its existence (Hickey 2015). It relates to the usage of data from the speech society to explain variations in languages. Further, sociolinguistics is more commonly employed to propose a unique interdisciplinary range—the whole story of the relationship between language and society (Hazen 2010).

Language Variation Theory highlights linguistic variations in specific speech communities according to a variety of dividing criteria such as social class and region. The theory argues that language varies in several styles, but there are typically two main sorts of variation represented: RDs and the formal language (Honeybone 2011). This is precisely the case with Arabic, which is divided into MSA, the more formal version, and RDs such as Syrian, Egyptian or Gulf Arabic. According to Hickey (2015), language variation is primarily defined by social class. However, this is not really the case with Arabic, which is primarily defined by the region. While the primary divisions are by region, there is a class element in play, as less affluent people are more likely to speak a dialect that is more similar to MSA than their regional counterparts. This is especially interesting because in most countries where there is a high and a low form of the language, the high form is more frequently used by the wealthy. Even in countries with less pronounced diglossia, such as the US, more pronounced RDs tend to be more frequently associated with lower income people, while more wealthy and highly educated people speak a form of American English that is much more standard (Wilbanks 2020). In Arabic, another major factor is religion, as more religious people are more likely to have a better command of MSA, as it is the form of Arabic used for religious functions.

Language variation focuses on the connections between social formation, such as social class, and the linguistic composition reproduced in phonology and morphology (Ammour 2012). Arabic is no exception, as changes in spelling have occurred in conjunction with changes in pronunciation. At the same time, the theory indicates that variation occurs at the semantic level when there are different meanings for the same word from one dialect to another (Labov 1972). Language variation assumes that the most remarkable variations in languages lie in the grammatical structure and morphological divisions (Ferguson 1959). Labov (2011) concentrated on how speakers alter their speech, in terms of the number of alternatives that they perform for specific linguistic variables (Labov 1972). In Arabic, the grammatical

structure used in MSA is different from that used in various forms of RD. For example, in Syrian, Jordanian and Egyptian RD Arabic, the present tense is formed by adding a "b" sound to the beginning of the verb. However, in MSA the present tense is formed by adding one of four sounds, ("a", "na", "ya" or "ta") to the beginning of the verb, depending upon the subject. Language Variation Theory further assumes that such variation in semantics, syntax and morphology may contribute to influencing students' proficiency in their native language (Tegegne 2015).

Language Variation Theory suits this study of language acquisition among Arabic students because of the large degree of variation present in the Arabic language. This duality in the Arabic language is described as diglossia. Furthermore, it is argued that the Arabic language symbolises the world's most complex diglossic situation (Alsahafi 2016). This is because MSA and RDs vary in every aspect. In most other situations, either variation is not so complete because in other cases one is the parent language. For example, Dutch speakers and speakers of Afrikaans can generally understand each other, even though these are now considered two separate languages (Wilbanks 2020). Although MSA has gained superiority over the other varieties primarily through its impact on writing, it has coexisted with RDs for hundreds of years.

Furthermore, diglossia is theorised to have a significant influence on student language proficiency. Some researchers view the low level of reading skills amongst Arab students in the Arabic language as a result of the uniqueness of the orthography, as well as the dense morphological and syntactic system in the Arabic language due to the diglossic situation (Asadi & Ibrahim 2014). Because students naturally acquire RDs, the major differences in MSA make it akin to learning a second language rather than a new dialect of one's first language. Moreover, the variation enduring in Arabic produces significant difficulties for linguistic society. This difficulty produces significant demoralisation amongst native speakers of Arabic when they begin studying MSA (Alsobh, Abumelhim & Banihani 2015), which leads to the hindrance of educational improvement in the Arab world.

Within the same context, Arab children acquire the regional spoken dialect of the speech society to which they relate. However, learning MSA occurs principally as a result of formal guidance in reading. Consequently, MSA is nobody's first language. It is typically never used in conversation at home or anywhere in the region. The only places where one can hear MSA spoken are schools, mosques and formal speeches. This review is one step in the examination of how language variation between RDs and MSA might result in Arabic students having academic deficits in Arabic literacy in schools (Saiegh, Haddad 2011). Variation in the Arabic

language converges in showing that the phonological gap between the RD, which children acquire as a first language, and MSA, which is obtained principally as a result of formal instruction during schooling, does not foster the improvement of high-quality phonological symbols of MSA terms (Saiegh, Haddad 2011). Therefore, Arab children grow up speaking a particular spoken variety of Arabic practised in their everyday life, while at schools they are formally exposed to a different variety.

The rationale for choosing a language variation is that the Arabic language displays such a pronounced language variation, which negatively influences the proficiency of Arabicspeaking students. According to Saiegh-Haddad (2011), it has a significant impact on the process of language acquisition, which is a key element of language proficiency. Based on this assumption, Language Variation Theory will be the guiding theory of the first objective of this proposed study, namely to investigate how language variation in Arabic influences Arabicspeaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools.

Although language variation is not a recent theory, it is still used in the field of sociolinguistics to which this study is related. This has revealed that all languages are innately changeable, including examples of constant variation that can continue in a language for centuries. The process of investigating language variation proceeds by examining language performance in everyday social contexts and describing the linguistic variants following their cultural diffusion (Chambers & Schilling-Estes 2002). These events indicate the commencement of linguistic studies inspired by the description of linguistic variants associated with cultural factors (Chambers & Schilling-Estes 2002).

4.2.2 Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural Theory assumes that the linguistic environment shapes students' ability in a certain language, since language involves practice and exposure (Vygotsky 1978). Vygotsky argued that the linguistic environment, where young learners grow up and interact with teachers, friends and family, will influence their learning of languages (McLeod 2020). In Sociocultural Theory, learning occurs during the process of interaction between the child and the system of standard tools and activities that comprise the child's linguistic environment (McLeod 2020). Furthermore, Sociocultural Theory confirms that in the field of schooling, students not only model everything that has been provided by their teachers, but also transform it through the process of learning. Vygotsky stated that the process of learning any language is both personal and sociocultural. Therefore, it is of great significance to understand not only the individual, but also the cultural dimensions (Kozulin 2007). Furthermore, Vygotsky adapted the psychological notion of imitation as a method of recognising and developing psychological roles that were still inadequate for individualistic achievement. In Vygotsky's theory, imitation connects to all sorts of action of a particular kind carried out by the child in association with adults or with another child (Kozulin 2007). Sociocultural Theory assumes that play is a crucial element of learning, since it assists in opening up a zone of proximal growth in which children exceed their current level of ability (Vygotsky 1978). Furthermore, Vygotsky remarked that play and work are not contradictions, but rather from the perspective of language development hold the exact same psychological purpose. This emphasises the point that games are the original method of teaching children languages (Kozulin 2007). This part of Sociocultural Theory is especially applicable to the current study of Dubai's British schools, as particular attention is paid to casual and recreational interactions in addition to formal instruction.

Vygotsky (1978) proposed that the process of learning is not merely a separate topic. Some researchers have gone so far as to claim that learning always happens in social contexts (Mali & Kamble 2020). Vygotsky claimed that the child initially obtains knowledge through associations and connections with people, and then interprets this knowledge by engaging with the unique benefits it contains (Topçiu 2015). Vygotsky highlighted the importance of students gaining more knowledge in collaboration with their peers or mentors in real-life situations (Kurt 2020).

Interaction is responsible for the majority of the influence in a child's language development, since learning occurs in the process of interaction between a child's maturation and a system of standard tools and activities that the child stores from his/her sociocultural environment. In social interaction, young learners can engage in more advanced activities than the child can undertake alone. This occurs by breaking the activity into parts to make it more accessible, modelling new strategies, encouraging, supporting young learner's involvement in the more complex components, and completing the more difficult task components so that the learner can concentrate on other aspects (Gauvain 2020). The process of learning in its reasonable, designed, and planned form emerges in Sociocultural Theory as stimulating energy of growth, as a result rather than a foundation of learning expertise (Kozulin 2003). The contribution of Vygotsky to the field of education guides social responsibility, social perception, social assurance and social accountability. The theory of Vygotsky depends upon social interaction and the social improvement of the learner (Mali & Kamble 2020). Sociocultural Theory also suggests that the setting plays an essential part in learning (Hall 2019). In the case of Arabic-speaking students in Dubai's British schools, the languages they

learn through practice and assimilation tend to be either RDs of Arabic or even English, with MSA simply not used in this manner.

Sociocultural Theory also elaborates on the vital role of the linguistic environment in influencing students' proficiency. In his Sociocultural Theory, Vygotsky stated that exposure to a language in different social contexts has a fundamental role in improving people's proficiency in the language they are learning (Roberts 2013). Frequent exposure to a language has a tremendous influence on students' proficiency in learning it (Al-Zoubi 2018). Exposure to a specific language could be described as the connection that students have with the language they are endeavouring to learn (Al-Zoubi 2018). Vygotsky's work on the relationship between the individual and their linguistic environment contributes to solid methods for improving teaching-learning environments that ultimately contribute to the growth of language in children. Given the significance of exposure to a language in increasing proficiency, the degree to which Arabic-speaking students in Dubai's British schools use MSA is of particular interest. This study theorises that limited exposure to MSA results in poor proficiency. According to Al Ahmad (2018), the level of Arabic speaking students in the Arabic language in non-Arabic schools are affected by the dominance of English language. In fact, for most students, their exposure to MSA is limited to four-to-six classes per week (Curriculum Requirements for Private Schools in Dubai 2021) (Appendix 11).

The role of teachers is to support an advanced linguistic environment that leads to learning through social interaction. Vygotsky confirmed that in the field of schooling, students not only model everything that has been provided by the teachers, but also transform this through the process of learning. The communication between teachers and students is especially significant, and learning happens as a result of this communication (Topçiu 2015). Therefore, it is no surprise that several studies have confirmed that the usage of a language by teachers as a medium of classroom instruction has a significant influence on the students' proficiency in that language (Roberts 2013). The medium of instruction in most classes in Dubai's British schools is English, rather than MSA, which significantly limits the students' exposure to the latter. This study will also consider the use of MSA within MSA classes, because researchers have pointed out that the amount of time spent using the target language influences students' target language improvement, and a direct and convincing relationship has been built between student performance and teacher practice of the target language (Roberts 2013). One of the most significant responsibilities of the teacher is to provide students with sufficient exposure to practise the target language in a range of environments (Roberts 2013).

To connect the main assumptions of Sociocultural Theory to this study, Vygotsky summarised the main assumptions of the theory in four main aspects: interaction, play, imitation and exposure. Although Arabic-speaking students have limited exposure to MSA in an English linguistic environment where they play with friends, interact and imitate their teachers using English, this theory is intended to guide the second objective of this study, which involves investigating the influences of the linguistic environment at Dubai's British schools on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language.

Despite making many useful claims, one of the weaknesses of Sociocultural Theory is the tendency to generalise, as Vygotsky's studies are limited to certain groups of people in certain communities. This thus does not necessarily provide a concrete understanding of the broader population (Pfaff 2002). Vygotsky's theory focuses on social interaction and its impact on learning languages. This means that the assumption he made should be applicable and generalisable in all societies, which is unrealistic (Kurt 2020). Moreover, Sociocultural Theory has been criticised due to the lack of experimental tests as Vygotsky relied heavily on observation to prove that social interaction is a key factor for learning languages (Kurt 2020). It has been argued that results and assumptions based on people's responses or feelings might lack precision, since it is difficult to investigate social behaviour without altering the participants' feelings (Pfaff 2002). Despite Vygotsky's reliance on surveys and questionnaires, this study will also be incorporating more empirical assessments of language proficiency.

Sociocultural Theory is more relevant when Language Variation Theory is taken into account. While one might consider the linguistic environments of Arabic-speaking students in Arab nations to be clear, the language variation of Arabic adds significant complications. For example, the students in Dubai's British schools spend their childhoods not in an MSA linguistic environment, but rather RD linguistic environments. They then transition into schools where the medium of instruction is English, thereby creating a significant English linguistic environment within their RD environment. Finally, they are sent to study MSA several times per week, nesting yet another linguistic environment inside the other two. The students at Dubai's Arabic schools face a similar situation, but with the roles of English and MSA reversed. The RD remains their first language, but MSA becomes a more comfortable second language, while English is relegated to the English as a second language classroom. Accordingly, Sociocultural Theory that summarises the role of the linguistic environment on shaping students' ability in language learning will guide the second research objective.



Figure 4.2: Language variation and the linguistic environment of Arabic-speaking students in Dubai's British schools.

4.2.3 Language Management Theory

Language Management Theory highlights the role of organisations and authorities in managing language education within a speech community (Spolsky 2009). The theory assumes that while language policy is determined by personal choices, it is a social phenomenon that depends on the consensual behaviours and beliefs of portions of a speech community. It is also crucial to language management that language exercises provide the linguistic context for individuals learning a language (Spolsky 2009). Language Management Theory presents a framework with regards to language problems on various levels (Kimura & Fairbrother 2020), and is described as a comprehensive theory that delimits its connection with linguistics. Furthermore, it expands beyond its limits and extends into the sociocultural and socioeconomic domains (Nekvapil 2015). Spolsky (2009) claimed that the following fundamental elements in Language Management Theory need to be borne in mind: individuals, schools, institutions, administrative structures, and interaction. The theory assumes that each component forms authorities that assist in accounting for language selection. It has been stated that spolsky's approach to language management practices involves language design, as is evident within the setting of three interrelated but individually describable elements: language practices, language

ideologies or beliefs, and management (Maseko 2016). Language practices are people's behaviours and preferences regarding language usage and linguistic resources, including certain linguistic elements or language varieties in specific disciplines. Language ideology is the value that people hold regarding their language (Maseko 2016). Language management concerns language as a communication tool that relates to individual or group efforts that have, or claim, authority over the participants in particular domains to alter or serve to their language practice and ideology (Spolsky 2009). Language Management Theory is explained broadly as any scheme or project planned in a language (Nekvapil & Sherman 2015). An organisation such as the MOE can undertake these schemes, which delivers announcements regarding mandatory laws or people in unique connections when, for example, we move to another language variety (Nekvapil & Sherman 2015). In this study, the authority that manage teaching Arabic in the context of Dubai's British schools is the KHDA. Language management as a known and precise work by language directors or administrators is intended to guide language opportunities and options, and represents the actual and visible work by someone or some group that has, demands or claims power over the members in the field to change or modify their methods or views (Mwaniki 2014).

Language Management Theory is a web of educational measures and standards arising from decision-making, sociolinguistics, policies and administrative assumptions (Mwaniki 2011). In practice, such measures generally fall within the purview of the government, although this is not necessarily a requirement. Language management can be considered as any scheme or project that attempts to codify, standardise or otherwise control a language. The language practices afford the types of language that facilitate language learning and then build the required restrictions for language management that are represented in language policy and language ideology (Spolsky 2009). Language management relates to the formulation and announcement of a specific project or plan, typically but not indeed recorded in a legal paper, about language practice (Spolsky 2004). However, the existence of such a particular strategy or programme does not ensure that it will be achieved, nor does achievement ensure success (Spolsky 2004). Language Management Theory presents that language policy concerns options and choices (Spolsky 2004). Even if you speak only one language, you have options of dialects and techniques. To explain the nature of this process, one requires an environmental model that will connect social formations and positions with linguistic collections (Spolsky 2004). Any speaker or writer is continually choosing characteristics—sounds or grammars, lexical items, or morphological models (Masekom 2016). Language Management Theory has developed in a unique context since the 1980s: that of the increasing recognition of the limits of the form of language policy as well as language plan (Mwaniki 2011). It has been argued that language management has been improved from the need to react to functional concerns within the academy, as well as policy horizons (Mwaniki 2011). Furthermore, language management holds for the rebellious nature of language-related challenges and their effects on various societal, political, economic, social, cultural, organisational, and technological efforts. Within the same context, Language Management Theory was developed alongside language planning. Yet, it has gradually separated as it deals with wider aspects and domains in the field of language education (Fakulta 2013).

Language management is considered to be a reforming discourse-based method, which includes the distinction between two ways that distinguish language usage: (i) the origination and reception of discourse, that is, the formation of expressions; and (ii), the exercises intended to be used for the generation and acceptance of conversation, that is, the supervision of these statements. (Sanden 2014). It has been argued that Language Management Theory is based on distinguishing between two methods that explain language application: (i) the creation and acquisition of conversation; and (ii) the projects arising from

leading to the creation and acquisition of conversation, for example, metalinguistic projects. Language Management Theory is a collection of theoretical rules arising from decision-making theory, sociological and linguistic theories, modernisation theory, systems theory, critical theory, management theory, phenomenology and human development theory, which all attempt to explain the interactive dynamics of language in community. Language Management Theory, particularly in multilingual communities, endeavours to form methods that can be used to address language-related difficulties (Mwaniki 2014). However, the management may itself cause speakers to alter their practice or opinion (Spolsky 2009). Spolsky explained how language management should be described as the guidance of the language status of a population or a community. This interpretation demands the appearance of a language director who might be represented by a person or a group of people, incorporating organisations or arrangements, containing a very convenient stand in the language management accomplishment process (Spolsky 2004). It is precisely the interference carried out by the language director through forming and declaring a coherent language policy or plan. Language management emerges as a hands-on instrumental approach to language-related inquiries, near to the field in which the regulation or policy formulations take place. It represents a sequence of development where language is planned and performed based on a strategic evaluation of the subjective language demands of the body (Sanden 2014).

Language management is not really an issue relating to a language, but rather to the people who use it (Kaplan 2011). The illustration of language management imagines language management as a collection of theory and method, indicating that language management is a critical process of considering social and linguistic aspects; a distinct form of thinking and imagining of language in language and society in general; and a distinct form of employing science, mainly while science concerns itself with the responsive dynamics of language and society (Kaplan 2011). Necessarily, it involves the formulation of methods and frames that could be used to control both private and shared language devices in society (Mwaniki 2011). The theory of language management has experienced a resurgence in practice recently. Language Management Theory intends to include not only the whole language, established in the usual conservative knowledge, but also a broad scope of further difficulties connecting speech, politeness, and conversation in intercultural-contact conditions, as well as concerns resulting in proofreading, talk treatment and literary critique (Kaplan 2011).

Spolsky (2009) stated: It is hard to understand why even a single organisation behaves the way it does without considering (a) the individuals who work in it; (b) the other organisations with which it competes, cooperates and compares itself to; (c) the institutional and regulatory structures within which it operates, and (d) the interactions between all these components.

Accordingly, entities that are managing language learning in a speech community should take into account the beliefs and linguistic context of the individuals or institutions in the speech community.

Furthermore, according to Language Management Theory, the school in most societies has become the primary power or agency of managing languages by setting out to support students' perceived language inadequacies (Spolsky 2009). The theory discusses the US, where smaller linguistic communities such as the Amish, who have an estimated population of 200,000 and manage around 1,500 schools, have considerable flexibility in managing their language in line with their linguistic context and beliefs. The diversity of language education management in the US aids in understanding the best practices in language management, since there are around 15,000 school systems with different curricula and policies that come under the direct or secondary control of the government, with various levels that hold different language requirements and preferences. Those systems were provided with the flexibility to establish and achieve language choices and policies that fit the various students' linguistic requirements.

In comparison to the situation of Arabic language education in Dubai, the US is very different from the current language management of the Arabic language. The US is a monolinguistic country, yet it has diverse and varied approaches to language management throughout the numerous regional school systems. Even though the US is one unified nation, speaking one language, there are numerous approaches to language management. In the Arabic world, however, there are 22 countries, each with RDs existing alongside MSA. While this allows for different language management schemes in each nation, that is often the limit of the diversity. In the UAE, for example, all language management in Dubai is handled by the KHDA, with a single framework applied to all schools, whether American, British or Arabic, without considering their differentiated linguistic environments.

In the light of this review of Language Management Theory and its main constructs and elements, the theory will guide, structure and build in different parts of this study. Moreover, Language Management Theory will guide the third objective of this study, which involves investigating the perceptions of the leaders, teachers and parents regarding the influences of language management on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools.

The theory of language management fits into this research as the final factor of this study regarding the perceptions of the stakeholders that are related to the management body represented in the KHDA, and its role in managing teaching Arabic for native speakers in Dubai's British schools.

4.2.4 Conclusion

In order to determine the factors that influence the proficiency of Arabic-speaking students in MSA, it is necessary to acquire a complete picture of how they learn. Although they are perceived as simply Arabic students studying Arabic, Language Variation Theory reveals much more. Despite both being termed 'Arabic', the RD they mastered before even entering school bears only a faint resemblance to the MSA that they learn in the classroom. By making this distinction, one recognises that the RD and MSA are, for all intents and purposes, two separate languages. Thus, according to Sociocultural Theory, the students are moving between complex and unique linguistic environments. Students in Dubai's British schools thus spend their day shifting between three linguistic environments. They speak their first language, the RD, at home; learn most of their subjects in English; and then finally, a few times per week in Arabic class, study MSA through a course of study mandated by the government and its MOE, specifically the KHDA. While Language Management Theory recognises that such schemes may influence language learning, it also highlights that such schemes are not always successful, as language learning is influenced by many other factors.

4.3 Literature Review

In this section, a set of concepts related to the focus of this study will be reviewed in order to gain insight into how these concepts affect students' proficiency in language. First, the research will review the concept of diglossia and its influences on Arab-speaking students' proficiency in MSA. Second, several studies that describe the influence of the linguistic environment at school on students' proficiency in language will be reviewed. The third section will present a synthesis of studies that highlight the influences of language management on students' proficiency in language. The next section covers research into the definition of proficiency, which will help to determine the criteria by which the study will be conducted. Finally, the last section reviews similar studies from other countries that bear some similarity to the context of Dubai.

4.3.1 The Concept of Diglossia

The word diglossia arises from the Greek word "di" that means 'two', and "glossia" that means 'language'. Diglossia is also the Greek expression for bilingualism. The Greek term for diglossia is "dimorphic" or "diyfia", which describes two models or two methods sequentially (Gkaragkouni 2009). According to Yacoub (2015), there is a debate among linguists concerning how the term diglossia was coined. Karl Krumbacher first studied the phenomenon of diglossia in his book *Das Problem der Neugriechischen Schriftsprache* in 1902. Later, it was advanced in 1930 by Marcais, a French scholar, in his book *La Diglossie Arabe*. The term grew in popularity in linguistic studies after being discussed by Charles Ferguson in a conference on urbanisation and official languages in 1958 (Simanjuntak, Haidir, Pujiono 2019).

Diglossia is a split between a more standardised form of a language and more recent RDs. According to Abou-Ghazaleh, Khateb and Nevat (2018), diglossia exists in many languages at various levels. Ancient languages such as Arabic, Greek and Tamil illustrate the classical form of diglossia with a significant distinction between the high and low varieties. Typically, the former is used in writing and considered more proper or formal, while the latter is generally spoken and considered less sophisticated. According to Ferguson (1959), Arabic is one of the main four languages that exhibit the concept of diglossia, which in Arabic refers to the sociolinguistic situation in which the language used on a daily basis—that is, acquired first—differs from the language taught in schools and only utilised in formal settings (Ferguson 1959). The situation that Ferguson observed over half a century ago is

still present in Arabic-speaking nations. If anything, it has been exacerbated by the greater level of influence on the language exerted by foreign influences, especially English.

Some scholars assert that diglossia in Arabic began with the Islamic conquests of the 7th century AD. Arabic grammarians thus claim that after these conquests, MSA became the common language, with modern RDs developing from MSA much later. As evidence, they cite the way that people who do not know how to speak MSA correctly tend to drop case endings, speak it with an accent and introduce lexical innovation. Such changes to the language could, over time lead to the development of separate RDs. By contrast, others believe that the language found in pre-Islamic poetry and literature was totally different from that of the vernacular used in everyday communication. Consequently, they trace the sources of Arabic diglossia to a period before the emergence of Islam (Amer, Adaileh & Rakhieh 2011). The argument for a pre-Islamic diglossia is more convincing because there is clear evidence of differentiation between different RDs in pre-Islamic writing. Various word endings and other linguistic elements varied from tribe to tribe. Admittedly, this variance was not as great as it is today. Furthermore, the Holy Qur'an states that at the time of the Prophet Muhammed (Peace Be Upon Him), each tribe spoke a different dialect. However, it was not until this time that one language was established as the formal, or high version of Arabic—the Arabic of the Qur'an, which would eventually become MSA. So in this sense, it is fair to say that the RDs of Arabic predate Islam, although the founding of Islam marks the beginning of MSA. Despite disagreement on the origins of Arabic diglossia, experts do agree that the gap between MSA and the RDs has increased in recent years (Al Ahmad 2018).

In Arabic diglossia, there are two distinct language varieties: the RD and MSA (Alsobh, Abumelhim & Banihani 2015). The colloquial dialects in Arabic countries are well defined and are acquired by native speakers through interaction. In point of fact, each Arab country has its own dialect that distinguishes it from others utilised in day-to-day conversation (Farghaly 2014). These dialects are slightly different from one region to another. Despite these regional differences in the Arabic used on a daily basis, MSA is shared by educators throughout the Arabic world. MSA is the formal language used in formal settings such as mass media, government, and education. On the other hand, daily conversation is carried out in one of the local dialects (Boudelaa & Marslen-Wilson 2013). The diglossic situation in the Arabic language is a universal phenomenon that defines the status of the spoken and written Arabic language (Al-Huri 2012). In the state of the Arabic language, there are two central difficulties arising in the linguistic and sociolinguistic view: every country has its own dialect,

and sometimes there are different RDs within the same country (Khalil 2011). The diglossic situation in the Arabic language emerges from the gap between the RD and MSA (Ibrahim 2011).

Accordingly, this diglossic situation negatively influences students' linguistic skills in both varieties (Hamze 2008). The different forms of Arabic language are acquired by native speakers in two ways: the first method of acquiring a language typically only occurs with RDs, in the early years of childhood; while the second is through learning the language in formal settings, which occurs with MSA (Boudelaa & Marslen-Wilson 2013). In this sense, there are two distinct aspects of Arabic in terms of learning it: the RD, which is acquired as a first language and is used on a daily basis in conversations between parents and their children in the period prior to school; and MSA, which conversely is not acquired as a first language, in spite of the fact that children are presented with it as soon as they begin to watch children's television shows, listen to the radio, or start attending nursery. Arab children thus gain familiarity with the RD well before they begin their formal learning through schooling (Boudelaa & Marslen-Wilson 2013). Therefore, Arabic speakers around the world struggle in the process of mastering reading and writing because of the diglossic situation of the Arabic language that manifests in two different varieties (Leikin, Ibrahim & Eghbaria 2013).

A growing body of literature affirms that diglossia has a tremendous negative influence on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency. A synthesis of studies has defined the concept of diglossia and its influence on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language (Al Ahmad 2018). Furthermore, some researchers view the low level of Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language as a result of the uniqueness of the orthography and solid morphological and syntactic system in the Arabic language due to the diglossic situation (Asadi & Ibrahim 2014). Because the only extant Arabic alphabet is the one used in MSA, the RD is limited in its written form. Writers of RD are forced to use letters that are close to, but not quite the same as the sounds they use in speech. Others use a blend of Arabic and English alphabets, or even switch entirely to the English alphabet in order to accurately transliterate what is predominantly a spoken language.

Although the orthography is quite complex, other aspects of the language further complicate it. Words and morphemes vary from one region to another, with none matching MSA. For example, in Egypt and Jordan, a suffix is added to words when they are used in questions or negative statements. In other places like Syria and Iraq, suffixes are not used to create negative sentences. The syntax is also a lot more flexible in RDs than in MSA. For example, in questions, Egyptian Arabic places the question word at the end of the sentence, while MSA only permits the question word to be placed at the beginning of the sentence. The diglossic situation of the Arabic language is one of the most compelling characteristics of Arabic in the process of literacy acquisition. This complicated situation has direct implications for literacy acquisition (Haddad 2012). These direct implications represent the rigorous and parallel practical disconnection of two linguistic systems: the written (MSA) and the spoken (RD) (Saiegh-Haddad & Ghawi-Dakwar 2017). This linguistic situation was famously described in a discussion between Al-Kufa and Al-Basra, two leading schools of Arabic grammar, about matters of language 'disgrace' and 'corruption', and the following concerns of practice regarding linguistic pureness and rightness.

As previously discussed, the emergence of Islam marked the emergence of a unified form of written Arabic, or as it is now known, MSA. The requirements of Islam, primarily the necessity of reading the Holy Qur'an, played a significant part in extending the gap between the two varieties of RD and MSA (Maamouri 1993). Although RDs remained as spoken languages, those few who were literate now had a unified and codified language to use instead. In addition to forming the foundation of the religion of Islam, the Holy Qur'an provided the basis, through its role as the ultimate example of MSA. Authors of pre-Islamic versions of Arabic could write flexibly, utilising their own dialects without an authority to state what was correct or not. After the founding of Islam, the Holy Qur'an became that authority. Since then, the correct form of Arabic, at least in writing, has been the Arabic found in the Holy Qur'an. This ultimately led to a more significant appraisal of the written varieties of the language over its spoken varieties, and finally to the dichotomy of the Arabic language that exists today.

Diglossia represents a 'language dilemma' as a state that links to conditions of which the society is not wholly conscious, which have not become an objective of language policy, and which are still able to offer mainly to the stress in the community (Maamouri 1993). This language dilemma was discussed by several scholars. Haddad (2012) highlighted that diglossia has direct implications for literacy improvement in Arabic in terms of language acquisition. While all Arab children spontaneously acquire the RD in the speech community to which they relate, learning MSA begins as a result of formal education. Therefore, MSA is nobody's mother tongue and is never spoken at home or in the speech community. Haddad (2012) also clarified that the complex linguistic situation in the Arabic language results in inadequate language proficiency in MSA, and in linguistic uncertainty that reduces language usage and influences literacy-related systems and consequences. This preserves the distance between the two varieties and maintains the diglossic reality. Other scholars reviewed this language dilemma. such as Asadi and Ibrahim (2014) who found that

phonology is strictly linked to reading and grammar mistakes amongst native Arabic-speaking students from grade 1 to grade 6. Moreover, another phonological contrast between the RD and MSA relates to the phonological formation of syllables within the word. For instance, it is incorrect to start a word with a consonant cluster in MSA (Asadi & Ibrahim 2014), while it is common to use a consonant cluster in RD. For instance, the concluding cluster /lb/ in MSA (kalb كلُب) , that means 'dog' turns to /lib/ in the word (kalb كأب) in the RD (Saiegh-Haddad & Ghawi-Dakwar 2017). Within the same context, while children necessarily acquire their local dialect of Arabic, only children who have access to the advantages of formal schooling may learn MSA, thereby obtaining socioeconomic advantages as well as cultural mobility (Asadi & Abu-Rabia 2019). The infusion of Arabic language forms into the classroom points to a pressing pedagogical issue, and even to the perceptions of linguistic uncertainty in formal school conversation amongst high numbers of young Arab students. This shortage of confidence arises from a common perception of the low understanding of MSA and the low classification of its standards. Attempting to approach this question, one notices that Arab children seldom interact in MSA in everyday speech situations with family, friends, or others in the real-life movements of their home and play (Maamouri 1993). Furthermore, the generally low levels of proficiency in MSA and the high rates of illiteracy collectively, result from degraded shortage and low socio-educational environment issues in children commencing the process of literacy acquisition with limited or no experience about the primary requirement of language and literacy skills that create the foundation of reading progress (Haddad 2012). This loss presents fewer opportunities for success (Haddad 2012).

It is worth mentioning that although varying levels of similarity or distance characterise both forms of the Arabic language, this also appears to be principally linked to the challenging diglossic status of the language (Asadi & Ibrahim 2014). Arabic-speakers are expected to know both varieties of the Arabic language: the spoken Arabic dialect and MSA (Saiegh-Haddad & Ghawi-Dakwar 2017). Those differences happen due to the variations in the phonemic formation between MSA and the RD. Actually, there are phonological formations of the syllables that exist only in the MSA, and others that exist only in the RD (Asadi & Ibrahim 2014).

Within the same context, the growth of literacy-related phonological abilities in MSA is affected by the phonological gap between the RD and MSA. For instance, some authors compared children's phonological knowledge of RD and MSA phonemes and noticed that, even after their production of MSA phonology had normalised, the children had a further problem in distinguishing between MSA and RD phonemes (Saiegh-Haddad & Ghawi-Dakwar 2017). Furthermore, the RD

and MSA are distinguished through a phonemic variety that overlaps, although they are not indistinguishable. For instance, in MSA there are some grammatical features that do not exist in the many vernaculars, but which are substituted by other phonemes that exist in RDs (Asadi & Abu-Rabia 2019). Diglossia starts influencing the level of Arabic-speaking students early, since the acquisition of the spoken RD occurs prior to attending school and learning MSA, which is not practised at home. Consequently, their capability to communicate using MSA becomes distorted. Additionally, those who use MSA face several linguistic restrictions since they do not master it perfectly; therefore, most of their conversation or communication is rather inaccurate, requiring much energy to produce a full MSA sentence that contributes to the prevailing discussion (Al-Sobh, Abu-Melhim & Bani-Hani 2015).

Numerous studies have specifically examined the influences of diglossia on student proficiency in languages. Although the specific contexts of these studies are different from Dubai's British schools, they still serve as valuable models for this study as the situations regarding language variation share many similarities. There are several studies on Arabic diglossia in terms of Arabic-speaking students' understanding of phonology. Asadi and Ibrahim (2014) explored the influence of diglossia on primary and secondary school students throughout the Arabic-speaking world, where they noted that variations between the RD and MSA were responsible for many of the mistakes produced by the students. Likewise, both Saiegh-Haddad and Ghawi-Dakwar (2017) and Asadi and Abu-Rabia (2019) noted similar issues among Arabic-speaking students in Palestine. Their situation would be most similar to the language variation that influences Arabic-speaking students in Dubai's British schools, as they speak the RD at home and learn MSA in Arabic class, but receive the rest of their instruction in a third language, Hebrew. Despite the influence of diglossia on students' understanding of phonology being widely studied, none of these studies focused on other ways in which diglossia or language variation might influence student learning linguistically and non-linguistically.

