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Saad Alamri

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EXPLORING THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES ON FAMILY LANGUAGE POLICY

by

Saad Alamri

A Dissertation
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major: English

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In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful
ABSTRACT

Earlier Family Language Policy (FLP) research has focused on ethnic identities, mobility, and transnationality, as well as, to a lesser extent, gender and familial kinship; few studies have focused primarily on religion as a factor in FLP processes. Religion is particularly important in the FLP of Muslim families who speak Arabic as a first or additional language, as many of the daily Islamic practices necessitate the use of Arabic. Therefore, this dissertation sets out to investigate the impact of religious beliefs and practices on the FLP of non-Arab Muslim families. I particularly focused on Pakistani expatriate/immigrant families raising their children bi-/multilingually in Saudi Arabia to see how they navigate and construct their family language strategies while following and practicing a ‘linguistically foreign,’ i.e., not native to Pakistan, religion. I explain in this study how this context was/is quite interesting because it involves families whose heritage language is Urdu while simultaneously adhering to a religion with a restricted language policy that necessitates the use of Arabic almost daily.

Six families (including one single parent family) of Pakistani origin living in Saudi Arabia who had at least one child participated in the study. The study employed ethnographic qualitative multiple case studies as I treated each family as a case study. The data sources included approximately 20 hours of naturally occurring data, multiple home observations, and in-depth interviews with the families. Given the large number of participants and the volume of data obtained, I decided to first analyze the data and present them in an independent manner using a within-case analysis. I then conducted a cross-cases analysis of all FLPs combined which answered the research questions and provided a picture of how Pakistani families in Saudi Arabia form and manage their FLPs, as well as the effect of religion on these policies.
The cross-cases analysis revealed how religion in general, and religious beliefs and practices in particular, may significantly influence language beliefs, practices, and management in the family domain. The study found that many of the participating families prioritized Arabic over their heritage language owing to the holiness of the Arabic language because of its relationship with the Islamic faith. That is, the Pakistani Muslim parents in this study, driven by their religion, their desire of raising their children to be practice Muslims, the fear of the religious consequences in the afterlife, and the One ‘Ummah’ identity felt obligated to teach or pass on Arabic to their children. In other words, the language restriction in the Islamic Language Policy, as manifested through its practices that necessitate the use of Arabic, impacted the language use and choice in the Urdu-speaking families in this study.
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DEDICATION

To my parents (Aida & Abdulaziz), my wife, (Alaa), and my son (Majid).
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The field of family language policy (FLP) has grown exponentially in the past decades, with book-length volumes and special journal issues contributing to the contexts, populations, and languages studied. The goal of FLP is to understand the connections between young children’s language development (usually in bi- and multilingual contexts) and the language policy processes in the family or household to which they belong. While FLP research has centered on ethnic identities, mobility, and transnationality as well as, to a lesser extent, gender and kinship in the family, few studies have focused primarily on religion as a factor in FLP processes. Religion is particularly important in the FLP of Muslim families who speak Arabic as a first or additional language, as many Islamic practices necessitate the use of Arabic almost daily. This raises a number of concerns in the context of FLP, including how Muslim parents, particularly those who do not understand Arabic, deal with this ‘religious’ language requirement? What are the procedures that they take with their children in this regard? Or, in a more complicated scenario, how does this affect the maintenance of the heritage language, particularly in the context of immigration?

This ethnographic dissertation sets out to investigate the impact of religious beliefs and practices on the FLP of non-Arab Muslim families. I particularly focus on Pakistani expatriate/immigrant families raising their children bi-/multilingually in Saudi Arabia to see how they navigate and construct their family language strategies while following and practicing a ‘linguistically foreign,’ i.e., not native to Pakistan, religion. This context is quite interesting because it involves families whose heritage language is Urdu while simultaneously adhering to a religion with a restricted language policy that requires the use of Arabic at least five times per day.
during prayers. Additionally, they live and work in Saudi Arabia; a country that the first line of its constitution states that Arabic is its sole official language.

Smolicz’s (1981, 1991) theory of culture’s core values demonstrates that each ethnic group has its own set of values (i.e., religion, language, clan) that individuals must adhere to in order to be a part of the group and avoid exclusion. Smolicz (1981, 1991) further suggests that if a group’s core value is language, for example, it is more likely to be maintained in an immigrant context. As for religion, many scholars defined religion as a core value for many immigrant communities around the world (Smolicz 1992; Clyne & Kipp 2006). Accordingly, if we have a religion that is strongly associated to a certain language, immigrants who follow that religion are more likely to maintain that language (Fishman 1991; Clyne & Kipp 2006; Paulston & Watt 2012).

In this regard, many studies have examined this hypothesis and demonstrated that religion and religious institutions might serve as a means of language maintenance among immigrant families. (see Yazan & Ali, 2018; Gomaa, 2011). These studies, however, have concentrated on ‘Arab’ immigrant families who practice Islam which is a religion that speaks their heritage language, and they looked at the ‘maintenance’ of Arabic. In contrast, the current study focuses on non-Arab immigrant Muslim families and examines families’ perspectives on using Arabic vs. Urdu at home as well as the perception of Arabic as a high-status language associated with religious identity on the choice of languages and maintenance of Urdu at home. The context of this study presents several questions that could help expand the FLP literature; for example, what role does religion play in the language use and choice as well as the heritage language maintenance of non-Arab Muslim immigrant families? Or more specifically, how do these non-Arab families manage their religion’s language needs while navigating and constructing their family language policies? These initial questions have played a fundamental part in the development of this
dissertation. Therefore, the focus on the Muslim immigrant/expatriate Pakistani families who live in Saudi Arabia provides a unique and interesting case study of how religious beliefs and practices can play a profound role in the families’ language use and choice. The particular sociological, religious, economic, and ethnolinguistic characteristics of this immigrant community make it an ideal subject of study.

1.2 Family Language Policy.

Family language policy can be defined as “explicit and overt planning in relation to language use within the home” (King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry 2008, p.907) as well as the “implicitly and covertly” implemented strategies (Curdt-Christiansen 2009, p.352). King et al. (2008) stated that examining the FLP can provide “a window into parental language ideologies,” reflecting individual and social views regarding minority and majority languages (p. 907). In a language contact setting among immigrant families, immigrant parents often wish to pass on their heritage language, minority language to their children and future generations as well; they may even develop a language plan based on their beliefs and experiences about the language (King et al., 2008; Spolsky, 2004). Using the FLP framework, this study analyzes how religion influences the decision between a heritage language and a religious language in families where the parents are Muslim and not only wish to pass on their heritage language to their children, but also wish to raise them to be practicing Muslims.

Most of the previous FLP/sociolinguistics studies focused more on the religious institutions, demonstrating that these institutions play a critical role in heritage language maintenance by providing a space for minority language use (see Giles, Bourhis & Taylor 1977; Woods 2004). For instance, Churches (i.e., Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox) tend to be associated with a particular ethnic group; thus, it promotes the ethnic traditions, values, and
languages of that community (see Moore, 2016; Kraftsoff & Quinn, 2009; Spolsky, 2003; Takigawa-Nikiporets 2007 as cited in Basova, 2013; Verivaki, 1990). For example, Verivaki (1990) demonstrated how the Greek Orthodox Church in New Zealand contributed to maintaining the Greek language within the Greek community for a long time. The Church served as a meeting point for community members, and the church services were held in Greek. Although the second and third generations people favored the use of English in other domains and reducing Greek proficiency was noted among them, they kept using the Greek language at church as well as when speaking to older people (Holmes, Roberts, Verivaki, & Aipolo, 1993). Similar results of Greek maintenance have been seen in other societal settings among Greek communities (e.g., Komondouros & McEntee-Atalianis 2007; Rompopoulou 2018). Furthermore, in the family domain, few studies have found that Arab immigrant families in the United States rely on religious institutions to ensure their children keep their Arabic language skills through enrollment in Sunday schools run by Mosques (Turjoman, 2017;2013, Al-Sahafi, 2015; Gogonas, 2012). The majority of these research focused on one component of religion, the social element, and did not examine other components (e.g., psychological aspects) that may be more complicated.

While the focus of these studies has been on the role of religious institutions, which supported Spolsky’s (2009) notion of religion as “an important social force,” they did not directly address the role of the religion itself (p.32). That is, as explained earlier, certain faiths require their adherents to use a certain language when conducting religious practices such as praying, reading the holy book, or performing other religious deeds. Such an obligation may have a profound impact on the FLP of religious families, especially on parents. Spolsky (2009) stated that:

“...an observant Jew is expected to learn Hebrew, and an observant Muslim to acquire knowledge of Classical Arabic. A less observant Jew or Muslim might not set out to learn
the language, but will probably believe that he should, and will be willing for his children to be taught it. (P.49)

Spolsky’s statement is significant for the context of this current study since it includes some Pakistani parents who do not speak Arabic but are Muslims, and it is interesting to observe and analyze what actions these parents take with their children in this regard, and how this effect the construction of their FLPs.

1.2.1 Why Family Language Policy?

The reason that motivates me to write my dissertation on this topic goes way back to my childhood. I was born and raised in a city called Madinah, also written as Medina, in Saudi Arabia. This city is known as the is the second holiest city in Islam and Saudi Arabia; it attracts more than seven million annual religious visitors who come to perform Hajj during the Hajj season, and Umrah throughout the year (General Authority for Statistics, 2021). As I was growing up there, I met so many international friends and classmates who were originally from Indonesia, Pakistan, India, and many other countries. Their families came to Saudi as temporary workers or visitors and stayed there for years. As of 2019, there are around 2.7 million Pakistanis living in Saudi Arabia, accounting for almost 20% of the entire migrant population in the country (General Authority for Statistics, 2021). However, I remember how weird I felt, then as a k-12 student, when I met my classmates’ parents and heard them talking. I had never thought of this before that moment, but I was expecting them to speak fluent Arabic just like their children; instead, I heard what I used to call “broken Arabic.” It was later during my graduate school when I realized that creolized and pidginized languages are not ‘broken,’ rather they are emergent phenomena of specific kinds of language contact (Versteegh, 1984). Since then, I have always been wondering about my classmates’ language situation; how they talk at home? What languages do my
classmates use with their parents? And many other scattered questions that did not find a framework for me to delve into and understand until I was introduced to the field of Family Language Policy.

In a prior pilot study, I found that all the Urdu-speaking parents I interviewed expressed a strong desire to improve their children’s Arabic language skills for a variety of reasons, but mainly to improve their knowledge and literacy about their faith, knowing that Arabic is associated with Islam. The sanctity of the Arabic language led many of these parents to prioritize the sacred language over their heritage language. These findings from the pilot study spark my interest even deeper into the role of religion as an agent of linguistic forces – both social (Spolsky, 2009) and self-forces – in shaping the FLP. However, I then noticed that most of the studies published before 2018 focused on the role of religious institutions and did not directly address the role of the religion itself (Komondouros & McEntee-Atalianis 2007; Rompopoulou 2018), which, as I said earlier, supported Spolsky’s (2009) notion of religion as “an important social force” (p.32). According to the Islamic language policy, Arabic is a holy language used in prayers and other Islamic rituals and cannot be translated or replaced by other languages. That is, if a Muslim does not know Arabic, he/she must memorize a few Quranic verses and a few Arabic phrases before performing prayer. Personally, I remember that I asked one of my Muslim friends from Indonesia, who does not speak Arabic, whether he knew what he utters during prayers or not? He told me that he repeats these bulk phrases as he memorized them when he was young with the help of his parents; he now understands the overall meaning of some of the Quran verses, but he does not know the literal meaning of each sentence. There is some overlap between this Indonesian example and the Pakistani families in this study, as they all face similar daily circumstances, performing religious practices in a language other than their heritage language. However, to my knowledge, there are
no FLP studies that have been conducted on a similar population to observe the influence of religion on their language choice, as well as aspirations for their children's language development. The current study hypothesizes that religion associated with a sacred language may have a profound impact on the FLP of its ‘foreign’ families – meaning families who do not speak the sacred language as a first language –, and could be a source of language shift, not maintenance as seen in previous studies (Yazan & Ali, 2018; Gogonas, 2012; Gomaa, 2011), in the family. Besides, these studies targeted Arabic-speaking immigrant families, and they looked at the ‘maintenance’ of the heritage language, which is Arabic in this case, which differs from the families in this study. That is, the families in the above studies have two intertwined core values (religion and heritage language) that motivated them to maintain Arabic whereas the core values of the families in this study are not intertwined since the families’ heritage language here is Urdu, not Arabic. In Islam, the Arabic language is associated with Islam which means Arabic and Non-Arabic speakers are not only required to recite the daily five prayers in Arabic, but they also ‘must’ have a minimum amount of the Quran memorized for the purpose of worships and prayers (Albirini, 2016). This may put non-Arab Muslim parents in a daily challenge over whether to focus on their heritage language or the language of religion, as well as which language they want their children to learn more.

Nevertheless, the context of this study extends existing research on FLP to a rarely studied context and aspect of the field, revealing whether these immigrant families behave in the same way as immigrant families in western studies, in terms of minority language maintenance and majority language use, or introducing any new behaviors or factors, that are not already captured by the earlier research, that influence the development of the FLPs of immigrant families.

1.2.2 Statement of the problem and significance of the study.
Few studies have investigated the role religious beliefs and practices play in choosing a language at home (Said, 2018). Pandharipande et al., (2019) stated that “there is not much research available at present which focuses exclusively on the role of religion in the maintenance and shift of languages” (p. 279). There were, however, some studies that showed how many immigrant religious communities maintained their languages, such as Pennsylvania Dutch among Amish, Plattdeutsch among Mennonites, and Hebrew in Israel (See Brown, 2019; Schwartz, 2008; Fishman, 1991; Moelleken, 1983), but there has been little research on why and how it occurs from the perspective of intergenerational transmission. Besides, most of these studies focused on religious communities that follow a religion connected to their heritage languages, which is similar to Yazan and Ali’s (2018) study in that these families share two core values (i.e., religion and heritage language) that help them maintain their heritage language. However, and as stated earlier, the families in this study have a different circumstance as their heritage language is Urdu and they practice an Arabic-based religion.

Moreover, Spolsky (2009) describes religion as a “social-force” as he regarded religious institution as the first social structure outside of the family to try to influence language use (p. 32). I argue here that Muslim parents’ internal religious beliefs (self-force) might also influence the family’s language use and choice. Said (2021) conducted a study on Arabic-speaking multilingual families and observed several mothers who felt a strong sense of religious responsibility to transmit Arabic to their children, to the point that they have associated it with their role as mothers. While Said’s study focuses on the transmission of Arabic to future generations in Arabic-speaking households, Muslim parents who do not speak Arabic are in a different scenario since they most likely feel they should learn it and teach it to their children, according to Spolsky (2009). These internal religious beliefs might be driven by the Islamic concept of ‘rewards and punishments’ in
the afterlife. Nazri et al., (2011) stated that this concept, meaning reward and punishment, plays an important role in Muslim’s external behavior and manifests their deeds, words, thoughts, feelings, and intentions. One may argue that such a self-force motivates Muslim parents to educate their children in Arabic from an early age in order for them to pray and memorize the Quran and therefore be rewarded in the afterlife, as the findings of this dissertation will indicate. Rahman (2006) stated that “while children in Arabic-speaking countries have to develop literacy in only one language, Muslim children in Pakistan and India must learn Arabic for religious purposes” (as cited in Spolsky, 2009, p. 46). This presents a number of issues, all of which are addressed in this study, including the impact of parents’ internal religious beliefs and responsibilities as Muslims on their FLP, the impact of parents’ willingness to learn Arabic and teach it to their children on the family language use, and whether or not this has an effect on heritage language maintenance among family members.

Furthermore, Muslims are often conflated with only being from the Middle East and North Africa region when in reality only (20%) of the world’s Muslims live there; the majority of the global Muslim population, around (62%), resides in the Asia-Pacific region (Lipka, 2017). Being a Muslim in a country that does not speak Arabic as a first language is a challenge; therefore, Muslim countries (e.g., Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, etc.) opened what is known as Madrasa which is an educational institution that teaches Arabic, Quran, and Islamic Knowledge to Muslim children. This type of special institution is very common in the above-mentioned countries, and many Muslim families send their children there every day to help them learn Arabic, memorize the Quran, and acquire Islamic values and literacy (Alam, 2020; Moosa, 2015; Zaman 1999). Moore (2016) explored religious education choices in a West African Muslim community, reporting that families send their children to Quranic School and encourage them to learn Arabic
and Quran at home, which shows the influence of religious education choices on language use at home.

Moreover, the practices described above are classified as ‘parental religious socialization practices,’ which indicates that parents employ these strategies to establish religious beliefs, rituals, and a sense of belonging in their children. (Bengtson, Copen, Putney, & Silverstein, 2008). That is, parents (Arab and non-Arabs) convey religious socialization messages by engaging in discussions and answering questions about religion, encouraging their children to involve in religious practices, and reinforcing or punishing behaviors based on their religious beliefs (Moore, 2016; Boyatzis & Janicki, 2003; Özdikmenli-Demir & Şahin-Kütük, 2012). One would ask if these family discussions could also include the Arabic language use, considering that Muslim parents may feel obligated to teach it to their children in order for them, the children, to perform their five daily prayers and maintain a connection to their faith. Bennett (2017) noted that such an obligation might have “profound social and religious consequences” on the life of all Muslims around the world (p. 142). Nonetheless, relatively few studies have been conducted on this subject, particularly from an FLP perspective (see Yazan & Ali, 2018; Gogonas, 2012; Gomaa, 2011).

1.3 Purpose of the study

This ethnographic study seeks to explore and describe the impact religion has on the shaping of FLP of bilingual Pakistani expatriate/immigrant families currently living in Saudi Arabia, which is both, unstudied topic and context as well. As mentioned earlier in the process of my research topic selection, personal experience with Pakistani immigrant classmates, friends, and neighbors in Madinah was one driving factor that led to my early interest in FLP research. Therefore, seeking a better understanding of the role religious beliefs and practices play in
choosing a language at the home of these families, and observing the current status of both Arabic and Urdu in the lives of both parents and their children are, also, some personal leading triggers that evoked the topic at hand.

As far as researchers are concerned, gaps identified in the previous studies are an area where one may start out a research project. This FLP study contributes to previous research on FLP by examining a context and aspect of the field that has received little attention as it examines, in depth, the influence of religion on language use and choice of families that do not speak the religious language as their first language. With the exception of limited studies that are related in one way or another to FLP and religion (e.g., Yazan & Ali, 2018), there have not been studies that explored the religious impact in general – or the Islamic language policy in particular – on the family language policies of non-Arabic speaking families. And as I previously stated, most of the published studies that somehow focused on the role of religion in FLP literature have targeted Arabic-speaking families, and they looked at the maintenance of the heritage language, while this study focuses on non-Arabic speaking families in Saudi Arabia; it examines Pakistani parents’ perspectives on using Arabic vs. Urdu at home with their children, as well as the impact of the perception of Arabic as a high-status language associated with religious identity on language choice and Urdu maintenance at home. Additionally, few studies showed that the maintenance of the heritage language for children is important as it offers access to an entire culture with its various sub-aspects of identity, opportunity, extended family ties, and potential capacities (see Wilson, 2021; Gharibi & Seals, 2020; Mu, 2014). These benefits of maintaining the heritage language may represent a challenge to parents’ religious responsibilities in this study, as their religious beliefs may encourage them to prioritize another language (i.e., Arabic).
Moreover, when it comes to FLP research in Saudi Arabia, there has not been a single FLP study that has been conducted in that context. Smith-Christmas (2017) stated that “there is a dearth of research situated within Africa or the Middle East (apart from Israel)” (p. 18). Not to mention the significant lack of sociolinguistic research, in general, on immigrants and expatriates in Saudi Arabia who represent nearly 30% of the country’s population (General Authority for Statistics, 2021). Most of the linguistic studies conducted on immigrants, foreigners, and expatriates in Saudi Arabia were mostly about ‘pidgins and creoles’ of Arabic. To my knowledge, this is the first sociolinguistic study to be conducted on foreign communities in Saudi Arabia, and in the Gulf countries as well.

Finally, all of the above-mentioned issues and perspectives are the purpose of this study; and I believe the FLP’s scope is capable of giving a valuable insight into the dynamic of language negotiations, and how language decisions are made among participating families. It is possible that knowing this may provide some theoretical understanding of FLP that has not been captured in a western setting, hence offering a new lens that may bring new insights to FLP for understanding how similar factors in one context might have a bigger influence on the development of FLPs in another, as well as the variations of parenting goals, ideology, values, practices, and strategies between families in the Eastern and the Western contexts.

1.4 Research questions

This section presents the dissertation research questions, followed by an explanation of how they relate to the gaps identified in the existing literature. Thus, the following are the three major questions:

1. How do bilingual Pakistani families in Saudi Arabia shape and construct their family language policies?
2. What languages do bilingual Pakistani families in Saudi Arabia use and how do they manage language in family interactions?

3. To what extent do religious beliefs and practices play a role in the FLP development process of bilingual Pakistani families in Saudi Arabia?

The first question explores the broad language patterns and strategies described by the six Pakistani families, as well as how they construct and develop their FLPs. The second question explores the actual vs. aspired FLP of the participating families, observes parents’ perspectives on using Arabic vs. Urdu at home with their children. The third question addresses the influence of the religion factor and how it influences the formation and development of the language policies of these households, which is the core of this study. The answers to these three questions may provide a broad perspective to the field and add to the existing literature by bridging the gap and revealing novel parental religious behaviors that are directly related to the FLP development process.

Lastly, one should note that at present, it is unclear whether or not religion itself can be seen as a self-force in the FLP. That is, one must observe whether or not religious parents feel spirituality obligated (self-force) of teaching the sacred language to their children in order to be rewarded and avoid punishment in the afterlife. If this is the case, it will provide a more comprehensive picture of the impact religion could have on FLP, beyond Spolsky’s (2009) notion which regarded religion as “an important social force” that only focused on the context of religious institutions. When a religion is strongly tied to a specific language and this religion carries beliefs (such as afterlife consequences and religious rewards), it may have a significant influence on the parents, which directly affects their FLP development process. This can be seen closely in Gogonas's (2012) study which compared Muslim and Coptic Egyptian speakers in Greece and
concluded that the Muslim Egyptians were the “language maintainers” (p,113). Although there was not an official mosque in Athens, the Muslim community created their own place of worship which also served as a school to teach Arabic and Quran to their children (Gogonas, 2012).

1.5 Contextualization.

This study is conducted in Madinah, the second holiest city in Islam and Saudi Arabia; it is a multicultural city where one can hear the language diversity every day in streets and stores and see its reflection in the linguistic landscape all around the city. It has a population of 2.1 million, and nearly 40% of this number are non-Saudis; besides, the number of religious visitors reached 7 million in 2019 (General Authority for Statistics, 2021). In addition, the city hosts Al-Masjid Al-Nabawi (the Prophet Mosque) which is located in the heart of Madinah, making the city the second-holiest city in Islam, after Makkah. It also hosts millions of pilgrims from all around the world during the Umrah and Hajj seasons. For me, I did not realize how special Madinah is to all Muslims until I was in fourth grade. It was the day that my father took me to the Prophet Mosque to pray one of the five daily prayers and to visit the prophet’s shrine which is located inside the mosque. These two acts are considered to be very sacred and significant to all Muslims around the world. My experience of going to the mosque with my father was one that unforgettable; the place was very crowded with people of different cultures, colors, and languages. They all came to do the exact same thing that my father and I came to do, pray, and visit the prophet’s shrine. As I was growing up, I started to notice how Madinah and Makkah are very different than the rest of Saudi Arabia; the number of foreigners, Arabs and non-Arabs who visit, live, or work in these cities is very noticeable.

The study was specifically conducted inside the Haram zone. The Haram zone is a phrase is used in Islamic urban planning; the word Haram means "a site of high sanctity," and it describes
the two holy mosques in Makkah and Madinah and the area around them; thus, this study was conducted in neighborhoods around the Prophet Mosque since many foreigner families live there. In the Islamic beliefs, Muslims believe that the ‘religious reward’ of praying in the Prophet Mosque is better than a thousand prayers in any other Mosque (Goldziher, 1967); therefore, Muslims from all around the world visit Madinah all the time, stay in hotels inside the Haram zone, and pray as much as they stay at the Prophet Mosque. Same thing goes for most foreigners who choose to live in Madinah, including all participating Pakistani families in this study; most of them want to take advantage of living around the Prophet Mosque so they can perform the five daily prayers in the Prophet Mosque and have more religious rewards, which is, as stated above, a spiritual merit earned by the performance of good deeds and prayers. In this regard, Muslims believe that every action has a sin or a reward attached to it, which is why they seek to earn a great number of rewards for the day of judgment (Goldziher, 1967; Nazri et al., 2011).

1.6 Defining the subjects

To examine the impact of religion among Pakistani families in Saudi Arabia, I think it is important to define the main variables that shaped the current study: the immigrants and expatriates in Saudi Arabia. The first variable is the term immigrant, which is defined by Merriam-Webster as “a person who comes to a country to take up permanent residence.” As for expatriates, I used Cohen’s (1977) description of expatriates in which he says they are “voluntary temporary migrants” for businesses, religious missions, teaching, or leisure (p. 6). I brought the definition of these two concepts because at the first phase of this dissertation, I found it very hard to categorize my participants as all of them are expatriates in legal documents; however, they consider themselves as immigrants. This is very critical because according to their contracts that allowed them to work in Saudi Arabia, they are vulnerable to being deported at any time. Therefore, when
many of these expatriates reach retirement age, they are legally expected to leave the country, but many prefer to remain illegally. In fact, during the writing of this dissertation, and because of the economic reform that is taking place in the Gulf countries, Saudi Arabia announced in June (2021) that over 5.6 million violators of residency and labor laws as well as border security system were arrested in Saudi Arabia since November 2017, of whom 1.5 million were deported to their home countries (Gulf News, 2021). Other Gulf nations, such as the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, are taking similar practices. Thus, many expatriate families decided to return to their home nations as a result of these new rules, and some of these families had children who had never visited their homelands before. However, I should point out that these families’ second and third generations are not Gulf citizens — meaning they do not hold the passport of the Gulf countries —; unlike the United States, being born to foreign parents does not guarantee citizenship in all Gulf nations.

Furthermore, since I started this dissertation, I have been following the experiences of several families who have returned to their countries of origin online, on YouTube, to examine how their children integrate into their new environments. For example, Amjad, who is a YouTuber, is a child to an expatriate family who used to work in Saudi Arabia; he uploaded a video of his experience of leaving Saudi Arabia to his YouTube channel. His father and mother lived in Saudi Arabia for forty years, but they decided to finally go back to Pakistan after their contract expired. In many of his videos, Amjad discusses his confused identity as he has never gone to Pakistan, never imagined he would live there, and knows very little about Pakistani culture (Amjad’s YouTube Channel, 2020). For example, in a recent video (Figure 1), he stated that he considers himself to be "half Pakistani, half Saudi," that he loves Saudi Arabia, and that he intends to return to the country and start a business when he is more mature. One should note that all of his videos
in the past two years were in Arabic, not a single video was uploaded in Urdu, although he stated that he speaks “good Urdu."

*Figure 1: Screenshot of Amjad’s YouTube video*

The video Titled “The life of Saudi-born Pakistanis in Pakistan.” (Amjad’s YouTube channel, 2019)

Another interesting example is ‘Alaa Hussain,’ who is another Pakistani who had a similar story. However, his family could not go back to Pakistan because none of his siblings speak Urdu, putting them in a tough situation if they had chosen to return to Pakistan; instead, they chose to live in Georgia, a country located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. The 17 years old Alaa uploads many videos in his YouTube channel, all of which are in Arabic. One of his videos is entitled "Celebrating the Saudi National Day at the Saudi Embassy in Georgia" demonstrates his
continued interest in the Saudi culture even after he left the country (Alaa’s YouTube channel, 2020).

Amjad and Alaa are not the only children who went through this interesting experience, many others have done the same and expressed their experience in their YouTube channels (e.g., Abraham’s YouTube channel, 2020, etc.). All of those YouTubers post many videos about their daily lives after leaving the Gulf countries, and it is clear that these people have formed Arabic-speaking communities where they socialize and assist one another with their new experiences and surroundings.

The reason I brought up these examples is to show the critical situation of the community I studied in this paper. Although most families in this paper are “a typical two-parent” (King, 2016, P.730); however, I believe the situation of these families is unique and does not fall under King’s regular two-parent family description as their permanent place of residence is always uncertain. Needless to say, the religious linguistic demands, the difficulty of paying residence fees for children, the uncertainty of family stability, and the confusion of feelings, identity, and belonging are among many other things that the families I studied go through and experience every single day.

