The Maintenance of Arabic in Libyan-Canadian Children in Montréal:

The Role of Immigrant Mothers

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study investigated the attitudes of Libyan immigrant mothers toward Arabic as their heritage language in Montréal and their efforts to maintain it in their school-aged Libyan-Canadian children. The overall objective of the study was to determine the role of mothers in Arabic maintenance and loss in their children. In a place like Québec where language is highly politicized, issues of heritage language become very significant. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, data were collected from 6 Libyan mothers who have been in Canada for at least 5 years, and 10 of their children who were between the ages 7-12 at the time of data collection. One-to-one semi-structured interviews were used to gain insights into the mothers' language attitudes and language practices with their children. Participant observations were also used to check if the mothers' reported attitudes and practices were reflected by their actual language use in their homes with their children. The findings suggest that Libyan immigrant mothers are very positive toward the maintenance of Arabic in their children. The mothers played a significant role in their children's heritage language maintenance or loss. Their language use in their homes was influenced by their proficiency in the majority languages in Québec which in return impacted the children's language use. This may suggest the influence of Québec's immigration, integration and language policies on the maintenance and loss of heritage language. The findings suggest that home language planning is essential to the maintenance of heritage language in immigrant families.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude qualitative a porté sur les attitudes des mères immigrantes libyennes à l'égard de l'arabe en tant que langue d'origine à Montréal et sur leurs efforts pour le maintenir chez leurs enfants libyens-canadiens d'âge scolaire. L'objectif global de l'étude était de déterminer le rôle des mères dans la maintenance et la perte de la langue d'origine chez leurs enfants. Dans un endroit comme le Québec où la langue est hautement politisée, les questions de langue d'origine deviennent très importantes. Afin d'atteindre les objectifs de l'étude, des données ont été recueillies auprès de six mères libyennes qui sont au Canada depuis au moins cinq ans et de dix de leurs enfants âgés de 7 à 12 ans au moment de la collecte des données. Des entretiens semi-structurés individuels ont été utilisés pour mieux comprendre les attitudes et pratiques linguistiques des mères avec leurs enfants. Les observations des participants ont également été utilisées pour vérifier si les attitudes et les pratiques des mères étaient reflétées à la maison avec leurs enfants. Les résultats suggèrent que les mères immigrées libyennes sont très positives envers le maintien de l'arabe chez leurs enfants. Les mères ont joué un rôle important dans le maintien ou la perte de la langue d'origine de leurs enfants. Leur utilisation de la langue à la maison a été influencée par leur maîtrise des langues majoritaires au Québec, ce qui a eu un impact sur l'utilisation de la langue par les enfants. Cela pourrait suggérer l'influence de l'immigration, de l'intégration et des politiques linguistiques du Québec sur le maintien et la perte du langage patrimonial. Les résultats suggèrent que la planification linguistique à la maison est essentielle au maintien du langage d'origine dans les familles immigrantes.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Heritage Language in a Multicultural World

Immigration, births, and deaths are equally responsible for population change (Lewis, 1982). Migration has been increasingly a common phenomenon. People are traveling across the world searching for better social and economic opportunities or escaping from danger. The number of international migrants worldwide has continued to grow over the past seventeen years, reaching 258 million in 2017 (International Migration Report, 2017, p.4). Between 2000 and 2017, Northern America hosted 17 million migrants (International Migration Report, 2017, p. 5). In Canada, non-English and non-French immigrants account for 22.3 percent of the total population (Statistics Canada, 2017a), resulting in the presence of over 200 non-official languages (Statistics Canada, 2017b). From 1998 to 2016, about 13.7 percent of immigrants to Canada settled in Québec (Statistics Canada, 2017a). From 2001 to 2016, Montréal, where the current research study took place, received more than 15% of immigrants to Québec (Statistics Canada, 2017c). In such linguistically and culturally diverse contexts, the continuation of linguistic and ethnic traits of immigrant families could be threatened (Fishman, 1989). These immigrant families become members of minority groups trying to integrate into an ethnolinguistic distinct dominant group (Al-Sahafi, 2015). The maintenance of the immigrants' heritage languages[1] in their host societies becomes a serious challenge, especially when they try to communicate with their children in their mother tongue (Fishman, 1991; Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002).

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[1] According to the Canadian Heritage Languages Institute Act (1991) a *heritage language* can be any language other than French or English spoken by a group of people in the Canadian context. It is also called *mother tongue* (Schrauf, 1999), *minority language* (De Bot, 2005), *immigrant minority language* (Extra & Görter, 2001) and *community language* (Wiley, 2005). In this study these terms are used as synonyms for *heritage language*.

Heritage language maintenance[2] has been encouraged in recent years, as a way to preserve immigrant children's identity and culture. Transferring the home language to the children in immigrant minority contexts is perceived to have a positive impact on children's successful integration into the host society (Cummins, 2000). Unfortunately, many immigrant children lose their heritage language as they become exposed to the majority language of their host society (Fillmore, 1991a). The loss of heritage language[3] entails the loss of culture (Hinton, 2001), and loss of ethnic identity markers (Fishman, 2001) because through language the cultural heritage is received and passed to the next generations (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981, as cited in Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002). Kouritzin (1999) argued that the lack of resources that promote heritage language maintenance accelerates its loss. Cummins (1984) asserted that home language maintenance starts in the home. Fishman (1991) agreed on the essential role of families in preserving their first languages in the next generations of children.

With the importance of preserving heritage languages, the role of immigrant families, and as an immigrant mother myself, I feel that it would be essential to look at the role of immigrant mothers in preserving their heritage language in their children in Montréal where language is highly politicized, as will be discussed in Chapter 2. This qualitative study explores mothers' attitudes toward Arabic as their heritage language and their efforts to maintain it in their Libyan-Canadian school-aged children. It further explains the impact of language policies on language ideologies and language practices of the participating mothers.

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[2] The term *language maintenance* refers to the continued development of heritage language proficiency of children with immigrant background and continued use of heritage language by people with immigrant background (Fase, Japaert & Kroon, 1992; Hakuta & D'Andrea, 1992).

[3] The term *language loss* refers to the process of compromising the use of one's heritage language to the use of the dominant language in a given context (Weinreich, 1952). In this research, the given definition is used for *language shift*, *loss* and *attrition* alike.

1.2 Personal Ground

My husband and I came to Canada as international students. English as a Second Language was the original focus of my graduate study in Montréal. However, my academic interest was shifted as soon as I started witnessing language attrition in my three-year-old Libyan-Canadian daughter. I was reminded of my amazing teacher at high school *"Mrs. Thana."* She was Libyan, but she identified herself also as a Canadian since she lived for twenty years in Canada. By the time she returned permanently to Libya, none of her four children could speak Arabic. She introduced me to her eldest daughter, eighteen-year-old *"Ema"* who was forced by the Ministry of Education of Libya to redo secondary school in Libya where the language of instruction was Arabic. I saw how Ema suffered both academically and socially. I always thought, why didn't Mrs. Thana transfer Arabic to Ema and her siblings? It was a no-brainer for me that Ema should have been able to speak Arabic because her parents could. I could only feel what these two women went through when I went through the same hardships. My little one was socialized through and into three languages: Arabic, English, and French. She showed signs of Arabic attrition and shifted to English and French. I started researching how I can reverse language shift in my child. I asked other mothers who reported the same outcomes in their children. I then stumbled upon a journal article on the struggle of immigrant mothers in their immigration contexts. I started reading more, and my interest in heritage languages flourished.

As a graduate student in a Second Language Education Master's program, I embarked on this research study as a mother-researcher, to raise awareness of the importance of preserving home languages, to help immigrant women better inform their decisions with respect to language planning and practice, and to familiarize them with the issues encountered by immigrants in Québec, more specifically in Montréal.

In order to better understand and assess the way Québec perceives immigrants' heritage and the means it provides them to integrate into the society, outlining the province's policies with respect to immigration and language is therefore essential. In the next chapter, I provide an overview of the context that could potentially impact the way the participants of this study perceive their heritage language and culture.

1.3 Thesis Overview

In Chapter 2, I present historical issues related to Québec immigration and language policies and how they differ from the ones set by the federal government of Canada, because immigrants have to negotiate both when they settle in Québec. I also provide an overview of the status of Arabic-speaking immigrants in Québec and a brief description of the language.

In Chapter 3, I review the literature about theories of heritage language maintenance, processes and consequences of heritage language loss, diverse factors related to heritage language maintenance in the immigration context, and of the family role in heritage language loss and maintenance.

In Chapter 4, I provide a description of the methodology of the study, including the participants, the instruments for data collection, data collection procedures, and data analysis methods.

In Chapter 5, I present the results that emerged from the interview and observation data. Results are presented in three main categories, supported by interview excerpts.

In Chapter 6, I discuss and interpret the research results in depth by relating them to the literature according to my research questions.

In the last chapter, Chapter 7, I put forward some implications of the study and recommendations for the Arabic-speaking community with respect to Arabic maintenance as a

heritage language in Montréal. This chapter ends with a discussion of limitations of the study and a summary of the study.

CHAPTER 2. SETTING THE SCENE

In this chapter, I provide background context for this research study, including a description of Arabic language and Arabic-speaking immigrants in Québec. I will first outline the development of the immigration patterns in Canada and Québec. It will include Canada's multiculturalism policy as opposed to Québec's interculturalism policy. I will focus on the development of events that led to the enactment of Bill 101 (*The Charter of the French Language*) that was passed to protect French language and culture in Québec. I will then discuss the status of Arabic and Arabic-speaking immigrants in Montréal. Finally, I will provide a description of the Arabic language.

2.1 Multiculturalism within a Bilingual Framework

The Official Languages Act officially declared Canada to be a bilingual country in 1969 (Cobarrubias, 1985). This is a milestone in Canadian history because the legislation stated that English and French are equal in terms of rights and status in the Canadian government (Cobarrubias, 1985). The new legislation obliged the federal government to accommodate minority Anglophones and Francophones across the country by providing services and information in both languages (Eggington & Wren, 1997). It stated that acts passed at the federal or provisional levels should be published in the two official languages, and the use of either language was a choice to be made by speakers (Government of Canada, 2016). The majority Francophones and Anglophones are located in different regions, which means only one of the two languages is regularly used in any given location (Eggington & Wren, 1997). Bilingualism could be said to exist in only a few cities (e.g., Montréal, Ottawa, and Moncton) (Eggington & Wren, 1997).

The Canadian history of immigration has gone through fundamental changes with respect to immigration policies. These policies were based on race and geographical origin from 1885 until 1962. In other words, immigration policies at that time encouraged only white-European immigrants and discouraged others (Haque, 2012). Haque attributes the admission of White European immigrants to Canada to the fact that they share the same common western culture with the "founding races" (p. 5), namely "the English and French" communities in Canada. Haque proclaimed that "the presence of Other within the metropole does not evoke a harmonious patchwork of cultures; instead, it challenges the totality of national culture by bringing in the Other's history of elsewhere and articulating the narrative of cultural differences that disrupts the national history" (p.14). However, the increase in unemployment rates, the decrease of European immigration, and the shame of being overtly racist were the motivating forces for a change (Taylor, 1991). Therefore, in the early 1960s the country of origin was disregarded as the main condition of admissibility and it was stated that immigration should emphasize education and skills. These new regulations eliminated all discrimination toward race, color or beliefs. In the following three decades after lifting the racial restrictions, Canada became ethnoculturally diverse due to the increased number of non-white immigrants from Asia, Africa, South and Central America (Haque, 2012). Canada further "declared a policy of Multiculturalism in 1971 to improve intercultural relations in the country" (Berry, 2013, p. 663). This made Canada the first nation to have a multiculturalism policy which protected the different cultures of immigrants but under a bilingual framework (Guo & Wong, 2015). The Bilingual and Bicultural Commission (B and B) from which the latter policy emerged took three steps to implement it: provide support for cultural communities, promote intercultural communication and encourage the learning of the official languages to help remove barriers that reduce active integration of

newcomers in the society (Berry, 2013). At this time, the Multiculturalism Act did not mean Canada was multicultural per se; instead, it was an acknowledgment and celebration of the existence of many cultures within the Canadian context (Haque, 2012). In the 1980s, the policy emphasized equity and social justice toward minority groups (Berry, 2013), and focused on managing diversity (Guo & Wong, 2015, p. 4). For the next decade, the policy emphasized civic multiculturalism, "constructive engagement," "society building" and "citizenship." And in the 2000s, the multiculturalism policy was one of integrative multiculturalism, with the focus on "inclusive citizenship," the reference point being "Canadian identity" and the mandate "integration" (Guo & Wong, 2015, p. 4).

To protect its image as a leader in multiculturalism, Canada relies on the multicultural approach to immigration. Québec, on the other hand, rejected the multicultural policy and adopted an intercultural approach (Bouchard, 2015).

2.2 Interculturalism in Québec

Québec needed an alternative to multiculturalism due to the following factors: Québec's minority/majority status; the need to retain French as the common public language, and the expectation of full societal participation (Maclure, 2003). Therefore, interculturalism in Québec emphasizes the need to integrate the identities of immigrants and minority groups into the mainstream identity and culture (i.e., "Québécois identity and culture" (Mahrouse, 2010, p. 86). The identities of minority groups become subordinated to maintain both Québécois culture and an ever-expanding inclusive culture (Hutcheon, 1994)

Bouchard (2015) traces the source of this policy to the Quiet Revolution; "namely a redefinition of the French Canadian nation, now centered in Québec" (p. 28). This redefinition placed the French Canadian culture and language squarely at the forefront of the Québécois

nation, a concept that is incompatible with Canadian multiculturalism. Bouchard (2015) notes

that Québec traditionally sought for "a definition of Canada as being made up of two nations

(Anglophone and Francophone) sharing the same rights" (p. 60). From Québec's perspective, a

conception like this would strengthen the position of French and francophone culture within

Canada.

After setting up its own Ministry of Immigration, Québec sought control of its own

immigration policies which was granted by the federal government (Banting & Soroka, 2012).

Québec has established its own points system and has given more weight to French-speaking

immigrants (Banting & Soroka, 2012). The *francisation* of immigrants became therefore

fundamental as "a common public language" (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008). By declaring French a

foundation of interculturalism, it was given a status superior to other languages.

2.2.3 The linguistic situation in Québec and Montréal.

French is the majority language in Québec, but a minority language in North America

(Fallen & Rublik, 2011). Bourhis (2001) asserts that the arrival of allophones[4] in Montréal turned

it into a multilingual and multiethnic city. For the purpose of integration into their new

community, those allophones chose to preserve their HL so they could deal with the competing

languages, namely French and English (Bourhis, 2001). This means that minority groups in

Québec are likely to preserve their mother tongue as their home language, French as the

language of education and of the majority, and English as the socio-economic language in North

America (Bourhis, 2001). To protect the French language from the influence of English-

dominant communities in the Canadian and North American context, the provincial government

of Québec passed Bill 101 in 1977 (Fallon & Rublik, 2011). The allophone immigrants were

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[4] *Allophone.* A term used in Canada to refer to individuals whose L1 is neither English nor French (Bourhis, 2001).

used as fuel to stop the decline of the French language (Sarkar, 2005). The government of the time considered this important piece of legislation essential because it was an opportunity to preserve French through teaching it to the ever-increasing number of immigrants, among other provisions of the legislation (Fallon & Rublik, 2011).

Bill 101 requires that instruction in the kindergarten classes and in the elementary and secondary schools shall be in French, except where allowed otherwise. This rule obtains in school bodies (the school boards and the Comité de gestion de la taxe scolaire de l'île de Montréal) and in private educational institutions accredited for purposes of subsidies under the Act respecting private education (Charter of the French Language, 2010). French continues to be used as the common public language for "every person living in the territory of Québec, whatever his or her origin" (Charter of the French Language, 2010, p. 13) unless those considered eligible for education in English. The exempted persons are, by Title I, Chapter VIII, Section 73, the following:

(1) a child whose father or mother is a Canadian citizen and received elementary instruction in English in Canada, provided that that instruction constitutes the major part of the elementary instruction he or she received in Canada;

(2) a child whose father or mother is a Canadian citizen and who has received or is receiving elementary or secondary instruction in English in Canada, and the brothers and sisters of that child, provided that that instruction constitutes the major part of the elementary or secondary instruction received by the child in Canada.

Sarkar (2005) points out that education in French for newcomers was a way of ensuring the survival of the French language in Québec. As such, the children of Allophone newcomers had to attend school entirely in French and were expected to become fluent speakers of French (Sarkar, 2005). In 1969, it became evident that the province's education system needed to

provide the means to assist immigrant students who were enrolled in French schools to learn the target language. This lead to the creation of welcome classes, or *classes d'accueil* (Steinbach, 2010). These intensive classes aim at raising immigrant students' French proficiency. They last for a maximum of twenty months at the primary level of education (Allen, 2006), wherein students are excluded from learning with their peers in regular classes (Steinbach, 2010, p. 97), and are transitioned into mainstream classes as soon as possible (Allen, 2006).

Allen (2006) believes that this model is targeting the host society's language and culture rather than that of the immigrants. She contended that isolating ethnic minority students from the mainstream classes further marginalizes them. Sarkar (2005) also criticized the program for providing limited exposure to Francophone classmates. She explained that the teachers recruited to teach classes d'accueil were not adequately trained and showed no tolerance for the heritage languages of students. Cummins (1978) questioned the benefits of these programs. He argued that while most immigrant children require only two years to become conversationally fluent in the school language, they still require at least five years to be able to perform the cognitively complex tasks necessary to academically achieve at grade level, which puts them at a disadvantage.

Sarkar (2005) explained that in the mid-sixties when the French language was declining in Québec and the provisional government decided on using newcomers as raw material to create French-speakers "issues of non-French minority ethnicity were not on the table" (p. 313). In fact, "languages other than French and English were suppressed to stamp out ethnicity" (Cummins & Troper, 1985, p.21). However, the emergence of multiculturalism obliged the school system to "acknowledge, legitimize and teach heritage languages" (Cummins & Troper, 1985, p. 21).

In response to this pressure posed by multilingualism, Québec implemented a new program targeting the teaching of HLs to children of immigrant backgrounds (i.e., programme de l'ensignement des langues d'origine "PELO"). The PELO program that was started in 1977 provides an hour of HL instruction a week during lunchtime (McAndrew, 2003). Cummins & Troper (1985) stated that the purpose of such a program is to help students with immigrant backgrounds, especially newcomers, survive in the French dominant educational system. It is argued that instructing immigrant students in their HLs in public schools helps them cope better emotionally and academically as it embraces their ethnicity (Cummins & Troper, 1985). Unfortunately, only a few schools in Montréal qualify for the PELO program, since it requires the request of at least 20 parents in any given school (Kirk, 2006). In fact, its effectiveness is controversial in academia (Cummins & Troper, 1985). There are concrete reasons why the PELO program has not been as successful as planned. Some of these reasons include teachers perceiving the inclusion of heritage language teaching time during regular school hours as time-consuming, and the unfeasibility of implementing such classes given the diverse range of students' L1s, as well as the lack of "significant links with welcome classes, whose students are not allowed to enroll" (McAndrew, 2009, p. 1538).