4.3.2 The Linguistic Environment

According to Sociocultural Theory, the linguistic environment is a major factor for anyone learning a foreign language, and for students studying Arabic as a result of diglossia. Although there are millions of native-Arabic-speaking people in the world, none of them are native speakers of MSA (Al Ahmad 2018). They all speak RDs as their first language, which means that when they learn MSA, they are learning it as a second or possibly third language, as many of them are simultaneously studying English or some other foreign language. As a result, it is important to consider the linguistic environment (Thomure 2019).

When students enter school, their linguistic environment is largely determined by the language of instruction. If that language is their native language, it greatly influences proficiency (Kozulin 2007). The school is a significant context where students collectively share life, activity, and interests. Students in a linguistic environment such as school are expected to be exposed to rich linguistic components including a variety of complex lexical and grammatical items that positively influence their proficiency. When that sharing occurs in their native language, it can greatly influence their proficiency (Kozulin 2007). The linguistic environment consists primarily of teacher–student and student–student interactions using the dominant language (Saglam & Salı 2013).

Al Zoubi's (2018) study focused on students learning English rather than Arabic. However, it noted clear advantages in language learning due to the students being placed within an appropriate linguistic environment. Although the study focused on the correlation between Jordanian students' proficiency in English and the extent of their immersion within an English linguistic environment, the principles should be similar for language learners studying other languages. However, compared to the linguistic environment experienced by those students in Jordan, the linguistic environment in Dubai's schools is somewhat more complex and nuanced. Students in Dubai are either immersed in English, in British schools, or immersed in MSA, in Arabic schools, but speak the RDs of Arabic in their homes, as well as being exposed to varying levels of English, in addition to MSA, depending upon their lifestyles and entertainment preferences. Such factors create a complex linguistic environment that can influence student proficiency.

A growing body of research emphasises the significant role of the home environment on children's linguistic improvement. However, research related to the extent of parents' knowledge in connection to early language input disparities overwhelmingly centres around infant improvement, although early childhood intellectual and language advancement is the primary focus (Leung, Hernandez & Suskind 2018). Over the last 40 years, a great deal of research has provided mounting evidence that parental discourse plays an essential role in the language advancement of their children. For instance, in terms of the improvement of phonetics and phonology, it has been found that parental figures adjust their language in a way that appears to make the language learning task simpler for their children. This method is referred to in the literature as 'motherese' (Onnis, Truzzi & Ma 2018). In many ways, the RD that students learn at home is simpler than MSA. The major distinction, however, is that students learning the RD at home never fully transition to MSA in the way that most children gradually transition from motherese to a full language. Instead, students are suddenly expected to communicate in MSA when they start learning it at school, but are able to switch back to RD when they return home. Therefore, they are never fully immersed in MSA.

4.3.2.1 The Influence of the Linguistic Environment on Students' Learning

A growing body of studies has highlighted the influence of the linguistic environment on language learning. Researchers such as Onnis, Truzzi and Ma (2018) argued that the linguistic environment at school influences students' language preferences and proficiency. Moreover, scholars have recognised that for students, being exposed to a considerable number of words and terminologies in their linguistic environment correlates directly with performing better in all linguistic skills (Leung, Hernandez & Suskind 2018). The linguistic environment of children plays a central role in their language growth. It has been reported that 60-70% of the variance in the language is shaped in the period from birth to the age of five (Justice, Jiang & Strasser 2018). Within the same context, practising more extended linguistic inputs in students' linguistic environment is vital to equip them with a wide variety of vocabulary that will play an essential role in enhancing their proficiency (Leung, Hernandez & Suskind 2018). Brito (2017), likewise states that the linguistic environment significantly influences students' proficiency in their native language. The linguistic environment in schools assists with improving students' proficiency through overhearing teachers interacting with the other students, especially at levels in which the speech has to be adjusted to the students' level of understanding. This leads to more regular usages of certain words and language structures, which result in improving students' proficiency (Al Zoubi 2018). The linguistic environment also provides students with various linguistic contexts and the practice required to improve their proficiency (Spolsky 2009). Interaction represents an essential part of students' learning. It has been argued that cognitive development and students' proficiency in their native language are affected by both the social and cultural approaches in a linguistic environment.

The connection between language, culture, and behaviour is intricate. To start with, numerous facets of language are determined by culture. Language is a system of symbols shared by group members through which they understand and interpret their culture and beliefs. The connection between the two is inextricable, as anyone who has ever studied a second language knows. Learning the language is impossible without the context that knowledge of the culture provides (El Masri 2012). Culture, as acquired convictions and values, has a significant impact on behaviour. Viewed along these lines, phonetic structures fill in as markers of social factors. Furthermore, there is excellent proof that language additionally impacts comprehension and behaviour-how we talk appears to influence how we think and act. It has been argued that there are corresponding associations among language and culture: language may bolster the impact and conservation of culture by helping its spread and giving it an enduring structure; while language may additionally shape culture, as it is the primary mode of its transmission (Mavisakalyan, Tarverdi & Weber 2018). Leikin, Ibrahim and Eghbaria (2013) stated that most studies of preschool children examined the influence of phonological distance on phonological processing, where it was found that children succeed less when asked to make a phonological analysis of literary, linguistic structures compared to those of the spoken language, as the spoken language they practise daily at home is different than what they learn at school. This emphasises the influence of the linguistic environment at home on students' development in literacy.

Although previous studies have thoroughly established a variety of language learning factors that are influenced by a student's linguistic environment, there is less written about the interplay between non-language factors and the linguistic environment, as a student can, to some degree, shape his or her own environment. It is necessary for this study to address some of these non-language factors such as parents' preferences and beliefs towards learning Arabic, and also students' motivation and attitudes regarding learning Arabic and how importantly they conceive learning Arabic in comparison to other subjects. Furthermore, in order to determine the influence of the linguistic environment on the proficiency of Arabic-speaking students in Dubai schools, it is important to note that the linguistic environment is more complex than that of other places. According to Sociocultural Theory, this is likely to have a profound influence on the development of the students' language skills. Students speak RD of Arabic at home, and study their other subjects in either English or MSA. At the same time, they are likely to use varying degrees of their English or MSA throughout their daily lives. As a result, each student's linguistic environment becomes a unique blend of three languages, typically with English and MSA as their second or third languages, and the RD as their mother tongue. While there is little that can be done to control most aspects of students' lives and their daily language usage, their schools remain a significant factor in their linguistic environment by accounting for a third of a student's day, five days a week. Whether that 40-hour period includes 35 hours of English instruction and 5 hours of MSA, or vice versa, must be expected to have a major impact on the students' overall linguistic environment.

4.3.3 Language Management

Because this study focuses specifically on schools, and the major portion of a student's linguistic environment that they represent, it is necessary to address language management and the role it plays in determining the methods, standards and practices used throughout the language education system, as well as the size and scope of Arabic language instruction.

Several studies have defined the concept of language management and its influence on students' proficiency in their native language. The literature defines language management as an institution that dictates a community's usage, preferences, and beliefs in the language (Spolsky 2004). Language management was introduced by Cooper and dealt with in more detail by Kaplan and Baldauf (2011), who explained it as equivalent to the French term "Management Linguistique" (Jiri 2012). A large body of research confirms that the concept of language management was brought into sociolinguistic literature by Jernudd (2010) and Neustupny (2011), and became a broadly used phrase in the literature of sociolinguistics (Jiri 2012; Sanden 2014).

Language management states that language obstacles arise in simple management where decisions are made by authorised people without considering established management, which is based on discussion and valuing the stakeholders' perspectives and needs (Mwaniki 2014). The field of language management may be passive or confront the collection of ideas and preferences that hold a community's usage of language, and the original usage of language performance. To explain language management, one may utilise a taxonomy obtained from the topic modelled by Cooper (1989, p. 31) when he set out to examine language expanse and language development, and answer the question: "who designs what for whom and how?". Recounting these inquiries will provide a fuller understanding of the essence of language management and how it should be distinguished from the common language habits and views it is intended to change (Spolsky 2004). It is also important to language management that language studies produce the linguistic setting for anyone studying a language. Children's language attainment depends considerably on the language habits to which they are presented (Feely 2002). Language studies are the visible responses and decisions that people perform concerning language usage or what people really do with their linguistic sources,

incorporating the selection of distinct linguistic characteristics of language categories in exceptional areas or communications.

Language management may be represented by the standardisation of the articulation of unknown words carried out by an educational institution and approved by a ministry (Mwaniki 2014). Language management takes place within the social channels of several fields. It does not happen only in several situations, with a range of projects, but includes the entire community. Governments are usually the primary centres of the language management, but management occurs further in singular organisations, institutions, media, communities and relationships, as well as individual speakers in superior communications (Mwaniki 2014). The word 'management' relates to a broad spectrum from actions of awareness to 'language obstacles'. Language obstacles are difficulties of language in the restricted understanding of a word (Spolsky 2004). Language management aims to include not only the whole of the language, as described in the ancient knowledge, but also a broad spectrum of further queries involving discussion and connection in intercultural association settings (Mwaniki 2014).

As a system, language management is an established form of knowledge that preoccupies itself with topics linking to the theoretical competence of language design and intention, and how these influence language design and planning implementation, particularly in multilingual contexts (Spolsky 2004). As a practice, language management is a significant and productive deployment of policies intended to discuss language-related difficulties (Mwaniki 2014). The members of a speech society further share a common collection of ideas about relevant language exercises, sometimes creating consensual beliefs, indicating importance and prestige to several features of the language characters employed in it (Spolsky 2004). These beliefs both derive from and influence practices. They can be a source of language management, or a management policy can be expected to approve or alter them (Spolsky 2004).

Education is by its very nature a field assigned to language management (Spolsky 2004). Educational institutions control the entirety of the language learning curriculum, including the linguistic environment at schools, as determined by the medium of instruction. According to Spolsky (2009), the use of a language other than the first language as a medium of instruction at schools diminishes students' proficiency in their first language. Most children encounter a severe gap between the language of their home and the language of school. In Belgium, 40% of high school students described such a gap, a consequence of the contrast between the formal Dutch and French practised in school, and the regional variations they speak at home (Mwaniki 2014). This implies that school applications that require the use of the RD as the language of instruction should be available to address the additional challenges and investment of a language improvement element

(Spolsky 2009). The language used in the field of schooling is a fundamental element of language education policy, which may be further controlled by variations in the proportion of the school week designated to two or more languages in a multi-medium plan (Spolsky 2004). Moreover, any teaching in the students' home language may reasonably be described as an enhancement, while the teaching of any other language can be described as second language teaching. This is slightly different in Arabic as the students' home language is usually not the language of instruction, with MSA the preferred academic form.

A group of studies shed light on the role of language management in terms of the language obstacles that influence the teaching and learning process (Sanden 2014). Some studies explained language management's influence on students' learning by analysing who designs what, for whom, and how. Such analysis provides full knowledge of the structure of language management and how it can influence students' proficiency in their native language (Spolsky 2004). Within the same context, language management produces the linguistic environment for students learning a language. Students' language proficiency depends considerably on the language habits to which they are exposed (Feely 2002).

Some scholars, such as Spolsky (2009), state that language management should interpret the policies or curricula of teaching languages in association with language beliefs, what speakers assume or the purpose that they connect to their language. For example, in the UAE, a casual observer might note that young people place a great deal of emphasis on English. It is used everywhere they go, for recreational, as well as academic pursuits, as it is a significant part of most curricula, and a prerequisite for many of the best jobs. Students thus view the learning of English as a valuable endeavour. However, attaining high levels of proficiency in MSA is not viewed so positively. Therefore, it is necessary to alter this perception related to a non-language factor, both in school and at home. Especially in their earlier years, much of students' attitudes towards MSA is determined by the influence of their parents (El Masri 2012). By choosing what languages they expose their children to, and what languages are spoken in their homes, parents are able to significantly shape their children's view of MSA. Parents who provide their children with a greater range of materials in MSA and insist on using it in the home to some degree are likely to have children who are not only more proficient in MSA, but who are also more motivated to study it further (El Masri 2012). Furthermore, the parents are also responsible for determining which schools their children attend. In Dubai, there are a wide range of schools, with instructional languages ranging from English to MSA, and even French or Urdu. By choosing which school their children attend, the parents are not only determining which language their children will be immersed in, but also signalling to their child which language

is most important for them to learn. This role of parents is also reviewed by some scholars as a nonlanguage-related factor (Al Ahmad 2018).

Spolsky (2009) focuses specifically on language management within the context of education systems. While there are other aspects of language management, he claims that the language policy adopted by an educational system is, without doubt, one of the most powerful forces in language management. This is especially true in situations where the national or official language used in schools varies significantly from the language that the students use in their everyday lives. In the case of the diglossia experienced by Arabic-speaking students, it is likely that the gap between the RD and MSA is even more pronounced. Thus, because of this gap, the education system, as the primary source of language management, needs to recognise the difference between teaching a second or foreign language and 'language enrichment', which Spolsky (2009) defines as "any teaching in the students' home language". Because MSA is not the students' home language, it is a second foreign language. Therefore, language education policy needs to take this into account. A significant component of any language-learning policy is determining the amount of instructional time to be devoted to each language, in addition to the language of instruction.

4.3.4 Language Proficiency

Because the focus of this study is those factors that influence language proficiency, it is necessary to define what proficiency means and how it is measured locally and internationally. Obviously, proficiency can be simply defined as one's overall ability to communicate, but such a definition is far too vague for scientific research. Thus, it is necessary to define it in clearly measurable, empirical terms. Without doing so, it is impossible to objectively identify variations in true proficiency.

A growing body of research defines language proficiency and how to measure it in different contexts (Faez, Karas & Uchihara 2019). Rao (2016) defined proficiency as the capacity to speak or communicate with adequate fundamental efficiency and vocabulary to participate effectively in various formal and informal discussions on operational, social, and expert issues. Proficiency incorporates the elements of being aware and able to speak a language. Proficiency refers to what somebody can do/knows about the application of a topic in the real world (Harsch 2017). Furthermore, Rao (2016) claimed that proficiency is best measured through the process of reading and writing. Within the same context, other scholars stressed the significant role of the four skills in measuring students' proficiency. Harsch (2017) argued that language proficiency includes a language learner's

communicative capabilities and knowledge systems. This values the communicative skills and their role in determining proficiency. Moreover, in language proficiency testing, the domain is divided into four primary skills: listening and reading (receptive skills), and writing and speaking (productive skills). Each skill raises particular measurement concerns (Hal & Verhoeven 1992). Within the context of highlighting the important role of the four main skills in measuring proficiency, the listening skill is one of the four main indicators that assist in measuring and improving students' proficiency. Although there is a tendency for language proficiency to be measured and related to reading comprehension, other scholars see that listening and communicative comprehension are significant in measuring proficiency (Mallillin & Castillo 2016). Proficiency represents the authentic performance of a learner in a language, and it involves the capacity to use the language, focusing mainly on communication and creativity in language use (Consolo 2006). According to Durairajan (2019), languages are communicative and cognitive means. From a critical perspective, in measuring students' proficiency, it is believed that all skills are considered to play their own part as they complete the bigger picture of students' overall level in the language. Therefore, shedding light on one or two skills might provide an inaccurate picture of a student's proficiency.

Proficiency is based on inputs in the process of learning and how these inputs contribute to enhancing or hindering learning. Some researchers described inputs as the language to which the student is exposed, either verbally or visually, or in other words, the language that surrounds them (Nel & Müller 2010). Social determinants influence the proficiency achieved by various groups of students. Through the process of learning a second language, the social factors negatively influence students' learning through the use of their first language in their daily life (Nel & Müller 2010). Essentially, those students who use a different language at home are likely to have a lower level of proficiency than those students who use the same language at home and school (Nel & Müller 2010). Some scholars, such as Durairajan (2019), supported this argument by stating that the interaction provided by parents, caregivers, and more-abled peers enables language learning and improves students' proficiency.

On the level of measuring student proficiency, teachers tend to recognise the students' language proficiency as a first step. For this purpose, they implement a diagnostic project, manage a placement examination or conduct an observation. Furthermore, proficiency can be determined by conducting interviews and questionnaires to support the empirical data that has been collected (Elizondo 2013). Some studies adopted proficiency measures from the system drawn from the

American Council on Teaching Foreign Languages (Faez, Karas & Uchihara 2019). In comparison, other studies use different measures depending on various factors such as the social setting.

In the case of the Arabic language, proficiency is crucial in most public and private schools in Arabic countries because it is the language of instruction. Success in other subjects, including maths and science, depends on the students' proficiency in the Arabic language (Thomure & Speaker 2018). The Institute du Monde Arabe, a Paris-based institution that promotes the Arabic language, launched an International Certificate for Arabic Language Proficiency (Fox 2019). A newly designed test to qualify for the certificate can be taken at institutions in several Arabic cities such as Rabat, Tunis, Cairo, Alexandria, Doha, Jeddah, Manama, and Amman, as well as European cities in France and Switzerland. This new certificate is based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). It has been argued that the CEFR could be used to measure proficiency in all languages, since it is universally recognised and trusted (Fox 2019). For example, Level A1 accurately portrays a beginner's ability to study a language, while Level C2 represents mastery in a language. The certificate is recognised by the (CIMA), which turns into an Arabic word "*sima*" that can be interpreted as 'visa'. It is worth mentioning that the CIMA examines proficiency only in MSA (Fox 2019).

In the context of this study, while the language of instruction in Dubai's British schools is English, the KHDA has its own measures based on a set of standards and determinants. Student proficiency is evaluated in listening, speaking, reading and writing (KHDA 2020). Inspectors pay close attention to the learners' acquisition of higher order reading skills, including reasoning, analysis, and information synthesis, and assess the students' proficiency in the Arabic language using a set of standards in the school's curriculum adopted by the KHDA itself (KHDA 2020).

Table 4.1: The measures adopted by the KHDA for measuring Arabic-speaking students' proficiencyin the Arabic language (KHDA 2020).

Outstanding	Very good	Good	Acceptable	Weak	Very weak
Most students attain levels that are above curriculum standards.	The large majority of students attain levels that are above curriculum standards.	The majority of students attain levels that are above curriculum standards.	Most students attain levels that are within curriculum standards.	Less than three-quarters attain levels that are above curriculum standards.	Few students attain levels that are above curriculum standards.

The curriculum standards used for measuring students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools are a set of learning objectives divided into the year groups from nursery until grade 12. The measuring process occurs through various assessment methods intended to determine whether the given objectives associated with that grade level have been achieved. The assessment methods are designed to cover a variety of linguistic skills, and include tasks such as writing essays, speaking individually or in groups, and reading comprehension. While such tasks are perfectly valid forms of assessment, the grades can be limiting in that they do not determine proficiency holistically, but only in terms of a specific set of criteria. For Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language, the KHDA publishes an annual report on its website shedding light on students' proficiency in the final evaluation. Table 4.2 below, as well as Appendix 12, provide a review of Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the 2017–2019 period (Open Data KHDA 2022).

~ 1						
School	The overall rating	The rating of the students' proficiency in Arabic attached to				
	of the school	the year of inspection in all outstanding British schools in Dubai				
		2017	2018	2019		
1	Outstanding	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable		
2	Outstanding	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable		
3	Outstanding	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable		
4	Outstanding	Acceptable	Good	Good		
5	Very good/	Acceptable	Good	Good		
	Outstanding					
6	Outstanding	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable		
7	Outstanding	Acceptable	Good	Good		
8	Very good/	Acceptable	Good	Good		
	Outstanding					
9	Outstanding	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable		
10	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good		

Table 4.2: The Arabic department ratings in Dubai's British schools from 2017 to 2019.
4.4 Review of Related Studies

4.4.1 Introduction

Although few studies have focused on the issues influencing the proficiency of Arabicspeaking students, similar issues have been addressed among speakers of other languages in other countries. The countries chosen are those that have issues with language management, complex linguistic environments and significant diglossia. China has as many as 300 different languages and dialects, although nearly everyone also speaks and writes Mandarin, mostly as a first language, thanks to the strict language management by the government of China. Switzerland has four official languages, with Swiss German representing a diglossic cousin of the German spoken in Germany. Greek, a language predating Latin that fractured into a handful of European languages, is likewise split into multiple versions that are not always mutually intelligible. By assessing these same characteristics, as well as the methods through which other researchers have studied them, it is hoped that this study will be better able to fill the research gap in the Arabic-speaking world.

4.4.2 China

The relationship between social roles and languages is important. In China, those matters are related to language death, the rise of English and mainly the use of dialects represented in the diglossic situation (Snow 2013). Several studies highlighted the linguistic situation of China, which is somewhat similar to the situation of the Arabic language in terms of diglossia. Snow (2013) described the diglossic situation in China, saying that Classical Chinese was the high variety representing the prestigious social class and formal settings, while there are many dialects practised on a daily basis. In the late 1800s, language reformers began to replace Classical Chinese with the BaiHua dialect (Snow 2013). As a result of those movements for language reform, the success of adopting the BaiHua dialect was achieved through the accreditation of BaiHua as a formal language in the field of schooling and the print media (Snow 2013). This aspect is very different from the linguistic situation of the Arabic language, and is more resistant to change than the RDs, primarily because it is the language of the Holy Qu'ran.

On the level of policy, it has been discussed that the framework of sociolinguistic progress in the west of China is not fundamentally appropriate to the east (Martens 2016). The

framework applied in the west related to the social stratification of languages only shed light on the western social harmony and culture, without bearing in mind the eastern culture and the linguistic situation (Martens 2016). Consequently, some researchers raised a question examining the influence of diglossia on the current Chinese language situation (Martens 2016). Furthermore, a study conducted on language attitude in the city of Guangzhou indicated that high and low varieties could be noticed clearly in the surveys completed by the participants (Martens 2016). Some studies also highlighted the role of Chinese language policy in minimising the gap between the H and L varieties in several respects (Martens 2016). Firstly, how the policy was implemented, in which the use of the L variety was respected and developed while the use of the H variety was obligatory in the educational field and formal settings. Furthermore, it was required to have a degree at least in the H variety when people applied for jobs. This played a role in maintaining both the H and L varieties, since the use of the L variety was on a daily basis (Martens 2016).

On the level of writing reforms, a group of studies highlighted the role of authorities in China in the process of simplifying the characters and promoting the use of both dialects and standards based on one unified variety, namely that of Beijing during the 1950–1970 period (Goldstick 2009). All these movements and reforms were based on the policy of one state, one people and one language. The purpose behind this was to create a sense of unity (Goldstick 2009). In addition to the simplification of the Chinese characters, there were severe attempts to standardise the language and build connections across all regions in the country.

The linguistic situation in China was complicated as the Arabic counterpart (Al Ahmad 2018). China was divided linguistically and culturally into various regions (Goldstick 2009). The reforms of language in China contributed to boosting the economy and the political stability of the country (Goldstick 2009). Researchers such as Zhang Xiru (2017) and others reviewed the significance of having a unified, standardised language across all the nation which will, in turn, assist people in being understood everywhere and having a sense of unity (Goldstick 2009). In the process of unifying and then standardising the written language in China, a set of actions were taken to boost the new unifying written language. The teachers in primary, middle and secondary schools were trained in extensive programmes. Furthermore, programmes for training in the national army and media were launched in order to promote the use of the new common written language. Aiming to ensure some kind of stability in these attempts to promote the new language, the government established a central working committee responsible for directing and organising this process in different fields such as education as well as commerce (Goldstick 2009).

The consensus of these studies seems to be that unification of the language leads to greater proficiency, while facilitating more effective communication and efficient exchange of ideas. Although organisations such as the KHDA, and its counterparts in other Arabic-speaking countries, manage Arabic instruction locally, there is no unifying body that manages the Arabic language across the many nations that speak it. While there is nobody fulfilling this management role, there is a single standard that is accepted throughout the Arabic world: the Holy Qu'ran that serves as a framework for MSA and is the indisputable model that defines what is correct in terms of written Arabic.

These factors make the context within Dubai's British schools significantly different from China, despite the significance of language management in both regions.

4.4.3 Switzerland

Similar to the linguistic situation in the Arabic countries, the co-existence of high German and Swiss dialects in German-speaking Switzerland is a source of complexity. With these two language variations' roles to plan and navigate differences in daily life, it is subject to the social and political discussion on language systems (Knoll & Jaeger 2019). In the speech community of Switzerland, in addition to the many immigrant languages being practised, four official languages are spoken: German, French, Italian and Rhaeto-Romanic. In a study conducted in the canton of Zurich, which is officially a German-speaking community, the linguistic situation was called diglossic because two language variations are in practice together: a high German variety (standard German) is utilised as the formal language in official contexts such as politics and the media, while local dialects are used in everyday life and in informal written contexts (Knoll & Jaeger 2019).

Some researchers stated that children would develop their language abilities by studying high German in their earlier years, particularly those with a migrant history, which would lead to greater assimilation. In contrast, other researchers emphasised the need to use dialect as an issue of political, national and cultural duty. On the level of learning languages in the early years of childhood, the Swiss dialect must be practised as the primary language in classrooms and teaching, although high German is possible in specific topics. Moreover, the national framework appears to be quite limiting regarding the use of high German in the early years' classes. Although using high German is limited, it is not explicitly described how it may be taught. Notwithstanding the federal requirement to speak the dialect in early years as an outcome of the election, the current system grants an opportunity for teachers to practise both

dialect and high German in classroom languages (Knoll & Jaeger 2019). As mentioned earlier regarding the similarities between the linguistic situation in the Arabic countries and Switzerland, Vorwerg, Suntharam and Morand (2019) stated that speakers in diglossic languages switch between varieties as bilinguals do between the languages they speak. In German-speaking Switzerland, local speakers of German have control of two varieties of German, which are utilised in various situations: Swiss German, the spoken dialect used in everyday life, and standard German, which is used in formal settings (Vorwerg, Suntharam & Morand 2019).

While Switzerland is an example of various, monolingually adapted school systems in a multilingual country due to the substantial regional liberty of the different linguistic societies, Lundberg (1958) argued that it is not a perfect example of diglossia as defined by Ferguson. Lundberg pointed out that languages and their variations survive in complicated interrelations in which they are selected for various tasks. The mixture of the plans and purposes of specific principles has begun to be recognised as a particular sort of diglossia (Lundberg 2018). The diglossic situation in Switzerland was used as one of the four primary examples mentioned by Ferguson (1958) in his original article defining diglossia. Interestingly, Lundberg argued that the Swiss setting never ultimately met Ferguson's definition, and the disagreement affected one of the essential principles set by Ferguson, notably prestige. According to Lundberg, the Swiss variety of German is not a low variety, at least according to the Swiss themselves. This, indeed, rather than highlighting flawed theorising in studying diglossia, instead indicates the uniqueness of every individual multilingual setting (Lundberg 2018).

The Swiss have succeeded in maintaining a balance between their dialectal varieties and Standard German so that it can now be assumed that union has been enduringly prevented. In the speech community of Swiss–German, students learn to speak standard German in grade 3 when all students use the standard language as a medium of instruction and communication. Furthermore, they practise it in church and hear it on the radio and television. To conclude, a particular type of bilingualism identifies the ethnically Swiss, a symbiosis of two related yet syntactically separate languages (Lundberg 2018).

This clearly shows the similarities between the linguistic situation in the Arabic countries and Switzerland, where people use dialects in everyday life and the standard form in formal settings (Lundberg 2018). Although the division between the RDs and MSA is more clearly a split between the low and high forms of Arabic than the division between Swiss–German and German, there are many similarities between the diglossic situations. While these two languages are used bilingually by many, they are often not the only languages used. In

addition to the two forms of German, many Swiss people learn French or Italian and, especially in recent years, English. Similarly, Arabic speakers are often tasked with learning a third language in addition to the two forms of Arabic, and while this third language is often English, in some areas it may be French, Spanish or Turkish.

4.4.4 Greece

The Greek language has had diglossia for so long that it produced the term (Toufexis 2008). Within this sense, diglossia refers to bilingualism in Greek (Mackridge 2004). Diglossia has existed in the Greek territory, which was initially a collection of city-states with different languages, since the 1st century BC, and maintained its survival for more than two millennia until the 20th century AD (Toufexis 2008).

The Greek state of diglossia has drawn the interest of researchers to the field of Byzantine and Modern Greek studies; their significant enrichment to the discussion of the phenomenon can be briefly reviewed in the following considerations (karagkouni 2009). In 1830, Greece became a republic and earned its independence after four centuries of subjection under Ottoman rule (Mackridge 2004). At that time, there were two main varieties of the language spoken in the Greek community. As a result, significant disagreements took place between traditional Greeks, the Archaisers, and the more progressive ones, the Demoticists, regarding the selection of a national and official Greek language (Mackridge 2004). Those two main varieties were Katharévousa and Dhimotikí. After the founding of the Greek Republic, the two varieties coexisted for some time in a diglossic state similar to the case of Arabic. The Katharévousa variety ended up being used in formal settings, particularly in the written language, while the Dhimotikí was used in everyday life (Toufexis 2008). This state of diglossia lasted for over a century. The usage of both Dhimotiki and Katharevousa varieties in the period of the 19th and 20th centuries can only partially be seen as a normal state of diglossia (karagkouni 2009). Dhimotikí increasingly gained ground and the case of diglossia in Greek was resolved through the process of adopting the Dhimotikí variety as the formal language of the country (Toufexi 2008). It was ultimately identified as the official language of the Greek nation in 1976, and has remained the sole national language ever since (toufexi 2008).

While the diglossic situation in Greece was resolved through the low version ultimately eclipsing the high version, this would never happen in Arabic for two reasons. First, the high version, MSA, is the language of the Holy Qu'ran. For this reason alone, it would never be

allowed to be eclipsed entirely by another language or variety. Second, unlike the situation in modern Greece, Arabic is spoken in 22 different countries, each with more or less their own RD, or in some cases more than one dialect. It would be impossible to select one nation's RD as the correct form of Arabic, but it is possible to change how Arabic is taught in different regions by taking into account the needs of different students in different linguistic environments, such as Dubai's British schools.

4.4.5 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the theoretical basis for the concepts that will guide this study in terms of the three factors influencing the proficiency of Arabic-speaking students: language variation, social culture (linguistic environment), and language management. In order to understand the unique challenges and situations faced by these students, this chapter examined the three theories that represent the three factors mentioned above. Language Variation Theory introduces the idea of diglossia, which significantly influences the Arabic language. This theory will guide and support the first research question. Sociocultural Theory presents the idea of linguistic environments, which guides the second research question. All learning within schools is under the purview of the government, and thus guided by Language Management Theory that supports the third question.

Although the literature documents numerous factors that influence language learning in general, these three are the most relevant to the unique situation faced by Arabic-speaking students. The literature demonstrates many parallels between certain aspects of the language instruction experienced by language learners in different countries. However, there is a distinct gap in Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in Arabic-language in Dubai's British schools. The next chapter addresses how the data for this study were gathered and analysed.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive description and explanation of the research methodology selected for aiding in the collection of data on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in MSA. It has been noted in the literature review that there is a necessity for investigating the factors influencing Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in the context of this study. As mentioned in the section of the significance of this study, there are limited studies targeting the above-mentioned field. Therefore, this study seeks to achieve three objectives, which will lead to the achievement of this study's aim, namely to investigate the factors that influence Arab-speaking students' proficiency in MSA in Dubai's British schools. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), research is the methodical grouping and perceptive investigation of data or knowledge for a specific purpose, while the research methodology highlights the different purposes of adopting quantitative and qualitative approaches (Creswell 2013). The methodology for this study includes quantitative data collected from the surveys of the students, parents, Arabic teachers and leaders, as well as an analysis of the students' work. The qualitative data were collected through interviews with the parents, teachers and leaders. Initially, observations of Arabic classes at both types of schools were planned, but this became impossible due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

Table 5.1: Some differences between the quantitative and qualitative approaches (YousefiKaczmarek 2015; Nooraie et al. 2018).

Quantitative approach	Qualitative approach
The focus of the study is describing and explaining, as well as predicting, the nature of the relationship between the study and its variables.	The focus of the study is understanding and interpreting the research variables.
The researcher has minimal involvement to reduce bias.	The researcher is involved as either a participant or a catalyst.

The sampling technique is probability- based.	The sampling technique is non-probability based.
A deductive approach is employed that uses numbers.	An inductive approach using words is employed that avoids the complexity of the relationship between numbers and words.
The type of question is based on how many and how often.	The type of question is based on why and how.
Describes human behaviour and identifies related factors.	Identifies and understanding the causes of human behaviour.
Tests research hypothesis.	Formulates research hypothesis.

The benefits of the various methods can be exploited through a mixed-method process in which quantitative and qualitative data are combined to strengthen investigative research in the field of education (Creswell 2013). In this study, it was essential to examine various methods to uncover the most complex concerns underpinning the factors influencing Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools. Thus, this chapter will explore the chosen methods that were deemed most beneficial to respond to the research questions:

1- How does variation in the Arabic language influence Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools?

2- What influence does the linguistic environment at British schools have on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language?

3- What are the perceptions of the leaders, teachers and parents regarding the influence of the language management of Arabic on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools?

By answering these questions, it is hoped that this study will achieve its main aim of determining the influence of the three aforementioned factors on the proficiency of Arabic-speaking students in Dubai's British schools.

This chapter provides an overview of the process used to complete the research for this study. It begins by providing a theoretical background to explain the rationale that was used to

select the research methods. It then continues to describe each step of the data-collection process, from selecting the samples to the instrumentation employed. The validity and trustworthiness of these instruments are examined, and ethical considerations for the study are addressed, before considering the methods used to analyse the data.

5.2 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a set of hypotheses or views of a researcher that produces a distinct research methodology for a study (Creswell 2009). A research methodology is the overall plan of the research method, including all the research phases from establishing the theoretical underpinning to gathering and analysing the data. The research methodology is a philosophical stance or ground that carries the process of research (Creswell 2009). Hence, a philosophical worldview is essential for research methodology. Research philosophy affects the method by which things are observed in the world. It directs the hypotheses that strengthen the research approach and techniques chosen as part of a research paradigm (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012). For this research, one major component of the paradigm is pragmatism.