1.6 Organization of the dissertation

In general, this dissertation is divided into seven chapters, and they are as follows: Chapter One, this current chapter, establishes a brief background and rationale for the study and research questions. Chapter Two provides a literature review related to the research. The review of literature focuses on the sociology of language and religion, language policy and family language policy, and the history of immigration in Saudi Arabia. Chapter Three gives a detailed explanation of the methodology I used, the ethnographic methods of data collection, data analysis procedures, my
positionality as an ethnographer, and the trustworthiness of the study. Chapter Four presents a comprehensive ethnographic and linguistic profile of each participating family which were mainly derived primarily from the ethnographic fieldnotes to provide a detailed picture of these families’ lifestyles. Chapter Five presents the findings and discussion from each family using a within-case analysis followed by Chapter Six which answers the research questions by presenting the findings and discussions using a cross-cases analysis. Finally, Chapter Seven concludes the study with a discussion of the implications, limitations, and areas for future research.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction:

Throughout this chapter, I situate this study in the context of important literature on FLP and sociolinguistic studies on language maintenance and shift, as well as the role of religions in these processes. Therefore, this chapter is divided into five sections, which are as follows: The first section specifically investigates the sociology of language, religion, and immigration; an area that has received little attention from FLP scholars. The second section explores the origin of FLP as a field; then, it discusses some key literature that helps set the foundation of this field. It also lays out the factors that influence the FLP, as mentioned in recent studies, and the interrelationships between these factors. In addition, the third section recognizes literature review gaps, and then presents the major questions of this dissertation. The fourth section discusses the theoretical framework of the study as well as the ethnography approach in FLP. Finally, the fifth section presents the history of immigration in Saudi Arabia and discusses its language policy.

2.1 The sociology of language and religion.

This chapter presents studies on language and religion in general from a sociolinguistic perspective. In Chapter One of this dissertation, I explained Smolicz’s (1981, 1991) theory of the core values of culture and discussed how every ethnic group has unique values (i.e., religion, language, clan) that group members must adhere to in order to be included in that group and avoid exclusion. That is, if a language represents a core value of a community, it is more likely to be maintained in an immigration context. As for religion, many scholars recognized religion as a core value for many immigrant communities around the world (Smolicz 1992; Clyne & Kipp 2006). Accordingly, when we have a religion that is significantly associated with a particular language, the immigrant community, who follows that religion, will more likely maintain that language.
(Fishman 1991; Clyne & Kipp 2006; Paulston & Watt 2012). However, the participants in this study have a different situation where religion could be the source of language shift. That is, in Islam, all Muslims – Arabic and Non-Arabic speakers – are not only required to recite everyday prayers in Arabic, but they also ‘must’ have a minimum amount of the Quran memorized for the purpose of worships and prayers (Albirini, 2016). Such an obligation may have “profound social and religious consequences” on the life of all Muslims around the world (Bennett, 2017, p. 142).

2.1.1 Religion as a macro scale factor.

Most of the previous studies looked at religions from a macro scale factor and focused on how Churches, Mosques and other religious institutions helped language maintenance and development. These studies took a top-down approach, demonstrating how religious institutions, as meeting places for religious followers, frequently contribute to language maintenance among communities since they offer a place for minority language use (see Giles, Bourhis & Taylor 1977; Woods 2004). For instance, Churches (i.e., Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox) tend to be associated with a particular ethnic group; thus, it promotes the ethnic traditions, values, and language interactions of that community as seen in previous literature. For example, Verivaki (1990) demonstrated how the Greek Orthodox Church in New Zealand contributed to maintaining the Greek language within the Greek community for a long time. The Church served as a meeting point for community members, and the church services were held in Greek. Although the second and third generations people favored the use of English in other domains, and reducing Greek proficiency was noted among them (Holmes, Roberts, Verivaki, & Aipolo, 1993), they kept using the Greek language at church, especially when they speak to older people (Verivaki 1990; Holmes et al. 1993). Similar results of Greek maintenance have been seen in other societal settings among Greek communities (e.g., Komondouros & McEntee- Atalianis 2007; Rompopoulou 2018).
Furthermore, Moore (2016) explored how religious education choices in a West African Muslim community influence the families’ language use at home. He reported that families who send their children to Quranic School in Mosques often encourage them (meaning their children) to learn Arabic and Quran even at home, which shows the influence of religious education choices on language use at home. I should note here that Moore’s study is somewhat similar to my study in terms of participants – religious followers who do not speak the religion language as their first language –, but they are fundamentally different. That is, Moore’s study focused on the impact of Islamic schools on non-Arab families, who do not speak the language of religion as a first language, but the study, like the earlier ones, took a top-down approach and looked at religion as a macro factor and focused on ‘institutional effect’ on the family. Not only did it not explain how and why the effect occurs, but Moore’s (2016) study also did not concentrate on the religion in general and its practices and beliefs that parents wish, or may feel responsible, to pass on to their children. I believe that religious impact should be explored more deeply on a micro level by taking a bottom-up approach; that is, within the home and by listening to parents, observing their everyday behaviors, and understanding how they deal with their religious practices and language requirements. This may provide us with a more detailed explanation of the psychological influence of religion on parents and, consequently, on how languages are used in their home that has not been addressed previously in scholarship.

2.1.2 Religion as a micro scale factor.

Few previous FLP studies took bottom-up approach and examined the religious impact on a micro level, noting that religion influences parental language use and choice. This influence is rooted in two sets of closely intertwined factors. First, the religion has a restricted language policy that limits its believers to speak in a certain language during religious practices and rituals. Second,
parents religiously feel responsible that their children should practice their faith; hence, they utilize language to achieve this goal. For example, Yazan and Ali (2018) studied the maintenance of Arabic of a Libyan Muslim immigrant family living in the Southeast United States. One of their findings suggested that the FLP of these families is driven by parents’ expectations of their children to participate in religious practices. Clyne and Kipp (1999) reported a significant association between the use of Arabic and religion among Australians of Egyptian and Lebanese origin in Melbourne. They found that the Muslim community was effective in maintaining and passing the Arabic language to their children because religion served as a motivator. Finally, Gogonas (2012) compared Muslim and Coptic Egyptian speakers in Greece and showed that the Muslim Egyptians were the “language maintainers” (p,113). He then concluded that "religion rather than language emerges as a core value for the Arabic speakers in this study” (p, 20); he also added, “although there is not an official mosque in Athens, the Muslim community has created its own places of worship which at the same time function as places of socialization and run mother-tongue classes” (p, 20). Although these studies demonstrated the relevance of religion in the FLP development process, they focused on Arabic-speaking families and on the maintenance of the heritage language (in this case, Arabic), which does not address the problems raised in this study. What if the family speaks a different language than that religion’s language? How would that affect the FLP of these believers? To what extent do religious beliefs and practices in specific play a role in FLP?

Furthermore, Said (2021) argues that religion as a motivation for maintaining Arabic as expressed by parents or perceived by researchers is “oversimplified and in need of further analysis” (p. 22). While I agree with most of this, I believe it does not apply to Muslim families that have a different heritage language other than Arabic, because religion, in my opinion, plays an important role in these families’ language learning developments. That is, for Arabs, the Arabic language is...
a daily language that is related to all aspects of their lives, not only religion, whereas in non-Arab Muslim communities, learning Arabic has traditionally been strongly intertwined with learning religious knowledge and performing religious practices, which gives it, meaning Arabic, a more sacredness and comprehension orientations (see Moore, 2016; Albirini, 2016; Spolsky, 2009; Brenner 2001; Fishman, 2002). Therefore, this study is adding a different dimension to the discussion of religion and FLP.

2.1.3 Sacred Languages.

The concept of a sacred language is very important in the context of this study, and it should be discussed. Sacred languages, or holy languages, are any language that is promoted and used in religious service, prayers, and practices, or for other religious traditions (Karan, 2011). For example, in Islam, it is required for all Muslims, even by those who do not speak Arabic, to ‘only’ use the Arabic language in their prayers. Fishman (2002) stated that languages such as Hebrew, Arabic, and Greek have all been “holy vessels” (p. 17) as they have carried written and oral religious practices. Therefore, in the case of Islam, and as mentioned earlier, Bennett (2017) states that such an obligation may have “profound social and religious consequences” on the life of all Muslims around the world (p. 142). This includes the parents in this study, as almost all of them speak Arabic, perform prayers and other religious practices in Arabic, and raise their children accordingly.

Furthermore, Muslims believe that the Arabic language is significant and sacred because it was selected by God to be the language of the Quran, according to the Islamic faith. The Quran is divided into 114 chapters (about 631 pages), with each chapter including many verses. It describes itself as a book of guidance for mankind; therefore, many Muslim families send their
children to Quran Memorization Centers (QMCs), where they learn the whole Quran before they reach their adolescence (Figure 2). Anzar (2003) illustrated how such school functions, and said:

“A typical model of Quranic school, which is common from Central Asia to China, from India to Arabia and from South Africa to the North, is a small room, usually attached to a mosque, where a teacher, usually male, teaches students to read and in some cases memorize the Quran in Arabic whatever the child’s mother tongue. Students usually finish the Quran in about three to four years. The students vary in ages from 4 years to 16 or more years” (p.6)

Figure 2: Example of one of the Quran Memorization Centers

(1 Source: The General Authority of Islamic Affairs and Endowments, 2021)

Non-Arabic speaking Muslim parents send their children to these religious centers so they can achieve some proficiency in Arabic (Alam, 2020; Moosa, 2015; Moore, 2016;2006). Moore (2016) connects this practice – sending children to QMCs – and other religious institutions to FLP context and emphasizes the influence of this religious education option on family language use, as
parents demonstrated a desire for their children to study the Quran and the sacred language both at the center and at home. However, he described the competence of these children, in a west African context, as reproducing the Quran in both oral and written Arabic without comprehension or the ability to develop new and meaningful words. Having said that, I should mention that all of the families in this study send their children to QMC in Saudi Arabia on a daily basis, and it will be interesting to see if these children have the same level of Arabic competence as the children in Moore’s study, as well as to observe the impact of this practice on these families’ FLPs and language use.

2.2 Language Policy.

In its early phase, the concept of Language Policy (LP) first described the political plans and policies made at the nation-state level to control and shape language practices in various public domains in any country (Spolsky, 2004). These plans and policies are designed by top-down approach carried out by powerful and influential organizations, i.e., governments, who implement language-related plans around the country. Most of the studies then explored and investigated the efforts that post-colonial countries took to solve their language issues (King & Bigelow, 2018). However, in recent years, another view was developed, suggesting that LP matters should be looked at through a bottom-up perspective rather than top-down. Spolsky (2007) stated that people’s actual use of language is not simple choices made by top-down policies. In fact, language practices are developed from the complicated relationship between linguistic and non-linguistic factors, including political, social, and religious factors (Shohamy 2006; Spolsky 2004, 2012).

Moreover, the bottom-up perspective in LP studies focused on more diminutive domains such as school and the workplace. With regard to language shift and maintenance, and to go in line with Fishman’s model of ‘reversing language shift’ (Fishman, 1991), the family was added as an
independent domain in the field of language policy for its significant role in the natural inter-
generational transmission of languages (Spolsky 2004). The use of the word ‘domain’ is critical 
here since it explains the social setting of where the family is located and settled; therefore, it 
highlights the interrelationship between what occurs in and outside the family context (Spolsky 
2009). Following Fishman’s model of reversing language shift, Spolsky (2004) states that it is 
crucial to understand how external factors can affect the family decisions and beliefs regarding 
their language use, shift, and eventually language maintenance.

2.2.1 Family language policy.

Although research on the family domain had started very early in the previous century, 
most of the scholarship focused specifically on FLP came after the landmark article of King, Fogle, 
and Logan-Terry, (2008). They stated that FLP is an explicit language policy that sets the frame 
for language practices within the home context and between family members (King et al., 2008).
Curdt-Christiansen (2018) also defined FLP as “deliberate and observable efforts” at practicing 
and using particular languages within the home domain and among family members (p.420). 
Moreover, although FLP deals with explicit and overt language planning within a family context, 
it could also be shaped and maintained implicitly and covertly (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009; 
Schiffman, 1996). The difference between them is that explicit and overt FLP refers to parents’ 
deliberate attempts to create linguistic environment for their children’s language learning and development, whereas implicit and covert FLP refers to a family’s “default” language practices as 
a result of their ideological views (Curdt-Christiansen, 2018, p.402). However, while language uses, whether implicit or explicit, operate at the micro-level (i.e., family), they are shaped at the 
macro-level by wider social influences (e.g., governments or other organizations) (Caldas, 2012).
These interrelationships will be explained in detail in the section titled ‘the interrelationships
between internal and external factors.’ The current research, which focuses on religion, necessitates this section since I believe religion is a sensitive topic that has to be explored through both micro (e.g., family’s pure religious believe) and macro lenses (e.g., Mosque or other religious institutions).

Furthermore, the current study falls under the scope of FLP research since it investigates the role religious beliefs and practices play in choosing a language at home. King et al. (2008) mention that child bilingual language acquisition is best observed within the FLP framework; to widen our perception of how language ideologies reveal themselves into language plans and uses, and eventually “determining the maintenance and future status of minority languages” (p. 907). This is significant for this study since bilingualism, and bilingual parenting, is/are almost inevitable for the participating religious families participating in Islamic rituals and practices that require the use of a language other than the family's heritage language. Thus, and since it examines families' language beliefs and ethnolinguistic objectives from an ethnolinguistic perspective? as well as how languages are perceived and utilized at home, the FLP framework can give a more comprehensive understanding of families’ language dynamics at home and help answer the research questions.

### 2.2.2 Factors influencing Family Language Policy.

In general, the study of FLP attempts to find answers to questions such as: why do members of some immigrant societies maintain their native languages while members of other societies lose them? Why do some children who grow up in a monolingual setting become bilinguals while other children in a similar setting become monolinguals? Furthermore, to what extent do parental and family language ideologies affect their language uses and practices? As King et al. (2008) assert that FLP studies can provide snapshots into parental language ideologies which will help to reveal the broader societal beliefs and ideologies of both languages and parenting. This study, however,
contributes to the FLP literature by offering further insight into religious identity of immigrant families, while the majority of previous work has concentrated more on the ethnic identity (see Mirvahedi & Jafari, 2021; Revis, 2019; Xiaomei, 2017).

Furthermore, one should note that the past decade has witnessed an increase in volumes of studies that attempts to find answers to the above questions, and most of these studies identify the family as a dynamic construct in a changeable world (King, 2016). For example, immigrant parents usually face difficulty whether to raise their children bilingually or only in the dominant language when they move from one setting to another. While they often prefer that their children maintain the family’s heritage language, yet at the same time they want them to learn the dominant language to succeed at school (De Angelis, 2011). These FLP negotiations and discussions are usually complicated, and they are influenced by a variety of factors affecting the family's language planning and practices. Curdt-Christiansen and Huang (2020) classified these factors into two categories: micro-internal factors (e.g., emotion, parental impact beliefs, child agency, etc.) and macro-external factors (e.g., the socio-cultural, socio-political and socio-linguistic environment), to better comprehend the complexity of FLP in connection to language planning and practices. This connects to the current study’s purpose, which is to determine the impact of religion on FLP from both a micro and macro perspective. That is, for example, on a macro level, religious institutions, as well as Saudi Arabia’s language policy, are among many other macro aspects that I should account while analyzing the data of the participating families. On the other hand, I believe there is a significant link between religion and emotions, cultures, and beliefs, which I must take into account in order to have a better grasp of what is going on within these homes through a micro lens. The following is a summary of these factors and their relevance to this current paper as I argue that each of these factors has a strong connection to religious aspect in FLP context.
2.2.2.1 Micro internal factors.

Internal factors in this context mean the linguistic variables that motivate maintaining or breaking close family ties and close relationships between family members. These factors include emotional, cultural, and identity factors, parental impact beliefs, and child agency (Curdt-Christiansen and Huang, 2020). I will discuss each of these factors in detail in separate paragraphs and explain how they relate to the religious aspect in FLP context.

**Emotional Factors.** Many studies have investigated the relationship between emotions and language; they suggest that the emotional factor affects how the family language plays in the relationship between generations within the family context. Fillmore (1991) stated that heritage language fluency empowers meaningful connections between the family generations. In addition, studies investigated the relationship between emotions and language also reveals that family language helps maintain the heritage language and improve the emotional connections between family members (Schalley & Eisenchlas, 2020; Tannenbaum 2012; Pavlenko 2004; 2012; Okita 2002; De Houwer 1999). Pavlenko (2004, 2012) explained that emotional development occurs in two coordinate processes through primary language acquisition. The first is related to “perceptual development,” where children develop their emotional literacy of all sensorial moods (i.e., visual, audible, and physical) through language socialization (Curdt-Christiansen & Huang, 2020, p. 177). The second process touches on what is called “linguistic affective conditioning,” where a child develops his/her emotional memories that are associated with some linguistic elements (Curdt-Christiansen et al, 2020, p. 177). In other words, during this process, there could be some words or phrases that have deeply personal meanings and trigger love, fear, taboos, or other common emotions. Therefore, the use of the primary language can trigger some deep emotional responses and make members of the family feel ‘closer’ in daily interactions.
Going back to the scope of this paper, one should note that religion and emotions are intertwined and cannot be discussed separately (Cummins & Stille, 2021). Most religious people tend to express their religion and spirituality through emotions such as awe, serenity, and reverence (Riis & Woodhead, 2010). For example, all practicing Muslims tend to have sacred feelings toward the Arabic language due to the fact that the Quran was written in Arabic, which gives Arabic the sanctity attached to it, especially among Non-Arab Muslims (see Khamroyeva, 2021; Nisa & Arifin, 2020; Daugaard, 2019). This is significant for this study because it provides a framework for examining the influence of this sacredness, if it exists, on participating families’ language use and choices. That is, and as previously said, the usage of Arabic by native speakers is not associated with the religion alone because it is their everyday language, whereas the connotation of Arabic for non-Arab Muslims is only linked with Islam. This tendency of linking Arabic exclusively with Islam is seen in several research that discuss learning Arabic for religious purposes (see Khamroyeva, 2021; Nisa & Arifin, 2020; Daugaard, 2019).

Identity Factor. Identity is generally used to define “an individual’s sense of self, group affiliations, structural positions, and ascribed and achieved statuses” (Peek, 2005, p.17). The distinction between ascribed and achieved identities is important in this study since religious affiliation and identity are inseparable. Ascribed identity refers to markers that are socially constructed rather than defined by the person, whereas achieved identity refers to markers that are defined by the individual himself/herself (Deng & De Costa, 2020; Ruzzeddu, 2021). In the context of this study, this factor is significant, and it should be taken into account in order to understand how collective identities of participating families (e.g., Muslim identity, Pakistani or Pakistani/Saudi identity) are addressed and managed on an individual level.

Furthermore, in the past two decades, many sociologists investigated the role of religion in
maintaining group and individual identities. However, while there have been many scholars who did not include religion as an identity category (Howard, 2000; Cerulo, 1997; Frable, 1997), others asserted that religious identity should be viewed as an identity category due to the way religion functions in a society (Min & Kim 2001; Chafetz & Ebaugh, 2000; Warner & Wittner, 1998). For example, being a member in a religious institution may have an effect on how individuals describe their identity. In addition to satisfying their religious needs, membership in a religious institution provides many non-religious supports such as psychological, social, and educational supports (Chen, 2002; Hurh & Kim, 1990). One may argue that such supports are influential in how individuals see and define their identities, especially when they visit these religious institutions regularly.

Having said that, one should note that very few studies looked at the effect of religious identity on the formation of FLP. For example, one study conducted by Jaspala and Coyleb (2010) examined how a group of young British-born Pakistanis recognize and define their religious and linguistic identities; they concentrated on the role of heritage, sacred languages, and religious socialization. They stated that “participants who reported being devoutly religious attached a great deal of religious importance to their sacred language often at the expense of their heritage language” (p. 31). Mills (2004) studied the language perceptions of ten Pakistani families in the U.K.; she noticed a close relationship between religion, identity, and language. The Arabic literacy for reciting the Quran was an important component of their identities, “even more than Punjabi or Urdu parents in several cases” (as cited in Yazan & Ali, 2018, p.373). Therefore, this current study will look carefully at the parents’ identities, particularly their religious identity, and their influence on their language use and choice, since previous FLP studies focused more on ethnic identity and not so much on religious identity.
The Cultural Factor. The cultural factor applies to cultural traditions and social practices to which a family adheres. Culture, just like identity, can be grasped and defined differently among family members and from one generation to another (Little, 2020; Mu, 2014). There have been many studies that explored how an individual’s religion (religious beliefs, religious practices, etc.) is associated with his/her culture. For example, some studies find that religion influences culture and helps to form them (Beckford & Demerath, 2007). Other studies focused more on how religion is, in fact, a culture in itself (Croucher et al., 2017). That is, religion offers a language with distinct “cosmopolitan traits” through the use of certain religious markers by individuals and societies, and this connection forms a distinct culture that reflects the way they think (Mustafi, 2019, p. 118).

This is critical in the context of this study, as one of the primary reasons for writing this study is the similar religious culture that I observed among many ethnic-religious groups who live in different contexts. For example, I noticed many similarities in rituals among the non-Arab Muslim communities here in the US and in other countries as well; similarities such as taking children to Friday prayers and listening to the sermon in Arabic, as well as using religious phrases every day (e.g., Jazak Allah khayr or may Allah reward you). One may argue that these ‘universal religious/cultural behaviors’ must have an impact on individual’s and family’s cultures, their perceptions of Arabic, and their language use and choice in their homes.

Moreover, within the family domain, some parents may believe that by teaching their children the heritage language, they would develop a cultural attachment to their homeland. However, this assumption comes with some cultural and social practices that may not be compatible with the host culture (Curdt-Christiansen & Huang, 2020, p.177). Consequently, there is a high probability that conflicting cultural values may be one of the reasons contributing to family heritage language loss (Curdt-Christiansen 2016; 2020). This indicates, according to Curdt-
Christiansen’s argument, that if the family’s cultural values do not contradict with those of the host country, there is a high probability that the family maintains their heritage language. However, I should note the families in this study have a different and unique situation. That is, while the cultures of the families in this study are actually compatible with the host culture, it is possible that this will lead to the loss of family heritage language. This is because both cultures are mostly based on the Islamic religion, which promotes the use of the Arabic language, which Pakistani families do not mind, according to certain studies (Khan, 2020; Jaspal & Coyle, 2010).

**Parental Impact Beliefs.** The concept of impact belief, initially proposed by De Houwer (1999), is assumed to promote language maintenance within the family. It refers to the parent’s belief about their ability to “exercise some sort of control over their children’s linguistic functioning” (De Houwer, 1999. p. 83). It also applies to parental ‘expectations’ about their ability and obligation to raise children in a heritage language environment or bilingual setting (Curdt-Christiansen, 2016). Such expectations are usually driven by many factors, such as the parents’ educational, cultural, and migration experiences (Curdt-Christiansen & Huang, 2020). The impact of this factor can be seen from the contribution it makes in constructing FLP since “it is directly related to parental involvement and investment in the process of language learning and development” (Curdt-Christiansen et al., 2020, p.178).

Having said that, there are many questions that should be asked regarding this factor, for example, what effect do parents’ religious beliefs have on their children's language learning process and expectations, particularly when their faith necessitates proficiency in a language other than their heritage language? Muslim parents whose heritage language is not Arabic are considering either passing the Arabic language to their children if they know it, or providing Arabic educational opportunities for their children, as stated by Spolsky (2009), and that could happen
through Islamic schools or QMCs.

**Child Agency.** Finally, child agency can be described as children’s active role in shaping their family language use (Fogle & King, 2013; Smith-Christmas, 2020). Kuczynski (2002) define agency as “actors with the ability to make sense of the environment, initiate change and make choices” (p.9), whereas child agency in FLP studies can be seen through children’s influence on the construction of FLPs (Fogle, 2012). While child agency is outstanding in immigrant families as they have the power “to disrupt the power differential along generational lines through the child’s greater linguistic competence in the majority language” (Smith-Christmas, 2021, p. 2), the concept is yet complicated due to generational gaps in cultural and social values that occur naturally between the generations of families (Fogle 2012; Said & Zhu, 2019; Smith-Christmas 2018; Curdt-Christiansen et al., 2020).

Most of the previous studies looked at children as language agents in their FLPs through the perception of normal schools, meaning public schools which usually expose immigrant students to the majority language (see Machowska-Kosciak, 2017, Evans & Liu, 2018, Kheirkhah & Cekaite, 2018). This study, however, will take a different path by considering families who send their children to nontraditional schools, (i.e., religious schools). Religious schools and institutions (e.g., Madrasa and QMCs) expose children to specific religious linguistic cultures which may influence the children’s language use at home, hence affect the family language practices (see Moore, 2016). Although previous FLP studies would look at such child agency through a resistance lens, which means children are going against the FLP, there were some recent critiques against this view (see Smith-Christmas, 2021), as they believe that it should be viewed as either “resistance” or “resourcefulness” (Abebe, 2019, p. 8), which could be either case for the participating families in this study.
In the above section, I have mentioned all of the micro internal factors that affect the formation of the FLP, as they were mentioned in Curdt-Christiansen and Huang’s (2020) article. I have also addressed the links between these factors and their direct or indirect associations with religion, presenting religion as a key component that may affect all of the other factors described earlier. In the following, the paper will discuss the external factors how they relate to the religious aspect in the FLP context.

2.2.2.2 Macro external factors.

While internal factors are limited to the sphere of the family’s private and social life (Curdt-Christiansen & Wang, 2018; Fogle, 2012; Gafaranga, 2010), external factors imply broader contexts knowing that families are connected and influenced by the world around them (Spolsky 2004, 2012). Thus, Curdt-Christiansen (2009, 2013, 2014) proposed a theoretical FLP framework by utilizing Spolsky’s (2004, 2012) concepts of four major linguistic and non-linguistic contexts; these contexts are sociolinguistic context, socio-cultural context, socio-economic context, and socio-political context. These contexts can be identified as sources that effect ideology and FLP decisions (Curdt-Christiansen et al., 2020). However, one should note that limited work has been reported on the effect of ‘socio-religious context’ on language ideologies and FLPs. The families in this study engage in many socio-religious practices that may, or may not, have an implicit impact on the FLPs.

In sociology literature, the socio-religious context provides a framework for how religion intersects with other social structures (Hjelm, 2021). Such a context could be beneficial for FLP studies, especially with studies that focus on religions that encourage social gatherings in a daily basis. For example, Islam requires its followers to pray five times a day at mosques where they can share their faith with others. Such a lifestyle must have an impact on Muslim parents and
children since it allows them to meet their neighbors and community members, talk to them, and pray together. Tawalbeh, Dagamseh, and Al-Matrafi (2013) explored the phenomenon of language maintenance and shift among Saudi Hausa pilgrims who came from Nigeria and stayed in Makkah, which is the birthplace of Islam. Their findings reveal that Saudi Hausa community (100 Saudi Hausa individuals) have limited proficiency in the Hausa language. Arabic, on the other hand, is utilized in practically every social and religious context of their lives. They also noted that there was a “fast shift” through generations, to Arabic, and this shift may be attributed to a variety of causes, including socio-religious practices (p.128). This is similar to the Pakistani families in this study, since they engage in many socio-religious practices as well.

The above two sections were a summary of the micro and macro factors and their relevance to this current paper as I argued that each of these factors has a strong connection to religious aspect in FLP context. In the following, I discuss the interrelationships between internal and external factors.

2.2.2.3 Interrelationships between internal and external factors.

The above review presented the factors as internal (micro) and external (macro); however, there is “no clear distinction between the two types of factors” in real life (Curdt-Christiansen et al., 2020, p. 179). That is, some external factors may have a direct impact on one of the internal factors. Curdt-Christiansen et al. (2020) gave an example of how educational language policy, as an external factor, could affect parent’s choices on whether to continue to promote the heritage language development or not in case it is not taught at school, which mirrored the parent’s impact beliefs. In general, Curdt-Christiansen (2013) stated that unpacking the impact of these factors may “enhance our understanding of the power relationships between linguistic varieties and cultural and symbolic values” (p. 4).
The same thing goes for the socio-religious context where parents, driven by their religious values, make some ‘parental religious decisions’ for their children, such as encouraging them to accompany them to pray in mosques, sending them to Islamic schools, or sending them to specialized centers (e.g., QMC), which is a very common practice among all Muslims around the world. Thus, one should examine the impact parental religious decisions may have on internal factors, such as child agency, the identity factor, parental impact beliefs, etc.