In addition to the PELO program, Québec law also allows the option of full-time private ethnic school wherein the community language is taught to advanced level. Furthermore, community-funded afterschool programs or weekend schools are also offered (Sarkar, 2005). Although these additional supports help allophone immigrants retain their mother tongue, the weak provisions of heritage language maintenance in Québec would undoubtedly result in children's inability to retain adult like proficiency (Cummins, 2000; as cited in Sarkar, 2007) especially given the overriding preoccupation of many immigrant parents that their children learn

English well (Sarkar, 2005, p.7) considering it the language of the Canadian and international economy (Lamarre, 2003).

As far as heritage languages are concerned, a population of 7,974,370 has a mother tongue other than English or French which represents 21.1 % of the Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2017b). In such an ethnolinguistic context, HL maintenance becomes a day-to-day challenge to those immigrant minority groups (Fishman, 1991). In fact, language loss is the main problem encountered by minority groups (Cummins & Danesi, 1990). This is especially true in Québec where minority immigrants are expected to assimilate into Québec's culture and language.

2.2.2 Immigration from Arabic-speaking countries to Canada.

The first cohort of immigrants from the Arabic-speaking countries arrived in Canada prior to World War II. They were Christian Syrian and Lebanese who were at the time ruled by the Ottoman Empire, known today as Turkey, so they came with Turkish passports (Abu-Laban, 1980). They soon established churches in Montréal and Toronto. Unfortunately, they could not sustain them since the community was too small. They immigrated for economic reasons. "Their emphasis on economic prosperity and material wealth" resulted in the loss of their heritage, and the third and fourth generation of Canadians with Arabic heritage were similar to the mainstream society (Eid, 2007, p. 7).

After World War II immigration from different Arabic-speaking countries increased dramatically. This cohort is characterized by diversity with respect to geographical origin, religion and educational level (Abu-Laban, 1980), due to the 1966 White Book Reforms which removed discrimination based on race, color, religion or ethnicity (Dweik & Qawar, 2015, p.2). The civil war in Lebanon, the socialist revolution in Egypt, the Israeli invasion of the Arab

world, and the first Gulf war in 1991 all resulted in the increased immigration from that part of the world to Canada (Eid, 2007).

The third wave of immigrants of Canada from Arabic-speaking countries arrived after the 1970s. It comprised Muslims who had strong ethnoreligious affiliations and wanted to implant these in their new society, as they rejected westernization. They established mosques and attached great importance to them. The majority of second-generation Canadians from Arabic origins come from the third cohort of immigration. The Muslim ones are likely to have a strong ethnoreligious identity (Eid, 2007). More recently, the outbreak of what has become to be known as the Arab Spring and its tragic consequences has led to large scale migration from the Arab World (Al-Sahafi, 2017, p. 94).

Arabic-speaking immigrants account for 1.2 percent of the Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2017b). Although one can find Arabic-speaking individuals in all big cities in Canada, the Arabic-speaking community in Montréal is larger than any other Arabic group in any other Canadian city (Dweik & Qawar, 2015). They account for 4.8 percent of the total population of Montréal which makes the Arabic language the main minority language in Québec with 191,960 speakers. In Montréal, 18 percent of immigrants speak Arabic as their mother tongue (Statistics Canada, 2017c).

The biggest proportion of these immigrants come from Lebanon, followed by Egypt, Morocco, Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Algeria, Kuwait, Tunisia, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and United Arab Emirates (Dweik & Qawar, 2015, p.2). Other smaller groups originated from Bahrain, Djibouti, Libya, Mauritania, Oman, Qatar and Yemen ((Dweik & Qawar, 2015, p.2). According to Dweik and Qawar (2015), immigrants from Arabic speaking countries cannot be lumped into one category, since they come from different countries and have different religious

affiliations. Regardless of their country of immigration and religious beliefs, Arab immigrants tend to establish religious institutions upon their arrival to Canada. Arabic-speaking Christians, for example, built many churches (e.g. St Georges and St Joseph church, St Mark Montréal church and the Coptic Orthodox Church). Arabic-speaking Muslims also built mosques to accommodate their religious needs. The first mosque, "Al-Rashid," was the first to be established in Canada in 1983 (Dweik & Qawar, 2015). I know from my personal experience in Montréal that there is at least one mosque in every neighbourhood of Montréal. In downtown Montréal alone, there are three mosques (Al-Madina, Al-Salam and Aisha), in addition to many Muslim prayer rooms in universities and colleges in Montréal. Muslims also have their own radio channels that broadcast in Arabic (i.e., Alshark AlAwsat and Moyen Orient), and Arabic newspapers (e.g. AlWatan, Annahar, Mustakbal) (Dweik & Qawar, 2015). To the best of my knowledge, oriental shops which sell Halal and oriental products are found in every neighbourhood in Montréal (e.g. Adonis, AlMizan, AlBakkar).

According to Dweik and Qawar (2015), many of Arabic-speaking immigrants arrived in Canada as well-educated couples with children, and they highly value education, both for themselves and for their children. They established many Arabic schools like Dar Al Iman, Ali Ben Abi Talib, JMC, Ecole Arabe Pour Enfants, Al Nour School, Yasmine Institution, and Al Salam School in Montréal. The majority of these Arabic-speaking immigrants to Montréal practice the Islamic faith at 59 percent. Christians come second, followed by a small group who had no religious affiliation (Dweik & Qawar, 2015). The 2016 Canadian census reported 6300 Libyan immigrants, who are the subject of this study, in Canada. Of these, 510 reside in Montréal (Statistics Canada, 2017c). To the best of my knowledge, all of them are Muslims since Libya is an all Muslim country.

2.3 Arabic as a Diglossic Language

Arabic is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world and one of the six official languages of the United Nations (Temples, 2013). It is spoken by about 1.5 billion people, and it is the official language of 22 countries. The Arabic-speaking world includes the following 22 countries in Asia and Africa: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen (Al-Sahafi, 2017). The language is not only used by Arabs, but also by those who practice the Islamic faith (Temples, 2013). According to Nydell (1996), Arabic is not only a means of communication but also a symbol of a well-known civilization.

Diglossia is a feature of Arabic, that is, it has different varieties that are employed for different societal purposes within the same context (Saiegh- Haddad, 2005). It is to be noted that Arabic in immigration context exists in a diglossic situation, which is manifested through the co-existence of Standard and Colloquial Arabic (Al-Sahafi & Barkhuizen, 2006). Classical Arabic, which is the language of Quran, is now limited to religious practices (Kaye, 1970). Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), a modern form of Classical Arabic, is the formal literary variety shared by all the Arabic-speaking countries and is used for written and formal communication, while Non-Standard Arabic (NSA) is the informal form, referred to as *colloquials*, *vernaculars*, or *dialects*. MSA is shared by all Arabic-speaking countries, whereas dialects vary from one country to another and are the everyday used spoken varieties (Ryding, 2006). Ferguson in 1959 (as cited by Palmer, 2008) labels the different registers as "high" and "low." The high register refers to MSA, NSA is considered the low register. Educated individuals who had the formal

instruction of Arabic at school speak MSA, while NSA is acquired by daily exposure to the language which does not reflect formal schooling in Arabic (Mahmoud, 2000).

Ibrahim and Aharon-Peretz (2005) further explain that Arabic consists of three layers: Classical Arabic, Literary Arabic, and spoken Arabic. An individual who can read Quran, read a newspaper in Arabic and speak one dialect of Arabic is considered multilingual (Ibrahim & Aharon-Peretz, 2005). Practicing Muslims all over the world read the Quran, memorize chapters from it, and pray in classical Arabic, regardless of the dialect they use in their everyday life. They believe the Quran itself is a miracle, revealed by God to Muhammad in Arabic, and thus Arabic itself is sacred. The Quran has served as the model for Arabic literacy for over 1400 years, and even now MSA is closer to the classical Arabic of the Quran than it is to NSA. Al-Sahafi (2015) emphasized that, "due to its strict association with Islam, MSA enjoys a symbolic significance to Muslims in general and to Arabic-speaking Muslims in particular as the only authentic means of religious expression"(p. 77), which gives it "a special status and authenticity" (Clyne and Kipp, 1999, p. 330).The families under study are all Muslims. As Muslims, they are required to teach their children the literary form of Arabic to enable them to read Quran and practice religion.

Arabic is also a prominent heritage language, necessary for cultural and interpersonal reasons to the families and communities who speak it and for whom it is a binding force (Fishman, 2001). Although Arabic-speaking immigrants come from different countries and have different religious affiliations, it is common to lump them into one category (Eid, 2007). In immigrant contexts, Standard Arabic serves as a symbol of the pan-Arab spirit (Al-Sahafi, 2017). Al-Sahafi found that despite coming from different countries, immigrant fathers in his study perceived Arabic as a unifying force among Arabic-speaking immigrants as it provided one

aspect of commonality for them, which he calls "Shared sense of Arabness" (2015). The challenge to maintain the Arabic language for immigrant families thus becomes much more extensive when the spoken variety of Arabic is different between community members due to the diversity of Araic-speaking families and the fact that the spoken variety differs from the formal variety. Belonging to different speech and religion communities and having to maintain different registers of the same language are the challenges encountered by the participants in this study. Understanding the diglossic nature of Arabic would help understand and interpret the mothers' experiences in Chapters 5 and 6.

Furthermore, Wilmsen (2006) believes that learners who are not provided with the opportunity to develop competence in both formal and vernacular varieties of Arabic may lack basic linguistic skills necessary for survival in Arabic-speaking countries and building relationships. It is to be noted that some families in this study are planning on returning to Libya, as such, the maintenance of both MSA and NSA in their children is compulsory if they want to ensure the successful integration of their children in their homeland.

2.4 Summary

In this chapter, I outlined the development of immigration, cultural and language policies in Canada and Québec. This included a specific discussion of Canada's multiculturalism policy as opposed to Québec's interculturalism policy and their implications for this study. I then described the linguistic situation in Québec focusing on Bill 101 and its outcomes. I also gave a brief account of Arabic-speaking immigrants in Canada and Montréal with respect to their history of immigration and status. Finally, I presented a description of the Arabic language which was necessary to understand how the participants in this study have to deal with the different varieties of Arabic and how they struggle to maintain them in their children given the different,

yet complementary functions of each of them. This chapter provided what I perceived necessary context for more nuanced understanding of the contextual factors for the study of Arabic maintenance in Libyan-Canadian children in Montréal. In the next chapter, I turn to review the relevant literature.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter draws on existing literature on heritage language maintenance and loss that helped situate the inquiry presented in this thesis. I begin by reviewing theories and studies on the importance of maintaining heritage languages in children of immigrant backgrounds. Then, I discuss the various factors that impact heritage language maintenance, giving special focus to the relationship between parental influence and heritage language maintenance. Finally, I provide an overview of the factors and consequences related to heritage language loss.

3.1 Attitudes toward HLs in Canada

The population mobility and the increased immigration to Canada have resulted in racial, linguistic and cultural diversity (Cummins, 2001a). As a result, multilingual and multicultural children have become the norm rather than the exception (Cummins, 2000). However, this diversity has been treated by the educational policies (reviewed in chapter 2) as a problem rather than a resource (Cummins, 2001a). These policies showed no tolerance toward minority students' language and culture. By presenting diversity as a problem to be solved, ethnic minority students were pushed to renounce their heritage languages and assimilate into the mainstream languages and culture which accelerated the loss of their home languages (Cummins & Danesi, 1990). Guardado (2013) asserted that the focus on teaching the majority languages to immigrant students resulted in the marginalization of research on heritage languages. Cummins (1981) challenged the traditional negative attitudes held by mainstream education toward multilingualism and argued in favor of multilingualism for schoolchildren. In this regard, Cummins and Danesi (1990) considered the multilingual skills of immigrant children as national resources for Canada which could reinforce the country's position in the world's markets. Similarly, O'Sullivan (2011) reported that bilingualism is important because of its usefulness in

the marketplace. Krashen (1998) also illustrated that the economy of nations could thrive due to trade that relies on multilingual individuals, whom he considers as natural resources. Cummins and Danesi (1990) further recommended that the heritage languages of minority ethnic students be promoted and encouraged as valuable resources. Recent research has reached a consensus on the importance of heritage languages to linguistic minority children. Researchers in the field of language maintenance have advocated that minority languages should be preserved and developed for a linguistically and culturally diverse world (Park &Sarkar, 2007, p.224).

Research has documented the positive outcomes of heritage languages on immigrant children's academic performance, social competence and ethnic identity formation (Cummins, 1981, Freeman & Freeman, 1994). The next section reviews some theories and studies that support the promotion of heritage languages for their positive outcomes on ethnic minority students.

3.2 Theories and Research Findings in Support of HL Maintenance

3.2.1 Academic achievement and social competence.

Research has suggested that bilingual or multilingual students have an intellectual advantage over their monolingual counterparts. Lambert (1975), for example, asserted that bilingual children are more flexible and diverse with respect to intelligence and thought. Thus, he proposed that bilingual education which encouraged the maintenance of the mother tongue should be pursued in educational systems. Cummins (2001a) reported that the level of development of children's mother tongue is a strong predictor of their second language development. In his *Interdependence Theory*, Cummins (1981) claimed that proficiency in heritage language is linked to the successful acquisition of other languages. He argued that the strong literacy skills in L1 enhance the cognitive development and academic achievement of

children since these skills are interdependent across languages (Cummins, 1981). He further reinvestigated his theory two decades later and reconfirmed that strong base of heritage language literacy skills is essential for minority students' successful acquisition and development of the majority languages of their host societies (Cummins, 2000). Cummins and Schecter (2003) stated that the development of minority students' heritage languages enhanced their performance in school. In contrast to the traditional beliefs that bilingualism hinders the academic progress of linguistic minority students, Cummins and Schecter (2003) argued that bilingualism is advantageous since it provides students with concrete conceptual skills of two languages. In the same vein, Swain (1991) asserted that the mother tongue serves as the foundation on which the acquisition of other languages rests. As such, children who speak their heritage languages perform better in mainstream education (Freeman & Freeman, 1994).

Theories of the positive outcomes of L1 maintenance on the acquisition of second languages have been supported by empirical studies. S. K. Lee (2002) conducted a study to examine the relationship between heritage language maintenance and the academic achievement of 105 U.S born Chinese and Korean high school students in Southern California. The results indicated that the students who were interested in preserving their heritage language outperformed those who were more inclined to assimilate into the mainstream culture and language. Cummins and Genzuk (1991) analyzed the results from an eight-year longitudinal study conducted by Ramirez. The study compared the academic achievement of 3 groups of Hispanic students in the U.S. The students in the first group were enrolled in English immersion programs. The second group of students received instruction in Spanish for one-third of the time throughout Kindergarten and first grade and were transitioned into mainstream classrooms after. The students in the third group were instructed exclusively in Spanish in Kindergarten with

increasing amount of English instruction from grade one to grade six. The results show that the last group outperformed the other two groups in terms of English acquisition and academic achievement.

Heritage language proficiency also provides increased social competence and economic advantages. In O. Garcia's (1995) quantitative study conducted in the United States, higher proficiency in both English and the heritage language, Spanish, correlated with higher income for the Hispanic group. She noticed that while a quarter of English speaking Hispanics living in the U.S were at or below the poverty line, the Spanish speaking group enjoyed a better financial status.F O. Garcia concluded that "speaking only English does not always make a difference in the achievement of economic prosperity, and that bilingualism, rather than monolingualism, is a useful commodity in some communities" (p.157).

Guardado (2002) conducted a qualitative study to explore the loss and maintenance of Spanish in the children of four Hispanic families in Vancouver, Canada. He found that the parents were motivated to maintain Spanish in their children for different reasons, but the most salient motive was their desire to provide better economic opportunities as they grow up and that they associated bilingualism with economic benefits.

3.2.2 Ethnic identity formation.

Ethnic identity is described by Phinney, Romero, Nava and Huang (2001) as "identity as a member of an ethnic group within the larger society" (p. 135). Research confirms that heritage language development is an integral part of identity formation (Cho, 2000; Tse, 1996) and that it is positively related to higher self-esteem and confidence (Cho, 2000; Freeman & Freeman, 1994; J. S. Lee, 2002; Tse, 1997). In the Canadian context, Li and Duff (2014) conducted a longitudinal study to examine the impact of the following factors (i.e., ethnolinguistic identity,

motivation, family and peers) on HL maintenance of 4 first-generation immigrant adolescents from China and Indonesia, who were enrolled in Chinese Heritage Language programs at the university level in Canada at the time of the study. The participants took a survey on their HL attitudes and learning motivations. They were also interviewed two times. They were first interviewed after they completed the survey. The researchers also conducted follow-up interviews three years later. The findings revealed that the Chinese participants were motivated to further their knowledge in Chinese because they perceived it important marker of their identity and culture. Feuerverger (1991) examined the perceptions of 148 ethnic minority university students studying their HL at the University of Toronto through questionnaires and interviews. The results showed that HL maintenance plays a positive role in helping minority ethnic students appreciate and value their culture and that of their host society. Likewise, Lucas, Henze and Donato (1990) asserted that when children's home language and culture are valued, they often develop a more positive attitude towards mainstream education and thus achieve better in the school system. Ethnic minority students' proficiency in their heritage languages does not only lead to acceptance and formation of ethnic identity, but it also helps promote the acceptance of majority culture of their host societies (Cho & Krashen, 1998).

In the American context, Cho (2000) investigated the impact of HL proficiency on Korean-American students' social relationships with members of their ethnic community. The data were collected through interviews with and a questionnaire answered by Korean-American second-generation adults and students. The results indicate that the participants' proficiency in HL positively impacted their involvement in their Korean community in the U.S. The author argues that those who are competent in their HL have better relationships with members of their linguistic ethnic community. In contrast, the ones who did not achieve sufficient competency in

their HL may feel excluded because they fail to maintain relationships with their ethnic community members (Cho, 2000). J. S. Lee (2002) investigated the relationship between HL proficiency and ethnic identity among 40 second-generation Korean-American university students through questionnaire data. The results show that HL maintenance can enhance biculturalism. She found that those who are proficient in the Korean language are more likely to develop a strong sense of ethnic identity both with their own ethnic group and with the American society, contrary to those who are not proficient in the Korean language.

3.3 Factors Contributing to Language Maintenance or Loss

Several studies claim that language maintenance or loss can be influenced by many factors, e.g., family, community, and religious and educational institutions) (e.g., Clyne, 1982; Fishman, 1991; M. E. Garcia, 2003; Hinton 2001; Kloss, 1966; B. Y. Lee, 2013; Park & Sarkar, 2007; Smolicz, 1981). Hinton (2001), for instance, stated that family, relationship with ethnic community members, and educational and religious ethnic institutions are critical factors in the promotion of heritage languages. In order to understand the impact of these factors on intergenerational mother tongue maintenance, Fishman (1966)) in his pioneering book *Language loyalty in the United States* proposed the *Reversing Language Shift* framework (RLS) by providing examples of successful achievements of language maintenance of L2 ethnic groups. Fishman emphasized that different problems and opportunities that different social contexts offer should be considered for the success of reversing language shift to language maintenance. He pointed out that RLS can start from the micro-level such as families, neighborhoods, and local communities. Fishman's lead has been followed by researchers who tried to explore the factors that affect the maintenance and attrition of heritage language ranging from social to individual and familial factors.

