ARAB AMERICAN PARENTS' ATTUDES TOWARD THEIR CHILDREN'S

HERITAGE LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND LANGUAGE PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

NATALIE MARTIN: Arab American parents' attitudes towards their children's heritage language maintenance and language practices (under the direction of Lynne Vernon-Feagans)

This study explored the language practices and attitudes towards Arabic of Arab American parents (N=94) and examined associations between perceived racism and language practices and attitudes. Self-identified Arab American parents with at least one child between the ages of 5 and 18 were surveyed. Parents were asked questions about their family's language proficiency in Arabic, how they use Arabic in their lives, whether they encourage their children to use Arabic, their attitudes towards the Arabic language, and perceived racism. Results indicate that parents hold positive attitudes towards Arabic and engage in various language practices that promote the maintenance of Arabic in their families. Results indicate that racism is not significantly associated with language attitudes or language encouragement.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

The purpose of this study was to examine the language attitudes and language practices of Arabic-speaking families living in the United States. Specifically, this study explored Arabic-speaking parents' feelings about their children's heritage language retention. I also investigated the influence of epistemological racism towards Arab Americans and its influence on parent attitudes and language practices. The research questions were: 1) What are the language practices of Arab American parents and children? 2) What are Arab American parents' attitudes towards Arabic? 3) What are Arab American parents' levels of perceived racism? 4) Are Arab American parents' levels of perceived racism significantly associated with language practices? 5) Are Arab American parents' levels of perceived racism significantly associated with language attitudes? In the following sections I explain the rationale for this study.

Rationale

Large-scale interest in language minorities and heritage language practices in the United States began in the 1960s (Brinton, Kagan, & Bauckus, 2008; Fishman, 1978). This interest was partly a result of social movements, such as the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, which promoted the affirmation of ethnic and cultural identity (Rouchdy, 2002). As American culture grew to appreciate its diversity so did the academic community, which became increasingly involved in heritage language research (Brinton et al., 2008).

Scholars began to investigate the needs of language minority populations and how to best support them in the school context.

To begin supporting language minorities, educators must understand students' family backgrounds. Through social interactions with family and community members, children develop an understanding of the world (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Children from one culture may understand the world differently than children from another culture (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Consequently, children who speak a language other than English at home undergo a different family experience than their peers. Because such differences can present challenges to language minority children in school, educators should have some knowledge of their students' family backgrounds so that they can anticipate how these children may interpret instructions or expectations differently. By understanding a child's family background, educators can work to accommodate the child's developmental needs (Cummins, 1989).

One aspect of a child's family background is family language practice. Educators need to know the family language practices: whether parents use a language other than English at home, whether children speak another language at home, and whether children are literate in another language. This information helps educators decide when children are eligible for ESL support (Ovando, Combs, & Collier, 2006). It can also help explain mistakes children make in their written work; for example, a child who is literate in Arabic may omit quotation marks because they are not present in Arabic (Thompson-Panos & Thomas-Ruzi, 1983). Inadequate knowledge of children's language and cultural background and degree of second-language development can have detrimental effects (Ovando, Combs & Collier, 2006). For example, language-minority students have often been identified as having special needs because educators misdiagnosed their trouble with English (Cummins, 1989).

Besides understanding family language practices, educators need to understand family language attitudes, particularly how parents feel about their children's maintenance of their heritage language. According to Dunst (2002), schools should understand family attitudes and tailor instruction to support family goals; Dunst called these *family-centered practices*. *Family-centered practices* produce better academic and developmental results than programs that aren't *family-centered.* Building on Dunst's findings, educators can provide optimal instruction for ESL students by understanding parents' language attitudes and supporting those attitudes in the classroom.

Understanding parents' language practices and language attitudes helps educators promote multicultural education. Awareness of family background promotes respect and appreciation of diversity. This appreciation transfers into promoting students' first language and cultural heritage in the classroom--what Nieto (1992) called *affirming diversity* within the classroom, i.e. highlighting diversity and supporting its development. Understanding parents' language attitudes and practices not only help support the development of their children, it can also help support multicultural education in the classroom (Nieto, 1992). Instead of ignoring the language differences of a particular student, an educator should openly recognize these differences in the classroom as a way of acknowledging the power and importance of students' native language and encouraging respect for it. Open recognition is just one way to improve the social experience of minority students and a creating comfortable learning environment for them.

Knowledge of students' family background allows educators to tailor their instruction, create family-centered practices, and enhance multicultural education. All of these factors help improve the outcomes of language-minority students (Dunst, 2002; Nieto,

1992; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Although the need to and benefits of knowing parent language attitudes and practices have been documented, many language minority populations have not been studied in depth (Brinton, Kagan, & Bauckus, 2008). One of these populations is Arab Americans. The following section will provide more information about Arab Americans and why they are a particularly important population to study.

Significance of studying Arab Americans

While a great deal of educational research has been devoted to the needs of larger minority groups, little attention has been given to Arab Americans who speak Arabic (Rouchdy, 1992). This knowledge gap is becoming more obvious because the population of people of Arab descent in the United States has grown almost 40% from the 1.2 million counted in 1980 (United States Census Bureau, 2003). As the number of Arab immigrants grows, so does the number of Arab Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students. In states with a high concentration of Arab Americans, such as New York, California, and Michigan, Arab students can form a significant proportion of the LEP students. For example, children of Arab descent make up forty percent of the LEP students in New York (Kayyali, 2006). Even states with smaller populations of Arab Americans report significant numbers of Arab National Origin Minority (NOM) students; North Carolina has approximately 2,236 Arabic NOM students in its public schools (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2008).

Early-twentieth-century Arab immigrants were encouraged to assimilate into American culture, forsaking Arabic for English. However, recent changes have promoted ethnic pride and language retention (Rouchdy, 1992). Three significant factors have helped foster appreciation of Arabic. First, the Civil Rights Movement affirmed the rights of minorities and promoted ethnic identity. Second, political unrest in the Middle East has

encouraged emigration to America; the resulting infusion of native Arabic speakers strengthens Arabic-speaking communities. Finally, the worldwide growth of Islam has created an interest in Arabic because it is the language of the Koran (Rouchdy, 1992). These factors have encouraged recent immigrants to preserve their language, unlike their earlier counterparts (Sawaie, 1992).

However, despite historical progress towards the preservation of minority languages, opposition forces are still strong. Arab Americans, like other minority groups, endure various levels of racism (Cainkar, 2004). Media portrayal of Arabs, American involvement in the Middle East, and the events of September 11th all fuel epistemological racism towards Arab Americans (Cainkar, 2002; Lester, 2003; Perry, 2003; Suleiman, 1999; Wingfield, 2006). Terms like "terrorist" and "fanatic" are linked with images of Arabs in the media so that some Americans have begun to associate Arabs with violence (Lester & Ross, 2003). Being Arab has become something undesirable in American society.

Arab Americans also face opposition to the maintenance of their language. Organized opposition to bilingualism, for example the English Only Movement, hinders the preservation of Arabic and promotes a general shift towards English. Also, as Arab Americans have become more vulnerable their heritage language has become more powerful. National security concerns have lead to the placement of increased value upon the Arabic language (Kubota, 2006). In an effort to boost national security, the U.S. government has increased funding for Arabic-language programs (Wiley, 2007). However, the growth of Arabic's prestige in American politics places some heritage speakers (i.e., Arab Americans) at risk of being exploited as a national resource (Kubota, 2006). These contradictory circumstances place Arab Americans in a precarious position.

Although some Arab Americans perceive less racism in America than in their native countries, racism toward Arab Americans does exist and so do its effects on Arab families. Many Arab American children are not only aware of racism, but also experience it both in and outside of school (Kader, 2005). Arab American parents may be placed in the difficult position of wanting their children to be proud of their heritage while also protecting them from bigotry (Livengood & Stodolska, 2004). One aspect of how Arab Americans negotiate these concerns is through their use of their heritage language, Arabic (Rouchdy, 2002).

Given the need for educators to better understand Arab American students, this study sought to answer the following questions: 1) What are the language practices of Arab American parents and children? 2) What are Arab American parents' attitudes towards Arabic? 3) What are the levels of perceived racism of Arab American parents? 4) Are Arab American parents' levels of perceived racism significantly associated with language practices? 5) Are Arab American parents' levels of perceived racism significantly associated with language attitudes? In the next sections, I begin with basic demographic information about Arab Americans. Next I present a summary of my method of selecting articles for this review and an analysis of the results of their findings. Then I describe the methods and procedures of my study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Close-knit families and religion are important aspects of Arab American lives and contribute to the maintenance of Arabic (Kayyali, 2006). Arab American families tend to be larger than the average American family, with extended family living near or in the same household (Kayyali, 2006). Parents of Arab American children are more likely to be married than other Americans and to remain married (United States Census Bureau, 2003). Consistent interaction among Arab Americans supports the maintenance of Arabic (Fishman, 1978; Rouchdy, 1992). Within Arab American families, religion is often a basis for maintaining Arab identity (Suleiman, 1999). For Muslim families, learning Standard Arabic (the language of the Koran) is important. However, less than 25% of Arab Americans claim Islam as their religion (United States Census Bureau, 2003).

Besides religion and family, parents often encourage their children to learn Arabic as a means of maintaining their cultural or ethnic identity (Rouchdy, 1992). In fact, 69% of first- generation Arab Americans speak Arabic at home although parents in mixed marriages or who are second- or third-generation Arab Americans tend to speak English at home (United States Census Bureau, 2003). In areas with high concentration of Arab Americans, some parents even send their children to public schools that teach Arabic (Rouchdy, 1992).