All in all, the above review presented both internal and external factors, and their interrelationships, which could impact the FLP (Curdt-Christiansen et al., 2020). This study presents a conceptual framework to describe how various factors (e.g., religious belief, religious identity, etc.) might impact family language decisions in dynamic ways that prior research has not addressed. In the following section, I highlight the gaps in the literature, the purposes of the study, and the research questions.

2.3 Research gaps and research questions.

Few studies have investigated the role religious beliefs and practices play in choosing a language at home (Said, 2018). Pandharipande and others (2019) stated that “there is not much research available at present which focuses exclusively on the role of religion in the maintenance and shift of languages” (p. 279). Most of the previous studies targeted Arabic-speaking families, and they looked at the maintenance of the heritage language, which is Arabic in this case, (see Yazan & Ali, 2018; Gogonas, 2012; Gomaa, 2011), which do not answer the questions proposed in this study; what if the family speaks a different language than the religious language? How would that affect the FLP of these believers? To what extent do religious beliefs and practices influence FLP?
In addition to the above gap, although FLP literature published between 2008 and 2019 shows a diversity of countries reported as the context of individual studies, Smith-Christmas (2017) stated that “there is a dearth of research situated within Africa or the Middle East (apart from Israel)” (p.18). Therefore, this study will also fill this gap since it recruited an unstudied population – Pakistani immigrant/expatriate families – living in Saudi Arabia, which is one of the global south countries that receive less attention in this field. (Lanza & Lomeu-Gomes, 2020)

2.3.1 Research Questions.

In line with the mentioned theoretical and contextual gaps in the literature, this paper attempted to find answers to the following questions.

1. How do bilingual Pakistani families in Saudi Arabia shape and construct their family language policies?

2. What languages do bilingual Pakistani families in Saudi Arabia use and how do they manage language in family interactions?

3. To what extent do religious beliefs and practices play a role in the FLP development process of bilingual Pakistani families in Saudi Arabia?

The first question explores the broad language patterns and strategies described by the six Pakistani families, as well as how they construct and develop their FLPs. The second question analyzes the actual vs. aspired FLP of the participating families, as well as parents’ behaviors on utilizing Arabic vs. Urdu at home with their children. The third question investigates the religious factor, examining how the perception of Arabic as a high-status language related with religious identity affects language choice and maintenance of Urdu at home. The answers to these three questions may provide a broad perspective to the field and add to the existing literature by bridging
the gap and revealing novel parental religious behaviors that are directly related to the FLP development process.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

FLP has always been described by “methodological” and “interdisciplinary” diversity, and this diversity has become even more significant in recent years as new research interests have emerged in the fourth phase (King, 2016, p730). This new research interests look at language competence “not just as an outcome, but as a means through which adults and children define themselves, their family roles, and family life” (King, 2016, pp.727-728). Therefore, and as the field shifts from a typical two-parent family model to one that includes a wider range of families, King (2016) stated that researcher must modify their methodologies to meet the emerging needs of focusing on “on globally dispersed, transnational, multilingual populations beyond the traditional” (p. 728).

Furthermore, conducting research with a family is a sensitive task, which is why trust must be developed. Hall (2014) discusses research ethics in ethnographic research with families, arguing that the sensitive nature of both ethnography and family relations “presents particular challenges to using an ethnographic approach to studying families” (p, 2175). The introduction of the immigrants/expatriates in Saudi Arabia in Chapter One shows how foreigners, not only in Saudi Arabia but also in the Gulf countries, are usually vulnerable not only because of the process of relocation in a new country, but also because of the potential distress and the identity crisis that could happen to them as their permanent place of residence is always uncertain. As a result, my methodological approach required an extra caution while gaining access to these communities and families. An ethnographic method appeared most appropriate since it would enable my participants to learn more about me and, perhaps, develop a trustworthy connection.
Having said that, and since this is an ethnographic study that examines the role of religious beliefs and practices in the FLP of Pakistani expatriate/immigrant families who live in Saudi Arabia, the following section describes my theoretical framework used in this study. I start by outlining Spolsky’s model which serves as the framework for the findings and analysis chapters, and why it has been selected in this study. Following that I highlight the ethnographic approach that was applied in this research in precise details.

2.4.1 Why Spolsky’s framework?

Spolsky’s (2004, 2009) theoretical framework of language policy has been widely used in order to understand and describe FLP. This framework is composed on “three interconnected components” (Curdt-Christiansen, 2018, p. 3), and they are as follows: (1) language beliefs (ideologies), which relate to “the beliefs about language and language use.” language practices, which are “the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistic repertoire,” and language management, which encompasses “any specific efforts to modify or influence that practice by any kind of language intervention, planning or management” (Spolsky, 2004, p. 5). Moreover, many early FLP research used Spolsky’s framework to define how members of the family view certain languages (language beliefs), what they really do with languages (language practices), and what attempts and actions they take to preserve their heritage languages (language management) (Curdt-Christiansen, 2018).

Furthermore, since this study is focused on the religious factor, one should note that research frameworks for religious studies that are relevant to the study of language and society are limited (Spolsky, 2009; Mühleisen, 2007; Omoniyi & Fishman, 2006; Pennycook & Makoni, 2005). Sociolinguists have examined religion through the lens of language contact and use by demonstrating how it contributes to the development, maintenance, and revival of languages.
(Kouega & Baimada, 2012). However, during the past few years, many scholars used Kouega’s (2008) structural-functional framework (see Ndzotom, 2016; Kouega & Emaleu, 2013; Kouega & Baimada, 2012; Baimada, 2013). Kouega and Baimada (2012) demonstrate this framework and say:

“This sociolinguistic frame is based on a two-step procedure: first, it dissects a given religious service using the participant observation method; then using the questionnaire, interview, informal discussion and participant observation methods simultaneously, it checks what language is used in each of the constituent parts of the religious service and for what purpose (p.12)

Given the nature of this study which considers religion as both social and self-forces and looks at religious practices and rituals that take place in-and-out the institutional environment, I find Kouega’s (2008) framework to be limiting in its ability to draw conclusions to the research questions of this paper because it only focuses on the practices held inside the institutions. On the contrary, I find Spolsky’s framework more comprehensive if conducted and applied ethnographically. Lomeu-Gomes (2019) stated that the growing use of ethnographic approaches in FLP calls for a discussion of “the extent to which Spolsky’s general model and its underlying epistemological and ontological assumptions are compatible with those of ethnographic approaches to the study of language and society.” (p. 11). In general, the ethnographic application along with Spolsky’s framework will help to understand the relationship between language policies (e.g., religious language policy) and practices, as well as reveal the actual language practices within the family domain (Lanza & Lomeu-Gomes, 2020).

This study relies on Spolsky’s framework for FLP research, notwithstanding recent criticisms of the framework’s theoretical foundations and its implications for FLP research (e.g.,
Lomeu-Gomes, 2018), which I discuss in the following section when I justify why I chose ethnography as an approach for this FLP study. However, and as I stated above, the reason I used this model goes to the core of my research which first, considers the religion, and its beliefs and practices, as both ‘social and self-forces,’ and second, examines the impact of the Islamic Language Policy (Spolsky, 2009), which necessitates the use of Arabic in most of its practices, on the FLPs of the non-Arab Muslim families.

2.4.2 Ethnography in FLP

According to Curdt-Christiansen (2018), there are three broad categories of approaches used in FLP: quantitative approaches (such as survey studies), qualitative and interpretative methods (such as data collected through interviews or stories), and sociolinguistic ethnography (including audios and videos of family interactional data). In general, sociolinguistic ethnography brings together various research disciplines (such as interactional sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and new literacy studies) in today’s world (Rampton & Maybin, 2015), where globalization, along with international migration, has resulted in a more “fluid, heterogeneous, and under-patterned” understanding of the world than previously assumed (Bauman, 1992, p.65). Furthermore, although traditional ethnographers often immerse themselves in distant ethnic groups, linguistic ethnographers frequently focus on local populations and so must utilize methods that allow them to achieve an analytic perspective (Rampton et al., 2015), which is what I did in this study as I focus on a local population in my home country, Saudi Arabia. Moreover, using an ethnographic approach is important to this study since it will not only document language use but will also provide insight into how attitudes toward language practices are developed (see Copp Jinkerson, 2012; Kyritzis, Reynolds & Evaldsson, 2010). Therefore, and because my participants...
and I share the same religion and faith, such an approach was advantageous as I felt that we, my
participants and I, had a common ground, allowing us to engage in this study together.

In terms of ethnographic studies in FLP, Gallo and Hornberger (2019) argue that FLP
studies represent part of the movement that language policy and planning (LPP) is taking toward
greater attention to micro-level activities in language planning. Ethnographic studies in this context
make the interaction between the “hegemonies of policy and the power of language policy actors”
(i.e., policymakers, communities, families) more obvious and explicit (Johnson, 2013 cited in
Gallo & Hornberger, 2019, p. 7). Moreover, Blommaert and Jie (2020) noted that ethnographic
fieldwork aims to elicit information on issues that are frequently overlooked yet are essential to
the underlying patterns of people’s lives.

Furthermore, one should note that this change toward ethnographic studies in FLP, along
with many other attempts by many scholars to engage with different models or theories in FLP
studies, came because of the critiques Spolsky’s model received because of its lack of
epistemological and ontological assumptions. Lomeu-Gomes (2019) summarized three
ontological and epistemological assumptions of Spolsky’s model. First, he stated that the domain
concept in Spolsky’s model is used to signify “the salience of role relations between participants”,
as opposed to viewpoints that emphasize social categorizations such as race, ethnicity, gender, sex,
or age (p.22). Second, he also noted that Spolsky’s model sees language as “an abstract, bounded,
discrete entity that can be neatly delineated” (Lomeu-Gomes, 2019, p.22), although Spolsky
himself highlights the “sloppiness of the labels we have available” when describing multilingual
practices and contexts (Spolsky 2004, p.161). The last assumption was that “language behavior is
reflective of sociocultural patterning” (Fishman 1972, p.441), which Spolsky echoed in his
argument that “language management is not autonomous, but the reflex of the social, political,
economic, religious, ideological, emotional context in which human life goes on” (Spolsky 2009, p.9 as cited in Lomeu-Gomes, 2019, pp. 60-61)

However, many scholars argue that the ethnographic approach can provide a ground-level account of parental agency in FLP studies (see Fogle, 2013; Cassels-Johnson, 2013; Curdt-Christiansen, 2014, 2016). It can also provide a valid explanation of “the ways in which people accommodate, resist, and make policy in everyday social practice” (McCarty, 2015, p. 82). Therefore, this current study takes the ethnographic approach as a mean to collect the data and uncover themes; however, the study utilizes Spolsky’s model as a framework to present and analyze these data.

2.5 The history of immigration in Saudi Arabia, and its language policy.

This study takes place in a particular cultural, political, and religious setting; hence, and in order to comprehend the factors that contribute to and influence FLPs, I must contextualize my research site: Saudi Arabia. Therefore, there needs to be a discussion of Saudi Arabia’s cultural, political, economic, and religious development through the past years.

Saudi Arabia is the home of the Islamic holy cities of Makkah and Madinah, as well as the cities of Riyadh (the political capital) and Jeddah (the commercial capital). These metropolitan cities have dominated the region’s growth. However, traditionally, some nomadic pastoralists also have resided in the region. Yamani (2009) stated that the Hijaz, which is the region in Saudi Arabia that includes the cities of Makkah and Medina, “gained an international reputation for trade and as the focus of the Islamic hajj (pilgrimage), which contributed to its relative economic prosperity and enhanced its political significance” (p.1). Under the Ottomans (the mid-1700s), the economic resource of the Hijaz region was the revenues that came from the religious pilgrimage (Johany, 1982). Indeed, the majority of strong merchant families derived their fortune from businesses
serving pilgrims in Jeddah which become a commercial center as a gateway to Makkah and Madinah. It is worth mentioning that many of today’s families in Hijaz came to the region as pilgrims from other nations and chose to settle there permanently. (see Long, 2005; Shaw & Long, 1982). As a result, the Hijazi people developed a distinct cultural identity, beginning with their language. The Hijazi dialect of Arabic is distinctive in its use of specific terminologies and pronunciation of particular letters and phrases, as well as in its tone (Yamani 2009). Religiously, many Islamic schools emerged in the Hijaz as a result of diversity; there is however, a large Sufi presence in Hijaz, which includes certain rituals (e.g., celebrating the Prophet’s birthday) that are uncommon in the rest of Saudi Arabia (Yamani, 2009).

The current Saudi Arabia was founded in 1932 by King Abdulaziz after he united the four regions through a series of conquests that began in 1902 with the capture of Riyadh, the ancestral home of his family who founded the first and the second Saudi states which were founded in 1744. Since then, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been a hereditary monarchy governed on Islamic principles (Al-Enazy, 2010). At that time, all residents of the Hijaz were granted Saudi citizenship after the region joined the kingdom during the lifetime of the founding king; however, some residents of the region did not seek the Saudi citizenship and were thus not naturalized. As a result, many families now hold Saudi citizenship, while others from the same extended family do not. Overall, this historical background is important for this study because it provides context for the history of immigration and immigrant families in Saudi Arabia and explains why some immigrants are citizens of Saudi Arabia while others are not.

2.5.1 Immigration in Saudi Arabia

Regarding the Saudi labor market, the global economy, in the mid-1900s, was booming as a result of rapid industrialization; earlier sources of energy (steams and coals) were being phased
out in favor of, then, a modern fuel source which was oil. Saudi Arabia, however, happens to be home to one of the world's largest oil reserves. With greater resources in hand, the Saudi monarchy set about establishing and consolidating a centralized governmental bureaucracy. As oil earnings soared, the number of foreign workers moving to Saudi Arabia increased as well (Birks & Sinclair, 1982). The economic and political development that took place in Saudi Arabia at that time necessitated the need for manual labor, specialist expertise, and unskilled labor who came from all around the world. This massive flow of foreigners into the kingdom at that time, however, overwhelmed some Saudis, particularly those from Riyadh, who did not have a history of migration (Shaw & Long 1982). While there were no official laws regulating the dress code in Saudi Arabia at that time, especially for non-Muslim workers, gated housing compounds were created for the workers at the oil company. This type of housing increased for all high skilled foreign workers, non-Muslim and Muslim, especially after the terrorist attacks that Saudi Arabia was subjected to in the past years. I should mention here that one of the parents in this study previously lived in one of these gated communities in Jeddah before she got married and moved to Madinah. However, including this section is important to this study because it illustrates an important aspect that should be considered. Although all of the families in this study may have come to Saudi Arabia for religious reasons, economic reasons may also have been a major factor in their decision to settle in Saudi Arabia.

2.5.1 Saudi Arabia’s language policy

In terms of Saudi Arabia’s language policy, Payne and Almansour (2014) stated that there are few studies on Saudi Arabia’s language policy, and until the moment of writing this dissertation, most studies focused entirely on the educational aspect, and only discussed the inclusion of the English language in the past (see Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017; Louber & Troudi,
These studies, however, did not discuss Saudi Arabia’s language policy, but rather its educational language policy, and there is a significant distinction between the two. Educational language policy is a context-specific policy whereas language policy has been described as “decisions people make about languages and their uses in society” (Shohamy, 2006, p. 77). Additionally, language policy is not limited to official documents or announced policies; it also occurs in various forms such as hidden, unofficial, or implicit regulations or practices (Ricento, 2006; Shohamy, 2006). In this regard, I should note that the first line of the Saudi constitution states that Arabic is the only official language in the country. However, despite the fact that it sees itself as a monolingual country, Saudi has seen an increase in multilingual immigrants, expatriates, and sojourners in the recent years; thus, many government agencies have begun offering services in different languages, including Urdu. Even government accounts on social media have begun to write posts in multiple languages, as seen in the image below (Figure 3), which shows a Saudi Interior Ministry account on Twitter writing a tweet in Urdu.

Figure 3: Screenshot of the Saudi Ministry of Interior's Twitter account

A tweet written in Urdu in the Saudi Ministry of Interior's Twitter account (June 5, 2020)
To summarize, there are no studies exploring the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s language policy, and the majority of studies focus exclusively on educational language policy, despite the fact that the state is currently undergoing significant social changes. For instance, in 2019, and for the first time in the country’s history, Saudi Arabia has officially opened its doors to visitors who wish to travel to the country for purposes other than religion. Previously, only Muslims seeking to perform Umrah or Hajj could get a visa to travel to Saudi Arabia. Non-Muslims could only enter Saudi Arabia through a work contract, which is no longer the case since non-Muslims are now permitted to enter Saudi Arabia for the purpose of tourism, and even visit religious sites such as Madinah. These social and political developments may have an influence on the country’s LP, providing a chance for academics to address this gap.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on the literature review based on the dissertation's research questions, and it was divided into three main themes. The first theme focused on the intersectionality of language and religion, the second theme provided background information on key literature on family language policy, and the final theme provided context for some background information on Saudi Arabia. This helped to develop a thorough understanding of the critical interaction between these three themes and to identify potential connections that have not previously been addressed. The chapter, and themes, was/were divided into five sections, which are as follows: The first section specifically investigates the intersectionality of language, religion, and immigration, an area that has received little attention from FLP scholars. The second section explores the origin of FLP as a field; then, it discusses some key literature that helps set the foundation of this field. It also lays out the factors that influence the FLP, as mentioned in recent studies, and the interrelationships between these factors. In addition, the third section recognizes literature review
gaps, and then presents the major questions of this dissertation. The fourth section discusses the theoretical framework of the study as well as ethnography in FLP. Finally, the fifth section presents the history of immigration in Saudi Arabia, and its language policy.
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The study employed an ethnographic approach that combined different methodological techniques, including in-depth semi-structured interviews, ethnographic observation, and naturally occurring data (NOD). This study included six families with diverse immigrant histories, including eleven parents (six females and five men) and six children (two girls and four boys).

In this chapter I provide the methodology of this dissertation. The chapter is divided into four sections. First, I explain and discuss the multiple case study design briefly, as well as why it is an appropriate choice for answering the research questions. Then I present the participating families and discuss the inclusion criteria, recruiting method, and setting of the research site. Additionally, one part of this section is devoted to describing the six participating families and how I met them. Following that I discuss the data collection techniques followed by the data analysis section. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of my positionality as a researcher and the trustworthiness of the study.

3.1 Multiple Case-study Design

The focus of this ethnographic dissertation was on six Pakistani families in Saudi Arabia. These families were varied and diverse in many ways: in terms of their socioeconomic status, their time of being in Saudi, and the number of children, etc. The study employed ethnographic qualitative multiple case studies in a tradition of linguistic ethnography; I treated each family as a case study. In the first phase of building this dissertation, I decided to follow the Multiple Case-study Design and include multiple families to capture diverse and variety of experiences embedded in multiple families within one particular community, and also to provide a broader understanding of patterns parents highlight with their children when it comes to their religious linguistic
requirement. Gustafsson (2017) stated that “when a study includes more than one single case, a multiple case study is needed” (p.3). Thus, and in order to provide the best possible answers to the research questions, I believe that the multiple case study approach contributed to capturing the intricacies of community practices in general and increasing the validity of the findings. Duff (2014) stated that case studies in Applied Linguistics made significant contributions to theories and models in a variety of domains, including “language attrition and shift, acculturation and socialization, and familial or workplace multilingualism and pragmatics” (p. 233). The use of the multiple case study approach, in this study, offered holistic, thorough, and novel findings; consequently, these findings contribute to previous research on FLP.

In comparison to a case study, a multiple case study approach allows for a more in-depth exploration of research questions and theoretical development (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Additionally, it enabled me to analyze data from both "within" and "across" settings (Yin, 2003). Baxter and Jack (2008) stated that evidence created from a multiple case study is measured strong and reliable. Although the multiple case-study design shows great advantages, the number of FLP studies that include such design is very limited.

Finally, I should note that as there are advantages of applying multiple case-study design, there are some difficulties as well. Multiple case studies can be very difficult, and it could take more time to implement (Baxter & Jack, 2008). In my case, conducting an ethnographic multiple case-study approach in six families with multiple sources of data was very challenging and time-consuming; for example, I recorded a total of almost 20 hours of family interactions and interviews, not to mention the ethnographic observations that were documented. Therefore, the selection of this approach should not be viewed as an effort to expand the sample size as one might assume (Bengtsson, 1999). In fact, because of this approach, I was able to collect very interesting
data that displayed very diverse patterns embedded in the fluidity of the families’ dynamics within the same community; many of these patterns helped answer the research questions, and it would not be possible to capture if the study took the one case design.

3.2 Research Participants

In this section, I highlight my three inclusion criteria that I used as well as the research context and describe my recruitment process and the ethical considerations of this process. In addition, the final portion of this section describes the six participating families and how I met them.

3.2.1 Inclusion criteria.

I used three inclusion criteria to recruit families for this study. The first is that the family had to be non-Saudi, either from Pakistan or originally from Pakistan, and live in Madinah. That includes the first and second generations of Pakistani families who still live in Saudi. It also includes individuals who consider themselves Saudis but have not obtained the Saudi nationality. Second, the family had to be bilingual in Urdu and Arabic or Pidginized Arabic. The inclusion of families speaking pidginized Arabic added some interesting family cases to the research, demonstrating how they manage their language use on a daily basis in light of their religious linguistic requirements. Finally, the families had to be parents to a school-aged child living at home. I excluded families who do not have children, or whose children have not reached the age of school yet. That is because I needed only families who talked and negotiated their language choices at home following their children's exposure to the majority language, Arabic, in Saudi public schools.

Finally, I wanted to include families from various socioeconomic backgrounds. There were some instructors, an engineer, a barber, and, of course, some unemployed individuals. Having this
diversity helped me obtain better findings for the analysis. The following Table (1) shows the profile of these families, including eleven parents (six females and five males) and six children (two girls and four boys).

*Bold age number is the interviewed child*

The families in the study were given names based on the name of their child who was interviewed for the study. For instance, the first family in Table (1) is Salah’s family, indicating that Salah was the child interviewed in this home, and the family in this study is named after him. The table also includes their age, generation, level of education, and occupation of each adult member of these families. Regarding their generation, the table also shows two periods of generation: first and second. The first generation means those who were born in Pakistan and came to Saudi Arabia on a working visa, while the second generation means those who were born in Saudi, yet he/she does not have the Saudi nationality. Unlike the U.S., immigration policy in Saudi Arabia does not grant the citizenship to those who are born in the country.

Moreover, in terms of education, I used the International Standard Classification of Education (2021), which means (1) for lower education, (2) for lower secondary education, (3) for higher secondary education, and (4) for higher education. Finally, and with regard to the participants occupations, most of the parents are blue and pink-collar workers. Personal service-oriented workers in retail, nursing, and teaching are examples of pink-collar occupations, whereas hard manual laborers are examples of blue-collar occupations. The following is a brief description of the context of the study site and why I chose it.
3.2.2 Research site context

This research took place in Madinah, Saudi Arabia, and it was specifically conducted inside the Haram zone. The Haram is a word used in Islamic urban planning; the word ḥaram means “a site of high sanctity,” and it describes the two holy mosques in Makkah and Madinah and the area around them, where non-Muslims are not permitted to enter. Along with the restriction on non-Muslim access, there are several additional religious practices that Muslims within the region must adhere to. Additionally, Muslims believe that these areas have a significant amount of sanctity due to the great religious rewards and punishments associated with them. It should be noted that the majority of foreigners who come to work or live in Madinah and Makkah, including all of my participants, prefer to live inside these districts; they want to be close to the holy mosques and other religious landmarks. I choose this neighborhood because I knew that the majority of the residents are from international families, and I wanted to have as many families as possible. The number of Saudi families residing in these neighborhoods is decreasing as more move to the suburbs. I could not reach the official data that shows the demography of Madinah. However, according to my experience of living in Madinah for the most of my life, a large number of Saudi families in Madinah are conservatives, and the idea of living in areas with international neighbors invites 'unwanted' changes to the family and their children, therefore they prefer to move elsewhere. During my meetings with these families, I drove and walked around their neighborhoods, the number of international foreigners was very noticeable.

3.2.3 Recruitment Process

The above context is very important as it shows the situation of the participating families in this study. Therefore, in order to find families with the above criteria, I identified the neighborhoods inside the Haram zone where immigrants with the above characteristics live. I then
approached people living in those neighborhoods to participate in the study in three ways. First, recruitment flyers and posters (See appendix A) were posted in public places such as foreign restaurants, grocery stores, and coffee shops in these neighborhoods; however, I only received one call via this method. The second method was a more random yet direct way of sampling where I randomly ask potential participants whenever I have a conversation with any one of them. Only one family was recruited through this method. Finally, the networking and referrals method, which was the most effective one as it recruited four families. That is, the first two methods were not effective as they did not recruit enough families; most of them showed some hesitant and were afraid that I work with outside agencies. However, families were more accepting via networking and referrals because they trusted me and knew exactly my identification. The networking process was either done by the families themselves, who introduced me to another family, or by some friends who knew one of the parents who fit my criteria. The following Table (2) shows the names of the families and the method that was used to recruit them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment methods</th>
<th>Numbers of families</th>
<th>Name of Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Referrals/networks</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kareem’s Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mohammed’s Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Salah’s Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ahmed’s Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flyers (Posters)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wateen’s Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person-to-person recruitment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sophia’s Family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.4 Ethical Considerations

The data of this dissertation were collected after I received permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human rights subjects (See appendix B). Protecting the privacy of every participating family in this study was considered and emphasized. The real name of every family member was not used in this study. Rather, their names along with
all identifying information that could lead to them were replaced with pseudonyms and equivalent pseudo information. Also, families were always noted of their right to withdraw from the study the moment they feel their privacy is being invaded. I also handed them a translated copy of the IRB along with another translated copy of some information about my research so they can be aware of the process. Overall, I made every effort to protect the family’s confidentiality and privacy.

3.2.5 Participating Families

The following is a brief description of the families, and how I met them. Given the nature of this ethnographic research, I believe it is important to provide these information as it does not only provide a sense of the early phase of the data collecting procedure, but also offers a guide of how recruiting process is being handled in different areas in the globe. An example of this could be the way recruited Sophia’s Family (3.2.5.5), as I will explain in detail in the following sections.

3.2.5.1 Salah’s family

Starting with first family in the above Table (1), Mohanad, the father, who is a first-generation immigrant, and Sabah, the mother, who is a second-generation immigrant, have been married for eleven years, and they have three children, two girls and a boy. Mohanad works as both English and Quran teacher while Sabah works as a volunteer Quran teacher in a nearby QMC. I know this family through one my friend whose child is one of Mohanad’s students. I met this family three times during the summer of 2019, two of which were at their house in a neighborhood called Al-saith, within a walking distance to the Prophet Mosque. The third meeting was held at a coffee shop with the father and his child, Salah. In total, there were three recorded interviews, two with both parents individually and one with Salah (see Table 3).
As I was building my relationship with this family, there were many informal interviews that took place. For example, at our first meeting which was before the sunset prayer, Mohanad suggested to accompany him and his son to the Mosque to pray the sunset prayer before it gets crowded. Minutes later, I found myself walking toward the Mosque with him and his ten years old Salah, and we talked and discussed some interesting points on our way. Nothing was recorded in our first meeting as I was building my relationship with this family, however, I was observing and writing in my Note app whenever it was possible. The reason I did not record these interactions was because the family members, and this applies to all families in the study, were shy and uncomfortable at the beginnings, but the more I talked to them about my research and how it relates to them, they were more open to share more stories and thoughts, and even ready to walk me around their house.

Furthermore, the family also recorded two NOD sessions during their dinner time. They were given a recording device to be used during dinner time; however, they used what it appeared to be a more practical way, the WhatsApp app. The family found this way a more practical than what I suggested, the recording device, as the app was accessible and easy to use.

Table 3: Data of Salah’s family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mohanad</td>
<td>May 19, 2019</td>
<td>01:15:33</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabah</td>
<td>May 19, 2019</td>
<td>00:42:37</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salah</td>
<td>May 19, 2019</td>
<td>00:48:14</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All family</td>
<td>May 24, 2019</td>
<td>00:24:12</td>
<td>NOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All family</td>
<td>May 25, 2019</td>
<td>00:28:34</td>
<td>NOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>03:39:10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.5.2 Mohammed’s Family

Next, Mohammed's family. Mohammed's mother, Eve, is a second-generation Pakistani single mother who got married to a Saudi man at an early age and had two boys. This case is very
interesting as it stands as the only single parent family in this study. Eve’s ex-husband did not participate in the study; however, Eve shared some information about him and his family. Her ex-husband is a Saudi national who works as a car dealer. After the divorce in 2015, Eve and her ex-husband decided that he would have the children for four days, and she would have them for three days during summer vacation. However, the situation changes during the school period, during which the children stay at their father’s place during the school days and spend the weekends at the mother’s.