A pragmatism-based theoretical framework can be beneficial to research because it concentrates on the rational connection between the two paradigms of inquiry, particularly quantitative and qualitative, and emphasises choosing what works in research (Creswell 2007). This is why the pragmatic paradigm was used in this study due to its flexibility. One of the main characteristics of pragmatism is its role in bridging the gap between the practical singular scientific method to study and the comparatively new and unlimited inquiry of qualitative research (Creswell 2007). Pragmatism also concentrates on the study outcomes, allows more significant weight to be shifted towards the study question(s) than the methods employed, and affirms that various data-gathering methods can inform the research. In pragmatism, a multi-stance approach enables the researchers to incorporate both biased and unbiased views, and allows objective and subjective data that are relevant to the study (Creswell 2007). Essentially, it is the process of choosing what serves and works in order to meet the research objectives.

Apprising this arrangement should be the philosophical hypotheses the researcher carries to the research (Creswell 2014). Two central factors assist researchers in deciding the character of mixed-method design that fully agrees with their research: the preference and implementation of the process of collecting data (Molina-Azorin 2016). Concerning the

preference, the mixed-method researcher may not necessarily have a preference for quantitative or qualitative elements. This importance might emerge from the research question(s), from possible restrictions on data collection, or from the necessity to explore one form of data before progressing to another. The implementation of data collection relates to the process the researcher practices to gather both quantitative and qualitative data (Molina-Azorin 2016). It is of great importance to know that since qualitative and quantitative research approaches rely on variant theories and hypotheses, one of them may be more beneficial than the other one, and vice versa, depending on the type of research and the process of data collection.

As a philosophical framework for mixed-method research, authorities have highlighted its importance in the sector of social science (Al Quraan 2017). Pragmatists do not view the world as an entire union. Similarly, mixed-method researchers consider various approaches for gathering and interpreting data rather than supporting just one method. Moreover, pragmatist researchers seek answers to the 'what' and 'how' of the research topic based on its expected results. As a pragmatist, the researcher aims to determine the most suitable means, and then gather and interpret data to respond to the research question(s) (Bdeir 2019). Applying both qualitative and quantitative approaches give the researcher greater understanding concerning the in-depth pragmatics to be considered. The philosophy of pragmatism is not confined to any one scheme of philosophy. This connects to mixed-method research whereby researchers seek freedom in their data collection through both the quantitative and qualitative hypotheses they employ in their work. It is no secret that researchers have the liberty of selection. They have the freedom to determine the systems, procedures, and styles of research that most immeasurable satisfy their requirements and expectations (Bdeir 2019). Pragmatic researchers acknowledge that research regularly arises in cultural, classical, administrative, and other settings. The overarching essence of research philosophy links to the growth of knowledge and its essence. Pragmatism asserts that the research questions are the most critical determinants of epistemology, ontology and axiology. Within this regard, epistemology seeks knowledge to uncover and then understand phenomenon (Ajay 2021). Ontology is the philosophy whereby the researcher investigates the determinants and the factors that influence the outcome of research (Aliyu, Singhry, Adamu & Abubakar 2015). Axiology concerns the values of the research outcome, or highlights to what extent the researcher's values shape the way he or she conducts research and how the outcomes could be beneficial for society (Ajay 2021). Furthermore, when making axiology explicit, it would help to set and clarify the guiding tone for action in research (Aliyu, Singhry, Adamu & Abubakar 2015).

Pragmatism is intuitively apparent, mainly because it helps researchers to avoid the engagement in what they view as rather futile discussions about such notions as fact and certainty (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009). It is worth mentioning that pragmatism is a matter-of-fact approach to identifying clarifications and addressing research inquiries in a working system. Hypotheses or assumptions are liberally represented from both qualitative and quantitative sources to provide a more extensive understanding of the targeted topic. Pragmatist researchers prioritise what works, select the most appropriate methods without preconceived outcomes, and form judgments based on objective truth (Albalushi 2019). Pragmatists seek truth and authenticity. Therefore, pragmatism has a robust philosophical space in mixed-method research. The pragmatic philosophy views the world as an authoritative organisation; therefore, it calls for various approaches to explore the truth.

5.3 Research Approach

According to Creswell (2003), the research approach provides the entire structure of the research. The research approach presents significant data concerning the structure, planning, and policies needed for developing the investigation in association with the research purposes. The research approach includes a collection of choices that allow choosing the principal course of development for the study; these choices include selecting the methods and systems for analysing the collected data (Creswell 2014).

The research approach empowers researchers to obtain answers to fulfil the research goals and recognise the difficulties included in the research because it views the study collectively (Jackson 2011). The research approach is also categorised as descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory (Yin 2003). The explanatory research approach represents the presumed causal connections of real-life interventions that are challenging to explain by using experimental designs and tactics. The descriptive research approach is primarily performed for describing an actual experience or intervention regarding the real-life setting in which the event occurred (Yin 2003). Finally, exploratory approach is predominantly employed to explore positions that cannot be understood clearly because the results are likely to be complicated (Jackson 2011). For this study, the explanatory approach was used, with Table 5.2 below providing more details of the study approach.

Main Aim	To investigate the factors influencing Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools					
Research Approach	Explanatory sequential mixed-method approach					
Main Research Question	Paradigm	Instrument s	Participants	Sampling Technique	Data Analysis	
What are the main factors influencing	Quantitati ve and qualitative	Questionnai res	Students	Critical case sampling	Descripti ve and inferentia l	
Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools?	quantative		Leaders, teachers and parents	Simple random		
		Document analysis	Samples of students' work	Stratified cluster sampling	Descripti ve and inferentia 1	
		Semi- structured interviews	Leaders and teachers	Purposive	Thematic analysis	
			Parents	Purposive (Quota sampling)		

Table 5.2: The main elements of the research approach.

In this study, an explanatory sequential mixed-method approach was used. This is a process where both quantitative and qualitative methods are employed in the data-collection process (Creswell 2014). The explanatory sequential mixed-method approach can assist in building various perspectives from both approaches, and through promoting more reliable means for analysis (Albalushi 2019). The adoption of a research approach is also based on the research type itself, the gap in the research or the concern being explored, the experience of the researcher, and the audience of the study (Albalushi 2019). The explanatory sequential mixed-method approach comprises two stages of design, in which the researcher gathers quantitative data in the first stage, analyses the outcomes and then utilises these outcomes to design the second qualitative stage. The quantitative outcomes typically inform the participants to be purposefully selected for the qualitative stage, and the questions that will be directed to the participating members (Creswell 2014).

While the exploratory sequential mixed-method approach offers many of the same benefits as the explanatory method, the former is more appropriate to this study due to the breadth of the topic, where the goal is to determine the factors that influence language learning. While the study focuses on three areas of interest, the relationship between multiple complex factors is not easily determined from quantitative data. For this reason, it is necessary to use qualitative data in an attempt to explain the reasons for the trends uncovered in the quantitative data. In this study, the quantitative data, in the form of questionnaires and document analysis, revealed a variety of trends and data clusters. In order to begin to determine the underlying causes, it was necessary to ask those in close contact with the students, the educational system or both.

The overall goal and fundamental assumption of any mixed-method research is that the application of quantitative and qualitative approaches in union presents a more complete perception of the research inquiry and complicated aspects than either approach used alone (Molina-Azorin 2016). This is especially important when dealing with a complex topic such as education. Students are influenced by a host of both educational and non-educational factors. While this study has selected three broad areas (language variation, linguistic environment and language management), it is necessary to explore more deeply to reach the specific factors within each of these broader areas. By gathering data from all stakeholders, and combining both quantitative and qualitative, this study aims to effectively examine this issue from every possible angle.

The rationale for adopting the explanatory sequential mixed-method approach was a desire to refine and explain the analytical results of the quantitative data through a qualitative exploration of the participants' perceptions. The quantitative data, collected from the teachers, parents, leaders and students regarding the factors influencing Arabic-speaking students' proficiency, will be further supported by exploring the perceptions of the teachers, parents and leaders towards the same factors mentioned above. Consequently, this explanatory sequential mixed-method analysis will inform the research findings. Although the research context has never been investigated in this way, similar studies of factors influencing language learning proficiency have likewise used the explanatory sequential mixed-method approach. For example, a study conducted in Cambridge University in 2014 highlighted the significance of using a sequential mixed-method approach in research related to language learning (Riazi & Candlin 2014). This study is likewise a study of language learning and the factors that influence

it, and the explanatory sequential mixed-method approach is the standard mode of investigation for this type of research. Although the context and the language are different, the type of data being collected, and the goal of the research are very similar. As Riazi and Candlin (2014) pointed out, explanatory sequential mixed-method studies are concerned with variation and variability between language and its learners in order to explain the relationships and to advance generalisable inferences.



Figure 5.1: The explanatory sequential mixed-method approach stages.

Another motivation behind adopting the explanatory sequential mixed-method approach is the strengths that may be added to this research through minimising the shortcomings, limitations and gaps between both quantitative and qualitative approaches. According to Creswell (2014), there are several reasons for choosing a sequential mixedmethod approach, two of which are especially relevant to the approach used by this study. Firstly, explaining the outcomes of quantitative data qualitatively, which was achieved through interviews to determine the underlying causes of the various trends found in the questionnaires and document analysis. Trends noted in the data determined the lines of inquiry followed in the interviews. Secondly, to further refine the qualitative instrument in order to enhance the understanding of the experimental outcomes by connecting the qualitative data to the views of the participants. Asking the participants about their perceptions is significantly more valuable when there are clear empirical data to discuss, as it helps to keep the participants from giving misleading answers and starts the discussion from a factual basis.

The quantitative approach is used to examine unbiased theories by investigating the connections amongst variables. Those variables can be estimated, typically using analytical

tools, so that the calculated data can be interpreted utilising analytical methods (Leung 2015). This is similar to qualitative researchers involved in this kind of analysis who have hypotheses for examining theories, checking for alternative interpretations, and being capable of generalising and replicating the conclusions (Creswell 2014). The first benefit of this research approach is the application of analytical data as a means for maintaining time and sources. The quantitative research approach emphasises numbers and patterns in the collection and interpretation of data. The quantitative research approach could be viewed as being objective (Creswell 2014). The application of analytical data for the research records and interpretation saves that time and energy that the researcher would have spent in explaining his or her conclusions (Daniel 2016). Although many of the findings in this study come from qualitative data to support them. Although the responses on the questionnaires do not have anywhere near the same level of detail as the responses to the interview questions, they have the weight of numbers behind them. The same is true of the samples of student work used for the document analysis.

Researchers define qualitative research as interests, a notion, a description, comparisons, representatives and a record of a phenomenon (Daniel 2016). Qualitative research includes all the essential tools that could provoke recall, which supports problem-solving. Qualitative data tools such as observation and interview by video/audio and field notes are used to collect data from members in their original contexts. The methods applied in the data collection provide a sufficient explanation of the research concerning the members included (Daniel 2016). Qualitative research is an approach for investigating and interpreting people's concerns or organisations' impact on social or personal problems. The process of research includes developing questions and schemes; data are usually obtained in the context of the participants. Data analysis develops details to common issues, and the researcher presents information about the essence of the data (Daniel 2016). The ultimately written description has a manageable form. In this study, the qualitative data emerged entirely from semi-structured interviews conducted with the leaders, teachers and parents.

The basis of qualitative research is to create a significant image without negotiating its abundance and dimensionality. Similar to quantitative research, qualitative research intends to explore answers to 'how', 'where', 'when', 'who' and 'why' questions in order to develop a theory or confirm a present theory. Unlike quantitative research that collects principally statistical data and conducts mathematical interpretations under a reductionist, relevant and rigorously accurate paradigm, qualitative research manipulates non-numerical information and its phenomenological understanding, as phenomenology is the study of things as they appear in our experience, or how we experience things from a person's perspective (Smith 2013). This, according to Creswell (2014), links entirely with human insight and subjectivity.

While individual passions and views from both subjects and researchers are considered to have unacceptable negative effects on quantitative research, the same components are regarded as necessary and precise, if not essential, in qualitative research as they steadily reveal further aspects and shades to enhance the study conclusions. Furthermore, qualitative research sees human cognition and action in a social setting and incorporates a broad spectrum of phenomena in order to recognise and fully understand them. Individual actions, which involve communication, thoughts, presentation, and measures, are examined in detail due to the indepth analysis of phenomena. The reason that the qualitative approach is so integral to this study is that it requires taking a holistic perspective of the factors that influence the proficiency of Arabic-speaking students. It requires the combined perceptions of teachers, parents and leaders, understood within multiple complex social settings. Such information could not be obtained through qualitative analysis alone.

5.4 Implementation

The explanatory sequential mixed-method research approach used in this study was implemented in three phases. Phase one entailed obtaining quantitative data by administering questionnaires targeting the leaders, teachers, parents and students. The focus of the questionnaires was on three areas: (i) the perceptions regarding language variation between the RD and MSA; (ii) the linguistic environment experienced by the students attending Dubai's British and Arabic schools; and (iii) the perceptions of the leaders, teachers, parents regarding the language management process. The other quantitative instrument used in phase one was the assessment of samples of student writing. Assignments were collected randomly from the students who completed the questionnaire. These assignments were the same for the students from both schools, and were assessed using the criteria mandated by the KHDA. Fortunately, due to the uniform curriculum of the KHDA, the assignments completed in the Arabic class were the same across all schools, which made them ideal for comparison. Furthermore, the KHDA has standardised grading criteria available for each assignment, which were used to perform the assessment. The assignments were graded blind, without the examiner knowing whether the student was from an Arabic or British school, or what grade the student initially received on the assignment; this data were added to each assignment afterwards, in order to provide a more comprehensive picture.

In the second phase, the qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with the teachers, heads of Arabic departments leaders and parents. Initially, the researcher had also planned to both administer the questionnaires himself and observe classes. Though the students were given questionnaires, they were not interviewed. This choice was made for several reasons. First it was considered that the quantitative methods were already gathering data about the students. It was felt that because of their ages, maturity and level of self-awareness, the interviews would be unlikely to add much insight to the data. Second, the difficulties in working with young children, especially during the Corona virus pandemic and the accompanying restrictions. Neither was possible due to Covid restrictions. Overall, it was felt that on balance, the data gained from students' questionnaire fulfilled the objective of this aspect of data collection.

The main function of the explanatory sequential mixed-method approach is that quantitative research generates trends and general observations, which the qualitative research then seeks

to explain. Thus, the goal of this qualitative research was to understand the trends uncovered in phase one. The quantitative data offered a variety of information about student achievement, attitude and behaviour, as well as the behaviour and perceptions of others involved with their education. Before phase two began, it was necessary to examine these trends and use them to design more probing questions. In the semi-structured interviews, the goal was to explain the data in terms of concrete factors that influence students' proficiency. The questions focused on the three primary areas of the research, namely language variation, linguistic environment and language management. The final phase entailed analysing both types of data.

In this study, during the process of reviewing the relevant literature to investigate the factors influencing Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools, it was determined that neither qualitative nor quantitative approaches would be independently adequate to examine the complexity of the current situation of Arabic language instruction in the context of this study. Essentially, it was concluded that investigating the factors influencing Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools demanded various research methodologies. Consequently, the purpose of embracing the explanatory sequential mixed-method approach was to enable the researcher to sufficiently ensure adequate responses to the research questions. Furthermore, the nature of the questions of this study also lent themselves to an approach based on investigation followed by interpretation.

5.5 Access and Sampling

In order to gain access to the schools that served as the research sites, the researcher contacted the administration of each school by email, providing them with a letter from the university (Appendix 1), as well as an overview of the research and what it would entail on the part of the school should they agree to participate. Because of the non-invasive nature of the study and the generally positive attitude with which educational institutions tend to view academic research, there were no issues with this part of the data gathering process.

The data collection consisted of questionnaires, documents and semi-structured interviews conducted at seven different schools. where the targeted population of this research was five primary and secondary British schools and two primary and secondary Arabic schools in the emirate of Dubai in the UAE. There are a total of 79 British schools and 15 Arabic

schools in Dubai (KHDA 2021). However, as a target population, the study chose schools from among those rated 'very good' and 'outstanding' by the KHDA. These ratings are given by the KHDA on an annual basis and are available on their website. The scores depend on a variety of factors including student achievement and the quality of instruction, as well as non-academic factors such as facility and safety. By using the best schools, the contrast between language skills would be far clearer. Furthermore, by avoiding schools rated 'weak' or 'acceptable', it was less likely that any deficits in the students' language skills would be due to other factors that hinder student achievement in all subjects. Because the KHDA ratings encompass so many areas, schools with lower ratings would have a greater potential for factors that influence all areas of student achievement that would complicate the results of the study. By using only 'outstanding' or 'very good' schools, it would be easier to ensure that any deficits in Arabic language proficiency were due to a language-related factor, rather than some other factor.

There were a total of 25 British schools with the rating of 'very good' or 'outstanding' (KHDA 2020), and thus five schools (20% of the total) should be representative. These schools were selected using single-stage cluster sampling, where the researcher divided the total number of schools into five clusters, where each cluster had five schools. The researcher chose one cluster that represented the other clusters (Jindonesia 2015). These schools were contacted and invited to participate. Because the focus is on students in British schools, the inclusion of two Arabic schools was sufficient to serve as a point of comparison. The Arabic schools for this study were chosen from among the 15 Arabic schools that the Arabic departments in those schools were rated 'very good' or 'outstanding', using the same procedure employed to select the British schools, and thus ensuring that all schools that met the inclusion criteria had an equal chance of being selected.

The researcher received permission from the Research Ethics Committee at the British University in Dubai to commence the data-collection process from the targeted sites (Appendix 2). Then, the researcher communicated with the Student Affairs office in the selected schools and gained the approval necessary for him to conduct the study. He also required the assistance of the teachers both for administering the questionnaires to the students, and collecting the samples of students' work. Through the process of obtaining approval, consent from the parents was collected in order to facilitate the participation of students under the age of 18 years (Appendix 3).

Prior to administering the students' questionnaires, the students' teachers sent a link to the parents with an online electronic consent form for them to sign. After that, the questionnaires were administered in class, in an electronic format. In addition to administering the questionnaires to the students, the teachers were asked to provide the researcher with several samples of students' work from different levels (A and C) in order to choose samples from both types of schools for comparison purposes.

It has been argued that the quality of a study endures or struggles not only due to the suitability of the methodology and instrumentation, but additionally through the appropriateness of the sampling procedure embraced (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). According to Taherdoost (2016), before considering several methods of sampling, it is of great importance to understand what sampling means, along with the reasons why researchers need to carefully consider the selection of a sample. Sampling can be utilised to form an assumption regarding a population or to produce generalisations concerning existing conditions. In reality, this depends on the choice of sampling technique.

In this study, probability sampling (simple random, critical case, cluster and stratified) was employed for the quantitative data collection, while the non-probability (purposive and quota sampling) technique was used to collect the qualitative data. In the simple random technique, every person in the population has an equal opportunity of being selected (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). Furthermore, because a probability sample is selected randomly from the broader population, will be beneficial if the researcher is seeking generalisations because the sample is representative of the broader population (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). The random sampling method presents the highest certainty that those chosen are a typical sample of the broader population. A notable limitation of the random approach is that since the researcher has no power to control the selection of the sample, quiet, uncooperative or unintelligible people may be picked. For practical reasons, this study used critical case sampling for the students' questionnaire and stratified cluster sampling for their assignments. Stratified cluster sampling is a technique where the population is divided into clusters and then one cluster is randomly taken to represent the whole population (Glen 2019). Within the same context, critical case sampling is a technique where researchers select samples that are most likely to provide data that highlight vital information to represent the overall population (Patton 1990), whereby the data obtained can be generalised to the overall population since the samples chosen are critical and importantly, in a significant position to be representative (Patton 1990).

This is because the simple random sampling technique would skew the data towards whichever grade levels have higher response rates. Instead, this study used a critical case based on the grade level.

For the qualitative data, the adoption of the purposive sampling technique was due to the participants' knowledge, position or experience in the targeted field. In purposive sampling, usually a characteristic of qualitative study, researchers select the participants to be involved in the sample on the basis of their knowledge, their typicality or mastery of the particular area of research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007).

The study also included the teachers and leaders at the schools, as well as the parents of the students who attended these schools. By collecting data from all of the stakeholders, the study could ensure that it presents a holistic picture of the Arabic education situation in Dubai's British schools. All Arabic teachers, leaders, and parents at the target schools in this study were potential participants, selected randomly. However, to ensure a more representative sample, critical case sampling was used for both the student questionnaires and the document analysis, with students from grades 2, 5, 7 and 10 at each school, as these grades would provide a more comprehensive view of primary and secondary schools in terms of the overall students' proficiency. This process was intended to provide a sample that represented the school in general, as well as providing insight into the process of student development due to the array of grades spanning from primary to secondary levels. Examining students in both primary and secondary grades was intended to provide a representative view of phenomenon as a whole. Furthermore, it avoided the occurrence of sampling bias due to differences in student maturity and attention affecting the response rates, as would likely have been the case when dealing with students of different ages.

While the samples for the quantitative data were mostly random, some of the interviewees for the qualitative data collection were purposely selected based on factors such as their experience and their role as leaders at the school. While this made the sample less representative, the goal here was to focus on teachers and leaders with experience at both Arabic and British schools, since teachers and leaders with such experience would be in the best position to draw comparisons between the two. However, these criteria were only applied to the teachers and leaders. The parents were selected using quota sampling to form a representative sample from among the questionnaire respondents who agreed to be

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interviewed. This provided a greater range of views and perceptions, while ensuring that they were representative, thus providing a greater level of authenticity.

	Quantitative		Qualitative	
Sample group	Technique	Process	Technique	Process
Students	Critical case sampling	One class selected randomly from grades 2, 5, 7 and 10 from each school		
Parents	Simple random	Survey link sent by email from the school to all parents of the students	Purposive (Quota sampling)	Parents divided into groups based on their questionnaire responses, with representatives of each group selected
Teachers	Simple random	Survey link sent by email from the school to all Arabic teachers at the school	Purposive sampling	Teachers selected based on their experience of working in both Arabic and British schools
Leaders	Simple random	Survey link sent by email from the school to all leaders at the school	Purposive sampling	Leaders selected based on their experience of working in both Arabic and British schools
Document analysis	Stratified cluster sampling	Students stratified by score in class, then randomly selected to form the sample		

 Table 5.3: The sampling process of this study.

The student questionnaire was administered online and given to all grade 2, 5, 7 and 10 Arabic-speaking students selected from the schools using critical case sampling. The questionnaires were administered by the students' teachers, who also sent a link to an electronic parental consent form. The questionnaire was then administered to those students whose parents provided their consent.

The teachers' and leaders' questionnaires were also administered online and given to all the teachers and leaders at the schools that were randomly selected, ensuring that everyone had an equal opportunity to participate. An online survey is the most efficient way to administer a large number of questionnaires to a large population. Because participation was voluntary, it was limited to those who chose to participate in the study.

The parents' questionnaire was distributed online to the parents of those students attending the selected schools via the school administration, while using the simple random technique to ensure that all the parents had an equal opportunity to participate.

Regarding the document analysis, the technique of stratified cluster sampling was used. The researcher divided the students in the class by their current average score, which allowed him to determine what percentage of the students had an A or C grade. After that, an appropriate number of students were randomly selected from each of the score-based strata. This process provided a sample of the class that proportionally represented the various skill levels of the students (Nafiu 2012). This was intended to ensure that the comparisons between the results were as valid as possible. Because all the schools utilised the same curriculum mandated by the KHDA, it was possible to compare the same written assignments across multiple students in multiple classes.

Regarding the sampling technique used for the semi-structured interviews, the parents' version of the questionnaire asked if they were interested in participating in an interview, and those who volunteered were selected using quota sampling. In quota sampling, which is one of the purposive sampling techniques, the researchers choose participants who experienced or have insights into the research topic. By conducting the interviews using quota sampling, the responses of the interviewees can be considered more focused (Sedgwick 2012). Using the responses, the parents were divided into groups based on emergent trends. Quota was set in order to ensure that while a wide range of voices would be heard, it would remain somewhat representative of the population of parents.

The teachers' version of the questionnaire also asked if they were interested in participating in an interview, while including certain questions about their teaching experience. This allowed the researcher to use a purposive sampling technique based upon the participants' position and experience in the field of teaching Arabic in Dubai's schools. The goal of this was to ensure that a group of experienced teachers who had worked in both Arabic and British schools was selected and would have familiarity with the linguistic environment in such schools.

The purposive sampling technique was selected for the leaders to be interviewed, and especially the Arabic department heads. Therefore, the leaders were chosen on the basis of their experience and familiarity with the students and their language learning, as well as the educational system.

5.6 Instrumentation

This study followed the explanatory sequential mixed-method approach, through which the qualitative instruments explained and refined the previously collected quantitative data (Creswell 2014). The use of three data collection instruments employing both quantitative and qualitative methods would produce an accurate representation of the reality when answering the research questions (Creswell 2014). Approachability to various sources of data allows researchers to distinguish, classify and capture a much clearer understanding of how the phenomenon develops over time (Albalushi 2019).

The first instrument was a set of questionnaires distributed to the students, parents, teachers and leaders aiming at investigating their perceptions regarding the research questions, such as their language preferences and habits. The second instrument was document analysis conducted on a sample of work from students at both the Arabic and British schools selected for this study. The third and final instrument was the semi-structured interviews conducted with the leaders, teachers and parents. Table 5.4 below presents the instruments that were employed in the process of data collection, in accordance with the research questions and the objectives of this study.

Research question	Instruments	Analysis
 Research Question 1: How does variation in the Arabic language influence Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools? Objective 1: To understand how the variation in the Arabic language influences Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in Arabic in Dubai's British schools. 	 Questionnaires distributed to teachers, leaders, students and parents Interviews with teachers, leaders and parents Document analysis 	 Quantitative: 1- SPSS software 2- Descriptive statistics 3- Inferential statistics Qualitative: 1- Thematic analysis
 Research Question 2: What influence does the linguistic environment at British schools have on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language? Objective 2: To gain insight into the influences of the linguistic environment at Dubai's British schools on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language. 	 Questionnaires distributed to teachers, leaders, students and parents Interviews with leaders, teachers and parents Document analysis 	 -Quantitative: 1- SPSS software 2- Descriptive statistics 3- Inferential statistics - Qualitative: 1- Thematic analysis
 Research Question 3: What are the perceptions of the leaders, teachers and parents regarding the influence of the language management of Arabic on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools? Objective 3: To determine the perceptions of the leaders, teachers and parents regarding the influence of the language management of Arabic on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic search and parents regarding the influence of the language management of Arabic on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools. 	 Questionnaires distributed to leaders, teachers and parents Interviews with teachers, leaders and parents Document analysis 	 Quantitative: 1- SPSS software 2- Descriptive statistics 3- Inferential statistics Qualitative: 1- Thematic analysis

5.6.1 Questionnaires

This study used questionnaires targeting the leaders, teachers, students and parents. The questionnaires were distributed online. A link to the questionnaire was available to all Arabic teachers at the five Dubai British schools and the two Arabic schools selected for this study, as well as to the parents of the students taking Arabic in either of those schools. The students' questionnaire was administered electronically to all students in the selected classes whose parents signed the electronic consent form. The questionnaire was administered by the students' normal Arabic teacher, as the researcher was unable to access the classrooms due to the Covid-19 restrictions. The questionnaires began by seeking basic demographic information and language-related habits and preferences, before moving on to the students' attitudes and perceptions of Arabic, the Arabic class and the education system as a whole. To facilitate the subjects' participation in the study, a letter from the British University in Dubai was distributed to the principals of the target schools (Appendix 1).

The teachers' and leaders' questionnaires were designed for all the teachers and leaders from different grades responsible for teaching Arabic to Arabic-speaking students. The questionnaires comprised two sections: the first section collected the participants' demographic information, which covered various aspects related to nationality, experience, qualifications and professional development; while the second section contained Likert scales to gather their perceptions on statements regarding the influence of language variation, the linguistic environment and language management on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language. All Arabic teachers and leaders at the schools chosen for this study were potential participants in the questionnaires.

For the parents' questionnaire, it was intended that all parents with Arabic-speaking students in the schools selected for this study would be potential participants. The questions sought demographic information such as the nationality and level of education. The survey also asked about their language-related habits, such as what language(s) and what form(s) they used at home, as well as the frequency. Finally, it gathered some general perceptions and attitudes both about the Arabic language and the education system.

Before the data-collection process began, the questionnaires were piloted in two schools targeting a sample of the population in order to test the research instruments. This testing was

essential in order to establish the content validity of the scores on the instruments, while aiming to improve the questions, format and scales used (Creswell 2014).

5.6.2 Document Analysis

Document analysis is an effective method for exploring documents to explain the data while gaining understanding and developing practical information (Fraenkel, Hyun & Wallen 2012). Document analysis can also provide the researcher with important information that has a significant function in managing educational inquiries (Daraghmeh 2019). According to Fraenkel, Hyun and Wallen (2012), various techniques can be employed to analyse the study's data and understand its findings. Some of these techniques include descriptive statistics, counting, frequencies, or narrative descriptions. Document analysis has a long history in research, dating back to the 18th century in Scandinavia (Hsieh & Shannon 2005). In the US, document analysis was primarily employed as an analytical method at the beginning of the 20th century (Hsieh & Shannon 2005). Document analysis is a significantly flexible method that has been widely used in various areas of research (White & Marsh 2006). The primary goal of document analysis extends beyond counting words or categorising themes, with the aim to produce knowledge and recognition of the phenomenon under study (Hsieh & Shannon 2005). Document analysis is a systematic, rigorous method of analysing documents gathered in the course of research (White & Marsh 2006). Researchers apply document analysis in both qualitative and quantitative research methods (Hsieh & Shannon 2005). Accordingly, both quantitative and qualitative analysis were employed in this study.

In this study, descriptive and inferential statistics were used in order to analyse the samples of Arabic-speaking students' work. One of the advantages of document analysis is its simplicity when compared to other approaches. Moreover, document analysis is not limited to a period in time or a particular area (Fraenkel, Hyun & Wallen 2012). For each of the selected students, the same written assignments were collected. These assignments were the same for all students in each of the selected years at every school. Because of the standardised curriculum, the assignments and grading criteria are consistent in Arabic classes across all schools, including British and Arabic schools. Each assignment was anonymised so that the grader did not know which school the student attended, and was then graded according to the standardised criteria adopted by the KHDA.

Document analysis is utilised to approve the conclusions of the investigation with other instruments that correspond to it. Additionally, it can provide the researcher with valuable information that has a crucial role in managing educational problems (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun 2014). Furthermore, it assists in investigating possible connections or examining different ideas (Taherdoost 2016). The documents in this study provided a valuable opportunity to create inferential comparisons between the students who attended the British schools and those who attended the Arabic schools. By examining differences in proficiency between those two school systems, the study was intended to address the primary goal of assessing the influence of the linguistic environment on student proficiency. Because the assignments and the curriculum are the same, as mandated by the KHDA, differences in student achievement must be attributable to an outside factor, with the linguistic environment a likely source of influence.

In addition to looking at the overall student proficiency, it was intended that this would help in assessing specific areas such as vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. Knowing which areas students struggle with would contribute towards assessing the influence of language variation as well as the linguistic environment.

5.6.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviewing enables the researcher to verify the assumptions about the considered subject that the collected data suggests (Fraenkl, Hyun & Wallen 2012). The interview enables the researcher to refine the written answers in order to explain uncertainty in the interpretation process (Abdallah 2018). It has been stated that the interview is a response to an organised inquiry for collecting data with a possibility to clear up inquiries and extend the respondents' replies whenever needed (Daraghmeh 2019). Furthermore, the interview allows the researcher to verify that the obtained data linked to various points in the research are correct (Fraenkel, Hyun & Wallen 2012). They also produce more profound knowledge and insight by hearing different participants' views and experiences. Interviews are also considered a method to learn participants' thoughts and views on the target issue. Hence, semi-structured interviews were used in this study and allowed greater flexibility, which benefited the investigation by allowing the interviewes to introduce ideas and lines of inquiry that the interviewer might not have previously considered.

Because this study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-method design, the interview questions were revised after the process of quantitative data collection, using the guidance granted by the results of the questionnaires, as well as new insights that emerged. The

interview were semi-structured, allowing a great deal of flexibility on the part of the interviewer. Even though the questions were determined by the questionnaire results, the interviewees introduced new ideas and new lines of inquiry. Because the goal of the qualitative portion of an explanatory sequential mixed-method design is to explain the results obtained in the quantitative portion, it is necessary for the interviewer to be free to fully pursue any line of inquiry that arises. The intended interviews were piloted with three Arabic teachers from different grades, two parents and two leaders in order to evaluate the validity and suitability of the questions. Furthermore, some of the interviewees, both teachers and leaders, were selected based upon their questionnaire responses, in order to ensure a representative sample of views.

The purpose of these interviews was to highlight the perceptions of the leaders, teachers and parents regarding the influence of language variation, linguistic environment and language management on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency. The interviews enabled in-depth insight into the members' perceptions. Interviews inspire participants to declare their views directly (Abdallah 2018). It is worth mentioning that in qualitative data collection, the subjectivity of respondents as well as their views, beliefs and attitudes collectively add to a level of bias (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). The interview can be considered as a method to explore the thoughts of participants regarding a subject (Fraenkel, Hyun & Wallen 2012).

The leader interviewees discussed their perceptions of the KHDA's role in language management, as well as the influence of language variation and how it influences students' proficiency. The teacher interviewees discussed their perceptions of the main factors, both language and non-language related, that influence student proficiency, and their views on the managing role of the KHDA in Arabic language instruction in Dubai schools. The parent interviewees were specifically focused on their children, and their perceptions of both the factors that influence their children's proficiency in Arabic, as well as their beliefs about the Arabic language in general.

5.7 The Reliability, Validity, and Trustworthiness of the Instruments

5.7.1 Reliability

An instrument is regarded as reliable when used by several different researchers under constant situations with consistent outcomes (Ghazali 2016). Reliability distinguishes the extent to which the research outcomes constitute an accurate representation of the study population and their consistency over time (Ghazali 2016). Moreover, reliability is recognised as the extent to which an instrument is free of measurement inaccuracies, since the more measurement mistakes that occur, the less reliable the instrument. According to Johnson and Christensen (2014), reliability results from consistency and steadiness.