While some Arab Americans try to maintain their Arabic, they also make efforts to learn English and achieve high levels of academic success. According to Suleiman (1999), 75% of all Arab Americans are able to speak English "very well," which can be explained by

the fact that many first-generation Arab Americans arrive in this country with high levels of education and studied English as a foreign language in their home countries. For example, more than 40% of Arab Americans have at least a bachelor's degree, compared with only 24% of other Americans (United States Census Bureau, 2000). Because of their high educational levels and English skills, Arab Americans have performed well economically; their median income is higher than the national average (United States Census Bureau, 2000). These are a few examples of how Arab Americans are successful in America. Many Arab Americans appear to follow the path of other "voluntary minorities", immigrant populations that assimilate in order to achieve economic success (Ogbu &Simons; 1998).

Language Loyalty

Within the field of research on language retention in the United States, Joshua Fishman's theories are some of the most prominent. In *Language Loyalty*, Fishman found that community motivation and exposure to language are key elements of language retention (Fishman, 1978). Specifically, having one's language of origin supported in religious programs, school and daily life are key factors in maintaining that language. This finding is consistent with Schrauf's (1999) findings that religious support and community use of a language are key to its maintenance. According to Fishman, minority language groups need constant exposure to their native language in order to maintain it. One aspect of such exposure is parental use of their native language at home and their involvement in a larger native-language community (Phinney, 2001). The disappearance of minority languages over the course of generations is usually due to lack of support and efforts to maintain them in daily life (Fishman, 1978; Phinney, 2001; Schrauf, 1999).

The prestige of a language is considered one of the biggest motivating factors for maintaining it (Fishman, 1978). Languages that are perceived as more valuable in society tend to attract higher levels of language loyalty (Fishman, 1978). However, Americans have often been criticized for holding negative attitudes towards bilingualism; speaking a language other than English is seen as undesirable (Ovando et al, 2006). This can be seen in campaigns like the English Only Movement, which seeks to maintain the dominance of English in America. The power of such movements is reflected in studies of parental attitudes toward their heritage language (Canagarajah, 2008; Mucherah, 2008). In Mucherah's study of more than 200 immigrant parents, a significant number reported feeling that their children would be socially isolated if they used their parents' native language in public (Mucherah, 2008).

Studies show considerable variation among ethnic groups in language practices and attitudes towards their native languages. Many motives encourage or discourage positive attitudes towards heritage languages: religious practices, ethnic and cultural maintenance, communication with countries of origin, and economic incentives. An ecology of factors, generally those that support language maintenance, influences attitudes towards language. However, despite generally positive views of heritage language maintenance, parents show considerable variation in what aspects of a language they encourage and to what degree. Some parents report an interest only in informal spoken language, whereas others want their children to be able to attend a college whose courses are taught in their native language. Ironically, parents' attitudes about their children's language use do not necessarily correlate with their own language practices (Park, 2007). Though many parents claim they want their children to learn their parents' native language, not all parents engage in language practices that promote their native tongue.

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Language Attitudes and Practices

The following summary of parent attitudes towards heritage language maintenance and language practices is organized according to ethnic group. Search results on Arab American parents were limited; however, the studies that were found are noted at the end of this section.

Shin (2005) and Park (2007) reported similar positive attitudes toward the maintenance of Korean among Korean families and language practices. Shin (2005) studied 250 Korean families living in New York, Chicago, Houston and Boston. Through parent questionnaires and interviews, Shin discovered that almost half the parents wanted their children to be biliterate in Korean and English. Most parents were literate in Korean and took the time to teach Korean at home and/or sent their children to Sunday school classes to learn Korean. Park (2007) studied nine Korean-Canadian parents using both interviews and questionnaires and found that Korean parents encouraged their children to use Korean in order to communicate with people in the Korean community, made efforts to send their children to heritage language schools, and promoted the language at home. However, Park's study also noted another motivation for maintaining Korean: to get a good job. According to Park's research, many Korean families felt that being biliterate in English and Korean would make their children more competitive in the job market. While the majority of the parents in Shin's study promoted Korean to their children, some deemphasized Korean because they felt that English would help their children achieve more economic success (Shin, 2005). This result supports Fishman's (1978) earlier finding that the prestige of a language is a significant motivating factor for its use or non-use.

Schecter and Bayley (2002) study of Mexican families discussed how they identify themselves and the various ways they practice Spanish. Through a series of interviews with 11 Mexican families, Schecter and Bayley explored Mexican American motivations and methods for using Spanish. Not surprisingly, family identification was found to depend on length of residence in the U.S., birth location(s), economic status and educational history. While an elite Mexican immigrant family may stress the importance of speaking "proper" Spanish and reading classical literature, a family with lower social status and fewer material resources may think it's more important for their children to speak Spanish at family and cultural events. A correlation was found between the values the sample families attach to Spanish and its relationship with their cultural identity. For example, the family that valued maintaining "standard Spanish" was concerned about having their children attend a school with a large number of children who spoke non-standard Spanish. Those parents wanted to send their children to a school with few native Spanish speakers. Schecter and Bayley's research shows language attitudes and practices can differ among families within the same ethnic group.

Mills (2005) conducted a two-year longitudinal study of 10 second-generation Pakistani mothers, who cited preservation of ethnic identity as the most important reason for maintaining native their languages. According to one interviewee: "Without language, you couldn't really keep in touch with your roots" (Mills, 2005, p. 272). According to Mills, native language enables people to maintain multiple group identities, such as ethnic and national origin, by interacting in their mother tongue. However, the same motivations may also encourage people to speak English (speaking English in an English-speaking country would promote a different kind of national identity). Despite these positive attitudes towards

mother-tongue maintenance, many parents promoted English as their children's main language or even primary language at school. Children of these parents reported that they mostly spoke English at home and that speaking English was easier for them. Yet, their parents still used their native languages of Urdu or Pashto. Mills found heritage languages in use into the third generation, despite a general shift towards English.

While ethnic groups vary in their practices, some findings suggest that refugee groups maintain higher levels of loyalty to their native languages than other immigrant populations do. Mills (2005) noted that the stress of living in diaspora encourages people to maintain their ethnic identity. In an ethnographic study of 35 Khmer refugees, Smith-Hefner (1990) found that many placed a high emphasis on maintaining Khmer at home; some parents explicitly cited the importance of maintaining their native language because it would be necessary if they were able to return to Cambodia one day. These refugees living in diaspora perceived speaking their native language as a way of maintaining their identity and community until they were able to return to their home country. However, what the parents felt about Khmer at times contradicted their decisions about their children's education: several parents opted not to send their children to the Khmer/English dual-language school. Because Khmer cultural notions of education emphasize letting children motivate themselves Khmer could be encouraged at home whereas within the domain of school children may or may not be pushed academically.

Hmong refugees also have a long history of language maintenance despite being displaced numerous times (Withers, 2004). Withers used mixed methods to study 12 Hmong living in California and found (although not conclusively) very positive attitudes towards maintaining the Hmong language among the majority of her participants. Many felt a strong

need to maintain their culture and saw speaking Hmong as a part of cultural maintenance. One participant declared: "If they stop to speak Hmong, they is not a Hmong!" (p. 439). Such positive attitudes were reflected in the numerous resources the Hmong used to maintain their language, including library books, community centers, radio programs and interaction with other Hmong nearby. Withers's Hmong subjects lived in a community with a high population of Hmong refugees. By using local resources and various media available in Hmong, they worked to maintain their native language.

However, not all refugee groups indicated strong language loyalties. Canagarajah (2008) reported that language maintenance was not considered a crucial part of ethnic identity. This study, of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees living in London, Toronto and Lancaster used mixed methods to survey surveyed more than 500 participants. Some participants reported that maintaining their language was not necessary for the maintenance of their ethnic identity; instead they placed a greater value on cultural traditions such as dance. Other parents felt that English would be more important in helping their community survive economically and therefore stressed English over their own Tamil.

Clyne and Kipp (1999) studied Arab communities in Australia. Through a series of focus groups, they found Arab Australians to be very interested in having their children attain a high level of proficiency in Arabic. Most of the parents took advantage of school programs that offered Arabic, as well as church and mosque programs. Various media were used to promote the language at home: TV programs, books, radio, Internet, and religious sermons. Communication, both within the Arab Australian community and country of origin, and access to the Koran were the strongest motivating factors for this study's participants. Their

high levels of proficiency, which correlated with their daily use of Arabic in social and religious situations, supports Fishman's (1978) theory of language loyalty.

Other researchers have investigated the maintenance and use of Arabic, but not from a parental perspective. Among these studies was a historical examination of the Dearborn Arab American community in Michigan (Aswad, 1974). Aswad's findings indicated that because of its high concentration of Arabs (that is, native speakers of Arabic), through community efforts and continual contact with newly arrived immigrants, the Dearborn community had succeeded in preserving Arabic. This community's efforts included teaching Arabic in religious-school classes and offering Arabic classes at local public schools.

Similarly, Rouchdy (2002) found a recent revival in the use of Arabic among Arab Americans in Detroit. She credits this revival, in part, to an increase in Arabic media that cater to Arab interests, including TV programs and newspapers, as well as increased enrollment in Arabic classes. When the researcher asked students why they were interested in formally studying Arabic, the majority mentioned maintenance of ethnic identity and religious affiliation. Kenny (1992) found similar results in his survey of 28 Arab American students. They reported being influenced by their parents, with 75% stating that their parents encouraged them to study Arabic and more than 75% claiming that their parents always or almost always spoke Arabic to them at home. Besides parental influence, these students' top reasons for studying Arabic were to read the Koran, to maintain their culture, and to communicate with other Arabs.

Because of the limited research on Arab American families, studies of other immigrant families have been included in this literature review. These studies, which offer insight into how language minority families use or do not use their native language in an

English-speaking country, show great variation between language groups. Attitudes towards language maintenance vary across immigrant groups and even within them. The lack of data makes it difficult to compare Arab Americans to these groups; however, most reports indicate that Arab communities express a strong desire to maintain Arabic, as well as high levels of community participation to preserve the language. Islam is frequently mentioned as a strong motivating factor in promoting Arabic. However, because less than 25% of all Arab Americans are Muslims, the factor of religion may not be as significant for all Arab Americans (United States Census, 2000).

