An Exploration of Heritage Language Maintenance among Arabic Speakers in Montreal, Quebec.

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Abstract

This research is an exploration of the experiences of six Arab-Canadians learning LA (Literary Arabic) as a heritage language in Montreal. Four of the six participants are Canadian born and two were born in France. All six participants are undergraduate university students, aged 21 to 24. Two semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the participants. Results of the study indicate that the participants who were able to maintain their spoken vernacular of Arabic in addition to developing literacy in the language are those who had their parents' support as well as themselves making efforts to keep both forms of the language. Factors contributing to heritage language maintenance and loss are discussed with reference to the findings of this study.

Résumé

Cette étude vise à explorer les expériences de six étudiants canadiens d'origine arabe apprenant l'arabe littéraire à Montréal. Sur les six participants, deux d'entre eux sont nés en France et les quatre autres sont nés au Canada. Les six participants sont des étudiants de premier cycle universitaire âgés de 21 ans à 24 ans. Deux entrevues semi-structurées ont été menées avec chaque participant. Les résultats indiquent que les apprenants qui ont pu maintenir leurs compétences orales vermiculaires de l'arabe tout en développant la littéracie liée à la langue, sont les apprenants soutenus par leurs parents et qui, font preuve d'efforts afin d'entretenir ces deux formes de la langue. Des facteurs pouvant contribuer positivement ou non au maintien d'une langue d'héritage patrimoniale sont investigués en lien avec les trouvailles.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Canada is one of the countries that rely on immigration as a means to population augmentation. Arabs are one of the ethnic groups that constitute the Canadian mosaic. With the rising number of Arab immigrants in Canada, there is a need to check the status of the language and the number of speakers it holds. According to the 2016 census, Arabic is the most spoken non-official non-official language in the city of Montreal (Statistics Canada, 2016). In addition, there are 151,955 individuals whose mother tongue is Arabic in Montreal (Statistics Canada, 2016). Following Cummins' (2014) definition of heritage languages (HL), Arabic is considered a Heritage Language in Canada as it is not one of the official two languages in the country (English and French).

Heritage language loss

Research shows that heritage language speakers face the threat of losing their HL at a young age when schooled in a language other than their HL (Wong-Fillmore, 1991). In addition, Wong-Fillmore (1991) argues that the most visible side effect of HL loss is the loss of family socialization. Immigrant parents who are not proficient in the official language can no longer communicate with children that have lost their HL.

Bilingualism

The research literature provides various definitions for the term bilingualism. Cummins and Swain (1986) report inconsistency with the different definitions of the term. Researchers such as Macnamara (1967) and Oestreicher (1974) as cited in Cummins and Swain (1986, p. 7) argued who is to be considered bilingual? On one end of the continuum, low proficiency level in

L2 was taken into consideration in defining a bilingual speaker, on the other end of the continuum a high proficiency level in L2 was required to be considered a bilingual speaker (Cummins & Swain, 1986, p. 7). Research up until the 1960s argued that bilingualism is negative as the L1 impedes speakers from acquiring the host language (Bialystok, 2010). The turning point was in the 1960s, when Peal and Lambert (1962) showed that bilingual students in Montreal outperformed their counterpart monolinguals in "all the tests, including nonverbal intelligence" (Bialystok, 2010, p. 560). Researchers following Peal and Lambert were more balanced and tried to explain the effects of bilingualism on linguistic and cognitive abilities (Bialystok, 2010).

Heritage language programs in Quebec

In light of results emerging from studies on the importance of keeping students' HL and developing literacy, certain Canadian provinces initiated HL programs offered to HL students (Duff, 2008). Quebec is amongst the provinces that offer HL programs in its public schools. HL students have access to their HL through the PELO program (Projet d'Enseignement des langues d'Origine) in which various HLs are offered in the public schools in Quebec (Courtemmanche, 2017; Crump, 2014; Duff, 2008; Levine, 1990; Sarkar, 2003). In addition, Quebec allows the initiation of community private schools that offer HLs to their students, as well as weekend community schools that offer cultural and HL classes (Courtemanche, 2017; Cummins & Danesi, 1990; Sarkar, 2003).

Significance of the study

My personal interest in HLs and HL students resulted from my experience teaching ESL in a private Muslim school in Montreal. This school offers two hours of Literary Arabic

(henceforth "LA") to students, yet a large number of them had difficulties with the language and lacked the ability to speak in Arabic. I wanted to know if the program helps students establish and sustain literacy in LA. I also wanted to know whether the LA literacy developed through the HL program lasts after the programs end. In addition to literacy development, I wanted to know about spoken Arabic maintenance in Montreal. How can it be achieved? And in the case that it was lost, what were the factors causing language attrition or loss?

The following questions guided me through my exploration:

1)   What can graduates of heritage language programs of literary Arabic in Montreal tell us regarding the maintenance of their spoken dialect of Arabic?

2)   What information can graduates of heritage language programs of LA in Montreal share regarding their development of literacy in LA?

Rationale

My research is an exploration of the HL maintenance experiences of six heritage speakers of Arabic in Montreal. Due to the special nature of Arabic as a diglossic language, speakers of Arabic acquire the spoken vernacular as a mother tongue. The literary form of the language is only acquired through formal education in schools. Heritage speakers of Arabic struggle with scarcity of resources in both forms of the language. As a result, maintenance requires massive efforts of heritage families of Arab descent. With the help of this research, I aim to explore the maintenance efforts of the families of the six participants. The six participants had the privilege of attending Literary Arabic classes in Montreal. Results emerging from this study could shed light on means of maintaining a HL as well as developing literacy skills in the HL.

Organization of the study

The study constitutes of six chapters. **Chapter One** is this chapter in which I provide an introduction to my study as well the significance of the study.

Chapter Two presents the literature related to the topic of this exploration.

In **Chapter Three** I present the method I chose to conduct my study with. In addition, I present the rationale behind the research method as well as the choice of participants. This chapter also includes a detailed description of the data coding and analysis.

Chapter Four, Results, includes emerging themes from the interviews with the participants in addition to direct quotes to support the resulting themes.

Chapter Five is the Discussion Chapter. It connects the results emerging from my study with the literature related to my topic. In addition, I present studies with similar results to mine and try to explain the emerging results in my study.

In the concluding and **sixth chapter** I include a summary of the thesis as well as a presentation of the limitations of the current study, in addition to directions for future explorations of the topic.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The nature of diglossia in Arabic

Arabic is one of a few languages that share a special feature, namely what Ferguson (1959) referred to as "diglossia" (p. 233). The term *diglossia* refers to languages that have a dichotomy—two forms of language co-exist simultaneously, one form is the *Low* form, used in everyday situations, which varies from one region to another, whereas the second form is the *High* form and is used in formal settings and in writing (Abu-Rabia, 2000; Al-Wer, 1997; Ferguson, 1959; Ibrahim & Aharon-Perez, 2005; Khamis-Dakwar, Froud, & Gordon, 2012; Leikin, Ibrahim, & Eghbaria, 2014; Saiegh-Haddad, 2004). In diglossic languages, the *low* form of the language is acquired as a mother language, whereas the *high* form of the language is only acquired through formal education (Abu-Rabia, 2000; Al-Batal, 1992; Al-Wer, 1997; Ferguson, 1959; Ibrahim & Aharon-Perez, 2005; Khamis-Dakwar, Froud, & Gordon, 2012; Leikin, Ibrahim, & Eghbaria, 2014; Saiegh-Haddad, 2004).

In Arabic, the spoken form is the form that Arabic speakers acquire as their mother tongue and that is subject to geographical differences as well as differences related to socio-economic status. Often the dialect in one region would be hard to understand by speakers of distant regions. There is also the literary form of Arabic (LA), which is used in writing and all formal settings. It is the language of the Quran, the holy book of Muslims. The spoken form of Arabic is acquired at home, while the literary form is encountered for the first time through formal schooling (Abu-Rabia, 2000; Al-Batal, 1992; Al-Wer, 1997; Ferguson, 1959; Ibrahim &

Aharon-Perez, 2005; Khamis-Dakwar, Froud, & Gordon, 2012; Leikin, Ibrahim, & Eghbaria, 2014; Saiegh-Haddad, 2004)).

The discrepancy between LA and the various spoken vernaculars lies in discrepancies in terms of morphosyntax, phonology, and lexicon, in addition to pragmatic and sociolinguistic aspects (Abu-Rabia, Sher & Mansour, 2003; Ferguson, 1959; Ibrahim, 1986; Suleiman, 1986; Shlonsky, 1997). An example of this discrepancy can be found in word order. The unmarked word order in LA is VSO (verb-subject-object) whereas in the spoken vernaculars it is SVO (Shlonsky, 1997, p. 7). Additional examples of discrepancy can be found in the lexicon, where items in spoken vernaculars vary entirely from the LA ones. Ferguson (1959) provides examples of lexical items in the spoken vernacular of Arabic in Egypt that vary completely from the ones found in LA:

High (LA)		Low (spoken vernacular of Egypt)
ḥiðā'un	shoe	gazma
'anfun	nose	manaxir
ðahaba	went	rāḥ
mā	what	'ēh
'al'āna	now	dilwa'ti

The relationship between spoken vernaculars and the literary form of Arabic

Having clarified the nature of Arabic as a diglossic language, it is important to point out that learning LA is considered challenging to native speakers of spoken Arabic due to the discrepancy between the two forms. An empirical study conducted by Saiegh-Haddad (2004) can

further clarify this issue. The study was conducted in an Arab village in Northern Israel. 66 chidren were recruited for the study; 24 kindergarten children and 42 first-grade students who speak the same vernacular of Arabic. The study was conducted during the last month of the school year, allowing first-grade students to have been exposed to LA for an entire school year. Both groups were provided with two phonemic awareness tests using words from LA, spoken Arabic and pseudowords. The targeted phonemes were the voiced and voicless interdental fricatives /θ/, /ð/ in addition to the emphatic voiced interdental fricative /ð�/ and the uvular stop /q/. Those four phonemes do not exist in children's spoken vernacular of Arabic. The LA words used have phonologically close representations in the spoken vernacular, yet they are not identical. The targeted phonemes were evenly divided in initial-word positioning and final-word positioning. Children were asked to listen to audiorecorded list of words, one word at a time. Then they were asked to vocalize the targeted phoneme. The results indicate that the lexical status of words (real word or not) does not affect the phonemic isolation performance. It is explained that the prosodic structure of Arabic as a syllabic language allowed for the isolation of phonemes even in pseudowords and novel LA words.

In addition, it was found that the phonemes that are absent from children's spoken vernacular of Arabic, were harder to isolate in both kindergarten and first-grade groups in comparison to phonemes present in children's dialect. This meant that decoding the spoken vernacular of Arabic was easier for children than decoding LA because of the difficulty of decoding phonemes absent in the spoken vernacular.

Cross-dialectical comparison

Saiegh-Haddad (2007) repeated the previous study (2004) but this time she compared two groups of children from two different regions in Israel. The intention was to "test the cross-dialectical validity of the phoneme's linguistic affiliation on phoneme isolation in diglossic Arabic" (Saiegh-Hadda, 2007, p. 616). The study compared first-grade, second-grade and third-grade students from a Northern Israeli village to first-grade and second-grade students from an Arab village in the center of Israel in an area called the Triangle. The spoken Arabic used in the two regions differs, as the targeted phonemes of the study are lacking in the Northern spoken Arabic vernacular (N-SAV) yet they are present in the central spoken Arabic vernacular (C-SAV). The targeted phonemes are the voiced interdental fricative /ð/, the voiceless interdental fricative /θ/, the emphatic voiced interdental fricative /ḏ/, and the uvular stop /q/. For the purpose of the study, 159 students from the Northern village were recruited: 30 first-grade students, 129 second-grades students and 43 third-grade students. From the central village 23 first-grade students and 31 second-grade students were recruited. The gap between the number of students in both regions is explained in terms of the size of population in both villages. The Northern village has a larger population size while the central village has a smaller population size and no more students could be recruited. Phonemic isolation tasks were administered individually. Students were asked to indicate "what the word began or ended with" (Saiegh-Haddad, 2007, p. 613). Results indicate that students who have the four phonemes in question in their phonemic repertoire had better phonemic awareness in comparison to students who lacked the phonemes in their repertoire. Students from the Northern village found it difficult to isolate phonemes absent in their spoken dialect in both first-grade and second-grade groups. Thus, even after two years of formal instruction of LA, students were still unable to isolate phonemes absent from their spoken

dialect. However, with the third-grade group they showed better performance, isolating phonemes absent from the spoken vernacular of students. In contrast, students from central Israel showed advanced phonemic sensitivity and awareness.

Findings from both empirical studies (Saiegh-Haddad, 2004, 2007) show that the process of acquiring literacy in LA is challenging given the discrepancy between the spoken and the literary froms of the language. The spoken from, which is considered the native language, may facilitate the acquisition of the literary form, yet it could also impede literacy acquisition in cases of severe discrepancy between the two forms. In adiition to Saiegh-Haddad's (2004, 2007) studies testing phonemic isolation in a diglossic context, Khamis-Dakwar, Froud and Gordon (2012) tested grammatical judgment in a similar context. This study tested grammaticality judgment using ten different grammatical structures. In six structures there is a mismatch between the LA and the spoken vernacular forms. In the remaining four structures there is a match between the two forms of the language. 120 elementary school students were recruited to participate in the study. All students come from the city of Nazareth in Northern Israel and speak the Palestinian dialect of Arabic. Students' ages ranged from six years to twelve, in grades one to five. There were 60 boys and 60 girls in the sample. Each student was tested by a researcher individually. Each student was provided with two pictures; one representing a common seller who is more likely to use the spoken vernacular of Arabic at work. The second picture represented a television announcer who is more likely to be using LA at work. The researcher would show the first picture then would read sets of two sentences to the student asking him/her to point out the sentence that sounds better. Then the same process would be done using the second picture. There was a counterbalance on the choice of which picture to present first. Results suggest that children from all age groups found it hard to point out the correct from when

there is a mismatch between the LA form and the spoken form of Arabic. In addition, in the matching structures, children were able to judge the correct structures equally in both forms of the language across all age groups. The best results were achieved with the spoken vernacular in the case of matching structures. Khamis-Dakwar et al., (2012) suggest that the spoken vernacular of students should be accounted for in the process of teaching LA, especially when the two forms of the language have a clear mismatch in grammatical structures. In addition, the researchers suggest that the spoken vernacular of Arabic should be assessed in schools as the success in one form of the language does not predict success in the other.