3.3.1 Parental involvement and attitudes

Children's cultural and linguistic experience in the home is the foundation of their future learning, and we must build on that foundation rather than undermine it (Cummins, 2001a, p. 19). There is consistent evidence that parental use of HL at home is an essential factor in enhancing immigrant students' HL maintenance. Fishman (1991) argues that family is key in HL maintenance. Kung (2013) agrees that parents' role is essential for language maintenance in the children. Research on HLs has found that the use of HL at home with family members promotes the proficiency in the language. According to Hinton (2001), if the immigrant children lose their ability to communicate in their HL with their parents, they will encounter challenges at the personal, familial and social level. Thus, she encourages parents to actively promote and maintain their community language in their children. Cummins (2000) suggests that heritage language should be exclusively used in the home. Luo and Wiseman (2000) attributed children's HL maintenance to parents' attitudes towards the language as well as to the parent-child relationship. They suggested that solid relationships among parents and children are predictors of the maintenance of HL in the children.

Tannenbaum & Howie (2002) investigated the relationship between familial relations and language maintenance of 40 children of Chinese immigrant families in Australia. All of the parents in the study speak Chinese. Given the challenges that immigrant families encounter in the context of immigration, and the role of language as the transmitter of culture, the researchers hypothesized that the extent to which children will maintain their L1 would depend on their relationship with their parents. The findings of the study revealed that the stronger the ties between parents and children, the more preference towards and use of Chinese on the part of the

children. The opposite is also true. The study suggests that when children are raised in cohesive familial environments, they are more likely to maintain their heritage language.

Guardado (2002) divided the four families he interviewed into two groups, "the maintenance families" and "the loss families" based on their children's competence in Spanish and English. He found that the parents in "the maintenance families" encouraged their children to use their heritage language, while the parents in "the loss families" expressed strong beliefs of heritage language maintenance, but they never actually promoted its use. Zeng (1997) surveyed 185 Chinese-American college students for evidence of language shift or maintenance. The author concluded that family shaped the children's heritage language use and that parents' efforts to maintain their mother tongue in their children have a positive influence on the children's language choice. Luo and Wiseman (2000) argue that children showed interest toward heritage language as the parents and family members illustrated its importance by encouraging its use. They reported that the maintenance of the heritage language in the children reflects its use at home. In the same vein, Lao (2004) stated that at-home language practices determine the maintenance or shift of HL. Similarly, Li (2006) attached importance to parental beliefs and at-home language use on the maintenance of their L1 in their children.

It is important to highlight the role of parents as caregivers because only when the parents are the primary caregivers do they have an influence on the children's attitudes towards their HL. For instance, Luo (1993) found that only mothers have a significant influence on their children's attitudes toward their minority language, whereas fathers' attitudes have not. This is attributed to the fact that in Chinese culture, mothers are the primary caregivers (Luo, 1993). Likewise, Kondo (1998) reported that being the primary caregiver, mothers have a significant influence on language use and preference of their children. She also emphasized mothers' role as

communicators in the HL with their children, and also as facilitators who support children's HL education since immigrant children have "much more extensive informal contacts and use in the HL" (p. 373) with mothers.

Studies of the familial and parental influence on heritage language maintenance reported that the importance that families give to and positive attitudes toward HLs reflects positively on children's attitudes towards the language. Most of the studies reported that identity formation, family communication, and better lifestyle are the reasons for the positive attitudes of parents towards the preservation of their mother tongue (e.g., Kondo, 1998; Lao, 2004; J. S. Lee, 2002). However, Hinton (2001) claims that parents' positive attitudes to the HL cannot be a sole and sufficient source of immigrant children's HL maintenance. Kondo (1998) also stresses that Japanese mothers' HL use with their children at home alone is insufficient, particularly with respect to children's literacy skills. In this regard, she suggests that children's HL should be promoted and supported by schools and ethnic communities along with home support. According to J. S. Lee (2002) parents can promote and maintain their heritage language in their children through using it at home, visiting homelands and making connections with the same ethnic group members. Other parents prefer sending their children to heritage language schools (Gogonas, 2012).

3.3.2 Ethnic communities.

Having ethnic community members who can speak the same language is also a vital factor in promoting HL maintenance in ethnic minority children. Many studies have demonstrated that ethnic communities play a vital role in immigrant children's HL maintenance (e.g., S. K. Lee, 2002, Park & Sarkar, 2007; Tse, 2001). For instance, Tse (2001) interviewed 10 second-generation bilingual adolescents in the U.S. who showed positive attitudes toward their

heritage language and culture as a result of being involved in community programs. Tse concluded that ethnic community programs provide the children with opportunities to practice language and culture and see their usefulness. Schrauf (1999) aimed at exploring the influence that the following factors have on HL maintenance and loss (i.e., settlement, religion, HL schools, cultural celebrations, visits to the homeland, in-group marriage, and employment within HL community). Data from immigrant families from 11 different groups in the U.S and Canada was collected from the Human Relations Area Files. The findings revealed that demographic concentration correlated with language maintenance in the third generations among the groups. In other words, the more immigrants are clustered in their communities, the more likely their HL will be maintained in their children. The researcher attributes the influence of community on HL maintenance to the fact that community members have more opportunity to speak in their HL when their population is concentrated in one place. In the same vein, Phinney et al. (2001) reported that immigrant children tend to have strong ethnic identity through their heritage language when they interact with peers and adults from the same ethnic group as often as possible.

3.3.3 Ethnic educational and religious institutions.

Heritage language education is believed to be an important factor that fosters the learning of heritage languages (M. E. Garcia, 2003; Tse, 1997). B. Y. Lee (2013) conducted a study to explore how the attitudes and actual practices of Korean parents living in the U.S influence their Korean-American children's identity and heritage language maintenance. She found that all the participating parents sent their children to Korean ethnic schools. The parents believed that having their children mingle with other co-ethnic children provide them with the opportunity to practice the language and also to learn about culture while socializing together. Tse (1997) found

that ethnic language programs are beneficial for ethnic minority children because they not only develop their proficiency in their heritage language but also their appreciation of it. Similarly, Octu (2010) stated that community-based heritage language schools could positively influence ethnic minority children's HL maintenance because they provide a context where people of similar beliefs and attitudes toward a heritage language can meet and socialize.

Religion plays an important role in intergenerational heritage language maintenance too. Warner and Wittner (1998) recommend that the religion of ethnic minority groups should be perceived as a means of reproducing the group's heritage in their new societies. Al-Sahafi (2015) conducted a study to investigate the role of Arabic-speaking Muslim fathers in the maintenance of Arabic in their second-generation children in New Zealand. He found that all the fathers in his study valued the transmission of Arabic to their children for various reasons, but the most salient one was their desire that their children practice Islam through Arabic. Thus, they send the children to weekend Arabic schools and to Quranic sessions held in mosques. He concluded that Arabic community schools that taught both Arabic and Islamic studies played a significant role in the maintenance of Arabic in the children and in shaping their ethnoreligious identity. Clyne (2003) pointed out that " language is usually most effective as a core value where it is linked with other core values such as religion […] and where such intertwined core values necessitate the use of the language for particular purposes" (p.62). "For instance, Arabic […], have claims to authenticity as the language of the Quran" (Clyne, 2003, p.62). He further asserted that "core values play a significant role in the maintenance of a language for a longer period" (p.238)

The positive influence of Islam on the maintenance of Arabic has been well documented by research (e.g., Fishman, 1991; Gogonas, 2012; Turjoman, 2013; Dweik, Nofal, & Qawasmeh, 2014). Gogonas (2012), for instance, investigated Arabic maintenance in the children of Arabic

speaking immigrants to Greece (Muslims and Coptic Christians). Data were collected through questionnaires that children had to answer, and parents' interviews. Children's estimation of their competence in Arabic differed largely between Muslims and Coptic Christians. While Coptic children showed preference towards Greek and low proficiency in Arabic, Muslims reported high proficiency in all language skills in Arabic. Parents valued the transmission of Arabic to their children. However, Muslims and Coptic Christians had different rationales. The Coptic parents viewed Arabic as being useful for the educational values of multilingualism, whereas the Muslim parents stated that Arabic is part of their identity and it helps with religion. In contrast to Coptic parents, Muslim parents used more Arabic at home, and they sent their children to private lessons in Arabic that are run three hours a week in a Masjid (mosque). Muslim parents felt the need to expose their children to more Arabic, so they started sending their children to a fully-fledged Arabic school in Athens, whereas Coptic parents are against the idea of sending their children to that school, saying that they appreciate the religious values the Greek schools provide. Gogonas (2012) concluded that Islam has a positive impact on Arabic maintenance. Turjoman (2013) attributed the importance of transferring Arabic to the children in Muslim families to the fact that children are expected and encouraged to perform prayers, which is a fundamental pillar of Islam. Performing prayers requires memorization and understanding of verses from Quran which can only be done through Arabic (Turjoman, 2013). Likewise, Dweik, Nofal, and Qawasmeh (2014) explored patterns of language use and attitudes of 70 Muslim Arabic-speaking immigrants in Vancouver. Sociolinguistic questionnaires were used to collect data from the participants. The results revealed that the participants had very positive attitudes toward Arabic as the language of the Quran as well as an ethnoreligious identity marker. In the same vein, results from Schrauf (1999), which I reviewed earlier, revealed that heritage language

maintenance correlated with religion. He concluded that the more efforts immigrant parents put into the practice of religion, the more HL maintenance. The present body of literature makes clear that ethnic educational and religious institutions play a significant role in heritage language maintenance.

3.3.4 Other factors.

There are a few other factors that are believed to play a vital role in promoting heritage languages in children of immigrant backgrounds. Many researchers noted that when immigrant families visited their homelands, it reflected positively on language retention in their children (Hinton, 2001; J. S. Lee, 2002). Hinton's (2001) study with Asian-American university students indicated that visiting their country of origin had a positive impact on their HL development. Likewise, J. S. Lee (2002), in her study of 40 Korean-American students, found a higher level of proficiency in Korean in students who reported 4 or more visits to Korea. She attributed this to the fact that when they visit Korea, they become immersed in a monolingual environment, so they're pushed to learn Korean. Thus, she encourages parents to travel to their home countries to promote heritage language maintenance in their children.

Other studies reported that watching TV and videotapes in the heritage language, helped children to improve their proficiency and identity maintenance in their L1 (Cho & Krashen, 2000; Cruickshank, 2004). Cruickshank (2004) found that in the families of Arabic-speaking immigrants to Australia, both parents and teenage children engaged in practices that promoted their heritage language. The parents continued to expose their children to Arabic through Arabic-language videos which helped promote their fluency in Arabic. Cho and Krashen (2000) studied 114 Korean American adolescents to explore different factors leading to Korean maintenance through interviews and questionnaires. They found that watching Korean TV contributed to

Korean retention. Al-Sahafi (2015) recommends that immigrant parents expose their children to a richer language environment because their own communication with their children covers very limited topics. He therefore suggests, that providing the children with resources on the internet through which they can chat with their relatives in their home countries, and reading magazines and newspapers to maximize their exposure to their heritage language which could result in its promotion and maintenance (Al-Sahafi, 2015).

Thus far, I have reviewed the literature relating to heritage language maintenance and development of ethnic minority children in different immigration contexts. This review offers insights into understanding why it is important to maintain the heritage language in immigrant children, and what factors reinforce its maintenance in multilingual and multicultural societies. This review also shows that immigrant children's minority languages cannot be expected to be automatically maintained unless they are actively protected and promoted by parents and families, ethnic communities, and schools in the host society. Now that I have discussed theories, research findings, and various factors relating to heritage language maintenance of younger generations of immigrant families, I shift my attention to the factors that contribute to HL loss and how members of ethnic communities are impacted by the loss of their home language. Although the maintenance of heritage languages has been given more support in the last two decades, many researchers (Cummins, 2001a; Fillmore, 1991a; Hinton, 2001; Kouritzin, 1999) have pointed out that it is still common that the children of immigrant families lose their HL in the host society due to the influence of different factors (e.g., education, peer and social pressure, and the lack of resources to support their HL maintenance). Thus, immigrant children's heritage language maintenance should be framed in relation to the potential consequences of its loss, to

raise awareness to find possible research-based solutions for heritage language maintenance in ethnic minority children.

3.4 Heritage Language Loss

Despite the importance of maintaining heritage language in the next generations of immigrant children, it is often the case that minority ethnic children experience minority language loss in their host society. Research on immigrant multilingual children across the world shows that it is challenging to maintain HL when the children are exposed to the majority language, and in most cases, these children experience language shift towards the latter (Clyne, 2003; Fillmore, 1991a). Younger generations of immigrants are perhaps more prone to HL loss than adults (Fillmore, 1991b; Hinton, 2001). When a shift in language usage does occur, it is towards the majority language (Pendakur, 1990, p.4). In such situations, it becomes challenging to use both the majority and minority languages. Rather, ethnic minority students experience subtractive bilingualism as a result of the intensive exposure to the dominant language (Clyne, 2003; Cummins, 2001a; Fillmore, 1991b). Shifts in language usage in Montréal which do take place are split between English and French […] because of the fact that half of all persons in Montréal reporting heritage languages as mother tongues also report an ability to speak both English and French (Pendakur, 1990, p. 4). Fillmore (1991a) puts it that HL loss has a great negative impact on the linguistic, social and national performance of children. In the Canadian context, Kouritzin (1999) aimed at exploring the meaning of the loss of HL of immigrants. She collected data for her study through interviewing 21 adults who had lost their heritage languages as children. Kouritzin observed a link between the age of the participants and their attitude toward their HL. Younger participants associated their HL loss to loss of opportunities for a future career, while the older participants linked their HL loss with the loss of contact to their

ethnic identity and cultural heritage. Kouritzin concluded that HL loss is a powerful negative individual experience. She warned that cultural and familial ties might be weakened as a result of heritage language loss because of the lack of communication between children and the parents in the families (Kouritzin, 1999). Fishman (1966) described how HL could be lost in three generations. He explained that HL is spoken most of the time by the immigrant parents. Conversely, their children use the dominant language more than their HL, and their grandchildren may ultimately shift to the dominant language. Fishman's HL loss process was well documented by R. L. Garcia and Diaz (1992) who found that children's use of their HL decreases as they grow up and have more contact with the dominant language of the host society.

The processes of HL loss might differ depending on the social situations and individual experiences of immigrant families. As discussed above, when ethnic minority students learn the majority language of their host society, they are likely to use it more than their HL, which result in the loss of their HL when it does not have sufficient support. Cummins (1978) explained that the intensive exposure to the majority language shouldn't threaten the development of the mother tongue if there are sufficient contexts to maintain it outside the school. However, if there is not enough exposure to HL in the outside environment, then the majority language will restrain its development. In the next section, I briefly review various factors that are linked to immigrant children's HL loss in multilingual societies.

3.4.1 Factors associated with HL loss.

Fillmore (1991b) indicated that the issue of HL loss could not be addressed without taking into account immigrant children's social context. In multilingual and multicultural societies, immigrant children are challenged by powerful social pressures when they start going to school. They are forced to assimilate into the host society through the rapid acquisition of the

majority language (Fillmore, 1991b), which is especially true in Québec as explained in chapter 2. This means that ethnic minority students are likely to lose their HL rapidly in the process of acquiring the majority language (Fillmore, 1991b), especially when there is not enough support for their heritage language in their home or the outside school (Cummins, 1981). This pressure can come, for example, from their peers in school and may lead them to think that their differences could hinder their sense of membership in the majority group in school. (Hinton, 2001).

One of the most important factors causing immigrant students' HL loss in an immigrant family is parents' choice of the home language (Alzayed, 2015, p. 263). According to Hinton (2001), parents' language choice at home may increase the possibility of their children's HL loss. However, Fillmore (1991a) claims that immigrant parents are excited to see their children acquire the dominant language of the host society and thus they do not implement a policy that allows only HL to be spoken at home. As such, children do not see its usefulness (Ching & Kung, 1997). At the family level, parental beliefs affect parental language behavior which in turn may significantly influence their children's language use pattern (Yu, 2010, p. 3). Many studies reported that the parents with the best intentions to preserve their language, end up with language shift in their children (Hinton, 2001; B. Y. Lee, 2013; Turjoman, 2013; Yu, 2010). The best example is Yu's (2010) study, in her endeavor to find how parental beliefs influence the language use of parents in their home with their children, Yu had eight recent immigrant families in New Zealand fill out questionnaires on their language beliefs and attitudes and language use in their home. She also tape-recorded the speech patterns of the families in their homes for sixty minutes each month throughout a one-year period. She found that parental language use does not always reflect their attitudes, in that many parents reported positive attitudes toward language

maintenance. However, their attitudes did not always translate to language maintenance. De Houwer (1999) pointed out that "attitudes and beliefs as expressed in interviews are not necessarily the attitudes that people really hold" (p.84). Nor do these "overtly expressed attitudes and beliefs necessarily coincide with overt or less consciously held attitudes and beliefs" (De Houwer, 1999, p. 84). Yu (2010) indicated that the parents in her study under-reported their use of the majority language in their homes. She attributes this to the fact that human behavior is regulated by action theories, namely: *Espoused Theory* and *Language in Use Theory.* Espoused theory refers to the worldview and values on which people believe their behavior is based, whereas language-in-use refers to the worldview and values that are implied by their behavior (Yu, 2010, p. 3). She argues that most people are not aware that their actions do not reflect their values. In this sense, Sakamoto (2006) investigated parents' efforts to promote bilingualism in Toronto, Canada. She concluded that parents were very positive about Japanese. However, many of them said that if they were proficient in English, they would give up Japanese. Similarly, in her study on the maintenance of Korean as a heritage language, Shin (2005) reported that although parents had positive attitudes towards their mother tongue, they encouraged their children to speak English at home.

At a social level, the attitudes of the society towards a language or a community group could also influence people's language behavior in relation to language maintenance and language shift. Hostile and suppressive beliefs toward the minority language can result in either greater efforts to maintain it or language assimilation (Yu, 2010, p. 2). It is important here that I revisit Québec's interculturalism policy, discussed in section 2.2. The policy emphasizes the need to integrate the identities of immigrants and minority groups into the mainstream identity and culture (i.e., "Québécois identity and culture" (Mahrouse, 2010, p. 86). The identities of

minority groups become subordinated to maintain both Québécois culture and an ever-expanding inclusive culture (Hutcheon, 1994). Yu (2010) reported that knowing the advantages of developing the majority language in the marketplace in the mainstream society and the disadvantages of an inadequate level of the language in question force the immigrant families to focus on improving their skills in the majority language and failing to maintain their home language. With regard to involuntary language loss among Asian-American immigrants, through a set of linguistic autobiographies written by about 250 students, Hinton (2001) reveals that the introduction of English within the family by parents accelerates children's HL loss. As immigrant parents' level of proficiency in English grows, they start using it in their home with their children to help them acquire it more quickly. Moreover, parents are concerned about their children's ability to succeed in mainstream education. This causes their attention to stray away from the use of heritage language to the use of the dominant language in their homes, especially when their children start to go to school (Li, 2006). The previously mentioned studies all support that the assimilative policies of the host societies put pressure on parents to assimilate into the mainstream culture and language.