For this study, there were fewer considerations for reliability since all of the data were gathered by a single researcher. Although there is always the possibility that respondents might interpret questions in a different manner, the questions and instructions were all worded exactly the same. Furthermore, because there was only one researcher administering the interview questions, the possibility for the interviewer to impact the results was reduced. There was no need to normalise grading for the document analysis or worry about providing consistent instructions for completing the questionnaires, since they were done online. The primary area in which extra steps needed be taken to ensure reliability was in the exact wording on the questionnaires for the leaders, teachers, parents and students. Fortunately, they were modified, altered, developed and used from more than one study. This, in its turn, increased the reliability of the instruments. The final copy of the questionnaires was sent to an expert, aiming to consider his feedback and gain more clarity. This step is known as 'content-related evidence' (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun 2014). Furthermore, to guarantee more reliability in this study, the questionnaires were piloted to a group of teachers, leaders, parents and students. The feedback of the participants from this piloted study was used to improve and modify the questions in order to gain greater clarity. The key to ensuring reliability through clarity is to ensure that every respondent interprets each question in exactly the same way. If any questions are confusing or ambiguous, it is likely that the data will be tainted by incorrect responses. Fortunately, both piloting the questionnaire and having it reviewed by an expert helped to ensure that all the questions were clear and easy to understand for people of all backgrounds and levels of education.

For the document analysis, the sample of the students' work was both random and representative, making it reliable, and was evaluated by the same examiner, again using standardised criteria to ensure consistency and reliability (Taherdoost 2016).

5.7.2 Validity

According to Johnson and Christensen (2014), the instrument's validity relates to the accuracy of the inferences or discussions gained from the test results. Accordingly, the validity of instruments is regarded as a crucial principle. It is worth mentioning that the use of the explanatory sequential mixed-method approach is attached to a variety of instruments (questionnaires, document analysis), thus contributing to a high level of validity (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004). In mixed-method studies, the researcher is required to build the validity of the records from the quantitative criteria. In the explanatory sequential mixed-method approach, further validity concerns emerge. In quantitative research, validity is maintained through the use of appropriate instruments, measures and data. It essentially depends on whether the methodology and the plan fit with the research being conducted, and that the specific instruments, samples and data analysis are relevant (Leung 2015).

In this study, the internal validity was assured by analysing the findings accurately and ensuring that these (i) represented the phenomenon under research, and (ii) could be used in alternative contexts (Ghazali 2016). Furthermore, the face validity was guaranteed through ensuring that the content of the questionnaires was suitable for the context of the study and that the questions were clear (Streefkerk 2019). Internal validity is concerned with whether the conducted study suits the context or not, while face validity is concerned with whether the researcher measures what he or she claims to measure (Hopkins 2021). Furthermore, more validity of this research was achieved because of the researcher's experience and involvement in the context of this study (Creswell 2014).

Validity was assured through a number of additional methods. First, the questionnaires adopted for this study were modified and developed from questionnaires used in several other similar studies, one of which was conducted at the University of Sudan in 2016. The findings of that study indicated that the community of Sudan is affected by language variation in the Arabic language, where the students use MSA in formal settings and RD in daily life (Khatir 2016). The other study was conducted at the University of Bangor in Wales and explored the impact of diglossia on the Arabic language of its learners (Al Zahrani 2012). The findings

showed that the functional differences between MSA and RD negatively affect students' learning in the early years and have less influence on adult students. Furthermore, the study highlighted the role of the linguistic environment on students' learning (Al Zahrani 2012). To gain further validity, these questionnaires were sent to an expert in the field and then were amended in accordance with the feedback given. Afterwards, the questionnaires were piloted and then revised based on the responses.

For the document analysis, validity was ensured by using standardised criteria and a consistent grader working with anonymised writing samples (Taherdoost 2016). Furthermore, the content validity was assured through consulting an expert and considering their feedback in this regard to ensure that the samples were representative. By its nature, it is more difficult to measure the validity of qualitative research due to its more subjective nature. Unlike quantitative data, it is not possible to simply reproduce the results using the same instruments, samples and analysis. In qualitative research, the foundation of reliability is regularity; through ensuring that each respondent is asked the same questions, in the same manner, the possibility of the interviewer influencing the respondents' answers is reduced (Leung 2015).

5.7.3 Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the semi-structured interviews was ensured through the use of carefully vetted questions, examined and approved by a group of experts, and the use of the same interviewer.

Trustworthiness is considered a method for researchers to persuade the reader that their findings are worthy of attention (Lincoln, Guba & Pilotta 1985). Trustworthiness is a topic of faith, whereby the investigator is observed as having made those systems obvious and auditable. Various contributors to research methods have explained in what way qualitative researchers can combine patterns that deal with these concerns. Within the same context, researchers have endeavoured to react immediately to the concerns of validity and reliability in their qualitative research (Shenton 2004). It has been argued that several qualitative researchers have overlooked proving sufficient explanations in their study of their hypotheses and techniques, particularly concerning the process of data analysis (Gunawan 2015).

Trustworthiness is often defined by four components: credibility, which matches roughly with the positivist notions of internal validity; dependability, which links to reliability; transferability, which is a sort of external validity; and confirmability, which is mostly an effect of the performance. According to Guba (1981), credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are established as the naturalist's equivalents for the more established standards of objectiveness.

In order to achieve trustworthiness, the study must meet all four of those criteria. The first criterion is credibility. It has been established that credibility is the trust achieved through integrity in the study's findings. This was achieved in this study due to the researcher's involvement and experience with the setting in which the research was conducted. The next trustworthiness criteria is transferability, which was accomplished in this study by displaying a thorough explanation of all the stages of the study in the methodology section. This data enables the reader to make their own judgments concerning the transferability of the study. The faithful portrayal of the sites, the curriculum utilised in the Arabic language education, the datacollection process, and the context enable this research to be replicated in other similar settings. According to Abdallah (2018), an in-depth and comprehensive collection of aspects concerning the setting and the methodology is a crucial phase for the transferability of research. Furthermore, it has been argued that surface validity is regarded with the degree to which the conclusions of one research can be employed in different situations (Leung 2015). Since the conclusions of a qualitative plan are particular to a low number of distinct situations and people, it is difficult to show that the conclusions and outcomes fit other states and groups. It has been noted that several naturalistic inquiries consider that, in practice, even established generalisability is never easy, as all measurements are determined by the particular contexts in which they occur (Shenton 2004).

The next trustworthiness criterion is dependability. In order to ensure this, the instruments, the map of the intervention, the individual participants and the data-collection process were rigorously organised and monitored. The nature of the researcher's employment, which offered complete engagement within the study setting, is regarded as an essential factor that could guarantee the methods and procedures were applied in reaching the criteria for credibility and transferability. Moreover, dependability was ensured in this research through the thorough explanation of the research process. According to Lincoln, Guba and Pilotta (1985), when the reader can examine the research process, they can better judge the dependability of the research. A study may demonstrate the dependability of its process by having it audited, allowing more dependability The fourth trustworthiness criterion is confirmability, which according to Lincoln, Guba and Pilotta (1985) is achieved when

credibility, transferability, and dependability are established. Confirmability refers to the idea that the researcher's interpretations and explanations are clearly derived from the data, thus demonstrating how the research findings were attained (Nowell et al. 2017).

In the study, all the transcripts the of the data from the interviews were accomplished in a manner that facilitated the cross-checking of progress. Various researchers incorporate objectivity in science with the employment of tools that are not reliant on personal experience and knowledge. They understand the challenge of securing pure objectivity since, as humans design the tests and questionnaires, the intervention of the researcher's preferences is necessary. The notion of confirmability is the qualitative researcher's similar interest to objectivity. Here, measures must be taken to guarantee insofar as possible that the project's conclusions are the outcome of the practices and beliefs of the sources, rather than the attributes and choices of the researcher (Shenton 2004). The results and the findings of the conducted research were formed from detailed participant quotes in order to present reliable data about the Arabic speaking student's proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools. After participants' views were transcribed and categorised, the researcher did not contact the participants to achieve the step of member checking due to technical reasons.

5.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are a well-defined subject in terms of the development and completion of studies that involve building arrangements, as well as creating judgments that may impact the performance of people. It is worth considering that there are three fields of ethical concerns that researchers might weigh in social contexts: firstly, the ethics of the manner of gathering and interpreting data; secondly, the ethics that are associated with the participants and how the researcher deals with them; and lastly, the ethics that are connected to community and accountability (Bdeir 2019). It has been argued that the security of social topics throughout the ethics that are related to the process of data collection and analysis involve adherence to the foundations of ethical behaviour for the investigation, processing, and recording of conclusions, while avoiding imitation, errors, carelessness, and deceit (Bdeir 2019). Within the same context, the plan of obtaining consent should be implemented deliberately and clarify what is being requested, while the stakemust be eligible for consent. This indicates that to participate in a study, members are expected to be adequately informed about the study,

understand the data and have the potential of self-sufficiency in making judgments to allow them to decide whether to participate or withdraw (Arifin 2018) (Appendix 3). Research ethics is vital to ensure that researchers preserve the honour of their thoughts and advertise the knowledge that is examined (Akaranga & Makau 2016). According to Akaranga and Makau (2016), there are several powerful philosophical methods concerning research ethics: teleology and deontology. The teleological design believes that the purposes agreed by the research explain the means. This means that the advantages of the research conclusions should be considered versus the values of practising unethically. However, this depends on the estimate presented about the relevant outcomes versus the damage caused (Akaranga & Makau 2016). While the deontological principles, which are the contrary of teleological theories, assert that the purposes agreed by the research can never support the application of unethical practices; they declare that there are thoughts which do an act or practice real besides the morality or badness of its results. It has been stated that the ethical treatment of those who participate in the field of research involves the observation of the foundations of ethical behaviour in order to guarantee that members are preserved from real or emotional abuse, embarrassment, or risk (Akaranga & Makau 2016). Ethical treatment guarantees the well-being of all participants and demands adherence to approved keys of practice associated with the evaluation of risk, approval, privacy, confidentiality, and fraud (Bdeir 2019). In all phases of educational studies, researchers need to adhere to best practice in handling and advertising their research conclusions by handling the task in a quality and reliable manner based on a set of ethical sources (Bdeir 2019). It is worth mentioning that ethics is a category of a theory that describes the behaviour of people and leads to the criteria or rules of conduct of people and connections with each other.

The major ethical considerations for this study were consent and confidentiality as part of the British University in Dubai's protocol for the data-collection process. In order to ensure the informed consent of the participants, they were asked to sign an online electronic consent form (Appendix 3) that included an explanation of the research. Fortunately, due to the nature of this research, full disclosure did not negatively impact the results. However, because many of the subjects were unable to legally consent due to their age, their parents were asked to provide consent on their behalf.

All of the questionnaires, interview notes, and other data were kept strictly confidential. Any quotes published in the final report have been anonymised, as per the samples

of students' work used for the document analysis. The participants were also made aware of the study's confidentiality in order to ensure that they could speak freely without any fear of punitive measures being taken against them. This was especially important to collect students' honest impressions of their classes and materials, as well as the teachers' honest impressions of their schools and education systems.

5.9 Data Analysis

The process of data analysis in this study was completed in three separate stages. The first stage began with the quantitative data. Both the questionnaires and the samples of student work were analysed by descriptive as well as inferential statistics. The data from the questionnaires were broken into segments, so that a variety of comparisons could be made between different segments of the population, in order to find patterns and identify common factors. This process centred on the factors that differed among the differences in Arabic use, both in and outside school for both the students and their parents. Additionally, the views, opinions and observations of the Arabic teachers and leaders were compared with those of the parents. This data were then used to make inferences about the population of Dubai. The second phase was the thematic analysis of the qualitative data obtained from the semi-structured interviews and document analysis using the phases of Braun and Clarke's approach in thematic analysis, and the four stages of coding developed by Bryman (2008).

The analysis primarily consisted of comparing the perceptions, beliefs and attitudes between the stakeholders at Arabic and British schools. The process of triangulating data was used to provide depth and refinement to the quantitative data by further explaining the reasons and connections that were responsible for any trends that appeared. According to Lincoln, Guba and Pilotta (1985), the process of data triangulation increases research credibility. Triangulation can guarantee that essential biases derived from using a single technique are overcome. Triangulation is also a step that aids in examining and explaining complicated human behaviour to offer a more balanced explanation to the reader (Noble, Heale 2019). Triangulation in research increases the research credibility (Nowell et al. 2017).


Figure 5.2: The phases of data analysis process.

For the questionnaires, descriptive and inferential statistics were used that allowed the researcher to address all the major trends of this section. According to Johnson and Christensen (2014), descriptive statistics are significant in the field of quantitative analysis. They offer many advantages, such as assisting researchers to describe, summarise and make sense of the data collected. In practice, it was not possible to collect data from every student in every British school in Dubai; thus, this study employed inferential statistics with the assumption that the findings of the sample would likely be reflected in the wider population. Using inferential statistics helps in going beyond the immediate data and inferring the population's attributes depending on samples (Johnson & Christensen 2014).

The descriptive statistics aimed to determine the mean, standard deviation, and frequencies to analyse the quantitative results. The data from the questionnaires were analysed using the SPSS software in order to identify any trends and more effectively guide the

qualitative analysis. According to Al-Shammari (2020), the use of SPSS enables advanced tools employed for the statistical analysis of data. It also equips researchers with the flexibility to store, organise, and analyse large amounts of quantitative data, which will enhance the effectiveness of the data analysis and reduce the possibility of error. Using inferential statistics contributed towards extending beyond the immediate data and inferring the population's attributes depending on the sample (Johnson & Christensen 2014). By analysing this sample of students, parents, leaders and teachers, it was possible to make inferences about all of Dubai's British and Arabic schools. Using descriptive statistics helps describe, summarise, and make sense of data (Johnson & Christensen 2014).

For document analysis, the collected student writing assignments were graded according to the standards mandated by the KHDA. For each assignment, there was a set of criteria and a rubric that was used for all students across both British and Arabic schools. The selected samples from grades 2, 5, 7 and 10 were graded and compared holistically, and in each category. Sixteen samples of the selected classes representing A and C levels were adopted in this research, with the purpose of the process to compare the students' levels from the different types of schools who achieved the same (A or C) score. By doing so, and as the curriculum and grading criteria of both types of schools were the same, differences in the students' levels were related to other factors. Students' writing provides a clear and empirical method of measuring student proficiency in MSA, which is the study's primary focus. Based on inferential statistics, it could be inferred that the samples taken from the selected grades in the selected schools were representative not only of the achievement in other grades, but also those in other schools. In this phase of the data analysis, all assignments of the students in grades 2, 5, 7, and 10 in the selected schools were divided into strata by the average A and C score, and then a representative sample was analysed using SPSS, which assists in making sense of data collected and thematic analysis.

For the semi-structured interviews, the researcher recorded the interviews and then transcribed, coded and made themes of the participants' responses. The interviews were analysed qualitatively using thematic data analysis, a process in which the data were organised into several sections of information classified as strains or codes (Creswell 2007). The thematic analysis technique systematically analyses, creates, and gives insight into models of meaning (themes) over a set of data (Braun & Clarke 2012). Through concentrating on meaning across

a set of data, thematic analysis enables the researcher to understand and gain a sense of common or shared meanings and experiences (Braun & Clarke 2012) (Appendix 10).

Coding is a fundamental aspect of thematic analysis because it can interpret data to create something distinct or new (Appendix 10). According to Creswell (2015), coding is a method of interpreting qualitative documental data by considering them independently to understand what they produce, before placing the data collectively back in a meaningful process. In this study, thematic analysis, including coding, was adopted to interpret and make sense of the data collected from the interviews with the study participants (Creswell 2007). Themes were identified, as well as codes, which assisted in generating something new (Creswell 2007). According to Creswell (2015), coding is a global method because of its ability to generate new trends or themes from the data collected. During the process of qualitative data analysis, the researcher consulted an expert in this targeted field to ensure that the transcriptions of the participants' interviews were of effective quality (Creswell 2007).

5.9.1 An Overview of the Quantitative Analysis

The main purpose of the questionnaires was to gather information about the habits, preferences, and perceptions of each of the relevant stakeholders with regards to the education of Arabic-speaking students. The quantitative data of this research include that resulting from the questionnaires completed by the Arabic-speaking students, Arabic teachers, Arabic department leaders and the parents of the Arabic-speaking students. The teachers and leaders had knowledge and perception influenced by a great deal of experience with the teaching process, while the students and parents were able to offer insight based on their own individual experiences. Each of these perspectives helped to provide a more complete picture of the factors that influence the proficiency of Arabic-speaking students in the Arabic language. Additionally, the quantitative data include samples of students' work from grades 2, 5, 7, and 10 in both the Arabic and British schools. The same assignments were included, completed by both high scoring and low scoring students at each school, in order to provide a solid basis for comparison.

For the students' questionnaire, the main aim was to elicit their habits, preferences, attitudes, and views regarding the use of MSA, the RDs of Arabic and the English language in and outside of their schools, and for different activities. Exploring the linguistic environment of Arabic-speaking students in both Arabic and British schools was hoped to draw a complete picture of the factors that influenced their proficiency in Arabic.

The number of participants in the student questionnaire was 211, with responses collected from seven schools (British and Arabic) from different grades (2, 5, 7, and 10). The graph in Figure 6.1 below outlines the basic information including the grade level and type of school curriculum.



Student Questionnaire Respondents By Grade

Figure 5.3: Student participants by grade and type of schools.

The participants were from different grade levels and school curricula. A total of 96 students who attended British curriculum schools participated in this questionnaire. They represented 45% of the total. The responses of those 96 students who attended a British curriculum school were collected from grades 2, 5, 7 and 10, with 20 students from grade 2 (20%), 16 students from grade 5 (17%), 42 students from grade 7 (44%) and 18 students from grade 10 (19%). One hundred and fifteen students who attended Arabic curriculum schools participated in the questionnaire, comprising 55% of the total student participants. The responses of these students were also collected from grades 2, 5, 7 and 10, with 23 students from grade 2 (20%), 28 students from grade 5 (24%), 23 students from grade 7 (20%) and 41 students from grade 10 (36%). It is worth mentioning that the responses from the students from both the British and Arabic curriculum schools were collected from the same grade levels for the purpose of comparison. The questionnaire included various questions that highlighted the students' use of Arabic language in different places and situations such as at school, home, with friends, family and in their daily routine and linguistic habits. The students were asked to state the frequency with which they used the given language in the given place, using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 6 (1= never, 2= rarely,

3= sometimes, 4= often, 5= frequently, 6= always). Furthermore, the students were asked to state which languages they used for a variety of daily activities ranging from receptive ones like watching films or reading books, to more communicative ones like social media or speaking to grandparents.

Regarding the reliability of the students' questionnaire, a test was conducted using Cronbach's alpha coefficient via the SPSS software. The questionnaire included 10 questions about the languages students used for a variety of activities, which related to the influence of language variation as well as the linguistic environment. It has been stated that this test is considered an essential method in order to evaluate the stability of students' responses (Tavakol & Dennick 2011).

Table 5.5: Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the variables of the students' questionnaire.

Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardised items	N of items
.854	.851	10

Reliability statistics

Table 6.2 above demonstrates the values of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient related to the student questionnaire items. The results of the test in the ten items of the questionnaire indicated that the highest value was 0.861, while the lowest value was 0.817. This result showed that the ten items in the students' questionnaire are highly reliable and consistent because they are in the 0.861–0.817 range, which is > 0.8. Therefore, all the ten items are reliable.

For the leaders' and teachers' questionnaires, the main aim of this set of questionnaires was to collect information about the perceptions and experiences of the leaders and Arabic teachers at both the Arabic and British schools regarding the three main objectives of this study.

Regarding the demographic information of the teachers, while it is common for teachers to work in both British and Arabic schools, the transfer occurs in only one direction. Thus, it should be noted that while 80% of the British school teachers surveyed had previously worked in an Arabic school, none of the Arabic school teachers surveyed had ever worked in a British school. On the level of qualifications, as illustrated in Figure 6.2 below, out of the 23 participating Arabic teachers in the British schools, 4 teachers had achieved the level of master's degree while 1 Arabic teacher out of 16 in the Arabic schools had a master's degree.



Figure 5.4: Arabic teachers' demographic data in both the Arabic and British schools.

Regarding the reliability test of the Arabic teachers in both schools, this was carried out using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient in order to measure the consistency and reliability of the teachers' responses regarding the variables presented in the questionnaire. As shown in Table 6.3 below, the results of the 12 statements of the questionnaire indicated that the Cronbach's alpha was > 0.7, meaning that all 12 statements in the Arabic teachers' questionnaire are reliable.

Table 5.6: Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the variables of the Arabic teachers' questionnaire.

Reliability statistics for teachers

Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardised items	N of items
.739	.731	12

As for the leaders' reliability test, the Cronbach Alpha was > 0.7, indicating that all 12 items of the questionnaire are reliable (Table 6.4).

Table 5.7: Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the variables of the leaders' questionnaire.

Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardised items	N of items
.856	.762	12

Reliability statistics for leaders

The main aim of the parents' questionnaire was to gather information regarding the attitudes and habits of the parents of the Arabic-speaking students, as well as their perceptions of the education system.

In this study, 38 parents who sent their children to Arabic schools participated in the questionnaire, as well as 45 parents who sent their children to British schools. On the level of the parents' qualifications, the data obtained illustrated that 6 parents of the British school students had a doctorate, and 1 parent of the Arabic school students. Furthermore, 4 parents of the Arabic school students had only reached the high school level, and 1 parent of the British school students. These two aspects indicate that the level of education of the parents of the children in the British schools was higher than the level of the parents of the children in the Arabic schools. Regarding the master's and bachelor's degree levels of education, there was no significant difference in both types of parents, as shown in Figure 6.3 below. While the data suggested that more educated parents are slightly more likely to send their children to British schools rather than Arabic schools, this could be an indicator of a multitude of non-measured factors. For example, more educated parents are likely to be wealthier, as well as more likely to work with multinational companies that require a higher level of education and place a greater level of importance on English skills. While these are likely to be among a variety of factors that influence a parent's decision on which school to send their child to, the data suggest that there are some differences among the two groups of parents.



Figure 5.5: Demographic information of the parents in both types of schools.

Regarding the reliability test of the parents' questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the reliability. As illustrated in Table 6.5 below, the results of the test of the 21 items of the questionnaire indicated that the highest value was 0.784, while the lowest value was 0.710. This indicates that the 21 items of this questionnaire are reliable and consistent because they are in the 0.784–0.710 range, which is > 0.7. Therefore, all 21 items of the parents' questionnaire are reliable. According to George and Mallery (2003), the value of 0.7 or above considered preferable.

Table 5.8: Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the variables of the parents' questionnaire.

Reliability statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardised Items	N of items
.757	.741	21

For the document analysis, the main aim of the content analysis was to determine how different factors influence the writing of Arabic-speaking students. The quantitative analysis was based on a comparison of scores given for assignments based on the KHDA's standardised grading criteria.

In this section of the content analysis, the samples of students from both schools' work were graded against the KHDA criteria (Appendix 9). The process of grading started with a careful review of the criteria. The second stage was grading the samples of the students' work with the names hidden. The grading process was completed through two stages. The first stage was conducted by an experienced Arabic teacher, while the second stage was conducted by the researcher. According to Lincoln, Guba and Pilotta (1985), when research data are analysed by more than one researcher, the credibility of the data obtained will be enhanced.

After both stages were complete, there was a moderation meeting between the researcher and the first grader to decide on the final grades for the students' work. Table 6.6 below illustrates the final scores of the students in both schools.

Grades of students in British schools		Grades of students in Arabic schools	
Grade 2 (A level)	8/10	Grade 2 (A level)	10/10
Grade 2 (C level)	3/10	Grade 2 (C level)	7/10
Grade 5 (A level)	8/10	Grade 5 (A level)	10/10
Grade 5 (C level)	3/10	Grade 5 (C level)	7/10
Grade 7 (A level)	9/10	Grade 7 (A level)	10/10
Grade 7 (C level)	5/10	Grade 7 (C level)	6/10
Grade 10 (A level)	9/10	Grade 10 (A level)	10/10
Grade 10 (C level)	6/10	Grade 10 (C level)	7/10

Table 5.9: Students' scores of the selected levels and grades in both types of schools.

5.9.2 An Overview of the Qualitative Analysis

The main purpose of thematically analysing features of the students' writing was threefold. First, certain types of mistakes relating to the differences between the RD and MSA contributed to highlighting the influence of language variation, which helped to answer the first research question. Other mistakes and inappropriacies, which indicated English language influence, suggested the influence of the linguistic environment, particularly since the students were being compared across schools with different languages of instruction. This helped to providing a more complete answer to the second research question. Finally, because the tasks were set by the KHDA, reviewing students' attempts to achieve them was relevant to the third question.

In this part of qualitative analysis, the researcher followed the four stages of the coding approach developed by Bryman (2008), as shown in Figure 6.4 below.



Figure 5.6: The four stages of coding developed by Bryman (2008) in thematic analysis.

Bryman's (2008) approach was followed due to its flexibility, practicality, and appropriateness for analysing samples of written work. The researcher started the process of content analysis by categorising the samples of Arabic-speaking students' work from both the British and Arabic schools. The total number of samples collected was 16. Table 5.10 below clarifies the process explicitly.

Samples of students from British schools		Samples of students from Arabic schools	
Grade 2	Level A	Grade 2	Level A
	LEVEL C		LEVEL C
Grade 5	Level A	Grade 5	Level A
	LEVEL C		LEVEL C
Grade 7	Level A	Grade 7	Level A
	LEVEL C		LEVEL C
Grade 10	Level A	Grade 10	Level A
	LEVEL C		LEVEL C

Table 5.10: The total number of the students' sampled work by grades and level.

Two levels of students (A and C) were chosen from each class for the purpose of comparison. Level A signified a score from 8.5 to 10, while level C signified a score from 5 to 6. The thematic analysis was carried out as follows.

Stage 1: Indexing and categorising

Stage 1 started by reading the samples of the students' work carefully to highlight the major trends and group the cases into types. According to Bryman (2008), researchers in stage one read the texts as a whole and make notes. Furthermore, they highlight the major trends and themes, and group cases into types of categories that may reflect the research questions.

Stage 2: Reading the texts again

In Stage 2, the researcher read the samples again and started the process of marking, underlining and highlighting the key phrases or words in order to label the major trends generated, to assist in making codes. Bryman (2008) stated that the researchers at this stage mark, underline, circle, annotate, label and note any analytical ideas that come to mind.

Stage 3: Coding the texts

In Stage 3, the researcher started the process of marking the samples of the students' work against the criteria from the KHDA. Furthermore, he started the process of reviewing the major trends and groups of cases in order to make codes. According to Bryman (2008), in this stage researchers systematically mark the texts and indicate what the chunks of texts are about (themes, index). Furthermore, researchers eliminate repetition and similar codes.

Table 5.11: The final codes with reflections generated from the samples of the students' work fromboth types of schools

Samples of students' work from the British schools		Samples of students' w scho	ork from the Arabic
The main code	Reflection	The main code	Reflection
Spelling mistakes	- The spelling	Spelling mistakes	The students of all
	mistakes in grades 2		grades at the Arabic
	and 5 were much		schools tended to
	clearer and below		make significantly
	the expected level		fewer mistakes,
	according to the		typically just two to
	KHDA criteria.		three, although many
			of the higher scoring
	- Many of the grade		papers were mistake-
	2 or 5 students had		free. Additionally,
	nearly 10 mistakes in		their improvement
	their papers, while		occurred at a regular
	older students had		and gradual rate.
	just a few, with some		There was no
	higher scoring grade		noticeable gap from
	10 students		primary to secondary
	producing error-free		school.
	papers.		

The use of dialect For example, the use of the word " لازم "lazem" instead of " يجب " "yejib" to mean 'should'. and the word " زحت "insert Arabic form using English alphabet" 'I went'	All students used at least a few words of RD in their writing in all grades, while some papers had several. As with the spelling errors, this was more frequent in the early grades.	The use of dialect For example, the use of the word " لازم" "lazem" instead of " يجب " "yejib" to mean "should". - and the word " ن رُحت" "insert Arabic form using English alphabet" 'I went'	Only a few students, typically those with lower scores, used any RD. Even then, there were never more than three words in a single paper.
Sentence structure For example, an English speaker would write, "He helped his country", but in Arabic it would be preferable to write, "Helped he his country".	Students in the British schools tended to use the style of English in their writing. They started sentences using subjects and then verbs. In Arabic, the opposite is more recommended and appropriate.	Sentence structure For example, an English speaker would write, "He helped his country", but in Arabic it would be preferable to write, "Helped he, his country".	Students in the Arabic schools very rarely wrote in this way. There were only one or two examples out of all of the papers, which suggests occasional slips, rather than English influence.

Word variety For example, "yayish", which means 'live' in English, but there are three other words with the same meaning. This also applied to the word " يذهب أذهب "	In nearly every paper, the only words used were the simplest ones available. More advanced synonyms were almost never seen.	Word variety Using different synonyms of the verb 'live': ، يعيش يسكن، يقطن	A wider range of vocabulary was seen. Higher scoring students in particular were able to flexibly use a wide range of synonyms, and even the lower scoring students were able to
0			some synonyms into
			their writing.
The use of figurative	I he papers written	The use of figurative language	while figurative
language	students were almost	ligui ative language	frequently used, it
For example, one	completely free of		was notably present.
student used a simile	figurative language.		especially in the
comparing smoking to a			writing of older,
bullet.			higher-scoring
Also, the use of			students.
metaphor such as, "the			
food is like the fuel for			
human beings".			
The use of connectives	It is clear that the	The use of	The students in the
and conjunctions	students used	connectives and	Arabic schools used
	connectives and	conjunctions	a wider range of
For example, when	conjunctions in their		connectives much
using connectives, only	writing. But the	For example, when	more flexibly. They
a few basic ones were	words or	using connectives,	also tended to use
used, such as 'then',	expressions used	only a few basic	words that are more
	were basic and	ones were used, such	common and

'and', 'after that', and 'once upon a time'.	below the expected level of students according to the KHDA criteria. Many of the connectives, in particular 'once upon a time', are	as 'then', 'and', 'after that', and 'once upon a time'.	appropriate in Arabic.
	indicative of the English influence.		
The use of adjectives, adverbs and antonyms	The students did not use adverbs or antonyms in their writing. Few basic	The use of adjectives, adverbs, synonyms and antonyms	The students used a wide variety of adjectives, and adjectival phrases.
For example, when adjectives were used, they tended to be the most general forms such as 'good' and 'bad', or 'big' and 'small'.	adjectives were used. The most frequent adjectives were 'good', 'not good', and occasionally, 'bad'.	There were a variety of adjectives used in the students' writing.	For example, rather than writing that smoking is 'not good', one student wrote that it "has a negative impact on our health".
The use of evidence, examples and statistics in writing No use of evidence in the students' writing	The students at all grades rarely used scientific facts, statistics or evidence in their writing. The main characteristics of their writing were simplicity and direct statements with no evidence attached. For example, in a	The use of evidence, examples and statistics in writing For example, using statistics that show the real danger of smoking such as one person dies every	The students used examples, statistics and data to support their ideas. This was present in all work, but it occurred most frequently in the work of higher scoring students. For example, in a paper about fast food, one

	paper about fast	second because of	student listed the
	food, the students	smoking.	calories for several
	stated that fast food		typical fast-food
	was unhealthy, or		items.
	fattening, but very		
	rarely gave any		
	evidence to prove		
	this.		
Word choice	The quality of	Word choice	The students were
	writing gradually	word choice	more aware of key
For example, the use of	improved from	For avample, the use	words and phrases
"Smalring assuges	and as 2 to 10. The	of "Smalring approx	and used for fewer
Sinoking causes	grades 2 to 10. The	or Smoking causes	and used far fewer
	students used simple		words that were
The students in	expressions with rare	Ine	inappropriate for the
the British schools used	use of key words or	students in the	context. Although the
"smoking gives us	phrases that were	British schools used	students in the Arabic
problems". While the	closely related to the	"smoking gives us	schools had better
students in Arabic school	topic. The students	problems, while the	word choice than their
used "smoking causes	frequently used	students in the	British school
problems".	words that were not	Arabic schools used	counterparts, the same
	appropriate in the	"smoking causes	trend was present with
	given context and	problems".	the younger students
	seemed generally		showing less
	unaware of		awareness of
	collocation.		collocation, and the
			older students having
			fewer inappropriacies.
Coherence and	Neither coherence	Coherence and	Overall, the students
cohesion	nor cohesion were	cohesion	in the Arabic schools
	noted clearly in		wrote clearer and
	the students' work.		more coherent
	Essays rarely had		essays, with more

	any progression and were more frequently a string of paragraphs with little connection, and frequent repetition. In a few cases, the students even left out concluding paragraphs.		logical paragraphing and a clear progression throughout the essay. Although this was especially clear with higher scoring students, it was present in all of the students' writing.
Task achievement	All students in the British schools failed to achieve every part of the task on their assignments. For example, in a biographical essay the student were required to describe the entire life of an influential person. One student only discussed the present, saying how he was a great football player, but did not mention anything about his childhood.	Task achievement	Most students in the Arabic schools also missed some parts of the task, but the higher scoring students either completed the entire task or occasionally missed only small parts. The lower scoring students usually missed some parts of the task, but not as many as the lower scoring students in the British schools.

Stage 4: Relating theoretical ideas to the texts coded

In Stage 4, the researcher related the generated codes to the research questions. Furthermore, the researcher interconnected the codes in order to interpret the gained information in relation to the research questions. In this regard, Bryman (2008) stated that coding is only part of analysis, since researchers should add their identified interpretations between codes and then relate those codes to the research questions.