Which form of Arabic should be used in instruction?

This diglossic nature of Arabic affected policy makers in the Arab countries when a decision was required as to what form of the language would be used in instruction. Abu-Absi (as cited in Cote, 2009, p. 77) mentions the debate in the late 1800s. There were two camps, each calling for a different form to be used. The proponents of the use of LA in instruction argued that this is the form used in Arabic literature and is the language of Quran; it is a prestigious form of the language that unites all Arabs together. However, opponents of the use of LA in instruction argued that the use of this form would withhold meaningful learning since learners would not be instructed in their mother tongue (Ayari, 1996; Bani-Khaled, 2014; Cote, 2009). Today, LA is used in the Arab world as the official language of instruction in education, the language of literature and the language of official settings (Ayari, 1996). The debate on which form of the language to use in instruction was not restricted to the Arab countries. The debate also resonated in North America amongst Arabic teachers (Al-Batal, 1992; McCarus, 1992). After WWII, the US governments saw a need in training officials in Arabic especially with the rise of new independent Arab countries in the Middle East (Al-Batal, 1992; Allen, 1992; McCarus, 1992).

Therefore, the debate surfaced once again as to which form to use in instruction. Various

programs were implemented and the use of LA alone or a spoken vernacular alone were used

(Al-Batal, 1992; Allen, 1992; McCarus, 1992). In addition, university programs witnessed a high

rate of students' interest in Arabic after the September 11th attacks in the US (Shiri, 2010).

Various programs implement the use of LA at the university level in addition to courses offering

a spoken vernacular (Al-Batal, 1992). By examining the literature of Arabic in North America,

studies have addressed LA as a foreign language (Al-Batal, 1992; Allen, 1992; McCarus, 1992).

Only very fiew have addressed HL learners of Arabic and their needs (Bale, 2010; Rouchdy,

2002; Sawaie, 1992; Shiri, 2010). HL learners have usually learned their HL in a foreign

language context and only recently they have been acknowledged as learners with needs

different from those of foreign language learners (Compton, 2001; Fishman, 2006; Montrul,

2010; Valdés, 2001; Wiley, 2001).

Arabic in the diaspora

Arabs learning LA in the diaspora are considered to be *heritage language learners.*

Heritage languages in the Canadian context are languages other than the two official languages

in the country (English and French), the indigenous languages and the languages of the "Deaf

Community" (Cummins, 2014, p. 2). The definition of *heritage language* is not consistent in the

literature. Other terms have been used to refer to such languages, such as "'ancestral', 'ethnic',

'immigrant', 'international', 'minority'…" (Cummins, 2014, p. 2). Given the dynamic nature of

the term *heritage language*, the term *heritage language learner* has also been dynamic in the

literature. Questions such as 'who is to be considered a *HL learner?'* have prevailed in the

research literature (Fishman, 2001; Hornberger & Wang, 2008; Jean & Geva, 2012; Montrul,

2010; Valdés, 2001; Wiley, 2001). Learners' exposure to the language "outside the formal

education system" was one element that constituted the definition according to Webb and Miller (2000, p.19). Valdès (2001) argues that an *HL learner* is a learner who has a historical connection to a language that is not taught in mainstream schools, or who was brought up in a house where English was not spoken (in the US context). I will be following Cummins' definition of *heritage languages* as it is compatible with the context of my study. A *heritage language* in Canada is a language other than the two official languages (English and French), the indigenous languages and languages of the deaf community (Cummins, 2014).

Arabs living in the diaspora receive instruction via LA when learning Arabic. Their case is more challenging than the case of Arabs in their motherlands. While Arab students in Arab countries can rely on the spoken vernacular to facilitate learning, Arab students in the diaspora do not share a similar advantage. Arabs living in Arab countries are exposed to the spoken form of the language wherever they go. Their spoken vernacular of Arabic is dominant in their country (Bale, 2010). However, a large majority of LA students in the diaspora can only be exposed to their spoken dialect either at home or in community gatherings. Their HL and culture are a "minority" (Bale, 2010, p. 135). Therefore, this poor language exposure could be reflected in the official settings when learning the literary form of the language. Teachers of LA in the North America (Rouchdy, 2002; Shiri, 2010) face the challenge of teaching a form of the language that learners are scarcely exposed to. Teachers of Arabic in North America lack the appropriate preparation to deal with students of Arabic as a heritage language (Shiri, 2010; Zakharia & Bishop, 2013). In addition, LA programs in North America adopt curricula developed in Arab countries and designed for native speakers of Arabic and do not reply the needs of heritage language learners (Shiri, 2010). Zakharia and Bishop (2013) examined a Muslim school in Brooklyn in the US. This school uses curriculum developed for non-native speakers of Arabic in

Saudi Arabic. However, teachers in the school stress that the themes found in books rarely relate to students living in western countries, let alone Muslim students living in western countries. Teachers of Arabic in the diaspora usually teach this form of the language without relying on a specific vernacular to facilitate learning, since the choice of one vernacular over the other would be unfair towards speakers of other vernaculars. Shiri (2010) mentions the risk certain vernaculars of Arabic might face if the HL teacher chooses a specific vernacular to use in instruction. The use of one vernacular of Arabic automatically excludes other vernaculars. As a result, all students that are not speakers of this vernacular could be overexposed to it and eventually their own dialects could face the risk of attrition. Rouchdy (2002) claims that in the diaspora the interaction between students who are speakers of various vernaculars creates a new *language* that is a mixture of all dialects interacting simultaneously (p. 145). This new *language* is neither related to a specific vernacular nor to LA. It is used as a language of communication between the HL learners of Arabic in the diaspora (Shiri, 2010).

It is hard to conclude that the use of LA exclusively as a means of instruction is the best approach given the empirical studies (Khamis-Dakwar et al., 2012; Saiegh-Haddad, 2004, 2007) that prove the role the spoken form of the language plays in the process of learning the literary form. Given the diversity in linguistic backgrounds of HL learners of LA in the diaspora, Bale (2010) comments that "there cannot be a single approach to Arabic heritage language instruction" (p. 148). However, as Valdés (2001) points out, it is important that educators are aware of the diversity found in students' repertoire of HL. Teachers of LA need to know what vernaculars of Arabic are spoken by their students. Then they should adapt the resources and teaching material considering students' repertoires.

Means to facilitate LA acquisition in school

Abu-Rabia (2000) suggests early exposure to LA via storytelling in kindergarten as a means to facilitate learning LA in school. He argues that early exposure to LA in kindergarten would facilitate reading and predicts success in school. His results suggest that children who are exposed to LA in kindergarten outperform those who were not exposed to LA when they reached grade one. In addition, Leikin, Ibrahim and Eghbaria's empirical study (2014) on kindergarten-age Arabic speaking children in a Palestinian village in Israel showed surprising results to the research team. The team tested the narrative ability of the children by asking them to retell two stories told to them. One story was told by the teacher using the spoken vernacular and the other story was read to them by the teacher in LA and instructions were provided to the children in LA as well. The children showed better results when they retold the spoken story. However, they showed developed understanding of LA at kindergarten age despite not being officially instructed in LA. The researchers suggest that home exposure to LA through media and children's stories read to children this age has enhanced their ability to understand LA prior to being officially instructed in that form of the language. Homes can function as "language nests," allowing exposure to both forms of the language. Stories read in LA and explained in the spoken form could allow for both forms of the language to interact simultaneously and as a result LA acquisition would be easier in formal settings.

Next, I will present Arabs' waves of immigration to Canada and discuss their drift from their heritage and language in an attempt to assimilate to the mainstream community and the consequences assimilation had on language.

Arab waves of immigration to Canada

Immigration flow to Canada is one of the country's means towards augmentation in the population. Arab waves of immigration to North America started in late 19th century and continue to the present day. Research documenting the Arab immigration waves to North America names at least four distinct waves of immigration, with World-War-II a marking point (Elkholy, 1969; Naff, 1983; Rouchdy, 1992). However, Suleiman (1999) and Eid (2007) document two distinct waves of Arab immigration to North America with the World-War-II as the marking point between them. Despite different opinions about the number of waves of immigration, the previously mentioned research agrees on World-War-II as a distinct point demarcating different Arab populations entering North America.

Pre-World-War-II immigration to North America

Pre-World-War-II Arab immigrants came from what was then known as Greater Syria and they were almost entirely Christian young men from Mount Lebanon (Abu Laban, 1980; Bale, 2010; Eid, 2007; Elkholy, 1969; Kayal, 1983; Naff, 1983; Rouchdy, 1992; Suleiman, 1999; Zakharia & Bishop; 2013). Reasons triggering the migration vary according to different resources. Eid (2007), Kayal (1983) and Suleiman (1999) report that the young Christian men escaped the oppression of the Muslim Ottoman empire in the region. However, Naff (1983) reports that Mount Lebanon was a peaceful and prosperous administration and that it is unlikely that the young men migrated to escape oppression. Naff (1983) presents different motives triggering migration to North America. Among these are evading military service in the Turkish army, which became mandatory for Christians in 1908. In addition, they saw an opportunity to

accumulate wealth in the new world and that is the reason they decided to migrate. This latter point was also reported in Abu Laban, 1980; Eid, 2007; Elkholy, 1969; Suleiman, 1999.

Early arrival Christian-Arab immigrants to Canada permeated into Ontario and Quebec and as their businesses grew bigger they expanded to other cities and provinces (Abu Laban, 1980). In addition, they settled in cities as these offered an abundance of job opportunities. Muslims in this wave of immigration settled in Lac La Biche, Alberta, forming the first Muslim community in Canada (Abu Laban, 1980; Eid, 2007).

Characteristics of pre-WWII immigrants

Young Christian men migrating from Greater Syria to North America were uneducated peasants who saw in the new world opportunities to accumulate enough wealth to come back to their homeland and live a decent life there (Abu Laban, 1980; Bale, 2010; Eid, 2007; Elkholy, 1969; Suleiman, 1999). They saw themselves as sojourners who will one day go back to their homeland (Abu Laban, 1980; Bale, 2010; Eid, 2007; Suleiman, 1999). These young men worked as peddlers and that was their means to accumulate wealth (Abu Laban, 1980; Eid, 2007; Elkholy, 1969; Naff, 1983; Suleiman, 1999). Given their occupation in peddling and trade, this group of immigrants lived a nomadic lifestyle and followed work opportunities (Abu Laban, 1980; Eid, 2007).

In the early years of the immigration to North America, it was bachelor Christians that constituted the large majority of immigrants. However, later on those young men would marry women from their homeland, bring them to North America and start their families (Bale, 2010; Elkholy, 1969; Naff, 1983). These bachelors paved the way for married men to follow them to North America and as a result families immigrated and settled there. Soon enough, wives joined

their husbands in peddling, helped in creating garments for their husbands to sell and maintained the households (Naff, 1983).

Interestingly, first-generation Syrian immigrants in North America did not invest their wealth in their dwellings, but rather in their homeland, hoping that one day they would move back and live there (Elkholy, 1969; Eid, 2007; Naff, 1983; Suleiman, 1999). World-War-I erupted and Arab immigrants were disconnected from their families and relatives in Greater Syria. As a result, Arab immigrants in North America ceased to think of themselves as sojourners and invested their money in better residences, moved to the suburbs and invested in the education of their North-American-born children who were assimilated to the host community (Elkholy, 1969; Kayal, 1983; Naff, 1983; Suleiman, 1999).

The years between WWI and WWII witnessed a decline in Arab immigration to North America as a result of restrictive immigration acts in the US and Canada (Abu Laban, 1980; Eid, 2007; Naff, 1983; Saliba, 1983; Suleiman, 1999). In Canada, immigrants from origins other than American or British faced public opposition (Abu Laban, 1980). Asiatic groups were denied entry to Canada and Syrians were among those denied entry (Abu Laban, 1980; Bale, 2010; Eid, 2007; Suleiman, 1999). Following these restrictions, the growth of the number of Arab immigrants in Canada was due to natural increase and not to immigration prior to WWII (Abu Laban, 1980; Eid, 2007; Hayani, 1999).

Ethnic identity within Arab pioneer immigrants in North America

First wave immigrants to North America in the late 19th century had a minimal concept of ethnicity (Eid, 2007; Kayal, 1969; Suleiman, 1999). Back in the 19th century, Arab regions were ruled by the Ottoman Empire. Within these regions there were Arab nationalists calling for

national autonomy and were fought by Ottoman officials (Haddad, 1983). Therefore, first wave

immigrants to North America could only identify themselves in terms of their original

geographical region, clan, village or religion (Bale, 2010; Eid, 2007; Kayal, 1983; Suleiman,

1999). The unformed ethnic identity of pioneer Arab immigrants to North America created a

second generation of Arab immigrants who were almost entirely assimilated to the host

community (Eid, 2007; Kayal, 1983; Naff, 1983; Suleiman, 1999). Assimilation was pushed

forward by the stable middle-class status and accumulated wealth pioneer Arab immigrants had

managed to achieve (Kayal, 1983; Naff; 1983; Suleiman, 1999). Heritage language loss was

gradual within the second generation of Arab immigrants in North America and by the third

generation they had entirely lost their HL (Abu Laban, 1980; Eid, 2007; Naff, 1983; Sawaie,

1992; Suleiman, 1999).