Early exposure to the majority language is another factor causing HL loss in immigrant families (Fillmore, 1991a). Fillmore conducted a study to explore how bilingual educational programs may affect the language use of children. Interviews with 1001 families all around the U.S were analyzed. Of these families, 311 were Hispanic families (the sample group) whose children attended preschool programs in Spanish. The data collected from the sample group served as the base on which the researcher compared the language quality of other children who attended English only or bilingual preschool programs. Fillmore found that younger children in the immigrant family are more prone to HL loss due to early exposure to the dominant language

which their older siblings bring home from school. The findings suggest that the earlier young children are exposed to the majority language, the greater the negative effects on their HL. As noted above, HL loss is usually witnessed in immigrant children when they start school in the host society. The minority students' HLs are not actively promoted in school, where they are instructed in the majority language for faster integration into the mainstream society (Cummins, 2001a). Ghosh and Abdi (2004) report that the assimilationist policies in education in Canada had resulted in immigrant students' HLs being neglected and devalued. Linguistic and ethnic diversity in Canada was considered as a threat to the mainstream society because of the different cultures and languages of ethnic minority groups who were resistant to assimilation. The society's negative attitude toward linguistic and ethnic minority students' HLs and culture cause them to form a negative self-concept toward their HL, culture, history, and even ethnic identities. The negative self-concept of immigrant students toward their own ethnic groups then leads to HL loss (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004).

Length of residence in the host society was also reported to have a negative impact on HL loss in immigrant families (Huls & Mond, 1992; Yu, 2010). Yu (2010) found the use of mother tongue in the home dropped significantly in immigrant families to New Zealand within 28 months of arrival. Huls and Mond (1992) conducted a study to see if the length of residency in a foreign country could have an effect on L1 loss in two families that migrated to the Netherlands. One family which the researcher calls the *Five* family migrated 5 years before the study and the other family, the *Fifteen* family migrated 20 years before. The study aimed to explore expectant Turkish attrition through recording natural linguistic behaviors of the two Turkish families. The researchers intended to identify whether the *Fifteen* family spoke less Turkish and the *Five* family spoke more Turkish and less Dutch. They anticipated that the children of the *Fifteen*

family would employ Dutch grammar in Turkish, which would occur less with the children of the *Five* family. They further examined who spoke more Turkish, the parents or the children, and they compared the two families. The results showed that the longer the family resided in the Netherlands, the less the family used L1 and the more they used L2 (and vice versa). It is to be noted that the sample group in this study is very small. However, its findings support Yu's (2010) findings that the longer period of immigration may have a negative impact on immigrant families HL loss.

3.4.2 Consequences of HL loss.

As reviewed above, there are many factors that cause HL loss in children with immigrant backgrounds. HL loss in immigrant students often causes a variety of negative consequences to the immigrant family. To begin with, the loss of HL in linguistic minority students can lead to the formation of negative ethnic identity, since language represents the most significant aspect of culture and identity (Fillmore, 1996; Kouritzin, 1999). Kouritzin (1999) found that immigrant students resist becoming linguistic and ethnic minorities by speaking the majority language and behaving like members of the mainstream culture. In her study, B.Y. Lee (2013) reported that one child in her study was ashamed of her Korean name and asked her mother to only call her by her American name, especially at school, which the mother approved. For visible minorities, the "apparent distinction in color and/or culture produces a sense of discomfort" (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004, p. 70). Thus, "they may cope with their subordination […] by developing oppositional social identities and cultural frames of reference in opposition to the dominant culture" (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004, p. 71). The authors maintain that the insecurity of ethnic minority students about their heritage language and culture comes from the "us-versus-them politics of location, in which

visible minority groups remain immigrants in the perception of mainstream groups, even after several generations" (p. 71).

HL loss is also reported to have negative outcomes on the academic achievement of ethnic minority students (Cummins, 2001a; Fillmore, 1991a). Cummins (2001b) maintains that intolerance of the HLs of immigrant students in school has negative impacts on their academic performance. He claims that if teachers discourage immigrant students from using their HLs in schools, then their optimal participation in the classroom is not likely to be achieved. Fillmore (1991a) also links HL loss to educational difficulties in school. She believes that when immigrant students neglect their home language before fully acquiring the majority language, they are likely to "end up with fossilized versions of interlanguages" (p. 345). The two studies imply that the loss of HL in immigrant students will hinder their academic success.

Conflicts in immigrant families is another major consequence of HL loss (e.g., Cummins, 2001b; Fillmore, 2000, 1991b; E. Lee, 1996; Hinton, 2001; Kouritzin, 1999; Thomas & Cao, 1999). Studies conducted by Fillmore (2000) and Hinton (2001) report the negative influence HL loss has on family relations as a result of the weakening of communication between generations. E. Lee's (1996) reported that the immigrant parents in her study lost control over their children because of the children's loss of their heritage language and their developed linguistic abilities in the majority language. She said that parents could not maintain authority when their children became their translators. Likewise, Thomas and Cao (1999) investigated language loss in a Vietnamese family in the U.S by analyzing samples of their discourse. The results of the study revealed that the parents lost authority as English took over in their homes. The children under investigation did not give authority to their parents with respect to the decision making of the children's schooling. As a result of the language gap caused by the children's increased

competency in the majority language and the parents' lack of sufficient communicative skills in English, the family members could not communicate well. In addition, Fillmore's (2000) conducted a qualitative study with a Chinese immigrant family in the U.S which involved 4 adult members and 4 children. The results of the study revealed that the language shift from Chinese to English in the children negatively influenced their family relations because of miscommunication between the adults and the children.

The theories and research findings presented thus far strongly support the vital role that immigrant families play in intergenerational language maintenance. My research therefore focuses on the role of mothers in the maintenance of Arabic in their children in Montréal. As the theories and research findings presented in this chapter have manifested, the development of linguistic minority students' HL is beneficial for their cognitive development, academic success, acquisition of second languages, and for the maintenance of ethnic and religious identity. It also entails personal and societal benefits. Therefore, HL maintenance needs to be supported by ethnic communities, schools, host societies, and most importantly the immigrant families. Only if the family initiates home language maintenance and provides ample context for its use, supportive policies and educational provisions would likely to be of benefit (Fishman, 1991).

3.5 Summary

In this chapter, I briefly described the attitudes toward ethnic minority immigrants' HLs in Canada. I then discussed the theories and research studies pertaining to HL maintenance and loss. In particular, I emphasized the role of immigrant parents as primary caregivers of their children in maintaining their home language in the next generations of children. The role of family is critically important in HL maintenance in the Canadian context since the educational

system in Canada and Québec do not provide adequate support for the maintenance of HLs, a marker of identity.

In the next chapter, I state the research questions of the study. I highlight my position as a researcher and immigrant mother. Finally, I explain the methodology and methods used to collect and analyze data for this research study.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the qualitative research design used to gather and analyze data for this study. I first state my research questions. Then, I situate my role in the study. After that, I elaborate on the research design, focusing on participants, instruments used to collect data, and procedures followed in data collection and analysis.

4.1 Research Questions

The study was designed to gain insights into Libyan immigrant mothers' attitudes toward Arabic maintenance in their children and their efforts to help them maintain it as their heritage language in Montréal. Based on the purpose of my research study, the central research questions that frame this study are as follows:

1) What are Libyan immigrant mothers' attitudes toward Arabic as a heritage language?

2) How are these mothers involved in the language development and maintenance of their school-aged children?

4.2 Researcher's Positionality

Merriam (1998) recommended researchers to fully define their positionality in the research to strengthen the reliability of their qualitative studies. Patton (2002) agrees that articulating the researcher's perspectives as an instrument of the research is important because the researcher's biases can influence the data collection and analysis. According to Merriam (1998), research interest can be motivated by a number of factors. One of them is personal experience. As an immigrant mother of two children, I am aware that my background, values, and understanding may affect my interpretations and findings. Therefore, I devoted this section to identify and reflect on my different roles within this study.

I was born in Libya to Muslim and well-educated parents. I grew up in a small city in the eastern part of the country where everyone was monolingual and monocultural. As a little girl, I always admired my father and wanted to speak English like him, so I can enjoy good economic and social status as an adult. I asked him to teach me English and so he did. Later the government legislated the teaching of second languages at elementary and secondary schools. I had ESL classes 4 hours a week at the elementary school. I picked it up easily because I was really motivated, however, my classmates always suffered due to the lack of resources and the untrained teachers. My goal was to have a degree in Teaching English as a Second Language, secure a scholarship, travel abroad to pursue higher education and go home to help build a better future. When I traveled to Canada, I realized there was a greater cause than teaching English in my country, and that is saving Arabic from being lost in children in immigration contexts.

Being actively involved in the Libyan community, I observed how Libyan mothers suffered from the loss of Arabic in their children. In fact, I found myself in a situation where my child was unable to communicate with me in Arabic, which was frustrating for both of us. As an immigrant mother, I know the desire and challenges encountered by these women to pass on their heritage and culture to their children. I believed that I share some of the experiences of these women, those pertaining to their perspectives toward Arabic and their efforts, if any, to maintain it in their children. Finally, as a graduate student in a Second Language Education program, I became further interested in theories and practices of heritage language maintenance.

Given my cultural and professional background, I had the privilege of being an insider as well as an outsider with respect to the Libyan community. According to Johnson and Christensen (2004), I am an insider to the community because I share the same culture and social experiences as them. On the other hand, my participants viewed me as a researcher who is only interested in

collecting data. For objectivity reasons, I embraced both my roles as an insider and outsider as recommended by Johnson & Christensen (2004). My multiple roles allowed me to reflect on my practices as an immigrant mother and as a qualitative researcher.

4.3 Research Design

Different methodologies have been adopted to address issues in the field of heritage language. Depending on the objectives of the research, some researchers have used quantitative approaches (Alba et al., 2002; O. Garcia, 1995; Hakuta & D'Andrea, 1992), while others have employed qualitative research designs (Bradshaw, 2006; Gogonas, 2012; Fillmore, 2000; Hinton, 2001; Lao, 2004; Park & Sarkar, 2007).

Quantitative researchers are interested in finding if relations or co-occurrences among variables exist and, if so, to which degree (Mackey & Gass, 2015). They seek to frame and project the phenomenon under study, rather than identify its effects (Bickman & Rog, 2009). Martin (2009) employed quantitative methods to examine the relationship between racism and attitudes towards Arabic as a heritage language of 94 Arab-American parents. Zeng (1997) used descriptive statistics to determine the degree of Chinese maintenance in American-Chinese adults, the extent of use of Chinese to carry out daily activities as well as to identify variables affecting maintenance or loss of Chinese. Likewise, Rochester (2012) tried to identify correlations between two variables (i.e. heritage culture, including HL and academic performance) among First Nations students. Henshaw (2015) quantified assessment results to check if HL and L2 learners enrolled in HL classes benefit from the interaction among each other.

On the other hand, qualitative researchers perceive facts as being shaped by individuals, who serve as the foundation for change (Stainback & Stainback, 1988). Qualitative methods help

researchers gain in-depth insights into participants' perspectives (Burns, 2000). Maykut and Morehouse (1994) believe that qualitative researchers are interested in the participants' interpretations of the world, thus they seek to understand their behaviors and expressions. Gogonas (2012) carried out a qualitative research to investigate the extent to which language has shifted in the children of Arabic speaking immigrants to Greece, and what are the factors that caused the language shift. Data were collected through questionnaires that the children had to answer, and parents' interviews. Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe (2009) explored the attitudes of immigrant Chinese families in Philadelphia and their second generation children towards HL maintenance, the efforts made by parents to preserve the Chinese language in their children, as well as children's feelings towards these efforts through interviews and observation. In the same vein, Park and Sarkar (2007) conducted a qualitative study of nine Korean immigrant parents in Montréal to explore the efforts of parents to maintain their children's heritage language and also parents' attitudes towards their heritage language.

Because I am interested in exploring mothers' role in HL loss or maintenance in depth, and drawing on the qualitative approach the studies reviewed earlier adopted to address the parental influence on HL development in children, I collected the data for this study through interviews and observations. Denzin & Lincoln (2000) claim that using different types of qualitative data provide the researcher with different perspectives which could trigger deeper and more diverse insights of possible answers to the research questions. I believed that by integrating two different sources of qualitative data, I would gain richer and clearer understandings of mothers' perceptions toward their HL and their endeavors to preserve it. Therefore, interviews and observations were employed to investigate the aforementioned research questions.

4.4 Participants

The participants in this study were Libyan mothers and their children living in Montréal. To be recruited for the study, the participants had to meet all of the recruiting criteria. Perry (2011) stated that having recruiting criteria facilitates the selection process of the sample to be studied. I set the recruiting criteria as follows. First, Libyan mothers who had at least one child between 7 and 12 years old. Second, mothers who had been in Canada for at least 5 years with their children. Third, mothers who spoke Arabic, more specifically the Libyan dialect as their first language. As for the children, they had to be between 7 and 12 years old, they were born or had lived in Canada for at least 5 years, and they must speak English and/or Arabic.

Being Libyan myself and a speaker of Arabic as L1 facilitated the recruiting process. I prepared a letter to invite potential participants to participate in the research (see appendix A). After receiving the *Certificate of Ethical Acceptability* from the Research Ethics Board, I published the letter on Facebook groups for Libyan women in Montréal. I also contacted acquaintances to invite them to participate and/ or ask them to suggest more potential participants. The snowball method worked better. In other words, every participant referred me to another they believed would fit and might have the willingness to partake in my study. I contacted them all, but at the end, only six mothers and ten of their children were recruited.

The mothers were all born in Libya and had been in Canada for eight to eighteen years. They immigrated to Canada for different reasons, but mainly for pursuit of higher education. They had a total of twenty-two children, however, only ten of them fit the recruiting criteria. Eight of the participating children were born in Montréal, and two were born in Libya. Of the ten children, seven were boys and three were girls. All the ten children went to French or English-French bilingual schools and were in grades three to five.

Table 1 Summary of the participants

Mother (pseudonyms)	Length of residency (in years)	Child(ren) *pseudonyms*	Age of children	Place of birth
Ariam	8	Chris	9	Libya
Hanna	18	Elana	12	Canada
		Damon	10	Canada
		Jad	7	Canada
Kate	12	Loulou	9	Canada
Liza	14	Jacob	8	Canada
Sara	18	Messi	10	Canada
Tala	9	Sabrina	11	Canada
		Romeo	8	Canada
		Mike	7	Libya

4.5 Instruments

4.5.1 Interviews.

Interviews help the researcher to elicit information on people's perspectives that may be otherwise unnoticeable (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Denscombe (2010) described interviews as a tool that enables the researcher to gain a more elaborate understanding of people's beliefs that

cannot be explained in a few words. I chose to interview only mothers because the responsibility of raising and disciplining children is assigned to mothers in Arab families (Barakat, 2012). The role given to mothers in the Arab family as described by Barakat applies also to Libyan mothers. I expected that they would provide more informative data since they are the primary caregivers for the children.

My interviews with the participants were semi-structured, mainly because this interview style provided flexibility by promoting a natural and realistic conversation, which offers deeper insights into each participant's responses (Fontana & Frey, 2000). In semi-structured interviews, the researcher lists questions and uses them as a guide to direct the interview; however, the focus is on giving the interviewees the freedom to express themselves (Denscombe, 2010). The interview included nineteen questions divided into five categories (see appendix D). The first category asked questions about mothers' residency in Montréal. The second category was about the educational background of mothers. The third one was about the involvement of mothers with their children and their role in Arabic development in their children. The fourth category was about mothers' perceptions of their children's Arabic development. The last one was about general family information. Interviews took between thirty to sixty minutes.

All the interviews were audio-recorded. Denscombe (2010) suggested that researchers can rely on their memories to conduct interviews. However, he warned that human memory can fail the researcher. Audio-recording helps the interviewer to keep the interview as is, i.e., as it happened in real time (Thomas, 1998) and facilitates the analysis later on (Mackey & Gass, 2015). To record the interviews, I used two smartphones. After each interview, I transferred the audio file to my personal computer, so it will not be vulnerable to loss. I also made a backup copy on a flash drive that I am keeping in a locked drawer.

4.5.2 Observation.

Maxwell (1996) stated that interviews and observations complement each other. In interviews, the researcher hears what people say, but cannot determine if that corresponds to what they do. Observations, for their part, help the researcher reach conclusions about aspects of behavior, including those not mentioned by interviewees during the interviews (Maxwell, 1996). After interviewing the mothers, I set up observation sessions on a different day to check their at-home practices with their children to validate what they said during the interviews. During the observations, I sat down quietly, observed the children as they interacted with their mothers over a period of time ranging from thirty-eight to eighty minutes depending on the busy schedules of mothers, and took field notes. I mainly focused on their language use while they conversed with their mothers and/ or their siblings. After each session, I typed the field notes and attached them to the relevant interview transcript.

4.6 Procedures

After I had recruited the participants, I contacted them and explained that I would need to see them twice. The first time would be to conduct an interview with them, the mothers, and the second, to observe them at home while they interacted with their children. The time and place of the interviews were at the convenience of the participants. After the participants set the time for the first meeting, we met and went through the consent form (see appendix B) together and I had them sign a copy for me and gave them a copy to keep for themselves. I asked each participant to choose a pseudonym for herself. I then interviewed them in Arabic. I made the decision to conduct the interviews in Arabic for two main reasons. First, Arabic is the first language of all the participants. I believed using their first language would make them more comfortable and communicative. Second, I wanted to embrace my role as a heritage language advocate through

promoting the use of Arabic among Arabic speakers. However, the bi/multilingual mothers code-switched at times. The interviews were audio-recorded using two smartphones. Three interviews were conducted at the participants' homes and the other three were at cafés. Some interviews were longer than others because some mothers opened up and shared a lot, while others simply answered the questions. The interviews lasted for about twenty to sixty minutes. After finishing the interviews, I asked the mothers to set a time for me to meet with their children. At the observation sessions, I sat with the children and we went through the assent form (see appendix C). Each child signed a copy for me and was given a copy to keep. After that, I asked them to choose pseudonyms, which they were excited about. I then sat down quietly, observed them while they interacted with their mothers and siblings, and took notes on their language use. I transferred the interviews to my personal computer to keep them safe and I deleted them from my smartphones. As soon as I finished all the interviews, I transcribed them. I did not translate them, rather I left them in their original form in non-standard Arabic, ready for analysis.