Racism towards Arab Americans

Discrimination against Arab Americans has increased *(*Livengood, 2003; Peek, 2003; Perry, 2003; Wingfield, 2006). American-Middle East relations have fueled negative images of Arabs (Wingfield, 2006). In particular, portrayals of Arabs in mainstream media have created stereotypes of Arabs as terrorists and fanatics. Some of this propaganda is marketed to children, for example in movies such as *Aladdin* that develop an image of Arabs as people who live in the desert, riding camels and swinging curved swords (Shaheen, 1994). These images are reinforced in textbooks that overemphasize nomads, camels and deserts (Barlow, 1994). Such images are troubling because they portray Arabs as uncivilized and backward (Wingfield, 1995). In truth, less than 2% of Arabs living in the Middle East are nomads (Barlow, 1994).

While media images fuel stereotypes of Arabs, relations between the United States and Arab countries in the Middle East have increased racism towards Arab Americans (Cainkar, 2002; Perry, 2003; Wingfield, 2006). This trend was particularly noticeable in the months immediately following September 11, 2001, when at least 145 hate crimes against

Arab Americans were reported (Perry, 2003). These crimes included events at schools in which Arab American children were abused by their peers (Perry, 2003). American Muslim women were hardest hit by these crimes (Cainkar, 2004), in part because their head coverings made them more visible. Fearing violence, some Arab Americans have avoided going out in public and have even stopped allowing their children to ride their bikes in the street or go to a park (Livengood, 2004).

After September 11, Arab Americans began to worry not only about abuse from other Americans but also about government surveillance and questioning (Cainkar, 2004). Congressional acceptance of the USA-Patriot Act in October 2001 led to mass arrests and detentions of innocent Arab Americans. The remnants of these investigations are still present today. According to a preliminary report of racial focal groups for the 2010 U.S. Census, since September 2001 many Arab Americans have felt that they are not treated like other Americans. Because of these feelings, many Arab Americans were skeptical about how the census would be used and were therefore hesitant to participate (United States Census Bureau, 2009).

Media stereotypes, hate crimes and government surveillance all place Arab American families in precarious situations (Cainkar, 2004). Nonetheless, how Arab American parents are reacting to these dangers has not been investigated; for example, it is still not known whether such parents encourage their children to defy public backlash and proudly display their heritage or encourage their children to speak Arabic only at home. It is possible that the cultural isolation felt by Arab Americans may result in high levels of Arabic maintenance. According to Aswad, American involvement in Middle Eastern political conflicts during the

1960s and early 1970s fomented a growth in ethnic pride and heritage language retention among Arab Americans (Aswad, 1974). However, we do not know if the same is true today.

Because studies have found that parent attitudes towards language maintenance are generally positive across ethnicities and nationalities, we can hypothesize that this will be true for Arab Americans. Research also suggests that the prestige of a language influences how well it is maintained. Arabic has recently been given more prestige as a valuable language for national security; however, studies have not found if this interest in Arabic affects Arab American language practices. Previous studies suggest that many Arab Americans have experienced discrimination and racism (Cainkar, 2002; Perry, 2003). However, no studies have investigated whether these experiences have affected their language attitudes.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer a number of questions regarding Arab American language practices, attitudes toward Arabic, and perceptions of racism. The first question addressed language practices. The second addressed language attitudes. The remaining questions addressed perceptions of racism and the relationship among perceived racism, language practices and attitudes. Each question is followed here by a brief description of the question and its place in this study.

1) What are the language practices of Arab American parents and children? This question sought information about how Arab American parents and children are using or not using Arabic. The question gauged language proficiency and language use.

Participants were asked to state their proficiency in spoken and written Arabic, as well as their children's proficiency in spoken and written Arabic. Participants were then asked what language they speak with their children.

Drawing on Fishman's (1978) research, participants were asked whether a) their family socializes with other Arabic speakers; b) their children learn Arabic at school and; c) if Arabic is part of their family's religious practices. As previously noted, these factors are often associated with high levels of language maintenance (Fishman, 1978).

Encouragement of Arabic was assessed through questions about whether parents encourage their children to speak Arabic and what their motives are for doing so or not doing so. Parents were also asked whether they encourage their children to learn Arabic and how they teach their children Arabic.

2) What are Arab American parents' attitudes towards Arabic? This question assessed how parents feel about Arabic as a language and how valuable they think the language is. Scale items came from Baker's (1992) Attitudes to the Welsh Language General Scale. Arabic is currently in high demand for national security. However, little is known about Arab Americans' attitudes towards Arabic today (Kubota, 2006).

3) What are the levels of racism perceived by Arab American parents? This question assessed Arab American parents' experiences with racism in the United States.

4) Are Arab American parents' levels of perceived racism significantly associated with their language practices? Specifically, this question was interested in whether there are significant differences in the levels of perceived racism by five groups of parents: those who encourage their children to speak entirely in English, mostly in English, an equal mix of English and Arabic, mostly in Arabic and entirely in Arabic. This information will help

researchers begin to understand the relationship between Arab American parents' perceptions of racism and their domestic language practices.

5) Are Arab American parents' levels of perceived racism significantly associated with language attitudes? Specifically, is there a negative relationship between perceived racism and language attitudes? Do parents who report low attitudinal levels towards Arabic report high levels of perceived racism? Perceived racism was assessed using items from Utsey's (1996) Index of Race-Related Stress, which was originally designed to be used by African Americans. References to African ethnicity in scale items were changed to Arab ethnicity. This question sheds some light on the relationship between Arab Americans' perceived racism and their attitudes towards their heritage language.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The survey was distributed to Arab American parents who self-identified through online networks such as The Arab American Institute, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services, Arab American Family Support Center, and Arab American Council, Inc. Participants were also recruited through their associations with the principal investigator as either a friend or colleague. Participants were self-identified parents of Arab descent with at least one child. Participants were not restricted by age, gender, immigration status, or geographic location within the United States.

Data was gathered using an online survey distributed to Arab American parents through Arab American organizations. Membership directors of these organizations were initially contacted via telephone and asked if they would be willing to take the survey and forward it by e-mail to parents on their listervs.

Sample

The sample collection for this study was non-probability in nature. Though non-probability samples are not necessarily the most desirable, they have been shown to be helpful in identifying hard-to-reach minority populations (May, 1992). May's study of Arab American immigrant parents seeking health care for their children used a non-probability

sample. May obtained participants through Arab American social networks and found this to be the most effective way to gain the trust of and access to Arab American parents (May, 1992). By identifying and contacting Arab American parents through online organizations, I hoped to gain participants' trust and strengthen my response rate.

The survey was designed to take only 15 minutes. Participants were given a window of roughly two weeks to complete the survey at their convenience. Almost all questions were multiple choice. Participants were not forced to answer any question. In order to protect participants' identity, all surveys were filled out anonymously.

Although most Arab Americans speak English (United States Census, 2003), participants were given the option of taking the survey in either Arabic or English, according to their preference. This option was designed to include participants with higher levels of proficiency in Arabic than English. The survey was translated into Arabic by a graduate student whose native language is Arabic and then proofread by another native Arabic-speaker.

Procedures

The survey for this study was conducted online via e-mail. Initial contact with Arab American organizations was made by phone to see if they were willing to have their members participate. The investigator asked for a list of e-mail contacts who might personally contact potential participants. Those who agreed were asked to forward an e-mail from the principal investigator explaining the project with a link to the survey. Other participants were also recruited through the investigator's colleagues and friends.

Prospective participants received an e-mail explaining the purpose of the project and a link to the online survey. Once they opened the survey, a letter of consent appeared. After

providing their consent they were given the option of taking the survey in Arabic or English. Participants were asked to confirm that their status as: 1) self-identified Arab Americans and 2) parents with at least one school-age child between the ages of 5 and 18. The survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete. Participation was anonymous. Afterward, participants were thanked and given the option of contacting the investigator with further questions. Unless participants chose to contact the investigator, there was no follow-up contact with them.

The survey consisted of 36 questions divided into four sections. The first section asked questions about participants' language practices. The second section addressed parents' attitudes towards the Arabic language. The third section asked parents about their perceptions of anti-Arab racism. In the final section, parents were asked to provide demographic information about themselves and their children.

Measures

Language Proficiency

Four questions were used to assess Arabic language proficiency of the parents and children: 1) How well do you speak Arabic?; 2) How well do you read and write in Arabic?; 3) How well does your child(ren) speak Arabic?; and 4) How well does your child(ren) read and write in Arabic? Parents assessed themselves and their children on a five-point scale ranging from "fluent" to either "I do not speak Arabic" or "I do not read or write in Arabic."

Language Practices Outside the Home Scale

This scale was designed address how Arab American families use Arabic. A wide range of questions were asked regarding how Arabic is or is not used in participants' lives, including: 1) Does your family socialize with other Arabic speakers?; 2) Do(es) your

child(ren) learn Arabic at school?; 3) Is Arabic part of your family's religious practices?; and

4) What do you do to make sure that your child(ren) learn(s) Arabic?

Language Use Between Parent and Child Scale

This scale examines language use at home within the family. The following question

was used: 1) When you talk to your child(ren), in what language do you speak?; 2) When

your child(ren) talks to you, in what language do they usually speak?

Language Encouragement Scale

The language encouragement scale assessed whether parents encourage their children

to use Arabic. The following question was used to determine parent encouragement: 1) What

language do you encourage your child(ren) to speak at home? Participants chose their

responses on a five-item scale ranging from "Entirely in Arabic" to "Entirely in English."

Participants were also asked if they encourage their children to use Arabic. Those who

answered "Yes" were also asked, "What motivates you to encourage your child(ren) to use

Arabic?"