Post-WWII immigration to North America

Post-World-War-II immigration to North America from Arab countries was different

from the early waves of immigration. Immigration acts in the US and Canada became permissive

and Arabs from different Arab regions were allowed entry (Eid, 2007; Hayani, 1999; Naff, 1983;

Suleiman, 1999). In addition, while the early Arab immigrants to North America were mainly

Christian peasants from Mount Lebanon, post-WWII immigrantion waves included Muslims

from other Arab countries in addition to Christians (Eid, 2007; Elkholy, 1969; Naff, 1983;

Suleiman, 1999).

Post-WWII Arab immigrants were educated professionals who had clear future prospects

in their new land (Abu Laban, 1969; Abu Laban, 1980; Eid, 2007; Naff, 1983; Suleiman, 1999).

These new immigrants had the advantage of education, official language knowledge and Arab

settlements already established by the early immigrants (Abu Laban, 1969; Naff, 1983; Suleiman, 1999). These factors facilitated the adjustment of new Arab immigrants and raised the chances of upward mobility (Abu Laban, 1969; Haddad, 1983; Naff, 1983). Ontario and Quebec continued to be the destination of Arab immigrants in this period (Abu Laban, 1980; Hanna Wassef, 1977; Abu Laban & McIrvin Abu Laban, 1999).

Ethnic identity amongst post-WWII immigrants

Arab immigrants coming to North America after WWII had an established sense of ethnic identity affected by the rising nationalist voices in the newly independent Arab countries (Eid, 2007; Kyal, 1983; Suleiman, 1999). However, the real turning point for Arab immigrants' sense of ethnic identity in North America was the 1967 war between Israel and its neighbouring Arab countries (Abu Laban, 1969; Kayal, 1983; Naff, 1983; Suleiman, 1999; Eid, 2007). The defeat of the Arab countries in the war created a sense of disappointment and gloominess within the Arab communities in North America (Eid, 2007; Naff, 1983; Suleiman, 1999). The result was a sudden interest of third generation Arab immigrants in their heritage, caused by the negative image imposed on Arabs by mass media at the time of the 1967 war (Eid, 2007; Kayal, 1983; Nafff, 1983; Suleiman, 1999). Newly arrived Arab immigrants joined descendants of Arab immigrants to stand against the negative stereotypes imposed on Arabs by the media, resulting in a better understanding of one's ethnic identity (Eid, 2007; Kayal, 1983; Nafff, 1983; Suleiman, 1999). Arab immigrants in North America became interested in the revival of their heritage, resulting in the formation of community schools to teach Arabic and in republishing Arabic newspapers and periodicals (Naff, 1983; Sawaie, 1992; Suleiman, 1999).

Language retention within the Arab community

Patterns of language loss and retention among Arab immigrants in North America are similar to patterns in other ethnic groups (Hayani, 1999). Language retention efforts amongst Arab immigrants can be looked at through examining the pre-WWII and post-WWII Arab immigrants to North America.

Pre-WWII Arab immigrants' language retention efforts

Pioneer Arab immigrants to North America were uneducated peasants from Mount Lebanon who had no command of languages other than Arabic (Abu Laban, 1969; Abu Laban, 1980; Eid, 2007; Naff, 1983; Suleiman,1999). The unfamiliarity with the host language and the new culture kept the new Arab immigrants connected, forming a close-knit community in the new country, whether it was the US or Canada (Abu Laban, 1980; Naff, 1983; Suleiman, 1999). Considering themselves sojourners in North America, the early Arab immigrants showed interest in teaching the heritage language to their children, thinking it would be useful for them when moving back to the homeland (Abu Laban, 1980; Sawaie, 1992). Community schools provided literary Arabic classes as early as 1917 in Montreal, followed by the first literary Arabic classes in church in 1924 (Abu Laban, 1980).

However, second generation Arab immigrants' assimilation and lack of resources caused a decline in enrollment and eventually the programs ceased to exist (Abu Laban, 1980; Sawaie, 1992). Second and third generation descendents of early Arab immigrants to North America lost their HL and could only keep contact with their hertitage through food and folk music (Abu Laban, 1980; Kayal, 1983). It was only with the post-WWII immigration cohorts that interest in

and revival of literary Arabic became of interest to Arab immigrants (Abu Laban, 1980; Rouchdy, 1992; Sawaie, 1992; Suleiman, 1999).

Post-WWII Arab immigrants' language retention efforts

Arab immigrants' interest in thier HL was intensified after the loss of Arab countries in the war against Israel in 1967 (Abu Laban, 1969, 1980; Eid, 2007; Naff, 1983; Suleiman, 1999). Disappointment at the loss accompanied with disappointment at the western media's representation of Arabs triggered third and fourth generation Arab immigrants' questioning of their ethnicity and heritage (Abu Laban, 1969, 1980; Eid, 2007; Naff, 1983; Suleiman, 1999). The result was the cohesion of Arab descendants and new Arab immigrants against the negative representation imposed on them by western mass media (Abu Laban, 1969, 1980; Eid, 2007; Naff, 1983; Suleiman, 1999). Arab immigrants proudly stated their ethnic origin after the 1973 war between Israel and the Arab countries, since Arab countries were not defeated this time (Abu Laban, 1980). Community schools, mosques and churches offered LA classes that transmitted the importance of the HL to children (Abu Laban, 1980; Bale, 2010; Sawaie, 1992).

It is important to mention that in comparison to pioneer Arab immigrants to North America, descendants of post-WWII Arab immigrants showed a faster rate of HL loss (Abu Laban, 1980). This phenomenon can be explained by examining the characteristics of parent immigrants in both groups (pre-WWII and post-WWII Arab immigrants). Post-WWII immigrants had a high command of either English or French while their pre-WWII counterparts had no command of any of the host languages (Abu Laban, 1980; Bale, 2010; Eid, 2007; Naff, 1983; Suleiman, 1999). Therefore, when children showed symptoms of language shift, post-

WWII parents could easily communicate with their children while their pre-WWII counterparts could not (Abu Laban, 1980).

The 1993 Ontario survey

Hayani (1999) reports on a 1993 Ontario survey conducted with the Arab community in the province. The survey aimed to explore the Arab community's acculturation patterns through examining community members' ethnic identification, behavior patterns and heritage language use. Results of the survey indicate that there is a difference between the Canadian-born respondants and the foreign-born ones. Canadian-born respondants tend to identify more with the Canadian society and they showed a higher rate of heritage language loss than the foreign-born immigrants.

The Arab community in Canada is an ethnic group made up of individuals from different regional backgrounds. Each region has its distinct vernacular of Arabic along with other distinctive marks such as food, music and traditions. Based on the results of the previous survey, it would be important for the Arab community in Canada to enhance their efforts to maintain the HL, whether it is the spoken vernacular or the literary form. Generations to come are at risk of losing the language entirely or becoming receptive bilinguals who are unable to use their HL. Next, I will discuss the advantage of HL maintenance and the effect HL loss has on individuals.

Why should communities maintain the heritage language?

Canada is one of the countries that acknowledge the diversity of its population. It is one of the countries that have been supportive to HL and minority language education. Acknowledging diversity within its population, Canada worked towards encouraging minorities

to maintain their heritage languages (Duff, 2008). Some of the reasons supporing HL

maintenance are:

> to validate multiculturalism in this country and recognize people's multiple cultural and
>
> linguistic identities, to help minority children gain strong L1 language and literacy skills
>
> that will in turn support their second language (L2) schooling, and to provide public
>
> relations and policies to help encourage immigrants to settle in this country, knowing that
>
> their cultures and languages are valued. (Duff, 2008, p. 72)

In addition to the aforementioned reasons in favor of HL maintenance, there is abundance of

evidence in the literature reporting the negative consequences losing HL may have on both the

individual and society as well (Nestreuk, 2010; Wong Fillmore, 1991). One of the seminal

researchers that addressed the effect HL loss has on individuals is Wong Fillmore (1991). In her

research, Wong Fillmore (1991) reports that the negative results of HL loss is divided between

social consequences and cognitive educational consequences (p. 342). The direct and most

noticeable consequence of HL loss is the loss of family socialization. Parents who have not

mastered the dominant language are unable to socialize and communicate with their children

who in turn have lost their HL. With no familial socialization, it is hard to transfer cultural

values. The additional negative consequence HL loss has on individuals and society lies in

education.

Research on the academic profiles of HL learners in countries with large immigrant

populations such as the US and Canada mention the importance of developing literacy in the HL

in addition to the official language in schooling (Cummins, 2000; Fishman, 2006; Shibata, 2004;

Valdés, 2001; Wong Fillmore, 1991). The main claim of those studies is that HL maintenance

and literacy development will not impede academic success in school (Cummins, 2000; Fishman, 2006; Shibata, 2004; Valdés, 2001). In addition, it is claimed that additive bilingualism will enhance students' cognitive abilities and eventually be reflected in their academic performance (Cummins, 2000; Danesi, 1991; Duff, 2008; Swain & Lapkin, 1991, 2005).

The Canadian research presented by Duff (2008) shows that bilingualism achieved through HL maintenance in addition to acquiring the host language can be regarded as a sign of strength. A society that succeeds in generating balanced bilinguals may benefit economically, as reported in Agirdag (2014), in addition to the social and educational benefits. Duff's (2008) quote regarding the importance of HL maintenance:

> to validate multiculturalism in this country and recognize people's multiple cultural and linguistic identities, to help minority children gain strong L1 language and literacy skills that will in turn support their second language (L2) schooling, and to provide public relations and policies to help encourage immigrants to settle in this country, knowing that their cultures and languages are valued. (Duff, 2008, p. 72)

relies on Cummins' (2000, p. 173) *Interdependence Hypothesis*, which states that literacy skills acquired in L1 facilitate acquisition of literacy skills in L2. This transfer of literacy skills from one language to another can only be obtained once the literacy skills of L1 are fully consolidated. Results confirming the *interdependence hypothesis* are found in the literature. Ayari and Tarone (1993) conducted an empirical study with participants of Arab origin in the US. The study evaluated the written performance of participants. The participants of the study were divided into three groups. The first group consisted of five university level students that were native English speakers. The second group consisted of five university level students who were native Arabic

speakers and beginners in ESL. The third group consisted of 27 university level students who were native speakers of Arabic and who had between three to ten years of education in the US. All three groups were Muslims. For the purpose of the study, participants had to describe the Friday prayer to a non-Muslim reader. The first group (native English speakers) had to write in English only. The second group (native Arabic speakers) had to write in Arabic only. The third group (native Arabic speakers) had to write in both Arabic and English. Results indicate that within the third group there is a high correlation between participants' performance in Arabic and his/her performance in English. Participants that failed to perform the task properly in Arabic also failed to do so in English and vice versa. This study supports Cummins' *interdependence hypothesis* (2000). Literacy skills transfer from one language to another. Mastering literacy in one's mother language can predict successful literacy in L2.

Heritage languages in Canada

Baker (2001) as cited in Duff (2008, p. 72) mentions the Canadian aspiration of multicultural inclusive mosaic for all of Canada's ethnic groups in addition to its aspiration to move away from the US assimilative melting pot policies. Thus, more and more HL programs are being implemented in Canadian schools. Since the education system in Canada is under provincial jurisdiction, different provinces implement different HL programs (Cummins, 2014). Alberta is at one end of the continuum, offering various HL bilingual programs as means of instruction in the public school system. Amongst the languages offered are: "Arabic, Mandarin, German, Hebrew, Spanish and Ukrainian" (Cummins, 2014, p. 5). Ontario is at the other end of the continuum, with HL programs offered as transitional domains helping the HL students towards the official language (Cummins, 2014). HL lessons are prohibited in regular school hours (Cummins, 2014, p. 5). Presenting HL programs in all Canadian provinces is unfortunately

beyond the scope of this research. Next, I will present the historical background of language policies in Quebec in addition to the development of HL programs in the province.

Language conflict in Quebec

The province of Quebec has produced a proliferation of language acts since the 1960s (Barbaud, 1998; Cornick & Regan, 2007; Courtemanche, 2017; Crump, 2014; Levine, 1990). These language acts have historical grounds to them. There are a number of factors that triggered these pieces of legislation. First, the city of Montreal, the province's most populated city, was mainly populated by French speakers (Courtemanche, 2017; Crump, 2014; Levine, 1990). However, despite the fact that the Francophone community surpassed the Anglophone community in number, the latter managed to dominate the economy of the city (Courtemanche, 2017; Crump, 2014; Levine, 1990). As a result, English was the dominant language of power and economy in the city. There was a clear disparity between the income of Anglophone households and their Francophone counterparts (Barbaud, 1998; Crump, 2014; Levine, 1990). Second, education in Quebec was in the hands of the Catholic Church (Courtemanche, 2017; Crump, 2014; Levine, 1990). Two school boards dominated the education system in the city. The Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal (PSBGM) served the Anglophone community and offered instruction in English (Courtemanche, 2017; Levine, 1990). The Catholic establishment was the Commission des écoles catholiques de Montreal (CECM) which served the Francophone community in addition to a small number of Anglophones (Cortemanche, 2017; Levine, 1990). Prior to WWI, CECM offered students a choice of French only, Bilingual or English only education (Courtemanche, 2017; Levine, 1990). The educational establishments remained bound to the church until 1997 when schools became secular. In 2000 they were separated based on language and not religious denomination (Courtemanche, 2017). The immigration waves after

WWII resulted in the Francophone community's feeling that their language may disappear one day as their birthrates were declining with time (Barbaud, 1998; Courtemanche, 2017; Levine, 1990; Sarkar, 2005). Immigrants arriving in the city after WWII preferred to send their children to English-speaking schools. This is actually related to the fact that English was the language of business in the city and parents saw it as a necessity for upward mobility (Courtemanche, 2017; Levine, 1990). In addition, the French school boards denied immigrant children access to their schools (Cortemanche, 2017; Crump, 2014; Levine, 1990; Sarkar, 2005). As a result, more and more immigrant children were students in English schools (Courtemanche, 2017; Crump, 2014; Levine, 1990). Therefore, Francophones feared to be outnumbered and calls for action dominated the city (Barbaud, 1998; Courtemanche, 2017; Levine, 1990). Levine (1990) brings an example of a language conflict in the 1950s between the two communites. At the time, a new building belonging to the national rail line was established at the heart of Downtown Montreal and the name suggested was *The Queen Elizabeth* (p. 37). The Francophones were outraged by the suggestion and public joined the media to make their voices heard. They eventually chose the name *Le Château Maisonneuve* after the founder of the city (Levine, 1990).