Further, I knew Eve through my brother who works with her at five stars hotel right next to the Prophet Mosque. I told my brother about my research, and he suggested to meet his colleague, Eve. I texted her the following day and she was very welcoming and suggested to meet first at a coffee shop. It is important to highlight that it is uncommon in Saudi Arabia, especially in Madinah, for men and women who are not related to sit together in public, and even more so in private. To help Eve feel more comfortable speaking with me, I asked my wife to accompany me to the coffee shop, which proved to be extremely effective because Eve later shared that she was initially worried about meeting a strange man in a public place, but once she met my wife and me, and learned more about my research, she became deeply involved and very interested. My wife then sat at another table, and Eve and I started the first recorded interview.

The other interviews were at Eve’s house where I recorded the second interview with her, and the other one with her child, Mohamed. As for the NOD session, I gave Eve the option to use the recording device or the WhatsApp application, she sent me only one session via WhatsApp (Table 4). Fieldnotes were taken throughout and shortly following all of my meetings with this family based on my ability to take notes in each setting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Data of Mohammed’s Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

59
3.2.5.3 Kareem’s Family

Moving to Kareem’s family, Samar, the mother, and Abdullah, the father, have two boys, Kareem and Nader. Both parents were born in Saudi Arabia and have never been to Pakistan. Their families migrated to Saudi Arabia forty years ago and have lived in Saudi since then. I reached this family, as the previous one, through one of my friends who referred them to me. I met Kareem’s family members four times; I first met Abdullah, the father, alone at a coffee shop where we talked about the study, and no recording happened at this point. Abdullah then invited me to his house the following day where I met Samar, his wife, and their two children. At their house, I conducted two interviews, one with Samar, the mother, and the other with their oldest child, Kareem. Abdullah’s two recorded interviews happened days after the meeting with his family, and they took place outside the house at the same coffee shop where we first met (Table 5).

Regarding the family NOD, the family was able to provide me with only one session in which they used the recording device I gave them. As for the field notes, I was able to collect them in all of my meetings with the family members, even in their house and the children’s room as well.

### Table 5: Data of Kareem’s Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Samar</td>
<td>June 19, 2019</td>
<td>01:19:23</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kareem</td>
<td>June 19, 2019</td>
<td>00:24:52</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All family</td>
<td>June 21, 2019</td>
<td>00:28:47</td>
<td>NOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdullah</td>
<td>June 23, 2019</td>
<td>01:13:08</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdullah</td>
<td>June 25, 2019</td>
<td>01:04:35</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>04:30:45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.5.4 Ahmed’s Family

Moving to Ahmed’s family who migrated to Saudi Arabia twenty years ago. Sharifa, who is a housewife, and Hussain who is an agriculture engineer, came together from Pakistan and gave birth to four children, two boys and two girls, in Saudi Arabia. That is, both Hussain and Sharifa are first-generation immigrants, and their children are Saudi born Pakistanis. The family lives in a neighborhood called Quba, which hosts Quba Mosque. The mosque is significant to Muslims since it was constructed by the Prophet Mohammad and is considered to be the site of the first Friday prayers in the Islamic history. Ahmed’s family choose this neighborhood to be able to pray all the five daily prayers at this special mosque.

I knew this family through Abdullah, who is Kareem’s father from the previous family. When I texted Hussain, he was already aware of my research after he spoke with Kareem’s father before our interaction. However, one thing I should highlight here is the benefit of the referring method which was very helpful to me as most of the families I have met through this method have been more comfortable with the fact that their friends or colleagues, who referred them to me, were already aware of my background.

Additionally, I met Ahmed’s family three times; the first visit was a quick one just to meet them and plan everything according to their suitable time. The second visit took place the following week where I only met most family members but their father, Hussain, who had a sudden business meeting at the same time as my meeting. However, at that second meeting, I interviewed both the mother and her fifteen years old child, Ahmed. I later, on another day, met Hussain, the father, and his child, Ahmed, at a coffee shop where we conducted Hussain’s interview. With regards to NOD, the family was only able to provide me with one session during which they used the recording
device I provided (Table 6). In addition, all of my meetings with this family were documented using field notes, which I was able to take in each setting.

**Table 6: Data of Ahmed’s Family**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharifa</td>
<td>July 02, 2019</td>
<td>01:22:12</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed</td>
<td>July 02, 2019</td>
<td>00:57:04</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All family</td>
<td>July 04, 2019</td>
<td>00:19:45</td>
<td>NOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hussain</td>
<td>July 10, 2019</td>
<td>01:02:45</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>03:41:46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3.2.5.5 Sophia’s Family**

Next is Sophia’s Family. Ayman, the father, and Abeer, the mother, have five children (four girls and one boy), all of whom go to Saudi public schools. Both parents in this family are first first-generation immigrants, and all of their children were born in Saudi Arabia. Unlike all of the above families who were recruited through the referral method, I used the person-to-person recruitment method with this case. I first met Mr. Ayman at a mosque where I heard him reciting the Quran fluently. I knew that Mr. Ayman was not a Saudi from the way he dressed; he was wearing a ‘kurta,’ a long loose shirt that most Pakistanis wear every day. I went to him directly and presented myself; he was happy to participate in the study. This practice which may seems unusual in an individualistic context (e.g., the U.S.), is rather acceptable and normal in a collectivistic context such as Saudi Arabia.

I met this family three times, including my first meeting with Mr. Ayman which lasted for almost an hour as we went to his shop right after the prayer and talked more about my research. Mr. Ayman invited me to his house the following day where I met and interviewed the rest of his family. I also had a follow up meeting with the family the next day as I was invited to have dinner with them. Dinner was gender separated; I sat in a room with Mr. Ayman and his six-year-old child, while all females ate in another room. They did so because the adult females were dressed
in the Islamic Hijab and had their faces covered. I was able to walk around their house and take field notes on all of my visits. In terms of NOD, the family could only provide me with one session during which they used the recording device I provided (Table 7).

**Table 7: Data of Sophia’s Family**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ayman</td>
<td>July 22, 2019</td>
<td>01:09:31</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abeer</td>
<td>July 22, 2019</td>
<td>00:26:52</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophia</td>
<td>July 22, 2019</td>
<td>00:37:12</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All family</td>
<td>July 26, 2019</td>
<td>00:13:19</td>
<td>NOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>02:26:54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3.2.5.6 Wateen’s Family**

Finally, Wateen's family. Waleed, the father, who is a first-generation immigrant, and Kholod, the mother, who is a second-generation immigrant, have three Saudi born daughters. Waleed works as a full-time barber while Kholod takes care of their children during the day. Similar to Salah’s family, this family lives in Al-Saih neighborhood which is very close to the Prophet Mosque. The recruitment of this family was very interesting as they were the only family in the study who first initiated our relationship. Kholod told me that she saw my announcement poster at her nearby mosque, she told her husband about it as she believes that her family can relate to the study.

I met this family four times; two at their house, and the other two at the Salon. The first meeting was on the same day I received the call from Waleed, and we agreed to meet at his Salon at the end of the day. I went there and talked with him for an hour before he closed the Salon, and then we walked to his house, which was very close to his workplace, and I met all of his family members. Nothing was recorded at this point; interviews were recorded the following day during which I interviewed the father, the mother, and their thirteen years child, Wateen. The next day, I went to Mr. Waleed's salon and stayed and observed there for almost four hours with him and his
daughters, who come and go as they live nearby the salon. During this meeting, as well as earlier ones, I was able to take very interesting fieldnotes about the family. Regarding the family NOD, they were able to provide me with two sessions in which they used the WhatsApp app as a mean to record and send these sessions to me (Table 8).

### Table 8: Data of Wateen’s Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waleed</td>
<td>August 04, 2019</td>
<td>00:52:12</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kholod</td>
<td>August 04, 2019</td>
<td>01:08:23</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wateen</td>
<td>August 04, 2019</td>
<td>00:23:16</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All family</td>
<td>August 05, 2019</td>
<td>00:14:33</td>
<td>NOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All family</td>
<td>August 08, 2019</td>
<td>00:17:13</td>
<td>NOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>02:55:37</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3.2.5.7 Summary**

The preceding section provided an overview of the six participating families and how I met them. Eleven parents (six females and five males) and six children (two girls and four boys) participated in this study. The data from these families were collected through the summer months (May through August) of 2019 in Madinah, Saudi Arabia. The following section discusses the data collection techniques used in this dissertation.

**3.3 Data collection techniques**

In the context of this dissertation, the data were collected through three techniques: (1) semi-structured interviews; (2) field notes and observations from research sites; (3) recordings of Naturally Occurring Data (NOD) between the family members during dinner time. I discuss each of these data collection methods in depth in the following sections. However, more than 19 hours of recorded data were taken from interviews and NOD sessions (see Table 9). Regarding the fieldnotes, six e-files (one for each family) on my Note application – that works on my smartphone and my personal computer at the same time – documented all of my notes and observations pre,
during, and after each family encounter, which provided me with very important data of the lives of these families (see Figure 4).

*Figure 4: A screenshot of Sophia’s family field-note on the e-Note App*

Overall, as the stories of these families unfolded, each of them shared insights and information about who they are as a bilingual Pakistani family living in Saudi Arabia, as well as how their life in Saudi Arabia influenced their family language strategies. Finally, it might be useful to restate that the families were named after their children’s name who participated in the study, and they are as follows: Salah, Mohammed, Kareem, Ahmed, Sophia, and Wateen.

*Table 9: Recording dates and times by family*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Families</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salah’s Family</td>
<td>May, 2019</td>
<td>03:39:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammed’s Family</td>
<td>June, 2019</td>
<td>02:08:05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kareem’s Family</td>
<td>June, 2019</td>
<td>04:30:45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed’s Family</td>
<td>July, 2019</td>
<td>03:41:46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophia’s Family</td>
<td>July, 2019</td>
<td>02:26:54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wateen’s Family</td>
<td>August, 2019</td>
<td>02:55:37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>19:22:17</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.1 Semi-structured Interviews

In-depth semi-structured interviews are a typical interviewing format in qualitative research. While some interviews are unstructured, the in-depth semi-structured interview is usually a personal and close interaction during which open, direct, verbal questions are asked to elicit the information necessary for the study. It can also provide data to researchers that is “probably not accessible using techniques such as questionnaires and observations” (Blaxter et al. 2006, p.172). Additionally, it has been suggested that when conducting such interviews, at least a basic checklist based on research questions be used to ensure that all relevant areas are covered (see Berg 2007; Schensul et al. 1999). As a result, I compiled a list of questions that I would refer to during all interviews (See appendix C). However, it is worth noting that the questions in an in-depth semi-structured interview are based on a set of prepared open-ended inquiries, while the rest of the questions emerge from the interviewer's interaction with the interviewee.

3.2.2 Ethnographic Observation

Participant observation entails an organized and thorough engagement with the participants’ everyday routines. McCarty (2015) stated that observation involves “observing the activities, people, and physical aspects of the situation and systematically recording those observations” (p. 85). In the context of this study, I utilized ethnographic observation (Emerson et al., 2011) to capture the families’ routines during all of our meetings. This method is commonly used in the study of language socialization. (e.g., Bayley & Schecter, 2003; Schieffelin, & Ochs, 1986). For over four months in the summer of 2019, I utilized the Note app on my smartphone to record field notes pre, during, and after each family encounter, which provided me with very important data of the lives of these families. Using the Note app instead of the traditional hard notebook was rather helpful. The app was accessible at all the time in a cloud protected service
with a passcode (Apple iCloud), which improved the security of the data decreased the potential of data loss. Lastly, I should note that the field notes that came from the ethnographic observation were important to the research objectives, and they showed the important role field notes play in such setting (See Blommaert & Jie, 2010, 2020; Heller, 2008).

3.2.3 Naturally Occurring Data (NOD)

Since the article of Schwartz (2010), in which she emphasizes the significance of collecting and analyzing naturally occurring conversations using ethnographic methods, many papers have followed her advice (Lomeu-Gomes, 2020). For instance, Kheirkhah and Cekaite (2015) used video recordings, ethnographic observations, and interviews to explore the language practices of a Persian-Kurdish family in Swedish. These methods enabled them to identify the many strategies employed by parents in their interactions with their children, as well as the necessity of considering children as agents in the implementation of FLPs. The NOD allowed me to gain a better understanding of the family's behaviors, which enabled me to match them with what the parents expressed in their interviews.

In the context of this study, the families were given a Sony recording device to use at dinner time to record the language practices and routines. However, I should note here that some families used what it appeared to be a more practical approach, an application called WhatsApp. It is a messaging app that allows its users to send text, voice, and video messages in a secured way as they use the end-to-end encryption technique. Some participating families considered this method to be more practical than the recording device I provided, due to the app's accessibility and convenience. From my perspective, I found this way very applicable and efficient because I was receiving the data the moment it happened which saved a lot of my time.
Further, these recordings not only showed the actual language practices that occurred in their homes but also aided me in triangulating the data. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) defined triangulation as the use of multiple data sources to check one source of information and compare it to the others, which helps to increase the validity of the data collected. That is, if I identified behaviors in one of the family's data that differed from what the family reported, I would clarify them.

3.4 The Data Analysis Process

This section covers my data analysis approach, covering all steps of the study. I go over my technique of data selection, the problems and limits of the data collection, and data analysis methodologies employed. I should point out here that the data analysis process started as soon as I received my first sort of data in the summer of 2019. Each data piece that I received was analyzed separately and underwent comparison and contrast in order to “discover variation, portray shades of meaning, and examine complexity” (Rubin, 2005, p. 202). I then have started to listen, read, and engage myself in each set of data as Creswell (2013) suggested. Besides, there were three primary data analysis procedures: (1) data preparation, (2) organization, and (3) coding.

3.4.1 Data preparation.

This study engages a variety of data analysis tools. The data collected from each of them underwent careful handling and analysis. The following sections show how I did this in detail for each type of data.

3.4.1.1 Semi-structured interviews

With the exception of the single parent family in which I only interviewed the mother, I interviewed both parents of each participating family, and I also interviewed the oldest child of all families. Also, I should note that I had at least one individual interview with each of the
participants; however, most of these interviews were conducted in a setting with the presence of at least two or all family members, especially when I interviewed a female participant. As I earlier explained with the single parent case, being alone, as a male researcher, with a female participant is something that is not common in this context for religious and cultural reasons; thus, I respected the decision of each family as I let them organize the way the interview should go and appreciated their cooperation with me. In fact, with all these limitations, I still find the attempt I made in this study could help other researchers who are interested in similar studies in Saudi Arabia.

The interviews were recorded via my Sony recording device, which differs from the one I give to families. After each interview, I moved the recording files into my hard disk in a special file for each family. I transcribed all these files by myself, and no one was hired to for this purpose. For this I used Express Scribe software which is a professional audio software for PC or Mac designed to help transcribe audio recordings.

Lastly, I should note two points regarding the transcription process. First, all interviews were conducted in Arabic, including one with a mother who only speaks Urdu, as her eldest daughter served as a translator between me and the mother. Second, some parents talked in pidginized Arabic during their interviews, which I later learned was difficult for Arabic speakers, particularly those who did not live in Saudi Arabia, to comprehend. As a result, and to make my data more accessible and understandable to a larger audience, I translated their speech to MSA and utilized almost identical words and phrases whenever possible; these discourses are marked in italics.

3.4.1.2 Field Notes and Observations

While visiting these families, I actively engaged in and observed their family life. I sat and ate with them, played with their children, explored their homes, checked their televisions, walked
around their neighborhoods with them, accompanied them to their mosques and prayed with them, and went to restaurants, coffee shops, and other waking places with them. I attempted to live life as the family did in hopes of gaining insights into their actual family language use in many settings.

My observations resulted in observational notes that I kept in my Note App throughout the observation process and after I got into my car at the end of my meetings. Meanwhile, I was making analytical notes and capturing my thoughts and feelings on what I had witnessed and experienced. After transcribing the NOD, I matched it chronologically to the observational notes in the database of the analysis software I used.

3.4.1.3 Naturally Occurring Data (NOD)

The recordings of NOD provided eight sessions of audio data of six bilingual Pakistani families’ conversations during dinner time. I used two Sony recording devices: one for my interviews and one for the families to record their NOD sessions. However, I made sure that after receiving the device from each family, I downloaded everything into my hard disk and then deleted all data before giving it to another family. Further, I listened to each NOD session to understand the background and then selected episodes with significant bilingual or religious practices that are related to the theme of this study. That is to say, the participants’ code-switching behavior, parent-child interaction, child-initiated interactions, and language religious practices were all taken into consideration when determining the criterion for significance. These selected episodes where is transcribed and added to the family files, and the database of the analysis software in chronological manner.

3.4.2 Data Organization

Transcribing process. All interviews, field notes, and the selected episodes of NOD were all transcribed and exported in a written form into my hard disk in its original language, whether
it was Arabic or Pidginized Arabic. However, some of the selected episodes of the NOD had some Urdu/English content from some families, therefore, and since I do not speak Urdu, I reached all families in a periodical way, via WhatsApp, to help me to translate some Urdu words. I did not translate all of the Urdu content because my objective with this source of data, the NOD, was/is to identify how families communicate during dinner time and whether they speak Arabic or Urdu (parents to parents and parents to children). That is, I want to get a snapshot of some of the linguistic practices occurring within these families’ homes as an attempt to triangulate the data with what all the parents expressed in their interviews. However, there were times when I only needed to verify what the parents were saying at a given time (e.g., at one point, I wanted to see if the parents were giving instructions related to religion in Urdu). When this happens, I send the exact audio segments (ranging from 20 to 50 seconds) to one of the parents via WhatsApp, and they respond by explaining what they were saying at the time. After I traveled back to the U.S., my communication with all families was, and still is, conducted via WhatsApp, which is a very secure application that uses end-to-end encryption as I wanted to make sure all families felt safe to share whatever they wanted to share with me.

The qualitative data analysis software. Following the transcribing process, I began working on Quirkos, a qualitative data analysis software. In contrast to NVivo, Quirkos was the only qualitative data analysis software that supported the Arabic language. All of my data, including interviews, fieldnotes, and NOD sessions, were entered into the Quirkos database in textual form, where I used the bubbles technique (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Screenshot of the Quirkos Software
This technique, with its graphical interface, assisted me in examining the larger and smaller details in and across all of my data by creating bubbles of varying sizes and different colors to represent the relation and frequency of my codes and themes. In other words, the bubble method was more graphical in appearance in which I connected sentences and patterns from all the data and placed them inside multiple bubbles, each bubble functioning as a hashtag, but the more data that enters the bubble, the larger the bubble becomes, indicating that this pattern is significant and recurrent. I spent several months constructing, connecting, and dividing bubbles to look for significant themes and patterns in one set of data and see how they related to others. Besides, with this software, I had six tabs, one for each family, into which I imported all of the data for that family in chronological order. I was capable of connecting all of my field notes, interviews, and NOD sessions altogether.

Regarding the data analysis procedures and findings, I came to the conclusion that, given the large number of participants and the volume of data obtained, as well as the variety of emerging
family language policies, it is best to analyze and present the results in an independent manner: that is, each FLP must be considered separately. Thereby, in Chapter Five, the analysis and presentation of each FLP findings will be separate, systematic, and coherent, allowing me to compare and discuss the findings of this particular FLP to those of Western studies. Cross-cases analysis of all FLPs combined will be presented in Chapter Six while answering the study questions to provide a picture of how Pakistani families in Saudi Arabia form and manage their FLPs, as well as the effect of religion on these policies.

3.4.3 Coding

The goal of qualitative analysis is to “discover variation, portray shades of meaning and examine complexity” rather than “counting or providing numeric summaries” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 202). Since this study seeks to explore the impact of religion and religious beliefs, practices, and rituals on the FLPs of Muslim Pakistani families in Saudi Arabia, the thematic analysis was employed as the instrument of data interpretation (Braun & Clarke 2006). This form of analysis gave significant insights and highlighted diverse behaviors that reflected the ideologies and attitudes of family members (See Yousef & Taylor-Leech, 2018; Pavlenko, 2004; Yu, 2013). According to Cavana, Delahaye, and Sekaran (2001), thematic analysis is used to “identify the underlying themes, insights and relationship within the phenomenon being researched” (p. 69). Pavlenko (2008) stated that thematic analysis is a valuable instrument to interpret and analyze individual experience narratives.

Moreover, the coding in this study was used to determine the similarities, differences, and probable relationships between phrases, practices, and concepts inside and across each piece of data. I used Marshall and Rossman’s (2016) procedures for the process of data management when I exported all my data from the hard disk to the Quirkos database; I thoroughly structured the data
in a consistent, clear, chronological, and easily accessible fashion. That is, for each interview, field note, or NOD session, I followed the guideline to “log the types of data according to the dates and times when, the places where, and the persons with whom they were gathered” (Marshall & Rossman 2016, p. 217). Thus, the data were organized in a chronological manner. I did this to develop a sense of the original timeline flow of all forms of data for the analysis, so that it does not become an issue in such a long-term project. Following, I explain the data analysis tool and process. Creswell (2009) stated that:

“The process of data analysis involves making sense out of text and image data. It involves preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data (some qualitative researchers like to think of this as peeling back the layers of an onion), representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data (p.183).”

Since qualitative data are often in the form of text, the analysis process often entails deconstructing the textual data into manageable patterns and connections; I thematically analyzed the data from all three types of methods (i.e., interviews, fieldnotes, and NOD sessions). The data from the interviews and field notes were exported to the Quirkos database, where I immersed myself in the lives of the families by reading and connecting their stories, thoughts, and behaviors.

Concerning the NOD sessions, as I stated earlier, I only transcribed selected episodes with significant bilingual or religious practices that are related to the theme of this study. My rationale behind collecting this type of data is to triangulate the results and get a snapshot of language practices that occur naturally in the house. However, I tried to pay close attention to capture the participants’ code-switching behavior, parent-child interaction, child-initiated interactions, and language religious practices during dinner time. I also tried to pay more attention to the beginnings
and endings of each NOD session, particularly when handling one of the religious duties at dinner, which is the recitation of the Arabic prayers supplications before and after eating. Earlier I stated that I consider religion as both ‘social-force and self-force,’ and in this context, I examined how it is a self-force for the parents as they feel religiously obligated to request their children to utter these prayers, and at the same time, it is a social-force for the children as they feel obligated to say these practices just to satisfy their parents’ request.

Finally, the process of analyzing all these data has gone through three phases. First, I read and listened to the data several times to select and mark the most revealing or insightful phrases, statements, or even minor discussions regarding the families’ FLP and the theme of this study. The second phase is that I read each line and phrase in the data and listened to all recordings and asked, “what does this indicate or reveal about the FLPs of these families?” In the last phase, I examined the data holistically by reading the text as a whole and determining which phrase may determine the core meaning of the data. As a result of this approach, I recognized four key domains (values, practices, sentiments toward languages, and desired goals), as shown in the table above Table (10). The majority of data fell into these four domains, which also constituted subdomains due to the volume of data. This strategy enabled me to examine the data in a manner consistent with Spolsky’s framework, as it made it possible for me to recognize practices, planning, and management.

Table 10: The domains and subdomains of the data analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Sub-Domain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Religion and religious identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pakistani Culture/ identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Saudi Culture/ identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heritage Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religious Language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table summarizes the domains and subdomains that generated numerous themes that families presented in a variety of ways. It is worth mentioning here the value of ethnographic research, which enabled me to collect this great volume of data that gave me a clearer and more detailed image of these families' language policies and their effect on their daily practices.
3.5 My positionality and trustworthiness of the study.

This section focuses on the trustworthiness of the study and my positionally as an ethnographer.

3.5.1 Positionality and constructing my role as an ethnographer.

Since this is an ethnographic dissertation, the complexity of positionality and its impact on the study needs to be recognized. The positionality of researchers concerning his/her insider/outsider status has gained extensive attention among ethnographers (e.g., Messerschmidt 1981; Headland Pike and Harris 1990). While critics of insider studies highlighted their concerns regarding possible bias in support of one’s society or intended blindness to some practices that could be taken for granted, advocates argue that there could be benefits of being an insider, including the potential of getting access to a broad range of social and cultural contexts and the ability to interpret subtle linguistic and cultural cues (Aguilar 1981; Bennett 1998).

Moreover, in this research, I considered myself as a ‘partial insider’ as I am a Muslim who knows a lot about Islam and its obligations, yet I am not a Pakistani nor fully aware of the Pakistani culture. My religious background allowed me to align myself religiously with all of my participants. Being a Saudi and Madinah resident also allowed me to align myself culturally with the second generation of some of my participants; however, I also occupy a position of power as an Arab.

In addition, there are similarities in the backgrounds of myself and my participants. I am also a sojourner who lives in the United States and knows what living abroad means. Dealing with immigration offices with different systems, regulations, and languages is an experience that both my participants and I lived. However, although I share some of the same personal experiences as my participants, my migration story to the U.S. differs significantly. I came to the U.S. because of
school purposes which means that I am ultimately going back to Saudi Arabia. In other words, I have a feeling of permanency in Madinah. On the other hand, most of my participants' situation is unclear; they want to live permanently in Madinah, but that is legally unachievable without a job. That is, when parents reach the retirement age, they find themselves forced to go back to their original country, and their only way to get back to Madinah is to have a forty-day religious visa that allows them to stay in Madinah that much.

All in all, for this study, I think it is essential to reveal my positionality to my research participants because it might affect the research methodologies and the stories that were shared by the participants. Many of the in-depth interviews, participant observations, and NOD were conducted with Pakistanis who were aware of my situation as a Saudi who lives in the United States, which may have impacted their responses, especially when discussing Saudi society and culture. Furthermore, I am aware that my position could influence how I interpret the data. One way I have tried to raise the validity of my study is the awareness of “researcher bias” (e.g., my expectations and pre-understandings) as an ethnographer, and how these factors could impact the way I interpret the data revealed to me by the families (Maxwell, 2013, p.124). In qualitative research, it is questioned whether objectiveness and objective knowledge can be obtained and achieved. (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). That is, there is always a possibility that the researcher's interpretation of data would be impacted by subjective pre-conceived notions and thoughts. Thus, and by being conscious of my subjectivity and how it may affect my study, I have attempted to improve the validity of my findings by asking myself what lies beneath my interpretations. I attempted to be conscious of my own preconceptions and the influence that they may play in the process of interpretation. Another approach I attempted was to maintain contact with all of the families, even after I returned to the United States; that helped me to sometimes share my
interpretation with the parents of these families to ensure that I had accurately grasped what they were expressing. However, the process of establishing the trustworthiness of the study findings is explained in detail in the following section.

### 3.5.2 Trustworthiness of the Study

Researchers usually take some steps to guarantee that the findings of their studies are both valid and reliable (Creswell, 2009). The validity of a study, also known as its trustworthiness, authenticity, or credibility (Creswell and Miller, 2000 cited in Creswell, 2009), is the extent to which the results of a study can be considered accurate from the researcher's, participants', and readers’ perspective (Creswell, 2009). One of the key factors of validity and reliability in qualitative research is methodological rigor, which is a proof of the study’s integrity by adherence to detail and accuracy to ensure the integrity and trustworthiness of the research process (Creswell, 2009). Trustworthiness, therefore, is very essential in qualitative research and is established by examining the study’s credibility, transferability, and dependability.

#### 3.5.2.1 Credibility

Triangulation in qualitative research refers to the deployment of two or more data collection tools in a qualitative study in order to gain deeper explanations of a given situation (Yin, 2018; Schwandt, 2014). In this study, the data were collected through semi-structured interviews, field notes and observations, and NOD during dinner time. Although the interviews provided interesting data, both field notes and NOD assisted in triangulating the data by demonstrating the real FLP applied at home and then comparing the findings to what the parents/children expressed in their interviews. In general, the use of these three methods of data collection was essential in ensuring the credibility of the results that were obtained at the end of the study.
3.5.2.2 Transferability

The term "transferability" refers to the ability of a case study to be used in other contexts. It examines if the results were contextually relevant or stand out as distinctive (Guba, 1981, p. 86). It is important to stress that the goal of this study was not to generalize research findings. Each case has been and will continue to be distinct and unique. According to Bitsch (2005), scholars can help the transferability decision made by a potential user through a “thick description” (p. 85). Creswell (2013: 252) defined it and said that “thick description means that the researcher provides detail when describing a case or when writing the research” (p, 252). As a result, when I presented my findings, I provided detailed descriptions of families (e.g., their circumstances, homes, TVs, libraries, and neighborhoods). Additionally, I included photographs of specific objects (e.g., books, games, and televisions) from families who permitted me to do so. Overall, the transferability requirements were satisfied when I carefully described the process of conducting this study, providing detailed and lengthy explanations of the research methods in order to increase the transferability of the study’s findings.