Language Attitudes Scale

To assess parents' attitudes about their heritage language, respondents were asked

five questions about their feelings towards Arabic. Questions were adapted from five items

on Baker's (1992) Attitudes to the Welsh Language General Scale. This scale was chosen

because it has strong internal consistency according to Baker (1992), who reported a

Cronbach's alpha of .93 in his examination of Welsh attitudes towards the Welsh language.

The study asked participants to strongly agree to strongly disagree on a five-point Likert

scale. The following items were taken from Baker's (1992) scale and adapted so that Arabic,

not Welsh, was the language of interest: 1) I like speaking Arabic; 2) There are more useful

languages to learn than Arabic; 3) Arabic is essential to take part fully in Arab life; 4) We need to preserve the Arabic language; and 5) I would like my child(ren) to be Arabic-speaking.

Perceived Racism Scale

Utsey's (1996) Index of Race-Related Stress was used to assess respondents' levels of perceived racism. The scale asked participants to either agree or disagree on a five-point Likert-type scale. Five items of the scale were selected for this study. These five items have been shown to have good internal reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha range of .87 (Utsey, 1996). The scale was designed for African Americans and adapted for Arab Americans. The following items were used: 1) Arabs are often treated harshly or unfairly by Whites/non-Arabs because of their race; 2) There exists a double standard in the way the law or other systems of government (court, disciplinary committees, etc.) work when dealing with Arabs as opposed to Whites/ non-Arabs; 3) The police treat White/non-Arabs with more respect and dignity than they do Arabs; 4) There is seldom anything positive about Arab people on radio, TV, newspapers, or in history books; and 5) White public officials or other influential White people often make racist remarks or comments about Arabs.

Demographic Variables

Participants were asked 10 demographic questions, including (a) How many children do you have? (b) What are the ages of your child(ren)? (c)What is your gender? (d) Are you married to an Arab American? (e) Do you have a domestic partner that is Arabic-speaking? (f) What generation Arab American are you? (g) Please indicate the last level of education you completed. (h) In which State do you live? (i) What is your ancestry? (j) What is your age in years?

RQ 1: What are the language practices of Arab American parents and children? Both parental and child language practices were assessed using descriptive statistics. Frequencies were run on the language proficiency scale, language use scale and language encouragement scale.

RQ 2: What are Arab American parents' attitudes towards Arabic? Responses on the language attitude scale were used to answer this question. The five items in this measure were first tested for internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha. Participant responses to these five items were then compiled and reported as a total language attitude score. The mean of these total scores is reported as parental language attitudes.

RQ3: What are Arab American parents' levels of perceived racism? The perceived racism measure was compiled and averaged similarly to the language attitude measure. The five items in this measure were also tested for internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha. The total perceived racism score is reported.

RQ 4: Are Arab American parents' levels of perceived racism significantly associated with language practices? Differences in language practices groups' levels of racism were analyzed using an ANOVA test. Participants' responses to What language do you encourage your child(ren) to speak? were used as categorical variables (i.e., "Entirely in Arabic," "Mostly in Arabic," and "Equal mix of Arabic and English," "Mostly in English," and "Entirely in English"). An analysis of variance among these five groups was run using the total perceived racism score as the dependent variable.

RQ5: Are Arab American parents' levels of perceived racism significantly associated with language attitudes? Participants' total perceived racism score was examined for

correlation with their total language attitude scores. Results from correlation tests are reported to show the association between racism and language attitudes. Results are examined to see whether parents who report low attitudinal levels towards Arabic report high levels of perceived racism.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Sample

This study surveyed 94 Arab American parents from across the United States. Parents were recruited through online Arab American organizations and through the investigator's colleagues. Data were collected between April 14 and May 1, 2009.

Response Rate

The nature of recruitment made it difficult to know precisely how many people were invited to take the survey. A total of 63 online Arab American organizations were contacted via e-mail and asked to forward the recruitment e-mail to their staff and membership. Additional participants were recruited through my colleagues. Because the survey was anonymous, I do not know who was recruited through which organization. Certain demographic groups had higher response rates than others, however. For example, I only contacted one organization in Georgia and within days of speaking with their membership director, I had 12 respondents from Georgia.

Colleagues and membership directors who expressed particular interest in the study may have been more likely to forward the recruitment e-mail, possibly resulting in a greater number of responses from certain areas of the country. Recruitment through my colleagues produced larger number of responses. Several colleagues in North Carolina forwarded my

recruitment e-mail to their friends and families, resulting in 31 responses in North Carolina.

Table 1 displays full data on participants' states of residence.

(Insert Table 1 here)

Generally, most respondents were happy to help me with my project and grateful that someone was taking an interest in Arab Americans. Thirty parents contacted me to wish me luck, ask for the results, and say they were excited about my study. Through parent feedback, I also became aware of a problem with how the recruitment e-mail was phrased. For several parents, the term "Arab American" seemed to suggest that participants had to be citizens. Because they were not citizens, they were unsure about whether they should participate in the study. To correct this misunderstanding, on April 17 I modified the term in recruitment e-mails and initial gateway question from "Arab American" to "Arab living in America." Additionally, some parents and membership directors wanted to be assured that I was not associated with the U.S. government: "You don't work for any government agency? I ask because you may know of the difficulties of profiling specifically aimed at Arabs/ Muslims." Arab Americans have reported distrust of the government in other studies as well (United States Census, 2009). Such fears may explain why certain participants choose not to answer all of the demographic questions, which resulted in a lower N on some questions.

Demographics

The survey participants were predominately women (62.6%), first generation Arab Americans (77.3%), Palestinians (50%), individuals with a four-year college degree or graduate degree (70%), and married or partnered to an Arabic speaker (80.9%). They had a median of 3 children. Their median age was 29. Full demographic figures are listed in Table 2.

(Insert Table 2 here)

Inconsistencies between some aspects of the sample and census data is a probably the result of having used a convenience sample. Women, who make up slightly less than 50% of all Arab Americans, were overrepresented in the sample. The number of first-generation participants was also higher (77.3%) than on census reports (54%). According to the 2000 U.S. Census, more than 66% of Arab Americans are of Syrian, Egyptian, or Lebanese origin. However, fully half of my sample were Palestinian (16 of these from North Carolina alone). This may be because many of my contacts were Palestinian Americans. The sample also featured 70.4% of respondents with a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to the 41.2% overall reported in the 2000 U.S. Census. The sample median age of 29 was younger than the median of 33 in the 2000 census.

Language Practices

My first research question, "What are the language practices of Arab American parents and children?", is reported through frequencies and correlations among several variables: *language proficiency*, *outside home language practices*, *language use between parents and children,* and *language encouragement.* The simple answers to this question were that the majority of parents want their children to use Arabic and the majority of families are engaged in at least one language practice that promotes the maintenance of Arabic. Despite these attitudes and efforts, however, parents reported small numbers of children fluent in Arabic. It should be noted that language practices across the sample were found to be more complex than the above description.

Language Proficiency

As shown in Table 3, parents reported higher levels than their children of both spoken and literacy proficiency in Arabic. Eighty-three percent of parents reported fluency in or at least above-average familiarity with Arabic, compared to 24.7% of their children. Parents also reported high literacy rates in Arabic: 75.3% above average or fluent, compared to 8.5% of their children.

<center>(Insert Table 3 here)</center>

Language Practices Outside the Home

Three questions were used to assess language practices outside the home: "Does your family socialize with other Arabic speakers?", "Does your child(ren) learn Arabic at school?", and "Is Arabic part of your religious practices?" Previous research suggests that people who practice these three items report higher levels of language maintenance (Fishman, 1978). A majority of parents in my sample reported that they socialize with other Arabic speakers and use Arabic in their religious practices. However, only about 20% reported that their child(ren) learn Arabic at school. In response to the open-ended questions, some parents stated that their children do not learn Arabic at school because it is not offered, and also that the cost of outside classes is prohibitive. This lack of access to formal education in Arabic may have reduced the mean for the item "Does your child(ren) learn Arabic at school?". Table 4 displays frequency data for all three items.

<center>(Insert Table 4 here)</center>

An additional analysis of interest, a correlation test, was run to explore the relationship between these parental/family practices and child language proficiency. Because internal reliability among the three items was low (.302 alpha), they were not assessed together. Little variance in the first item may have caused the low internal reliability. Both

<center>30</center>

the second and third items, "Does your child(ren) learn Arabic at school?" and "Is Arabic part of your religious practices?", positively correlated with child language proficiency. The strong correlations between child literacy proficiency and religious practices may be explained by religious school classes that teach Standard Arabic (so that students may read the Koran in its original language). The correlations between language proficiency and religion, and language proficiency and school language classes are both consistent with previous research on language maintenance (Fishman, 1978). Table 5 displays full correlation findings.

(Insert Table 5 here)

Language use between parents and children

Despite high levels of parent language proficiency, parents on average reported speaking an equal mix of Arabic and English with their children (M = 2.95), but that their children use more English than Arabic when speaking with them. This type of difference is noted in previous studies as well and may be due to the language shift to English (Canagarajah, 2008; Mills, 2005). Table 6 contains complete data on all items.

(Insert Table 6 here)

Language Encouragement

The majority of parents reported that they encourage their children to use Arabic (80%), most popularly for the promotion of their children's Arabic cultural heritage (72.3%). Previous research has reported that maintaining cultural heritage is a popular motivation for encouraging children's native language use (Withers, 2004). Despite the high percentage of parents who encourage their children to use Arabic, when asked what language they

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encourage their children to speak at home, the mean score of 3.2 suggests an equal mix of English and Arabic. Table 7 shows full language encouragement figures.

(Insert Table 7 here)

Most parents also reported that they encourage their children to learn Arabic (88%), most commonly by Arabic to them (68.1%). This may be because speaking to their children is easy and free method for parents to maintain Arabic.