The quiet revolution

The 1960s were predominantly unstable years in terms of security and politics in Quebec (Courtemanche, 2017; Crump, 2014; Levine, 1990). Rights movements across the US called for equal rights across races (Crump, 2014). In Quebec it was Francophones' calls to bring back the French face of the province (Crump, 2014). Francophones protested in what became known as *the Quiet Revolution*, Government of Quebec to lead changes while keeping the French culture and language dominant in the province (Courtemanche, 2017; Crump, 2014; Levine, 1990). For the first time in the history of the province, the French language was regarded as the province's

responsibility (Barbaud, 1998). There was a need for a body to make sure that an appropriate form of French was being used. The *Office de la langue française* was created in 1961 (Barbaud, 1998; Cornick & Regan, 2007; Courtemanche, 2017; Crump, 2014; Levine, 1990). Following these events, Francophone nationalists came to power in the Government of Quebec, with the election of separatist premier René Lévesque in 1976 who would mark history in language policies in Quebec (Barbaud, 1998; Cornick & Regan, 2007; Crump, 2014; Levine, 1990).

The charter of the French language

With the rise of René Lévesque's party in 1976, language policies took on more coercive forms (Barbaud, 1998; Cornick & Regan, 2007; Crump, 2014; Levine, 1990). In 1977 the party passed the *Charter of the French language,* commonly referred to as Bill 101 (Barbaud, 1998; Cornick & Regan, 2007; Courtemanche, 2017; Crump, 2014; Levine, 1990; Sarkar, 2003, 2005). Bill 101 changed the face of Quebec and French became dominant in various spheres (Barbaud, 1998; Cornick & Regan, 2007; Courtemanche, 2017; Crump, 2014; Levine, 1990). I will address its resonance in education, as this aspect is of relevance to my research.

With the implementation of Bill 101, limitations were put on the choice of education in either English or French (Barbaud, 1998; Courtemanche, 2017; Crump, 2014; Levine, 1990). To be able to receive education in English, a student needed to: 1) have one of his parents educated in English in primary level in Quebec; 2) be a student already receieving instruction in English along with his/her siblings; 3) have one of his parents educated in English outside Quebec but who were residents of Quebec at the time the charter was passed (Barbaud, 1998; Courtemanche, 2017; Crump, 2014; Levine, 1990). Later, amendments to the charter changed the first part, allowing parents who had received English education at primary level in Canada to send their

children to English schools in Quebec (Courtemanche, 2017; Crump, 2014; Levine, 1990; Sarkar, 2005).

Therefore, this charter assured that all new immigrant studens would receive their education in French (Barbaud, 1998; Courtemanche, 2017; Crump, 2014; Jedwab, 2000; Levine, 1990; Sarkar, 2005). The result of this charter was that French schools that were attended only by Francophone students before have become highly diverse, with students from various ethnic backgrounds and religious affiliations (Courtemanche, 2017; Crump, 2014; Cummins & Danesi, 1990; Levine, 1990; Sarkar, 2005). In addition, the face of the city of Montreal was now French, with ethnic minorities adopting the language as well (Crump, 2014; Levine, 1990). Bill 101 was followed by various amendments throughout the years, all promoting the French language as the official language of Quebec (Courtemanche, 2017; Crump, 2014).

To guarantee the appropriate integration of immigrant students into the French education system, immigrant students were put in welcome classes (*classe d'accueil)* (Allen, 2006; Courtemanche, 2017; Crump, 2014; Sarkar, 2005). Despite having been functioning for several years prior to Bill 101 (Courtemanche, 2017; Levine, 1990), *welcome classes* are spread across Montreal French schools attempting to facilitate educational and linguistic integration of immigrant students (Allen, 2006). However, these welcome classes exclude the students from the mainstream classes (Allen, 2006; Sarkar, 2005). In addition, students in these programs are at times frustrated as they find it difficult to achieve high proficiency and literacy in French and build negative attitudes towards the language (Allen, 2006). Allen (2006) reports that at the secondary level, immigrant students in the welcome classes compare their educational achievements to those of their peers in their countries of origin and become even more frustrated. Despite these challenges facing immigrant students in the French education system, language

policies in the province managed to elevate the status of French in Quebec (Cornick & Regan, 2007; Crump, 2014). Having been the language of white Francophones solely, French has now turned to be "less and less white" (Crump, 2014, p. 48). In effect, this new reality requires deeper investigations of Quebecers' perceptions of identity and inclusiveness as well as immigrants' sense of belonging and acceptance in the wide community.

Heritage language programs in Quebec

Heritage language instruction in the city of Montreal predates the charter of the French language by many years. With the rising numbers of immigrants in the city, the CECM (Commission des écoles catholiques de Montreal), permitted the instruction of HLs as early as the 1960s as long as students were enrolled in French schools (Courtemanche, 2017). The Arab community in the city started the first Arabic school serving its children in 1917 (Abu Laban, 1980). However, low enrollment rates and the repercussions of WWI gradually caused the elimination of these programs (Abu Laban, 1980; Courtemanche, 2017). Consequently, immigrant communities started to provide instruction to their children through weekend programs that are still active (Courtemanche, 2017; Sarkar, 2003).

Immigrant students in French public schools were offered the opportunity to become balanced bilinguals through the implementation of the PELO program (Programme d'enseignement des langues d'origine) (Courtemanche, 2017; Levine, 1990; Sarkar, 2003). This program was first produced by the CECM in 1977 and offered instruction of certain subjects in students' HLs (Levine, 1990). The idea was that balanced bilingualism would help immigrant students better adapt to the educational system in public French schools (Courtemanche, 2017).

In addition to the PELO program and the weekend community schools, laws in Quebec permit ethnically specific private schools (Sarkar, 2003). Permissive laws regarding private schools allowed various ethnic communities to initiate their own private schools (Sarkar, 2003). The official language of instruction in private schools is French in addition to the community's HL (Sarkar, 2003). The question asked is *will HL programs help the maintenance of these HLs?* This study attempts to answer this question in relation to Arabic HL programs in Montreal.

Mainstream education, a threat to HL?

Various public schools in Quebec implement the PELO programs offering different HLs. As mentioned earlier, these programs provide HL speakers with literacy in their L1 and as a result students are expected to transfer literacy to French and aspire for academic success (Courtemanche, 2017; Cummins, 2014). Academic success in Quebec relies on success in the official language, namely French. The plurilingual reality of Montreal might be assumed to lend itself to the interaction of diverse languages in classrooms; however, educators in the early years after Bill 101 were not ready to deal with this new plurilingual reality in French schools (Levine, 1990). Despite wider community's acknowledgement of the plurilingual reality of Montreal and French public schools, deeply ingrained underlying unilingual attitudes can still be found in educational establishments in Montreal (Courtemanche, 2017). Codes of conduct in a number of French school boards devalue students' HLs by banning their use in school corridors (Courtemanche, 2017). Restricting the use of HLs to HL programs signals to the heritage students that HLs have no true value in the educational process, resulting in negative attitudes towards the language and a possible retreat and loss. However, when students' HL and cultural diversity is valued by the larger community and not banned in schools, as we see from many examples from outside Quebec, students' positive attitudes towards their HL rise, resulting in

higher levels of HL maintenance (Chumak-Horbatsch, 1999; Cummins, 2014; Curdt-Christiansen 2006; Jean & Geva 2012; Kraven, 1992; Oriyama, 2010; Sook Lee & Oxelson, 2006; Young Lee, 2013).

Geographic distribution of Arabs in Canada

Quebec and Ontario have been the destination of many Arab immigrants across immigration waves (Abu Laban, 1980; Hanna Wassef, 1977; Ohan & Hayani, 1993). According to the 2016 Canadian census, there are approximately 949,340 individuals of Arab origin in Canada. Quebec is home to 370,155 individuals who report having origins from Arab countries (Statistics Canada, 2016). In Ontario, 455,840 individuals report having origins in Arab countries (Statistics Canada, 2016). Quebec and Ontario constitute 87% of the total individuals in Canada who report having origins from Arab countries. It seems that both provinces are still the main destination of immigrants from Arab countries. In addition, the well-established Arab communities in those provinces attract new Arab immigrants to come. (Abu Laban, 1980; Hanna Wassef, 1977).

Arabic in Montreal

According to the 2016 census, there are 151,955 individuals whose mother tongue is Arabic (Statistics Canada) in the Montreal CMA (census metropolitan area). However, this number decreases to 72,985 individuals that report Arabic as the language most spoken at home (Statistics Canada). This enormous gap between the number of speakers of Arabic as a mother tongue and the number of speakers that practice the language at home can be explained by the language shift phenomenon (Fishman, 1991). Language shift means that speakers of a certain minority language abandon this language in favor of another dominant one. In the case of Arabic

speakers in Montreal, the shift is towards the official languages, namely French and English. Jedwab (2014) relies on census data from previous years to conclude that by the third generation after immigration, "very few individuals" of a given ethnic group speak their HL as L1 (p. 246).

Despite the gap between the number of individuals whose mother tongue is Arabic and the number of individuals who speak Arabic at home, Arabic is the most widely spoken non-official language in in the city of Montreal according to the most recent census in 2016 (Statistics Canada).. Therefore, research is required to assess the factors affecting language shift within Arabic speaking communities in Montreal, taking into account the plurilingual reality of the city.

Eid (2007) conducted a study with 250 second generation college level Arab students in Montreal. Participants were Muslims and Christians with origins from different Arab countries. The study aimed to investigate ethnic identity definitions of this group. Regarding HL proficiency, the study only asked participants to state their proficiency in the spoken form of the language, in what contexts they would use it and with whom (Eid, 2007, p. 82). The literary form of the language was not addressed in the study. Results indicate that years of stay in Canada did not affect participants' use of the spoken form of the language, as the majority define themselves as good in their vernacular. Eid (2007) concludes that the Arab community in the city of Montreal has succeeded in transmitting the HL to the second generation. However, the means in which the community has managed to carry the HL to second generation Arab-Canadians is not addressed in the study. The present study aims to touch upon the experience of six individuals with the maintenance and development of both the spoken vernacular and the literary form of Arabic in the city of Montreal.

Summary of Chapter

Heritage language programs in North America offer learners opportunities to develop literacy in their heritage language. The aspiration is that literacy will be transferred to the official language, resulting in academic success. However, HLs are still devalued in western societies (Cummins, 2014). HL learners need to know that their HLs can add to the wider society so their attitudes towards their HLs remain positive. As a result, they will be able to successfully maintain and develop their literacy in their HL.

Arabic is the most widely spoken non-official language in the city of Montreal according to the 2016 census. Yet there is an enormous gap between the number of individuals who report it as their L1 and those who actually use it the most at home. Therefore, this research will explore the experience of young Arab Canadians whose experiences with Arabic vary in terms of its spoken vernaculars and the literary form. Their personal experiences with maintenance attempts can help inform future generations of Arab descendants in Canada. In the next chapter I expand on the chosen procedure for data collection and analysis.

Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter consists of a detailed description of the design used in the study to answer the following questions:

1. What can graduates of heritage language programs of literary Arabic in Montreal tell us regarding the maintenance of their spoken dialect of Arabic?

2. What information can graduates of heritage language programs of LA in Montreal share regarding their development of literacy in LA?

The questions relate to the diglossia found in Arabic, as discussed in the Literature Review chapter.

Researcher's Positionality

The traditional perspective in ethnographic research is that the researcher is an outsider-studying a context s/he is unfamiliar with (Voloder & Kirpitchenko, 2013, p. 3). However, in recent years, research conducted by researchers familiar with populations being studied and who are themselves a part of the population being studied, has emerged and has provided deep interpretations to participants' beliefs. By being an insider, the researcher is not only close to the population, but is also able to reflect on subjects that mark the population and isolate it (Voloder & Kirpitchenko, 2013, p. 5). Thus, by being a native Arabic speaker and immigrant myself, my affinity to the participants' backgrounds should not withhold me from gaining authentic insights, rather I should be able to reflect deeply on participants' insights and beliefs.

The idea behind the research was a result of my personal experience as a newly arrived parent-student in Montreal. I arrived in Montreal in the summer of 2015, one month before my anticipated graduate studies at McGill University. I was accompanied to Montreal by my husband and my four children. None of my children had been exposed to French or English before our arrival. Three weeks after my arrival I was offered a position as an ESL teacher at a private primary Muslim school in Montreal. My older children, a girl aged eight and a boy aged seven started going to a French school in our area and were placed in a welcome class with other newly arrived children their age in order to learn French. About two weeks after school started we, the parents, were invited to school to meet the teacher and be informed on what our children were and would be learning in that class. The teacher was very welcoming and encouraged us to expose our children to French as much as possible. This sounded normal, as we were in a French province and our children were learning in a French school.

However, simultaneously I was working in a Muslim school, where a large majority of the students come from Arabic speaking families; I saw that a large number of my students did not speak Arabic at all. These students come from homes where Arabic is spoken, yet they find it hard to express themselves in Arabic. I was afraid that my own children would lose their Arabic and thought I needed to know more about mother tongue maintenance.