3.5.2.3 Dependability

According to Schwandt (2014), dependability is both the process of investigation and the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that this process is rational, traceable, as well as documented. In other words, one can say that dependability addresses the procedure of the constancy of the findings. To enhance dependability of this study, a clear track was planned and maintained from the beginning of this study. The recruiting method of interviewing Pakistani families based on inclusion criteria serves as the base for the study’s findings’ dependability. Another step I took to enhance the dependability process was to be explicit and clear in terms of data collection and analysis methods. As a result, I outlined the data collection
process in detail for other researchers who are interested in ethnographic studies, particularly for those who are interested in conducting such studies in a conservative context. In terms of documentation, and given the nature of my study, I had a notebook with me at all times in which I wrote down my thoughts, plans, and timelines in order to guarantee that my approach was traceable and documented (see Figure 6).

*Figure 6: My dissertation notebook*

### 3.6 Chapter summary

The above chapter included a full discussion of the study methodology and analysis process. I provided the research design and explained why I chose the ethnographic multiple case study methodological approach. The ethnographic approach is essential for the context of this study to answer the research questions and to gain a better understanding of the attitudes and
practices of participating families. This allowed me to meet and spend time with the family, learn about their lifestyle and challenges, and many other things. Also, I should note that all the families were pleased and comfortable talking to me, since I spent a lot of time with them and their children: I accompanied them to their workplace, to the mosque, and played with their children too. They were even pleased and surprised by my interest in such a topic.
CHAPTER FOUR: FAMILIES’ FULL LINGUISTIC PROFILE.

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I present a comprehensive ethnographic and linguistic profile of each participating family. All of the ethnographic descriptions are derived primarily from the fieldnotes to provide a detailed picture of these families’ lifestyles and their full linguistic profiles. Additionally, I offer additional information that I feel is necessary to emphasize before delving deeper into the study in the following chapter. Following the ethnographic profiling process, I group these families according to their reported FLPs; consequently, and to demonstrate the FLP classification technique, some brief examples from these families will be presented; these examples will be presented and discussed in further detail in the following chapters, as they were merely cited here for justification reasons. Besides, given the nature of this ethnographic study, I feel it is critical to learn more about these families before engaging in discussions about their language policies. Lastly, regarding the language evaluation process in the following tables, I asked the participants to evaluate their language fluency as they wanted, providing them with five options in Arabic, which is equal to (Does not speak it, Novice, Intermediate, Fluent, Native); thus, they assessed their language, accordingly, as shown in the tables below (Tables 11; 12; 13; 14; 15; 16). However, one thing I should mention here is that parents assisted their children in evaluating their language, particularly the younger ones who were reluctant to speak, and I tried not to interfere since I believe parents are more aware of their children’s linguistic skills than me. Also, I did not have the means to assess their language competence at that time.

4.1 Salah’s Family

The first family was Salah’s family who is originally from Pakistan (See Table 11). Mohanad (the father) and Sabah (the mother) have been married for eleven years; they have three
children, two girls, and one boy.

Table 11: Background of Salah’s Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mohanad (Father)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>BA in English</td>
<td>Quran &amp; English Teacher</td>
<td>Urdu (Native) Arabic (Fluent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabah (Mother)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Highschool</td>
<td>Quran Teacher</td>
<td>Urdu (Native) Arabic (Fluent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salah*</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3rd grade</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Arabic (Fluent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryam</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>Arabic (Fluent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aisha</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Arabic (toddler)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates the interviewed child

Starting with the father’s history, Mohanad was born in Pakistan and migrated to Saudi Arabia with his family at the age of four. He explained that both of his parents speak Urdu and Pidginized Arabic at home. During his time living with his parents, Mohanad reported that he started to go to a Quranic Memorization Center (QMC) at an early age; his father used to take him there every day until he reached the age of seventeen. By that time, he was able to memorize the whole Quran which is around 604 pages. Not only has Mohanad memorized the whole Quran, but he also has two Ijazahs, which are licenses or certificates that allow the possessor to transmit a certain style of reading and reciting the Quran to others and are provided by someone who already has such permission. Such certificates not only allowed Mohanad the opportunity to teach Quran for a career, but they also gave him a religious-social prestige within both the Pakistani and Saudi communities. In addition to that, Mohanad also holds a bachelor’s degree in English from Taibah University in Madinah; however, he could not find a job in any school, so he turned to private business. Thus, along with teaching Quran, he also gives private English tutoring classes that focus on the university preparatory-year curriculum to students who want to pass the university’s requirements. Mohanad said that he teaches one-hour session twice a week to seven Saudi students.

On the other side, the mother, Sabah, shares a similar past with her husband. She moved to
Saudi Arabia about two decades ago with her family. They arrived in Madinah immediately and settled in the neighborhood where her then future husband grew up. Sabah stated that her father and mother took her to a female QMC as well. Her parents saw an opportunity in these sorts of centers since the outcome would include not just memorizing the Quran but also acquiring the Arabic language. Although she does not possess an Ijazah certificate, she voluntarily teaches Quran to Saudi and non-Saudi female students in a local mosque before the sunset prayer on workdays. She added that she and her two girls go to the mosque one hour before prayer, where she would spend her time teaching the Quran. Her students’ ages range from 12 to 70, according to her, and she has some grandparents who come with their granddaughters to learn how to recite and memorize the Quran. When asked about her two daughters during her teaching hours, she said the elder one, Maryam, normally sits with her and imitates her, while the three-year-old Aisha plays with other children her age.

Salah, their oldest child who I interviewed, is ten years old and attends a Saudi public school in the fourth grade. It is worth noting that Arabic is the medium of instruction in Saudi public schools, and the only foreign language taught as a subject (four hours per week) is English. Salah appears to speak fluent Arabic with the Madinah dialect, according to the field notes I collected during my encounters with the family. Salah, like his parents, has attended a QMC in his neighborhood since he was seven years old. As of the day of our meeting (May 19th, 2019), he has memorized seven chapters of the Quran, and it seems that he is motivated to memorize the whole Quran. Both parents show some positive and proud feelings that their child memorizes the Quran. In fact, they asked Salah to recite some of the Quran verses when I was at their house (Fieldnote, May 19, 2019).

Regarding this family’s language policy, the field notes indicate that the family follows a
monolingual policy, with Arabic being the only language spoken in the home. Both parents communicated in Arabic with one another and with their children during my visits (Fieldnote, May 19, 2019). When I initially met the father, Mohanad, and informed him of my research, he explained that he and his wife occasionally use certain Urdu terms around the house. However, during my visits, I have not overheard any of it; both parents spoke in Arabic.

4.2 Mohammed’s Family.

Next, Mohammed’s family (See Table 12). Mohammed's mother, Eve, who is originally from Pakistan, is a single mother who got married to a Saudi man at an early age and had two children, Mohammed, and Nassir.

Table 12 Background of Mohammed’s Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eve (Mother)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Highschool</td>
<td>H- receptionist</td>
<td>Urdu (Native) Arabic (Fluent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>English (Intermediate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Turkish (Novice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arabic (Native)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Urdu (Intermediate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>English (Novice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Turkish (Novice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammed*</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6th Grade</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Arabic (Native)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Urdu (Intermediate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>English (Novice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Turkish (Novice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nassir</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4th Grade</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Arabic (Native)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Urdu (Intermediate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>English (Novice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Turkish (Novice)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates the interviewed child

Eve is a working mother who works as a receptionist at a five-star hotel right next to the Prophet Mosque, at the center of Madinah. She sees herself as a multilingual individual who speaks Arabic, Urdu, Turkish, and English. She believed that “everyone should learn a new language to gain an appreciation of this world” (Fieldnote, June 2019). Although she does not hold a degree, which is usually a job requirement at any institution in Saudi Arabia, she said that her linguistic skills in multi-languages got her the job at a prestigious hotel in Madinah. That is reasonable
considering that Pakistani and Turkish pilgrims rated among the top five nationalities that visited Madinah for religious purposes in 2019, which was prior to COVID-19 period (General Authority for Statistics, 2021). As a result, the hotel industry in Madinah and Makkah has a long history of hiring multilingual employees to facilitate communication with its guests.

Following the divorce, Eve and her husband, who has not participated in this study, agreed that he would have the children for four days, and she would have them for three days during summer vacation. However, the situation changes during the school year during which the children stay at their father’s place during the school days and spend the weekends at the mother’s.

Additionally, the field notes, which were only collected at Eve’s house since I could not meet the father, revealed that the family follows a multilingual family language strategy. It was apparent that Eve was opened to inviting more languages to the house. The dominant language of the house is Arabic; however, the mother speaks some Urdu sentences to her children, and the children reply by codeswitching using Arabic and Urdu. Eve stated that her children are also taking online courses in English and Turkish on their smart tablets. Furthermore, the house library has so many books in different languages such as Arabic, English, Urdu, Turkish. Even the smart tablets of her kids have many language learning apps. The reflection of this multilingual mentality can also be seen on their TV, which has a variety of channels with different languages. While I was at their house, there was a Turkish TV show playing in the background. The children were on their tablets playing online games and shouting some English words to their online friends.

4.3 Kareem’s Family

Moving to Kareem’s family (See Table 13), Samar (the mother) and Abdullah (the father) have two boys, Kareem (12yrs) and Nader (10yrs). Both parents were born in Saudi Arabia and
have never been to Pakistan. Their families migrated to Saudi Arabia forty years ago and have lived in Saudi since then.

**Table 13: Background of Kareem’s Family**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abdullah (Father)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Completed 50% of BA degree (Online)</td>
<td>Quran &amp; English Teacher</td>
<td>Urdu (Native) Arabic (Fluent) English (Fluent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samar (Mother)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Highschool</td>
<td>Quran Teacher</td>
<td>Urdu (Native) Arabic (Fluent) English (Fluent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kareem*</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Homeschooled</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Arabic (Fluent) English (Fluent) Arabic (Fluent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nader</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Homeschooled</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Arabic (Fluent) English (Fluent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates the interviewed child

The mother, Samar, is an online teacher who teaches Quran to students in the United States and Canada via Skype. Samar said that during her childhood, she lived in a gated compound in Jeddah. The concept of a gated compound is not well-known in Saudi Arabia because urban planning in Saudi Arabia is different from what it is in America. Most Saudi families choose to live with their children in a single family-owned building, even after their sons and daughters’ marriage; usually, the parents live in one apartment and their sons and daughters marry and move to another apartment in the same building. These separate buildings may be seen in many neighborhoods in Saudi cities, and they are not gated by walls, as is the case in gated communities. In fact, the concept of gated communities was not introduced until the 1990s, after the kingdom was hit by a series of terrorist attacks against its non-Muslim foreign employees. As a result, both the government and the private sector in the country designed and built these gated compounds to safeguard western immigrants. To explain this more, Inter-nations, which is the largest global community organization for expatriates, described compounds in Saudi Arabia, specifically Jeddah, and said:
“In Jeddah, most expatriates move into so-called compounds. These gated communities cater particularly to foreign residents from Anglo-American countries, Continental Europe, and Japan. It is foreigners from such highly industrialized, non-Muslim nations that have sometimes become the target of terrorists. Therefore, employers, estate agents, and landlords will probably insist that they move into a residential area with special security controls. For some expats, this can cause the feeling of living in a ‘gilded cage’; others enjoy the extra safety and the amenities that compound life provides” (Inter-nations, 2020).

Although Samer's parents were Muslims from non-Western nations, she said that her father's employer provided her family with this "great perk" that she experienced while living with her parents. Therefore, Samar felt that she had not been sufficiently connected and close to the Saudi people and culture when she was living with her family at this gated compound. She even went to an international school, attached to their compound, where most of the students were international. For her, English was the language of the house, the gated compound, and international school when she was growing up. She also stated that her father used to take her every day to a nearby female QMC outside the compound in which she was able to hold a Quranic Ijazah. This Ijazah, along with her English competence, gives her the opportunity to teach Quran to students in the United States and Canada via Skype. She said she was able to meet some of her students when their families perform Umrah, the minor pilgrimage to Makkah, and visit Madinah.

Abdullah, the father, is a second-generation Pakistani who has finished half of his online bachelor's degree in Arabic language at the Saudi Electronic University. He works in delivering packages for a major delivery company in the region. Besides that, Abdullah speaks fluent English with an ‘American dialect,’ as he describes his English proficiency, and holds two Ijazahs in Quran. Abdullah cannot work at a QMC since he does not have a permit to work in the public
sector in Saudi Arabia; thus, he teaches both Quran and English privately. Nevertheless, the flyers that he hands out to people in his neighborhood in Madinah states that he “can teach English with an American dialect;” he says that most private teachers in Madinah are only teaching grammar courses; therefore, he wants to take advantage of his speaking skill.

Additionally, Abdullah said that he learned English at a young age from living and working with his father's American colleagues. Before moving to Madinah, Abdullah's father immigrated from Pakistan and began working in a large construction firm in Jeddah, where he had many international colleagues. Abdullah explained that Urdu was the language of his family’s house, but his father used to speak with him sometimes in English. Both of his parents wanted him to learn Arabic and memorize the Quran; hence they registered him at a QMC at the Prophet’s Mosque in Madinah. In his twenties, Abdullah tried to strengthen his relationship with English speakers, listen to many American songs, watch many American movies.

In order for their children to speak Arabic and English, Samar and Abdullah have decided to follow the OPOL as their family language strategy in their house. That is, the mother speaks in English, and the father speaks Arabic with the children. They both explained the importance of both languages. Samar said, “Arabic is the language of the Quran and our faith, we look at its presence at home as a necessity, and the English language is also important because it will help you to get a job easily in Saudi Arabia.” Both parents agreed that their children would face fewer problems in finding a job in Saudi Arabia as long as they speak “decent English.” However, one can see the notable absence of Urdu in this house, which is the family's native and heritage language.

The interviewed child, Kareem, is thirteen years old, and he is a homeschooled child as is his younger brother. Samar explained that since there is not an international school in Madinah,
and she and her husband felt the Saudi education system is not “efficient,” they both decided to homeschool their children. During my visit to their house, I have noticed that both of their children speak good English, compared to many Saudis at their age (Fieldnote, June 19, 2019). I have also noticed that the children keep a variety of western textbooks in English in their room. When asked the parents, Abdullah said that one of his wife’s student’s families sent them many Canadian textbooks from Canada. Overall, both parents appeared to be interested in teaching their children both Arabic and English at home; thus, they use the OPOL approach, in which the mother speaks English, and the father speaks Arabic when they speak to their children.

4.4 Ahmed’s Family

Moving to Ahmed’s family who migrated to Saudi Arabia twenty years ago (See table 14). The mother, Sharifa, is a housewife who came with her husband, Hussain, from Pakistan and gave birth to four children, two boys and two girls, in Saudi Arabia.

*Table 14: Background of Ahmed’s Family*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hussain (Father)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>BA in English</td>
<td>Agricultural engineer</td>
<td>Urdu (Native) Arabic (Intermediate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharifa (Mother)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Highschool</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>Urdu (Native) Arabic (Intermediate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed*</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Highschool</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Arabic (Fluent) Urdu (Intermediate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asim</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6th Grade</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Arabic (Fluent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lara</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2nd Grade</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Arabic (Fluent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nouf</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pre-School</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Arabic (Fluent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates the interviewed child

She said that long before she came to Saudi Arabia, she knew how to speak “some Arabic” because she went to a Madrasa, which is simply defined as an Islamic school in South Asian countries. She said that she memorizes some Quranic verses that she reads during the everyday prayer. Regarding her professional life, Sharifa said that she used to work at a female beauty shop in Madinah once she first came to Saudi, but soon after she gave birth to her first son, she quit her
job. In addition, similar to many parents in this study, Sharifa goes to a QMC where she tries to memorize the whole Quran, which she describes as one of her dreams.

The father, Hussain, works as an agricultural engineer in Madinah. When I first met him and introduced my study, he told me that he feels very happy that he speaks Arabic and that he listens to his children speaking “the language of Islam” fluently. Hussain, and similar to his wife, went to a Madrasa back in Pakistan; thus, he speaks fluent Urdu and intermediate Arabic, based on the way he evaluates his linguistic skills. He then revealed that he and his wife did not plan their family language strategy whatsoever. He said that Ahmed, who is his older son, was the only one who was exposed to Urdu until he was five or six years old; until then, the father says, the language of the house was Urdu. However, shortly after he began praying and attending school, the entire family shifted to Arabic over that year.

The interviewed child Ahmed, who is fifteen years old, acknowledged the laissez-faire policy that his parents followed. He noted that he remembers the days where his mother and father used to speak Urdu together, and he never recalls his parents telling him which languages to use. Ahmed, among his three other siblings, is the only child who speaks Arabic and Urdu in this family. Ahmed talked about his attempts to sit with his father and practice Urdu with him. He said that his father always answers him in Urdu, and sometimes corrects his language and gives him feedback.

Additionally, there is one point I want to emphasize here: Asim’s statement. Asim is Ahmed's twelve-year-old younger brother; he was not interviewed. He did, however, make a statement during my initial visit to the family on July 02, 2019, and before I start the recording process; he said in Arabic, “I cannot imagine our family speaking Urdu together; it makes me laugh when my brother talks about it.” When I asked him about the reasons, he replied: “it is weird
and funny.” This statement may indicate the family's laissez-faire attitude toward languages as well as the influence of birth order on children's language perspectives. It appears as though it is up to the children to choose which language they want to learn and speak at home.

Further, this family appeared to be more conservative in their religious beliefs than the other families I met. First, the family did not own a TV until recently; both parents were concerned that their children would be ‘exposed’ to western culture as featured in movies and TV shows (Fieldnote, June 19, 2019). During my whole visit, the Makkah channel was on, which broadcasts Quran recitation 24 hours a day. Second, the family lives around the Quba mosque, which is the first mosque in the world that dates to the lifetime of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century CE. The father stresses that his first target once he arrived in Madinah was to live right next to this mosque. This mosque is said to be where the first Friday prayer was held in Islam, led by the Prophet Muhammad; therefore, the father said he wishes to pray all of his prayers in this mosque, and so do his children. In fact, he registered all of his children at the QMC at this mosque, and they go there every day, all year long. Ahmed, the older son, memorizes the whole Quran, and his siblings are about to reach this goal.

4.5 Sophia’s Family

The above four Pakistani families have something in common: none of them used the heritage language as the primary mean of communication as the following two families. Starting with Sophia’s Family (Table 15), Ayman, the father, and Abeer, the mother, have five children (four girls and one boy), all of whom go to Saudi public schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ayman (Father)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Highschool</td>
<td>Businessman</td>
<td>Urdu (Native)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CL-AR** (Fluent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CO-AR*** (Novice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abeer (Mother)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>Urdu (Native)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The father, Ayman, is fifty-five years old and owns a small gift shop right next to his family house; he moved to Saudi Arabia around forty-one years ago. I met Mr. Ayman on (July 21, 2019) at the mosque after the sunset prayer, where I listened to his recitation of the Quran as he was the ‘Imam’ of this prayer. The person who leads the prayer is usually called an Imam or ‘sheik’, a very high religious and social status in Saudi and Muslim societies. Every mosque in Saudi usually has an official Saudi Imam approved by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs. However, when the official Imam misses a prayer or is late, worshipers usually nominate the person who is linguistically competent in reciting the ‘Quranic Arabic’ in the most reliable way to take the Imam’s place, which is very hard for many Arabic native speakers. The Quranic Arabic, also known as Classical Arabic, is a form of Arabic used in the Quran, known to be very complex and extremely hard to grasp for L2 Arabic speakers.

However, on July 21, 2019, following the prayer, I looked at the Imam’s place and saw Mr. Ayman; I knew he was not a Saudi because of the way he dressed; he was wearing a ‘kurta,’ a long loose shirt that most Pakistanis wear every day. I went to him directly and presented myself and my research. Although it was hard for me to understand Mr. Ayman’s Arabic, he recites the Quran rather fluently; therefore, he usually gets chosen to lead the prayer at that mosque whenever the
official Imam is absent or late. This status gives him, Mr. Ayman, and his family, a high status among that community. In addition, Mr. Ayman explained later that he lived in an Urdu community in Makkah, Islam’s first holiest city, for all of his life, and had never been around Saudis or Arab speakers until he moved to Madinah eight years ago, which may explain his lack of colloquial Arabic. Mr. Ayman was tutored to memorize the whole Quran by his father at a young age and now holds three Ijazahs, which explains his selection to be the Imam’s replacement of his neighborhood mosque. When asked about his family, he replied that all of his children speak Arabic “just like you,” meaning the way I speak with the Madinah dialect. He also said that he teaches his children Quran every day and that his oldest daughter, Sophia, memorizes the whole Quran. Then, he invited me to his house, and I met all of his family.

The mother, Abeer, is fifty years old, and she does not speak Arabic. While I was speaking with her, her daughter, Sophia, who is sixteen years old, translated all of my questions and her answers. Abeer explained that she could understand a little bit of Arabic, and she tried to learn it, but since she had not been around Arab speakers, she could not. She is a full-time mother who spends most of her day caring for her home and ensuring that her children are well-prepared for school. When asked what language she uses with her children and husband, she stated that she speaks Urdu entirely, but occasionally attempts to pronounce some Arabic words, particularly religious expressions.

Furthermore, this family has five children, and all of them speak both Urdu and Arabic. In my conversation with Sophia, she told me that her brother and sisters speak Arabic when they talk to each other, speak Arabic and Urdu with their father, and speak Urdu with their mother. She also said that she has gotten used to be her mother’s translator outside the house, in places such as the school or shopping malls. Regarding the family’s house, it has some signs of a bilingual
environment. First, the TV has a variety of channels with Arabic and Urdu content. When I first entered the house, the TV was working on a channel called Zee-Aflam, which is a popular Urdu channel in the region. Second, in terms of the family’s library, it has many Islamic books written in two languages, Arabic and Urdu, Arabic on one page and its translation on the next page. There are also some Arabic learning books, along with some Saudi school religious textbooks.

4.6 Wateen’s Family

Finally, Wateen’s family, which is the second family that still maintains Urdu as the dominant language of the house, and the last family introduced in this study (Table 16). Waleed, the father, and Kholod, the mother, have three daughters, and two of them go to a nearby public school in the morning, and QMC in the afternoon.

*Table 16: Background of Wateen’s Family*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waleed (Father)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Highschool</td>
<td>Hair Stylist</td>
<td>Urdu (Native)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SPA** (intermediate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CO-AR*** (Novice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kholod (Mother)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Highschool</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>Urdu (Advanced)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arabic (Fluent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wateen*</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7th Grade</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Arabic (Fluent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Urdu (Fluent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadya</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4th Grade</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Arabic (Fluent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Urdu (Fluent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mona</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2nd Grade</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Arabic (Fluent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Urdu (Fluent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates the interviewed child  
** Saudi Pidginized Arabic  
*** CO-AR= Colloquial Arabic

The mother, Kholod, who is forty years old, was born in Saudi Arabia. Unlike her husband who is only fluent in Urdu, she speaks fluent Arabic and intermediate Urdu. Kholod said that she grew up at her family’s house, in Madinah, speaking both Arabic and Urdu, but primarily Arabic. Kholod shared her marriage story when she first heard from her father that a Pakistani man had proposed to her; she said that the first question she asked her father was, “what language does he
She expressed concern that he did not speak Arabic, but when they met, she found that he spoke "good Arabic" in comparison to other Pakistanis she knows. Regarding her professional life, she said she does not have time to work since she has to look after her daughters while her husband is at work.

Waleed, the father, is 46 years old and owns a barbershop near his home, which he runs from 4 p.m. until 12 a.m. According to his evaluation of his language skills, he speaks Urdu fluently and “a little Arabic.” Waleed talked about his attempts to learn Arabic with his children, but he could not achieve this goal due to his long hours’ of work. He then explained his decision to marry a woman who is bilingual in the two languages, Arabic and Urdu, so his children would be able to speak Arabic. Thus, four years after arriving in Saudi Arabia, he proposed to Kholod, and they got married a year after. Waleed expressed a strong interest in Arabic, revealing that it is one of his dreams to speak Arabic in the house, similar to his wife, Kholod, who stated that she has been trying to teach him Arabic, but due to the nature of his job, which required him to be outside the house for long hours, and the fact that almost all of his friends are Urdu speakers, it was difficult for her husband to learn Arabic. Therefore, she said that they were speaking Urdu all the time, but right after they had their first child, Wateen, they both decided that she should acquire Arabic from the beginning. Kholod said they were thinking of Arabic more than Urdu because they were “afraid” of having a house that only speaks Urdu. Thus, both parents decided to move near Kholod parent’s house, which is in the same city, to make sure that their first daughter spends most of her time in an Arabic-speaking environment while Waleed is at work. Now all of their children speak, read, and write fluent Arabic, and they just speak Urdu.

This family has three daughters, and all of them speak, read, and write fluent Arabic, and they just speak Urdu. The moment I entered their house, Wateen, who is thirteen years old and the
family's oldest child, welcomed me in Arabic along with her other sisters. As I was walking toward
the living room, I saw some drawings and writings on the wall; all of the writings were in Arabic
(names of the children and other Arabic words). The moment I sat down with the family, the father
was encouraging his shy daughters to speak Arabic with me. I believe that was an attempt to show
me that all his children speak fluent Arabic, and he looked happy about that. In terms of QMC, the
mother, Kholod, told me that all of her children go to a nearby QMC regularly, even during summer
vacation.

In general, Wateen’s Family was the second family that still maintains Urdu as the house’s
dominant language. The family follows the OPOL strategy; the mother speaks Arabic with her
children and Urdu with her husband. On the other hand, the father speaks Urdu to everyone in the
house; however, he always tries to say some Arabic phrases that he knows to his daughters.
Regarding the Children, they respond to their father in the language in which he use the discussion,
as well as in Arabic when alone or with their mother.

4.7 Chapter summary

As one can see, the above profiling shows that participating families reported four
different types of family language policies (See table 17), and they are as follows: 1) Kareem,
Sophia, and Wateen’s families reported to follow the OPOL strategy, which identifies it as the
most preferred language strategy among the participating families; 2) Ahmed’s family followed a
laissez-faire strategy (naturally speaking Arabic or Urdu, or both); 3) Mohammed’s family
followed a multilingual family language strategy; 4): and finally, Salah’s family reported to
follow a monolingual family language strategy.

| Table 17: Reported FLPs                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| **Reported FLPs**                   | **Families**                    |
| One-Parent-One-Language Policy      | Sophia’s Family                 |
|                                     | Wateen’s Family                 |
The following Chapter Five elaborates on the findings from these families through the use of within-case analysis for each family; a cross-cases analysis is presented later in Chapter Six. Despite the fact that the families were organized according to the family language policies followed, resulting in three families in one group (i.e., the OPOL families), I still used the within-case analysis for each family, which highlighted some important ‘individual patterns and sentiments that I believe are worth mentioning as they contribute to the field of FLP.
CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION FROM CASE STUDIES

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents findings and discussions from each family. The presentation of this chapter is organized into four sections, each one devoted to a particular FLP that was reported by the families, as explained in Chapter Four. With Spolsky’s model as a framework for analysis, I provide the findings from all data collecting methods, which include (1) semi-structured interviews, (2) field notes and observations, and (3) recordings of Naturally Occurring Data (NOD), in each of these four sections/FLPs. These findings are not grouped by method since some methods, such as NOD, did not provide as much data as, say, in-depth interviews in some families. That is, data from all sources are used in no particular order, but rather according to how they contribute to codes and, finally, themes centered on families' beliefs, practices, and management (Spolsky, 2004).