Table 2 Summary of the interviews and observations

Family (pseudonyms)	Length of interview (in minutes)	Interview site	Length of observation sessions	Site of observation sessions
Ariam's family	20	Café	80	Café
Hanna's family	23	Café	44	Participants' home
Kate's family	41	Participants' home	73	Participants' home
Liza's family	35	Participants' home	38	Participants' home
Sara's family	26	Café	44	Participants' home

Tala's family	60	Participants' home	50	Participants' home

4.7 Data Analysis

The analysis of the study was guided by thematic analysis, a strategy used to discover patterns and develop themes from qualitative data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). After transcribing my interviews and attaching the comments from my observational field notes to them, I categorized all my data by codes and themes. In other words, I performed six phases of thematic analysis as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) to identify the re-emerging and meaningful patterns in the data. I first familiarized myself with the data by reading the interview transcripts carefully and compared them to the field notes. I then generated initial coding to link data to its source. After that, I searched for and reviewed themes. Finally, I labeled the emerging themes and outlined them. As a result, three main themes repeatedly surfaced across the data set (i.e., identity, language learning as perceived by mothers, and Libyan mothers' efforts to maintain Arabic in the children). The results obtained from the data will be presented and discussed in details in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the major findings that emerged from interviewing six Libyan mothers residing in Montréal and observing their language use in their homes with their children. The analysis revealed three main themes based on the research questions and as all of the mothers highlighted them. The first theme revolves around identity. The second theme is about language learning as perceived by mothers. The last theme explains mothers' efforts to maintain Arabic. Each theme is divided up into three to four sub-themes which will be visited and explained one by one. The final section of this chapter discusses the language use of mothers and children at home as observed by myself, the researcher. The results are illustrated by excerpts from the interviews. Those excerpts are the only sections of interview transcripts that I translated into English since the interviews were conducted and transcribed in Arabic (Libyan dialect). Here, I will provide the original excerpts followed by the translated versions.

The data that the participating mothers generated with me provided insights into the hardships immigrant mothers go through as they navigate their host societies looking for coping mechanisms or rather integration techniques that nicely intertwine with their culture and values. I met with the mothers twice. The first time, I conducted interviews with them in Arabic. They were very welcoming, forthcoming and engaged throughout the process. They gave me tips on parenting and researching since some of them have experience with higher education. They were very willing to participate not only to further research, but to support the cause and raise awareness, and in some cases to help out a fellow researcher. I met with each one of them for a second time in their homes with their children to observe their language use in natural settings. An overview of the data collection procedures was presented in Chapter Three.

5.2 Participants' Personas

In this section, I introduce the mothers whom I engaged with for this study. I draw here on the interviews I had with them to develop a contextualized understanding of their family dynamics and perspectives.

5.2.1 Ariam.

Ariam is a medical doctor, currently working on obtaining her Canadian equivalency certificate so she can become a practitioner. She came to Canada with her husband, who intended to pursue his higher education and her one-year-old son (Chris) in 2009. She recently took ESL courses at McGill to prepare herself for the equivalency exam that she could not take before since she had two more children. She described herself as the primary caregiver for the children sixty percent of the time, since their father was busy with his doctoral program. She valued Libyan culture and Islamic upbringing, and she was determined to root them in her children. She insisted on teaching her children Arabic early on because she did not want them to suffer later, as she did when she tried to learn French.

5.2.2 Hanna.

Hanna traveled to Canada to visit her brother in 1999 when she met her husband, a political opponent of the Libyan regime. She learned English and was determined to learn French, but she had to stop when she started having her children since she was determined never to send them to daycare. She said she would rather live in Libya with her husband and four children so they can grow up among their extended families, but it was not an option for them. She worked with an alternative plan as she explained "making friends a family." She explained that her husband worked most of the time which made her responsible for raising the children. Her husband is partially involved in disciplining them.

Having been away from her family, Hanna wanted her children to grow up to be proud of their heritage, so she mentioned that she practised all the Libyan traditions, Islamic principles and implemented only Arabic at-home policy in her home.

5.2.3 Kate.

Kate arrived in Canada with her husband and toddler in 2005 in pursuit of higher education. She finished her Master's program in Chemical Engineering and decided to work from home so she could spend more time with her four children. The family could not go back to Libya due to the war that took place in 2011. She loved her life in Canada since she can be more involved with her children as opposed to if she stayed in Libya. She searched for all possible venues to transfer her language and culture to her children. She spent time with Arabophone friends, she went to Libyan and Muslim festivals, and she is actively involved in the Quranic and Arabic classes offered by a Mosque in her neighborhood. She also encouraged her multilingual children to learn as many languages as they could as she believed that multilingualism is a powerful tool.

5.2.4 Liza.

Liza was doing her Master's when her ex-husband decided to take her and their two children to Canada to pursue his higher education fourteen years ago. She said she learned English during her first year in Canada through watching TV with her children. She furthered her proficiency in English by taking ESL courses at McGill where she also obtained her Graduate Diploma in Accounting. She also learned French when she became a permanent resident of Canada. She said she was the only caregiver of her four children all the time since their father was busy with his doctoral program. She criticized the Libyan culture and said she was only involved in the Muslim community. She felt upset that she spent less time with her children in

their early childhood years and regretted not maintaining Arabic in them. According to her, she tried to teach them Arabic, but she was too busy, and communicating in English with them was easier and more convenient. Her mother moved to Canada to live with Liza and her four children when she separated from her husband. She said her mother helped her children learn Arabic since it was the only language she spoke and understood.

5.2.5 Sara.

Sara, the monolingual stay-at-home mother, came to Montréal eighteen years ago to join her husband who fled the country for political execution. Sara made a decision not to expose her four children to any second language in their early childhood. She never sent them to daycare or any other child care services. She believed that children could acquire the majority languages quickly at school, but they would not have enough exposure to Arabic. According to her, her children could speak Arabic, French, and English fluently now. She spent most of the time with them teaching them the Quran and Arabic literacy, while their father provided for the family.

5.2.6 Tala.

Tala and her husband came to Canada in 2005 to pursue their higher education. They enrolled in ESL classes and finished their Master's programs together. She said they both were equally involved with their three children. They traveled back to Libya in 2009, stayed there for three years and moved back to Montréal in 2012 to start their doctoral programs. She has significant disagreements with the Libyan traditions, yet she believed it was essential to transfer their culture and religion to their children to give them self-confidence and enable them to fit in when they eventually return to Libya. She was concerned about Arabic development in her younger children (Romeo and Mike) because they were very young when they started going to the daycare. Her eldest daughter (Sabrina) was schooled in Libya, so her Arabic is fully

developed, according to Tala. She insisted that watching Arabic TV helped her explain Islamic values she could not otherwise explain. The table below outlines their profiles.

Table 3 Participants' Profiles

Name *pseudonyms*	Ariam	Hanna	Kate	Liza	Sara	Tala
Reason for immigration	Pursuing higher education	Escaping political execution	Pursuing higher education	Pursuing higher education	Escaping political execution	Pursuing higher education
Level of education	B.M in General Medicine	B.B.A in business administration	M.Sc. in Chemical Engineering	GradDip. In Accounting	Associate's in accounting	Ph.D. in Computer Science
Language(s) spoken	Arabic, English	Arabic, English	Arabic, English, French	Arabic, English, French	Arabic	Arabic, English
Immediate family in Canada	Husband, three children, and brother	Husband, four children, and two brothers with their families	Husband, and four children	Mother, and four children	Husband, and four children	Husband, three children, and a sister with her family
Reported involvement with children and other caregivers *in percentage*	Araim 60 % / Husband 40%	Hanna 70 % / Husband 30%	Kate 80 % / Husband 20%	Liza (single mother) 100%	Sara 80% / Husband 20%	Tala 50% / Husband 50%

5.3 Results of interviews

5.3.1 Identity.

All the mothers interviewed for this study expressed very positive feelings and attitudes towards Arabic as their heritage language. When they talked about how important it is to transfer

Arabic to their children, they seemed to agree that Arabic represented them. They wanted their children to learn Arabic because they thought it was an integral part of their identity.

Sara, the mother of Messi, said that passing Arabic to the children was a must because Arabic makes up their identity.

<div dir="rtl">

العربية لازم يتعلموها الصغار لانها جزء من هويتهم, كيف بيكونو عرب و ما يعرفوش يتكلمو وعربي
</div>

*The children have to learn Arabic; it is part of who they are, they cannot be Arabs
and not be able to speak Arabic.*

Ariam, Chris's mother also stressed the importance of teaching Arabic to her children as it reflects who they are, according to Ariam.

<div dir="rtl">

توا انا مقتنعة لازم نعلم اطفالي العربي لان العربية هويتنا, لو ضيعو العربية معناها كارثة
</div>

*I am positive about teaching Arabic to my children because it is our identity, it is
a disaster if they lose it.*

5.3.2 Fear of loss of identity.

Like Ariam, the other mothers did not only show positive attitudes towards Arabic maintenance. They, in fact, showed strong negative feelings towards Arabic attrition when they were asked to give their opinions about Arabic loss in the children. They used very powerful adjectives to express their discontent. They were mainly concerned about the children's inability to communicate with their families back in Libya.

Tala, the mother of Sabrina, Romeo, and Mike expressed her fears about the time they would travel back to Libya. She said it would be hard for the children to fit in if they lost their identity and heritage language. Her fears were transferred to her children whom she reported were also worried that their extended family in Libya would not understand them when they speak Arabic.

<div dir="rtl">

النقطة اللي ديما خايفين عليها هي الهوية ديما خايفين على ضياع الهوية اللي هما اللغة و الدين
</div>

ف احني لازم نحافظو على هويتنا لان احني راجعين مانا قاعدين هنا دايما لو ماحافظنا عليها
بيكون بينا و بين الناس مسافة, حتى لما نجبو سيرة ليبيا و مرواحة ليبيا يقولو احني نفهمو ما عندن امشكلة
لكن احني خايفين هما ما يفهموناش لما نتكلمو خايفين ما يفهموناش.

*What scares us the most is the loss of our identity, which I believe is made up
of language and religion. I keep reminding myself and my children that we will
be back to Libya someday, and if we do not maintain our identity, there will be
such a big gap between the people there and us. The children are also
concerned about not being understood by our family members when we go
back to Libya.*

Likewise, Liza was afraid of the time when Jacob will visit Libya. She was worried that

he would not be understood and that would be hard on him. She clarified that it did not make

sense to be an Arab but unable to communicate in Arabic.

معقولة يقعدو عرب و ميعرفوش يحكو عربي كارثة يمشي للبلاد ما يعرفش يتكلم مع الناس صعبة ف
هم مش حيفهمو عليه حيتعب و لا هو حيفهمهم ف حتقعد في صعوبة في التعامل.

*I really can't believe that they are Arabs, yet they cannot speak Arabic. It is a
catastrophe if he goes to Libya and not be able to communicate with people
there. It would be challenging for Jacob since he would not understand them
and they would not understand him.*

Hanna, Elana, Damon and Jad's mother showed deep emotions as she talked about

Arabic loss in the children. She linked the loss of Arabic to the loss of one's identity.

خسارة كبيرة, لغتهم و لغة بلادهم و لغتهم الام و الاصل نحن عرب, مفروض منخسورهش عشان
ما نخسرو هويتنا.

*We are Arabs, and Arabic is our language, our native language, it is our heritage,
we should never lose it so that we will not lose our identity. It would be such a big
loss.*

5.3.3 Fear from previous experiences.

Some mothers mentioned that having seen other Libyan families suffer because of Arabic

attrition in their children taught them a lesson. They did not want to be in the same position when

they have had children or when their children were older. They explained that they decided to

pass Arabic to their children based on their fears to encounter the same difficulties that other families went through.

Tala talked about her experience when she and her husband first came to Canada. She said that they decided to teach their baby Arabic because they were afraid she would lose Arabic like the children of their Libyan friends.

نحن خذينا قرار من قبل لما كانت عندنا بس سابرينا كانت صغيرة مولودة مزالت بس كنا نشوفو في الناس الثانية الليبيين اللي قدامنا ولادهم كبار لاحظنا ان كل الاطفال معندهمش اللغة العربية, يعني في وسط البيت يتكلمو انجليزي, هذي وجعتنا بصراحة ف قعد صاينا رعب في النقطة هذي. تلقيهم مش مستوعبين انهم عرب ف احني نوينا ان شاء الله نحافظولهم ع العربي عشان ما ينسو اصلهم. اتفقنا ع الموضوع هذا.

We decided to teach Arabic to our children ever since Sabrina was very little. We have seen other Libyans who did not pass Arabic to their children. They actually speak English at home with them; it scared us, and yet we felt sorry for them… they do not know they are Arabs. So we both agreed to transfer Arabic to our children, we do not want to cause our children to forget who they are.

Ariam also talked about observing other Libyan families while they only interacted in English with their children. She said she did not understand why parents spoke English to their children. She was not happy to see the loss of Arabic in the children, and she decided not to repeat the same mistake as she said.

لا انا مش عارفه نشوف في هلبا ناس يقولو ان صغارنا يتكلمو انقليزي بس في الحوش و برا, و تلقي صغارهم ميتكلموش عربي, في منبش نكون هك منبش نكون السبب في خسارة اطفالي للعربية و اصولهم

I do not understand this; I see people speaking only in English with their children, I feel sorry that the children do not speak Arabic at all. I do not want to be like that. I do not want to cause my children to lose their Arabic and identity.

Before having had her children, Sara knew she had to teach them Arabic because she saw the inability of Libyan Canadian children to communicate with her in Arabic when she first arrived in Canada. She determined not only to teach Arabic to her children but rather to make it

their mother tongue. She said she did not send them to daycares because she wanted them to be exposed to Arabic only in their early childhood.

انـي قبـل مـا نجيـب صغـاري. شفـت ألعائلات كيـف يعانـو مفش لغـة فـي نـاس صغـار هم ميعرفوش يتكلمو بكل عربـي, يعنـي انـي مجربـة فـي نـاس عندهم بناتهم يعنـي كبـار فـي الهاي سكول مـا يتكلمـو عربـي. لانهـا مـا تعلماتـه فـي صغـر صعـب انـه تعلمـه فـي الكبـر. ف انـي صراحـة عنـدي اللـي قبلـي اخـذت منهـم درس, ف قـررت انـي صغـاري تكـون لغتهم الاولـى العربـي ان شـاء الله.

Before I had my children, I saw how other Libyan families are suffering because their children cannot speak Arabic. Some children were at high school by that time and yet were unable to communicate in Arabic. Because they did not teach them Arabic when they were little, it became hard for them to learn it when they grew up. I learned my lesson seeing these families, and I made up my mind to make Arabic the mother tongue of my children.

5.3.3.1 Arabic as a religious tool.

All the participating mothers practiced the Islamic faith. They considered Arabic as the language of their religion, by means of which they can practice Islam. For Muslims who wish to practice the Islamic faith, they need to perform five prayers a day at which they recite verses or chapters from Quran (i.e., the holy book for Muslims). These Quranic scripts have to be recited in Arabic, even for non-Arabophones. The mothers understood this requirement, and they expressed their intentions to pass Arabic to their children so they could practice the religion.

Liza, who is actively involved in Islamic community centers, witnessed how difficult it is for new converts to learn Arabic for religious purposes. She said that she wished Jacob would not have to go through the same hardships.

نحس فيها كارثة ان يفقد اللغة العربية, يعني اهم شي حفظ القران نشوف في اجانب مسلمين كيف يعانو عشان يتعلمو العربية, عشان يقرو قران ..لان اللغة العربية لغة القران لازم يتعلمها كيف يفهم القران و يصلي من غير ما يتعلمها

It is a disaster to lose Arabic. It is essential for children to learn Quran, I see non-Arab Muslims and how they suffer from learning Arabic so they can read Quran. Because Arabic is the language of Quran, he has to learn it, how can he understand Quran and pray if he does not learn Arabic.

Ariam, Kate (Loulou's mother), Sara and Hanna also stressed the importance of learning

Arabic for Muslims. They considered it an essential tool to practice the Islamic faith.

انا حريصة بصراحة ان اللغة ما تضيع بصراحة دائما نهتم انهم يحفظو سور عشان يقدرو يصلو بيهن

I am cautious that my children do not lose Arabic. In fact, I always make sure
they learn chapters from Quran so that they can perform their prayers. (Kate)

اللغة العربية لغة القران, لو احتي اهملنا ولادنا ان هما ما يتعلموش لغة عربية معناها مش حيتعلموه

Arabic is the language of Quran. If we neglected passing it to our children,
then they just won't learn Quran. (Ariam)

نحس فيها طامة, يكفي انها لغة القران, كيف ببو يصلو اذا متعلموش القران

Losing Arabic is catastrophic, it is the language of Quran, how can they pray
if they do not learn Quran. (Sara)

العربية هي لغة القران, اهم حاجة و اقل حاجة ان هما لازم يقرو القران عيالي لازم لما يكبرو
يعرفو قيمة انهم تعلمو العربية هي القران.
Arabic is the language of Quran; my children need to read Quran at least, they
will know the importance of learning Arabic when they grow up and be able to
read Quran. (Hanna)

5.3.4 Language learning as perceived by mothers.

5.3.4.1 Ability of children to absorb many languages.

All the mothers valued multilingualism. Most of them could at least speak two languages,

except for Sara who spoke only Arabic. They appreciated their stay in Montréal because it

offered the children the opportunity to acquire a minimum of three languages. They understood

that multilingualism did not hinder the academic performance of children. They instead thought

that multilingualism facilitated the children's academic achievement. There seemed to be a

common belief among them that children can learn up to six languages without any difficulties.

تعدد اللغات كويس انا نأيد ان العيل يتكلم اكثر من لغة, انا تمنى ان اولادي مزال ياخذو حتى لغة رابعة
لو صحلهم لان يعني المخ في هالفترة هذي يستقطب الكثير

Multilingualism is a good thing. I encourage children to learn as many languages. I wish my children can learn a fourth language if they like because the brain can absorb a lot at their age. (Kate)

حسيت تعدد اللغات يخلي الاطفال اذكياء انا بالنسبة نحكيلك على صغاري, نحس في صغاري عندهم قدرة استيعابية اكثر , هو ممكن يصيرلهم تأخير توا انا ولدي الثاني صارله تأخر في الكلام تقريبا احتمال او هوا هك طبيعته تداخلن عليه هلبا لغات وتوا ما شاء الله يتكلم فرنساوي و انقلش و ارابيك بطلاقة.

I feel that multilingualism make the children smarter. For my children, I found that they have more cognitive abilities. It might cause delays in speaking though. My second child started speaking very late because he was exposed to many languages, or it might be his nature, but now he speaks French, English, and Arabic fluently. (Ariam)

تعدد اللغات شئ رائع لان هي حتنمي قدرة الطفل الاستيعابية, اطفالي تعلمو اللغة الاولى العربي و الثانية انقلش وجتهم الفرنش. الطفل ف العمر هذا يقدر يتعلم حاجات واجدة.