Language Attitudes

Answers to my second research question, "What are parents' attitudes toward Arabic?", are reported on a five-item language attitudinal scale. Frequency data, which were used to assess the scale, suggest that parents hold positive attitudes toward Arabic. The scale's negative skew is consistent with previous findings that most parents have positive attitudes toward their native language (Clyne & Kipp, 1999; Hefner, 1990; Mills, 2005; Park & Sarkar, 2007; Shin, 2005). Item-by-item results and summaries are listed in Table 8. Total Language Attitude was computed by taking the mean of participants' scores across the five items. The third item, "There are more useful languages to learn than Arabic," was reverse coded to make descriptive statistics for the scales meaningful. This item was shown to be less negatively skewed than the other four items, suggesting that parents' feelings about the value of learning Arabic may be neutral.

(Insert Table 8 here)

The five items were analyzed for inter-item reliability. Although the scale had been shown to be reliable in Baker's study of attitudes toward Welsh (1992), in this study the internal reliability was low. The five-item scale produced a Cronbach alpha of. 406. Items were tested to see if deleting one item would produce higher internal consistency. When the

third item, "There are more useful languages than Arabic," was removed, the internal

consistency increased to .533. When the second item, "Arabic is essential to take part fully

in Arab life," was removed, the internal consistency increased again to .692. The low

internal consistency may suggest that this scale is not reliable for all heritage languages and

that perhaps a cultural element present for Arabic speakers but not for Welsh speakers

renders this scale invalid.

Given the low internal consistency among all five items, only the three items that

scored an alpha of .692 were used to compute the Total Language Attitude score. The Total

Language Attitude score had a mean of 4.72, suggesting positive parental attitudes toward

Arabic. This interpretation is further confirmed by the scale's negative skew and high

kurtosis score.

<div align="center">

Levels of Racism

</div>

Answers to the third research question, "What are parents' levels of perceived

racism?", is reported through frequency data assessed via five items. Table 9 displays

descriptive data on all five items and total racism scores. Like Total Language Attitudes, the

Total Racism score is a mean of the scores on the five items. When internal reliability tests

were run on the five items, reliability results show that the scale was valid with a Cronbach's

alpha of .853—a number very close to a previous reported reliability of .87 (Utsey, 1996).

<div align="center">

(Insert Table 9 here)

</div>

According to this scale of perceived racism, Arab American parents neither agree nor

disagree that Arabs are discriminated against in America. The mean Total Racism score,

3.42, does suggest that parents perceive Arab Americans to be only slightly more

discriminated against than non-Arabs in America. However, when each item is examined

individually, one appears to be different. Item 4, "There is seldom anything positive about Arab people on radio, TV, newspapers, or in history books," had a mean score of 3.9 with 76% of participants agreeing. This may suggest that parents perceive racism toward Arabs in the popular media.(These higher levels of reported racism may explain why most of the literature on racism discusses media racism.)

Racism and Language Practices

Answers to my fourth research question, "Are Arab Americans parents' levels of perceived racism significantly associated with language practices?", are reported through an ANOVA test. Parent responses to "What language do you encourage your child to speak?" were used as a categorical variable and perceived racism was used as the dependent variable. Language encouragement was selected because it showed direct parental influence on their children's language use. Complete frequencies are listed in Table 10.

(Insert Table 10 here)

Leven's test for homogeneity was conducted to test the homogeneity of variance. Results indicate that the variances were homogeneous ($p = .361$). Results of a one-way ANOVA test indicate that the differences among the five language-encouragement groups do not differ significantly: $F(4, 87) = 1.045$, $p = .389$. Only 4% of the variance in language encouragement was explained by racism ($\eta^2 = .045$).

Additionally, a linear regression test was conducted to see if racism and language practice means differed by generation status, age, and education. Regression results were non-significant, which may be because the group sizes may have been too small to produce statistically significant results. Although the means do not differ significantly, some of their characteristics can be described. The lowest mean was for the "Entirely in English" group.

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Perhaps with a larger sample, parents who encourage their children to speak Entirely in English may report the lowest levels of perceived racism. Also, measures of language practices other than language encouragement may be shown to differ by levels of racism. Further research is needed to explore other language practices; for the present, this sample suggests that parent language encouragement may not differ significantly according to levels of perceived racism.

Racism and Language Attitudes

The fifth research question, "Are Arab American parents' levels of perceived racism significantly associated with their language attitudes?", was analyzed through a correlation test between Total Language Attitude and Total Racism. The data was initially analyzed through a scatterplot which did not appear to be any clear shape, suggesting that there may not be a strong correlation between the two items. Case 23 was noted as a possibly extreme case. With an alpha level of .05, the correlation between language attitudes and racism was found to be statistically nonsignificant: $r(91) = .160$, $p < .129$. Re-running the correlation test with Case 23 removed did not increase the correlation. This data suggests that parents' levels of perceived racism and their own attitudes toward Arabic are not significantly related. One possible explanation is a lack of internal consistency, which has already been noted for the Language Attitude scale. When each item from the Language Attitude index was individually tested for correlations, only one item, Item 5, "I would like my child(ren) to be Arabic-speaking", approached significance: $r(92) = .184$, $p < .08$. Perhaps a bigger sample size may indicate that parents who want their children to speak Arabic perceive more anti-Arab racism. However, these results clearly indicate that parental attitudes toward Arabic are not significantly related to their levels of perceived racism.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This thesis aimed to clarify the language attitudes and language practices of Arabic-speaking families living in the United States. The study also explored the possible relationship between racism and parent attitudes and language practices. Although the majority of parents in the sample reported positive attitudes toward Arabic and that they encourage their children to use and study Arabic, a small number speak Arabic at home. Accordingly, parents reported higher levels of proficiency in Arabic for themselves than for their children. The racism scale revealed that the majority of parents feel Arab Americans are not treated significantly differently from non-Arab or White populations in America, and that their attitudes toward Arabic and language encouragement are significantly associated with their levels of perceived racism.

These findings provide new knowledge about Arab American families and heritage language maintenance—an under-researched area of study. An expanded discussion of language attitudes, language practices, racism, and the relationship between these variables appears below, along with parents' open-ended comments.

Outcomes

Previous research suggests that language practices and motivations vary within a language group (Schechter, 2002); this study showed that Arab American parents encourage and engage in different language practices. Parents reported a number of motivations for

encouraging their children to use Arabic as well as a number of interests in maintaining their children's Arabic. One parent wrote: "My wife works hard with my kids to teach them Arabic (read and write) and I wish all parents did the same." Another parent commented: "We never pushed our children to speak Arabic because we felt that it was better to speak one language (English) very well, rather than two languages (English and Arabic) below average." Given the difference in these two comments, it is important not to assume uniformity in Arab American language practices and attitudes.

Despite such variations in the sample, certain responses were more common. The following summary of the language practices and attitudes outcomes considers language attitudes and practices that promote Arabic maintenance, second, language proficiency and language-maintenance indicators. Finally, factors that may influence differences in language proficiency between parents and their children are discussed.

Positive Language Attitudes and Practices

The majority of parents reported positive attitudes toward Arabic. More than 90% agreed with the three items: 1) "Arabic is a language worth learning," 2) "We need to preserve the Arabic language," and 3) "I would like my children to be Arabic speaking." Because the five-item attitudinal scale was shown to be unreliable, only these three items were analyzed. Majority agreement on them suggests that parents not only hold positive attitudes toward Arabic but also toward its maintenance, consistently with previous studies (Clyne & Kipp, 1999; Mills, 2005; Park, 2007; Smith-Hefner, 1990). Outcomes were also consistent with studies focused on Arabic-speaking families (Aswad, 1974; Clyne & Kipp, 1999; Kenny, 1992; Rouchdy, 2002). Like the Australian parents in Clyne and Kipp's (1999) study, parents in my study indicated that they not only value the language but that they also

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want their children to be Arabic-speaking. Rouchdy's (2002) study of Arabic-speaking communities in America also indicated a growing interest in preserving Arabic and respondents' positive feelings toward maintaining Arabic.

Maintaining cultural heritage was the most-reported reason for preserving Arabic (72.3%). As one parent commented, "Learning Arabic is about preserving heritage, fostering a sense of identity and pride of whom [my children] are." This attitude is consistent with previous literature on immigrant's motivations for language retention (Fishman, 1978; Mills, 2005). Although not all traditions are easily transferable to a new country, language is. It is also a powerful means of preserving community for immigrants living in diaspora (Mills, 2005). The degree of interest in cultural maintenance within this sample may be influenced by the large number of Palestinian participants, many of whom are likely political refugees. Mills' (2005) research suggests that refugees living in diaspora may encourage others to maintain their cultural identity and language. Religion (48.9%) and the ability to communicate with extended family (63.8%) were also significant motivating factors, again similarly to the results of prior studies (Clyne & Kipp, 1999; Kenny, 1992).

Given parents' positive feelings toward Arabic and its maintenance, it was not surprising that the majority of parents reported encouraging their children to both use and study Arabic. The numbers were decisive: 85.1% of respondents claimed that they encourage their children to use Arabic and 94.6% claimed that they encourage their children to study Arabic. It is difficult to compare these findings to previous studies on other immigrant groups because of the range of parent encouragement. However, these results are consistent with the few studies that have examined Arab American parents. For example, an increased interest in Arabic maintenance has been noted (Rouchdy, 2002), and Kenny (1992)

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found that 75% of Arab American students claimed their parents encourage them to study Arabic.

The majority of parents in this study reported engaging in at least some type of language practice that promotes language retention. More than 50% reported that they teach their children Arabic at home, talk to them in Arabic, and socialize with other native speakers as ways of promoting their children's language development in Arabic. These findings echo Clyne and Kipp's (1999) study, which found that Arab Australian parents participated in various practices to promote Arabic, including watching Arabic TV programs and sending their children to Arabic language classes. However, children in that study had the option of studying Arabic in Australia's public schools, which is not necessarily available to the children of my sample. Not all of my study participants had access to the kinds of resources as the parents in Clyne and Kipp's study; however, they do attempt to teach their children Arabic themselves. Parental involvement in their children's Arabic language development suggests a strong interest in the language. Regardless of the pressure to learn and speak English in America, my outcomes indicate that parents are actively working to preserve their heritage language.