The aim of the study is to explore the experiences of young adults who come from Arabic speaking homes and who have learned Literary Arabic in Montreal. I want to know how were they able to maintain their HL, whether the spoken vernacular or the literary form of the language, and in case they were not successful in maintaining their HL, why? I want to be able to use this information to inform members of my community on means to maintain and preserve Arabic, whether the spoken form or the literary form, with future generations in Montreal.

Research Design

Through my research I aim to explore HL graduates' beliefs regarding their experience learning Literary Arabic and speaking Arabic in a non-Arabic speaking country. Therefore, I believe the most appropriate tool to help me conduct my research is the *qualitative approach* as this approach is *open* -the researcher does not have a formulated assumption as to what the research results would be; this approach is *inductive* -the researcher is not conducting the study to test a theory and this approach is *descriptive and interpretive* -the researcher conducts the study and interprets the data in an attempt to describe the issue questioned (Freidman, 2012, p.181). Therefore, the approach I chose for the study is a *qualitative approach* as it is the commonly used tool to help me answer my research questions.

Participant Recruitment

Participants recruited for the study represent what Creswell (2007) defines as *purposeful sampling-* a sample that can "purposely inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (p. 125). Participant recruitment was performed through a *snow-ball sampling* since I had few acquaintances from the age group which I hoped to recruit participants from. The first participant is the daughter of an administrator at the school where I used to work. I explained to him the purpose of my study and he nominated his daughter as a first participant. I contacted her and explained the study and its procedure and offered her to participate. She agreed to participate and she helped with the recruitment of other participants. The requirements for participating in the study were: 1) participants have to come from Arabic speaking homes regardless of the Arabic vernacular spoken by the family. As mentioned in the Literature Review chapter, Arabic vernaculars vary from one region to another and can be hard

to understand by speakers of other vernaculars; 2) participants must have participated in a Literary Arabic heritage program in Montreal for a period of at least five years. The first cohort of one of the Muslim schools in Montreal started attending that school starting grade two. If they did not continue for a secondary school that offered LA then they would have learned LA for a period of five years; and 3) participants must be between eighteen to twenty six years old, since, as previously mentioned, the first cohort of one of the first Muslim schools in Montreal are at the age of twenty four at the time of writing (2017).

A total number of six participants were recruited for the study: three males and three females; three of the participants come from families originating from the Middle East and three come from families originating from the Maghreb countries. Four of the participants were born in Montreal and two were born in France. The oldest participant was twenty four years old at the time of the interviews and the youngest was twenty one years old. Five of the participants were still university students at the time of interviews and one had already graduated. All participants are graduates of the same elementary school in Montreal. This is a private Muslim school that was founded in 2002 and serves the Muslim community in the city. I informed all participants on their rights for privacy, anonymity and withdrawal from the study. Next is **Table 1** which includes demographic information on the participants and the number of years attending LA classes at schools in Montreal. All participants were given pseudonyms to protect their true identities.

Table 1- participants' demographic information

Name	Country of birth	Age	Number of years learning LA in Montreal
Amjad	France	23	5
Anis	Canada	21	11
Fadia	France	22	8
Muna	Canada	24	5
Osama	Canada	22	10
Samira	Canada	23	10

Data Collection

The method I chose for data collection is interviews, as it is a more effective tool to use when trying to explore people's experiences and opinions compared to other forms of data collection (Denscombe, 2010, p. 174). Interviews in qualitative research are considered a strong method for data collection as they allow the participants to express their opinions without being influenced by theory or previous research results (Creswell, 2014, p.240). In addition, using interviews as a data collection method allows the researcher to use "multi-sensory channels" (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2011, p. 409) with participants and focus not only on what participants utter, but also on non-verbal responses s/he may receive from participants. Interviews help the researcher to ask participants to elaborate more on their responses and by

providing open-ended answers, participants can provide answers without being bound to possible answers (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2014).

A semi-structured technique in interviews was used, since it allowed me to be more "flexible" (Denscombe, 2010, p. 175) with participants and allowed participants to elaborate on personal experiences and opinions freely (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 415). I conducted a series of two interviews with each participant to avoid situations in which participants feel uncomfortable talking to a person they meet for the first time on personal experiences and opinions. Seidman (2006, p. 16) suggests a series of three interviews with each participant. However, the scope of the current study does not allow for more than two interviews with each participant. All interviews were held in study group rooms in public libraries except for one that was held in a coffee house. All interviews were audio recorded, with participants' authorization. Two participants, originally from Mediterranean countries preferred conducting the interviews in their spoken vernacular of Arabic. The third participant who originally comes from that region decided to start in Arabic but was unable to continue the first interview in Arabic, therefore we continued the interviews in English. These previously mentioned participants come from geographically close countries to my country of birth and therefore, their dialects are close to mine and we can understand each other perfectly. However, since my country of birth is geographically far from the Maghrebi countries I am unable to understand the Algerian and Moroccan dialects of Arabic. Therefore, all interviews with Maghrebi participants were conducted in English.

In the interviews, I asked participants questions related to their own personal use of languages. I also asked questions related to their command of both forms of Arabic. In addition, I

asked questions related to their experiences learning LA in formal settings in Montreal. For complete interview protocol, see Appendix A- Interview Protocol.

Procedures of Data Analysis

I used the data collected from the semi-structured interviews with six participants who are graduates of heritage language programs that provide LA instruction in Montreal. I connected the data with information compiled from the literature in an attempt to find answers to my research questions following Creswell's (2014) definition of analyzing qualitative data: "Analyzing qualitative data requires understanding how to make sense of text and images so that you can form answers to your research questions" (p. 260).

I transcribed the audio recorded interviews following "transcription conventions" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 537), that is, I transcribed the audio-recorded interviews, taking into account the non-verbal accounts of participants such as laughter or pauses in speech. A total amount of five and a half hours (316 minutes) were transcribed. Since four interviews were conducted in spoken Arabic, it was not possible to use computer assisted qualitative data analysis programs (Cohen et al., 2007). After I finished transcribing the data, I printed all the documents and kept the original transcribed files on my personal laptop and started reading the transcriptions, getting ready for the next step in the data analysis: data coding.

Data Coding

Creswell (2014, p. 267) defines data coding as "the process of segmenting and labeling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data". While reading the transcribed data for the first time I noticed frequent statements that all participants addressed in their speech. I followed Creswell's "inductive process of narrowing data into a few themes" (Creswell, 2014,

p.267). Using the inductive process, I made a list of codes addressed by all participants and looked for redundant codes, then narrowed the codes down into themes. Narrowing down the codes eventually led me to the following themes:

1.   Parents' practices with heritage language at home as a factor affecting language maintenance.

2.   Perceptions regarding the efficiency of heritage language education.

3.   Religion as a powerful influence on the interest in the heritage language.

4.   The availability of resources in the community supporting language maintenance.

5.   The influence of visits to the country of origin on heritage language maintenance.

The aforementioned themes are those themes that all participants shared thoughts about. However, there were topics that were addressed by certain participants but not by all of them. Therefore, I considered the aforementioned themes to be the major themes. Those that were not addressed by all participants I considered to be minor themes. I named them minor themes because they were not addressed by all participants, not because they were not of importance.

The minor themes I found are:

1.   The use of curricula developed for Arabic L1 speakers in Arab countries with heritage language learners of LA in Montreal.

2.   The prohibition of using spoken Arabic in school corridors by certain school administrators.

3.   Adopting Islamic values does not necessarily require attending an Islamic school.

Validating the Findings

Creswell (2014) discusses the importance of researchers assuring that the results emerging from their studies are accurate. As mentioned in Creswell (2014, p. 283) "validating findings means that the researcher determines the accuracy or credibility of the findings through strategies such as member checking or triangulation". In the current study, I used member checking with all participants to assure that the results are valid and genuinely describe what they think and believe. Each participant received a file with the themes emerging and was asked to confirm whether the themes accurately describe what s/he wanted to say.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter described the methodology used in the current research. It described the design of the study, the choice of interviews as means of data collection, the choice of participants and the procedures for data analysis. The study consisted of two semi-structured interviews with each of six participants who are graduates of heritage language programs of LA in Montreal. The interviews started in February 2017 and ended in May 2017. I checked for validity of results with all participants and asked them to confirm the accuracy of the themes emerging from the interviews.

Chapter Four

Results

In this chapter I will present the findings emerging from the semi-structured interviews held with the six participants. As I started thinking about the topic of my research, I did not have a formulated assumption as to what may cause heritage language retention and I wanted to know more about the experiences of people who grow up in a context where their heritage language might not have had the opportunity to flourish. In order to get a better understanding of the phenomenon of HL retention, the following questions led me through my exploration: 1) What can graduates of heritage language programs of literary Arabic in Montreal tell us regarding the maintenance of their spoken dialect of Arabic? 2) What information can graduates of heritage language programs of LA in Montreal share regarding their development of literacy in LA?

The experiences of the six participants with heritage language vary and I tried to find connections between what was said by them in the interviews. As mentioned in the Methodology Chapter, a number of themes that were connected to all participants emerged, while other themes were relevant to certain participants only. The themes that emerged from the interviews with all participants are the following Major Themes.

Major Themes:

1. Parents' practices with heritage language at home as a factor affecting language maintenance.

2. Perceptions regarding the efficiency of heritage language education.

3. Religion as a powerful influence on the interest in the heritage language.

4. The availability of resources in the community supporting language maintenance.

5. The influence of visits to the country of origin on heritage language maintenance.

Parents' practices with heritage language at home as a factor affecting language maintenance:

Participants reported on their personal use of languages and on language used by other family members. The answers vary, as families have different practices when it comes to heritage language. When asked to report on their spoken vernacular of Arabic and the use of it at home, participants said:

Samira:

"بابا كان عنده قاعدة بالبيت انه لغة عربية بس، كان كتير حريص ع هالشي"

(Original Language Transcription, Interview, 28.2.2017)

Translation: *My father had a rule at home, Arabic only, he was very assiduous.*

(Interview, 28.2.2017)

Osama:

(Original Language Transcription, Interview, "امي كانت تقلي احكي بس عربي بالبيت"

14.4.2017)

Translation: *My mother would tell me speak Arabic only at home.* (Interview, 14.4.2017)

Fadia: "*Sometimes in the house we were forced to speak in Arabic*". (Interview, 1.5.2017)

The following three participants reported that their parents never insisted on the use of Arabic in the house when the participants were still children.

Muna:

"احنا خلقنا هون ورح نعيش هون ولازم نحكي فرنسي منيح، فما كانوا يصرّوا انه نحكي عربي بالبيت"

(Original Language Transcription, Interview, 6.4.2017)

Translation: *We were born here and we are going to live here and we need to speak French well, so they did not insist on speaking Arabic at home. (Interview, 6.4.2017)*

Amjad-

Researcher: "*Did your parents force you to use Arabic at home?*"

Amjad: "*no, this never happened*". (Interview, 11.4.2017)

The same experience was reported by Anis, the youngest participant.

Perceptions regarding the efficiency of heritage language education:

Participants reported on their personal experiences going to Muslim schools in Montreal where LA is a core subject in the curriculum. Apart from the regular school, they also reported on their experiences at Saturday schools. All participants attended the same Muslim elementary school but they attended different schools on Saturdays. A large majority of their comments in the interviews were related to formal schooling of LA in Montreal. Their utterances regarding heritage language education diverge into the following sub-themes:

a. **Lessons of literary Arabic were not divided by proficiencies of students in the regular school in comparison to Saturday schools that did divide by proficiencies.**

Participants reported on the nature of the LA lessons in the regular school in comparison with Saturday schools. In Saturday schools, the classes had fewer students and classes were divided according to students' proficiency in the language. Participants reported on the advantage of attending a Saturday school in addition to the regular school.

Referring to the Saturday school he attended, Osama reports:

"كانوا مقسمين حسب المستويات، كانوا يعملولنا امتحان تقييم وحسب الامتحان يحطونا بالمجموعة المناسبة"

(Original Language Transcription, Interview, 14.4.2017)

Translation: *They divided us by levels, they ran tests and according to that we were put in the appropriate level.* (Interview, 14.4.2017)

However, when talking about the regular school Osama says:

"كان يزعجني انه بنفس الصف كان في من كل المستويات، القوي كتير واللي ما بيعرف شي، كان افضل لو انها الصفوف مقسمة حسب المستويات، هالشي كان راح يفيدنا اكتر" (Original Language Transcription, Interview, 3.4.2017)

Translation: *It bothered me that in the class there were [students] from all levels, the strong ones and those who knew nothing. It would have been better if classes were divided based on levels, this would have helped us more.* (Interview, 3.4.2017)

Referring to the same issue of proficiencies in the regular school, Anis had a similar comment:

Anis: *I think it's the school's problem.*

Researcher: *what's the school's problem?*

Anis: *putting different proficiencies in the same Arabic class. Because it's the third language in the school, it's not the first and it's not the second, so many of them {students} don't know it.* (Interviwe, 9.5.2017)

Moreover, participants addressed the advantage of attending the Saturday school in addition to

the regular school, as it improved their literary Arabic level.

Samira:

"ما كنت عارفة انه هالمدرسة تركت أثر بحياتي وساعدتني الا بعد سنين، بس لما كنت بآخر سنوات الثانوية عرفت قديش المدرسة يوم السبت ساعدتني" (Original Langauge Transcription, Interview, 22.3.2017)

Translation: *I did not know that this school had an impact on my life and that it helped me, only after years in my late high school years I knew how the Saturday school has helped me.* (Interview, 22.3.2017).

Osama:

"ايامات السبت هن اللي فعلا احنا فيهن تعلمنا"(Original Language Transcription, Interview, 14.4.2017)

Translation: *Saturdays are actually the days when we really learned {literary Arabic}.* (Interview, 14.4.2017)

Muna:

    Researcher: *Was there an Arabic teacher that you liked?*

    Muna: *Only in the Saturday class…I would learn faster than in the school.* (Interview, 12.4.2017)

In contrast to the previous experiences, Fadia's experience at the Saturday school was different.