The study hypothesizes that the family language beliefs and practices of the Pakistani Muslim immigrant/expatriate families are mostly religiously driven, and the findings provided in this study are consistent with this hypothesis. Collectively, these narratives reveal the families’ beliefs, practices, and aspirations regarding their language planning. Most families cited being an Arabic-speaking family as the guiding force for their family language strategy for many reasons but mainly to meet the demand of their religion, be religiously rewarded, fear religious consequences in the afterlife, and improve their knowledge about their religion. The families shared how they structured and processed this religious language requirement in their life and with their children. Additionally, individual stories show the subtle distinctions amongst participating families, offering insight into the many and diverse paths that families take as they negotiate their socio-religious situation and multicultural context.
Lastly, given the nature of this ethnographic research and the volume of data collected from each family, I should underline that the following four sections are entirely dedicated to presenting and analyzing each FLP’s findings separately using within-case analysis. A cross-cases analysis of all FLPs combined will be provided in the following chapter (Chapter Six) while addressing the study questions, to create a picture of how Pakistani households in Saudi Arabia develop and manage their FLPs, as well as the influence of religion on these policies.

### 5.1 One-Parent-One-Language Policy (OPOL).

Within the family context, the OPOL strategy is defined as each parent speaking a different language to his/her children (Cunningham, 2011; Smith-Christmas, 2016). The OPOL approach has been challenged by many studies in the western context as being unworkable, elitist, and unrepresentative of the minority language speaking families (Smith-Christmas, 2016; De Houwer and Bornstein 2016; Doyle 2013; Schwartz 2008; Hamers and Blanc 2000; Döpke, 1998). Others have stated that it does not assure effective bilingualism (Romaine, 1999; Lyon, 1996), and that it lacks a continuity characteristic in its implementation (De Houwer & Bornstein, 2016). However, these studies raise many questions regarding the implementation of this policy in another context that has not been studied before in FLP literature, as most of the previous studies were conducted in Europe or United States. The following sections provide a description of the family language beliefs and practices among the Pakistani families who followed this approach. Following that, I discuss the findings from these OPOL families and compare them to other studies.

Having said that, three families reported using this strategy with their children, and these are 1) Kareem’s family, 2) Sophia’s family, 3) Wateen’s family. However, these families are classified differently as they aspire for different outcomes regarding their children’s L1 and L2 preferences. That is, on the one hand, there are two families (Sophia's and Wateen's) in which one
parent speaks the minority language, Urdu, while the second parent speaks Arabic and may occasionally speak the minority language, as revealed by the data. On the other hand, Kareem’s family opted to have one parent, the mother, speaks English, instead of Urdu, while the other parent, the father, speaks Arabic to their children. Finally, I should note that during my visit to these families, and from the initial moments of my contact with them, I saw practices and behaviors that indicated that they were following the OPOL approach, whether overtly or implicitly.

Next, I present and discuss the findings of these OPOL families using Spolsky’s model as the framework for analysis, and compare the findings with other OPOL studies, especially the ones that were conducted in a Western context.

5.1.1 Families’ language beliefs.

In this section, I will discuss the themes that emphasize the families’ beliefs on languages. To begin, I address the families’ views and attitudes about the Arabic language (which are predominantly religious beliefs), and how these beliefs influenced their decision to pursue the OPOL approach. Then, I present some sentiments about families’ beliefs concerning English, which were only voiced in Kareem’s family. Finally, the third part of this section discusses families’ beliefs on Urdu, the families’ heritage language.

Families’ beliefs and attitudes toward Arabic.

All three OPOL families included Arabic as one of the languages spoken at home, but differed in the choice of the second language (Sophia's and Wateen's families included Urdu while Karim's family included English in addition to Arabic). The followings are themes and some important individual patterns that surfaced in these families in this regard.

Religion as a core value in FLP. Language is fundamental to religious practices, and as the case of Islam, one cannot perform, say, praying, without first knowing certain Quran verses
and reciting some Arabic phrases. Liddicoat (2012) asserts that in religious practice, there are two main orientations to language: a sacredness orientation, which sees the language as a sacred component, and a comprehension orientation, which sees language as a tool to know the religion and speak about it with others. Therefore, I wanted to see the families’ perspectives and orientations toward the Arabic language through this lens in order to gain a better understanding of how these families construct their FLPs’ basis and beliefs. Putting this in mind, Muslims believe that the Quran was verbally revealed from Allah to his prophet Muhammad through an angel; therefore, they call the Quran as ‘the book of Allah.’ They also believe that the whole Quran was revealed to the prophet in Arabic, which gave this language its sacred status among Muslims, Arabic and Non-Arabic speakers. The sacredness orientation towards Arabic is a major theme echoed in almost all families in this study, including all the OPOL families. See the following example which came from Abdullah, Kareem’s father who works for a delivery company. He said:

**Excerpt 1**  Word of God, (Abdullah, June 19, 2019)

Abdullah: My brother, this is the word of God, this is a sacred language. The Arabic language was chosen by God for the Quran. How can you not want us to learn it and teach it to our children?

يا أخي هذا كلام الله، هذه لغة مقدسة اللغة العربية اختارها الله للقرآن كيف ما تبغان نتعلمها ونعلمها أطفالنا؟

Abdullah emphasized the significance of Arabic and the holiness of the language for all Muslims, and he believed that this alone should be sufficient motivation for all Muslims to teach Arabic to their children. Later he added a similar sentiment, he said:

**Excerpt 2**  Arabic should be learned first (Abdullah, June 19, 2019)

Abdullah: Look, learn any language; in fact, this is a good thing, and I do this thing with my children, but the language of the Quran should be the basis. Isn’t it the language Allah chose for his book? For this, my brother Saad, I feel that everyone must make sure that it is learned first, and then if you want to learn thousand languages, may Allah bless your way.
One thing I should highlight about Abdullah, which might explain his strong positive attitude toward Arabic is the way he talks. During my interview with him, Abdullah, uses phrases that sounded more formal and religious. That is, he 1) occasionally uses Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) – which is very similar to Quranic Arabic, and is used in literature, academia, and legislation –, and 2) he adds more religious supplications (e.g., may Allah bless you) during our meetings (Fieldnote, June 23, 2019). These two features are usually attached to religious people not only in Saudi Arabia, but around the world. Samar, Kareem’s mother, holds a similar orientation towards Arabic; she said:

Excerpt 3  The necessity of Arabic (Samar, June 19, 2019)

Samar: Arabic is the language of the Quran and our faith, we look at its presence at home as a necessity, and the English language is also important because it will help you to get a job easily in Saudi Arabia.

Samar considers mastering Arabic, in addition to English, to be a “necessity” in her family’s life. However, she cites religion as the basis for her interest in Arabic, despite the fact that she lives in an Arabic-speaking country where Arabic is also necessary for her daily life. In other words, Samar stressed the religious value of Arabic but did not mention how essential the language was for her and her children to function effectively in the Saudi society. Overall, both of Kareem’s parents appear to have a conservative religious-oriented perspective towards Arabic, as they sounded protective of the language and showed a sacredness orientation toward it when I first initiated my questions about it. For instance, the father, Abdullah, constantly refers to Arabic as
the "Word of Allah," and he believes that Arabic should be the default language for all Muslims, and “everyone has to make sure that it is learned first.”

Moreover, Wateen’s Family, who is the second OPOL family that includes both Arabic and Urdu in their FLP, reported a similar sacredness orientation toward Arabic. Kholod, the mother who is married to the barber, gave her perspective on Arabic, stating:

**Excerpt 4** Arabic is not exclusive to Arabs (Kholod, August 04, 2019)

**Kholod:** I do not see that Arabic language is exclusive to Arabs; I believe that it is for everyone because my Lord has chosen it for the Quran. I swear to God this is how I see it.

انما ما اشوف اللغة العربية ملك للعرب، اشوف انها للجميع لأنه ربي خصصها للقرآن، والله اشوفها زي

Kholod stated in the above excerpt that she does not consider Arabic to be only for Arabs because God chose it for the Quran, making it the language of all Muslims. She later added:

**Excerpt 5** “It is my duty to teach it to my child” (Kholod, August 04, 2019)

**Kholod:** It is my duty to teach it to my child, this is a blessing that Allah gave to me, and for me to be thankful, I will preserve it and pass it for my kids and their kids, God willing.

هذا واجبي إني أعلمها طفلي وإنو اشوفها نعمة ربي رزقني هيا ومن باب شكر هذه النعمة إني احافظ عليها وإنقلها لأبنائني وأبنائهم كمان إن شاء الله

In the above excerpt, Kholod stated that she perceives Arabic as a “blessing” from God; therefore, she feels ‘obligated’ to preserve this language in the family and for generations to come. She expressed this sentiment with the phrase “my duty,” which was rather interesting given her view of teaching Arabic, the majority language, as one of the religious obligations of Muslim parents to their children.

Furthermore, unlike the previous two OPOL families, who have a sacredness orientation toward Arabic, Sophia’s family, who is the third OPOL family, has both sacredness and
comprehension orientations toward Arabic, seeing it as a resource to better comprehend their faith.

Ayman, who is the substitute Imam of the mosque, has a sacred view toward Arabic; he said:

**Excerpt 6**  The prophet of Islam was an Arab (Ayman, July 22, 2019)

Ayman:  ... the prophet, peace be upon him, is an Arab, I sometimes wear this Arab dress because I know that the prophet was from the Arab. The Quran is revealed in Arabic, the prophet, peace be upon him, spoke Arabic. This is why I want my children to first learn Arabic

الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم عربي، أنا أحب العربي، أنا في بعض الأحيان أرتدي ثوب عربى، لأن الرسول عربي، والقرآن عربي، لغة رسول عليه الصلاة والسلام عربية، ولذا أريد من أطفال أريد أن يتعلمو العربية.

*The Italicized Arabic is the most accurate MSA translation of the participant's actual pidginized Arabic.*

Ayman explained why he is interested in the Arabic language and the Arab culture. Given that the prophet of Islam was an Arab who spoke Arabic, Ayman sees this connection between Islam and the Arab culture as a key motivator to acquire Arabic and teach it to his children. In addition, Ayman has also explained another orientation toward Arabic; he said:

**Excerpt 7**  The Arabic language is our “safety valve” (Ayman, July 22, 2019)

Ayman:  ... I feel the Arabic language is our ‘safety valve’ for me and my family to adhere to our religion. Because if we neglect this language, this will inevitably affect our religion. The truth is that this is the reason why my wife and I moved to Madinah eight years ago because we wanted our children to focus more on Arabic; they already know how to speak Urdu.

Ayman indicated that he and his wife, Abeer, moved to Madinah to provide their children with more opportunities to interact with Arabic-speaking neighbors; he noted that before their move, they lived among the Pakistani community in Makkah. In his opinion, this will help his children to learn Arabic, which will help them better ‘comprehend’ their faith (Fieldnote, July 22,
Ayman uses the expression of “safety valve” to express how his commitment to the Arabic language is tied to his devotion to the Islamic faith, which could imply that he sees Arabic as the main source of knowledge about Islam.

Overall, one can see that the above three OPOL families have somehow similar orientations toward Arabic. All of them echoed a sacred view of Arabic, which was revealed through their use of sentiments such as “my duty to teach it,” “my God has chosen it,” and “the language of the Quran and our faith,” which were, as I stated above, quite interesting and seem to provide an attitude reference towards Arabic among all parents in this study. That is, every parent who knows how to speak Arabic feels “obligated” to pass on it to his/her children, viewing it as one of the religious obligations of Muslim parents to their children, and failing in fulfilling this ‘duty’ means failing in parenting. This obligation is rooted on the notion that the Islamic faith is strongly tied to Arabic, which is why mastering this language is considered critical for these families.

Additionally, in contrast to Kareem and Wateen's families, who showed only a sacredness orientation toward Arabic, Sophia’s family showed another orientation towards Arabic, a comprehension one, viewing it as a tool for better comprehending their faith. However, I should highlight that the primary distinction between Sophia’s family and the other two OPOL families (Kareem and Wateen's families) is that Sophia's was the only family in which both parents did not speak colloquial Arabic; the other two families had at least one member who is proficient in colloquial Arabic in Saudi Arabia. In my opinion, this caused the family to have a lack of social integration in Saudi Arabia, which would be another driven motive for the family to learn Arabic to better integrate into their current environment.

Also, Sophia’s family said that they moved to Madinah 8 years ago, which means when their oldest daughter, Sophia, who is now 16, was in second grade. That is, the family’s bold step...
of moving to another city and reducing ties with their extended family in Makkah’s Pakistani community occurred after their daughter began attending a Saudi public school. This suggests that the family’s interest in Arabic is also motivated by a desire to see their children succeed academically in Saudi Arabia; as a result, they had no choice but to improve their colloquial Arabic in order to better integrate into the Saudi community. This was not the case with the other two families since their Arabic-speaking parents knew colloquial Arabic, but Sophia’s father, Ayman, only spoke Classical Arabic, as explained in Chapter Four.

**Language can determine partnership.** This interesting finding has only surfaced in Wateen’s family. The father, Waleed, who works as a barber, voiced his desire to marry a bilingual woman who speaks Arabic and Urdu upon his arrival in Saudi Arabia. He said:

**Excerpt 8**  
**Marrying a bilingual woman (Waleed, August 04, 2019)**

Saad: Did you know Kholod before? How did you meet?

هل كنت تعرف خلود من قبل؟ كيف تقابلتم وتعترفتم على بعض؟

Waleed No, no, I didn't know her, I spent four years looking here and there, I said to myself that I have to marry a woman who speaks Arabic and Urdu so she could teach our children Arabic

لا، لا، لم أكن أعرفها، لقد أمضيت أربع سنوات أبحث هنا وحنا، وقلت لنفسي أنه يجب أن أتزوج امرأة تتحدث العربية والأردية حتى تتمكن من تعليم أطفالنا اللغة العربية

Saad Aha, ok but how did you do that? How did you know her?

حسنا، كيف فعلت ذلك؟ كيف عرفتها؟

Waleed One of my friends told me about her family, and when I went to them, I told them that I wanted to marry their daughter Kholod, they told me that they would reply to me later, after a month they told me they agreed, praise be to Allah.

أخبرني أحد أصدقائي عن عائلتها، وعندما ذهبت إليهم، أخبرتهم أنني أريد الزواج من ابنتهم خلود، أخبروني أنهم سيردون علي لاحقا، بعد شهر أخبروني أنهم وافقوا ، الحمدلله

Saad Did you see her in those days and meet her?

هل رأيتها في تلك الأيام وقابلتها؟

Waleed No no, that happened after engagement, marriage happens this way in Pakistan

لا لا، هذا حدث بعد الخطوبة والزواج يتم بهذه الطريقة في باكستان
Waleed moved to Saudi Arabia at the age of nineteen and, according to him, spent the next four years looking for a Pakistani woman who could speak in both Arabic and Urdu. Family language policy was a key factor in choosing a wife for Waleed and for his wife. Kholod, who was born in Saudi Arabia and speaks fluent Arabic, shared the other side of the narrative, and she said:

**Excerpt 9** Arabic is our ‘safety valve’ (Ayman, July 22, 2019)

Kholod: ...when my father told me a guy from Pakistan had proposed to me, I immediately asked him what language does he speak? Does he speak Arabic? hhh, I was not shy hhh, then they told me he speak Urdu and some Arabic, and I was afraid to be honest, but after I met him I saw he was good, we were able to talk and communicate, yeah.

Saad What if he was not speaking Arabic?

Kholod I will teach him hhh, but no seriously, I thank Allah for this, because I know some of my friends went through this, and it is weird, I always ask myself how they can talk together, because you know, this is marriage marriage, not children games, you know it is very very sensitive relationship, everything should be clear and obvious.

Kholod said that when her father informed her that a Pakistani had proposed to her, she instantly inquired “what language does he speak?” and “does he speak Arabic?” She stated that she was concerned that he would never speak Arabic, but upon meeting him, she discovered that he spoke a “good” Arabic in comparison to other Pakistanis she knows. Through this narrative, I realized that both parents had some language concerns and aspirations prior to their marriage, but...
each had different goals. That is, the father hoped that the future mother of his children would speak Arabic, along with Urdu, so that his children would acquire Arabic, whereas the mother preferred that her future husband speak Arabic in order to be culturally closer to her and not face a linguistic barrier in the way of them expressing their feelings to each other within the institution of marriage, which requires “pure” communication as stated by Kholod. This might be because Kholod was born and raised in Saudi Arabia, and she wants her husband to be familiar with the culture in order for them to get along in their relationship.

Families’ beliefs and attitudes toward English.

Kareem’s family was the only OPOL family that showed an interest in English; however, there is also Mohammed’s family who showed an interest in English, but they follow a Multilingual FLP, and will be discussed under section (4.2.3). Besides, I will discuss the commonalities across all FLPs in the following chapter since this section only focuses on OPOL families. Having said that, the following are some of the themes that were surfaced by both of Kareem’s parents that I believe contributed to their interest in English.

Personal Experience and history of the mother influence FLP. The story of Samar, who lived inside a gated compound in Jeddah and went to an international school that used English as their medium of instruction, is quite complex. Although she is multilingual who speaks Arabic, Urdu, and English, yet she is oriented toward bilingualism as she and her husband focus on Arabic and English and there was not any sign of Urdu presence in their house. Samar explained the reason for the absence of Urdu, saying:

**Excerpt 10** Urdu is not needed here (Samar, June 19, 2019)

Samar: Urdu was not among the options because we decided to settle here in Saudi Arabia, and the first thing that came to our mind was how to make the lives of our children easy in Saudi Arabia. The Urdu language will not be needed, as you know, unlike the Arabic language, which is the language of their faith and
As one can see, Samar cited her current living situation as the reason for her lack of interest in Urdu. She stated that “the Urdu language will not be needed” in the Saudi context. To have a better understanding of this, I need to discuss it further in terms of Saudi Arabia’s language policy. First, despite the fact that Urdu is one of the most widely spoken languages in Saudi Arabia, it is not taught in schools or universities; just two out of 36 Saudi universities provide Urdu classes. Also, Saudi Arabia’s official language policy is reflected in the first line of its constitution, which says that Arabic is the country’s only official language. That is, with the exception of Jawazat (the immigration department) all official government documents are frequently written in Arabic, and sometimes Arabic and English; thus, foreigners who do not know Arabic sometimes seek assistance from translation services in order to do their work for them. As a result, Samar may have concluded that the Urdu language is unnecessary in Saudi Arabia, and hence decided to concentrate on Arabic and English instead.

Additionally, Samar, perhaps, since she lived with her father in an English-speaking environment, recognized certain advantages that motivated her to concentrate on English for economic reasons, which I will address in the following section. However, at this point I just want to discuss how her personal experiences in the past could have influenced her FLP. That is, English proficiency has become one of the most important employment criteria in the private sector. This language requirement in the private sector is frequently criticized on social media, with critics...
asking the government to minimize it. However, the government responded to this movement by also requiring English language proficiency in some of the government jobs, indicating that there has been a significant shift in Saudi Arabia’s language policy that has not yet been officially revealed, which is what Samar seems to have predicted. Samar’s experience of living in gated compounds and her interactions with English speakers, who frequently hold higher-level positions and jobs in Saudi Arabia, appears to have made her see the inevitable, which is the rising need for English speakers in Saudi Arabia, which could explain her motive of enforcing English in her house.

Overall, there is little written about mothers’ histories and experiences and the language choices they make for their children (see Gu & Han, 2021), and Samar appeared to be a clear example of a mother whose own experience growing up in what appears to be an unusual environment in Saudi Arabia and using English clearly relates to the FLP that she is enforcing on her family.

**English as economic value.** Kareem’s father, Abdullah, echoed his wife’s view of the advantages of being an English speaker in Saudi Arabia, saying:

**Excerpt 11**

**English will get a job easily in this country (Abdullah, June 19, 2019)**

Abdullah: ...our children are so fluent in Arabic; praise is to Allah. Me and my wife made sure to prepare them and make them speak Arabic and English because we know this is the right thing for them, especially here in Saudi Arabia, and to qualify them for the job market in Saudi Arabia. You know that someone who speaks English will get a job easily in this country. That is why, from the beginning, my wife and I decided that she should be responsible for teaching them the English language and that my task would be to teach them the Quran and the Arabic language, and so far, praise be to Allah, I think we are doing good.

أطفالنا يجيدون اللغة العربية بطلاقة. الحمد لله رب العالمين. حرصت أنا وزوجتي على إعدادهم وكيف ائتنا نتخليهم يتكلموا العربية والإنجليزية لأننا عارفين أن هذا هو الشيء الصحيح بالنسبة لهم، خاصة هنا في السعودية من ناحية تأهلهم لسوق العمل في السعودية. أنت شاف كيفما نزو الشخص الذي يتكلم الإنجليزية رح يقدر يحصل على وظيفة بسهولة في هذا البلد. فايش قلنا. قلنا خلينا أنا وزوجتي من
Abdullah emphasized the importance of the English language and its economic value in Saudi Arabia, and abroad. Similar to his wife, he hopes that his children learn English so that they would not have a difficult time finding work in Saudi Arabia. Both parents acknowledged the value of English, keeping in mind that the family has an experience in this regard. They realize that Samar was able to reach a large number of Muslim families in Western countries that need a bilingual Quran instructor because of her ability to communicate in English.

Overall, while this attitude toward bilingualism is understandable given that both parents speak both languages fluently and recognize their religious and economic significance, it raises some concerns about the absence of the minority language, spoken by both parents, and the impact of this policy on family ties with their extended family and the Pakistani community.

**Families’ beliefs and attitudes toward Urdu.**

All of the three OPOL families shared their thoughts about the maintenance and use of the Urdu language in their families. The followings are some themes that emerged in this regard.

**The importance of Urdu in the case of a return.** This theme was only addressed by Sophia’s parents, who both acknowledged Saudi Arabia’s recent and more restrictive foreign regulations. As stated earlier, Saudi Arabia announced in recent years that all foreign workers, as well as the private sector, which depends largely on foreign labor, are required by law to pay annual fees to the immigration department in order to decrease Saudi citizens’ unemployment rate. This pushed businesses to replace foreign workers with Saudis, who are less costly. As a result of this regulation, many immigrant families felt uncertain about their futures, as Sophia’s family did. Both parents showed a ‘conditional’ view toward Urdu, stating that if they were forced to return
to Pakistan, they would do just fine as long as their children knew Urdu. Abeer, Sophia’s mother, who only speaks Urdu, stated:

Excerpt 12  Literacy of Urdu (Abeer, July 22, 2019)

Abeer: *Abeer speaks in Urdu*

Sophia She says that she is happy that we speak Arabic, but our Urdu is a little weak and needs us to be in school.

Saad Your children Urdu is weak?

Sophia *Speaks in Urdu*

Abeer *Speaks in Urdu*

Sophia She says yeah if we go back to Pakistan, we need to know how to read and write in Urdu

Saad Sophia, do you know how to read and write in Urdu?

Sophia I know but not that much, I do not know about my siblings, but I do not think so.

This excerpt surprised me since I assumed Sophia and her siblings were literate in Urdu; instead, it turns out they do not know how to read and write in Urdu. Therefore, Abeer showed her concern about this issue, implying that she is aware of the challenges of their living situation in Saudi Arabia and the possibility of returning to Pakistan. Additionally, the father, Ayman, seemed to be also worried about the idea of going back to Pakistan; he said:

Excerpt 13  The idea of returning to Pakistan (Ayman, July 22, 2019)

Ayman: ... life is getting difficult here, it is possible that today I am in Madinah, and tomorrow in Pakistan, in both cases, Alhamdulillah, the most important thing is that my family is in good health, there are no problems, the children speak Urdu, and the distribution of livelihood is from Allah.
In the above excerpt, Ayman explained that the new laws on foreigners made the idea of returning to Pakistan on the horizon. As a result, he feels that if he and his family return to Pakistan, “there are no problems” as long as his children speak Urdu. One can see how the uncertainty about a family’s permanent residency has influenced the language decisions in the family. That is, rather than considering minority language as a means of communication with Pakistani culture, the family perceives language through the lens of a conditioned perspective shaped by the family’s permanent residency. However, Sophia’s family situation is complicated, all the more so when one considers that this positive attitude toward Urdu and its critical role in the family’s possible future of returning to Pakistan is not matched by the same explicit efforts that the Arabic has in their home, as seen in the ‘Family Language Practice and Planning’ section (5.1.2).

**Urdu is not needed in Saudi Arabia.** This was an individual pattern that only emerged in Kareem’s family, who concentrated only on Arabic and English for their children. Earlier, I discussed the impact of the personal experience and history of Samar, Kareem’s mother, on her current FLP, which is limited to English and Arabic and does not include Urdu. In her statement in the above excerpt (11), she demonstrated an attitude towards Urdu and cited her current situation as the explanation for her lack of interest in Urdu; she stated that “the Urdu language will not be needed” in the Saudi setting, and that Arabic and English will benefit her children in and out of Saudi Arabia, as well as in Pakistan.

Furthermore, Kareem’s father, Abdullah, expressed a similar sentiment during his interview, stating that he avoids using Urdu in Saudi Arabia, preferring to communicate in Arabic and English in order to be respected, ‘even among Pakistanis.’ He shared a story of him visiting
the Pakistani Embassy in Saudi Arabia to finalize some papers for himself and his wife and found himself somehow forced to use English to get the signature he needed for his paperwork. He said:

**Excerpt 14  Abdullah’s story in the Pakistani embassy (Abdullah, June 25, 2019)**

Abdullah:  ...unfortunately, when you change your language, whether in English or Arabic, the treatment you receive changes, even among the Pakistanis themselves.

Saad  Among the Pakistanis?

Abdullah  Yes yes, see usually you stay in the Pakistani embassy for 7 or 8 hours to finish your stuff as a Pakistani. So one day I went there, and there was the deputy consul or the deputy director of the consul, he was one unfair person. You know the Pakistanis, most of them are poor workers coming to renew their passports and other affairs. So the deputy consul came, you know, wearing a suit and glasses, you know, like a diplomat, and I was at that time wearing a normal thoub, he passed by our side, and did not even look at us, and we had been standing there for hours, so I said to myself, let me speak to him in English, (I am not bragging or anything), so I said to him (excuse me sir, excuse me sir), so he stopped and turned to me and said (Yes, sir), and I said (no nothing but we are just waiting for a stamp or a signature of the head the office for the NOC to deliver it to my employer), he changed the tone, (what is your nationality sir... Sir). Hhh (Look at the mutual respect because I said that in English, hhh, I said I am Pakistani,) and he said (yeah yeah I understand ok Sir)*

Saad  Did he help you?

Abdullah  Oh man, right away hhh
What do you think would happen if you spoke in Urdu? Would he have treated you the same way?

No way, my brother, look, the poor workers were standing next to him, and when they speak in Urdu, and he responds to them in English (wait... come back later)

*Arabic & English in brackets is what Abdallah said in English during the interview.*

Abdullah shared this story to illustrate how speaking English made it easier for him to complete his paperwork at the Pakistani embassy than if he spoke Urdu, which is the Pakistani government’s official language. Abdullah explained that, like most of the visitors to the embassy that day, he received little respect from the person in charge, except when he communicated in English. When I asked him if he would be treated the same if he spoke in Urdu, he replied, “No way” and talked about the rest of the embassy’s visitors who had been waiting for hours at that time. In another context, Abdullah also shared another insight about how he occasionally avoids using Urdu in favor of Arabic in order to avoid being viewed as a foreigner. He said:

**Excerpt 15**

**Avoiding Urdu (Abdullah, June 25, 2019)**

... you know, some of them that, they do not even know that I know Urdu, and I do not want them to know, okay, if I want to talk to them about a topic, I speak to them as I speak to you, or sometimes in English, so you know, most of them think I am a Saudi, and hhh there is one that thinks I am a Qassimi huh, you know, but I’m missing the Shemagh hah..

In the above excerpt, Abdullah discussed his relationships with his coworkers at the administration department of the delivery company where he works, the vast majority of whom
were Saudis. He stated that his Saudi coworkers think he is Saudi, and from Al-Qassim region; thus, he does not want to show them otherwise if he talks in Urdu. This attitude does not appear to be limited to the workplace as during my two interviews with him, and unlike most Pakistanis in Saudi who wear their Pakistani costumes, Abdullah was wearing a Saudi dress, just like the one I was wearing at the time of the interview. All of these factors, together with Abdullah’s fluency in the Saudi dialect and English, appear to have assisted him to avoid being perceived as a foreigner or a Pakistani. One should note that the vast majority of immigrants from Southeast Asia, including Pakistan, are working in low-wage jobs in Saudi Arabia, which may explain why Abdullah avoids being identified as a Pakistani or a foreigner. Overall, I believe the above two stories are somehow related to the theme shared by his wife that “Urdu is not needed in Saudi Arabia.” That is, Abdullah did not look at the language from a cultural aspect, but rather from a practical aspect, and accordingly, he viewed the Urdu language as being ‘useless’ in Saudi Arabia.