Language Proficiency and Language Maintenance Indicators

Despite the large number of parents who reported positive attitudes toward Arabic, the majority did not report that their children are proficient in Arabic (24.7% of children are fluent in spoken Arabic, 8.5% are literate). Parents reported much greater proficiency for themselves (83% fluent in spoken Arabic, 75.3% literate). These high levels of parent proficiency may be due to the high number of first-generation respondents in the sample. Their children's lower levels of proficiency in Arabic are consistent with previous research

suggesting a language shift toward English in subsequent generations (Fishman, 1978). Two parents commented on their children's limited knowledge of Arabic: "I am ashamed to disclose that my kids do not speak Arabic"; and, "I did not teach my children Arabic when they were young. This was a mistake." Interestingly, the parents in my sample may also be shifting to a proportionally greater use of English. For example, despite their high levels of proficiency in Arabic, 85% of parents chose to take the survey in English. Differences between parent and child language proficiency also suggest a shift toward using more English than Arabic.

Limitations on Language Maintenance

Further research is needed to fully explain the discrepancy between parent and child language proficiency; however, previous research indicates that certain factors affect language retention. These include socializing with native speakers, using native language in religious practices, and learning the language in school (Fishman, 1978; Phinney, 2001). Though causality can not be established in this study, the degree of these associations may be related to language loss.

The correlation between language proficiency and language practices outside the home confirmed prior findings by Fishman (1978) and Phinney (2001) about language maintenance. Parents whose children learn Arabic at school reported higher levels of language proficiency for their children, especially with regard to literacy: child oral proficiency was significant at the .05 level and child literacy proficiency was significant at the .01 level. Although these factors produce high levels of proficiency, a small percentage of parents reported that Arabic is taught at their children's school (21.7 percent). This factor may account for the small number of children reported to be proficient in Arabic.

Degree of access may account for the small number of children learning Arabic in school. The majority of parents (77.3%) in the sample are first-generation Arab Americans; as such, it is reasonable to suppose that they had greater access to formal education in Arabic than their children do. However, classes in Arabic are probably only offered by schools that have high concentrations of Arabic ELL students. One parent commented: "I feel that public schools should offer the opportunity for their students, regardless of their descent (Arab or non-Arab) to learn the Arabic language."

The low percentage of children learning Arabic at school may explain the low levels of child language proficiency found in this study. However, whether the other outside-home language practices affects language maintenance remains unclear. Fishman (1978) and Phinney (2001) found that socializing with native speakers positively affects language maintenance. In this study, although 97.9% of respondents claimed that their family socializes with other native speakers, this factor was not significantly associated with child proficiency in Arabic. Furthermore, although 68.1% of the sample claimed that Arabic is part of their family's religious practices and using Arabic in religious practices was significantly associated with child language proficiency (significant at the .05 level for oral proficiency and at the .01 level for literacy proficiency), a surprisingly small percentage of parents reported that their child is fluent in Arabic. The inconsistency of these results with Fishman and Phinny's findings suggests that other factors may be associated with language loss within this sample.

Anther possible explanation for discrepancies between parent and child proficiency may be the pressure to assimilate and use English in America. According to Schrauf (1999),

daily use of a language is a significant predictor of language maintenance. Parents may be interested in heritage language maintenance, but may also feel that they need to assimilate and speak English in order to succeed in America (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). One respondent stated that most parents would choose to invest in English materials because English is perceived as more valuable: "It is sufficient for them that their children speak Arabic at home, but priority resources beyond that are aimed to ensure that the children become American first. For example: If $50 were to be invested in books, software, or movies, would priority be given to resources in English or in Arabic? English is overwhelmingly the answer. Assimilation of the next generation is a must as it is seen as a natural door opener for progress in America." Though this parent's comment and previous research indicate that this is a possible cause for language attrition, causality can not be established for this study.

Strong parental interest in developing English may contribute to later generations of immigrants knowing less and less of their heritage language (Fishman 1978). As one parent in my sample stated, "It just seemed easier to speak English." These comments expressing the difficulty of maintaining Arabic in an English-dominated society are consistent with previous studies that note a shift toward English (Fishman, 1978; Phinney, 2001). Although these parent comments as well as previous literature indicate that English dominance may be associated with heritage language loss, further research would be needed to confirm this effect in my study sample.

Racism

Parents stated neutral levels of perceived racism toward Arab Americans. Previous studies (Cainkar, 2004; Perry, 2003; Wingfield, 2006) have discussed specific forms of racism such as government surveillance and police racial profiling; however, this sample of

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Arab Americans did not report high levels of perceived racism toward Arabs in America. It is hard to know why the sample reported neutral levels of racism; however, one parent commented by e-mail: "I consider myself white and generally don't have problems with authorities. It is only after discovering my name and asking questions about my ethnicity that there may be problems although those are rare occasions." This comment echoes previous research that suggests Arab Americans may be considered an "invisible minority" in America because some Arab Americans look ethnically white and are sometimes classified as ethnically white (Samhan, 1999). Though parents did not report strong impressions of anti-Arab racism, they also did not report a lack of impressions; instead, the majority neither agreed nor disagreed that Arab Americans are discriminated against in America. This neutrality suggests that while discrimination against Arabs may not be perceived as a large problem, parents still feel that some level of discrimination is present in America.

While four of the five items on the racism scale showed means that indicate neutral levels of perceived racism, most parents clearly perceive the media as racist. Seventy-six percent of participants agreed that American media seldom portray anything positive about Arab people, a result consistent with previous studies criticizing media stereotypes of Arabs (Barlow, 1994; Shaheen, 1994; Wingfield, 1995). Although parents may not feel that other institutions (such as the police and the legal system) discriminate against Arabs, a large number of parents in this sample feel that American media portray Arabs negatively. Such media images may contribute to epistemological racism or negative public perceptions of Arabs but may not translate directly into racist practices such as police abuse. Lack of personal experience with anti-Arab violence or overt discrimination may explain why parents in this sample did not report high levels of racism by police or other Americans. However,

further research is needed to explain why parents reported a higher mean for media racism than the other four items.

This study found positive outcomes but no significant association between perceived levels of racism and language attitudes or language encouragement. It is encouraging to note that racism was not shown to be associated with parents' language encouragement or attitudes toward Arabic. Unlike Livengood's (2004) study, which suggests that racism influences Arab American families' leisure activities, the results of this study do not indicate that racism is associated with family language behaviors.

Limitations

Data collection procedures formed one limitation in this study. Results, which are based on the responses of a convenience sample, do not necessarily reflect the true population of Arab American parents in the United States. Some specific demographic information shows that certain demographics were over-sampled, for example women and first-generation Arab Americans. Furthermore, the sample was restricted to participants who had e-mail addresses and Internet access. This limitation could be overcome through different recruitment techniques and a larger sample size.

Another limitation appeared in the language attitudinal scale, which was not shown to be reliable for all five items. This problem may be the result of a cultural factor for Arab American parents that remains unknown to this researcher. It may also have appeared because only five items were selected from Baker's (1992) scale; if the whole scale had been used, perhaps reliability would have increased. It was necessary to select a limited number of items, however, to keep the survey short and reduce the number of drop-outs.

Another factor was the translation. The survey was translated by a native Arabic speaker and then edited by a professor of Arabic from a local university. Despite the care that was taken to ensure an accurate translation, it is difficult to be certain that the phrasing and word choices would be interpreted the same way in both English and Arabic.

Finally, parents may have had difficulty evaluating their language practices, such as how often they speak Arabic or how proficient they and their children are. Perhaps with a mixed- method study, in which more qualitative data could be collected, parent responses could be explored more fully.

Further Research

Given the limited amount of extant literature on Arab Americans, further research is needed to confirm my results. This study only begins to develop our understanding of this population. Potential areas of research are discussed below.

One possibility would be to replicate this study with a sample more representative of the varied national backgrounds of Arab Americans. For example, the large number of Palestinians in my sample may have affected study results. Women and first-generation Arab Americans were similarly overrepresented. Replicating this study with sample both random and larger may produce a sample more representative of the actual Arab American population.

Arabic is disglossic in that two forms are used in almost every Arab country: Modern Standard Arabic, which is the written Arabic of the Koran; and colloquial spoken Arabic, which varies according to country (Thompson-Panos & Thomas-Ruzi, 1983). The written form, Modern Standard Arabic, is what children typically learn at school. For the purposes of this study, however, parents were not asked to distinguish between Modern Standard Arabic

and colloquial Arabic. A follow-up questionnaire asking parents what form of Arabic they prefer or encourage for their children could be interesting and revealing.

Arab Americans' perceptions of anti-Arab racism also deserve additional investigation. For example, do parents feel that Arabs are generally treated well in American society, or do they perhaps perceive that persistent discrimination is only present in certain segments of American society? In my literature review, media racism was found to be the most common type of anti-Arab racism in America, but why the media is perceived as more racist than other American institutions remains unclear. How Arabs are presented in American textbooks and other classroom literature should also be examined more closely. Barlow's (1994) study found that American textbooks further negative stereotypes of Arabs, but whether remains true is not known.

Further research on parents' and children's school experiences would also be valuable. Although parents in this study seem interested in having their children learn Arabic, only a small number of their children are actually learning Arabic at school. Comparing the experiences of families who send their children to schools that offer Arabic with the experiences of families who do not, to assess how learning or not learning Arabic in school affects family language attitudes, could be very informative.

Finally, further investigation is needed to deepen our understanding of Arab American language practices. A larger sample, perhaps with more open-ended questions, may confirm the findings of this study; it would certainly provide more detailed knowledge of Arab American parental language practices. Time constraints and limited resources forced me to use a convenience sample and to keep this survey short. However, a larger study could

investigate the topic in more depth with a sample that more closely resembles census data about Arab Americans.