    Researcher: *didn't the Saturday school add much to your Arabic?*

    Fadia: *no… the thing is in this environment it's just not the proper approach.* (Interview, 1.5.2017)

Fadia was referring to the way the class was held on Saturdays, not different from the literary

Arabic class in the regular school. This classroom setting prevented students from interacting

with one another as they were not seated in a way that allowed them to interact while learning.

Amjad and Anis did not attend Saturday school to learn literary Arabic and reported that formal

schooling in LA did not have an impact on their level of the language nowadays:

    Researcher: *to what extent do you think that learning literary Arabic at school has contributed to your use of the language as an adult?*

    Amjad: *it didn't help very much. Most of the Arabic I learned was at home, either with my grandfather or with private tutors.* (Interview, 11.4.2017)

Anis shared a similar comment:

    Researcher: *to what extent do you think that learning literary Arabic at school has contributed to your use of the language as an adult?*

    Anis: *not much.*

    Researcher: *why do you think?*

    Anis: *because I barely listen, talk to people in Arabic.* (Interview, 9.5.2017)

In addition to the mentioned points, a major factor manipulating the progress of LA classes was the diversity of students' backgrounds. Participants in this study originally come from different countries. Osama, Samira and Muna come from the Middle East, whereas Anis, Amjad and Fadia come from the Maghreb. They all report that as students they felt that students that originally came from the Middle East had better performance in the LA class in comparison to students that came from the Maghreb who showed intermediate to low performance in LA. The presence of these diverse backgrounds in the same classroom resulted in different proficiencies interacting simultaneously causing difficulty for teachers to manage the class and pass material properly. This issue will be presented later.

b. Use of inappropriate teaching material.

Participants reported that the literary Arabic lesson at the regular school was not challenging, the materials were basic and caused loss of interest in LA on their part. The advanced students had nothing to do during the lesson and the students that knew very little found the class hard.

Osama reports:

"لما كنت بالمدرسة كنت احس انه المادة جدا سهلة عليّ لدرجة اني كنت اقعد بالصف واسمع بس لاني كنت اعرف كل شي"
(Original Language Transcription, Interview, 3.4.2017)

 Translation: *When I was at school I felt that the material was very easy for me. I would sit and listen only because I knew everything.* (Interview, 3.4.2017)

When talking about homework in literary Arabic, Samira adds:

(Original Language Transcription, Intervew, **"لما كانوا يعطونا واجبات كان كل شي كتير سريع وسهل"**
22.3.2017)

Translation: *When they gave us homework, everything was so quick and so easy.* (Interview, 22.3.2017)

Muna shared a similar experience as Osama and Samira, she said: "*In general it was not so difficult*" (Interview, 12.4.2017)

Adding on the same topic, Anis says:

"*At secondary four and five they pushed a little bit. But secondary one, two and three was basic. Not basic, but it was good. You do dictations, you read and answer questions out of your readings, just like French but easier level".* (Interview, 9.5.2017)

When referring to exams in LA at school, Amjad says: "*they were not that difficult. Well it was still very basic stuff*" (Interview, 18.4.2017).

Fadia reports that the level of LA taught in the classroom depended on the teachers:

> *Some of them made the class really easy for the students that had more difficulty…I can't generalize. It really depends on the teacher.* (Interview, 3.5.2017)

c. Teachers of LA and their role in language learning

Participants' learning experiences in LA varied. The majority of them link their learning experience, whether pleasant or not, to the teachers. Participants refer to the fact that teachers of LA usually came from Arab countries and had a hard time managing the class in comparison to teachers that were educated in Quebec. Fadia was the only participant that compared the LA teachers in the regular Muslim school to younger teachers that probably had their education in Quebec.

Fadia addresses this by saying:

> *"The only thing is that the teacher giving the class most of the time was someone who came from another country and so they didn't connect with the context as much as other teachers that were younger".* (Interview, 1.5.2017)

> *"Management skills were kind of difficult for them"* (Interview, 1.5.2017)

Fadia refers to the lack of management skills and lack of connection to the context when describing LA teachers in the regular Muslim school.

Amjad shares a similar experience:

There was no communication between us. They would get frustrated and we would get frustrated and this would make problems in the class, and this would put tension between the students and the teacher. (Interview, 18.4.2017)

On a different occasion, Amjad talks about himself and his general experience at school:

As a kid I loved going to school and there were classes I looked forward to, but the Arabic class wasn't one of them. Probably not because of the Arabic class itself, probably because of the teachers.

Muna's experience with LA teachers at the regular school was similar to Fadia and Amjad:

We had a teacher that didn't control the class and we didn't learn anything at times… there was one that was screaming all the time, screaming screaming, she didn't have any control. She would scream so high that our ears wouldn't take it anymore, and sometimes she would get so angry that she wouldn't finish her lesson" (Interview, 12.4.2017)

Participants that had negative attitude towards teachers in the regular school, have a different attitude towards LA teachers on the Saturday school. When commenting on their learning experience at the Saturday school, they talk about how nice and understanding LA teachers were in comparison to LA teachers at the regular school. Their positive learning experience at the Saturday school has contributed to enhancing their motivation to learn.

Osama adds:

"بمدرسة السبت كان الجو ما بخوّف، كانوا يجيبولنا هدايا ويعملوا مسابقات وتربحي شغلات، الحلو انه كان في منافسة، بمدرستي العادية ما كان في منافسة بين الطلاب بالصف" (Original Language Transcription, Interview, 14.4.2017)

Translation: *At the Saturday school the atmosphere was not intimidating, they used to give us gifts and to make competitions where you could win stuff. The beauty is there was a sense of competition. At my regular school there was no competition between students in the class.* (Interview, 14.4.2017)

Muna addresses the same point:

In the Saturday class you can see that she [the teacher] *was passionate, motivated and you could see that she was kind and cool.*

Moreover, participants addressed the fact that parents usually rely on schools to teach their children literary Arabic and the support in LA at home is very minimal. Fadia comments on parents in this issue saying:

That feeling that a light drops to earth and you're [parents] like 'go, go see the light' and then you feel that everything is gonna be beautiful and you've paid the price, you've paid the money and you have the teacher and the program is presented to you as something perfect and that's it, that's what you need. (Interview, 3.5.2017)

Amjad comments on his own personal experience with his parents relying on school to teach him LA: *My parents would rely on school to teach me Arabic, but they'd help me learn English and French and math and science, but they never pushed in that direction [literary Arabic].* (Interview, 11.4.2017)

When asked as why he thinks his parents never pushed him to improve his LA skills, Anis says:

Maybe if they give me that attention in Arabic, there would be less attention to French and math. (Interview, 9.5.2017)

Religion as a powerful influence on the interest in the heritage language

All participants in this study are Muslims. They all report that being Muslims is part of their identity and that for them it was important to learn literary Arabic to be able to read the Quran and books of interpretation of the Quran that are written in literary Arabic.

When asked why she was was motivated to learn literary Arabic, Samira said:

"السبب اكتر ديني، انه هي لغة القرآن، وبالنسبة الي كون القرآن باللغة العربية فبيعني قديش اللغة العربية مهمة"
(Original Language Transcription, Interview, 28.2.2017)

Translation: *The reason is more religious, it's the language of the Quran, and to me the fact that it's the language of the Quran means that it is very important"* (Interview, 28.2.2017)

Similar responses were reported by all participants. Knowing how to read the Quran was the main reason they were interested in learning LA.

The availability of resources in the community supporting language maintenance

All participants address the issue of not having books in the public libraries in literary Arabic and not having activities in the community centers dedicated to Arab residents. The only resources available to them were books in literary Arabic that their parents would purchase when visiting their country of origin and they were mainly stories for children and not books that could have been used as learning books.

Amjad addresses this issue by saying:

We didn't have Arabic books in the community library, most Arabic books we had at home were books that belonged to my parents or that they had read in the past. That's unfortunate, I spent a lot of time in libraries. (Interview, 11.4.2017)

Fadia shares a similar experience:

Researcher*: did the public library have an Arabic section?*

Fadia*: no, no no no no! I didn't find anything and frankly speaking my father would get books from Morocco when he would travel.* (Interview, 1.5.2017)

Osama shares a similar experience as well:

الباحثة: *" هل كان في برامج باللغة العربية بمنطقة سكنك للأطفال؟"*

أسامة: "لا، وحتى بالمكتبة ما بتذكر انه كان في كتب او فعاليات بالعربي. استغربت كتير لما شفت بالمكتبة هون قسم باللغة العربية، على زماني ما كان هالشي متوفر" (Original Language Transcription, Interview, 3.4.2017)

Translation:

Researcher: *were there any activities for children in Arabic at your area of residency?*

Osama: *no, not even in the public library I don't remember books or activities. I was amazed seeing an entire section in Arabic at the library here. At my times this wasn't available.* (Interview, 3.4.2017)

The influence of visits to the country of origin on heritage language maintenance

All participants have had the opportunity to visit their country of origin as children. Their presence with their extended family had an effect on their desire to develop their oral skills in their spoken vernacular of Arabic. They report that being surrounded solely by Arabic speakers forced them to use the spoken vernacular almost all of the time and this had helped improving their oral skills. Moreover, participants report having been ridiculed when speaking their vernacular in their country of origin. They all report that at times they felt like outsiders when staying in their country of origin and this sense had triggered the desire to work on developing their oral skills in their vernacular. In addition, the three participants coming from the Middle East report code switching to French with their parents and siblings if they did not want others to understand them.

Samira shares an incident when her cousin asked her to read a joke in the newspaper. She took the newspaper and faked reading the joke; she laughed without reading the joke because she did not want him to ridicule her reading skills in Arabic which were far from being close to those of a native speaker of Arabic in Syria. In the same context, Samira says:

"وقتها لما شفت كل اولاد عمي بيحكوا بالعربي حسيت كأنه *wake up call* انه لازم اتعلم عربي" (Original Language Transcription, Interview, 22.3.2017)

Translation: *Then when I saw that all my cousins speak Arabic, it was a wake-up call for me, that I have to learn Arabic.* (Interview, 22.3.2017)

Fadia addresses the feeling of being an outsider when she visited Morocco last year. Her father's family lives in Casablanca, a fluent French speaking city in Morocco, whereas her mother's family live in the far north in a traditional city speaking Arabic only. When she was in the north she felt there "*was more cultural clash with them because[she]didn't find what to say and things*

to talk about" (Interview, 3.5.2017) whereas when she stayed in Casablanca and because her relatives there are fluent French speakers "*language did have an effect on the conversations [they] had"* (Interview, 3.5.2017).

Minor Themes

Participants' experience learning LA in Montreal differed despite attending the same Muslim school in the city. Therefore, they addressed different topics in the interviews based on their personal experience learning the language. These topics form the **minor themes** of this study, as follows:

1. The use of curricula developed for Arabic L1 speakers in Arab countries with heritage language learners of LA in Montreal.
2. The prohibition of using spoken Arabic in school corridors, by certain school administrators.
3. Adopting Islamic values does not necessarily require attending an Islamic school.

The use of curricula developed for Arabic L1 speakers in Arab countries with heritage language learners of LA in Montreal:

Samira, a volunteer teacher of Interpretation of Quran at a Saturday school in Montreal, shares her personal experience learning LA at an Islamic school in the city. She stressed that the curriculum used in the school she attended was brought from an Arab country, not edited to be in line with students' experience being born in Montreal and growing up there. When asked to explain why she thinks the curriculum of LA used in the Islamic school seems weak to her, she said:

"المنهج المستخدم هو منهج لأولاد بيتعلموا عربي كلغة أولى، مو كأولاد عم بتعلميهن كلغة تانية أو تالتة" (Original Language Transcription, Interview, 22.3.2017)

Translation: *Curriculum used here [Montreal] was developed for children learning Arabic as a first language, not for children whose Arabic is a second or a third language.* (Interview, 22.3.2017)

The prohibition of using spoken Arabic in school corridors**:**

Both Osama and Fadia expressed that while attending the Islamic school in Montreal, they were not allowed to use their spoken dialect of Arabic in the school corridors.

Fadia said: "we were asked not to speak Arabic at the school" (Interview, 3.5.2017) and in the same interview she stressed that she "*was not allowed to speak Moroccan to [her] friends".* Osama shared a similar experience when he said:

"ع أيامي بالمدرسة ما كانوا يخلونا نحكي عربي" (Original Language Transcription, Interview, 14.4.2017)

Translation: *At my days in school, we were not allowed to speak Arabic.* (Interview, 14.4.2017)

Adopting Islamic values does not necessarily require attending an Islamic school:

Both Muna and Fadia had the opportunity to receive education in an Islamic school and non-Islamic schools in the city of Montreal. Muna attended an Islamic school for the primary level only and attended a private non-Muslim school in her secondary education level. Fadia attended a non-Muslim school in the last year of her secondary education level. They both report that the time spent in the non-Muslim school had enriched their experience with others. They report that the years spent in a Muslim school did not expose them enough to people from other communities, people that are not Muslims and do not share language or heritage values with

them. They both stressed that adopting Islamic values starts from home and does not necessarily require attending an Islamic school.

Fadia said: "*The thing is not whether you go to a Muslim or non-Muslim school, the critical thing is the education you have at home".* (Interview, 3.5.2017) Muna as well stressed the same point by saying:

[1] "I know a lot of people who went to non-Islamic schools and they are practicing even more the religion than I do. Their knowledge is more defined and it was surprising for me when I realized this at first. Also, I know some of them who attended my school just went the other way and they aren't that religious anymore. I think it really depends on the school and the parents' education. If the rules are too strict or too loose, then you'll lose the students".