Multilingualism is terrific, as it helps improve the child's cognitive abilities. My children first learned Arabic, then English and now they also speak French. The child can learn a lot at this age. (Hanna)

تعدد اللغات كويس عالنهاية, الطفل يقدر ياخذ ست لغات معندش مشكلة بكل, انا في وحدة قالتلي صعب راه تخشيها سنة اولى تقريها فرنسي و عربي وحيصير للعيل يتعب, بالعكس مصارلش و لا مشكلة كانت اني نتكلم مع ميسي عربي, خش للمدرسة خذا اللغة الفرنسبة في نفس الوقت, كان ناجح في اللغة العربية و ناجح في اللغة الفرنسية, و تعلم حتى الانجليزية لان الطفل ست لغات ياخذهن معندش مشكلة نهائي.

Multilingualism is really good. The child has no problem learning up to six languages. Someone told me it would be hard for my child to learn Arabic and French when he starts going to school. On the contrary, Messi had no problems at all. I spoke to him in Arabic, he went to school and learned French successfully, and he also learned English, because the child can learn up to six languages easily. (Sara)

5.3.4.2 Arabic as a complex language.

Five out of six of the mothers learned English when they arrived in Canada. They said that it took them only one year to be able to communicate and pursue their studies in English. They perceived it as a relatively easy language because of its easy syntax and the fact that it

was readily available. They were also taught Arabic grammar at the primary and secondary schools, and they believed it was very complex even for native speakers of Arabic.

The mothers are worried that if they do not teach Arabic to their children at an early age, it would be hard to do it later as they grow up. They stressed the importance of teaching them Arabic before English and French because as they claim, it was more complicated and harder to learn.

العربي هو اللي واعر, الانقليزي نحن في سنة تعلمناه يعني مش صعب. لازم الطفل يتعلم لغته قبل لانها صعبة مش ساهلة العرربي هوا اللي واعر يبي سنين بيش الواحد يتعلمه

Arabic is hard to learn; we learned English in one year, so it is not as hard. The child has to learn Arabic before because it is not easy, it is difficult, it takes years for someone to learn it. (Liza)

اللغة العربية يعني هي اصلا اصعب م الانجليزية وحتى الفرنسية , لو هوا ما تعلمهاش وهوا صغير صعب ان هوا يتعلماه و هوا كبير .

Arabic is actually harder than English and even French. If you did not pass to your child at a young age, it would be hard for him to learn when he grows up. (Ariam)

اللغة العربية صعبة جدا , لو الطفل ممتعلمهاش و هو صغير مستحيل ان يتعلمها لما يكبر.

Arabic is a super hard language; if the child did not learn it when young, it becomes impossible for him to learn it when they get older. (Sara)

مخارج الحروف ف اللغة العربية صعبة, يعني لازم تحتاج شغل و لو اهملناها خلاص بتضيع مش زي الانجليزي نحن الانجليزي تعلمناه في سنة لكن العربي صعب يتعلمه على كبر

The articulation of Arabic sounds is challenging. It needs much work, and if we neglect it, then Arabic gets lost. Unlike English, we learned it in just one year, but it is difficult for someone to learn Arabic when they are older. (Tala)

5.3.4.3 The difficulty of learning Arabic outside the home.

During the interviews, the mothers complained about their children's lack of exposure to Arabic. Since all the participating mothers had no families here in Montréal, the parents are the primary caregivers to the children, and they provided most of the input in Arabic. They said

that the children were extensively exposed to either French and/or English at schools and that the parents should have been more involved with their children to provide more input so the children can learn and maintain Arabic. They said if Arabic was not spoken at home, it was doomed to loss.

سابرينا مزالت احسن من الاولاد في اللغة لان انصقل لسانها بالكامل في ليبيا لكن الاولاد مخارج حروفهم مش زابطة لانهم متعرضين للانجليزية بشكل كبير في الخارج مهما درتي انتي في البيت تحاولي وتحرصي الا ما يكون البيئة لها تأثير ف هما هذا اللي صايرلهم, معندهم احتكاك كبير باللغة خارج البيت

Sabrina speaks Arabic better than her brothers because she mastered it while we were in Libya, but the boys are having difficulties with pronunciation because of the extensive exposure to English outside the home. Whatever you do at home regarding maintaining Arabic, the outside environment still affects them, because they are not exposed to Arabic outside the home. (Tala)

لانهم هما عايشين هنا مستحيل حيتعلموها لين يموتو ما يتعلموها اذا الاهل ما ادخلوش وعلموهم وبذلو معاهم مجهود كبير بش يتعلمو العربي لكن لو خلوهم هكي كيف مستحيل حيموت بدون ما يتعلمها لان مش قاعد في بيئة عربية بيش يتعلمها مع الناس لازم الهل هم اللي يضغطو عليه ويديرو مجهود بيش يعلموه وكان هذا منين ييي يتعلمها.

Because they live here, it is impossible for them to learn Arabic if the parents did not intervene and put significant efforts to teach them Arabic. Otherwise, it will be impossible for children to learn it. The child will die before he learns it because he is not in an Arabic environment so he can acquire it from people, the parents have to be strict and put efforts to teach Arabic to their child because he has nowhere else to learn it. (Liza)

لغتنا الام هي اللغة العربية لو ما تعلمهاش في البيت مستحيل يتعلمها من برا, بالذات هنا لو ما حفظش اللغة العربية من الصغر صعب ياخذها عالكبر

Arabic is our mother tongue. If he does not learn it at home, it is impossible for him to learn outside. Especially here in this context, if he does not learn Arabic while young, it becomes hard to acquire it later. (Sara)

5.3.5 Libyan mothers' efforts to maintain Arabic in the children.

Five out of six mothers stated that they made conscious decisions to teach Arabic to their children and that they were actively involved with them to facilitate Arabic learning. There was a consensus on the factors that mothers relied on to preserve Arabic. Most of them mentioned

speaking only Arabic with the children, except for Liza who felt guilty for communicating in English with them. Furthermore, all the participating children watched Arabic TV, except for Jacob. Other common factors were the weekend Arabic school and Quran tutorials at mosques. All the children in this study were sent to Arabic school and/or to the mosques to learn Islamic studies and Arabic. The Libyan community was also of great importance to Arabic maintenance as perceived by the mother.

5.3.5.1 Only Arabic at home policy.

As stated above, all the interviewees said that they only spoke Arabic to their children, except for Liza. In some cases, the children replied in English as reported by the mothers. They further prevented the children from speaking English or French among each other. They made it clear to the children that only Arabic was allowed at home. Liza was the only one who said she spoke English to her children. She explained that when she started learning English, she kept practicing it with them, and wished she could reverse it.

> العربي يفهموني لكن يردو بالانجليزي, هذي غلطتي مفروض في الحوش كنت منعت عليهم يحكو انقليزي مفروض عربي لكن انا كنت جديدة في الانقليزي ف نبي ندرب ف ناخذ و نعطي معاهم لكن انا ضربتهم هما و فدت نفسي فهمتي اللي صار انا النقطة هذي ديما شاغلتني قاهرتيني واجدة لان هما خلاص استسهلو الانجليزي.
>
> *They understand me if I speak Arabic, but they only reply in English. It is*
> *my fault, I should have prevented them from speaking English at home, but*
> *only Arabic. At that time, I started learning English, so I spoke with them in*
> *English to practice it. That benefited me, but it was to their disadvantage. It*
> *worries me, and I feel it is too late to reverse it. (Liza)*

> انا نحكي معاهم بالعربي بس, نقولهم في البيت هذي لغتنا يعني اللغة العربية لازم تكون موجودة في البيت نحس اكثر شي مخلي عربيتهم كويسة اللي هي ديما نتكلمو في البيت عربي
>
> *I only speak with the children in Arabic. I keep telling them that Arabic is*
> *our native language and it has to be spoken at home. I believe that their*
> *Arabic is good because we only speak Arabic at home. (Kate)*

اني دوري اني حافظت في البيت على اللغة , و لا لغة في البيت الا الليبي, حتى بيناتهم لما كانو سنة اولى و تانية و ثالثة بالفرنسي نكشخ عليهم نقوللهم لا في الحوش احكو عربي.

My role was to preserve Arabic at home. I prevented any other languages to be spoken at home except for Arabic. When I heard them speak French when they started school, I kept telling them that they can only speak Arabic at home. (Sara)

اهم شي ان ما يفقدوش اللغة العربية, الحاجة الوحيدة ان احكي معاه في الحوش عربي حتمشي بسهولة متدخليش اي لغة اخرى في الحوش الا العربي, انا عيالي لعند الماترنال مفش لغة في الحوش الا العربي, حتى نسمعهم مرات يحكو فرنش مع بعضهم لكن انا منخليهمش نحاول ديما و هما في الحوش يحكو عربي مع بعضهم.

It is essential that they do not lose Arabic, the only thing you should do is to speak Arabic with them, do not use any other language and they will learn it easily. My children were only exposed to Arabic until they started school. Sometimes I hear them speak French among themselves, but I do not allow them, I make sure they speak in Arabic at home. (Hanna)

5.3.5.1.1 Ease of use of Arabic to express mothers' feelings.

Despite the fact that the mothers spoke English fluently, except for Sara, they mentioned that it was less cognitively demanding for them to speak Arabic. They said that they found difficulty expressing their feelings in English because it did not represent them well. They mainly used Arabic when they were giving orders or when they were frustrated.

انا نحكي عن نفسي لحد اليوم مستسهلة العربي بصراحة ف انا اسهلي لما بنعبر لما ز علانة او نعطي اوامر.

For me, I still find it easier to use Arabic when I want to express my feelings, when I am upset or when I want to give instructions. (Tala)

لما نقعد منفعلة يطلع الليبي لكن لما نقعد هادية نحكي بالانقليزي لان نسنتسهل فيها لهم و هيا عشان حتى يفهموني بسرعة

Only when I am nervous, I speak Arabic. Otherwise, I speak English so they can better understand me and quickly. (Liza)

انا تجيني ايسر لان نبي نعبرلهم عن اي حاجة صعب عليا ان نعبر عن العواطف متاعي بالانجليزي بتوضحيلهم اي معلومة تجيني انا ايسر بالعربي.

It is easier for me to talk about anything in Arabic, I find it hard to express my feelings in English. When I want to explain anything to them, it is easier for to say it in Arabic. (Kate)

5.3.5.2 Arabic TV.

Arabic TV was available in all the participants' homes. They used it as a means of input. They complained about the different dialects spoken, but they preferred a different Arabic dialect over English or French. Tala avoided this different dialects issue by sitting and watching with her children so she could clarify the content. Liza, on the other hand, allowed Jacob to change the channel when he could not understand.

التلفزيون كله عربي. حتى رسوم الاطفال يغيرو مرات ع القنوات بعض القنوات يحطن باللغة الانجليزية نقوللهم لا لا دورو قناة باللغة العربية, و توا نتفرجو مع بعضنا على باب الحارة, انا حريصة نتفرج معاهم لان مرات ما يفهمو بسبب اختلاف اللهجات, نبو نعلموهم مبادئ و عادات مش بس لغة من خلال المسلسل.

The children can only watch Arabic cartoons; when they change to English channels, I ask them to search for something in Arabic. Now, we sit together and watch Bab Alhara (a famous Arabic series) together. I make sure we watch it together because sometimes they do not understand the different dialect. We want to teach them not only Arabic but also traditions and principles through this show. (Tala)

شريتلهم دش عربي لكن القناة العربية ميحطش عليها لان ما يفهمش الحاجة ف دغري يغير ليش نتفرج من دون ما نفهم.

I bought them an Arabic TV, but he does not watch Arabic channels, because he does not understand their content, so he directly changes, why watch if I cannot understand. (Liza)

وحدة م الحاجات اللي ساعدت لولو في تعلم العربي انها تحضر مسلسلات عربية دائما عندها اهتمام, تقولي يا امي شنو مسلسلات اللي كنتي تحضري فيها و اتفرج عليهن.

One of the things that helped Loulou with Arabic was that she watches Arabic cartoons. She is always interested in the cartoons I watched when I was young, and she watches them now.(Kate)

عشان نحافظلهم ع العربي نخلي فيهم يحضرو في رسوم بالعربي في الويكند, عندي دش فيه قصص اسلامية بالعربي.

I also maintained Arabic through TV. I have an Arabic TV that broadcast Islamic stories in Arabic. I let them watch it on weekends. (Ariam)

5.3.5.3 Arabic school and quranic teaching.

Mothers considered Arabic a complex language, and due to the lack of exposure to it, they wanted their children to have formal instruction in Arabic. All the children, except for Jacob, attended the weekend Arabic school. They reported that the school had a great impact on the children's use of Arabic, more especially on their pronunciation. The children were also sent to mosques to learn Quran. The mothers commented that the challenging phonemes in Quran help improve the children's pronunciation.

لان نحن متفقين نحافظولهم ع العربي اول مفتاح لينا كانت المدرسة العربية في الويكند كانت مهمة, المدرسة العربية نفعتهم واجد من ناحية اللغة و دين و ثقافة.و نعملو فيهم قران والقران قومهم لسانهم.

Because we agreed to transfer Arabic to the children, we enrolled them in an Arabic school on the weekend. They benefited a lot from the Arabic school, in terms of language, religion, and culture. We also teach them Quran. It helped them with pronunciation. (Tala)

اللغة العربية انا ننظرلها انا و زوجي انها حاجة ضرورية يعني على سبيل المثال جت فترة مثلا لولو اصبحت ما تنطق في الحروف بالشكل الصحيح ف حسينا انها ضروري تدخل مدرارس عربية. قعدنا نركزولها ع القران بعدها دخلناها للمدرسة العربية و تمشي للمسجد ف استفادت جدا من المدرسة و من القران الان اصبحت تحكي بشكل سليم

My husband and I perceive Arabic as a necessity. For example, Loulou had an issue with pronunciation, so we felt the need to enroll her at the weekend Arabic school and we also concentrated on teaching her Quran .so she started going to the Arabic school and to the mosque. She actually benefited a lot from the school and learning Quran. (Kate)

توا الاطفال لازم تعليمهم قران لان لسانهم ينطلق بالعربي لما تحفظيهم حاجة في القران تحسيه لان القران مخارج حروفه صعبة و واضحات تحسي يأثر هلبا. يمشو للمدرسة يوم السبت و يوم الجمعة يمشو للمسجد يقرو في تربية اسلامية و لغة عربية.

The children have to be taught Quran because it helps a lot with Arabic since its phonemes are challenging and very clear, it positively affects their

pronunciation. So we send our children to the weekend Arabic school, and they also go to the mosques to learn Arabic and Quran. (*Ariam*).

5.3.5.4 Libyan community.

Belonging to a community is an essential element in preserving Arabic, according to the mothers. They reported that they engaged with the Libyan community to show their children other Libyan children could speak Arabic just like them, and also to promote their sense of identity. They said they made sure to attend the Islamic holidays with Libyan families to familiarize the children with the Libyan culture. They expressed their need to have their Libyan community center where they could meet and speak Arabic to provide the children with more language input.

في نقطة مهمة قعدنا حريصين عليها عشان نحافظولهم على لغتهم ان يكون عندهم كوميونيتي, طبعا هنا ما عندك وين ترفعيهم لاطفال يحتكو بيهم ف شن البرنامج اللي درناه في البيت قعدنا اول ما يجيهم يوم اجتماع المعلمين او عطلة نلمولهم كل الاطفال الليبيين اللي نعرفوهم, ليبيين بس. ف هما حاسين توا ان عندهم كوميونيتي يكونو اطفال بس و يجو يوم كامل, يلعبو مع بعضهم. حكاية الكوميونيتي حسيتها مهمة انك تحافظي ع الهوية اولا و ثانيا حكاية انت لو فقدت عربيتك مش حتقدر تواصل مع الناس اللي زيك فف حتى الاطفال لما يجو هنا هم يستسهلو في الانقليزي ف نحاولو عربي عربي تلقينا هذاك اليوم يمشي كله اتكلمو عربي ما تتكلموش انقليزي. و شي ثاني نحن حريصين نقضو الاعياد مع عائلات ليبية و هذا جزء من الحفاظ على الهوية.

To maintain Arabic in our children, we made sure they have their own community. Because we do not have families here, we created what we call "No Parents day." On holidays or when the children have Ped days, we invite their Libyan friends. The children spend the whole day playing together. Now our children realize they have their own community. I think having a community is a good thing regarding keeping one's identity, and that if you lose your Arabic, you will not be able to communicate with people like you. When the children come over, they speak English, but we keep instructing them to use only Arabic. We also make sure we spend Muslim holidays with our Libyan friends, it is part of preserving our identity. (Tala)

الناس اللي يجو قلال يعني لكن نفرح خصوصا لما يجو الاولاد الثانيين. ,لكن لما يتلاقو الصغار يحكو انجليزي لكن مزال يسمعو فينا نتكلمو عربي و يعرفو عندهم جالية. في لمات العيد, هذي انا حاجة نحب نمشيلها نقولو عشان العويل خليهم يشوفو عويل ثانيين ليبيين زينا زيهم, يحكو زينا, لكن

أغلبة الحفلات للنساء فقط, يا ريت يكون عندنا مركز للجالية نتلاقو فيه و نديرو انشطة مع الصغار.

Only a few people visit us; I feel extra happy when other Libyan children come over. In fact, the children speak English to each other, but they still hear us speak Arabic and they realize they have their own community. I like to take them to Muslim holiday parties so they can meet with other Libyan children like them who speak Arabic like them. However, most of the other parties are unfortunately for women only. I wish we can have a community center where we can meet and do activities with the children. (Kate)

Liza complained that her children did not have Libyan friends and that most parties welcomed women only. She still took them to parties held for Muslims holidays, but she believed these were parties for Muslims and not necessarily for Arabs.

مش محتكين ابدا المشكلة الليبيين, مفش العيال حتى لما يديرو لمامي من غير اطفال. كنا نمشو صح في عيد الفطر و الاضحى, و عارفين رمضان و الثقافة متاعنا عارفينها لكن لما حولنا هنا ليا توا اربع سنوات و نصف خف النشاط و معش في وقت.

They are not actually involved in the Libyan community. Because all the parties are only for women, no children are allowed. I take them to the parties we organize for our Muslim holidays though. They know our traditions and holidays, but since we moved here and I started attending school, we became less active because of lack of time. (Liza)

5.4 Results of Participants' Observations

After I interviewed the mothers, and at a separate meeting, I visited each one with her child(ren) at home, except for Ariam and Chris whom I met in a Café shop. The observations took between thirty-eight minutes to an hour and a half. I had the opportunity to observe the children while they interacted with their mothers and in some cases with their siblings, and I took field notes. I typed the comments later and attached them to the corresponding transcripts.

5.4.1 Ideologies *vs.* Practices.

In general, the analysis of the interviews revealed that mothers valued Arabic as their heritage language and the importance of preserving it in their children. In real life, however, their language choices with their children could be presented as a continuum from exclusive use of Arabic (i.e., Hanna and Sara), to exclusive use of English (i.e., Liza), and in the middle ground code-switching between English and Arabic was observed (i.e., Ariam and Tala).