Conclusion

This study found that the majority of Arab American parents in its sample hold positive views about Arabic, their heritage language, and their children's maintenance of Arabic. A significant majority of parents make efforts to use Arabic and teach it to their children. Despite these efforts, however, parents reported low numbers of children proficient in Arabic. Parents do not perceive high levels of racism toward Arabs, nor is perceived discrimination correlated with parental language encouragement or attitudes toward Arabic.

Several conclusions can be inferred from this study. First, many Arab American parents are interested in promoting their heritage language. Second, the English shift does occur with Arab American children. Third, discrimination against Arabs should be taken seriously. These implications are considered below, along with what educators might learn from this study.

Arab American parents feel that Arabic is important part of their cultural heritage and would like their children to use and develop their knowledge of Arabic. These desires indicate a subject for educators to develop, in the form of foreign language classes (Arabic among them) or heritage language classes specifically for children who have knowledge of Arabic. Even if the latter classes are not an option, however, educators can suggest resources that support Arabic use or even provide literacy materials in Arabic to their students. Any of those options would fit into the acceptable range of ways that educators can be family-focused and support family goals.

The difference in language proficiency between parents and their children found in this study is an example of the English shift in America. Educators must realize that this shift means a loss of cultural capital not only for families, but for the country as well. Knowledge of a language other than English is a valuable skill. Bilingual children have the advantage of being able to socialize and work with two different language groups; as adults, they can take advantage of additional employment opportunities. Therefore, educators should encourage bilingualism, even if their schools do not offer language classes in Arabic, by affirming and encouraging Arabic use in their classrooms.

Finally, although parents did not report high levels of racism toward Arab Americans, they also did not report low levels. Further research is needed to clarify these findings; however, educators should immediately begin to consider that Arab American parents may not feel that Arabs are treated equally in American society. Cited incidents of hate crimes and discrimination confirm that some Arabs have experienced racism in America (Perry, 2003). Educators need to be careful about how they interact with Arab American families and make sure that Arab students are treated respectfully in their classrooms.

Despite Arab American parents' positive attitudes toward Arabic and their engagement in language practices that promote Arabic maintenance, parents in this sample reported higher levels of Arabic proficiency than their children. This result suggests that Arabic is decreasing in successive generations. Racism does not appear to be the cause of this problem, however: Arab American parents did not report feeling that their treatment differs significantly from that of non-Arab or White populations. Furthermore, societal racism was not found to be related to parental language attitudes or language encouragement.

This study adds to the limited body of current research on Arab families, especially Arab American families. Few studies have examined Arab American families' language practices, and even fewer have investigated Arab American parents living in America. The results of this study will hopefully help educators better understand this population of students and work to create a positive classroom environment in which Arabic and Arab culture are appreciated and promoted.

Would you like to complete the survey in English or Arabic?
- English
- عربي

1) Please verify that you are: 1) an Arab American and 2) have at least one child between the ages of 5 and 18
by clicking yes. If this does not describe you, please select no.

- Yes
- No

Thank you for participating in this survey. Please choose the best answer:

2) How well do you speak Arabic?
- Fluently
- Above Average
- Average
- Below Average
- I do not speak Arabic

3) How well do you read and write in Arabic?
- Fluently
- Above Average
- Average
- Below Average
- I do not read and write in Arabic

4) How well does your child(ren) speak Arabic?
- Fluently
- Above Average
- Average
- Below Average
- They do not speak Arabic

5) How well does your child(ren) read and write in Arabic?
- Fluently
- Above Average
- Average
- Below Average
- They do not read and write in Arabic

6) When you talk to your child(ren) what language do you speak?

- Entirely in Arabic
- Mostly in Arabic
- Equal mix of Arabic and English
- Mostly in English
- Entirely in English

7) When your child(ren) talk to you, what language do they usually speak?
- Entirely in Arabic
- Mostly in Arabic
- Equal mix of Arabic and English
- Mostly in English
- Entirely in English

8) Does your family socialize with other Arabic speakers?
- Yes
- No

9) Does your child(ren) learn Arabic at school?
- Yes
- No

10) Is Arabic part of your family's religious practices?
- Yes
- No

11) What language do you encourage your child(ren) to speak at home?
- Entirely in Arabic
- Mostly in Arabic
- Equal mix of Arabic and English
- Mostly in English
- Entirely in English

12) Do you encourage your child(ren) to use Arabic?
- Yes
- No

13) What motivates you to encourage your child(ren)'s use of Arabic?
- Communication with extended family
- Religious purposes
- Maintain cultural heritage
- Getting a good job
- Communicate with other Arabic-speakers
- No Applicable
- Other

14) Do you encourage your children to learn Arabic?
- Yes
- No

15) What do you do to make sure that your child(ren) learn Arabic?
- Teach them Arabic at home
- Send my children to Arabic classes
- Send my child(ren) to a school that offers Arabic
- Talk to them in Arabic
- Socialize with other native speakers
- Attend religious events in Arabic
- Not applicable
- Other

Now, please agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16) Arabic is a language worth learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17) Arabic is essential to take part fully in Arab life.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18) There are more useful languages to learn than Arabic.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19) We need to preserve the Arabic language.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20) I would like my child(ren) to be Arabic-speaking.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21) Arabs are often treated harshly or unfairly by Whites/non-Arabs because of their race.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22) There exists a double standard in the way the law or other systems of government (court, disciplinary committees, etc.) work when dealing with Arabs as opposed to Whites/ non-Arabs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
23) The police treat White/non-Arabs with more respect and dignity than they do Arabs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
24) There are seldom anything positive about Arab people on radio, TV, newspapers, or in history books.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
25) White public officials or other influential White people often make racist remarks or comments about Arabs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Now, please answer a few questions about yourself.

26) How many children do you have?

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

27) Please list the ages of your child(ren)?

0	Child #1
0	Child #2
0	Child #3
0	Child #4
0	Child #5

28) Are you married to an Arabic speaker?
- Yes
- No

29) Do you have a domestic partner that speaks Arabic?
- Yes
- No

30) What is your gender?
- Male
- Female

31) What generation Arab American are you?

- 1st Generation (I was born outside of the United States)
- 2nd Generation (my parents were born outside of the United States)
- 3rd Generation (my grandparents were born outside of the United States)

32) Please indicate the last level of education you completed
- I did not finish high school
- I graduated from high school
- I graduated from a two-year or community college
- I graduated from a four-year college
- I finished a master's degree
- I finished a doctorate level degree

33) What state do you live in? **(Please note: in the online version there was be a drop list of the states)**

34) What is your ancestry? **(Please note: in the online version there was be a drop list of the countries of origin)**

35) What is your age in years? **(Please note: in the online version there was be a drop list of the ages)**

36) If you have any additional comments about your feelings towards your family language practices please share your comments below.

Appendix B: Arabic Version of Survey

1) الرجاء اذا لم يتوفر فيك الشرطان التاليان، فاختر لا:
انت عربي اميركي ولديك طفل واحد على الاقل يتراوح عمره بين الخمس الى العشر سنوات.
لا
نعم

شكرا على مشاركتك فى هذا الاستبيانمن. الرجاء اختيار أفضل إجابة

2) كيف تقيم تحدثك باللغة العربية؟
بطلاقة
فوق المتوسط
متوسط
أدنى من المتوسط
لا أتكلم اللغة العربية

3) ما مدى اجادتك للغة العربية قراءة وكتابة؟
بطلاقة
فوق المتوسط
متوسط
أدنى من المتوسط
لا اقرأ ولا اكتب باللغة العربية.

4) كيف تقيم أبنائك باللغة العربية؟
بطلاقة
فوق المتوسط
متوسط
أدنى من المتوسط
لا يتكلمون اللغة العربية

5) ما مدى اجادة ابنائك للغة العربية قراءة وكتابة؟
بطلاقة
فوق المتوسط
متوسط
أدنى من المتوسط
لا يقرؤن ولا يكتبون باللغة العربية.

6) بأي لغة تتكلم مع أبنائك؟
العربية الخالصة
العربية معظم الوقت
مزيج متساو من العربية والانجليزية
الانجليزية معظم الوقت
الانجليزية الخالصة

7) بأي لغة يتكلم أبناؤك معك؟

العربية الخالصة

العربية معظم الوقت

مزيج متساو من العربية و الانجليزية

الانجليزية معظم الوقت

الانجليزية الخالصة

8) هل تتواصل عائلتك اجتماعيا مع متحدثين باللغة العربية؟

نعم

لا

9) هل يتعلم ابناؤك اللغة العربية في المدرسة؟

نعم

لا

10) هل تشكل اللغة العربية جزءا من الممارسات الدينية لعائلتك

نعم

لا

11) تشجع أولادك على استخدام أي لغة في المنزل؟

العربية الخالصة

العربية معظم الوقت

مزيج متساو من العربية و الانجليزية

الانجليزية معظم الوقت

الانجليزية الخالصة

12) هل تشجع ابناءك على التحدث باللغة العربية ؟

نعم

لا

13) ما هي الدوافع خلف تشجيعك أبنائك على استخدام اللغة العربية؟

التواصل مع العائلة الممتدة

أسباب دينية

الحفاظ على الموروث الثقافي

الحصول على عمل جيد

التواصل مع المتحدثين بالعربية

غير ذلك

14) هل تشجع ابناءك على تعلم اللغة العربية؟

نعم

لا

15) ماذا تفعل لتتأكد أن ابنائك يتعلمون اللغة العربية؟

أعلمهم العربية في المنزل

أرسلهم إلى صفوف لتعليم اللغة العربية

أرسلهم إلى مدرسة تعلم اللغة العربية

أتكلم معهم باللغة العربية

الاختلاط مع أشخاص لغتهم الام العربية

حضور مناسبات دينية تقام باللغة العربية

لا ينطبق

غير دلك

الان، الرجاء وافق أو لا توافق على المقولات التالية:

	غير موافق بشدة	نختلف لا أوافق أو غير موافق	يوافق	موافق بشدة
16) للغة العربية لغة جديرة بالتعلم.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17) اللغة العربية ضرورية للمشاركة الكاملة في الحياة في العالم العربي.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18) هناك لغات اكثر فائدة من اللغة العربية ليتعلمها المرء	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19) علينا أن نحافظ على اللغة العربية.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20) أحب أن يكون أبنائي متحدثين باللغة العربية.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21) قلما تسمع أو تقرأ شيئا ايجابيا عن العرب في الراديو، التلفاز، الصحف، أو كتب التاريخ.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22) لقد لاحظت معايير مزدوجة في الطريقة التي يتعامل (او لايتعامل) بها القانون او مؤسسات الدولة (محاكم، الاعلام، الخ) مع العرب بالمقارنة مع البيض/غير العرب.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
23) قد لاحظت أن الشرطة تتعامل مع البيض/غير العرب باحترام اكبر مما هو عليه الحال مع العرب.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
24) شهدت مواقف لم ينصف فيها العرب أو عوملوا بقسوة من قبل البيض/غير العرب بسبب عرقهم	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
25) سمعت تعليقات عنصرية عن العرب تفوه بها مسؤولون في البيت الابيض	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

الرجاء الإجابة على الأسئلة التالية حول نفسك

26) كم ولدا لديك؟

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

27) **كم** ولدا لديك؟

من فضلك، ضع أعمارهم بالتسلسل
28) هل أنت متزوج من يتحدث اللغة العربية؟
نعم
لا

29) هل لديك شريك منزلي يتحدث العربية؟
نعم
لا

30) ما هو نوع الجنس الخاص بك؟
ذكر
أنثى

31) أي جيل من العرب الأميركيين أنت؟
(الجيل الأول (ولدت خارج الولايات المتحدة)
(الجيل الثاني (ولد والداي خارج في الولايات المتحدة)
(الجيل الثالث (ولد جداي خارج في الولايات المتحدة)

32) ما هو مستواك التعليمي؟
لم أنه المدرسة الثانوية
تخرجت من المدرسة الثانوية
تخرجت من جامعة مدة الدراسة فيها سنتين.
تخرجت من جامعة مدة الدراسة فيها اربع سنوات.
حصلت على شهادة ماجستير
حصلت على شهادة دكتوراة

33) في أي ولاية تعيش؟

34) ما هو البلد الأصلي الخاص بك؟

35) كم عمرك؟

(36
اذا كان لديك المزيد من الملاحظات حول مشاعرك عن ممارسات عائلتك اللغوية، الرجاء مشاركتنا بها في الحيز
التالي

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Table 1

State Residency of Sample

	Frequency	Percent
State		
California	7	7.9
Georgia	12	13.5
Hawaii	2	2.2
Illinois	5	5.3
Kentucky	1	1.1
Maryland	1	1.1
Massachusetts	1	1.1
Michigan	8	9.0
New Jersey	5	5.3
New York	3	3.2
North Carolina	31	33.0
Ohio	2	2.1
Oregon	1	1.1
Tennessee	1	1.1
Texas	2	2.1
Washington	6	6.4
West Virginia	1	1.1

N=89

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

		Frequency	Percent
Gender			
	Female	57	62.6
	Male	34	37.4
Generation			
	1st	68	77.3
	2nd	17	19.3
	3rd	3	3.4
Ancestry			
	Palestinian	44	50
	Lebanese	13	14.8
	Egyptian	9	10.2
	Jordanian	7	8
	Syrian	6	6.8
	Iraqi	4	4.5
	Algerian	1	1.1
	Saudi Arabian	1	1.1
	Libyan	1	1.1
	Other	2	2.3
Education			
	Did Not Finish High School	3	3.3
	Finished High School	10	11.1
	Graduated from a 2-Year College	14	15.6
	Graduated From a 4-Year College	38	42.2
	Obtained Masters Degree	19	21.1
	Obtained Doctorate	6	6.7
Married to or Partnered	Yes	76	80.9
with an Arabic Speaker	No	18	19.1
Age in years			
	Median	29.0	
	Mean	29.7	
	Range	39	
Number of Children			
	Median	3.0	

	Mean	3.0
	Range	8
Age of Children		
	Median	13.0
	Mean	13.4
	Range	47

The N range for each item was 87–91.

Table 3
Proficiency in Arabic

	% Fluent	Mean	SD
Parent			
Spoken language	83.0	4.52	0.95
Literacy	75.3	4.12	1.42
Child			
Spoken language	24.7	2.74	1.13
Literacy	8.5	2.11	1.02

N=94

Percentage of respondents who are fluent or above average on the listed assertions.
Language Proficiency variable was assessed on a 1-to-5 fluency scale.

Table 4:

Language Practices Outside the Home

Item	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1. "Does your family socialize with other Arabic speakers?"	Yes	92	97.9
	No	2	2.1
2. "Does your child(ren) learn Arabic at school?"	Yes	20	21.7
	No	72	78.3
3. "Is Arabic part of your family's religious practices?"	Yes	64	68.1
	No	30	31.9

The N range for each item was 92–94.

Table 5

Language Practices and Proficiency Correlations

	Child Spoken Proficiency		Child Literacy Proficiency	
	Correlation	Sig.	Correlation	Sig.
"Does your family socialize with other Arabic speakers?"	0.16	0.11	0.16	0.11
"Does your child(ren) learn Arabic at school?"	0.22*	0.03	0.28**	0.00
"Is Arabic part of your family's religious practices?"	0.21*	0.04	0.37**	0.00

N=92–94

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2 tailed).
**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2 tailed).

Table 6

Language Use Between Parents & Children

	% Reporting Using Arabic	Mean	SD
"When you talk to your child(ren) what language do you speak?"	36.2	2.95	1.16
"When your child(ren) talk to you what language to they usually speak?"	14.9	2.18	1.16
"What language do you encourage your child(ren) to speak at home?"	43.6	3.2	1.13

N=94

Percentage of respondents who spoke entirely in Arabic or mostly in Arabic with the listed assertions.

Language Spoken Between Parent and Child variable was assessed on a 1-to-5 scale.

Table 7
Language Encouragement

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
"Do you encourage your child(ren) to use Arabic?"			
	Yes	80	85.1
	No	14	14.9
"What motivates you to encourage your child(ren)'s use of Arabic?"			
Communicate with extended family		60	63.8
Religious Purposes		46	48.9
Maintain cultural heritage		68	72.3
Getting a good job		15	16
Communicate with other Arabic speakers		47	50
"What language do you encourage your child(ren) to speak at home?"	Entirely in English	8	8.5
	Mostly in English	17	18.1
	Equal Mix	28	29.8
	Mostly in Arabic	30	31.9
	Entirely in Arabic	11	11.7
"Do you encourage your child(ren) to learn Arabic?"			
	Yes	88	94.6
	No	5	5.4
"What do you do to make sure your child(ren) learns Arabic?"			
Teach them Arabic at home		54	57.4
Send my children to Arabic classes		40	42.6
Send them to a school that offers Arabic		20	21.3
Talk to them in Arabic		64	68.1
Socialize with other native speakers		59	62.8
Attend religious events in Arabic		25	26.6

The n range for each item was 80–94.

*Only respondents who answered "yes" to "Do you encourage your child(ren) to learn Arabic?" were asked to list their language motivations.
*Only respondents who answered "yes" to "Do you encourage your child(ren) to use Arabic?" were asked to list how they maintain Arabic.
For both items, respondents were asked to check all that apply.

Table 8
Language Attitudes

	% Agree	Mean	SD	Skew	Kurtosis
1. "Arabic is a language worth learning."	97.9	4.86	0.37	-2.70	7.08
2. "Arabic is essential to take part fully in Arab life."	76.6	4.14	1.13	-1.14	0.15
3. "There are more useful languages to learn than Arabic."	40.4	3.09	1.33	-0.15	-1.06
4. "We need to preserve the Arabic Language."	93.6	4.68	0.62	-2.06	4.07
5. "I would like my child(ren) to be Arabic speaking."	93.6	4.65	0.69	-2.28	5.27
Total Language Attitude		4.72	0.46	-2.27	7.10

N=93

Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree with the listed assertions.
Language Attitude variables were assessed on a 1-to-5 scale.
Item 3, "There are more useful languages to learn than Arabic," was reversed coded to make the data more meaningful.

Table 9
Perceived Racism

	% Agree	Mean	SD	Skew	Kurtosis
1. "Arabs are often treated harshly or unfairly by Whites/non-Arabs because of their race."	47.9	3.25	1.14	-0.37	-0.65
2. "There exists a double standard in the way the law or other systems of government work when dealing with Arabs as opposed to Whites/non-Arabs."	42.4	3.3	1	-0.31	-0.05
3. "The police treat Whites/non-Arabs with more respect and dignity than they do Arabs."	31.5	3.17	1.05	0.10	-0.31
4. "There is seldom anything positive about Arab people on radio, TV, newspapers, or in history books."	76	3.9	1.02	-1.04	0.72
5. "White public officials or other influential White people often make racist remarks or comments about Arabs."	57.6	3.51	1.08	-0.66	-0.01
Total Racism		3.42	0.84	-0.65	0.25

N=92

Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree with the listed assertions.
Language Attitude variables were assessed on a 1-to-5 scale.

Table10

Mean Racism Scores by Language Encouragement Groups

	N	Mean	SD
Entirely in English	8	2.9	1
Mostly in English	17	3.48	0.55
Equal Mix Of English and Arabic	28	3.57	0.95
Mostly in Arabic	28	3.38	0.81
Entirely in Arabic	11	3.45	0.83

N=92