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented the results emerging from the semi-structured interviews conducted with six graduates of heritage language programs of LA in Montreal. I presented the results in two categories: 1) Major Themes and 2) Minor Themes. The *major themes* are those themed that all the six participants addressed in the interviews and shared their personal experiences within those themes. The *minor themes* are the themes that were addressed by certain participants only. The major themes emerging from the data are:

1. Parents' practices with heritage language at home as a factor affecting language maintenance.

2. Perceptions regarding the efficiency of heritage language education.

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[1] The quote was added at the participant's request, after the termination of data collection, at the Member checking stage.

3. Religion as a powerful influence on the interest in the heritage language.

4. The availability of resources in the community supporting language maintenance.

5. The influence of visits to the country of origin on heritage language maintenance.

The aforementioned themes were addressed by all participants and presented in this chapter. In addition to the *major themes* mentioned, there are three *minor themes* that were addressed by certain participants and those themes are:

1. The use of curricula developed for Arabic L1 speakers in Arab countries with heritage language learners of LA in Montreal.
2. The prohibition of using spoken Arabic in school corridors, by school administrators.
3. Adopting Islamic values does not necessarily require attending an Islamic school.

The *minor themes* were presented in this chapter along with direct quotes from participants regarding their personal experience learning LA as a heritage language in Montreal.

Chapter Five

Discussion Chapter

This chapter includes a discussion on major and minor themes that emerged from interviews with the participants. The research questions that this study attempted to answer are:

1. What can graduates of heritage language programs of literary Arabic in Montreal tell us regarding the maintenance of their spoken dialect of Arabic?

2. What information can graduates of heritage language programs of LA in Montreal share regarding their development of literacy in LA?

Discussion of Major Themes

In this section, I will discuss the major themes emerging from the data analysis. The major themes are:

1.   Parents' practices with heritage language at home as a factor affecting language maintenance.

2.   Perceptions regarding the efficiency of heritage language education.

3.   Religion as a powerful influence on the interest in the heritage language.

4.   The availability of resources in the community supporting language maintenance.

5.   The influence of visits to the country of origin on heritage language maintenance.

Parents' practices with heritage language at home as a factor affecting language maintenance:

In an attempt to answer these questions, I conducted two semi-structured interviews with each of six participants who were all heritage language learners of literary Arabic (LA) in Montreal. Data analysis suggests that a number of factors come into play when the issue is

maintenance of the spoken vernacular of Arabic. Out of the six participants, four reported being fluent in their dialect; two out of the four chose to speak their dialect during both interviews. Interviews with the remaining two were conducted in English, mainly because their dialect of Arabic is not close to mine and it would have been difficult for us to understand each other. Three out of the four fluent speakers reported that their parents pushed and were consistent about using solely Arabic at home when the participants were children. In addition, the two remaining participants reported not being pushed to use their dialect at home and that parents would talk to them in French in addition to their dialect; those two participants have the lowest fluency amongst all participants.

In addition to the role parents played in preserving the family's dialect of Arabic, they also played an important role pushing their children to learn the literary form of the language. All participants but one attended a Saturday school either learning both Islamic studies and literary Arabic or learning merely Islamic Studies. The role parents play in preserving their children's heritage language is reported in a number of studies conducted with heritage language learners of different languages (Becker, 2013; Brown, 2011; Endo, 2013; Hashimoto & Lee, 2011; Kondo, 1997; Martin, 2012; Park & Sarkar, 2007; Pauwels, 2005).

Perceptions regarding the efficiency of heritage language education:

   a. **Lessons of literary Arabic were not divided by proficiencies of students in the regular school in comparison to Saturday schools that did divide by proficiencies**

In addition to the important role parents played in preserving their children's spoken vernacular of Arabic, schools had a crucial effect on the development of the literary form of the language amongst participants. Participants' experience with the literary form of the language was divided

between formal instruction at the regular Islamic school and formal instruction at the Saturday school. Instruction at the different Saturday schools was more productive than the regular school according to participants. Placements tests were conducted at the Saturday school and students were placed in groups based on their proficiency in the literary form of the language. This is in contrast to the regular school where students in the same classroom received identical instruction regardless of their proficiencies in LA. Kondo-Brown (2005) reports in her findings that Japanese heritage language learners at the university level differed from Japanese foreign language learners. According to Kondo-Brown (2005), placing HL learners in the same group with native speakers prevents the HL learners from developing their literacy skills. She thus recommends placing students in groups based on their proficiency in the language to better develop their literacy skills.

b. **Use of inappropriate teaching material**

Weaker students at the regular Islamic school could not keep up with the pace of the lesson. Stronger students were bored and felt that LA was not challenging enough. Similar findings were reported in Kondo (1998) where heritage language learners of Japanese in Hawaii reported the easy level of Japanese being used at school and the negative effect it had on the development of their proficiency in the language. Participants that reported being strong in LA at school felt that the instruction of LA at the regular Islamic school did not contribute to the development of their proficiencies and felt that LA lessons were break time for them. What did develop their literacy skills was the LA instruction they received at the Saturday school and the private tutoring they had with professional private tutors. The two participants that reported having difficulty with LA are those who did not have additional instruction in LA beyond what they had learned in the regular Islamic school. Their LA proficiency was not developed enough to enable them to

explore literary texts in Arabic beyond the Quran. Reading literary texts in LA and reading the Quran demand different cognitive and literacy skills. Reading LA texts that are usually written without diacritics marking vowels demands deeper operation of grammatical inference by the reader (Abu-Rabia, 2002; Cook & Bassetti, 2005). All participants reported not having difficulty reading the Quran because of the extensive use of diacritics that facilitate the pronunciation of words. Only two participants reported having had the chance to read modern literary texts in LA that are not religious texts where diacritics marking vowels were not used. They needed to operate grammatical inference to pronounce the words correctly. These two participants happen to be the same two participants that chose to conduct the interviews in spoken Arabic, who reported being strong in LA at school and who had the opportunity to develop their LA with the help of private tutors and with the help of their parents at home.

All participants reported that the best students in the LA lessons were students originally coming from Levantine countries and speaking Levantine Arabic. Levantine Arabic is the name given to Arabic vernaculars spoken in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Palestine (Shiri, 2010). According to participants, students that came from Maghrebi families had lower performance in comparison with those students of Levantine families. This study did not aim to compare between graduates of LA programs in terms of their families' backgrounds or countries of origin. However, there seems to be a discrepancy between students' ability to develop literacy in LA depending on their families' countries of origin. Students who come from families originating from Levantine countries were able to achieve higher levels of proficiency than their counterparts of Maghrebi families.

A possible explanation to this discrepancy takes us back in history to the Bedouin immigration waves from the Arab Peninsula in the eleventh century spreading towards the

Maghreb and the Levant (Sayahi, 2014). While in the Levant, the spoken Arabic of the Bedouin

tribes was perceived as prestigious and close to Classical Arabic, in the Maghreb this was not the

case. A large majority of the population in the Maghreb were Berbers who adopted Arabic as a

second language and succeeded in becoming bilinguals. However, the spoken variety of Arabic

in the Maghreb was highly affected by the Berber dialects and a large number of features from

Berber dialects spread to the spoken Arabic in the region. The populations of the Maghrebi

region had negative attitudes towards the Bedouin immigration waves to their region. As a result,

features of the Bedouin dialect of Arabic were not rooted in the dialects there in comparison to

the Levantine dialects of Arabic (p. 27). It can be concluded that because the Levantine dialects

of Arabic have adopted and rooted Bedouin Arabic features, the dialects there are closer to

Classical Arabic (Literary Arabic). As a result it is easier for students exposed to these dialects of

Arabic to acquire and develop literacy in LA in comparison to students that are exposed to the

Maghrebi dialects of Arabic that have not adopted features that make them closer to LA.

However, despite the likelihood of students with Levantine origins to develop literacy in LA in a

better manner in comparison to students with Maghrebi origins, two participants' personal

experiences highlight the importance of support to reach this developed stage. Muna's family is

originally from Lebanon and Anis' family is originally from Algeria. Both participants have low

oral proficiency skills in their spoken dialects and both stressed the difficulty of LA for them. It

might have been expected that Muna would outperform Anis in developing oral and literacy

skills. This in fact was not the case. They both consider themselves intermediate in terms of their

literacy skills. Based on the interview with Muna, I could see how hard it was for her to produce

a sentence in spoken Arabic without relying on English or French to complete her ideas.

Likewise, Anis stated that he barely uses his Algerian dialect on a daily basis and feels more

comfortable and confident expressing his ideas in French. Muna did not attend LA lessons after elementary school and Anis settled for the LA lessons offered at school and did not attend LA lessons on Saturdays. In addition, their parents did not insist on using the spoken dialect of Arabic in family interactions and were content with their children's developed French literacy. Therefore, there is room to argue that the student's familial origins or personal dialect of Arabic is not the major influence on maintenance of the spoken dialect and development of literacy. The availability of resources surrounding the student and parents' commitment to the development of the spoken dialect play a larger role and have the highest impact on the likelihood of maintenance and literacy development.

c. Teachers of LA and their role in language learning

In addition to the previously mentioned points, participants reported the effect teachers had on their personal experience learning LA. Teachers of LA at the regular Islamic school had a negative impact on students' attitudes towards LA in comparison to the teachers of LA at the Saturday school. LA lessons at the regular Islamic school were teacher centered and there was no student interaction during the lessons, whereas at the Saturday schools teachers incorporated fun activities that triggered students' interest in the language. Having this discrepancy in the instruction of LA in both contexts resulted in students' preference to attend the Saturday school and dissatisfaction when learning LA in their regular school. All participants reported not being interested in learning LA as children as a result of their unpleasant experience in the LA lessons at their regular school. Similar results were reported in Curdt-Christiansen (2006) where students of Chinese as a heritage language in Montreal developed negative attitudes towards the language as a result of the negative effect heritage language teachers had on them.

In addition, one participant (Fadia) addressed the issue of having immigrant teachers teaching LA at the regular Muslim school and the difficulty they had managing the class. According to her, students' expectations by default were that the LA teacher would not stay for the whole school year. However, she did not address this issue when talking about LA teachers at the Saturday school. She compared the LA teachers at the Muslim school with other teachers at the same institution who had their education in Quebec. The difficulty of classroom management amongst immigrant teachers in Canada is addressed in Niyubahwe, Mukamurera and Jutras (2013). In their literature review of multiple studies related to immigrant teachers in Canada and Western countries, they addressed the issue of classroom management amongst immigrant teachers. Immigrant teachers have less familiarity with the new context and this unfamiliarity is at times reflected through their inability to manage the class.

Participants' positive experiences at the Saturday schools led to their engagement with the language. As a result, their positive attitudes towards the language as adults; similar findings were reported in Jean and Geva (2012), where heritage language learners that had pleasant experiences while learning developed positive attitudes towards the language and showed more interest in it.

An additional point addressed by participants is the fact that a large number of parents relied on the schools, whether the Saturday school or the regular Islamic school, to teach their children LA. Three participants reported parental investment in French, English and Math, yet LA was not given similar attention. Parents' investment in the dominant languages in Canada shows they saw multilingualism as capital (Dagenais, 2003) that would guarantee future access to higher education and perhaps a lucrative job. As a result they encouraged their children to develop proficiencies in French and English and hoped that Arabic (both spoken and literary)

would be acquired at school. However, successful experiences of heritage language revitalization, such as the Cherokee revitalization in Oklahoma reported in Peter (2014) and the Hawaiian revitalization reported in Luning and Yamauchi (2010) and in Yamauchi, Lau-Smith and Luning (2008) show that the success of these programs was achieved with the involvement and active role of parents in the programs and not through dependence on schools to achieve the goal.

Religion as a powerful influence on the interest in the heritage language:

All participants in this study are Muslims that practice their daily rituals and five of them attend weekly Quran interpretation lessons. They all addressed the importance of learning LA in order to be able to read the Quran. Being Muslim is an integral part of their ethnic identities and as committed Muslims they need to be literate in Arabic to read the Quran and to have access to interpretation texts of the Quran. Identifying LA as part of their heritage resulted in their motivation towards learning the language, despite the fact that their access to LA is restricted to religious texts in addition to the Quran. Research connecting cultural identity with heritage language maintenance is vast and the general emerging finding from these studies is that having positive attitudes towards one's heritage language results in forming positive attitudes towards one's identity and vice versa; these positive attitudes result in better learning of one's heritage language (Borland, 2005; Chhoun, 2011; Lee 2002, 2005; Luning & Yamauchi, 2010; Martin, 2012; Young Lee, 2013).

The availability of resources in the community supporting language maintenance:

Having heritage language speaking parents and attending community schools where the heritage language is taught does not guarantee language maintenance especially when resources

supporting literacy development are scarce. Participants in this study reported the lack of such supporting resources as children, when the need to have these resources is most crucial as they were in the process of developing their literacy. Books in LA were not available in public libraries and community centers did not offer activities for children in which they could engage using their spoken vernacular of Arabic. Amongst the six participants, two reported having extended family members and active entourage surrounding them in Montreal and they use their spoken vernacular of Arabic in their interactions. These two participants are the same participants who have a high level of fluency and who chose to conduct the interviews in spoken Arabic. The desire to learn heritage language in order to communicate with family members and members of the community is addressed in (Bale 2010; Choi, 2013; Chhuon, 2011; De Fina, 2012; Dixon et al., 2012; Hashimoto & Lee, 2011; Isik-Ercan, 2012; Jeon, 2008; Nesteruk, 2010; Oriyama, 2012). Findings in this study and in the aforementioned studies show that the availability of resources has an effect on heritage language proficiency and literacy development.