For the semi-structured interviews, the interviews were intended to follow the quantitative research and fill any gaps or uncover explanations to support those trends. Because the interviews were semi-structured, and thus somewhat flexible, they were able to address all of the research questions. The goal was to determine the views of the parents, teachers and leaders about the research questions. Regarding the first research question, the parents, teachers and leaders were asked about diglossia in order to discuss the influence of language variation on the proficiency of Arabic-speaking students. Finally, they discussed the role of the linguistic environment to address the second research question, as well as the participants' views regarding how the KHDA manage teaching Arabic.

In this section of the data analysis, thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach was employed. The reason behind adopting this approach was the freedom it provides the researcher through producing a deep analysis that answers specific research questions (Braun & Clarke 2006). Furthermore, the reason behind adopting this type of thematic analysis in semi-structures interviews, which was different from the approach adopted in the document analysis, was because through the process of conducting the interviews there was more overlap in data and trends than the data obtained from the document analysis. This explains the use of the two approaches of thematic analysis in order to gain more accurate results. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), there are six stages of thematic analysis that develop over the time while constantly moving between stages, as shown in Figure 6.5 below.



Figure 5.7: The phases of Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach in thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis searches for themes or patterns and then identifies, analyses and reports those generated themes, describing and interpreting the data in rich detail (Braun & Clarke 2006). It deals with various subjects through interpretation by presenting systematic components to data analysis and providing an opportunity to understand the various issues deeply (Ibrahim 2012). Both inductive and deductive thematic analysis were employed, since this study is based on a pre-defined theoretical framework and also intends to explore any themes that might emerge during the process of thematic analysis.

Stage 1: Familiarisation with the data

All the conducted interviews were transcribed. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), researchers must familiarise and immerse themselves with the gained data. To achieve this important stage, the researcher listened to the interviews and then read them carefully in order to have more indepth insights of the data collected.

Stage 2: Generating initial codes

The process of generating initial codes started with the process of reading the transcribed interviews, followed by making general notes and highlights. Braun and Clarke (2006) stated that coding is of great importance since it enables the researcher to view the data from different angles to acquire in-depth information. In this stage, the researcher generated three main codes related to the three questions of this research and 19 sub-codes. After revising the sub-codes, there was a reduction from 19 to 14 sub-codes. Table 6.9 below shows the codes and the sub-codes generated in this stage.

Main codes	Sub-codes
The influence of language variation	Participants' perception regarding diglossia
	The duality in using one variety at school and another at home
	Is MSA a mother tongue for Arabic students?
	The direct influences of variation on students' learning
	Why students prefer one language or variety to another
The influence of the linguistic environment	Language immersion
	The role of language exposure and consistency
	Language immersion in both types of schools
	Parents' choice in school selection

Table 5.12: The initial codes generated from the semi-structured interviews.

The influence of language management	Parents' beliefs about learning languages	
	Parents' satisfaction about the process of teaching Arabic in their children's schools.	
	The curriculum of teaching Arabic adopted by the KHDA	
	The criteria for assessing students' progress and attainment in Arabic	
	The pros and cons of the KHDA criteria	

Stage 3: Searching for themes

In this stage, the researcher read the themes, organised, labelled and refined them. Since this study implements inductive and deductive analysis, all themes were grouped into the theoretical framework or other factors that might emerge. For example, although the theme of "Parental choice" is not one of the factors that comprises the theoretical framework of this study, it was worth keeping because it might impact all of them. Parental choice is quite possibly the single largest factor determining what school, and therefore what linguistic environment, a child is placed in. The parents' choices may also impact language management, as parents have some influence on their children's schools, and even language variation, as they influence their children's exposure to the RD and MSA, respectively.

Stage 4: Reviewing themes

After the process of coding and searching for themes, the researcher reviewed the themes again, organised them thoroughly and reduced the sub-themes from 14 to 9. This was achieved by combining similar themes together. For example, "student motivation to learn MSA" and "attitude towards MSA" were combined into a single theme.

Stage 5: Defining and naming themes

In this stage, the researcher ensured that all themes were represented accurately by representative names in order to have themes that were closely and clearly related to the research objectives.

Stage 6: Reports

In this stage, the researcher started the process of writing the results and findings of all the generated themes and providing more in-depth analysis to fulfil the research objectives qualitatively. Table 6.10 below illustrates the final versions of the themes and their linkage to the research questions.

Research objective	Main theme	Sub-themes
1- To understand how the variation in the Arabic language influences Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in Arabic in Dubai's British schools	Highlights the influence of the language variation of the Arabic language on Arabic- speaking students' proficiency	The duality in using one variety at school and another at home
	in the Arabic language	Why students prefer one language or variety to another
		The direct influences of variation on students' learning
2- To gain insight into the influences of the linguistic environment at Dubai's British schools on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language	An overview of the influence of the linguistic environment on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language	Language immersion in both types of schools
		The role of language exposure and consistency
		Parents' choice in the school selection
3- To determine the perceptions of the leaders, teachers and parents regarding the influence	The role of the KHDA in managing teaching Arabic in Dubai's schools	Parents' satisfaction about the process of teaching Arabic in their children's schools

Table 5.13: The final generated themes from the semi-structured interviews.

of the language management of Arabic on Arabic-speaking	The curriculum for teaching Arabic adopted by the KHDA
students' proficiency in the	The criteria for assessing
Arabic language in Dubai's	students' progress and
British schools	attainment in Arabic

The aim of the semi-structured interviews was to answer the three research questions of the study.

The responses of the participants were first assembled, then coded. Table 6.11 below shows the total number of participants, and their role or position. The responses of the participants were analysed into three main themes and discussed thoroughly.

Table 5.14: The participants in the semi-structured interviews.

Type of schools	Position/role	
Participant 1	Arabic teacher in a British school	
Participant 2	Arabic teacher in a British school	
Participant 3	Arabic teacher in a British school	
Participant 4	Arabic teacher in an Arabic school	
Participant 5	Arabic teacher in an Arabic school	
Participant 6	Leader in a British school	
Participant 7	Leader in an Arabic school	
Participant 8	Parent in a British school	
Participant 9	Parent in a British school	
Participant 10	Parent in an Arabic school	
Participant 11	Parent in an Arabic school	

5.10 Conclusion

This study used the explanatory sequential mixed-method research approach to investigate the factors influencing Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools. It focused on a sample of British and Arabic schools in Dubai, with the intention of examining various domains including the teachers' and leaders' perceptions, attitudes and experiences; the students' habits, preferences and proficiency; and the parents' habits, perceptions and attitudes. Accordingly, the research design inevitably entailed varied methods and led to an explanatory sequential mixed method. It also featured a blend of random and purposive sampling. In order to collect this data, a mix of both qualitative and quantitative data collection was employed. To form the basis of this study, quantitative data in the form of questionnaires and document analysis was used. The questionnaires given to the teachers and leaders focused on their experiences and perceptions, making use of their intimate knowledge of the education system and their expertise in the field of language education. The parents' and students' questionnaires focused more on basic demographic information, as well as their language preferences and habits. The students' questionnaire also included questions about their educational experiences with Arabic. The document analysis used writing assignments taken from students in each of the selected schools at the same grade levels. Because the KHDA applies the same standards and grading criteria to all Arabic classes, the assignments for the students in the same grades were the same across all schools, which made comparison extremely valid. After both types of quantitative data were collected, they were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. After that, the qualitative analysis was conducted including samples of students' work and interviews with the parents, leaders, and teachers. These interviews were studied through thematic analysis. In the final phase, the quantitative data were triangulated with the qualitative data.

CHAPTER SIX

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected in this research to respond to the research questions, where the quantitative data were triangulated with the qualitative data in order to gain more solid conclusions. Table 6.1 below illustrates the types of data sets and analysis utilised to achieve the main research aim and objectives.

Table 6.1: The types	s of data set an	d analysis used to	o achieve the main	research aim and objectives.
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Research main aim	Research objectives	Type of data set	Type of data analysis
To investigate the factors influencing Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools in order to acquire a better understanding of teaching Arabic in the context of Dubai's British schools with a view to providing stakeholders with a set of recommendations that may	1. To understand how the variation in the Arabic language influences Arabic- speaking students' proficiency in Arabic in Dubai's British schools	 Questionnaires Semi- structured interviews Document analysis 	 Quantitative analysis 1.1- SPSS 2- Thematic analysis 2.1- The phases of Braun and Clarke's approach to thematic analysis (2012) 2.2- The four stages of coding developed by Bryman (2008)

assist in bridging the gap in students' proficiency	2. To gain insight into the influences of the linguistic environment at Dubai's British schools on Arabic- speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language	 Questionnaires Semi- structured interviews Document analysis 	 1- Quantitative analysis 1.1- SPSS 2- Thematic analysis 2.1- The phases of Braun and Clarke's approach to thematic analysis (2012) 2.2- The four stages of coding developed by Bryman (2008)
	3. To determine the perceptions of the leaders, teachers and parents regarding the influence of the language management of Arabic on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools	- Questionnaires - Semi- structured interviews	 Quantitative analysis 1.1- SPSS 2- Thematic analysis 2.1- The phases of Braun and Clarke's approach to thematic analysis (2012) 2.2- The four stages of coding developed by Bryman (2008)

6.2 Findings and Analysis Regarding the Influence of Language Variation on the Students' Proficiency.



Figure 6.1: Students of British schools' responses regarding their use of MSA, RD and English in and outside the school.



Figure 6.2: Students of Arabic schools' responses regarding their use of MSA, RD and English in an

outside the school.

The analysis presented in Figures 6.6 and 6.7 relates to 6 students' statements regarding their daily use of MSA, RD, and English in and outside of school. Both groups used the RD more at home than at school. Although both groups spoke some MSA at home, the older British school students spoke MSA more frequently, and the older Arabic school students less frequently. In most grades, there was also a decrease in the middle, with fewer students reporting that they spoke MSA "often" or "sometimes", and more reporting either high use with "always" or "frequently", or low use with "rarely" or "never". This indicates a greater amount of stratification outside of school.

It is worth noting, however, that the increase was significantly larger among the students at the British schools. While the percentage of students at the Arabic schools who used RD either always or frequently at home rose by only 5%, for the students at the British schools it more than tripled from less than 15% to nearly 45%. This may suggest a greater level of immersion in the British schools, with the students switching from RD to English, while the students at the Arabic schools did not make such a drastic change when they switch ostensibly from RD to MSA. This is likely explained by diglossia.

The data also suggested that the students in the British schools were not as skilled with MSA as their counterparts in the Arabic schools. This is expected based on Roberts (2013). Thirty-six percent of the British school students said they had some difficulty understanding their teacher when he or she spoke in MSA, while just under 16% of the Arabic school students reported the same difficulty. Furthermore, over 70% of the students in the British schools said they felt more comfortable communicating in English, even if the other person spoke Arabic, while only a little over 20% of the students in the Arabic school students, nearly 70%, reported that they preferred when their teacher used the RD, compared to a little over 50% of the Arabic school students.



Student Responses by School

Figure 6.3: Students' attitudes towards Arabic in both types of schools.

Regarding the students' preferences and linguistic habits outside of school, 55% indicated that the English language was their preferred language outside of school, while 38% stated that RD was the language they mostly used outside of school. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that only 6% of the students indicated that they used MSA outside of school, indicating that MSA was mostly employed at school during the Arabic classes. This linguistic situation reinforces the discussion in the introduction and literature review regarding the influence of the language variation of Arabic on students' proficiency in the Arabic language. The students' preference for RD provides insight into the influence of language variation. The use of RD in both the British and Arabic schools followed similar patterns to the use of MSA, with the Arabic school students using it much more frequently, and the British school students using it far less frequently. Nearly 80% of the Arabic students reported using RD always or frequently at school, while less than 15% of the British school students reported this.

Regarding the data obtained from inferential analysis, which helped in presenting the identification of differences and similarities in students' usage of Arabic in different linguistic

contexts, the researcher used two types of schools as independent T-test variable and all questions related to the use of Arabic on daily basis as dependent variables.

Table 6.2: Inferential Statistics of students' responses regarding the use of Arabic in different activities, from both types of schools.

N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Test Statistics
Arabic = 155	Arabic = 4.86	Arabic = 0.94	t = 21.365
British = 96	British = 2.47	British = 0.68	P-value = 0.000

The data in the table above show that the P-value = 0.000. It is therefore concluded that the null hypothesis is rejected H_0 which means that there is significant difference between students in Arabic and British schools in terms of language use. Students from Arabic schools consume Arabic more that students in British schools. It is concluded that the results obtained from inferential analysis are in line with the results of descriptive statistics. They all assisted in understanding how language variation influences students' proficiency in the Arabic language.

Although the student questionnaire provided insight into the students' use of language, in particular the relationship between MSA and RD, the teachers were able to provide additional insight. Their perspective was significantly different as they were familiar with the concept of diglossia and its effects. There was little variation between the teachers from either type of school with regards to their attitudes towards the curriculum and the language itself. For most questions about Arabic language instruction or teaching practices, the teachers from both schools had very similar answers. For example, 95% of each group of teachers believed that diglossia is one factor that makes learning MSA more difficult, which is consistent with the findings of Asadi and Ibrahim (2014). The leaders' perceptions about language variation were also the same as those of the teachers, which further confirms the answer to the first research question.

The interviews further supported this idea, as one recurring theme was the duality in using one variety at school and another at home. Most of the Arabic teachers, leaders and parents reported that the variation in the Arabic language had a negative influence on the students' learning, since the students used one variety at home and another at school. This phenomenon was observed by Alsobh, Abumelhim and Banihani (2015). The major trends of the responses indicated that if the students were using one variety of Arabic at home and school, then this would help them have more exposure to the language and gain more proficiency. In this regard Participant 1, who worked as an Arabic teacher in a British school, said: *"Using regional dialect at home and then using Modern Standard*"

Arabic at school of course affects students' progress in the Arabic language ... imagine that students use regional dialects at home and again they use them at schools, the results will be different. Their progress will be better and then the level of proficiency will be for sure better". To correlate this with the quantitative data, the observation is consistent with what over 95% of the teachers reported in the questionnaire, where they believed that the differences between the two varieties reduced student proficiency. Within the same context, Participant 2 said: "Students use MSA at school during the Arabic classes, and then use RD at home with family and friends. This duality in language prevents them from consistency and regularity, which for sure influences their fluency and mastery of language". Furthermore Participant 5, who taught in an Arabic school said: "Although Arabicspeaking students who attend Arabic schools are having Arabic sessions every day and use MSA in learning various subjects such as history, geography, and physical education, they still have difficulty using MSA and they prefer using regional dialect". To connect this to the results of the teachers' questionnaire, just over 95% of the teachers agreed that the students preferred using RD. Participants 5 also added that this "is because they spend their pre-school life using RD, so this duality in the Arabic language creates difficulty and affects their attainment in Arabic". Alsahafi (2016) claimed that Arabic is the most difficult example of language variation. Within the same context, Participant 3 who taught in a British school stated: "My students feel more comfortable using RD. They keep asking me to use it during the Arabic sessions". To connect this to the quantitative data, about 60% of the students said they preferred when their teacher spoke the RD, increasing to nearly 70% at the British schools, while a little over 55% of the students who attended the Arabic schools felt the same way. Participants 3 added: "They always say, "Let us speak what we speak at home. Why English is the same everywhere and Arabic is not?"". This observation is consistent with the experience of about 85% of the teachers from the questionnaire. It is also consistent with the fact that less than 45% of the British school students believed that studying MSA was important for their future, compared to nearly 90% of the Arabic school students.

The parents were asked about the language variation in their specific RDs, to gain insight into the first research question. The parents with children in the British schools were also more likely to report difficulties relating to diglossia. Over 70% reported that they spoke RD that was very different from MSA, and 75% believed that this was a factor that made it difficult for students to learn MSA. By contrast, less than 50% of the parents with children at the Arabic schools reported that their RD was very different from MSA, and less than 40% believe that diglossia was a factor that affects students' ability to learn MSA. While there are many possible reasons for their differences in beliefs, there is one that seems likely. Because the students at the British schools tend to be less proficient in MSA, it is more likely that their parents would be looking for factors that might be the cause of their deficit, while as the parents of the students attending the Arabic schools were more likely to believe them to be proficient in MSA, there would be less motivation to consider potential problems.

Issues relating to language variation were also observable. Many elements focused on more typical measures of proficiency. Through reviewing the samples of the students' work from the British schools, the major highlighted trends and cases identified regular spelling mistakes in grades 2 and 5, with less mistakes in grades 7 and 10. It was noted that there was a lack of the use of compound sentences in all the samples collected. Furthermore, the use of dialect in formal writing was more obvious and much clearer in grades 2 and 5 than grades 7 and 10. By contrast, the students in the Arabic schools made fewer spelling mistakes in general, with no distinction between the lower and higher grades. Compound sentences were prevalent in all the samples collected. Furthermore, the use of dialect in formal writing was not present.

The influence of language variation (diglossia) was especially evident in the "The use of dialect" code, which examined the frequency with which the students used words or phrases from RD in the place of words or phrases from MSA. Such direct influences of variation on the students' learning were discussed in the interviews. In this regard, Participant 8 reported: "My son makes regular spelling mistakes. Sometimes, he replaces some sounds with similar sounds used in dialect such as ذ-ز, and this is related to the influence of dialect". Within the same context, Participant 9 stated: "Most of my child's spelling mistakes are down to variation between RD and MSA. My child is affected by his Egyptian dialect. He always mixes between some similar sounds such as ف and ظ, since the first mentioned sound is difficult to pronounce and very similar to the later, so they mix using both". This is likely a widespread problem, as over 65% of the parents reported their RD to be significantly different from MSA. Furthermore, Participant 5 stated: "My students lack confidence using MSA; this is clearly related to the lack of consistency in using MSA". Participant 10 said in this regard: "Although my child attends an Arabic school, he still struggles using MSA compared to RD, he feels more comfortable using RD since we use it at home and everywhere except school. When I tell my child to speak about any subject using RD, he can achieve this task easily with no hesitation. But, if I ask him to achieve the same task using MSA, he struggles and uses basic words with less description and connected sentences". It's likely that other students had an even more difficult time than the student in question, as only a quarter of the Arabic school parents reported using MSA to speak to their children, and only 13% of the British school parents. Furthermore, Participant 11 claimed that the use of both MSA and RD had a direct influence on the child's level:

"He rarely uses MSA outside of school and is required to use it at a native level at school. This situation makes it difficult for my child and puts more pressure on him".

However, the students, especially those in the Arabic schools, reported something different. Nearly 80% of the students attending the Arabic schools reported that they used MSA always or frequently outside of school. However, in the section that considered the languages used for specific tasks, most students reported higher MSA usage for receptive activities, especially those that involved reading rather than for productive activities like speaking. For example, nearly a quarter of all the students reported using a language combination that included MSA, but not RD, for reading books as the resources of written RDs are scarce, unlike the films, television shows and other online videos that are available and watched as they feature the low variety of Arabic. Within the same context, according to Daquila (2020) there is only one institute in the UAE that has published around 20 books in the RD. Accordingly, some of the questions in the questionnaires targeted this aspect, as there was still the chance for the students to read in the RD, despite the paucity of available resources. Less than 8% of the students reported reading in RD but not MSA. If only the students attending the Arabic schools are included, these percentages rise to over a 30% for reading in MSA and less than 7% in RD. In contrast, only 14% of the British school students and 23% of the Arabic school students reported using MSA but not RD for watching films. Meanwhile, 7% of each group reported watching films in RD, but not MSA. Finally, for speaking to family, just over 10% of the students reported speaking in MSA but not RD, while nearly 50% reported using RD but not MSA. However, nearly a quarter reported using both. For the Arabic school students, the numbers were similar, with just over 15% using MSA but not RD, while nearly 40% reported using RD but not MSA. Again, however, 43% reported using both. This might suggest that the students did use MSA outside of school, but primarily for passive activities, and in many cases just for reading. While reading and other passive activities are beneficial to language learners, these patterns do suggest that the students had very little productive practice outside of school.

While this preference for RD over MSA occurred with the students attending the Arabic schools as well as the students attending the British schools, the errors were far less frequent for those attending the Arabic schools, and generally only occurred with lower scoring students. As Saiegh, Haddad (2011) pointed out, all students learn MSA as an additional language, and may make such mistakes. This suggests that the students attending the Arabic schools may be better able to deal with the influence of diglossia. If this is so, it may have to do with how the students conceptualise the languages. For the students in the Arabic schools, RD was generally their first preferred form

of Arabic, which they spoke at school and home, while MSA was their second preferred form of Arabic and their academic language. Even though they might not speak MSA exclusively at school, they would still read it almost exclusively. For the students in the British schools, RD was still their preferred form of Arabic, but English was still their first language at school and second language at home, followed by MSA. Thus, MSA and RD became more easily conflated. The RD was relegated to outside of school, as indicated by the vast difference in the reported use of RD in and outside of school by the British school students.

Another possibility is that the students in the Arabic schools were less likely to use RD in their writing because they had more experience with MSA, at least in the written form. Because RD is primarily a spoken language, and education involves a great deal of reading and writing, students in Arabic-schools would be exposed to a fair amount of MSA in their other classes, despite also using a lot of RD. For example, their maths teacher might teach the class using the RD rather than MSA, but their maths textbook would be written in MSA rather than the RD. This also likely relates to the code of "figurative language", which was sometimes used by the students in the Arabic schools, and almost never by the students in the British schools. The greater use of figurative language could be explained simply by the greater exposure to written MSA, with the students in the British schools simply lacking this level of exposure to written MSA.

This idea of exposure to MSA lessening the impact of diglossia is consistent with what many of the respondents in the interviews said regarding the role of language exposure and consistency. All the participants agreed that the exposure to a language and the consistency in using it represents the cornerstone in learning it. Participant 4, who taught in an Arabic school, stated: "Language variation in Arabic represented in diglossia denies students' progress in the Arabic due to lack of exposure and consistency". Within the same context, Participant 6 said: "Students in British schools find learning MSA as learning a new language, since they have never been exposed to it before they entered schools and they don't use it at home with friends or family members". To relate this to the students' questionnaire, only 8% of the British school students reported using MSA always or frequently outside of school, while 78% of the Arabic school students reported the same. Participant 6 added: "That's why this situation affects students' confidence and their learning process". Within the same context, Participant 7 who worked as a leader in an Arabic school confirmed that diglossia has a negative impact on the students' level in Arabic: "Our students lack consistency in using both varieties of Arabic. We all know that learning a language is all about practice and consistency, and this is what our students lack". Most participants agreed

that the minimal extent of using MSA outside of schools plays a role in hindering students' progress in MSA.

In this regard, Participant 4 said: "Although my students who attend an Arabic school curriculum are comfortable with using MSA and use it in and outside of schools, sometimes they struggle finding some advanced expressions that are used in RD". This is consistent with what the students in the Arabic school reported, where 78% reported using MSA frequently or always. It is also telling that in the section where the students listed their language preferences for different activities, the Arabic school students were more likely to report using only MSA rather than only RD (although selecting both was more common than either) in speaking to friends, family and grandparents, but not teachers. For most reading activities, the number for MSA was significantly higher. For example, while 28% reported using MSA for reading books, less than 1% reported using RD, although 44% reported using both. The low score for RD may be explained by the extremely limited supply of books available in the RD. In the UAE, there is only one formal institute that teaches the Emirati dialect and has limited resources. For more social activities, the scores were closer. For example, 15% reported using MSA, while 14% reported using the RD and 43% reported using both. The categories for speaking to people, with the exception of teachers, always had higher scores for the RD than for MSA, but both were always the most frequently reported language combination for the Arabic school students, with over 40% of the students reporting this.

Similarly for the British school students, Participant 3, a British school teacher, confirmed: "*My students use English mostly outside of school. This minimal amount of using MSA and also RD affects their learning and keeps them in square one*". To relate this to the quantitative data, this general sentiment was held by most of the Arabic teachers in the British schools, where all of them believed that their students preferred English to MSA, and 96% believed that they preferred English to the RD. A little over 70% of the British school students agreed that they felt more comfortable speaking in English, even with other Arabic speakers. However, the data suggest that there is actually more of a difference between the RD and MSA from the students' perspective: while only 8% of them reported that level of RD use. This suggests that the students believed that they used RD much more frequently than their teachers believed.

The surveys of the students and parents found that the RD was used much more frequently than MSA, especially outside of school. The teachers, leaders and parents all agreed in the

questionnaires that diglossia negatively influences the proficiency of Arabic-speaking students. The document analysis supported this view, while also indicating that the problem affected the students in the British schools to an even greater extent. Interviews were conducted in order to gain a more complete picture of this phenomenon, where there was a consensus among all participants on the negative influence of language variation on the students' proficiency in Arabic. The participants mentioned various linguistic aspects affecting the students such as spelling and morphology, while shedding light on consistency in using one variety of Arabic and its significant role in learning languages. The participants also agreed that MSA was the second preferred form of Arabic in the Arabic schools, but the last in the British schools after the RD and English. Thus, to answer the first research question, language variation primarily influenced morphology and spelling. However, it is also worth noting that a major factor determining the degree to which students were influenced was their overall exposure to MSA. Hence, the students attending the Arabic schools.

The primary conclusion is that Arabic-speaking students who attend Arabic schools are significantly ahead of their peers at the British schools. Within the context of the first research question, it seems likely that diglossia plays a role in hindering students' progress in MSA. Students in the British schools display a greater frequency of errors, suggesting that they are more deeply impacted by diglossia.

6.3 Findings and Analysis Regarding the Influence of the Linguistic Environment on the Students' Proficiency

The primary goal of this section is to address the second research question, which explores the linguistic environment that according to Sociocultural Theory has a significant impact on language development. Much of the quantitative research focused on comparing the students from the Arabic schools to the students at the British schools. Data were gathered from both sets to create detailed pictures of the linguistic environments of each set of students by using questionnaires targeting both the students and their parents. Not only was the linguistic environment of each type of student completely different at school, but in general it was also quite different outside of the classroom in many ways. In general, while both groups spoke in RD outside of school, the British school students were much more likely to read in English, while the students in the Arabic schools often used MSA for reading. This was in addition to their linguistic environments at school, where each was required, at least in theory, to read and speak exclusively
in either MSA or English. Thus, based on Sociocultural Theory, it is likely that these students would also have different levels of proficiency in MSA, due to their different linguistic environments.

The results of the student questionnaire indicated that the students attending the British schools were far less likely to use MSA both in and outside of school. Just under 60% of the students in the British schools either never or rarely used MSA at school, while just over 27% of them stated that they sometimes used it. By contrast, 62% of the Arabic school students said that they always used MSA at school, with another 15% saying they used it frequently. None of the Arabic students said that they never used MSA at school, which is not surprising as it is required in every class. However, 8% of the British school students said that they never used MSA, despite the fact that it is also required in their Arabic classes. The results were similar for outside of school, where 77% of the British school students reported that they rarely or never used MSA outside of school, while 78% of the Arabic school students reported that they always or frequently did. Obviously, such a huge difference in language use and exposure is likely linked with lower proficiency, as indicated by Roberts (2013).

These general trends were seen across all grade levels; however, they shifted slightly with grade. Interestingly, for the students in the British schools, the frequency with which they spoke MSA increased slightly as they got older. While none of the grade 2 and 5 students reported speaking MSA always or frequently in school, about 11% of the grade 7 and 10 students did. The reverse was true in the Arabic schools, where the percentages of grade 2 and 5 students who reported always or frequently speaking MSA were in the upper 80% range, while the grade 7 and 10 students who reported the same were in the mid-60% range.



Percentage of British and Arabic School Students Reporting that they "Always" or "Frequently" Use RD By School Year

Figure 6.4: *Percentage of students in all grades in both schools using the RD in and outside of school always and frequently.*

Regarding the use of English at school, the trend was, as expected, essentially the opposite of that for MSA. Obviously, the students in the British schools used English much more than the students in the Arabic schools. An age-related trend was observed that mirrored the one seen with MSA, whereby the older students in the British schools used English less frequently than the younger ones, just as the older Arabic students in the Arabic schools used MSA less frequently than the younger ones. The reverse was also true with non-dominant languages as the older students in the Arabic schools tended to report using English more frequently than the younger ones, just as the older students at the British schools reported more frequently than the younger ones. Together, these two trends support the theory that as students age, they tend to move towards bilingualism, both by speaking the dominant language less frequently, and by speaking the secondary language more frequently. This is likely not only because the later curriculum for both schools requires more language study, but also because older students have more opportunity to interact with the world outside of school, thus expanding their linguistic environments.

Language Use Outside of School for British and Arabic School Students By School Year



Figure 6.5: Language used outside of schools by the students in both schools.

With regards to inferential analysis, the data presented in the table 6.3.

Table:6.3: Inferential Analysis of students' responses regarding their preferred variety of Arabic.

Ν	Mean	Standard	Test Statistics
		Deviation	
Arabic = 155	Arabic = 3.74	Arabic $= 0.52$	t = 8.800
British = 96	British = 3.11	British = 0.51	P-value = 0.000

The data show that P-value = 0.000. As the null hypothesis was rejected H_0 , therefore, it is concluded that students in Arabic schools prefer using Arabic more than students in British schools. This is theorized to have an influence on students' proficiency as students in British schools are more exposed to English and feel more comfortable using it.

Within the same context, inferential analysis regarding the parents' use of Arabic show that there is significant difference between parents from different types of schools in terms of language use. The table 6.4 show that P-value = 0.000 and the null hypothesis was rejected $H_{0.}$. This means

that parents of Arabic schools use Arabic more frequently than parents of British schools. This finding is consistent with the findings related to students' language use which stresses the influence of linguistic environment and its role in shaping students' proficiency.

Ν	Mean	Standard Deviation	Test Statistics
Arabic = 17	Arabic $= 3.50$	Arabic = 0.62	t = 3.873
British = 38	British = 2.78	British = 0.65	P-value = 0.000

6.4: Inferential Statistics of parents' use of Arabic in different linguistic contexts.

The interviews conveyed similar trends about the level of language immersion in school and at home, and which language the students preferred or used in both environments. Most of the Arabic teachers and leaders who worked at the British schools confirmed that the preferred language for the Arabic-speaking students in and outside of school was English.

They also stated that English was their first language, the RD the second and MSA their third language. Participant 1, who taught in a British school, said that during the duties and break times, *"I see my Arabic students use English regularly. Also, during the Arabic sessions, they use English during the group activities or with partners. It is clear that they feel more comfortable using English"*. In correlation with the quantitative data, in the British schools over 70% of the students reported feeling more comfortable using English, even with friends who spoke Arabic. The social use of a language significantly impacts language acquisition according to Roberts (2013). In the same context, Participant 2 said: *"My students keep asking me to use Google Translate to translate words from Arabic to English, and sometimes they use Google to translate complete sentences. This indicates that English is their first language"*. This is supported by the "word variety" code in the document analysis. It was noted that the students in the British schools had a tendency to use only one word for items that have multiple more precise terms in Arabic, but only one term in English. Such patterns suggest that the students thought in terms of English and translating.

On the other hand, the teachers and leaders in the Arabic schools confirmed that the students mostly used RD and then MSA during the school day, and that few of them used English. In this regard, Participant 4 stated: "My students use RD all the time except Arabic sessions, this is what I witnessed in my school. Also, I can ensure that teachers of other subjects such as History, Physical Education and Art use RD with their students. Therefore, MSA is only practised regularly during the Arabic sessions mostly". The students in the Arabic schools mostly supported this, with 79%

reporting frequent RD use relative to the 76% who reported frequent MSA use. Furthermore, for speaking with teachers only, 23% reported using MSA but not RD, while nearly 60% reported using both. Over 10% reported using only RD and not MSA. This is especially problematic when, in theory at least, all teachers should be using MSA in the classroom.

Regarding the views of the parents, those of the British school students confirmed that their children used English mostly at home and for various activities such as watching YouTube or video gaming. In this regard, Participant 9 said: "*My children use English between each other and use RD with me or with their dad sometimes. I can tell that their preferred language is English*". This is supported by the data from the student questionnaires, where nearly 60% of the British school students reported not using Arabic with their friends, while only 22% did not use it with their families.

On the other hand, the parents of the Arabic school students confirmed that RD was the preferred form of Arabic being used regularly, with some MSA and English. It is worth mentioning that the parents of the children attending both types of schools confirmed that their children rarely used MSA outside of school in conversation activities. This indicates that the low level of using MSA at school contributed to the infrequent use of MSA outside of schools.

Across both types of school, there was a strong inverse correlation between English and MSA. In both schools, the more likely a student was to report the frequent use of MSA, the less likely they were to report the frequent use of English, and vice versa. For example, on average, 76% of the students at the Arabic schools reported that they used MSA in school either always or frequently. However, this level of MSA usage in school was reported by only 44% of the Arabic school students who reported that they used English always or frequently. Meanwhile, that number was 92% for the Arabic school students who used English rarely or never. The reverse also held true, with 85% of the Arabic school students who reported that they used English frequently or always, while less than 10% of the Arabic school students who said they used MSA frequently or always also reported that they used English frequently or always. The students of the British schools showed less drastic differences, but the correlation remained. Only 85% of the British school students who reported high English use, while 96% of the British school students who reported high English use. Only 6% of the students in the British schools who reported that

they used English either often or sometimes reported high MSA use. There were no students at the British schools who reported low English use.



Figure 6.6: The use of English in both types of schools.

Although the same trend across languages continued for at-home use, another interesting trend was the correlation between the students reporting a high frequency of language use in their school, and the high frequency of language use outside of schools. This correlation occurred at both schools, and for both languages. For example, the Arabic school students who reported high MSA use in school were more likely to report it outside, with 87% of them reporting high MSA use outside of school. By contrast, less than 30% of the students who reported low MSA use in school reported high MSA use outside of school. The same trend held true for the Arabic usage in the British schools. While just under 2% of the British school students who reported low MSA use in school reported high use outside of school, 43% of the British school students who reported using MSA always or frequently in school reported using it always or frequently outside of schools.



Reported MSA Use Outside of School for British and Arabic School Students Grouped by Reported MSA Use in School

Figure 6.7: The use of MSA outside of both types of schools.