Generally, both parents shared a similar sentiment towards Urdu as they did not find it as valuable in their everyday life as they did with Arabic and English. At this point, I should emphasize that Samar and Abdullah are second-generation Pakistanis who have never visited Pakistan and plan to settle in Saudi Arabia for the rest of their lives, regardless of the difficulties they may face in this matter. Having said that and keeping in mind that Samar grew up in a semi-western English environment within a gated compound in Jeddah, and Abdullah’s experience speaking Urdu in Saudi Arabia, one may argue that these circumstances led to the family's lack of a minority language and its current FLP, which included English.

**Protecting children from language exposure.** This interesting individual pattern has emerged in Wateen’s family as Waleed, the father who runs his own barbershop, revealed an
interesting pattern towards Urdu that emerged during our interview. He showed an interesting behavior of ‘protecting’ his children from exposure to Urdu songs; he said:

**Excerpt 16**  
**Daughters are not exposed to Urdu music. (Waleed, August 04, 2019)**

Waleed:  
Urdu is Pakistan’s language, it is the **hader** language (meaning urban language), actually, I listen to many Urdu songs, but you know, sometimes when I am in a good mood, I listen to Mohammed Abdu (A famous Saudi singer) songs because mashallah he is a true singer. But that is rarer, I listen to Urdu, Panjabi, Sri Lankan, and Indian songs most of my time.

الأوردو لغة باكستان الرسمية, وهي لغة صعبة, والحقيقة أنني اسمع كثير من الأغاني الأوردية ولكن كما تعلم بعض الاحيان عندما أكون في مسترخيا, اسمع محمد عبده لأنه مغني رائع ماتشاء الله, ولكن هذا نادرًا, أنا اسمع إلى أغاني أوردية وبنجابي وسيرلانكن و هندي في غالب الوقت.

Saad:  
Do your daughters know these Urdu songs?

Waleed:  
Hhhh, no no, Kholod will get angry at me. She always turns Makkah channel on so the Quran will be all over the house. She wants our daughters to listen to Quran every day.

هل يسمع بناتك هذه الأغاني الأوردية.

Saad:  
So no Urdu channel at house?

Waleed:  
Yes, the only receiver that has Urdu channels is the one at my shop.

نعم، ان الرسيفر الوحيد الذي يوجد به قنوات اوردية الذي يوجد في محلتي.

While the above excerpt demonstrates Waleed's positive attitude towards Urdu, it also demonstrates his attempt to isolate or block this orientation from his daughters. In fact, he works with his wife to help their daughters learn Arabic by enrolling them in a local QMC, encouraging them to read street signs in Arabic while driving (Fieldnote, August 04, 2019), and not watching Urdu content at home, despite the fact that Urdu is his only native language. Although Waleed is the primary source of Urdu according to the OPOL family language strategy, his positive attitude toward Arabic, which later revealed itself to be a sacred orientation as explained above in section 'Families' beliefs and attitudes toward Arabic,’ combined with the decreased minority language input within his household – the father works outside the home the majority of the time – may
have a negative impact on his children's minority language development. In general, the concept of ‘protecting children from one of the languages’ is interesting since it appears to be novel in OPOL contexts and also demonstrates how complex the linguistic decisions of these OPOL families may be. This illustrates how POOL was adopted just to facilitate communication inside the house; otherwise, the family is more concerned with teaching their children Arabic than the heritage language, as the data revealed.

5.1.2 Family language planning and practices.

In this section, I present the themes and important individual patterns that highlight all OPOL families’ language practices and planning. As previously stated, I combined these two parts (practices and management) since they are connected and, in some way, related to one another. According to Curdt-Christiansen (2014), the boundary between language practice and management is “blurred” inside the home domain, as parents might exert control over or intervene in their children's language practices every day (p, 38). This is the case with the families in this study, as all parents make implicit/explicit efforts to influence their children's language use and choice for religious reasons every day (e.g., praying five times a day, memorizing the Quran, etc.). Having said that, the first theme discusses the families’ religious language practice and management. Second, I examine the influence of the shortage of the Urdu resources in Saudi Arabia on the families’ FLP. Then I discuss homeschooling and how it allows for bilingual teaching for one OPOL family. Finally, I present a pattern that illustrates how children are exposed to different languages in different settings.

Religious Language Practice and Planning.

This theme turned out to be a major one that has so many subthemes and patterns across all OPOL families; they share some and differ in others. For example, the data showed that all the
children of these families go to QMCs, and in some families even the parents as well. However, some families showed some unique patterns within this religious framework (e.g., Sufi Nasheeds), which I will address in this section.

The Memorization of Quran. Each OPOL family reported a strong desire for their children to learn and memorize the Quran, and as a result, they engaged in a variety of practices to accomplish this goal. For instance, some parents enroll their children in QMCs, while others, in some cases, set aside time during the day to teach Quran to their children at home. However, all OPOL families, enrolled at least one of their children in a QMC, where he/she regularly comes to memorize and review the Quran. For instance, Sophia's family sends their six-year-old son to a nearby QMC, while the girls study the Quran at home, as Ayman explains:

Excerpt 17 Practices for memorizing the Quran (Ayman, July 22, 2019)

Ayman: Only Adel goes to the center, but the girls study here at home with me.

Saad Why do not Sophia and her sisters go as well?

Ayman You know, the center here is only for males, the female center needs a car ride, and I don't have a car, but I have time to teach them myself.

Saad So how do you do that? Like every day?

Ayman Yes yes, always after dinner and after we rest, they sit around me and we start reciting, as well as revising.

Ayman, Sophia's father, indicated in this excerpt that he takes his six-year-old son to a neighboring QMC and that he teaches his other four daughters at home every day because there is no female QMC near their home. Sophia also acknowledged this notion in her interview; and she said:
Sophia’s daily memorizing routine (Sophia, July 22, 2019)

Sophia: I memorize the part that I have to memorize before I sleep, usually it is a small part, like a page, because my father always says the most important thing is *Tajweed* (meaning quality and proficiency) and not the speed of memorization, and when he comes from work, we review with him what we memorized.

أحفظ الجزء الذي لا أحفظه قبل ما أنام، وعادة ما يكون جزء صغير، زي مثلا صفحة، لأن بابا دائما يقول أهم شيء هو التجويد ومو سرعة الحفظ، ولما يرجع من المحل تلاقينا نراجع معه الذي حفظناه.

I should clarify that Sophia’s father has an *Ijazah* certificate and that his reading of the Quran is very accurate that he sometimes leads prayers in a mosque in his neighborhood, as I mentioned previously. Because there is no female QMC near their house, Ayman teaches his daughters Quran almost every day, indicating the family’s commitment on making all of their children memorize the Quran, which undoubtedly plays a part in this family’s language use and strategies in the house. This commitment, however, may give Arabic a more positive and sacred view than Urdu because the former is associated with religious practices, not to mention the absence of such explicit practices in Urdu at home.

Wateen’s family, on the other hand, had a strong interest in learning and memorizing the Quran. Waleed and Kholod have three daughters, and two of them, who are at school age, go to a nearby QMC in the afternoon. This family places such an emphasis on memorizing the Quran that they have developed a method to assist their children in memorizing the Quran. Kholod, the mother, turns the Makkah channel, which broadcasts a Quran recitation with a live feed from the Grand Mosque in Makkah, on a daily basis so that her children can listen to the Quran, making it easier for them to memorize it, as stated by the father, Waleed (Excerpt, 16). Kholod acknowledged this in her interview, stating:

Makkah channel (Kholod, August 04, 2019)
Kholod: I love this channel to the point that when I wake up in the morning, I turn it on to make the Quran the first thing we hear in our day. I love this channel very, very much. Of course, even my daughters, sometimes my oldest daughter wakes up before me and she goes directly to turn on Makkah channel, she knows it is my habit every morning hhh.

Kholod mentioned in the above excerpt why she turns on this channel every day, stating that she wants to “make the Quran the first thing we (her family) hear in our day.” This practice is partly connected to this theme of memorizing the Quran, and it shows an example of how a certain religious practice can increase the Arabic language input, which is the majority language, at the expense of Urdu, which is the minority language, since it reduces its presence in the house.

Lastly, moving to Karim’s family who likewise demonstrated a strong interest in teaching and memorizing the Quran, to the extent that it became one of the family’s sources of income. The family revealed that not just the children, but even the parents, participated in the QMC. Both parents memorize the Quran and teach it as well. Abdullah holds several Ijazahs in the Quran; hence, he teaches Quran privately in Madinah. The mother, Samar, is a freelancer who teaches the Quran to students in the United States and Canada through Skype. She revealed that her father used to take her on a daily basis to a nearby female QMC outside the gated compound where she was able to get a Quranic Ijazah. This Ijazah, along with her English proficiency, enables her to teach Quran via Skype to students in the United States and Canada. Samar shared her story of how she got started in this business. As she put it:

**Excerpt 20** Samar’s online teaching story (Samar, June 19, 2019)

Samar: ... well, one day, I do not remember five or six years ago I was in the Prophet's Mosque, I met this amazing Muslim family from Canada, they came for Ziyarat (meaning visiting Prophet's Mosque) you know, so I got to know them because
you know I helped them, I remember they were lost, they lost their hotel address, and you know how it is in the central area..

أوك عارف مرا في يوم، ما أتذكر بس اتى كنت في الحرم قبل خمس أو ست سنوات تقريبًا، المهم قابلت عائلة مسلمة جدا لطيفة وكأنهم حسبنا من كندا، تعربت جابين زيارة (أي زيارة المسجد النبوي) وعرفتهم بعد ما ساعدتهم أتذكر أنهم كانو ضايعين كذا، ومأهوت عنوان فندقهم حتى، وأنت عارف كيف المنطقة المركزية

Saad  Right right

Samar  Yeah, well, I helped them, and I remember they liked my language (meaning Samar’s English), so they asked me about my feelings of living in Madinah and so, you know, well, I got to know them, they were very very nice, so after they went back to Canada, we continued to communicate and one day they emailed me asking me to teach a daughter of a Muslim family there in Canada who is really interested to memorize the Quran, and I said why not, I tried it, it was via Skype, and it was a very very nice experience and I continued this job since that time.

أياوا، فا ساعدتهم، وأتذكر أنهم حبو لغتي (أي لغة سمر الإنجليزية) وسلوني عن مشاعري مي عاشية في المدينة المنورة، وزي كذا زي ماتعرف تعرفت عليهم وكأنو مرا لطيفين صراحة، وحتى بعد مارجعوا كندا، جلستنا متصالين فترة، وفي يوم قلتهم أرسلوا لي أميل يطلبون مني اني ادرس ابنتهم مسلمة هناك في كندا مهتمة مرا بحفظ القرآن، وقلت ليه لا، وحاولت كانت عن طريق سكايب في ذات الوقت، وكانت لسلامة تجربة جدا رائعة وواصلت هذه الوظيفة منذ ذلك الوقت

Saad  Interesting, so how was that experience? Tell me more about it.

وأوا، طيب كيف كانت التجربة؟ كليمتي أكثر عنها

Samar  What do you mean? For me?

ثبت تقصد؟ ليا انا؟

Saad  For you and this young student in Canada

لك وللطالبة هذه اللي في كندا

Samar  Aha, well the good thing is that this family was originally from Pakistan, so we spoke Urdu, and you know that made it easy because Urdu and Arabic use almost the same alphabet.

أها، اوك، شوف الجميل انه عائلة الطالبة هذه كانت في الأصل من باكستان، يعني جذورهم من هناك وعشان كذا كننت أكلمها بالأردية ونفهم على بعض، وأنت عارف أن هذا خلا الموضوع سهل لأن الأردية والعربية ترا يستخدمها نفس الحروف الأبجدية تقريبًا

Saad  Interesting, so you used Urdu to communicate during teaching Quran?

جميل، يعني كننت استخدمي الأردية أثناء تعليم القرآن؟

Samar  Yeah, yeah mostly Urdu, especially when I talk to them about Tajweed and pronunciation.

أياوا، اياوا أكثر الوقت اوردو خاصة لما أكلمهم عن التجويد والنطق.
In the above excerpt, Samar explained how she started to work as a freelancer who teaches Quran to children of immigrants’ families in the U.S. and Canada. She stated that her interest in this area – teaching Quran online – began when she met a Muslim family who came to Madinah for the purpose of Ziyarat (visiting the Prophet’s Mosque), where they met and remained in contact even after the family left Saudi Arabia. Samar later received an email from this family asking if she could teach the Quran online to a Muslim child, which paved the way for Samar to pursue Quran remote teaching as a profession; she later shared with me her freelancer page (Figure 7).

*Figure 7: Samar’s ad page on a popular freelancer website.*

Samar stated that she has learners of many ethnicities, and one method she used to expand her potential audience or clients was to mention her language skills in three languages on her online page, as seen in figure (7) above.

Nonetheless, as one can see, both of Kareem’s parents are deeply committed to the concept of Quran memorization, and this devotion is reflected not only in their careers, but also in their
Kareem, their oldest child, memorizes approximately ten portions of the Quran – around 200 pages – and aspires to memorize the entire Quran by the age of fifteen.

All in all, and as explained above, all OPOL families were very interested in the concept of Quran memorization. The first and most essential practice that is echoed in all families is participation in QMC; it occurs in every family on a regular basis, every day of the year, including summer vacation. However, one point to emphasize here is that this practice is not limited to only OPOL families but rather was seen in all other families included in this study, as described in the following sections. This practice appears to be essential, from a genuinely religious standpoint to these families. It plays a significant role in the family’s language strategy as it contributes to Arabic language use, and competence, in the family.

Additionally, regarding the other related practice of listening to Quran recitations on the Makkah channel, which emerged in Wateen’s family, I should point out that this practice is rather common among many Muslim families, as I have seen many of them doing so here in the United States. Muslim parents frequently speak of the need of ‘accustoming’ their children to listening to the Quran, and Kholod appears to share this sentiment as well. Thus, one can question about the impact of this extensive Arabic input, such as attending a QMC and listening to the Quran on a regular basis, on non-Arab Muslim families’ language usage and strategy. This brings me to the interesting discussion about ‘Parental Religious Obligations to Children’ and “religious rewards” and their impact on parental behavior. Parents usually encourage their children to learn the Quran because, according to Islamic beliefs, anytime someone reads the Quran, the religious reward for doing so is for both the individual and whoever taught him/her how to read it. Certainly, this is not the only or primary reason, but it is one of several that inspire parents to engage their children in such practices.
Sufi Nasheeds. This surprising individual finding only emerged in Wateen’s family, where the father and mother expressed their thoughts on several Sufi practices they do, especially when they have visitors from Pakistan. Sufi Nasheed, which is practiced by Wateen’s family, is one of the Sufi rituals in which a group of people sing devotional religious songs together; it seems to be very popular in India and Pakistan. The mother, Kholod, who is married to the hairstylist, said that she teaches these Nasheeds to her daughters, and she said:

**Excerpt 21** Daughters perform Nasheeds for visitors (Kholod, August 04, 2019)

Kholod: ... I want them to know Arabic Nasheeds, because sometime when people visit us from Pakistan, they ask us to sing for them some of these Nasheeds, they always tell us that we are in Madinah, and Islam started here, they ask us to sing for them some Nasheeds. So, I ask my daughters to sing some for them, and they always enjoy it.الابغاهم يعرفوا الأناشيد العربية، لأنه في بعض الأحيان لما يزورنا الناس من باكستان ، يطلبون منا أن نغني لهم بعض الأناشيد ، ويقولون لنا دائما أننا في المدينة المنورة ، وبدأ الإسلام هنا ، ويطلبون منا أن نغني لهم. لهم بعض الأناشيد. وأقول لبناتي أن يغنوا لهم بعض الأناشيد و دائما تعجبهم.

Waleed: Yes yes, people in Pakistan love Nasheed, I do not know a lot, I love listening to them, but Kholod is very good, she knows a lot.نعم نعم الناس في باكستان يحبون النشيد ولا اعرف الكثير انا أحب الاستماع اليهم لكن خلود جيدة.

Kholod: Hhhh, yes, I try to memorize them, I keep forgetting them, but I always try with my daughters.مههو ، ايوا ، جالسة أحاول احفظهم ، ولكن بس انسى انسى ، ولكن دائما أحاول مع بناتي.

In this excerpt, both Kholod and Waleed highlighted the significance of these Nasheeds and how their Pakistani visitors demand them, as a welcoming gesture, when they visit them. This appeared to me to be a more cultural tradition than a religious one, as the visitors’ expectations appeared to be the driving force behind this practice. That is, when visitors from Pakistan come to Madinah for the purpose of Ziyarat and performing Umrah, they visit their relatives who live in Madinah and Makkah, and they usually expect these relatives to perform some of these Nasheeds.
for them because they live in these holy cities where Islam began, as happened with Wateen’s family.

**The high frequency of religious supplications.** As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the analysis of NOD went through two phases. The first phase of analyzing the NOD focused on the use of Urdu or Arabic and the families’ choice of languages during dinner, which resulted in the families being categorized according to the language policy followed; the first stage also helped triangulate the data by comparing what the parents said and what actually happens at home. During the second phase of analyzing the NOD, I focused on the Arabic content, since I do not speak Urdu, and I have two families who speak Urdu at home, and both of them reported the use of OPOL approach. The reason I concentrated on the Arabic content was that I wanted to examine how the Arabic language was used, why it was utilized, and how frequently it was used around meals, especially in the two families where Urdu was the dominant language of the house. However, I was able to identify the high frequency of religious supplications during dinner time across all OPOL families from the first time I listened to their NOD sets.

Unlike many cultures and faiths’ meal ‘grace’ prayers, the Islamic supplications for mealtime are not communal. That is, each individual, whether eating alone or in a company, recites their own individual supplications silently or quietly. Muslims are expected to recite these supplications before and after drinking water, eating a snack, or eating a full meal. The families in this study showed two methods for their children to acquire this behavior, either directly (by requesting it) and indirectly (by having one of the parents say it out loud). See the following example of Kareem’s family:

**Excerpt 22**  
**NOD (Kareem’s Family, June 21, 2019)**

1 Abdullah: Ok, *bism allah*, ok, Kareem, *aysh naqul alan*?

%tra: Ok, in the name of Allah, ok Kareem, what do we say?
At the beginning of the recording, the father, Abdullah, teaches/reminds his ten years old son, Nader, Kareem’s younger brother, of saying the *Basmalah* by asking to repeat it after him, as seen in lines 1 and 2. The other method (having one of the parents say religious supplications out loud) was surfaced in Sophia's family. The Urdu language was largely used by all family members of Sophia’s family, until one moment when the father was heard reciting the *Basmalah*, in Arabic; see the following:

**Excerpt 23**  
**NOD (Sophia’s Family, July 26, 2019)**

1. Child 1: *#Speaks in Urdu#.*
   
2. Ayman: *Bism Allah #Speak in Urdu#*
   
3. Child 1: *Bism Allah*
   
4. Child 2: *Bism Allah, Ommi #Speaks in Urdu#.*

Throughout the recordings of Sophia’s family, all members spoke Urdu during dinner time, with the exception of the beginning, when I heard some *Basmalah* (meaning in the name of Allah, in Arabic) stated by the father and followed by two of his children. However, the father in line (2) said some Urdu phrases right after he stated the religious *Basmalah* in Arabic, and I am not sure if he was instructing his children to repeat after him or saying something else. This was the only time the family spoke some Arabic phrases throughout the recording; the remainder of the conversation
was in Urdu. Furthermore, Wateen’s family followed a similar pattern, the father stated the *Basmalah* and was followed by one of his daughters; see the following:

**Excerpt 24**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NOD (Wateen’s family, August 05, 2019)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Khoold: #Speaks in Urdu#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%tra: #Speaks in Urdu#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Waleed:   <em>Oooh, shukran shukran mahsllah mahsllah bism allah alrahman alrahim</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%tra: Oooh, thank you thank mashallah mashallah in the name of Allah, the merciful, the compassionate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Child 1: <em>Bism Allah</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%tra: In the name of Allah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Khoold:   Wateen #Speak in Urdu#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%tra: Wateen #Speak in Urdu#.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>CH:       #Speak in Urdu#.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%tra: #Speak in Urdu#.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Waleed, the barber who is the source of Urdu in this family, heard only one time loudly reciting the *Basmalah*, prompting one of his daughter to mimic him immediately after he pronounced it. This was followed by Kholod, the source of Arabic at home, speaking in Urdu to her daughter Wateen (line 4). Similar to Sophia’s family, this was the only time the family spoke Arabic throughout the recording as the remainder of it was all in Urdu. Even Kholod spoke in Urdu, which corresponds to her statement in the interview that she constantly switches to Urdu while in the presence of her husband. However, this leads me to wonder how the NOD would be, during dinner, in the absence of the father in this family.

Overall, the above examples, particularly in the two Urdu-speaking families, show that the use of Arabic is mostly associated with religious rituals during dinner time. Hence, there is no doubt that such association (e.g., thanking God for the food in Arabic) generates a feeling and
emotion of the sanctity of the Arabic language in these children. In other words, when children see their Urdu-speaking parents shift to Arabic for religious purposes, this may promote a positive attitude linked with ‘religious holiness’ toward Arabic for the children.

**Bedtime stories.**

Despite the fact that two families reported using the OPOL method, which incorporates Arabic and Urdu, there was no evidence of this FLP in their house since they only have resources in Arabic. I went to Wateen’s and Sophia’s houses, took a tour, and looked through their TV and book collections; I was interested to see what languages they had in their homes, but I could not find any sources other than Arabic. For example, In Wateen’s house, I asked Kholod, who is married to the barber, to show me if there were some bedtime stories that she reads to her daughters, and she provided me with many stories that were all in Arabic (Figure 8). I expected to see stories in Urdu, given the father and mother both speak Urdu, and the father always addresses his daughters in Urdu as part of the OPOL plan. However, as I explained in the family's language beliefs section, the father displayed some behavior of “protecting” his children from the heritage language, which may account for the absence of Urdu stories in this context.
Kholod showed me this collection, which was all in Arabic bed stories; she also showed me some 'Manga magazines,' which are a collection of graphic novels from Japan (the first picture from the right) that she buys on a monthly basis for her daughter, and which were also in Arabic. I asked the mother if she has bedtime stories in Urdu, and she mentioned that due to the lack of sources, she sometimes makes up stories from her imagination and tells them to her children before bedtime in Urdu. The same scenario was going on in Sophia’s family, only that it was 15-year-old Sophia who read bedtime tales to her siblings, not her mother, who did not speak Arabic (see Figure 9).
In the above figure, the book on the right is a collection of bedtime stories for boys, as stated on the cover. The book on the left, however, was quite interesting to see which is ‘Al-qaidah An-noraniah,’ a very advanced book that teaches how to read the Quran with Tajweed in an effective and advanced way. Sophia said that her father bought this book for her and her siblings. She also said that she always referred to the book when her siblings commit mistakes when they read the Quran. However, when Sophia, who is 15 years old, takes on some of the parental responsibilities by reading Arabic stories to her younger siblings and teaching them certain religious books, it is clear that she is playing an important part in the family language planning. Additionally, after seeing the advanced book that teaches Classical Arabic, I started to understand the father’s interest in teaching his children the classical Quranic language and how this interest may affect his children’s learning of colloquial Arabic, especially when considering how this interest manifests itself in the family’s everyday language practices and uses. That is, most of the language practices that children engage in on a daily basis, even the Arabic spoken by their father,
do not assist them to improve their colloquial Arabic, but rather help them increase their competence in Classical Arabic or Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), which are only used in official speeches and writings. The books they read use MSA, while the Quran-related practices usually use Classical Arabic. This conclusion was reinforced to me during my interview with Sophia, the family’s oldest daughter, who used certain expressions that are uncommon in the Saudi community’s everyday spoken variety. See the following example:

**Excerpt 25**  
**The use of classical Arabic terms (Sophia, July 22, 2019)**  

Sophia:   I do not know, we did many things, but we always like to play the game of puzzles. We love puzzles a lot. Sometimes we stay up late at night playing, and we play, and we don’t feel the time.

ما ادري، سوينا اشياء كثيرة، لكن أكثرها لعبة الألغاز. مارا مرا نحن نحب الألغاز كثير. أحيانا نجلس سهريين طويل الليل نلعب ونلعب ونلاحظ حتى بالوقت.

Sophia in the above excerpt used the term (*nahnu*) which is (we). This phrase is often used in the MSA or Classical Arabic, rather than the Saudi dialects, which use “ahna” or “hanna.” This is one of several instances in which I identified language uses that are closer to Classical Arabic and MSA than to the colloquial dialects among family members. The focus on this variety of Arabic may be attributed to the father’s high excellence in Classical Arabic, his lack of understanding of the Saudi colloquial dialect, or other language ideologies.

All in all, although the above two families use Urdu as their primary language at home, the shortage of Urdu resources can be seen in their houses. Despite the fact that both families were aware of the shortage of Urdu resources in their house, neither family mentioned the primary cause of this shortage, which is the dearth of Urdu resources in Saudi Arabia, and more specifically in Madinah, as the root of the matter. After my meetings with both families, I decided to visit Madinah’s two main bookstores (*Jarir* and *Al-Obeikan*) and was unable to find any children’s books in Urdu, as the languages provided are predominantly Arabic and English. Indeed, the
majority of Urdu-language sources were exclusively religious literature aimed toward adults (see figure 10).

Figure 10: A screenshot of Jarir bookstore website

![Jarir bookstore screenshot](image)

*It only shows religious literature in Urdu.*

The shortage of these resources in Saudi Arabia, the host country, could be one implicit reason that may explain why both families are unaware of their children’s lack of Urdu language resources, which may have pushed their focus towards Arabic resources. That is, when a family goes to a bookstore and only finds Arabic bedtime stories, they are somehow pushed towards it, and one cannot truly know a family’s preference (language choices for bedtime stories) until all options are offered to the family.

**Homeschooling affords the space for bilingual teaching.**

Kareem’s parents are the only ones in this study who do not send their children to an official school in Saudi Arabia, according to the findings. Samar, the mother who grew up in a gated
community in Jeddah and attended an international school there, explained their education option and said:

**Excerpt 26  Homeschooling their children (Samar, June 19, 2019)**

Samar: ... You know that there are no international schools in Madinah, even private schools are not international, they use the same curriculum hhhh, we both (meaning she and her husband) see that this, the whole thing, the whole system, is inefficient. It is better for us to teach them here in our way.

In the above excerpt, Samar revealed that because there is no international school in Madinah, she and her husband, Abdullah, decided to homeschool their children. They believe that the Saudi educational system is "inefficient," and hence have chosen to homeschool their children. Later, she added:

**Excerpt 27  Taking advantage of the mother’ experience (Samar, June 19, 2019)**

Samar: ... I went to an international school in Jeddah and still have my textbooks. Did you know that I studied space sciences and geography, and physics in elementary school? Imagine, in elementary school. I have these textbooks, and so thankful that I kept them, and I am trying to teach them to our children, they will benefit from them, God willing.

Samar stressed in her explanation that she seeks to take advantage of her experience at the international school in Jeddah and to pass on what she has learned to her children. Therefore, Kareem and his younger brother are studying topics such as (space sciences, geography, physics, English, and Quran), which are generally taught at higher levels. This demonstrates how the parents’ prior experiences and socialization affect their own FLP and educational choices, as discussed above in section (5.1.1), which talks about the families’ beliefs and attitudes toward
English. Additionally, during my visit to Kareem’s family’s home, I saw that both of their children spoke English well, in comparison to many Saudis their age. I have also noticed that the children keep a variety of western textbooks in English in their room. When I asked both parents, Abdullah said that one of his wife’s student’s families sent them many Canadian textbooks from Canada.

While both parents discussed the factors that influenced their decision of homeschooling their children, which is both illegal and not recognized in Saudi Arabia, they did not include another factor that I believe is critical to their case. Both parents informed me that they did not officially register their children in the Jawazat, Saudi Arabia’s immigration department. As a result, their children are unable to attend Saudi schools unless they pay additional fees for each child. That is, the moment Kareem and his brother go to school in Saudi, both parents are expected to pay dependent fees for each child on an annual base. These fees were enforced on all foreigners who live in Saudi Arabia, whether they were born in Saudi Arabia or not, in order for them to get access to all services in Saudi. In this regard, I think it is important to restate some information on the Saudi immigration policy. Even though both parents were born in Saudi Arabia, neither they nor their children are Saudi citizens by birth, as is the case in the United States. Therefore, both parents have to pay the Jawazat annual fee for each dependent child. In this regard, both of Kareem’s parents informed me in another context how costly these yearly fees were; therefore, it appears that one of the implicit reasons they decided to homeschool their children was to avoid paying these costs.