The influence of visits to the country of origin on heritage language maintenance:

Participants in the study reported the positive effect their visits to their countries of origin had on the development of their oral skills in their spoken vernacular of Arabic. They reported being ridiculed at first due to their accent that was different from people's accent there and they went through what Krashen (1998) identifies as *language shyness* where heritage language speakers with low oral proficiencies tend not to speak the language when surrounded by proficient speakers of the language. However, being surrounded by relatives and community members that speak solely Arabic has helped the participants catch the proper accent after a while and engage in conversations with their relatives using their vernacular. Visits to the country of origin and the benefits for the development of oral skills in the heritage language are

reported in Nesteruk (2010) where immigrant parents from Eastern European countries in the United States tended to visit their countries of origin annually to enhance their children's use of their heritage language through interaction with relatives in the homeland.

Discussion of Minor Themes

I named the aforementioned and discussed themes **Major Themes** since they were addressed by all participants. However, language learning experiences vary amongst different people and the participants in this study are no exception. Their learning experiences varied and so did their language development. Therefore, certain participants shared experiences that were not common to the other participants. Their shared experiences formed what I called **Minor Themes** as they added to what was mentioned by the rest of the participants. These themes are of no less importance than the **Major Themes**, and they are as follows:

4. The use of curricula developed for Arabic L1 speakers in Arab countries with heritage language learners of LA in Montreal.
5. The prohibition of using spoken Arabic in school corridors, by school administrators.
6. Adopting Islamic values does not necessarily require attending an Islamic school.

The use of curricula developed for Arabic L1 speakers in Arab countries with heritage language learners of LA in Montreal:

One theme that was addressed by one participant is the use of curricula imported from Arab countries and using them with heritage language learners of LA in Montreal. These curricula were developed for native speakers of Arabic, not for heritage language learners. Samira is a volunteer teacher at the Saturday school she attended as a child. She teaches interpretation of Quran and is familiar with books being used to teach LA both at the Saturday

school and at the regular Islamic school, where her father is a member of the parents' committee and a member of the school administration. She addressed the themes being used in LA books as being irrelevant to students' lives in Canada. The use of imported curricula instead of working towards developing curricula for heritage language learners of LA has not resulted in creating fully literate graduates and independent readers of LA. Readers who are capable of reading modern literary texts that are not religious texts. Only two out of the six participants reported having engaged in reading modern literature in LA that is not part of religious texts. The need to develop curricula for heritage language learners that addressed their proficiencies and cognitive levels is addressed in Al-Batal (1992); Kagan (2005); Kondo (1998); Kondo-Brown (2010) and Shiri (2010).

The prohibition of using spoken Arabic in school corridors, by school administrators:

An additional theme that was addressed by participants is the prohibition of the use of spoken Arabic in school corridors in the regular Islamic school. As children, participants were asked by teachers not to speak in Arabic when talking to their peers. The prohibition on the part of teachers and administrators was not explained to students, yet they were asked to use only French at school. This demand on the part of teachers and school administrators contradicts the actions taken by other community based schools where teaching the heritage language is an integral part of their agenda. Community based schools teaching Turkish, Chinese, Hawaiian and Japanese as heritage languages support the use of the heritage language and encourage students to engage in conversations using the language (Curdt-Christiansen, 2006; Kondo, 1998; Luning & Yamauchi, 2010; Otcu, 2010). Studies addressing the education system in Quebec report on Bill 101 (Ghosh, 2004; Sarkar, 2003). The bill was passed in 1977 and states among other points that the language of instruction in Quebec public schools would be French. However, there is no

statement in the literature that the Ministry of Education in Quebec requires community schools, which offer heritage languages as subjects to be learned, to ban the use of the heritage language in students' interaction with peers. Private schools in Quebec are required to implement the curriculum offered by the Ministry of Education through the use of French as language of instruction (Ghosh, 2004; Sarkar, 2003), yet the use of heritage language in school corridors is not prohibited by law. Participants that addressed the prohibition of using spoken Arabic in school corridors report being confused at the time. While LA teachers asked them to use Arabic when talking to her even outside the classroom, other teachers would tell them not to use spoken Arabic outside the LA lesson. Discrepancy in staff behavior questions the status of the heritage language. Despite being in a community based school, students received signals that the heritage language belongs to the heritage language lesson and the school has no room for it outside of that specific context. These signals from staff have negative effects on students' attitudes towards their heritage language and as a result students might feel reluctant to learn the language, as reported in Cummins (2005) and in Sook Lee and Oxelson (2006).

Adopting Islamic values does not necessarily require attending an Islamic school:

The last minor theme that was addressed by Muna and Fadia, who went to non-Muslim private schools at secondary level, is that adopting Islamic values does not necessarily require attending an Islamic school. Both participants attended non-Muslim secondary schools in Montreal and report that being immersed in a non-Muslim school had brought them closer to Islam. They felt they were different form other students and by wanting to explore the difference they engaged in learning more about Islam and become closer and more committed to religion. They felt that the experience of being surrounded by non-Muslims and having to interact with them on a daily basis, has taught them to accept others and to understand the true meaning of

multiculturalism. However, they were unable to achieve this understanding from their own experiences in the Islamic school.

It seems that the Islamic school in its early years was over-concerned with immersing its students in Islamic values. Thus it overlooked the importance of exposing the students to Canadian society. School interactions were restricted to the Muslim community and the students did not have the opportunity to interact with other Canadians that were not Muslim. Fadia reports that the only exposure they had to Canadian society was what they saw in books. Apart from that there was no real exposure. Being a community school does not necessitate being isolated from others. Students will grow up to be a part of the Canadian mosaic and they need to obtain skills to successfully interact with others. Community schools cannot rely on families to provide their children with these skills and the cooperation of schools is necessary to raise generations that can function properly inside and outside their communities. Zhou and Li (2003) as cited in Pu (2012, p. 31) suggest that Chinese heritage schools in the United States work toward integrating students into the mainstream society rather than isolating them from it. Muna and Fadia reported feeling isolated from other Canadians while students at the Islamic school. Only when they were adolescent students attending private non-Muslim schools did they experience real interaction with other Canadians. It can be argued based on the comments of Muna and Fadia that the Islamic school they attended as children did not work towards integrating students into Canadian society. However, having been a teacher at the same school in 2015, I can say that this trend mentioned by the two participants no longer exists. The school works towards providing students with opportunities to interact with peers from other schools that are not necessarily Muslim. In addition, the school staff added non-Arab and non-Muslim members that students interact with constantly.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter contained a discussion of the major and minor themes that emerged from the analysis of data collected from interviews conducted with six graduates of heritage language programs that taught LA in Montreal. The findings of this study suggest that in order to achieve heritage language maintenance and develop literacy skills, a number of factors need to come into play concurrently. Parents' practices and commitment to heritage language maintenance constitute the most important factor in preserving the language. However, parents' practices alone cannot guarantee maintenance of the heritage language, as there is a need for school programs designed to teach LA as a heritage language and not as L1. Teacher education is also important, as heritage language teachers have a direct impact on students' attitudes and motivation to learn the language. There is also a need for available resources to enhance literacy development and community network for maximum interaction using the heritage language. When all these factors come into play simultaneously, we have successful examples like Samira and Osama who were blessed with an abundance of resources, allowing both the oral and the literary form of Arabic to be acquired and maintained.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

Summary of the thesis

Immigrant children or children of immigrant parents face the threat of losing their heritage language when they encounter mainstream education. HL loss denotes more than merely a language being lost. It threatens family socialization and communication in addition to having educational consequences (Wong Fillmore, 1991).

Arabs have been immigrating to Canada from the late 19th century. According to the latest Census in 2016, Arabic is the non-official language most spoken at home in the city of Montreal. The same census shows an enormous gap between the number of individuals who report Arabic as a mother language and the number of individuals who use the language at home. This gap can be explained in terms of HL loss. The official languages replace the HL and threaten its existence and permanence.

HL loss can be countered through the HL programs that reinforce HL maintenance and development within various communities in Canada. Arabic is one of the HLs that are being offered to HL speakers in schools and community centers. However, graduates of such programs still show language attrition and loss.

This study is an exploration of HL maintenance attempts of graduates of HL programs of LA in Montreal. The study aimed to answer the following questions: 1) What can graduates of heritage language programs of literary Arabic in Montreal tell us regarding the maintenance of

their spoken dialect of Arabic? 2) What information can graduates of heritage language programs of LA in Montreal share regarding their development of literacy in LA?

To answer the questions, I recruited six graduates of different HL programs of LA in Montreal. I conducted semi-structured one on one interviews in two different settings. The interviews were recorded and data were coded resulting in the emergence of a number of themes. Participants reported language use at home as the most crucial factor contributing to language maintenance. Participants that have maintained the spoken vernacular of Arabic and developed literacy in the language report parents' commitment to the use of language at home in addition to commitment to learning LA in school. In addition, participants who have lost their HL or who report not being fluent and highly literate in LA report that their parents focused more on the host language instead of the HL. Other factors contributing to HL maintenance or causing HL loss are mentioned in detail in Chapters Four and Five.

Limitations

Given the fact that this study was not a funded study, I could only recruit six participants. In addition, the study was restricted to the city of Montreal; a city with diverse population and languages. The Arab community in Canada varies in terms of geographical, religious, social status, economical status and educational backgrounds, each of which can influence HL maintenance and loss. In addition, data collected from interviews with participants regarding HL programs and the manner in which they were implemented reflect participants' childhood memories. They reported incidents that were rooted in their memories, whereas had the interviews been conducted while participants were still learning LA they could have shared other experiences. Furthermore, the diglossic nature of Arabic imposes on learners a situation in which

the students are learning a form of language they are rarely exposed to. The form they use on a daily basis varies from the form they encounter in books. To help students appreciate the literary form and acknowledge its richness and beauty, teachers of LA need to be prepared and trained how to teach it as a HL.

Given the diversity of the Arab community in Montreal and in Canada, the results of this study cannot be generalized to the entire Arab community in Montreal or in Canada.

Implications for theory

Results from the semi-structured interviews with participants indicate that for certain participants, family interaction is the only opportunity they have to use the HL. HL programs that place students based on their proficiency are considered more successful than those that place students based on their age. Programs of LA as a HL need to work harder towards creating curricula designed for HL learners and stop borrowing books from countries of origin. The experiences of LA learners in countries of origin are highly different from those of HL learners in the diaspora. Therefore, educators cannot assume that the use of resources from countries of origin would answer students' needs in the diaspora and result in successful literacy acquisition.

The plurilingual reality of the city of Montreal plays out in the linguistic practices of its residents. The Arab community in the city is one of many ethnic groups that dwell in the city. With the sovereignty of French and the necessity for English, it is interesting to see how the community has managed to get Arabic to be the most widely spoken non-official language in the city (Statistics Canada, 2016). It is also important to explore the community's attempts to transmit the literary form of the language to children. Do schools that teach LA succeed in raising students' interest in the language in a plurilingual context?

Other implications

Results from this study indicate that HL maintenance and development eventually fall on the shoulders of parents. HL use at home is highly crucial for maintaining and developing the language. Parents' consistency with the use of language at home and in family interactions predicts maintenance of the language. In addition, the educational sphere in which the child interacts affects his attitudes towards his HL. Prohibiting the use of HLs in school corridors signals to students that their HLs are inferior and have no contribution to academic success. Moreover, HL teachers and coordinators need to develop curricula for HL learners and not to import them from countries of origin to help students answer their own needs as HL learners.

Future research directions

Given the small sample size in this study, it would be recommended to conduct future studies with a larger number of participants from other cities in Canada. Perhaps conducting a study in a community with a high density of Arab population would provide additional results. In addition, it would be recommended to include participants that are not Muslims and examine their HL maintenance attempts and success rates. Moreover, it is recommended to examine HL programs in the tertiary level education and evaluate the curricula used there. Curriculum developed for HL learners of LA is a topic that was not given much attention in research. It would be important to study curricula especially developed for HL learners of LA and evaluate their efficiency.

Concluding remarks

Maintaining HL should not be the responsibility of parents alone. Educators and policy makers share equal responsibilities with parents. Raising awareness of the importance of HL

maintenance and literacy development in HLs is the responsibility of educators. It is the schools'

responsibility not to prohibit the use of the HL in school corridors and it is our responsibility as a

wider community not to scorn people's use of their HLs. The wider community needs to see HLs

as a source of strength and reflect their admiration towards successful HL programs.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol

Table 2

First Interview Protocol

Research Questions	Interview Questions
1. What can graduates of heritage language programs of literary Arabic in Montreal tell us regarding the maintenance of their spoken dialect of Arabic?	• Tell me about your personal use of language: what languages do you speak and for what purposes do you use each? • Tell me about your dialect of Arabic and how often do you use it? • What languages are spoken at your home? What languages do family members use to communicate with each other? • Tell me about activities in the community center where you lived as a child in Montreal, were there any activities for Arabic speakers?
2. What information can graduates of heritage language programs of LA in Montreal share regarding their development of literacy in LA?	• Tell me about the HL program you participated in. • Tell me about your experience with Literary Arabic. • Tell me about reading in your leisure time, what books do you prefer reading and in what languages?

	• To what extent do you feel that learning Literary Arabic has contributed to your use of the language as an adult? • Were there any available activities in Literary Arabic in the public library where you lived at the time you were learning Literary Arabic? • How do you find listening to news broadcast in Literary Arabic or reading a newspaper in Literary Arabic?

Table 3

Second interview protocol

Research Questions	Interview Questions
1. What can graduates of heritage language programs of literary Arabic in Montreal tell us regarding the maintenance of their spoken dialect of Arabic?	• Tell me about your visits to your country of origin, how did you communicate with people there? • As a graduate of a HL program, what do you think second and third generation immigrants need to develop and preserve their HL?
2. What information can graduates of heritage language programs of	• Tell me about teachers that taught you Literary Arabic.

LA in Montreal share regarding their development of literacy in LA?	- How did you find the Literary Arabic level expected of you at the HL program? - How did you find the assignments and tests required of you to pass the class? - How would you describe yourself in terms of your proficiency in Literary Arabic? - What was your family's role when you were taking the HL program? - To what extent were you motivated to learn Literary Arabic?