While this trend appeared for the students in both the British and Arabic schools, based on their self-reported language usage, it differed from what was reported when the students were asked about the language(s) they used for a variety of activities. In the Arabic schools, there was a general drift towards the use of a mix of languages as the students got older. The percentage of students who used language combinations that did not include English typically decreased by 20% from grades 2 to 10. In most cases, these were accompanied by increases in the percentages of students who used some mix, including some form of Arabic (RD or MSA) and English. Although the Arabic and British schools followed similar complementary trends for the self-reported language use in and outside of the schools, there was a general drift away from the use of a mix of Arabic and English for most receptive activities such as reading books or watching online videos. For these activities, the percentage of British school students who used language combinations that did not include Arabic (either RD or MSA) increased from grade 2 to 10, typically by over 10%. In contrast, more communicative activities such as social media or speaking to friends showed a decrease in the percentage of students who did not use Arabic from grades 2 to 10. These decreases were nearly always accompanied by increases in the percentage of students using some combination, including both Arabic and English.



Reported Language for Watching Online Videos for Arabic and British school students, by Year

Reported Language for Social Media for Arabic and British school students, by Year



Figures 6.8 & 6.9: The language used for online videos and social media by the students in both types of schools.

While the students at the Arabic schools, on average, had slightly higher rates of bilingualism for most activities, the differences were typically modest. However, two areas where the students in

the British schools had significantly higher rates of bilingualism were in social activities, whereby 40% and 50% of the students in the British schools said that they used English and some form of Arabic (RD or MSA), respectively, when speaking to their friends and families. By contrast, less than 15% of the students in the Arabic schools used both languages with friends, and less than 10% used both with their families. This demonstrates a significant difference in the linguistic environments that both sets of students occupied. The students from the Arabic schools tended to communicate almost entirely in Arabic, but studied English and consumed English media to a slightly greater extent than the students in the British schools did in the case of Arabic. However, the students in the British schools were significantly more likely to communicate in both English and Arabic. A major factor impacting their linguistic environments was likely to be their families. While nearly 90% of the British school students reported that they did not speak English with their families, less than 20% of the British school students reported this. Although just over 60% of the students in the British schools did not use English to talk to their grandparents, this increased to 94% for the students in the Arabic schools. This suggests that apart from their school lives, the students in the British schools had quite different home lives from their counterparts in the Arabic schools.

The data from these questionnaires primarily focuses on the second research question, as it gives a complete picture of each group of students' linguistic environment. In addition to using MSA more in school, as one would expect, the students in the Arabic schools also used it more outside of school, especially for tasks that involved reading or writing. The British school students, in contrast, were more likely to use English for reading and writing, as well as for spoken tasks. Overall, the linguistic environments both in and outside of school demonstrated significant differences in the levels of exposure to MSA.





Reported Language for Speaking with Family for Arabic and British school students, by Year







Figures 6.10, 6.11 & 6.12: *The language used in speaking to friends, families, and grandparents by the students in both types of schools.*

Despite the teachers' questionnaire being more focused on the other research questions, every teacher from both schools agreed that their students were more proficient in the language of instruction at their school. However, their reported proficiencies as well as preferences varied a fair amount. The idea that students develop greater proficiency in the language of instruction was discussed by Roberts (2013). For example, while over 90% of the British school teachers reported that their students had difficulty communicating in MSA, less than a third of the Arabic school teachers agreed with this view. Although no teachers from the Arabic schools felt that their textbooks were too hard for their students, nearly 90% of the British school teachers did. Because both groups of students used the same textbooks, this may indicate lower proficiency on the part of the British school students.

All the leaders also agreed that the students were more proficient in the language of instruction at their school. As with the teachers, the differences between the leaders from the Arabic and British schools reflected differences in language preference and ability that were to be expected. For example, all of the British school leaders believed that their Arabic textbooks were too difficult for their students, while only a quarter of the Arabic school leaders agreed with this

view. This suggests that the leaders in the Arabic schools viewed their students as proficient in Arabic, while the students in the British schools who used the same textbooks were not perceived as being proficient in Arabic.

While some of the data from the leaders differed slightly from that of the teachers, the general views regarding the impact of the students' linguistic environment were consistent, which provides additional verification for the second research question.

In the parent questionnaire, some of the same differences visible between the students at the British and Arabic schools were likewise revealed among the parents, although the differences with MSA were less pronounced. As one might expect, the parents who chose to send their children to British schools tended to place a greater emphasis on the English language, while those who sent their children to Arabic schools generally placed a greater emphasis on MSA. For example, a parent who sent their child to an Arabic school was more likely to use both MSA and RD at work, and less likely to use English as frequently. While only a third of the parents who sent their children to Arabic schools reported that they never or rarely used MSA at work, half of the parents of the children attending the British schools reported that they used MSA always or frequently at work, which was only slightly higher than the 10% reported by the parents of the British school students.

Because the parents' choices in sending their children to a British or Arabic school is such a significant factor, it was one of the main areas that the interviews focused on. The same question was directed to the parents of the students at both schools: Why did you send your child to an Arabic/British school?

The parents of the British school students stated that they believed that the British schools provided a better education than the Arabic schools. According to Participant 8: *"Well, everybody here in the UAE knows that English is the preferred language for a better future, and who knows, we might travel to live in English speaking countries, though, a British school was our priority"*. In general, many of the parents of the students attending the British schools agreed, with 50% reporting that they believed English is much more important than MSA for their child's future. By contrast, only 20% of the parents with children in the Arabic schools agreed. On the other hand, the parents of the Arabic school students emphasised that Arabic is the language of the Holy Qur'an, and that it was better for their children to master Arabic first, with the English language coming later. In this regard, Participants 10 stated: *"Arabic is one of the most difficult languages and learning it*

professionally requires a long journey with great focus. This is why I sent my kids to an Arabic school ... I know that English is the language of business and required everywhere, but I believe that, with extra effort and after school, learning English is achievable".

In conclusion, the participants of the British schools confirmed that English was the first language of the Arabic-speaking students who attended the British schools, while the participants of the Arabic schools confirmed that RD was the form of Arabic they preferred. All the participants from both schools agreed that the language of instruction is the main influencer of students' linguistic habits or preferences. Finally, the parents of the British school students attributed their choices to the importance of English globally, while the parents of the Arabic school students justified their choice for the importance of Arabic since it is the language of the Holy Qur'an and requires great effort in contrast to English. All of this suggests that, in response to the second research question, the linguistic environment played the most significant role in determining the proficiency of Arabic-speaking students in MSA. Because they spent so much time at school, the language of instruction was found to be a major factor, although there were potentially meaningful impacts caused by factors such as the parents' role in shaping the students' linguistic environment outside of the classroom.

With regards to RD and English, the differences were much more significant. While twothirds of the parents of the Arabic school students reported that they frequently used RD at work, just over a third of the British school students' parents reported the same. Although no parents of the Arabic school students reported using RD either rarely or never, over 15% of the parents of the students attending the British schools did. This gap continued regarding English usage. While all of the parents whose children went to the British schools reported that they always or frequently used English at work, less than half of the parents of the students in the Arabic schools reported the same. Furthermore, 13% reported that they rarely or never used English at work.



Frequency of Parents' Language Use at Home



Figures 6.13 & 6.14: The frequency of language usage at work and home by the parents of the Arabic and British school students.

Interestingly, the language category in which both groups were the most similar was in their MSA use at home. Both groups of parents were remarkably similar, with about 80% of each

group reporting that they used MSA rarely or never at home. This is surprising, given the MSA usage reported by the students, whereby 78% of the students in the Arabic schools reported that they used MSA at home either always or frequently, which was considerably higher than the 13% reported by their parents. Furthermore, the lack of a difference between the British school students' parents and Arabic school students' parents is also surprising. While the parents were separated by around 5%, the difference in the proportion of students reporting frequent MSA use was nearly 70%. This might suggest that regular use of MSA in school translates into more frequent use at home, which is partially supported by the data from the student survey indicating that the students who reported frequent MSA use in school were more likely to report frequent MSA use at home. This was true for students at the Arabic schools, with 87% of the students who reported frequent MSA use in school also reporting frequent use at home, relative to the 78% average for the Arabic schools. The difference was even more pronounced at the British schools, where 43% of the students who reported frequent MSA use in school also reported frequent use at home, relative to the average of just 8% for the British school students. This same trend held true for the parents, with 50% of those who reported frequent MSA use at work also reporting frequent MSA use at home, relative to the average of just under 10%.



Percentage Who Reported That They "Always" or "Frequently" Use MSA Outside of School or Work

Figure 6.15: The proportion of MSA used by the parents in and outside of work.

With similarly low use of MSA for both groups of parents, the distinguishing difference between the two groups was their uses of RD and English, whereby 73% of the parents of the Arabic school students reported frequent use of RD, while for the parents of the British school students this decreased to 58%, with the rates of infrequent use of RD being 7% and 8%, respectively. There was a complementary shift with English. While only 47% of the Arabic school students' parents reported using English always or frequently, 77% of the British school students' parents reported doing so. Meanwhile, 13% of the Arabic school students' parents reported infrequent English use, but none of the British school students' parents did. Again, this contrast is not nearly so stark as that of the students themselves. While nearly 77% of the British school students reported this, while for the RD the distributions were 43% and 84%, respectively. These differences were significantly larger than those for the parents.



Figure 6.16: The parents' and students' responses regarding the use of English and RD outside of work or school.

The parents were significantly different from the students in terms of their specific language habits, with the most obvious aspect the prevalence of bilingualism. In every single category, a mix of English and Arabic (either MSA or RD) was less common among the students than either a combination containing no English, or a combination containing no Arabic. For the parents, a mix of English and Arabic was not the most commonly reported combination of languages for over half of the categories, but in the others it was a fairly close second. For the parents, 42% reported a combination of languages that did not include any Arabic for reading books, and nearly 50% for reading articles online. Only 17% of the parents reported that they did not use English for either type of reading. The students were far less likely to report a mix of English and Arabic for reading. For online articles, 45% reported using no Arabic, while 39% reported not using English, with the remainder reporting a mix. Interestingly, the data for the students regarding books showed a complete departure from the parents. Not only was there a sharp divide, with just over 20% using a mix, but a combination of languages excluding English was slightly more common than one excluding Arabic, at 41% and 38%, respectively. The massive difference between the parents and students correlated well with the differences in MSA use reported by both. Because RD does not really exist as a written language, the majority of written Arabic in existence is MSA. This is

especially true of published material, both online and in print. Therefore, it makes sense that those students who used MSA more were more likely to read in Arabic. This also suggests that studying MSA in school leads to an increase in the reading of MSA outside of the school.



Figure 6.17: The parents' responses regarding the language used in reading books.

Although the parents reported less use of Arabic for reading, they reported less use of English for speaking to family. Nearly 60% of the parents reported not using English to speak with family, while almost 40% reported using a mixture of English and Arabic. This is essentially consistent with the student questionnaire, where nearly 60% reported not using English with family and 80% reported not using it with their grandparents. The only potential inconsistency is that only 30% of the parents reported not using English with their children, despite 60% of the children reporting not using English with their families. However, this can be explained by the differences in the respondents. Language use with family was one area where there tended to be a significant difference between the students at the British schools and their parents, and their counterparts from the Arabic schools. Because the survey included slightly more students from Arabic schools and slightly more parents of students from British schools, the totals here are somewhat unbalanced. Thus, it is important to look at each group separately.



Figure 6.18: The language used by the parents and students of both types of schools for speaking to family. "Mix" indicates the inclusion of English and either RD or MSA, while "No Arabic" or "No English" includes mixes that do not include MSA or RD, or English respectively. For example, a student who speaks English and Hindi would be counted as "No Arabic", while a student who speaks RD and English would be included as a "Mix".

In addition to showing very different levels of bilingualism, the rates differed greatly from the parents to students when split across the types of schools. The students attending the Arabic schools tended to be a little more likely to use both English and Arabic than the students attending the British schools for online tasks such as reading, watching videos or using social media. The British school students were slightly more likely to use a mix of languages for reading books, and significantly more likely to use a mix for social activities such as speaking with friends or family. This trend was not present with the parents. Although both groups of parents reported higher rates of bilingualism than the students, it was almost always the parents of the students at the British schools who were more likely to use a mix of Arabic and English for every single task. Interestingly, reading books was the sole category where the parents of the Arabic school students were more likely to read books written in the Arabic language as well as the English language. This is one of the few areas where the British school students were more likely than the Arabic school students to use a mixture of both languages. Another interesting correlation is between bilingualism and education. In most cases, the parents with higher levels of education tended to be more likely to use a mix of languages, while the parents with lower levels education were less likely to do so.



Figure 6.19: The language used by the parents for social media based on the level of education.

Not surprisingly, the parents who sent their children to the Arabic schools tended to report better Arabic skills than those who sent their children to the British schools. For example, only 20% of the Arabic school students' parents believed that their child was more comfortable using the English language than Arabic, and less than 7% believed that their child was more proficient in English. By contrast, over 80% of the parents with children in the British schools believed their child was both more comfortable using English and more proficient in it.

The interviews attempted to uncover why the students preferred one language or variety to another. The Arabic teachers at the British schools confirmed that the domination of the English language at the British schools played a significant role in the students' preferences and linguistic habits. According to Participant 3: *"It is not surprising that English is the first language of my students. Students come to school at 7 am and leave for home at 4 pm. So, they spend most of the day at school where English is the dominant language and is being practised all day, except for Arabic sessions. In my view, this has played the main role in shaping students' preferences". The connection*

between the language of instruction was documented by Topçiu (2015). All of the teachers agreed that the students were most proficient in the language of instruction at their school. Within the same context, the parents of the British school students agreed on the same point, and they confirmed that the high level of English immersion at school was overwhelmingly responsible for shaping the students' linguistic habits. However, it is also worth noting that the linguistic environment at home may be another contributing factor. In addition to being exposed to English in school, the parents of the children attending the British schools tended to use English more frequently than the parents of the children attending the Arabic schools. For example, over three-quarters of the parents of the British school students reported that they did not use English when speaking to their children. By contrast, 60% of the parents of the Arabic school students reported that they did not use English when speaking to their children's linguistic environment, especially in the case of younger children. For example, they choose what films will be watched and the books they will read. Nearly 30% did not watch films in Arabic.

On the other hand, the teachers, leaders and parents of the Arabic school students agreed that using RD regularly at home and mostly at school resulted in having students who preferred RD to other languages. According to Participants 11: "*My child uses RD at school in learning most of the subjects and also uses it at home and with his friends. It is difficult for us to provide him with opportunities to speak English or even MSA*". The students' questionnaire likewise showed that the students had few opportunities for practising MSA. Although many of the students from the Arabic schools frequently 'used' MSA, most of this usage, as previously discussed, was through passive activities such as reading. The students rarely used MSA for speaking to anyone except their teachers, and as previously reported, the reported spoken usage was rather low, especially considering that for the students in the Arabic schools they should be close to 100%. Through reviewing the responses from both types of schools, it became clear that the language of instruction at school was the main factor and the most powerful influencer on the students' linguistic habits and preferences.

The conducted questionnaire helped to provide a clear picture of the sorts of linguistic environments that Arabic-speaking students occupied outside of school, which helped to answer the second research question. Although there was a distinct split between the language use of the parents of the Arabic and English school students, one trait they both shared was that few parents in either group used MSA at home. The parents of the students in the British schools tended to use English more at

home, with some RD, while the parents of the students at the Arabic schools tended to use more RD and some English at home. The clear trend in the data is that the students in the Arabic schools had a higher level of proficiency in MSA than the students in the British schools. This is corroborated by the data from the parents', students', teachers' and leaders' questionnaires. While nearly 85% of the parents with children attending the British schools said their children were more proficient in English than Arabic, less than 7% of the parents with children in the Arabic schools agreed. Over 70% of the students in the British schools felt more comfortable using English, while only about 20% of the Arabic school students agreed. Ninety-two percent of the British school teachers and 100% of the British school leaders believed that the students had difficulty communicating in MSA, while less than a third of the Arabic school teachers and a quarter of Arabic school leaders agreed. Although the questionnaire data deals primarily in comparisons between English and MSA use, this quantitative content data analysis empirically supports the assertion that the British school students were less proficient in MSA than the students in the Arabic schools, rather than solely being more proficient in English.

Furthermore, there seemed to be a larger gap between the students in the British and Arabic schools in the earlier grades, while the older students in the British schools were only slightly behind their counterparts in the Arabic schools. In the British schools, not a single grade 2 or 5 student reported using MSA always or frequently either in or outside of school. By contrast, over 10% of both the grade 7 and 10 students reported that they used MSA either always or frequently both in and outside of school. This demonstrates a correlation between infrequent MSA use and lower proficiency in MSA writing. However, one possible explanation for this phenomenon is the transfer between Arabic and British schools. Because transfers are typically the product of outside factors, and equally likely to occur at any age, the older a student is, the more statistically likely it is that they have transferred. Thus, it is likely that any grade 10 class in a British school contains a higher percentage of students who previously attended an Arabic school at some earlier point than in a grade 2 class.

For further comparison between the students in the British and Arabic schools, samples of their writing were compared. The clearest trend that emerged was that the students in the Arabic schools were better at writing in MSA than their peers in the British schools. Since the primary difference between these two groups of students was their linguistic environment, this difference suggests that it must impact proficiency.

Through reviewing the writing samples collected from the students in both schools, it was clear that the students in the Arabic schools used more compound sentences and connectives, while the structure of their writing was more robust than the writing of the students in the British schools. In the British schools, the students tended to use simple and direct expressions, alongside basic words and phrases. Furthermore, the students in the British schools mostly started their sentences with subjects, while the students at the Arabic schools started their sentences mostly with verbs, which is the preferred style of writing in Arabic.

The codes generated from all the writing samples referred to clear differences in student abilities in both schools. The students in the British schools tended to make regular spelling mistakes. Furthermore, the style of their sentences was simple with no use of figurative language. The students at the British schools were also more prone to inappropriacies, awkward phrasing and incorrect collocations. Moreover, through comparing the samples of both schools, it was clear that there was significantly less written work from the students in the British schools than that presented by the students in the Arabic schools. Furthermore, the variety of word choice (synonyms, antonyms, adjectives and adverbs) employed by the students at the Arabic schools was much greater. The table 6.12 below illustrates the themes generated from the students' work in both types of schools.

Although the distinctions between written and spoken Arabic may relate to language variation, the limited exposure of the students in the British schools to MSA was more of an issue pertaining to the linguistic environment. This can be further witnessed in several codes that essentially measured the influence of English on student writing. The most telling was the "sentence structure" code. No other feature was so prevalent among the British school students, while it was almost inapplicable among the Arabic school students. This code refers to the occasions when the students structured their sentences with the subject first. While this is permitted in Arabic, it is unusual, with most Arabic writers preferring to start their sentences with verbs. English, however, nearly always requires the subject of the sentence to come first.

Another less obvious source of evidence suggesting that the British school students' MSA was negatively influenced by their English was their limited vocabulary. In the "word choice" and "word variety" codes, the British school students used less variety of words, with less precision and almost no awareness of collocation. While this could simply be seen as evidence of their limited exposure to MSA, it might also suggest that they were translating from English rather than RD. As a result, when there was one English word for something, the students tended to use only

the word that represented the closest translation. This could also explain the general lack of precision, since translations between English and MSA are likely to lose some meaning. This also explains the students' inability to collocate. At the same time, the Arabic school students, who might be translating from the RD, were not nearly as seriously hindered since the two dialects are at least conceptually closer.

Furthermore, the primary factor relating to language variation likely has to do with the level of exposure to written Arabic. While the Arabic-speaking students in the British schools might have used Arabic amongst themselves in school, it was primarily for verbal communication, which tended to mean RD. At the same time, even when the students (and some teachers) in the Arabic schools spoke RD frequently, the students still read in MSA. This increased exposure to written MSA is believed to explain some differences between the writing proficiency of the Arabic-speaking students in the British and Arabic schools. In addition to the difference in exposure to written MSA, the larger factor affecting the Arabic-speaking students who attended the British schools was the linguistic environment, which was the focus of question two. As well as making mistakes that suggested the influence of RD in their MSA writing, the students attending the British schools showed features in their writing indicative of a major English language influence.

6.4 Findings and Analysis Regarding the Influence of Language Management on the Students' Proficiency

The third factor was language management. In particular, this connects to questions regarding the difficulty of students' courses and any other considerations relating to the curriculum, from instructional materials to assessment criteria. It also includes other, less directly related considerations such as student motivation and attitude, which may be impacted by language management.

The questionnaires also assessed differences in students' attitudes toward MSA. The attitudinal factors that were assessed were how much the students enjoyed studying MSA and how important they believed studying MSA was for their future. The former is likely impacted by the curricula, and the latter is affected by the role language management authorities, in this case the KHDA, play in promoting the language.

There were significant differences between the attitudes of students in British schools and their counterparts in Arabic schools.

In addition to the difference to their environments, there were also some attitudinal differences between the students at the Arabic and British schools. While nearly 60% of the students in the British schools reported that they enjoyed learning MSA, this was over 90% for the Arabic school students. When asked if they believed that studying MSA was important for their future, nearly 90% of the Arabic school students agreed, while this was only half for the students from the British schools. This major difference in attitudes seemed to somewhat impact the students' use of MSA. The British school students who enjoyed studying MSA were over 50% more likely to report frequent use at school and over 20% more likely to report frequent use at school students. Interestingly, the British schools' students who reported that they believed that studying MSA was important for their future were no more likely to report frequent MSA use in school, but were twice as likely to report frequent use at home as the average British schools. While this suggests that student attitude plays some part, it is not significantly relative to other factors.

A more direct effect of language management involves the choice of curriculum. In order to assess the impact on proficiency in this area, students were questioned about their textbooks, the choice of which is a part of language management.

It was noted that while less than 10% of the Arabic school students found their textbook too difficult, this increased to 23% for the British school students, even though this was the same textbook mandated by the KHDA. While this was not surprising given other trends, it was also noted that both groups of students found the textbooks written in their dominant language to be better. About 65% of the students in the Arabic schools said their Arabic textbooks were better than their English textbooks, while only 13% of the British school students agreed. While the Arabic textbooks in question were the same, the English textbooks were not. Therefore, it is possible that this had nothing to do with the students' perceptions, and there was simply a difference in the quality of the English textbooks. However, given the differences in other areas, it seems more likely that it forms part of a pattern demonstrating students' preference for their

school's

dominant

Percentage of Students Who Reported Frequent MSA Use Inside and Outside of School Based on Responses to Questions



Figure 6.20: The use of MSA in and outside of school by the students of both types of schools.

Though the students' questionnaires showed significant differences in students' reactions to the same curriculum, hinting at the potential need for different curricula, the results from the teachers' questionnaires were more direct. Over 90% of each group of teachers believed that the curriculum should be different. This is consistent with Spolsky (2009), who argued that every aspect of the individual learners must be considered. The difference in their beliefs about the textbooks were far more significant than those of the students, with 90% of British school teachers believed that their student's textbooks were too difficult for them, while not one Arabic school teacher agreed. Both groups of teachers were also overwhelmingly in favour of increasing the class time dedicated to MSA instruction, with over 95% of the British school teachers and all of the Arabic school teachers in agreement.



Figure 6.21: The responses towards certain questionnaire statements by the Arabic teachers from both types of schools.

The teachers also noted significant differences in motivation. While over 40% of the Arabic school teachers believed their students to be highly motivated to learn MSA, only 4% of the British school teachers agreed. The same trend could be seen regarding some of the teachers' beliefs about the students' language preferences. While all of the British school teachers reported that their students preferred using English to MSA, only 12.5% of the Arabic school teachers agreed. Ninety-six percent of the British school teachers believed that their students preferred English to RD, while all of the Arabic school teachers believed their students preferred English to RD, while all of the Arabic school teachers believed their students preferred English to RD, while all of the Arabic school teachers believed their students preferred RD. This preference is likely due to exposure (Roberts 2013).

These differences were also consistent with the findings from the inferential analysis of data obtained from teachers' questionnaire. In this analysis, the researcher used the two types of schools as an independent T-test variable while the questions related to the teachers' views regarding students' motivation and preferences as dependent variables as shown in table 6.5.

Table 6.5: inferential analysis regarding the teachers' responses related to language management.

Ν	Mean	Standard Deviation	Test Statistics
Arabic = 16	Arabic $= 2.32$	Arabic $= 0.41$	t = - 4.028
British = 25	British = 2.77	British $= 0.30$	P-value = 0.000

The data presented in the table above show that the P-value = 0.000 while the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is significant difference in teachers' views with regards to their students' preferences and motivation to learn Arabic. Accordingly, teachers in British schools see their students less motivated to learn Arabic. This finding, as discussed previously, is theorized to be related to the difficulty that students find in their Arabic curriculum and the objectives they are required to achieve which is related to the influence of language management on students' proficiency.

While there were some very stark contrasts when English was involved, the differences in their students' perceived attitudes to RD and MSA were remarkably similar. For both groups, over 90% believed that their students preferred RD to MSA. Furthermore, both groups predominantly reported that their students believed that the RD was sufficient for communication. The British school teachers reported this at a rate just below 90%, while just over 80% of the Arabic school teachers agreed. Figure 6.27 and table 6.12 below present the Arabic teachers in both types of schools' responses towards some of the statements in the questionnaire.



Figure 6.22: The responses towards further statements from the questionnaire by the Arabic teachers from both types of schools.

Table 6.6:	Arabic	teachers	in	both	types	of	schools'	responses	to	further	statements	from	the
questionnai	re.												

Variable	Likert scale	Frequency	Percent
My students feel that the regional dialect is enough for communication, and Modern	Strongly disagree	0	0
Standard Arabic is not really necessary	Disagree	4	9.5
	Neutral	4	2.4
	Agree	31	73.8
	Strongly agree	5	11.9
The differences between Modern Standard Arabic and Regional Dialects make it	Strongly disagree	0	0
difficult for my students to learn Arabic	Disagree	1	2.4
	Neutral	1	2.4
	Agree	30	71.4
	Strongly agree	9	21.4
My students prefer using RD to MSA	Strongly disagree	0	0
	Disagree	0	0
	Neutral	2	4.8
	Agree	36	85.7
	Strongly agree	3	7.1
My students are more proficient in the language of instruction at their school than	Strongly disagree	0	0
at other languages they study (i.e. If you teach at a British school, they are better at	Disagree	0	0
English than Modern Standard Arabic)	Neutral	0	0
	Agree	30	71.4
	Strongly agree	11	26.2
I think more class time should be devoted to studying Modern Standard Arabic	Strongly disagree	1	2.4
	Disagree	0	0

	Neutral	0	0
	Agree	25	59.5
	Strongly agree	15	35.7
The Arabic curriculum for British and Arabic schools should be the same	Strongly disagree	24	57.1
	Disagree	14	34.1
	Neutral	0	0
	Agree	3	7.1
	Strongly agree	0	0
The Arabic grading criteria for the students in British and Arabic schools should be the	Strongly disagree	25	59.5
same	Disagree	13	31.7
	Neutral	1	2.4
	Agree	2	4.9
	Strongly agree	0	0

The data from the teachers' questionnaire was primarily targeted at answering the third research question regarding the influence of language management. There was a very strong consensus with regards to the changes that should be made to the current system adopted for teaching Arabic. Primarily, they believed that the students in the British schools and the students in the Arabic schools should not have the same curriculum and criteria. Regarding the first research question, the teachers also overwhelmingly believed that language variation is a significant factor influencing the proficiency of Arabic-speaking students. Finally, they likewise believed that the linguistic environment plays an important role in student achievement. Ninety-five percent of the British school teachers believed that the grading criteria at the British and Arabic schools should be different, and nearly 90% of the Arabic school teachers agreed.

The leaders responded to most questions similarly to the teachers. Generally speaking, this was a good sign for the education system as a whole since it suggests a synergy of understanding between the leaders and teachers. None believed that either the curriculum or the grading criteria should be the same for both the British and Arabic schools, and all believed that the time spent studying MSA should be increased. As with the teachers, nearly all of the leaders in the British

schools reported a preference for English over both MSA and RD, while very few leaders from the Arabic schools reported a preference for either. None of the British school leaders disagreed that the students preferred English over both MSA and RD. Meanwhile, every leader from the Arabic schools disagreed that the students preferred English to RD, and all but one disagreed that they preferred English to MSA. No leader from either school disagreed that the students preferred RD to MSA.

Although the responses for the leaders were generally in line with those of the teachers, there were a few differences, particularly with regards to motivation. Nearly 20% of the teachers believed that their students were highly motivated to learn MSA, while around 17% of the leaders agreed. Although this is not significant, if the scores are broken down between schools, over 40% of the teachers in the Arabic schools believed that the students were highly motivated to learn MSA, despite the fact that only 25% of the leaders agreed. At the same time, only around 65% of the leaders agreed that most of the students considered RD to be all they needed to communicate, while over 85% of the teachers believed this to be the case. For the Arabic schools, these numbers were even more disparate, at 81% of the teachers compared to only 50% of the leaders. This difference is interesting because it suggests that the leaders perceived the students as being less motivated than the teachers to study MSA, but at the same time fewer of them attribute this lack of motivation to one of the main factors that the teachers attributed it to.

In the interviews, most of the teachers, leaders and parents of the British school students were in line with the responses obtained from the questionnaires. They agreed on the necessity to have a different curriculum for Arabic-speaking students who attended the British schools. Most of their comments were about the difficulty of the topics chosen and the high level of grammar, as well as the pressure exerted on the students to achieve the required objectives. Participants 6, who worked as a leader in a British school, said: "Arabic-speaking students in British schools are under pressure to achieve the objectives of the Arabic curriculum. It is no secret that the KHDA mandated the same curriculum for all Arabic-speaking students in all types of schools. In my view, the curriculum of Arabic in British schools does not meet students' educational needs and it needs to be replaced". And Participants 8 stated: "My child who attends a British school. This is happening regardless of the differences in students' levels and the types of schools. In my opinion, my child needs to have something easier than this level". The need for a language management system that considers the learner's needs was discussed by Spolsky (2009). This is consistent with

questionnaires, wherein over 40% of the parents with children in the British schools reported that their child's Arabic class was too difficult, while less than 7% of the parents with children in the Arabic schools reported this.

Within the same context, the Arabic teachers, leaders and parents of the Arabic school students confirmed that the curriculum adopted for teaching Arabic was suitable for the students, while providing some comments and areas for improvements. Participant 5, who worked as a teacher in an Arabic school, said: "My students can cope with the curriculum ... all the mandated objectives, texts and requirements are achievable by my students". This was supported by the findings of the document analysis. In particular, the "task achievement" code noted that while the stronger students in the Arabic schools were able to complete all the objectives on their assignments, none of the students in the British schools were able to. This indicates that such tasks may simply be too difficult for them. Furthermore, Participant 11, whose child attended an Arabic school, stated: "I think the curriculum needs to be improved in some areas such as online teaching materials. But, in general, the curriculum is accessible and meets the needs of students. I can see my child reads, understands and achieves all the requirements without our support".

Thus, in response to the third research question, it is reasonable to say that the leaders' perceptions of language management were mostly in line with those of the teachers. This was especially true regarding the use of the same curriculum and grading criteria in both the Arabic and British schools. Like the teachers, all the leaders believed that the two types of schools should have completely different curricula and criteria. This was the most common complaint that emerged regarding the current language management system, as administered by the KHDA.



Figure 6.23: The teachers' and leaders' responses from both types of schools regarding the students' preference for RD or MSA.

Although the parents did not articulate it in the same way as the teachers, the differences in their attitudes towards Arabic education were very clear. While over 70% of the Arabic school students' parents were neutral about the quality of their child's Arabic education, less than 7% of them felt it was too difficult. By contrast, over 40% of the British school students' parents reported that their child's Arabic classes were too difficult, and over 65% said they were not as good as their child's English classes. Both statistics are especially noteworthy as the classes in both schools follow the same curriculum mandated by the KHDA.

In the interviews, most of the parents in both types of schools agreed that they were mostly satisfied with the process of teaching Arabic, albeit with some suggestions for improvement. Participant 9, who sent his child to a British school, said: *"To be honest, I am generally satisfied with the process in general, but I have some comments on a few points such as the curriculum adopted by the KHDA. It is difficult for my child"*. Their attitude is consistent with Sanden (2014), who found that language management profoundly impacts the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, Participant 8 was satisfied in general regarding the curriculum. On the other hand, the parents of the Arabic school students were fully satisfied with the process of teaching Arabic

in their children's schools. In this regard, Participant 10 said: "My child likes Arabic sessions and his progress in Arabic is very good".

While the parents with children at the British schools tended to be fairly consistent in their attitudes about their children's Arabic classes and abilities, they were not at all consistent regarding their attitudes towards English. While a little over 50% believed that English was more important than MSA, almost 30% disagreed. Of these, just over 15% strongly agreed, and a little less than 15% strongly disagreed. The results were similar regarding the question about RD, where just over 40% of them believed that the RD was enough, and that MSA was not necessary, while slightly more than that disagreed. Only 13% were neutral. Finally, a little over 50% of the parents who sent their children to a British school were in favour of increasing the amount of time spent on MSA, while nearly 30% disagreed. Surprisingly, this split did not seem to correlate with other factors, such as the reported use of MSA at work or at home. The parents who chose to send their children to Arabic schools, by contrast, were much more consistent. Over 50% of the parents of the Arabic school students were neutral regarding the importance of English, with the remainder split almost equally between agreeing and disagreeing, although no one strongly disagreed. None felt strongly either way on the question about RD, and again, over 50% were neutral. While less than 50% of them were in favour of increasing the amount of MSA instruction, a third were neutral with only 20% disagreeing. This is all somewhat surprising considering that language reportedly played a major factor when choosing their child's school for nearly 80% of the British school students' parents, compared to 60% of the Arabic school students' parents. Given this last result, it appears that many of the parents who chose to send their child to a school where the instructional language was English still considered MSA important, or even more important.