5.4.1.1 Ariam's Family.

Ariam expressed her positive feelings toward her Libyan heritage and the importance of transmitting it to her children. She claimed she exposed her children to Arabic for as much as she could (watching Arabic TV, socializing with Libyan friends…etc). She mentioned that she sometimes used English to better explain certain topics to her children. When I met Ariam and Chris (age 9), she spoke Arabic to Chris who also replied in Arabic. I noticed that when there's a misunderstanding, she clarified it in English. Chris mastered speaking about a lot of different topics in Arabic. However, he seemed more convenient when he spoke English. I did not have the opportunity to observe his language choices with his siblings since we met in a Café shop

5.4.1.2 At Hanna's.

When Hanna spoke about her Libyan heritage, she seemed nostalgic. She said she carried on her family's legacy in her home in Canada to provide her children with a picture of her life in Libya. She valued multilingualism and cherished transferring Arabic to her children. She decided not to expose her children to the dominant languages before they went to school. Hanna's declared commitments to L1 maintenance and her actual language practice matched. Hanna spoke Arabic and only Arabic with her children who demonstrated high proficiency in Arabic.

Elana (age 12), Damon (age 10), and Jad (age 7) spoke Arabic all the time among each other and with their mother. They used French to further explain to Jad, the youngest.

5.4.1.3 At Kate's.

Kate valued multilingualism and encouraged her children to learn as many languages as they could. She loved her life in Canada because she could spend more time with her children. She said the strategy that worked best to maintain Arabic in her children was allowing only Arabic to be spoken in their home. When I visited her home, I observed she spoke Arabic to Loulou (age 9) and her siblings, but she gave instructions in English. Loulou remained quiet most of the time as she was busy with her tablet. However, when she spoke to her mother and siblings, it was mostly in Arabic. Loulou also had a phone call with her grandmother with whom she engaged in a detailed conversation about school in Arabic.

5.4.1.4 At Liza's.

Liza perceived multilingualism as a powerful kit. She also valued transferring Arabic to her children but had some regrets. She said that her children went to the daycare at an early age and that they spent more time there than with her because she was busy with school. She also hated that their father never helped taking care of them. She was mainly concerned that her children might become unable to practice religion if they could not speak Arabic. She blamed herself for practicing English and French with her children which was at the expense of losing Arabic in them, as she reported. Liza thought she could not reverse this situation. During my visit, she spoke only in English with Jacob (age 8), even about religious topics. He also replied in English. In fact, I did not hear Jacob speak Arabic at all during my visit. He seemed to understand what his grandmother said in Arabic, but he always turned to Liza for translation from English into Arabic.

5.4.1.5 At Sara's.

Sara, a Libyan nationalist, expressed positive attitudes toward her Libyan heritage and valued transferring it to her children. She was decisive about not sending her children to daycares because she was terrified of them losing Arabic, as she observed in other Libyan families. She was confident that her children would learn the majority languages when they go school, but she could not afford the loss of Arabic in them. When I met Messi (age 10) for the first time, I was amazed by the way he spoke Arabic. He sounded like someone who spent all his life in Libya. He spoke Arabic very fluently and confidently with his mother and siblings with whom he also code-switched to French.

5.4.1.6 At Tala's.

Likewise, Tala had positive feelings toward Arabic. She valued transferring it to her children. She said she implemented "only Arabic at home policy," yet she occasionally gave in to her children's linguistic demands and conversed with them in English. She said her husband sometimes spoke English with the children and that they both had to have a serious conversation about their commitments to transfer Arabic to their children. At Tala's home, I noticed that while she spoke with them mainly in Arabic, she code-switched to English at times. The children in return replied in Arabic and they also code-switched. Sabrina and Romeo were more fluent in Arabic than Mike, the youngest, who had to think and pause a lot before uttering a sentence in Arabic. Among themselves, the siblings used English exclusively.

5.5 Summary

In this chapter, I provided an analysis of the data obtained from individual interviews with six Libyan mothers living in Montréal and observations of their at-home language use with

their children who fit into the selection criteria of the study. In order to summarize the findings, I

will provide brief answers to the research questions I initially posed in chapter three.

Being immigrant mothers in the multilingual city of Montréal:

1.   What are Libyan mothers' attitudes toward Arabic as a heritage language?

In general, the data analysis revealed that mothers had positive attitudes toward Arabic.

The mothers highlighted the importance of preserving Arabic in their children because

it is part of their ethnoreligious identity. They attached great importance to learning Arabic for

the sake of Islam. They also valued multilingualism for practical reasons (i.e., better academic

achievement, better position in the workforce). While the mothers' strong identification with

Arabic and their highly positive attitudes to multilingualism were important, they were

insufficient to guarantee language maintenance in their children.

2.   How are they involved in the language development and maintenance of their school-

aged children?

All the participating mothers agreed that parents have to act upon preserving Arabic at

home because it is almost the only place where children have exposure to Arabic. Five of them

are using the available resources to them to facilitate Arabic learning in their children (e.g.,

Arabic TV, Weekend school, Libyan playdates…etc.). However, there are inconsistencies

between the mothers' declared commitments to L1 maintenance and their actual language

practice with their children. The mothers' language ideologies did not always have a positive

impact on the children's command of Arabic, their language management in the home did. The

patterns of their language use have a great impact on their children's language use and therefore

was a clear indicator of Arabic loss and maintenance in the children. The level of education and

proficiency in the majority languages of the mothers also could have influenced their language

choices. In other words, it was apparent during the observations that the more proficient the

mother was in English and /or French, the more she used it with her children, and vice versa.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

The research questions of this study asked how Libyan mothers perceived Arabic as their heritage language and how they were involved in preserving it in their children. The findings to the questions have been outlined in the previous chapter, organized according to the research questions. In this chapter, I turn to critically discuss the findings that have emerged from the data of this study. To do this, I turned to a more conceptual argument that was divided into two main sections. The first section deals with how mothers perceived Arabic. It discusses issues of ethnic and Islamic identity formation and explores the mothers' fears of Arabic attrition in their second generation children. The second section is about the mothers' efforts to preserve Arabic in their children. It deals with the language ideologies of the mothers and their impact on their language management and practice. By organizing the discussion in this way, I allow for more nuanced interpretation of how language ideologies correspond to family language planning and use.

The discussion presented in this chapter ultimately provides an explanation of the challenges that Libyan immigrant mothers go through to maintain their home language in their second generation school-aged children. By gaining an understanding of how their ideologies have been impacted by the society they are living in, this chapter will help future researchers, immigrant mothers, and other concerned individuals to better understand the challenges of maintaining a heritage language in a multicultural context.

6.1 Mothers' Attitudes toward Arabic

In general, the Libyan immigrant mothers valued their heritage language a great deal. Their positive attitudes toward Arabic came from different perspectives. All the mothers perceived their home language as being closely related to their ethnic identity, an important

heritage that connects the second-generation children to their extended families, home country, and culture. Some studies also reported that immigrant parents had positive perspectives of their home language for its connection with ethnicity and culture (Al-Sahafi, 2015; Lao, 2004; B. Y. Lee, 2013). The mothers also valued Arabic for its association with Islam, as did the parents in other studies (Al-Sahafi, 2015; Gogonas, 2012). Some mothers regarded their home language as a beneficial resource for the academic advancement and future careers of their children. Some studies reported that parents insisted on maintaining their heritage language in their children for the same practical reasons (B. Y. Lee, 2013; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009).

6.1.1 Arabic as an essential ethnic identity marker.

Cavallaro (2005) mentioned that in multilingual societies, language is the most significant component of ethnic identity formation. Immigrant Libyan mothers believed the maintenance of their heritage language could facilitate their children's positive identity formation. They seemed to take pride in their ethnicity and language, even though visible minority difference can disadvantage immigrants in their host society. This finding is in line with Dweik (1986) that positive attitudes towards one's mother tongue may be a result of pride in their identity and culture.

It was apparent that when the mothers talked about ethnic identification, they were confident that this could be only achieved through transmitting their mother tongue to their children. Park and Sarkar (2007) also found that Korean immigrant parents considered that their children's proficiency in Korean would help them maintain their Korean identity. At the same time, these mothers wanted their children to embrace their Canadian identity as well. It was evident that they wanted their children to be socially accepted in Montréal through learning the majority languages and also when they travel back to Libya. They seemed to be aware of the role

of language in negotiating social relationships in a multicultural society. Therefore they emphasized that maintaining the home language and learning the majority languages can promote the children's appreciation of both identities. This finding is in line with Cho and Krashen's (1998) statement that multilingualism can help foster the acceptance of both the majority culture and the heritage culture. These mothers encountered difficulties to integrate into their host society when they first arrived in Canada, so they might have wanted their children to avoid this situation and be able to integrate well and be accepted both as Libyan and Canadian citizens.

6.1.2 Arabic as an essential factor for enhancing family ties.

Fillmore (1991a) highlighted that using home language through communication with immediate and extended family can facilitate strong and healthy relationships in immigrant families. The participating mothers thought that speaking Arabic with their children would give them more authority, resulting in more cohesive family structures. This could be attributed to the fact that their proficiency in Arabic is greater than their competence in English or French, whereas the opposite is true for their children. E. Lee (1996) found that parents lost control over their children because of the children's loss of their heritage language and their developed linguistic abilities in the majority language. Some of the mothers in this study expressed their discomfort when they got corrected by their children when they spoke English. Parents in E. Lee's (1996) study found it difficult to maintain authority when their children became their translators. It is important to note that children in Libyan culture may not argue with their parents, nor do they have a say on any topic or life situation. They are expected to obey, be very respectful to their parents and help out around the house. It was apparent that some of the mothers wanted to maintain that type of relation and control over the children. They did not want

to adopt nor integrate new regulatory behaviors of their host society which were perceived to be very different from their own; instead, they wanted to practice their pre-immigration patterns of behavior. According to Stern (1986), the parent-child change of role caused by language change might negatively impact the family atmosphere. Some of the mothers might have wanted to avoid this role change through maintaining Arabic.

The mothers in my study also believed that their children should maintain Arabic not only to keep order in their small families but also for their children to be able to communicate with their extended families in Libya, who are, to the best of my knowledge, monolingual. Two of the mothers in this study came to Canada as immigrants and had no plans to return to Libya. Although their residency in Canada is much longer than all the other four participants, they had more perseverance with maintaining Arabic in their homes. In fact, they spoke Arabic with their children more than all the other participants, in contrast to the results reported by Huls and Mond (1992) that the parents used more of the dominant language as a result of the extended period of immigration. These two mothers cannot travel back to Libya due to conflicts of political perspectives with the Libyan regime. They must have felt the urgent need that their children speak Arabic to connect and bond with their extended families in Libya because they knew they could not go back.

The other four mothers or their spouses, on the other hand, came to Montréal as international students sponsored by the Libyan government. They might want their children to learn as much as they could in Canada because they plan to leave as soon as they finish their graduate programs. A similar finding was reported by B. Y. Lee (2013) that the parents in her study tended to speak more of the dominant language with their children as they knew they were leaving soon. These mothers wanted their children to be able to speak Arabic to communicate

with their families and to be able to assimilate into the Libyan society when they travel back. They did not want their children to encounter difficulties as described by Wilmsen (2006) that building social relationships in Arabic-speaking countries might become challenging to those who lack basic linguistic abilities in Arabic.

6.1.3 Arabic as the language of Islam.

All the mothers in my study held faith-oriented attitudes toward Arabic. The positive language attitudes are further enhanced by their high expectations of their children's becoming practicing Muslims. All of the mothers reported their desire for their children to learn Arabic so they could practice religion. They grew very emotional and used powerful expressions as they spoke about their fears of the consequences that Arabic loss has on religion. They were concerned that their children might become unable to recite Quran or to conduct five prayers a day. It was evident as they talked that even if they had no other motivation to preserve Arabic, then maintaining it for the sake of Islam would be a sufficient one. Gogonas (2012) also found that the emphasis on religious practices led the Muslim parents in his study to view Arabic as a core value for their identity which led them to preserve it in their children. Dweik and Qawar (2015) also found that Arab participants valued the maintenance and use of Arabic, considered it a religious language and used it exclusively in all worship places.

The logic of the mothers in this study seemed to be "if you cannot speak Arabic, you cannot be a good Muslim." Apparently, they had zero tolerance toward their children's lack of practice of Islam. Their backgrounds have most probably rooted these values in them. They are all practicing Muslims, coming from an all Muslim country where everyone is expected to at least memorize chapters from Quran, pray five times a day and fast in Ramadan (a month during which Muslims are encouraged to recite a lot of Quran and conduct a lot of prayers, especially

the midnight one), all of which could only be done by the means of Arabic. Preserving Arabic, therefore, was essential as reported by mothers, not only to preserve it from loss but also to preserve Islam in their second generation, immigrant children.

6.1.4 Arabic, English, and French.

The positive attitudes of the Libyan immigrant mothers are accompanied by an understanding of the benefits of multilingualism, the awareness of the status of the majority languages, the challenge of learning Arabic with excessive exposure to English and French, as well as the nature of the Arabic language itself. Some of the mothers believed that transferring Arabic to their children would promote their learning of the majority languages. This finding corresponds to Cummins' (1989) *Linguistic Interdependence Principle* which claims that minority students' conceptual knowledge of their L1 positively impacts and enhances their fast and effective acquisition of the literacy and academic skills of the dominant language.

The mothers had no worries that their children's proficiency in Arabic would hinder their learning of French and English. On the contrary, they felt confident that their children can quickly acquire the majority languages at schools, and daycares. This finding contrasts with Cummins' (1984) statement that immigrant parents are concerned that their children's proficiency in their HL would negatively impact their acquisition of the L2 and consequently their academic performance, mainly on assessment. All of the mothers did not speak English nor French when they came to Canada, yet five of them managed to learn English, in some cases also French, in a relatively short period of time. Kate, Liza and Tala were able to pursue their higher education in Canadian universities within one year of their arrival to Canada. Their successful experience in L2 learning might have shaped their beliefs that the majority languages can be easily acquired by the children because they were immersed in them at schools and daycares.

Also, they valued their bi-multilingual skills which lay at the heart of their successful academic achievements, so as parents, they wanted their children to have the same skills. Similar findings were reported by B. Y. Lee (2013).

All the mothers were concerned about Arabic loss due to the extensive exposure to the dominant languages. Hana and Sara stated that Arabic loss would be maximal and more severe in infancy and early childhood. They decided not to expose their children to the majority languages until they went to school. They wanted to guarantee their advanced proficiency in Arabic before English and French took over. This is consistent with Fillmore (1991b) that the younger the children are when they learn the majority language, the more significant the negative impact. These two mothers did not integrate themselves into Canadian society. One of them never learned English or French, and the other one spoke only functional English. Also, both of them did not study or work and were very close friends which meant they helped each other a lot. Their status as stay-at-home mothers may have helped them eschew all child care services. The rest of the mothers did not have the privilege of keeping their children with them until they went to school since they were students when their children were younger.

6.1.5 Arabic as a resource.

Five of the mothers believed that maintaining Arabic would be a valuable resource for their children. They considered it a bonus to their children's resumes either here in Canada, in Libya or anywhere in the Arabic-speaking world. A similar finding was reported by Lao (2004) and B. Y. Lee (2013), immigrant parents valued their heritage languages as powerful tools for the future careers of their children. Krashen (1998) considers multilingual individuals as natural resources for economic success. In Libya, for instance, bilinguals occupy the highest positions in the workforce hierarchy. They earn two or three times as much as monolingual workers.

However, before being granted any bonuses for speaking a second or a third language, they have to be able to speak Arabic. The mothers, who are all well-educated, must have realized that Arabic has become a critical language, necessary for economic and political reasons.

Another factor that may have shaped their positive perceptions of Arabic is that many bi-multilingual Libyans travel to work in the Middle East where they are required to speak Arabic and English. Therefore, it has become trendy among Libyans who finished their education in Canada to move to the Arabic-speaking Middle Eastern countries, where they can have quality lives ever since the economic and political situation started to decline in Libya. The mothers must have considered their children's ease of movement across well-rich nations if they spoke Arabic.

6.2 Mothers' Efforts to Maintain Arabic in Their Children

All the participating mothers expressed the importance of maintaining Arabic in their second-generation immigrant children; they did not have any doubts that their children should learn Arabic. How do the mothers' positive attitudes and high expectations translate into language practices?

The findings of this study provide evidence that the mothers put forth efforts to maintain Arabic in their children. These efforts varied at different degrees. At one end of the spectrum, Hanna and Sara communicated solely in Arabic with their children, sent them to Arabic weekend schools and involved them in the Libyan, Arabic and Muslim communities. Ariam, Kate and Tala also sent their children to the Arabic school, occasionally participated in Islamic festivals, and spoke mostly in Arabic; however they also codeswitched to English. Liza, on the other end of the spectrum, spoke only in English with her children, participated only with the Muslim community, and stopped sending Jacob to the Arabic school at some point. However, she kept

sending him to the mosque to learn Quran. Although the mothers appreciated the positive impact of these resources on their children's language maintenance, they still thought these resources were limited and insufficient to preserve Arabic in their children. They believed that the parents' use of Arabic in their homes was more important and beneficial.

6.2.1 Cultural participation.

The mothers valued having a community where the children can develop a sense of identity and practice language. Similar findings of the importance of community in ethnic identity formation and exposure to HL have been reported elsewhere (by Lao, 2004; B. Y. Lee, 2013; Park & Sarkar, 2007). However, these mothers might have been overwhelmed trying to take part in three different communities. First, the Arabic-speaking community which comprises speakers of different varieties of Arabic, Muslims, and Christians from around the Arabic world. The mothers were concerned about the children's confusion being exposed to all the different dialects, yet they valued belonging to this community probably because of what Al-Sahafi (2015) calls "the shared sense of Arabness" a feeling of commonality among Arabs despite their different traditions and cultures.

Second, the Muslim community where all Muslim with different linguistic backgrounds come together to celebrate Islamic rituals. This was probably the most preferred community for all the mothers because their children were exposed to all the different Islamic practices, which the mothers wanted the children to perform; and to language. Schrauf (1999) reported that religious practices correlated with language retention in the second and third generations of immigrants in his study. According to him, celebrating religious rituals provides a context where language and culture can be enacted.

Finally, there is the Libyan community which primarily involves all Muslim, Libyan Arabic-speaking individuals. Ariam, Hanna and Sara were active members of the Libyan community and kept close relationships with other Libyan families. Kate and Tala kept some distance and limited their participation to children's activities and playgroups. For example, Tala stated that she did not want to be in contact with other Libyans, yet she thought it was still important that her children participate in the community. So she organized a monthly playgroup in her house, which she called "no parents day", she invited Libyan children, organized activities for them and allowed only Arabic to be spoken. Liza did not see the usefulness of this community so she withdrew herself and children from it. The Libyan revolution against the previous regime that took place in 2011 may have caused this social split between Libyans inside and outside the country. Between opponents and proponents, Libyans could not put their differences aside. This might be the reason why some of the mothers refrained from active participation in the community.

6.2.2 Heritage language schools and Arabic TV.

Given the busy schedules of the mothers, they were unable to spare time to teach their children Arabic literacy skills. It is important to note that the spoken Arabic dialects vary to a great extent from the written form of Arabic (Ryding, 2006). The latter belongs to the formal standard Arabic shared and understood by all Arabic-speaking countries (Ryding, 2006). It was clear to me that the mothers were concerned about the different varieties spoken in these schools. However, they were obviously interested in developing literacy skills in standard Arabic in their children because they will need it in their future careers. This is especially essential for the families who would be returning to Libya where the medium of instruction in all public or private schools is solely Arabic. These mothers did not want their children to fall behind once

they were back in Libya. Another factor could be that phone calls have become less popular and have been replaced by texting (Lenhart, 2012). This is especially true in Libya as far as I know from my personal experience. The mothers wanted their children to socialize with other co-ethnic individuals here in Montréal and Libya. They realize that if the children were to maintain relationships with family members in Libya, then learning literacy skills in Arabic would be vital. For example, during the interview with one of the mothers and while we were talking about Arabic literacy skills, her seventeen-year-old son texted her. She immediately remarked, *"this is why he has to learn Arabic literacy skills, to let me know he is home."*

I discussed the importance of religious upbringing of the children for the mothers, which I believe was another motivation to send their children to heritage language school. By sending them to Arabic weekend schools, the mothers made sure the children would learn chapters from the Holy Quran and learn how to read it, which will allow them to conduct prayers, which is the second most important thing to Muslims. The mothers reported the effectiveness of Arabic schools on their children's Arabic development as well as identity formation. Many other studies of heritage language maintenance have also reported the reliance of parents on HL schools for language retention and their positive impact on their second generation immigrant children (Gognas, 2012; Lao, 2004; B. Y. Lee, 2013; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009).

The mothers believed that home is where language maintenance and loss take place. They used the outside environment to support language development in their children, yet they said their exposure to Arabic outside the home is very limited. They wanted to foster their children's exposure to Arabic through Arabic TV. However, watching TV did not seem of interest to many of the children in this study. Also, the different varieties spoken were worrisome for the mothers, but they believed it was the least of two evils (i.e., Arabic *vs.* majority languages). They stated

that their children were confused by the different Arabic dialects they hear on TV, but for them exposing their children to different Arabic dialects was better than allowing more exposure to English or French. It seems common among immigrants to have access to TV channels or shows in their HL (B. Y. Lee 2013; Zhang, 2009; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). This is probably because TV shows from immigrants' homelands make them feel at home and help the children connect with their heritage.

6.2.3 Arabic in the home.

Five of the mothers reported the implementation of an only Arabic at home policy, so their children can have more exposure to the language. Only Liza said she never forced her children to use Arabic at home and that she always spoke with them in English because she found it more convenient. The mothers' language ideologies, their declared commitment to Arabic maintenance and their actual practice in their homes did not always match. One might suggest that my insider status forced the mothers to put on their best face (Cotterill, 1992), i.e., reporting positive attitudes toward the maintenance of Arabic so I will not judge them. However, I do not think the mothers were trying to accommodate me with the correct answers. I could hear and feel their struggle to preserve Arabic in the children. I agree with Bayley and Schecter (2003) that the parents' best intentions to preserve their home language in their children might not always translate into practice which is continuously negotiated and reconstructed between the parents and their children. Their beliefs were genuine, but there seemed to be lack of understanding of the importance of family language planning and also denial of the fact that some children were showing language shift toward English and French. There were also other factors that I believe caused the discrepancies between some of the mothers' beliefs and the actual practices of the mothers. For Hanna and Sara, it was easy to use only Arabic with their

children, because their English proficiency was minimal and they were not integrated into the Canadian culture. All they know is Arabic language and culture so they cherished and practised them. At the same time, they may have realised the difficulties posed by the inability to speak the majority languages, so they made sure their children acquire them, but only after they have acquired Arabic. Ariam, Kate and Tala were students and they were partially integrated into mainstream society. The fact that they had to use English most of the time at school should have resulted in bringing it to their homes, as I observed. Liza was fully immersed in the majority languages and culture and it seemed she could not keep that out of her home.

6.2.3.1 English proficiency of the mothers.

In theory, the mothers, except for Liza, said they implemented an "only Arabic at home" policy, but as I mentioned earlier, only Hanna and Sara actually spoke Arabic exclusively in their homes. Ariam, Kate and Tala underreported their use of English. Although they said they implemented "only Arabic at home" policy during the interviews, they spoke a lot of English during the observations. Yu (2010) also observed how parents used more English than they reported in the questionnaire. Their exposure and level of proficiency in English played a significant role in their language choices. The more competent the mothers were in English, the more they used it. Hanna and Sara's lack of knowledge of English must have helped them force their children to speak Arabic all the time. On the other hand, all the other mothers were proficient English speakers. Kate and Liza acquired an intermediate knowledge of French. In their homes, the four bi-multilingual mothers code-switched from Arabic to English and so did their children. As stated before, these mothers were students, which meant they were using English on a daily basis. Conversing in English had become natural to them because according to Thomason (2001) when a new language is acquired, it becomes integrated into the speaker's

linguistic repertoire. The speaker then has different languages to fulfill his or her communicative needs (Gumperz, 1964). Furthermore, I believe Hanna and Sara held unconscious negative attitudes toward mainstream culture since they reported their refusal of westernization in all its forms. As such, they may have felt excluded from the Québecois society which promotes assimilation into Québec culture (Ghosh and Abdi, 2004). It could be possible that their identities became 'thickened' as their identity as non-Canadian or non-Québécois was reinforced through repeated intentional or unintentional signaling from members of the mainstream society that they are not part of their group, which may have resulted in more use of HL as an identity marker (Lee et al., 2008). I believe that Hanna and Sara held unconscious negative attitudes about their host society's culture and language.

For Ariam, Kate and Tala, the situation is a bit different since they are partially integrated into Québec culture. They reported adopting some Canadian practices and integrating them into their everyday lives. They may have formed some positive attitudes toward some aspects of Québec culture and the majority languages in Canada since bi-multilingualism lay at the heart of their success. Liza also seemed to have very positive attitudes toward mainstream culture and languages. She fully yielded to the pressure of the assimilation policies in Québec and fully immersed herself and her children into the mainstream culture and languages. She also criticized Libyan culture a lot during the interview. This may have caused her to form unconscious negative attitudes toward Arabic. De Houwer (1999) stated that many bilingual parents use only one language when they have negative feelings about the other one. The discrepancies between language attitudes and practice of the participating mothers could be framed in relation to the *Espouse theory* and *Language in Use Theory* (Yu, 2010), which means that people think their

beliefs are reflected by their practices, but in fact their practices are influenced by unconsciously held beliefs.

By and large, Arabic attrition was observed in only one child (i.e., Jacob, Liza's son). The other children in the study demonstrated different levels of competence in Arabic. On the basis of my observations, the children of the mothers who spoke only Arabic at home showed more advanced skills in Arabic than the ones whose mothers code-switched. This means that the mothers' competence in English led to more use of it in their homes, which may have intervened with the children's Arabic maintenance. This result contradicts Zhang's (2009) finding that the proficiency of the Chinese immigrant grandparents, who were the primary caregivers of the children, in English, did not hinder their use of Chinese in the home. Park and Sarkar (2007) also found that parents used Korean in their homes regardless of their levels of proficiency in English or French. In this study, the opposite was true in that the more proficient the mother was in English or French, the more she used them at home which I believe encouraged the children to use more of these languages and less of Arabic. This indicates that the assimilative policies of Québec have great influence on mothers' language use in their homes which impacts language maintenance in the children.

6.2.3.2 Involvement of spouses.

All the mothers in this study were the primary caregivers of the children. Five of them reported the involvement of their spouses in raising the children and in decision making about the children's future. The fathers' support was very valued by the mothers because it took some pressure off their shoulders. One of the mothers, for instance, mentioned that she did not play or do activities with her children, but her husband took on that role. Another one said that her husband could not help the children with their school work because he had no knowledge of

French, but he helped with Arabic homework. Overall, these families showed stable and cohesive family dynamics and the parents seemed to agree on their different roles within their families, and they acted accordingly, which in my opinion are factors that led to Arabic retention in their children. Tannenbaum and Howie (2002) reported that children are more likely to maintain their first language when they perceive their family to be more close and cohesive, which was the case for these five families, although unfortunately not for Liza's. Arabic loss was apparent in her household. It is important to note that this mother is the only one who did not have her husband's support or involvement in raising the children. She said their relationship was always tense and by the time of the interview, they were officially separated. The difficulties this family had may have contributed to language attrition in the children. Thus, the involvement of fathers and its impact on the language maintenance in the children should be highlighted.

6.3 Summary

This study provided insights into Libyan mothers' perceptions of Arabic language maintenance in children. It also provided information on the mothers' efforts to enhance the Arabic learning of their children. The findings show that Libyan mothers play a significant role in their school-aged children's development of Arabic. The study provided additional evidence that heritage language use at home and family language planning are of great importance. Therefore, those families that have an overt home language policy are more likely to preserve their heritage language in their children since they provide them with more opportunities to practise the language on a daily basis. The next chapter deals with implications this study has for Libyan immigrant mothers and the limitations this study had.

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSIONS AND CLOSING REMARKS

The research presented in this thesis is an initial contribution that will hopefully lead to more inquiry into the challenges encountered by immigrant Arabic-speaking families to preserve Arabic in the generations after immigration.

In the discussion chapter, I placed the findings I arrived at within the theoretical framework presented in Chapter Three. I explored the complicated relationship between the mothers' perceptions of their home language through interviews and their actual practices in real-world settings through observations. By doing so, I attempted to answer the questions I posed in Chapter Four: what are Libyan immigrant mothers' attitudes toward Arabic as a heritage language? And how are they involved in the language development and maintenance of their children? The findings suggest that Libyan immigrant mothers living in Montréal have positive attitudes toward Arabic because they view it as an essential factor contributing to ethnic identity formation, family cohesion, Islamic upbringing and as a key resource for their children's future. However, the mothers' practices did not always reflect their attitudes. I found that their home language use has a great impact on the maintenace of Arabic in their children and interculturalism in Québec may have a negative influence on the mothers' language choice.

I hope future studies will be able to use this framework as a basis to understand the complex relationship between mothers' language ideologies and practices and their impact on children's perceptions and maintenance of their heritage language. It would be worthwhile to conduct a longitudinal study on the influence of the country of residence ideologies and policies on the language choices of the mothers and the impact of their beliefs and everyday practices on heritage language maintenance in their children.

7.1 Limitations of the Study

This study has a few limitations and therefore cannot be generalizable nor representative of all Libyan-Canadian families in Montréal. Rather, the findings are specific to the participating mothers and their children involved in this study. The pieces of evidence that emerged from the study are however suggestive.

First, the number of participants of this research study was very limited, only six mothers who with their husbands all share the same cultural background, socioeconomic status, education and a similar number of children (three to four children).

Second, I used only one-time interviews with the mothers, but not the fathers nor the children, due to the time constraints I was under. Since this is a qualitative study, I relied heavily on one-to-one interviews, the transcription of which would have been very heavy for one scholar had I included the fathers and children. A study that involved the fathers who unexpectedly were reported to be actively involved in making decisions for the future of the children might yield richer data. Furthermore, the perceptions of the children themselves toward learning their home language would have been of great importance, since several studies reported the impact of children's attitudes on their learning of their heritage language (B. Y. Lee, 2013; Zhang& Slaughter-Defoe, 2009).

Third, I used observations to triangulate my data, but these sessions were shorter than I expected because of the busy schedules of the mothers. I could say, however, that I obtained a good glimpse of their everyday practices since the settings were very natural and everybody seemed relaxed in my presence.

Fourth, although my insider status facilitated the recruitment of the participants and provided me with a better understanding of their ideologies, I am afraid that my status influenced the interpretation of the data since there is always a threat that my own interpretations as a scholar and an immigrant mother may not be the same as the participants'. However, I believe I listened carefully to their comments without putting forth mine and that I put my experiences aside during the process of interpretation.

7.2 Implications of the Study

The findings of this research study have some significant implications for the maintenance of heritage languages. Libyan immigrant mothers reported positive attitudes towards the maintenance of Arabic which can result in language maintenance if they were accompanied by home language use. The study provided further evidence that the use of heritage language in the home is of greatest importance. Children who have sufficient exposure to their home language and ample opportunity to practice it on a daily basis are more likely to develop proficiency in the language. It is noteworthy that the language choices and use of the mothers influence the language use of the children. It is thus recommended that parents take positive actions to promote the use of their heritage language at home through its exclusive use.

Although familial efforts are vital, they alone cannot achieve optimal outcomes of language maintenance. The Libyan community should play a more proactive role to provide the children with language support. Otherwise, Libyan Arabic might eventually be lost due to the small number of Libyan immigrants in Montréal. Some implications of this study suggest that a Libyan community center should be established to address the needs of these mothers, provide them with resources and organize mother-children activities to allow more exposure to the

language and culture. The community should inform the Libyan families of effective ways to preserve Libyan Arabic in the next generations.

The findings of this study suggest that Libyan families must keep close contact with the mainstream educational system to help foster positive attitudes in the children toward their heritage and culture. There is an urgent need that parents, with the help of their community, investigate the attitudes of the school system toward minority students' heritage and how these affect the language development and ethnic identity formation of these students. They need to develop ways to influence the government to better support and allocate taxes contributed by minority group members toward the teaching of their heritage languages.

Although my study has come to an end, there are many questions that are left unanswered. Further research needs to be done to address these questions. The findings from this study imply that immigrant mothers are very crucial in their children's heritage language maintenance. Although all of them reported very positive attitudes toward Arabic as their heritage language and ethnoreligious identity marker, only two mothers practised what they preached. Most of them were pulled toward the mainstream languages and culture which intervened with their language use in their homes. The children's language use was influenced by their mothers'. Thus, it is vital to highlight the importance of language planning in immigrant families to promote the use of heritage languages in their homes.

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Appendix A: Social Media Post

Hello, my name is Halima Hamed, a graduate student at McGill. I am conducting a research study on Arabic loss and maintenance in Libyan-Canadian children in Montréal. I am mainly concerned with the role of the mothers.

I am looking for mothers who have been in Canada for at least six years, who have at least one child between 7 and 12 years old and speak Arabic as their first language.

If you are interested, or know someone who might be, please contact me, or advise them to contact me directly at:

Email: halima.hamed@mail.mcgill.ca

Please do not reply to this post, nor disclose any of your personal information online.

Halima Hamed

Appendix B: Consent Form (For Mothers)

Title of Research: Preserving Arabic in Libyan-Canadian Children: The Role of Immigrant Mothers

Researcher: Halima Hamed, MA in Second Language Education, McGill University, Department of Integrated Studies in Education.
Email: halima.hamed@mail.mcgill.ca

Supervisor: Dr.Mela Sarkar, Department of Integrated Studies in Education.

Tel: (514) 398-4527 Ext. 094468   Email: Mela.Sarkar@mcgill.ca

Purpose of the research: the study investigates the awareness of mothers of the benefits of bilingualism/multilingualism and the consequences of Arabic language loss in their children, and whether their at-home language use reflect their understandings.

Procedures: as a participant in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview that will be audio-recorded and transcribed. The interview will last about two hours and will be one-to-one. You will be observed carrying out daily routines with your child(ren) and field notes will be taken meanwhile. You and your child(ren) will be assigned pseudonyms that will be used instead of your real name throughout the study. Your participation will remain anonymous. Also, the transcripts, recordings and identifiable research data will be kept on an encrypted folder on the researcher's personal computer and on a flash drive kept in a locked drawer. Only the researcher will have access to the identifiable research data. Your participation is totally voluntary, as such you can choose to not answer any question and you can withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty. Should you choose to withdraw from the study, the recordings or any data obtained from you will be destroyed unless you said otherwise. There are no anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Participants' Consent:

I have read the above information and I agree to participate in this study. I understand that I will be asked to participate in an interview that will be audio-taped and will be observed at home with my child(ren). My participation is entirely voluntary and I can choose to withdraw at any point from the study without any penalty.

  If you have any questions about the research, please contact the researcher.

        If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the McGill Ethics Manager at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca".

        Please sign below if you have read the above information and consent to participate in this study. Agreeing to participate in this study does not waive any of your rights or release the researchers from their responsibilities. A copy of this consent form will be given to you and the researcher will keep a copy.

Yes:____No:_____You consent to be audio- taped.

Yes:____No:_____You consent to be observed at home with your child(ren).

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Assent Form (For Children)

Hi, my name is Halima Hamed. I am a student at McGill University. I am doing my MA in Second Language Education, Department of Integrated Studies in Education. If you need to talk to me about our meeting today you can call me or ask mommy to write me an email. This is my Email: halima.hamed@mail.mcgill.ca

My teacher is, Dr.Mela Sarkar. She works at McGill University at the Department of Integrated Studies in Education. If you need to talk to her about our meeting today, you can also call her or ask mommy to send her an email. This is her phone number: (514) 398-4527 Ext. 094468, and this is her email: Mela.Sarkar@mcgill.ca

I want to watch you with your mother because I want to know if your mommy speaks English or Arabic with you. Because I want to know if you will be able to speak Arabic, like your mom and dad, when you grow up.

This is what I will do, I will sit quietly and watch you and write some stuff down that I see while you play with your mommy. When I write about you in my work that I have to do for school, nobody will ever know what your name is, because I will give you a fake name and you can help me choose it. You can tell me what you want your fake name to be or I can choose one for you. So when people read about what I see here, nobody will know it is you. Anything I will write about you will be on my computer at home and will always be locked and nobody can see it but me, so you do not have to worry. If do not like what I am doing, you just tell me and I will stop. I will keep a copy of this paper for myself and I will give one for your mommy to keep for you.

If you have any questions about this, you can always contact me, or you can contact Lynda McNeil, she is the big boss of everything. You can call Lynda at 514-398-6831 or you can ask mommy to write her an email at lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca

.

You agree to be watched at home with your mother: Yes _____   No _____

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: __

Appendix D: Interview guidelines

Information on length of residency in Montréal

1- How long have you been here?
2- How long have your child(ren) been here?
3- How would you describe your life in Montréal?
4- Is there anything you would like to say about your stay in Montréal?

Education and language learning background of mothers

5- Would you please talk about your education briefly?
6- Would you please talk about your language learning experience briefly, including Arabic and any other foreign language?
7- Is there anything you would like to talk about your education and language learning?

Mother's involvement

8- Who is the primary caregiver of your child(ren) in your family?
9- How much time do you spend with your child(ren)?
10- Have you made a conscious choice to teach your child(ren) Arabic? Which type of Arabic? Please give some examples
11- How do you describe your role in your child's Arabic development?
12- How do you feel about Libyan culture and tranditions?
13- In which language do you care for your child(ren)?

Information on children's language development

14- How would you describe your child's Arabic language development?
15- How would you describe your child's exposure to Arabic language and culture? Arabic-speaking peers, Arabic classes, media, etc.
16- What languages does your child speak with different people, family members, peers, strangers?
17- Is there anything you would like to say about your child's language development?

Family information

18- Does your family engage in any activities like celebrating in Libyan or Arabic festivals?
19- Do you have Arabic speaking friends?