Moreover, the document analysis confirmed the gap that the questionnaires alluded to, which raised some serious questions about the language management system. It seems that a system wherein one type of school consistently scores lower than another is inherently unfair, and not appropriate from an educational perspective. Many types of the mistakes were likely the result of the language management system. Codes in fairly basic areas such as "spelling mistakes", "adjectives" and "coherence and cohesion" all demonstrated very clearly that the students in the British schools were simply behind their counterparts in the Arabic schools in terms of MSA proficiency. This was corroborated by all of the questionnaires, which reported that the students in the British schools had more difficulty with MSA than their counterparts in the Arabic schools. While such a pronounced difference may suggest that applying the same curriculum and grading

criteria to both groups is not effective, the difference in the "task achievement" code made it even more evident. In the Arabic schools, most of the students failed to complete some parts of the task, while the high scoring students usually completed every part. By contrast, in the British schools even the high scoring students were unable to complete every part of the task. If even the best students are unable to complete all parts of the task, one might argue that the task is too difficult. This is consistent with the belief, held by most of the teachers and leaders, that the curriculum and grading criteria for both groups should not be the same.

Although it is likely that the "task achievement" was at least partially a language management problem, it may also relate to one of the major non-linguistic factors that this research has identified: motivation. While this is less obviously connected to language management than more concrete factors such as assessment criteria and textbook selection, it is still a factor that can be impacted by the curriculum, as well as the role the language management authority plays in promoting the language. While there were a variety of findings related to motivation, the data pretty consistently showed that the students in the Arabic schools were more motivated to learn MSA than the students in the British schools. The results for "task achievement" could simply demonstrate a lack of diligence due to reduced motivation. While this lack of motivation could partially contribute to the results for some other codes, it is likely that the impact is low. For example, "spelling" is a code that is unlikely to be directly affected by motivation, as writing a word correctly takes no more time than writing it incorrectly. By contrast, using figurative language and analogies requires a much higher degree of interest in a language. A student simply wishing to pass the class can memorise a few spelling words, but only students with a high level of motivation are likely to use any of those higher-level mechanisms.

The code that seems most likely to be affected by motivation is "evidence". The use of evidence in writing is not specific enough to language that diglossia would have an impact. It could have been attributed to the linguistic environment or language management, except that it is a feature of writing that is common to both MSA and English. So, even if the students in the British schools were exposed to less academic writing in MSA, in terms of demonstrating the use of evidence they were exposed to the same in English. They were certainly taught to support their ideas with evidence in their English writing classes. Therefore, the best explanation for why students who presumably were capable of supporting their ideas with evidence in English were not able to do so in MSA would seem to be a lack of motivation. Although this review of documents cannot itself fully answer the third research question, it has shed light on the fact that despite being behind their peers in the Arabic schools, due to the factors discussed, the Arabic-speaking students in the British schools were held to the same standards and taught using the same curriculum as those in the Arabic schools. This suggests some issues with the language management system.

The quantitative research clearly indicated that the students in the Arabic schools were significantly more proficient in MSA than the students in the British schools. The students', parents', and teachers' questionnaires indicated this, and the document analysis supported it. Furthermore, in both the leaders' and teachers' questionnaires there was some consensus that the two groups of students should not use the same curriculum or be graded with the same criteria, as is currently mandated by the KHDA.

The interviews arrived at a similar conclusion. First of all, all the participants thanked the efforts of the KHDA in improving the process of teaching Arabic. Participant 4, who worked as a leader in an Arabic school, stated: "*No one can deny the role of the KHDA in developing the way of teaching Arabic and the entire process. Before the emergence of the KHDA, teaching Arabic was unorganised. There was no framework or even a united curriculum*". The idea of a unified curriculum developed by a language management authority, focused on addressing language difficulties as they arise, is consistent with the discussion in Mwaniki (2014).

The participants from the British schools shed light on the importance of having different grading criteria for the students in the British schools to assess their progress and attainment in Arabic language. Participant 1 said in this regard: "*The KHDA should take into account the differences between students studying under different schools' curriculum; it is not fair for students in British schools to achieve the same criteria and objectives of students in Arabic schools"*. Within the same context, Participant 2 said: "*The KHDA has one size of criteria for all students in the UAE Arabic-speaking students are struggling in achieving those criteria and this exercises some kind of pressure on them and might hinder their learning in a way or another"*. A similar view was held by the majority of the teachers and leaders, and was discussed by Kaplan (2011). Over 90% of the teachers and leaders, at both the Arabic and British schools reported that neither the curriculum nor the grading criteria should be the same for the Arabic and British schools.

On the side of the Arabic schools, all of the participants also agreed on the necessity to have different criteria for the students who attended the British schools. But, regarding the criteria itself,
they confirmed that it was accessible and achievable by most students. Within the same context, Participant 5 said: "Yes, the criteria are achievable, but it needs to be updated regularly in order to be up to date with the global sector. As I remember, it has not undergone any update since its emergence in 2011".

To conclude, and thereby answer the third research question, regarding the perceptions of the parents, teachers and leaders about language management, there were three sub-themes in this section. The first sub-theme related to the parents' satisfaction regarding the process of teaching Arabic in their children's school. In this area, all the parents confirmed that they were generally satisfied. The second sub-theme related to the curriculum for teaching Arabic in both types of schools, and the third sub-theme related to the criteria used in assessing and evaluating the students' progress, as well as attainment in Arabic. In the latter two sub-themes, all of the participants of both types of schools stressed the necessity to have a different curriculum and grading criteria for the students in the British schools. Furthermore, there was a consensus on the need to update the curriculum and the grading criteria mandated by the KHDA. Moreover, the participants suggested a need to have a wide availability of online resources that might serve in making teaching Arabic more interactive, which would enhance Arabic-speaking students' Arabic language proficiency. Overall, the participants stressed the important role of KHDA in raising the profile of the Arabic language and hoped that the areas of improvement they highlighted would be considered.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the research and its conclusions. This study investigated the factors influencing Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools. As discussed previously in the research problem, the low proficiency of Arabic-speaking students in Dubai's British schools was the rationale for this study. This research highlighted firstly the historical and linguistic roots of the Arabic language and its position among the other languages, as well as its significance among its speakers. After that, it focused on the background research at the local level, specifically on research relating to Arabic language proficiency in the UAE.

The study provides in-depth insight into the field of teaching Arabic to Arabic-speaking students in Dubai's British schools. This contributes to a better understanding of the current situation, which will hopefully lead to putting this research into practice by establishing more flexible curricula, grading criteria and policies that contribute towards enhancing Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools. Furthermore, future research may build upon this study's findings, in order to further develop more concrete modes of instruction that lead to better learning outcomes. It is worth mentioning that this is the first research targeting the teaching of Arabic to Arabic-speaking students in Dubai's British schools.

In this chapter, the major findings, implications, limitations, research contributions and recommendations for future research will be presented and discussed.

7.2 Overview of the Research

In Chapter One, the research presented the main research aim:

To investigate the factors influencing Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools.

This main aim was broken down into three research objectives:

1-To understand how the variation in the Arabic language influences Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in Arabic in Dubai's British schools

2-To gain insight into the influences of the linguistic environment at Dubai's British schools on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language.

3-To determine the perceptions of the leaders, teachers and parents regarding the influence of the language management of Arabic on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools.

The adoption of the research aim and objectives led to the choice of the theoretical framework, literature review and research approach. The adopted research approach for this study was the explanatory sequential mixed-method approach. The participants in this study were students, Arabic language teachers, and Arabic department leaders, as well as the parents of the students. All the respondents were from five British and two Arabic schools in Dubai, the UAE. The data were collected through questionnaires, document analysis and semi-structured interviews. The quantitative data were collected and analysed first, and then refined and supported by the qualitative data. After analysing both sets of data individually, the third stage of the explanatory mixed method involved combining, refining and then triangulating the entire analysed data to inform the research findings.

7.3 Summary and Highlights

Although language instruction is a complex and multi-faceted process, and this study found a variety of factors influencing the study of Arabic within Dubai schools, the clearest and most consistent finding was that a one-size-fits-all curriculum might be less effective for students who attend non-Arabic schools.

Thus, the primary finding of section 6.6 in findings and analysis chapter, which focused on issues relating to language management, was that British and Arabic schools should have separate curricula and grading criteria. This was also supported by most of the parents, teachers and leaders who answered the questionnaire. Many also spoke about the theme in the interviews. Additionally, the document analysis showed a major gap between the writing of the students at the Arabic and British schools, despite them having the same grading criteria. The ability of the students themselves was distinct. Splitting the curriculum in two would thus better serve all of their needs.

The biggest difference between the students who attended the Arabic schools and the students who attended the British schools was self-evident, namely the fact that they studied in different linguistic environments where it was discussed in section 6.5. The students in the British schools were simply not exposed to MSA to the same extent as the students in the Arabic schools. This

was especially true with regards to written MSA. Although the students in the Arabic schools spoke RD frequently, all the text that they read was written in MSA, while the students in the British schools had only one textbook written in MSA. Constant exposure helps students to become familiar with the language. Increased familiarity with MSA was very evident when comparing the writing of the students from the British schools with that of the students from the Arabic schools. Aside from the gap between their overall scores, the students in the British schools tended to write less flexibly, demonstrating far less style, while at least some of the students at the Arabic schools were comfortable with many of the stylistic features of MSA.

This difference in linguistic environments also affects the degree to which language variation influences language learners. This was discussed in section 6.4. Essentially, students in the British schools become bilingual, speaking both English and Arabic, while the students in the Arabic schools speak both forms of Arabic (RD and MSA). Because of the Arabic school students' increased exposure to MSA, it was easier for them to detect small differences between the two varieties and make connections that many students with less familiarity simply could not achieve. Although the Arabic school students could easily grasp the differences between RD and MSA, the students in the British schools typically struggled. The introduction of English, which is vastly more distinct from RD and MSA than they are from one another, is likely to be an additional source of confusion. Many parents of the students in the British schools said that their children struggled to distinguish between RD and MSA. The document analysis also suggested a similar sort of fusing of the two languages, with the students in the British schools more prone to using words and features from RD rather than MSA. While language variation and linguistic environment are immutable consequences of an education system in a metropolitan area with numerous languages of instruction, language management presents some opportunities for alleviating some of the negative consequences. As previously mentioned, it was consistently noted that the curriculum for British and Arabic schools should be different. Not only is this supported by the numerous findings regarding language variation and linguistic environment that demonstrate the differences between the students, but also in the interviews with the teachers, parents and even leaders within the education system. Moreover, the literature reviewed in chapter four, particularly in 4.1.3, is in line with these findings. Spolsky (2009) stated that the authorities that are responsible for language management should take into account the linguistic contexts of the learners.

7.4 Discussion

In this section, research findings are interpreted in the light of the theoretical framework and literature review. The discussion focused on the best practices to improve Arabic speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai British schools by highlighting the main influencing factors reviewed in the literature and highlighted by the participants of this study. Accordingly, research findings will be presented and discussed in accordance with research questions:

7.4.1 The Influence of Variation in the Arabic Language on Arabic-Speaking Students' Proficiency in the Arabic Language in Dubai's British Schools

Arabic is characterised by variation, where native speakers use RDs in daily life and MSA in formal settings. This variation, which is represented in the diglossic situation, plays a role in influencing students' progress and proficiency in the Arabic language (Asadi & Ibrahim 2014). This was consistent with the findings in section 6.4, which confirmed that diglossia affects students in Dubai, but further found that this effect was more pronounced with students in Dubai's British schools.

Most of the Arabic teachers and leaders who participated in this study agreed on the negative influences of the variation on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language. Almost all of each group of teachers believed that diglossia is one factor that makes learning MSA more difficult. This was also the case with the leaders. Almost all of the leaders stated that language variation is a significant factor that influences students' proficiency in the Arabic language. What the teachers and leaders agreed upon is also supported by the literature. According to AlSobh, AbuMelhim and BaniHani (2015), variation starts influencing the level of Arabic-speaking students early, since the acquisition of spoken RD occurs prior to going to school and learning MSA, which is not practised at home. Consequently, students' capability to communicate using MSA becomes distorted. Within the same context, some researchers view the low level of Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language as a result of the uniqueness of the orthography and solid morphological and syntactic system due to the variation in Arabic (Asadi & Ibrahim 2014).

The parents' questionnaire responses supported the idea that diglossia is a factor in language proficiency, although not quite to the same degree. Three-quarters of the parents of the British school students reported that variation makes Arabic difficult for students, while around half of the parents of the Arabic school students agreed with this. This is supported by the literature. According to Saiegh-Haddad and Ghawi-Dakwar (2017), there is a phonological contrast between RD and MSA related to the phonological formation of syllables within the word. For instance, it is incorrect to start a word with a consonant cluster in MSA, while it is acceptable in RD: the concluding cluster /lb/ in MSA "كَلَب" "kalb", which means 'dog' turns to /lib/ in the word "kalbi" in the RD.

Most of the parents and teachers who participated in the semi-structured interviews stated that the factor of language variation is one of the most important factors influencing student learning. This agreement among the teachers, leaders and parents regarding the influence of language variation on students' proficiency is consistent with the literature. According to Haddad (2012), language variation in Arabic results in inadequate language proficiency in MSA and in linguistic uncertainty that reduces language usage and influences literacy-related systems and consequences. This preserves the distance between the two varieties and maintains the diglossic situation. Most of the interviewees, especially those with educational backgrounds, tended to believe that diglossia was a significant factor in students' proficiency since students tend to switch between the two forms of language. Even the students in the Arabic schools, who tended to have better proficiency with MSA, still preferred to use RD and even asked their Arabic teachers to use it in the classroom.

Despite the fact that this factor is related to the Arabic language itself, the better understanding provided by this study may help in handling this factor represented in the language management role by mandating different curricula and grading criteria for those students who are highly impacted. Furthermore, the students highlighted the influence of language variation through their responses to the questionnaire. While the focus was on the students' use of MSA, it also asked about their use of RD and English. For the students in both the Arabic and British schools, their use of RD outside of school was much higher than their use of RD in school. However, in the case of the Arabic school students, there was a slight increase, while for the British school students it was a huge increase because they rarely used RD in school. Furthermore, the document analysis indicated that the British school students also tended to make more mistakes in their writing, which indicates the impact of diglossia. Taken together, these two results may suggest that the reason students in the British schools are more influenced by language variation is because of the difference in how they relate to the languages. For the Arabic school students, the RD was their first form of Arabic, and MSA their academic form of language, while English was something they studied occasionally. For the British school students, the RD was likewise their home language, with English their academic language and MSA something that they studied occasionally. However, because of the diglossic situation of Arabic, the students in the Arabic schools were exposed to far more Arabic. Even in situations where they could speak RD, they were still obliged to read and write in MSA, because RD is not really a written language. They were able to build connections between RD and MSA, and fully understand the differences between them. The students in the British schools, however, simply switched from the RD to English when they arrived at school, and thus were more likely, when studying MSA, to confuse it with the only other form of Arabic they had experience with: RD.

Thus, it seems clear that while diglossia influenced language learners at both the British and Arabic schools, since the students were occasionally using MSA in their daily life while they were regularly using the RD, which was not permitted in the classroom, it seemed to have a more profound effect on the students attending the British schools. While obviously there is nothing that can be done to change the languages, or in some way remove language variation as a factor, simply being aware of and tailoring curricula to account for it will allow educators to mitigate some of the negative influences that the phenomenon has on language learners. Reducing the negative impact of language variation would help to improve the overall language proficiency, especially among the students in the British schools.

7.4.2 The Influence of the Linguistic Environment at Schools on Arabic-Speaking Students' Proficiency in the Arabic Language

The linguistic environment was first described by Spolsky (2009) as part of his Sociocultural Theory. The primary tenet of this theory, as it relates to this study, is the idea that language acquisition is deeply influenced by the language or languages that a person is exposed to within their environment. To correlate these claims with the findings of this study, detailed in section 6.5, the interviews with parents, leaders and teachers confirmed that students in British Schools were affected by the English language which dominates the linguistic environment in those schools hugely. Typically, a greater level of exposure to a language, or more preferably complete immersion, maximises the rate at which a student gains proficiency in the language. In this study, the students attending two different types of schools with different languages of instruction were asked about their language use both at home and at school, for a variety of different activities.

The primary finding was that the students in the Arabic schools were significantly more likely to use MSA outside of school than the students in the British schools. In both cases, the younger students were more likely to use only the language of instruction outside of school, although they tended to become more bilingual in the higher grades. While the grade 2 students from an Arabic school were more likely to report only using Arabic, and the grade 2 students from a British school were more likely to report using English, the grade 10 students of both types of schools tended to report a mix, although they still favoured the language of instruction. There was also an inverse correlation with both groups of students' use of MSA and English. Regardless of the school they attended, a student who reported more frequent MSA use outside of school was likely to report less frequent English use, and vice versa. Although this was true of both groups, the students nearly always preferred the language of instruction at their school

It was similarly found that the students were more proficient in the language of instruction at their school. The students in the British schools were much more likely to report that they felt more comfortable using English rather than Arabic, while the students in the Arabic schools were much less likely to report any difficulties with MSA. This was echoed by the surveys of both the leaders and teachers, who agreed almost unanimously that the students were more proficient in the language of instruction at their school. Within the same context, the review of Sociocultural theory in the theoretical framework in chapter four confirmed that the linguistic environment of students shapes their ability in certain language. Vygotsky (1978) stated that young learners are influenced by the level of exposure to a language where they grow up and interact. The parents' questionnaire also confirmed this, as the parents of the students attending the Arabic schools were less likely to report that their child's Arabic class was too difficult than the parents of the students attending the British schools. Finally, the quantitative stage of the document analysis showed that when the work of both sets of students was graded using the same criteria, the students from the Arabic schools attained higher scores. All this makes it very clear that the students in the Arabic schools were more proficient in MSA than their peers who were taking nearly identical classes in the British schools.

In addition to the obvious difference in instructional languages, the student questionnaire also revealed a significant difference in the linguistic environments that both sets of students occupied at home. Outside of school, the students from the Arabic schools tended to communicate almost entirely in Arabic, whether speaking to friends or family, or using social media. However, they consumed English media, such as books and films, to a slightly greater extent than the students in the British schools did in Arabic. Conversely, the students in the British schools were significantly more likely to communicate in both English and Arabic, which indicated a significant preference for spoken Arabic that tended to be the RD. A major factor impacting their linguistic environments is likely their families. While nearly 90% of the Arabic school students reported that they did not speak English with their families, less than 20% of the British school students reported this.

The surveys of the parents showed similar patterns, with the parents of the students attending the British schools being much more likely to use English as their primary language at work, and more likely to use it frequently at home. By contrast, the parents who chose to send their children to the Arabic schools were much less likely to use English, and used Arabic, although more frequently the RD, both at work and at home. The parents' questionnaire also indicated that their children were more comfortable using the language of instruction at their school, as well as being more proficient in it. Most parents of the students in the British schools reported that their children were more comfortable using English, and furthermore were more likely to report that their child's Arabic class was too difficult. The parents of the children attending the Arabic schools rarely reported that their children's Arabic classes were too difficult, and rarely indicated that their child was more comfortable using English than Arabic. The parents expressed similar views in the interviews, as did the leaders and teachers. There was definitely considerable consensuses tying proficiency to the language of instruction, which is in line with Sociocultural Theory, which is in line with the main points discussed in sociocultural theory in section 4.1.2.

Finally, the qualitative portion of the document analysis found clear, tangible evidence of the effects of having a non-Arabic language of instruction. Specifically, some of the sub- themes that were examined focused on writing features indicative of English influence. Such features were frequently found in the writing of the students attending the British schools, and almost never seen in the writing of the students from the Arabic schools. These types of stylistic features included syntax and word choice. This was, of course, in addition to simply finding far more mechanical errors, and a generally lower level of sophistication in their writing.

Based on the comparisons conducted between the students studying in these two different linguistic environments, it is clear that the influence of the linguistic environment on their proficiency is substantial. Students who are exposed to more MSA are simply able to use it more effectively, while the students with significantly less exposure to it are not. Unfortunately, as with diglossia, there are few remedies for this factor. The British schools cannot simply switch their language of instruction to Arabic, as it would defeat the purpose of them being British schools. Aside from recommending that parents who want their children to be highly proficient in MSA send their children to an Arabic school, there is little that can be done other than taking these differences into account. It is necessary for educators to take this significant factor into consideration, in order to mitigate its negative effects as much as possible and ensure that students all have access to classes that take their linguistic environment into consideration to more effectively address their educational needs.

7.4.3 The Perceptions of the Leaders, Teachers and Parents Regarding the Influence of the Language Management of Arabic on Arabic-Speaking Students' Proficiency in the Arabic Language in Dubai's British schools

Although the previous two research questions revealed more about two significant factors that influence the proficiency of Arabic-speaking students in MSA, it is important to note that neither result in something that can realistically be changed. They are unchangeable factors that must merely be taken into account. What sets this final research question apart is that it addresses language management, which is in a way the controlling factor, capable of influencing the response to the other two. As such, the exploration here focused more on gathering information on the attitudes and perceptions of the leaders, teachers, parents and students regarding the language management in general, and the curricula in both Arabic and British schools more specifically, as supported by the evidence gathered from the first two research questions.

The most significant recurring theme was the idea that the British and Arabic schools should have different curricula and grading criteria. Section 6.6 noted that this was the most clearly supported finding relating to language management. Not only did the data regarding both language variation and linguistic environment demonstrate that the students attending the Arabic schools had much higher levels of proficiency than their peers in the British schools, but the leaders and teachers nearly unanimously agreed that the two should be taught and assessed differently. This was further supported by the belief among many of the parents whose children attended a British school that their child's Arabic class was too difficult, even though almost no parents of the students who attended the Arabic schools felt the same way. It is clear that one group of parents felt that their students' class was not suited to their level of proficiency. The interviews with the parents, teachers and leaders, detailed in section 6.6, confirmed this finding. To link this discussion with the literature reviewed earlier particularly in section 4.2.3, Spolsky (2004) highlighted this claim stating that language management should produce the suitable linguistic setting for learners.. Nearly all of the teachers and leaders felt that different curricula should be adopted, while being a unanimous view among the teachers and leaders who had taught at both types of school. In the interviews, the leaders expressed a desire to develop a curriculum specifically for Arabic-speaking students within a non-Arabic linguistic environment, just as the KHDA has developed suitable and effective curricula to meet the needs of the many non-Arabic-speaking students studying Arabic in Dubai. Despite a great deal of satisfaction with the KHDA curriculum for Arabic schools, many teachers in the British schools expressed concerns at being unable to alter their material to better suit the skill level and needs of their students. The parents likewise appreciated the work the KHDA

has done, although many of the parents whose children attended the British schools felt that the courses could be better tailored to meet their children's needs. Finally, it is telling that even the students themselves perceived differences in their classes, despite the fact that they were identical. If the perceptions that two groups of students have of classes taught using the exact same textbooks and curriculum are vastly different, then it must in fact be the students who are vastly different. For example, the students in the Arabic schools liked their textbooks, while the students in the British schools did not. Since the book was the same, it must be the students who were different.

In response to the final research question, based upon the experiences and perceptions of all the stakeholders in Dubai's British schools, as well as the data collected for the first two questions, which compared Dubai's British schools to Arabic schools, and also the main concepts reviewed in literature earlier, most stakeholders believed that the language management system could be more effective at meeting the needs of the students in Dubai's British schools by providing a more flexible curriculum and grading criteria. As previously mentioned, based on the deeper understanding of these factors obtained by this research, neither language variation nor linguistic environment is something that can be neutralised at its root cause. The only way in which these two factors can be addressed is through language management. These findings may serve as a tool for the KHDA, much like the internal reviews that it conducts itself, in continuing its on-going quest for self-improvement. While those reviews are helpful, and cover a much broader scope than this research, it is likely that this research, conducted from a slightly different standpoint, could provide some unique insights.

7.5 Contributions of the Research to Theory, Literature and Policy

From a theoretical aspect, this study integrated the Language Variation, Sociocultural and Language Management theories into one framework targeting the field of teaching Arabic to native speakers in Dubai's British schools. The use of Language Variation Theory helped in providing a better understanding of the two varieties that the Arabic language has, and how the duality in using both varieties in different contexts contribute to influencing Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language. Furthermore, the choice of Sociocultural Theory contributed to highlighting the influence of the language used in and outside of schools on students' preferences and linguistic habits. This, in its turn, provided a greater level of understanding of the influence of using a specific language at school on the students' proficiency in Arabic. From the same theoretical view, the choice of the third theory in this research, Language Management, placed a greater emphasis on the significant role of institutions and governmental bodies in managing the

process of teaching languages. This emphasis helps in drawing a complete picture of teaching and learning languages, taking into account the influence of the management factor in learning languages and not only the factors that are related to the language itself. This integration of the three theories contributed to provide a complete picture regarding the influence of the three main factors on students' proficiency.

As shown in the literature review, highlighting one or two of the factors would not contribute to the field of theory as they are highlighted together. It is worth mentioning that the influence of language variation affects students' proficiency much more clearly when it is connected to the factor of the linguistic environment. This integration contributed to best investigate that influence on students' proficiency from different linguistic angles and is set to establish a solid theoretical background for future research.

The literature in the field of teaching languages underpins the findings of this study, as the findings from the study contribute to the literature. To elaborate, in a study that focused on the influence of language variation on students' proficiency in Arabic, Al-Huri (2012) stated that the usage of colloquial Arabic plays a role in hindering students' proficiency in the Arabic language and expands the gap between the two existing varieties. Within the same context, a study conducted by Onnis, Truzzi and Ma (2018) found that in the first years of life, children improve their language skills through interaction with family and other social settings, which allows them to understand and communicate actively. This supports the findings of the current study that highlighted the negative influences of the diglossic situation of the Arabic language on students' proficiency in Arabic. As the findings of this study add and contribute to the literature, the perceptions of the teachers, leaders, students and parents provide a more complete picture regarding the factors investigated, and also add to the stakeholders' understanding of the significance of the language management factor represented in the role of the KHDA in teaching and learning Arabic.

In the field of teaching Arabic in the UAE's schools in general, and Dubai's schools in particular, researchers have tended to study the way Arabic is taught to non-native Arabic speakers. This study contributes with an in-depth investigation regarding the factors influencing Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in the context of Dubai's British schools. As mentioned in Chapter One, this research is the first study at the doctoral level that targets the field of teaching Arabic to native speakers. This research thus contributes knowledge to the field of teaching the Arabic language through a sequential mixed-method approach represented in refining the quantitative data with the qualitative data collected from teachers, leaders and parents.

One factor that sets this study apart from previous research is that the parents' voices were considered and labelled in the findings. Not only were their questionnaire responses used to provide

insight into the students' home lives, but their opinions regarding their children' education were also collected and considered. It is worth mentioning that most similar research focused on the students, leaders and teachers without considering the role of the parents in the teaching and learning process. While such research is valuable, it leads to a somewhat narrow focus on the classroom. Because a major element of the theoretical framework of this study is the linguistic environment, it was necessary to assess factors outside of the classroom. The parents provided an ideal perspective for this. Studies using only students and teachers are limited as their only source of data about the students' home lives is the students themselves, which is a significant problem as the biases inherent in self-reporting can become even more problematic when those administering questionnaires are in a position of authority over the respondents, whether this is real or perceived. This study is also important since it sheds light on the role of the KHDA in managing the teaching of the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools. The study highlights this role in raising the profile of the Arabic language and also points out some elements that need to be considered for further reforms. Unlike previous studies, this one focused on primary and secondary education, while many of the others focused on higher or tertiary education. More significantly, most of the previous studies were of non-native Arabic speakers, rather than native Arabic speakers. This presents a significant difference because non-native speakers rarely experience any impact from diglossia. Since they have not already learned any form of RD prior to studying MSA, it is simply a new language, although it is still a second language. This is very different from the experience of native Arabic speakers, who have already learned to speak some form of RD before studying MSA in school. For them, diglossia has a significant impact on their proficiency. While the impact of diglossia in general on language learners is fairly well documented in other languages, there are only a few investigations that study its impact on native Arabic speakers. What separates those studies from this one is that the current study focuses not only on native Arabic-speaking students within an Arabic linguistic environment, but also within an English linguistic environment.

This study determined that native Arabic-speaking students outside of an Arabic linguistic environment are more seriously impacted by diglossia than similar students within an Arabic linguistic environment who are more frequently exposed to MSA. Very few studies have assessed students in this relatively unique situation where they speak RD at home, a foreign language at school and MSA in Arabic class; none have assessed students in Dubai under the management of the KHDA. However, as cities around the world become more cosmopolitan, such situations are likely become more commonplace. Better understanding of the impact of diglossia in the case of students who are exposed to multiple languages is important for anyone involved in teaching language to students in this situation. In Dubai, the organisation responsible for Education, particularly teaching Arabic is the KHDA. Thus, this study may contribute to the KHDA's own understanding of diglossia, allowing it to better tailor its curriculum to meet the needs of students who study in a non-Arabic linguistic environment.

While studying the KHDA's role in managing the Arabic language in the UAE is not new, the focus of this study is still different. Previous studies focused on the impact of inspections on the performance of schools, their efforts to raise the profile of the Arabic language and other initiatives. However, no previous studies have addressed the impact of the KHDA's management on the proficiency of Arabic-speaking students who study Arabic outside of Arabic linguistic environments. Certainly, none have compared native Arabic-speaking students between two sets of schools using the same KHDA curriculum and grading criteria, but within different linguistic environments. This study makes direct comparisons between students in Arabic and British schools, and the effects of the KHDA's one-size-fits-all Arabic curriculum.

At a practical level, the findings of this research provide a set of recommendations related to the context of teaching Arabic in Dubai's British schools. These recommendations are of great importance since they point out the perceptions of Arabic teachers, leaders and parents regarding the best practices for further improvement. To expand, this study assists in highlighting the issue of having the same curriculum for teaching Arabic in both British and Arabic schools. The findings of the study emphasise the need to have different or amended curricula for Arabic-speaking students in non-Arabic schools due to their different abilities, language habits and preferences. To compare the findings of this study to the findings of others, previous studies highlighted the perceptions of teachers as well as leaders, but not parents. In this research, the perceptions of the students' and preferences, have completed the bigger picture by including all the stakeholders involved and providing a more complete view of the factors influencing students' proficiency.

This research has contributed to our understanding that Arabic-speaking students in the British schools differ from the students in the Arabic schools in terms of their linguistic abilities in MSA. Furthermore, this research contributes to the governmental sector on how management plays a significant role in the teaching and learning process. This study also contributes to teachers' as well as parents' understanding of the fact that the amount that students use Arabic in and outside of school plays a crucial role in students' proficiency. This contribution may have a positive impact on parents' attitudes towards the level of Arabic use at home, and they might place more emphasis on using Arabic more frequently with their children.

7.6 Research Implications for Practice and Policy

The findings of this study provide policy and practical implications to stakeholders in the field of teaching Arabic in Dubai's British school.

7.6.1 Language Variation More Deeply Influences Students Studying in Non-Arabic Schools

This study has determined that language variation is a major factor influencing the proficiency of Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language. According to Tegegne (2015), language variation further assumes that such variation in semantics, syntax and morphology contributes to influencing students' proficiency in their native language. Furthermore, the variation in Arabic represented in diglossia is theorised to have a significant influence on students' language proficiency. Some researchers view the low level of reading skills amongst Arab students in the Arabic language to be a result of the uniqueness of the orthography, as well as the dense morphological and syntactic system in the Arabic language due to the diglossic situation (Asadi & Ibrahim 2014). Saiegh, Haddad (2011) also found that linguistic variation between RD and MSA might result in Arabic school students having academic deficits in Arabic literacy in schools.

Where this study advances the body of research regarding language variation is in its comparison between two different types of schools in order to determine which group is more deeply impacted by diglossia. Through the use of multiple types of data from questionnaires, document analysis and interviews, it was determined that the students studying in non-Arabic linguistic environments, in this case British schools, were more deeply influenced by diglossia. In addition to having lower overall proficiency, the specific nature of their mistakes was indicative of diglossia-related issues. Some of this could likely be remedied by offering different curricula and grading criteria to the students in the British schools and Arabic schools.

Because diglossia has a more profound influence for Arabic-speaking students studying in non-Arabic linguistic environments, it is vital for those responsible for their education to consider how it influences them and to differentiate their instruction. A one-size-fits-all approach is simply not effective. Both the students and their parents must be made aware of the influence of diglossia, and how it more profoundly affects students who speak a non-Arabic language in school. For example, one could say that students in the British schools are bilingual, speaking both English and Arabic, while the students in the Arabic schools are also, in a way, bilingual, speaking RD and MSA. The students in the Arabic schools' increased exposure to MSA makes it easier for them to notice subtle differences between the two varieties and to make connections that might not be clear to students with less exposure. While Arabic school students can more easily grasp the differences between RD and MSA, students in non-Arabic schools struggle. The introduction of a third, non-Arabic language, which is much more distinct from both RD and MSA than they are from one another, often means that students mentally fuse RD and MSA.

By being aware of this, both parents and students can work more actively on emphasising the distinction between the two varieties in order to ensure more practice with MSA. Teachers, especially those teaching students attending non-Arabic schools, likewise need to be aware of this deficit and do their best to tailor their material to meet the needs of their students. This is similarly the responsibility of Arabic leaders, although at higher levels, and should ultimately be addressed by language management. The single most important change would be for the KHDA to provide different curricula and grading criteria for students in British and Arabic schools.

7.6.2 The Linguistic Environment Leads to Differences in Proficiency

In addition to its influence on diglossia, the linguistic environment itself greatly influences language learning. According to Vygotsky (1978), interaction in a linguistic environment plays a primary role in a child's language development, since learning occurs during the process of interaction between the child and the system of standard tools and activities that comprise the child's sociocultural environment. According to Roberts (2013), exposure to a language in a linguistic environment in different social contexts has a fundamental role in improving people's proficiency in the language they are learning.

The conclusions of this study do not conflict with the results of others, although they are in some ways more nuanced. Both sets of students that were studied exist in unique and complex linguistic environments. The study looked at the specific interactions between RD, MSA and English both in and outside of school, determining how the relationships between these three languages, and their distribution throughout a student's linguistic environment, affects their proficiency in MSA. Generally speaking, it was found that students who use English more, tend to use MSA less, and vice versa. In particular, the students in the British schools tended to favour English considerably. Although this is not surprising, given that it is the language of instruction in their school, its use correlated with lower proficiency in MSA.

For the parents and students, the findings suggest that the best way to ensure mastery of MSA is to attend a school where Arabic is the instructional language. Failing this, both parents and students should make extra effort to increase the student's exposure to MSA. This is especially true of the exposure to written MSA. Although students in the Arabic schools may often speak the

RD, every piece of text they read from their exams to their textbooks and their schedules is in MSA. Students in the British schools do not have this experience. However, they or their parents can partially remedy this by finding opportunities to read MSA at home, whether in books, newspapers or even film subtitles. They could also do the same for spoken MSA. In addition to practising in the home, parents should seek out opportunities for their children to practise MSA, such as in clubs or other activities. By doing so, they can help to build familiarity with the language. Teachers likewise need to take the impact of the linguistic environment into account, and tailor their materials accordingly. Because the main issue is the lack of exposure, the main area where they can help to mitigate this is by providing the students with as many opportunities for practice both in and outside of the classroom. While MSA should be the only language used in the classroom, this may not always be the case. Teachers need to resist the impulse to use the RD, regardless of the students' preferences. The teachers should also ensure that their students have plenty of access to additional materials for practice outside of class, often by working in conjunction with the parents. Examples of this could include contacting parents and providing them with materials such as books, films, websites or activities in order to help them increase their child's exposure to MSA.

Leaders, and those responsible for language management, can also increase the opportunities for the British school students' exposure to MSA in several ways. First, they can make more extracurricular activities available to the students, where those who are interested can practise MSA. Clubs focusing on drama, poetry, or cinema could offer especially effective opportunities to practise, as well as increase students' interest in the language. Furthermore, the KHDA has the power to increase the number of MSA classes that are required at the British schools. While this would directly address the problem, it might not be feasible given the scheduling requirements. A more practical solution would be having a few classes that are currently taught in English being taught in Arabic. Some obvious choices would be courses on Islam and social studies. Additionally, the policy that requires the use of MSA rather than RD in the classroom could be strictly enforced.

While many of these options could help, the key to any significant improvement lies in making changes to the language management policy. If the KHDA were to accept the differences in proficiency caused by different linguistic environments, it could compensate for them through differentiated instruction and assessment.

7.6.3 The Role of Language Management in Bridging the Gap

Language management highlights the role of organisations and authorities in managing language education within a speech community (Spolsky 2009). Language management is a web of educational measures and standards arising from decision-making, sociolinguistics, policies and administrative assumptions (Mwaniki 2011). Language management is considered to be a healing discourse-based method, which includes the distinction between two ways that distinguish language usage: (i) the origination and reception of discourse, that is, the formation of expressions; and (ii), the exercises intended to be used for the generation and acceptance of conversation, that is, the supervision of these statements (Sanden 2014).

Within the context of this study, language management falls within the purview of the KHDA. They are responsible for the Arabic language curriculum that is used in every Arabic classroom in Dubai, as well as the requirements for Arabic instruction to which every school adheres, the policies that teachers follow, and the criteria by which they grade. This is a massive undertaking, especially given the diverse nature of Dubai, and the numerous different schools that teach diverse types of students. This study focused deeply on only one aspect of their language management policy, and as such, found ways in which it could be made even more effective. The primary implication of this study, which is supported by empirical data and the near unanimous consensus of the stakeholders involved, is that non-Arabic schools and Arabic schools should not use the same curriculum, and their students should not be held to the same standards.

The most obvious reason is simply that due to both the language variation and linguistic environment, students in the British schools are at a severe disadvantage when it comes to their proficiency in MSA. For this reason, curriculum and materials that are appropriate for students in the Arabic schools are too difficult for the students in the British schools. Using materials that are too difficult can negatively affect language learning. According to Al-Zoubi (2018), teaching materials have negative influences on students' learning when they are difficult to access. Aside from being somewhat unfair, this can also harm student motivation if they begin to feel that MSA is unpleasant and difficult. The students in the British schools are less likely to have a positive attitude towards learning Arabic, while the parents will likely also be impacted. It can also make life more difficult for the teachers, as using materials that are not suited to students decreases student achievement. By simply separating the two curricula, this would provide the opportunity to produce materials that are more appropriate for the students, which would lead to better achievement.

While separating the curriculum is the biggest, and likely the most effective change that could be made to improve student proficiency, this research uncovered additional, non-language factors that could also impact student proficiency. For example, the student questionnaire assessed factors such as whether the students viewed MSA as important, or whether they enjoyed studying it. Interestingly, neither factor made much of a difference. However, there were a few factors relating to the parents that had a much larger impact on student achievement. According to the questionnaire, the majority of the parents of the students in the British schools simply believed that English is more important than MSA. They were also more likely to report using English more frequently, both at home and at work, for the majority of activities. Few reported using MSA very frequently.

This preference for English means that the students in the British schools, in addition to spending their days in an English learning environment, spend most of their time outside of school in an English linguistic environment. While it has already been mentioned that changing the language of instruction at the British schools is not really feasible, it might be possible to, in some way, influence this other linguistic environment. Another part of the KHDA's mission is to promote the Arabic language, and doing so among the parents of the students in the British schools could really help to change the parents' opinions, and lead them to place more emphasis on the Arabic language. In addition to providing an additional Arabic linguistic environment for the students, it could also affect the students' perceptions of their parents' expectations. While this was not covered in the students' questionnaire, it is likely to play some role. Parental influence is a major source of student motivation, and if a students' parents do not act as if their Arabic class is important, it is likely that the student will put less effort into the class than they otherwise might have. Changing the parents' attitudes could in this way impact student proficiency.

7.7 Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research

The first limitation of this study, as with virtually all studies, is the number of participating teachers, leaders, and parents in both the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews. Larger sample sizes always yield more reliable results, but at the same time, size is limited by a variety of factors. One major factor reducing the available sample size was the restrictions mandated by the government on accessing school sites. Due to this situation, the researcher contacted the administrations of the selected schools via email, and all questionnaires as well as interviews were conducted electronically without physically meeting the participants. This situation might be the main reason for having a low number of teacher and parent participants from both types of schools. Furthermore, a large number of parents responded to the consent form that they would participate in the questionnaire and the interviews, but when the researcher contacted them through email, most of them did not reply or decided not to participate. Additionally, the number of students responding to the questionnaires, as well as the students' work used for the document analysis, was limited due to time constraints.

Another of the study's limitations, which was also due to the Covid-19 restrictions, was the absence of lesson observation in the actual classes. The researcher considered lesson observation as one of the main components of data collection at the stage of the research proposal, but due to the restrictions mandated, this component was out of reach. The restrictions also led to the researcher's inability to personally administer the students' questionnaire. As mentioned earlier, the Arabic teachers of the selected schools administered the students' questionnaire and also selected the samples of students' work, and then provided them to the researcher. Accordingly, the researcher considers that his absence adds to the limitations of the study, as it was impossible to determine whether each teacher precisely followed the researcher's instructions while administering the questionnaire in order to ensure as close to identical conditions as possible. It is worth mentioning that since the Arabic teachers administered the questionnaires themselves to their students, this process may have affected the students' responses' reliability and validity. The concern is that the students tended to be idealistic in their responses in terms of the level of Arabic used in different situations.

Although the presence of their Arabic-teachers was likely a major source of limitation, self-reporting bias is always a limitation of any questionnaire, by its very nature. This is partially why the portions about language habits for both the students and teachers asked questions in two different ways, first by asking about the frequency by place, and second by asking what language they used for specific tasks. This was intended to mitigate some of the

effects of self-reporting bias. However, it is impossible to entirely eliminate such bias when using any form of questionnaire.

Similarly, another concern that might be attached to the study limitations is the nature of the researcher's work. As introduced earlier, the researcher is an Arabic language teacher working in the field of the study, and he conducted the interviews with the Arabic parents. Therefore, it might be the case that the Arabic parents tended to show excessive interest in the Arabic language in terms of the level of using it with their children and different situations. As with questionnaires, interviews rely heavily on self-reporting, and the respondents may have reasons for distorting the truth, whether consciously or subconsciously. However, it is hoped that this effect was somewhat mitigated in a few ways. First, multiple groups were interviewed. Because the interviewer's relationship with other teachers, for example, was very different from his relationship with the parents or leaders, ideas that were consistent across all groups were unlikely to be the product of bias. Furthermore, the interviewer chose interviewees from multiple schools, further obscuring any connections with them.

One of the major limitations in this study might be the absence of interviews with students, which could have allowed for deeper analysis and provided more clarity to the data obtained, as the aim of the data gathered

from the students was to get insight into the amount of MSA, RD and English usage, in addition to the students' language preferences for different daily activities. Accordingly, the researcher considered the questionnaires to be sufficient to fulfil the purposes of data collection and analysis. Moreover, the step of member checking was absent in this study, which might add to the limitations of this study.

The findings of this study will definitely contribute to the literature in the UAE, simply because they address such a unique and specific situation. There are no other studies that focus on Arabic-speakers in non-Arabic educational settings within an Arabic-speaking country. However, because of this specificity, the findings become increasingly less applicable the further removed from the UAE they become. The findings would likely be valid in the Gulf area in general, due to the similar cultural and linguistic situation in nations like Kuwait or Qatar. However, some parts may not be relevant, depending upon the specific features of the national language management. In other Arabic-speaking countries the findings will be less relevant, as the linguistic situation is unlikely to be very similar, despite the presence of diglossia as a major feature of Arabic everywhere. Finally, the findings are unlikely to be very relevant outside of Arabic-speaking countries, as the diglossic situation with the Arabic language is not really comparable to that of any other language.

For future research, it is believed that maximising the number of Arabic and non-Arabic curriculum schools sampled would add to the reliability and validity of the research, and would lead to more accurate results. Furthermore, lesson observation is considered one of the most reliable components of research. It is suggested that for future research, observing students' performance first-hand would provide a more reliable and complete picture of their levels than relying only on scores and samples of their work. Another recommendation for future research is to distribute questionnaires to students in the presence of the researcher with the absence of their teachers. This would allow the students more freedom to reflect and respond without any kind of embarrassment, leading to more reliable and valid data.

Furthermore, additional studies could be conducted in other locations. Because of the differences in linguistic environments, yet similarities in educational systems, it would be revealing to conduct similar studies in the other emirates of the UAE. This would be especially revealing due to the high level of variance in terms of the outside influence on the linguistic environment. While Dubai, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi have more foreign exposure, other emirates such as Ras Al-Khaimah and Umm Alqewain have significantly less foreign exposure. Additionally, similar studies could be conducted in other countries that feature similar situations with Arabic and English such as Kuwait, Qatar or Bahrain, or even Arabic-speaking nations with other foreign language influences such as Morocco or Algeria. Similar studies could even be conducted in other nations that have multiple linguistic communities, such as Switzerland, Belgium, or China.

7.8 Conclusion

This study aimed at investigating the factors influencing Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British schools. The three objectives of this study addressed three main factors—language variation, linguistic environment and language management—in addition to other non-language factors. As discussed thoroughly in Chapter Six and in this chapter, the achievement of the first and second objectives led to providing a better understanding of two of the major language factors, which served to provide a set of recommendations to policymakers, teachers, parents and leaders in order to more effectively manage the tuition of the Arabic language.

Triangulated data obtained through the explanatory sequential mixed-method approach indicated that the language of instruction plays the main role in shaping students' linguistic abilities. Accordingly, a one-size-fits-all curriculum might be less effective for students who attend non-Arabic schools.

One of the most significant factors for this is that the students in the British schools were more deeply influenced by diglossia. This was confirmed by multiple instruments. Data from the questionnaires indicated that the parents, leaders and teachers considered it to be a major factor. More significantly, analysis of the students' work found that features indicative of diglossia were far more prevalent in the writing of the students attending the British schools. These findings were supported by the interviews, which attempted to explain the phenomenon. Essentially, the students in the British schools are bilingual, speaking both English and Arabic, while the students in the Arabic schools use both forms of Arabic, speaking RD and MSA. Multiple interviewes pointed out that Arabic school students' increased exposure to MSA made it easier for them to notice subtle differences between the two varieties and make connections that might not be clear to students with less exposure. While the Arabic school students could more easily grasp the differences between RD and MSA, the students in non-Arabic schools struggled with this. The introduction of a third, non-Arabic language, which was much more distinct from both RD and MSA that are closer to one another, often meant that the students mentally fused the RD and MSA.

This description of students' linguistic environment was borne out by the students' questionnaire. In general, the students in the British schools reported using English at school, with some RD at home. At the same time, the students in the Arabic schools tended to report

significantly using both MSA and RD at school, although with a slightly higher use of MSA. They reported using the same at home, although with slightly more use of RD. The questionnaires of the parents supported this, with most parents from both schools reporting that they primarily use RD with their children, although the parents with children in the Arabic schools used some MSA, while the parents of the children in the British schools also reported a moderate amount of English.

In addition to resulting in more pronounced effects of diglossia, the linguistic environment seems to have been a significant factor correlating with language proficiency. The results of the leaders', teachers' and parents' questionnaires agreed that the students were more proficient in the language of instruction in their school. The student questionnaire indicated this as well, with significantly more students from the British schools reporting that they preferred to use English. This was a frequent topic in the interviews, as many of the participants noted the profound impact of spending eight hours a day essentially immersed in a language, with this being perceived as the primary reason for the difference in proficiency between the students at the Arabic schools and their peers at the British schools.

The primary factor here is that the students in the British schools are not exposed to MSA to the same extent than the students in the Arabic schools. This is especially true of the exposure to written MSA. Although the students in the Arabic schools may often speak RD, every piece of text they read from their exams to their textbooks and schedules is in MSA. The students in the British schools do not have this experience. The interviewees noted that this constant exposure helped the students to build familiarity with the language. This increased familiarity with MSA was also evident when comparing the writing of the students from the British schools with that of their peers from the Arabic schools. Aside from the gap between their overall scores, the students in the British schools tended to write less fluidly, demonstrating far less flexibility and style, while at least some of the students at the Arabic schools were comfortable enough with the language to add creativity and stylistic flourishes to their work.

While the exploration of both language variation and linguistic environment provided a better understanding of two of the most significant factors influencing the proficiency of Arabic-speaking students, the third research question was a little different. Rather than focusing on a feature of language learning, it focused on the entire system, seeking a more structural analysis. Furthermore, it focused not only on measuring the outcomes and gathering data, but also on gathering the perceptions and opinions of the numerous stakeholders involved. Thus, these final conclusions are supported not only by the data gathered about the language variation and linguistic environment, but also by the collected perceptions and opinions of the parents, teachers and leaders.

As mentioned earlier, the primary conclusion of this study is that the British and Arabic schools in Dubai should have separate curricula and grading criteria. This is supported by the data regarding both the language variation and linguistic environment, as well as nearly all of the parents, teachers and leaders who completed the questionnaires and participated in the interviews. The document analysis showed a major gap between the writing, despite having the same grading criteria, while the students themselves had distinctly different preferences, attitudes and experiences with Arabic. Splitting the curriculum in two would serve all of their needs. There are also a number of smaller actions that the KHDA could take in order to improve Arabic language education. They could expand teacher training by putting on workshops to raise awareness of diglossia and discourage the use of the RD in the classroom. They could also offer students more chances to practise, by making more Arabic extracurricular materials available, or by conducting more classes of Arabic. There are also ways in which the KHDA could try to increase the interest in Arabic outside of the classroom, in order to encourage parents to place more emphasis on the Arabic class. However, none of these options would offer nearly the same impact as splitting the curriculum. The many other strategies mentioned are all relatively minor, and although likely to benefit a few students, the proposal to split the curriculum would enhance the quality of education, and thus likely the proficiency of every student at a non-Arabic school.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

BUID protocol for data collection



December 15, 2020

To whom it may concern

This is to certify that Mr. Alaaeddin Mehy Alahmad with student ID number 20180777 is a registered student on the Doctor of Education programme at The British University in Dubai since September 2018.

Mr. Alahmad has successfully completed the taught modules and is currently working on his thesis titled **"Investigating Arabic speaking students proficiency in the Arabic Language in Dubai's British Schools"**.

He needs your support in conducting surveys, interviews and observations to complete the research.

This letter is issued on student's request.

Yours sincerely,

Amer Alaya Head of Student Administration

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Ethical Approval from research ethics committee at The British university in Dubai



Application for Approval of Research Activity involving Human Participants, Human Data, or Human Material

This application form is to be used by researchers seeking approval from the Research Ethics Committee. All research associated with the British University in Dubai must not begin until ethical approval has been obtained.

Section I is a general research identification table.

Section II is the details of the ethical matters your research might involve and the necessary steps you are planning to take to address them.

Section III is an ethics checklist that will help you identify your research risk level. If you answer 'Yes' to at least any one of the high-risk statements, then your research is High Risk. If you answer 'Yes' to at least any one of the medium risk statements, and 'No' to all high-risk statements, then your research is Medium Risk. If you answer 'No' to all high risk and medium risk statements, then your research is Low Risk.

If you have documents related to the ethical considerations of the research such as, for example: a consent letter, evidence of external approval, questionnaire samples or interview questions, you can enclose them with this form before submission.

Research Candidate Name	Alaaeddin Mehy Al ahmad					
Faculty/Programme	Doctor of Education					
Research Candidate Contact Number	0555072235					
Research Candidate Email	20180777@student.buid.ac.ae					
Research Type	□ Research Project □ Doctoral/Maters Research □ Module Assignment					
Research Title	An Investigation into the Factors Influencing Arabic-Speaking students' Proficiency in the Arabic Language in Dubai's British Schools					
Submission Date	30/7/2020					
Submitted to (Name) Faculty Nominated Member (Research Projects): Professor Al Abukari						

I. Research Identification

Director of Studies (Doctoral Research): Professor Abdulai Abukari
Dissertation Supervisor (Masters Research):
□ Module Coordinator (Module Assignment):

II. Research Ethics Details

Background and rationale for study (This should be sufficient to justify the proposed research). Aims and objectives of the research (or the research question/s) and Potential benefits of proposed research: Limit to 500 words

The rationale for targeting the field of teaching Arabic in the Dubai British Schools specifically is the researcher's intention to shed light on this overlooked area of research. This is a significant area because there is a gap in students' proficiency in Modern Standard Arabic. The major aim of this proposed study is to investigate the factors influencing Arabicspeaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language in Dubai's British Schools in order to have a better understanding of teaching Arabic in the context of Dubai British Schools with a view to providing stakeholders with a set of recommendations which may assist in bridging the gap in students' proficiency.

With a view to achieving the main research aim, the author divided the major aim of the study into three objectives as follow:

1- To investigate how the variation in the Arabic language influences Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in Arabic in Dubai British schools.

2- To gain insight into the influences of the Linguistic Environment at British Schools on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic language.

3- To determine the perceptions of leaders, teachers and parents regarding the influence of the Language Management of Arabic on Arabic-speaking students' proficiency in the Arabic

language in Dubai British Schools.

Main Ethical Consideration(s) of the Research (The ethical matters your research may involve)

The primary ethical considerations for this research are confidentiality and parental consent.

First, it is necessary for all the data to be kept confidential. This is partially because some of the data is personal educational data, and in part because some of it may involve discussions where respondents must be able to speak freely without fear of any sort of reprisal.

Second, as with any study that includes minors, and as this research is planned to involve students in grades 2-4-7-10 in both Arabic and British Schools for observations and questionnaires processes. It is

Steps to be taken to ensure confidentiality of data:

Please outline steps if you are required to ensure confidentiality, privacy and anonymity of data during collection, storage and publication. Please specifically identify any confidential or personal information, and /or any other party's protected intellectual property which you need to use and safeguard.

In order to ensure privacy and confidentiality, all data shared within the study will be done so anonymously, with any identifying data removed. Furthermore, very little personal data will be collected. For the adult questionnaires, personal contact information will only be requested for respondents who volunteer to participate in interviews. It will be used only for that purpose and discarded afterwards. The only personal information that will be recorded about students is their grade level, and whether they attend an Arabic or British school. For the samples of student work, teachers will be asked to provide it anonymously, meaning that while the students' teachers may know the name of the students whose work is used for the sample, the examiner will not.

Steps to be taken to ensure financial and commercial propriety:

Please specifically identify if any external funding or significant third-party financial involvement with the research.

This study has no external funding or third-party financial involvement of any kind.

Other plans to address a particular ethical matter not mentioned: N/A

III. Research Ethics Checklist

If you answer 'Yes' to at least any one of the high-risk statements, then your research is High Risk. If you answer 'Yes' to at least any one of the medium risk statements, and 'No' to all high-risk statements, then your research is Medium Risk. If you answer 'No' to all high risk and medium risk statements, then your research is Low Risk.

High Risk		
Will consent possibly be coerced out of participants by those whom would likely benefit from the research?	□Yes	
Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time?	□Yes	□No
Will the study involve some form of invasion of privacy?	□Yes	□No
Is discomfort or harmful impact to participants likely to result from the study?	□Yes	□No
Is there a possibility that the safety of the researcher may be in question?	□Yes	□No
Will the research require the researcher to be deceptive or dishonest to the participants?	□Yes	□No
Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?	□Yes	<mark>□No</mark>
Will the research have negative intrusive physical or psychological effects on the participants?	□Yes	□No
Will the names of the participants or the institution appear in the research?	□Yes	<mark>□No</mark>
Medium Risk		
Will the research involve governmental institutions or participants such as, for example, the army or the judiciary?	□Yes	<mark>□N</mark> 0

necessary not only to obtain the consent of the respondent, but also the consent of the respondent's parent or legal guardian.

Furthermore: in order to ensure that observations will have no effects on students learning or cause any kind of interruption, the researcher will explain to the teacher and admins in schools that students learning is a priority and any procedure which might affect students learning will be sidelined. In order to ensure this, the researchers will explain that all data will be confidential, and all names of teachers, parents or students will be anonymous. by doing so, it is expected that there will be no pressure on teachers or school admins which of course will result in having relaxed lessons that reflect students' real level. Also, the researcher will ask the teachers to continue in their topics and objectives they are teaching as normal without any kind of changing their plans or methods which might affect students learning.

Methods of data collection:

Please outline in detail how data will be collected and **attach a copy of any questionnaires, interview schedules or observation guidelines** to be used. Limit = 400 words.

Questionnaires will be administered in paper and online formats. Observations will be conducted during normal class sessions, using a set of standardized criteria. Samples of student work will be collected from their teacher after the classroom observations. Interviews will be conducted in-person where available, and via some other form of communication if necessary.

Recruitment of participants:

Please outline the number and type (it may be considered vulnerable) of participants involved; give details of how potential participants will be identified and invited to take part in the study; and how informed consent will be obtained. Limit = 300 words

A link to an electronic questionnaire will be made available to potential adult subjects (parents, teachers and other school staff) through the school administration. Respondents will also be asked questions to help determine their willingness to participate in the interviews.

The students will be selected, at random, by class from each of the schools. The students will then be given consent forms that they need to have their parents or guardians sign.

Please attach a copy of your information sheet(s), draft materials such as interview questions etc. and consent form as well as indication of planned time of issue/use. If you are not using a consent form, please explain why.

□ Attached

Potential adverse effects on participants and steps to deal with them:

Please outline if you anticipate any potential harm or negative consequences including psychological stress, anxiety or upset which may be induced by the study and the steps to be taken to address them.

Because one of the steps in data collection relies on observing students from grades two, four, seventh, and tenth, there is a possibility that this will constitute a minor burden on the students in terms of students' participation in the class comfortably and in terms of the extent to which students use English, Arabic or colloquial dialect during the class. This may contribute to not obtaining accurate results. This will be clearly explained to the teachers as well as students before every observation to have a better outcome and in order to ensure that no adverse occurs. Also, the study consists entirely of voluntary feedback on relatively benign topics and passive observation of normal behavior; it is doubtful that this study would have any negative impact.

Will the study involve discussion of sensitive or potentially sensitive topics and issues?	□Yes	<mark>□No</mark>
Does the research involve potentially vulnerable participants (for e.g. children, prisoners, or people with disabilities)?	□Yes	□No
Does the research involve participants that are unable to give consent?	□Yes	□No
Will the research involve administrative or secure data that requires permission from the appropriate authorities before use?	□Yes	□No

Risk Level Identified Low Medium High	ı
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The researcher undertakes not to deviate from the original consent granted by the University's Research Ethics Committee. The researcher bears full and sole responsibility for any deviation from this consent and all consequences arising from such deviation. The researcher waives all right of appeal in the event of any penalties applied by the University arising from such deviation.

Declaration by the Researcher:

Having read the University's Research Policy I declare that the information contained herein, is to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate.

I am satisfied that I have attempted to identify all risks related to the research that may arise in conducting this research and acknowledge my obligations as a researcher and the rights of participants. I am satisfied that all researchers (including myself) working on the project have the appropriate qualifications, experience and facilities to conduct the research set out in the attached document and that I, as the lead researcher take full responsibility for the ethical conduct of the research in accordance with subject-specific and University Ethical Guidelines (Policies and Procedures Manual), as well as any other condition laid down by the BUiD Ethics Committee. I am fully aware of the timelines and content for participant's information and consent.

Print name: ______Alaaeddin Mehy Alahmad______

Signature: _____Alaaeddin Mehy Alahmad ______ Date: ____30/7/2020______

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY LOW RISK RESEARCH

Staff								
Chair of Ethics Committee								
Name:	Dr. Khalid Al Marri	√ Approved						
Date:	4/10/2020							
Signature:								

Students	
Dean of Faculty	
Name: Professor Eman Gaad	√ Approved
Date: 4/10/2020	□ Disapproved
Signature:	

Authorisation for conducting research (only if approval is obtained):

The Committee has confirmed that this project fits within the University's Policies for Research and I authorise the low risk research proposal on behalf of BUiD's Research Ethics Committee.

Print name: _____ Dr. Khalid Al Marri _____ Signature: ______ Reference for the Research Ethics Committee) Date: _____4/10/2020_____

Consent Form for parents

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1YOFjNXcaxM7LRSv1mKsSVYh_g5-aKZE8tSrdutRsMM/edit_

Appendix 4

Students 's Questionnaire

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1fcurUMWgzcfkGpKAC3GvsFTw6hOJScBQPpYUAKlSr6 s/edit

Appendix 5

teachers 's Questionnaire

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1vSxosONZFapQLFM6P8Dkmu4j7L9VXXxxeSzPx_yhsL E/edit

Appendix 6

leaders 's Questionnaire

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1b_Pc0tODPFmGYEuKGVxVzpKT5s7_Y91KoftoA3joWg/edit

Appendix 7

parents 'questionnaire

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1aekjUtd3awoWRESBueB1WBOn7OYd3WqrbZP5SmE_x y4/edit?usp=forms_home&ths=true

Semi-structured interviews questions

- 1. Are you familiar with the difference between Modern Standard Arabic and Regional Dialects?
- 2. How do you think this affects your child's proficiency in Arabic?
- 3. Why did you choose to send your child to an Arabic/British school?
- 4. What languages do you speak at home with your children? Why?
- 5. What language do you think your child is most comfortable speaking? Why?
- 6. To what degree, if any, do you think the language spoken at your child's school affects his or her preference for language at home?
- 7. How satisfied are you with your child's Arabic language education in the following areas?
 - 1. Instruction Time
 - 2. Grading Criteria
 - 3. Curriculum
 - 4. Course Materials
- 8. Do you think that these factors should be the same for students in both British and Arabic schools? Why or why not?
- 9. How could Arabic language instruction in the schools be improved?

The questions of Arabic Teachers interviews

- 1. To what extent, if any, do you think language variation impacts student proficiency in MSA? Consider the following areas:
 - 1. Grammar
 - 2. Phonology
 - 3. Morphology
 - 4. Orthography
 - 5. Composition
 - 6. Comprehension
 - 7. Other areas
- 2. What are some possible methods for overcoming these challenges?
- 3. Are there any differences between students at Arabic and British schools in terms of the effect of diglossia?
- 4. What languages are used in your class besides MSA?
 - 1. Giving instructions or explanations
 - 2. Classroom management
 - 3. One-on-one meetings
 - 4. Student-Student group work
 - 5. Student-student informal conversation
 - 6. Other
- 5. In what ways was this different when you taught at a British/Arabic school?
- 6. What language do you think your students are most comfortable using? Why? Was it the same when you taught at a British/Arabic school?

- 7. How satisfied are you with the Arabic language curriculum that you teach and have taught? Consider the following areas for both Arabic and British schools:
 - 1. Overall Quality
 - 2. Topics Chosen
 - 3. Materials
 - 4. Textbook
 - 5. Instruction Time
 - 6. Assignments
 - 7. Standards and Criteria
 - 8. Other
- 8. Do you think that the curriculum should be the same for students in both British and Arabic schools? Why or why not?
- 9. How could Arabic language instruction in the schools be improved?

The questions of Leaders interviews

To what extent, if any, do you think language variation impacts student proficiency in MSA? Consider the following areas:

- 1. Grammar
- 2. Phonology
- 3. Orthography
- 4. Composition
- 5. Comprehension
- 6. Other areas

2. What are some possible methods for overcoming these challenges?

3. Are there any differences between students at Arabic and British schools in terms of the effect of diclosure?

of the effect of diglossia?

4. What languages do you think are used in Arabic classes in your school besides MSA?

8. Giving instructions or explanations

- 9. Classroom management
- 10. One-on-one meetings
- 11. Student-Student group work
- 12. Student-student informal conversation
- 13. Other

5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Arabic language curriculum?

Consider the following areas for both Arabic and British schools:

- 14. Overall Quality
- 15. Topics Chosen
- 16. Materials
- 17. Textbook
- 18. Instruction Time
- 19. Assignments
- 20. Standards and Criteria

21. Other

7. Do you think that the curriculum should be the same for students in both British and Arabic schools? Why or why not?

8. How could Arabic language instruction in the schools be improved?

Appendix 9:

KHDA Grading Criteria

1. Students' achievement

1.1 Attainment

Elements

- 1.1.1 Attainment as measured against authorised and licensed curriculum standards
- 1.1.2 Attainment as measured against national and appropriate international standards
- 1.1.3 Knowledge, skills and understanding, especially in the key subjects
- 1.1.4 Trends in attainment over time

Brief descriptors

Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Acceptable	Weak	Very Weak					
1.1.1 Attainment as measured against authorised and licensed curriculum standards										
Most students attain levels that are above curriculum standards.	The large majority of students attain levels that are above curriculum standards.	The majority of students attain levels that are above curriculum standards.	Most students attain levels that are in line with curriculum standards and a few are above.	Less than three- quarters of students attain levels that are at least in line with curriculum standards.	Few students attain levels that are in line with curriculum standards.					
1.1.2 Attainment as me	easured against national	and appropriate internat	ional standards							
In external examinations, most students attain levels that are above national and international standards.	In external examinations, a large majority of students attain levels that are above national and international standards.	In external examinations, the majority of students attain levels that are above national and international standards.	In external examinations, most students attain levels that are in line with national and international standards.	In external examinations less than three-quarters of students attain levels that are at least in line with national and international standards.	In external examinations, only a few students attain levels that are in line with national and international standards.					

The codes generated from students' written samples.





G7-Britsh school . student c Level أكتبُ نصًّا اقناعياً عن موضوع تختاره للكتابة عن قضية أو موضوع مثيرٍ للاهتمام مدللاً على رأيك بالأدلة والبراهين و ملتزماً بمعايير النجاح المرفقة. a Ore Dune (11211 29 J Ugin seele VIrelin 122 (540,e) J. (now work age 7 d 11 and 22 SVN 2 (DN 12 (me) Ine a a all all in full 3 . 1 1 poly selent of the for the sel with معايير النجاح: - يكتب الطالب نصاً اقناعياً عن فكرة مركزة مستخدماً شواهد وأدلة. - استخدام علامات الترقيم وأدوات الربط بشكل سليم. C. level student

A level - British school (Grade 5 (e) La freisi (:) - أكتب تلخيصاً كاملاً لقصة الخوف يأتي من الداخل ذاكراً أحداث القصبة الرئيسة والهدف منها وملتزماً بمعايير النجاح. is. I. al Dawn J. g. Ly. Mahan Think sty and go and go go and go go and and go and the state of the line Sall 219 930 9 9 11 6 15 and and have been and the contration of the for the second of the second Servind 19 Contractor ment classified I and it IX 1X sile 1699 Las Friday and and g.g. J. Sal 10 ference President 5 Que la la la la la 2 - 1 - - - - - - minute of the state of the stat 1 gent to since some of the gent معايير النجاح: - استخدام أدوات الربط: كذلك، ثم، هذا يعذ - استخدام علامات الترقيم: ؟ ، : ! A-level student



Appendix 11:

The regulations related to the number of Arabic sessions (the influence of exposure as part of the Sociocultural Theory).

GOVERNMENT OF DUBAI



Curriculum Requirements for Private Schools in Dubai For the academic year 2020/2021

In accordance with Article (18) of the Executive Council Resolution (2) in 2017, concerning the regulation of the teaching of the mandatory subjects in private schools in the emirate of Dubai the following table shows the time allocation requirements for the subjects of Islamic Education, Arabic, UAE Social Studies and UAE Moral Education during the academic year 2020/2021.

All curriculum schools (non-MoE)

GOVERNMENT OF DUBAI



Guidelines on Arabic subject:

ARABIC												
Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Year	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Arabic as a first language (For those who are registered in the school/KHDA under an Arab passport)	6 lessons 5 lessons 4 lesso per week per week per we			sons week	sons veek							
Arabic as an Additional Language (For those who are registered in the school/KHDA under any other nationality)	4 lessons per week			O	ption	al						

Appendix 12:

1		Diseal Knowledge المعرفة			
		School Name	2017/18 DSIB Rating	2018/19 DSIB Rating	2019/20 DSIB Rating
2	54		. • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	Outstanding	Outstanding
58	55	private college -branch	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
89	81	Primary School	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
99	91	International School	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
115	107	English School	Very good	Outstanding	Outstanding
132	123	. College	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
133	124	- School	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
134	125	- School (Br)	Very good	Outstanding	Outstanding
137	128	school Dubai	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
176	163	I School	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
218					