**Different settings lead to different language exposure.**

This theme was quite unique and potentially highly informative about the FLP of Wateen’s family. The data revealed two contextual practices that demonstrate different language exposure: one was acknowledged by the parents, while the other was not but surfaced during my
ethnographic observation. Before explaining these two practices, I just want to restate the FLP of this case. The family reported to follow ‘a conditioned OPOL’ policy; when the husband is not home, the mother speaks fluent Arabic with her children and switches to Urdu in his presence. On the other hand, the father, Waleed, speaks Urdu to everyone in the house, and he always tries to speak some Arabic sentences, that he knows, to his daughters. Nevertheless, I identified two contextual factors that manifest different language exposure. First, Kholod asserts that she always speaks Arabic to her daughters, except when their father is present, at which point she shifts to Urdu. She elaborated:

**Excerpt 28** When to speak Arabic (Kholod, August 04, 2019)

Kholod: ... Of course, I always speak to them (meaning her daughters) in Arabic, when we are here or in my mother’s house, we speak in Arabic; unless their father was present, we all shift to Urdu

This behavior seemed interesting as it shows flexibility in their OPOL strategy; however, I asked her about the reason that she does this, and she said:

**Excerpt 29** Respecting the partner's linguistic abilities (Kholod, August 04, 2019)

Saad: Aha, so when Waleed is home, you do not use Arabic with them, right?

Kholod: No no, I often use Urdu, you know, out of respect, but if he really knows Arabic very well, I think I will speak Arabic to them.

According to my observations, Waleed works long hours in his barbershop during the day, and it appears that Kholod speaks Arabic with her daughters during these hours, as seen in the above excerpt. These hours of Arabic exposure in the absence of the Urdu speaking parent also include the time the mother spends with her daughters at the QMC before sunset, and at her
mother’s house as well, which is another Arabic speaking environment. All of this changes when Waleed, the father, is present at home; the family shifts to Urdu “out of respect.” Nevertheless, I should highlight here that despite the great exposure to Arabic, as reported by both parents, the data, especially the NOD and ethnographic observation, showed that the family still maintains Urdu as the house’s dominant language, which is understandable given that they were collected in the presence of the father.

The second identified practice in this family occurs at Waleed’s barbershop. Both parents reported that their daughters frequently visit their father’s barbershop and spend time with him; the shop is located just steps from their home. Thus, and in order to have a more in-depth insight into the lifestyle of this family, I asked Waleed to pay him a visit the following day. On August 5, 2019, I visited him at his workplace and stayed for almost four hours; I found that most of his clients were non-Saudis; some were from Arab states (e.g., Syria, Egypt, etc.), while others were from non-Arab states (e.g., India, Pakistan, Indonesia, etc.). Waleed turned on the TV as soon as he opened his barbershop, and what made this TV different than the one at home was that it only had Urdu channels (Figure 11). He explained that since he could not watch Urdu channels at home because of his children, he decided to have these channels at his workplace.
Additionally, it appears as though everyone in the neighborhood knows Waleed, since he always sits on a couch outside his barbershop’s entrance. At that time, few Pakistanis dropped by, spoke in Urdu, drank some tea, and then left. Waleed mentioned that this occurs on a daily basis when he is not working; his regular clients come to have tea and discuss Pakistani politics and current events. However, while setting there, Wateen and her sisters came over and asked their father, in Urdu, for money to buy groceries. Their father asked them to wait until he finished with one of the clients. Several of Waleed’s friends stopped by during this time, and I noticed that they all greeted Wateen and her sisters, some in Arabic and some in Urdu. When I asked about this, Waleed stated that it is “good opportunity” for his daughters to be able to practice “Arabic.” As soon as Waleed finished with the client, he took his daughters to the grocery store directly across the street. This event appeared to be frequent, and it describes a family behavior, which occurs with or without the parents’ awareness, in which children are exposed to Arabic and Urdu.
The above two interesting practices shows the complexity of the OPOL language strategy and its practices, and how it may fundamentally differ from one family to another depending on their lifestyle. The fact that Waleed spends the majority of his day at work and returns at dinner time when his children are about to sleep led me to think that the children are primarily accustomed to a monolingual FLP. With the exception of brief trips made by the children to their father’s barbershop, Wateen and her sisters spend most of their time with their mother who, in the absence of their father, communicates with them entirely in Arabic.

5.1.3 Discussion about the One-Parent-One-Language Policy (OPOL).

In this section, I will go over some of the main findings collectively across all three OPOL cases, and compare these findings with other OPOL studies, especially the ones that were conducted in Europe and Western contexts. However, before diving into such a discussion, I just want to give a general summary of the OPOL cases in this study. As shown above, the OPOL approach was used by three families: 1) Kareem’s family, 2) Sophia’s family, and 3) Wateen’s family. These families are classified differently because they have different objectives for their children’s L1 and L2 preferences. That is, Sophia and Wateen’s families are the only families in the study who spoke Urdu as the dominant language at home and had Arabic as one of the languages spoken by one of the parents at home, under certain circumstances. In one case, the Arabic-speaking parent (Wateen’s mother) spoke Arabic at home when the father was absent, but in another, the Arabic-speaking parent (Sophia’s father) spoke Arabic when educating his children about religious practices (e.g., teaching them how to recite the Quran and other religious practices). On the other hand, Karim’s parents’ language policy at home was limited to Arabic and English, despite the fact that both parents are fluent in Urdu; the dominant language of the house appeared to be mostly English. One might ask how a dominant language is determined in the OPOL context,
and as I stated earlier in the chapter, the simple answer to this question is that I examined the ethnographic observation notes (as shown in Chapter four) and NOD sets (as shown in this chapter, under the family language planning and practices section) and was able to determine the dominant language of these families, regardless of what the parents reported in their interviews. Finally, the study identifies the OPOL policy as the most used FLP among the study’s participating families, with three out of six families reporting that they use it. It is worth noting that the OPOL policy has become the most popular strategy in FLP and bilingualism research (Wilson, 2021; Schwartz & Verschik, 2013; Lanza, 2007). Having said that, the following are some discussions of the main findings of the three OPOL cases in this study.

**Views towards Arabic.** First, all OPOL families in this study listed Arabic as one of the language preferences that parents would like to teach their children. Despite the economic and social importance of Arabic to these families, who chose to stay in an Arabic-speaking country, they valued Arabic for its religious significance more. In this regard, I found that families’ beliefs towards Arabic revealed two fundamental orientations: a sacredness orientation, in which Arabic is viewed as a sacred object, and a comprehension orientation, in which Arabic is viewed as a tool viewing it as a tool for better comprehending the religion. Liddicoat (2012) looked at these two orientations from a broader language policy scope (top-down) and stated that they “are manifested in various ways in different domains of activity largely because the nature of the religious dimension of different activities varies” (p. 21). The same probably applies from a bottom-up perspective – in the family domain – as we have seen how these families engage in various religious practices on a regular basis. In other words, these families use Arabic during many religious practices, which are not time-limited, but rather occur throughout the day (before sleeping, after waking up, during/after prayers, before/after eating, etc.).
Moreover, most mothers and fathers, in this study, favored Arabic over the heritage language because they consider Arabic to be ‘their’ language, and it belongs to all Muslims, not just Arabs; thus, they felt obligated to pass it on to their children, which is understandable given that they are deeply involved in their religion and consider it to be central to their lives. This type of deep devotion can also be seen from the same ethnic group in another setting. Khan (2020) mentioned in his study about parenting in Muslim Pakistani communities in Canada and stated that “Muslim Pakistani immigrant parents feel obligated to teach their children their language and religion so that it does not get lost in the generations to come” (p. 58). We have seen how parents in the above three families, including the Urdu-speaking parents, pay so much attention to Arabic that they make it one of their responsibilities to teach their children.

**Views towards the heritage language.** As for the families’ beliefs and attitudes towards their heritage language and other languages, only two OPOL families, Sophia’s and Wateen’s families, included their heritage language, Urdu, in their policy, while the third family, Kareem’s, did not, preferring to incorporate English alongside Arabic. However, Sophia’s parents were the only ones among OPOL families who showed some explicit positive attitude towards Urdu. Sophia’s father, Ayman, described how the new restriction on immigrants increased the possibility of returning to Pakistan. As a result, he feels that if he and his family return to Pakistan, “there are no problems” as long as his children speak Urdu (Excerpt 14). A similar pattern was echoed in Lee (2021) as she found that Korean immigrant parents “were concerned with their children’s Korean language skills to successfully re-adapt back to the home country” (p. 98). Also, Song (2012) demonstrated how a future intention to return to Korea influenced the family language practices of Korean mothers. This current study finds that even uncertainty about the future has been a motive to maintain Urdu inside the family.
**Was the OPOL approach unworkable and doomed to fail?** Although the OPOL approach has been challenged by many studies in the western context as being unworkable, elitist, and unrepresentative of the minority language speaking families (Smith-Christmas 2016; De Houwer and Bornstein 2016; Doyle 2013; Schwartz 2008; Hamers and Blanc 2000), this was not the case in this study as demonstrated by the above-mentioned three families, especially with Kareem’s family who, unlike the other two families, was committed and showed no leakage by speaking more than one language. For the other two families, the OPOL policy is their only choice, as in their case, there is always one parent who only speaks the minority language. According to Döpke (1998), while there is general agreement that relying only on the OPOL strategy is insufficient for children's successful minority language learning, it is nonetheless necessary in households where only one parent speaks the minority language. I believe this was the case of two OPOL families in this study (i.e., Wateen’s and Sophia’s families). For instance, Wateen’s family modified their policy to their own needs and goals; thus, they developed a ‘conditioned’ OPOL strategy (e.g., the mother’s flexible practice of switching languages in response to changing circumstances); I believe this practice ensured the ‘continuity’ of their OPOL policy, which was one of the primary concerns addressed by De Houwer and Bornstein (i.e., OPOL continuity) (2016). Overall, all of the three OPOL families seemed to be adjusted to their social realities in the host country as well as their religious requirements, allowing this policy to function smoothly, as shown by the data.

Moreover, one can observe how the OPOL in the Middle Eastern context is quite different than what it is in the Western and European FLP and bilingualism studies. That is, while the majority of studies in Western and European indicate that it is often up to mothers to maintain the heritage language (see Lomeu-Gomes, 2019; Guardado, 2017; Kwon, 2017; Kirsch, 2012; Okita...
2002), which was not the case in this study, as there was an example of an Urdu speaking-mother who uses Arabic with her children while the father took the role of maintaining the heritage language (Wateen’s family).

**Family’s religious identity and ties.** There are many factors that contribute to effective bilingualism in these three OPOL families, but the religion component (religious practices and rituals) and the socioreligious component (the community of the Mosque) appear to be the most important, as demonstrated by the data. The combination of these two components allowed these families to establish connections with the local Muslim community in Saudi Arabia and avoid being labeled as outsiders. Instead, they chose to identify themselves by their faith – as Muslims rather than by their country of origin. For instance, when parents were asked about the Arabic language, all of their responses reflected religious sentiments (e.g., our faith, our religion, or Arabic is not exclusive to Arabs but to all Muslims); thus, these families do not consider themselves to be "outsiders" because they have a common factor with the locals, which aided them in establishing these connections. These ties benefited immigrant families significantly since they provided them with consistent Arabic input. This has been shown in several studies, which demonstrate that parents who are successful in supporting their children’s bilingualism using the OPOL technique are those who have a tight network of second language speakers, as this increases the children’s exposure to the language. (Clyne, 1970; Döpke, 1998; Lyon, 1996).

**Homeschooling as a contributing factor in the context of OPOL.** Another interesting theme that emerged in one of the OPOL families, Kareem’s, that contributed to effective bilingualism was a non-traditional form of education, homeschooling. Samar, the mother, stated that she plans to use her experience at the Jeddah international school to teach her children what she learned there. Kareem’s father also emphasizes the necessity of utilizing English as the
medium of teaching in all subjects, with the exception of Arabic and religious studies, as conducted in international schools in Saudi Arabia. Thus, it appears as though Kareem’s parents’ goal is to raise bilingual children, and homeschooling offered them the room for bilingual education. The homeschool concept was emerged and discussed in some FLP studies. For example, Fogle (2009), for example, showed a similar pattern in which one adoptive family chose to homeschool their children, reflecting the parents’ belief that “they could provide the best linguistic environment” for their children (p. 144), which highlights the important role of parents’ educational philosophy on their children’s education. Tan (2020) points out that bilingual parents in Singapore choose to homeschool as an alternative education option “due to their religious beliefs” and their opposition to “excessive testing and assessment in the schools” (p. 135), which also shows the crucial role of parents’ educational perspective on their children’s education. This study, likewise, showed how the parents’ past experiences and prior socialization might impact their educational philosophy driving them to homeschool their children.

Finally, I indicated above that Kareem’s parents may have chosen to homeschool their children due to their financial position, since they are unable to pay the annual Jawazat fees making the family’s financial situation as one of the reasons why parents decide to home school their children, which was not covered so much in the literature. Some studies have found specific factors (such as religion, academic reasons, or racism) that encourage parents to homeschool their children (Collom & Mitchell, 2005; Lange & Liu, 1999; Bates, 1991; Mayberry, 1988; Pitman;1987), but the family’s financial condition has not been recognized as one of them.

5.2 Laissez-faire family language policy

This section highlights and analyze interesting findings regarding the family language beliefs, planning, and practices within this particular FLP – laissez-faire FLP – which only includes
one family (Ahmed’s family). I then discuss these findings and compare them with other related studies.

The laissez-faire FLP is the natural use of language among family members without planning or making a particular choice or decision about what language to speak. Such a strategy is referred to as a laissez-faire policy (Smith-Christmas, 2018; Elkhalik, 2018; King & Fogle, 2013; Curdt-Christiansen, 2013). Curdt-Christiansen (2013) investigated the actual family language interactions in Singaporean Chinese-English bilingual households during homework sessions. While parents reported explicit FLPs for heritage language maintenance, she stated that parents had unreflective and laissez-faire attitudes concerning the consistency of FLP planning. This laissez-faire policy allows for the use of two languages during parent-child interaction without overwhelming the child “with some overarching goal of bilingualism in an attempt to create, a super linguist.” (Schwartz & Verschik, 2013, p.30).

Ahmed’s family was the only family in this study to follow this FLP where the father, Hussain, and the mother, Sharifa, did not explicitly discuss which language to use for family interactions. Hussain said that he and his wife did not think of any FLP when they first came to Saudi Arabia (fieldnote, July 02, 2019). They both spoke Urdu in their daily communications and used Arabic when they practiced their religious rituals. They also believe that the transition from Urdu to Arabic happened unintentionally after Ahmed started school and reached the age of prayer, as I will explain in the following sections. However, Ahmed (15yrs), acknowledged his family’s laissez-faire strategy. He also stated that he is the only one among his siblings who speaks Urdu, he said:

Excerpt 30 Ahmed is the only Urdu speaking child (Ahmed, July 02, 2019)
Ahmed: I’m so glad that I had this opportunity to acquire both languages, I tried to teach it to my siblings, but they were not interested. I think they chose not to learn it,
or maybe they are lazy. Every now and then I go to my father and speak with him in Urdu because I feel like I want to improve it.

أنا مرا سعيد انه توفرت لي هذه الفرصة اني اخذ اللغتين، حاولت اعلمها اخواني، عارف مرا ماكانهمهمين. وزي ماتقول قرروا من نفسهم انهم ماتعلموها أو انهم كانوا كسالي. فام اصر عندي الا ابويما تلاقينا كل فترة وقتنا اروح له واقتحم أي هرجة معاه بالأردو لأنني كانا اتخذي اطورها.

Saad 

ساد

So none of your brothers and sisters speak Urdu?

أيوا لن أحد من اخوانك واخواتك يتكلم الأردية؟

Ahmed: Yeah, you can say I am the only lucky one, hhh

أيوا نعم ، تقدر تقول إنني المحظوظ الوحيد هيه

Before I begin recording, Ahmed informed me that he recalls the days when his mother and father spoke Urdu together (fieldnote, July 02, 2019), and in the above excerpt, he stated that his early exposure to Urdu provided him with an “opportunity” to acquire the two languages, Arabic and Urdu, and that he feels “lucky” to speak Urdu. In contrast to him, his three younger siblings lacked Urdu language proficiency as they did not see the need to acquire it.

Having said that, the following sections present and analyze the findings of this family using Spolsky’s model as the framework for analysis. Following that, I discuss these findings and compare them to those of other relevant studies.

5.2.1 Family language beliefs

In this section, I present the findings that highlighted the family’s beliefs in relation to language. The first point sheds light on the effect of the Prophet being Arab and speaking Arabic on the FLP. The second point addresses how Arabic is reinforced by school, work social life in the Saudi Arabia. The third point discusses how the religious conflict in Pakistan shaped the family’s current language beliefs.

The Ummah effect. During the explaining of their FLP, Ahmed’s parents mirrored Sophia’s parents’ descriptions of the ideological impact of believing in Arabic religion, reading an Arabic holy book, and following a prophet who was an Arab and spoke Arabic, which is a more
of a sacred orientation. Hussain, the father, stated that these factors must have had a “unconscious effect” on their FLP, he said:

**Excerpt 31**  
**Unconscious effect (Hussain, July 10, 2019)**  
Hussain: Undoubtedly inevitable, look look, the *Ummah*’s book (meaning the Quran) is in Arabic and the *Ummah*’s prophet is an Arab and speaks Arabic. I think these things has an unconscious effect on us, we have not talked about this, but I believe they have an unconscious effect.

Hussain, in the above excerpt, identified himself as a member of the *Ummah* (Muslim nation), which is an Arabic term that means “community” and is synonymous for *Ummah Al-Islam* (the Islamic community). The word "*Ummah*" is often used in the Quran to refer to a single group with identical religious beliefs and is very popular among Muslims from different countries, ethnicities, cultures. Thus, it may be thought of as a supra-national society in which people from different states share common beliefs. Having said that, looking backward to connect the dots of what happened in his family, Hussein described the language shift process as unintentional, yet inevitable, since they are members of the Islamic *Ummah* which perceives Arabic as its language.

On the other hand, Sharifa, the mother, showed a similar sacred orientation when I asked her about this language shift; she said:

**Excerpt 32**  
**Arabic is our language (Sharifa, July 02, 2019)**  
Sharifa: ...And I believe we were pleased in some way with the change, because it is our language at the end, right? It is for every Muslim, right? We read Quran in Arabic, not Urdu, right? We pray in Arabic, not Urdu ....

Sharifa referred to Arabic as "our language" and followed this statement with tag questions “right?”, which appeared to be a request for confirmation of inclusion in the *Ummah*, knowing that Arabic is known as the language of the *Ummah*, and I found myself in a position where I had to
nod my head; then, she continued her statement by highlighting the association of Arabic and Islam. In other words, Sharifa, just like her husband, did not only identified herself as a member of the *Ummah*, but she also included me because she knows that I am a Muslim who could understand this (the importance of Arabic to Muslims); thus, she followed her statement with many tag questions for me.

**The religious conflict in Pakistan shaped the family’s current language beliefs.** This finding developed from Ahmed’s family discussing how the Arabic language helps them in finding additional resources to better understand their faith, which is a comprehension orientation. Both Hussain and Sharifa described how the religious conflict in Pakistan shaped the family’s current language beliefs. Hussain stated:

**Excerpt 33**

**Effect of Religious Conflict (Hussain, July 10, 2019)**

Hussain: I will make sure, sure, sure, that my kids will learn Arabic. You know, I like the idea that someone can understand the religious texts directly, and I do not like to have a translation stands in the middle because the translator can very much manipulate the texts. I mean, this thing is a fact because I saw it. This is the reason why people are fighting and attacking each other in Pakistan, and only those who live in Pakistan know this fact. They are fighting each other in a sorrowful way; Allah helps us. And of the biggest reasons is that they take religious texts through a translator.

Religious discrimination in Pakistan is a serious problem for the country’s current human rights status. Sunnis, Shias, Sufis, Ahmadis, and other religious groups, often face discrimination and, on occasion, violence. There have been incidents in which mosques and churches have been assaulted, along with their worshipers in the previous few years. Having said that, Hussain believes that the differences in religious translations and interpretations - from Arabic to Urdu – are the
reason “why people are fighting and attacking each other in Pakistan.” As a result, he wishes for his children to have direct access to information about their faith without the need for a broker.

During my interview with Sharifa, she made a similar reflection, she said:

**Excerpt 34**  
Religion is easier to grasp in Arabic (Sharifa, July 02, 2019)

Sharifa:

I am happy that they studied in Saudi Arabia and in Arabic, and I feel that made them understand their religion more deeply, not like our people in Pakistan. Each one interprets according to their agenda.

In the above excerpt, Sharifa expressed her happiness that her children had acquired Arabic because it would allow them to better comprehend their faith without the need for a translator, unlike in Pakistan, where translations are sometimes biased. That is, each group interprets the Quran and the Prophet’s hadiths (religious texts said by the prophet) in a manner to make them consistent with their views while contradicting others, resulting in increased tension and, ultimately, a conflict between these groups. Therefore, both parents recognized that teaching their children Arabic would keep them out of religious disputes that are happening in Pakistan, as they, the children, would have a clear grasp of their faith without the need for an interpreter who may or may not be biased.

**They speak like Saudis.** This pattern was only addressed by Sharif in this family, but I feel it is important to mention. In my interview with her, Sharifa explained her thoughts about her current family language situation, and she said:

**Excerpt 35**  
They speak like Saudis (Sharifa, July 02, 2019)

Sharifa:

Ahmed is my first child, he is the only one who I think is kind of proficient in Urdu, but the others are not. But I am really happy that they are fluent in Arabic. They speak like Saudis.
Sharifa stated that she was happy that her children speak Arabic, and she highlighted that all of her children speak “like Saudis.” Such a sentiment is important and was echoed in one other family in this study, Sophia’s family. One may argue that Sharif’s statement revealed how Sharifa identified her children – as Saudis – and how this may have influenced her FLP, since it could indicate a positive attitude toward both Arabic and Saudi culture.

However, I should highlight that this view (Speaking like Saudis) is often expressed by second generation foreigners living in Saudi Arabia as a point of support for their social media campaign (such as the YouTube videos motioned in the introduction chapter) to seek the Saudi citizenship. That is, while fluency in Arabic is not a prerequisite for getting Saudi citizenship, many foreigners, particularly those born and raised in Saudi, feel that speaking Arabic well will boost their chances of naturalization, which may have influenced Ahmed’s family's FLP.

5.2.2 Family language planning and Practices.

In this section, I present the findings that highlight the Ahmed family’s language planning and practices. The first finding focuses on the impact of religious practices on children's increased use of Arabic. The second finding focuses on Ahmed’s interest in Urdu and how he practices it with his father. Finally, the third finding covers the impact of Ahmed’s Saudi cousins as well as Saudi culture on the family language use.

**Religious Language Practices and Planning.** Similar to OPOL families, this theme turned out to be a major one that has some important subthemes and patterns in Ahmed’s family. I would classify this family as a highly involved Muslim family where much of their choices are religiously driven. For example, the father stated that his first goal once he arrived in Madinah was to live around Quba mosque, which is one of the first mosques in Islam that dates to the lifetime of the prophet, so he could pray all the daily five prayers in it. Also, and similar to Wateen’s family,
Makkah channel was on broadcasting Quran recitation in a low volume during my whole visit to the family. These two instances, together with the ones that follow, demonstrate how religious this family is. Nonetheless, the following sub-practices highlight key religious practices in the family that may have an influence on the family’s language use.

*He’s seven, he should start praying.* In the above excerpt (29), the father, Hussain, explained how his family shifted from Urdu to Arabic, as their dominant language; however, in that segment, he highlighted an important practice that I believe should be highlighted due to its potential influence on their FLP, he said:

**Excerpt 36 Preparing children to pray (Hussain, July 10, 2019)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saad</th>
<th>Unintentionally you said?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hussain</td>
<td>Yeah unintentionally, but you know I think at that time because it was the time for Ahmed to pray, so I think I just needed him to memorize the small verses of the Quran so he can recite them in his prayer. I remember at his age my father taught me these verses, may Allah reward him well for that.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

أبوا تقدر تقول بدون قصد، لكن عارف اتوقف انه كان الوقت المناسب لأحمد ان خلاص لن امتنع على عشان كذا اعتقد أني كنت ابغاه يحفظ آيات القرآن الصغيرة حتى يقدر يقرأها في صلاته. أتذكر لما كنت في عمره أن ابوي علمني هذه الآيات جزاه الله خير  

The father, Hussain, thinks that the language shift from Urdu to Arabic occurred “unintentionally” once Ahmed began school and reached ‘the age of prayer.’ The association between shifting to the dominant language and enrolling the family’s first child in a public school may be understood; however, the other factor, reaching the age of prayer, need to be explained. Muslim parents are expected to teach their children how to pray at the age of seven, and this process is expected to continue until their child reaches the age of twelve, when prayers become almost mandatory. This practice, along with enrolling Ahmed in public school, appears to have influenced the family’s language use by pushing them to put more emphasis on Arabic by teaching their child, Ahmed, how to memorize “the small verses of the Quran so he can recite them in his
prayer.” I believe that parents’ religious conviction that their children should start learning to pray at an early age is associated to the Arabic learning process, since children are supposed to read and study and memorize the Quran, which is in Arabic, as was the case with Ahamad.

Furthermore, during my interview with Sharifa, the mother, she asked her youngest daughter Nouf, who was six years old at the time of my visit, to read one of the smallest surahs – meaning chapters – in the Quran, which is the 112th chapter (Figure 12), and she did it hesitantly.

Figure 12: Surah Al-Ikhlas; the 112 chapter of the Quran

Overall, prayer education for children begins with memorizing short verses of the Quran, and it is one of the most important Parental Religious Obligations to Children in Muslim families whether they speak Arabic or not. While Arabic-speaking parents are expected to teach their children the physical practice (the act of prayer) since their children supposedly speak Arabic, non-Arabic-speaking parents are obligated to teach their children both the physical practice and the language associated with it.

Quranic Memorization Centers (QMCs). Both parents showed great interest in having their children memorize the Quran. As I said earlier, Hussain registered all of his children at the QMC at Quba mosque, and they go there every day, all year long. He explained:

Excerpt 37 Quran memorization classes (Hussain, July 10, 2019)
Hussain:
All my children are enrolled in the Quran memorization class at the Quba Mosque, thanks to Allah. You know when you plant the Quran in your children at an early age, the harvest will be seen in their morality and relationships with others. Also, this will also *tutliq lisanuh* (free their tongue) and strengthen their language.

كل أولادي مسجلين في حصة تحفيظ القرآن بمسجد قباء بفضل الله. عارف لما تزرع القرآن في أولادك في سن بديري زي كذا، الا ما يظهر الحصاد في أخلاقهم وعلاقاتهم مع الناس وغير كذا انه كمان رح يُطلق لسانهم ويقوي لغتهم.

Hussain highlighted the importance of learning the Quran and how this will affect his children’s morals and values, since it will teach them honesty and integrity. He also added further language-specific motives, claiming that learning the Quran would “free their tongue” and “strengthen their language.” The phrase *Taliq Allisan* (free the tongue) is an Arabic expression that is meant to indicate linguistic cleverness. For example, if a person is described with a “freed tongue,” it signifies that he/she is fluent and skilled in that language. In this regard, Hussein seems to believe that memorizing the Quran would benefit his children’s Arabic learning process. It is worth noting that Ahmed, the older child, memorizes the whole Quran, and his siblings are about to reach this goal.

The mother, Sharifa, also, goes to the same place where she tries to memorize the whole Quranic herself; she said:

**Excerpt 38**  
**Mother goes to QMC (Sharifa, July 02, 2019)**

Sharifa: I have been enrolled with the memorizing center for a long period of time. I have a dream that Allah will reward me with the ability to memorize the whole Quran. I used to go there every day, and I am trying to go on a daily basis, but as you know, housework can take up a lot of time, so recently I go there two or three times a week.

انا مسجلة في مركز تحفيظ القرآن منذ فترة طويلة. أحلم أن يمنحني الله القدرة على حفظ القرآن كاملاً. كنت سابقاً أذهب إلى المركز كل يوم، وأنا أحاول الان الالتزام بالذهاب يوميًا، لكن كما تعلم، أن الأعمال المنزلية تستغرق الكثير من الوقت، إذا فقد أصبحت مؤخرًا أذهب إلى هناك مرتين أو ثلاث مرات في الأسبوع.

The above excerpt shows Sharif’s interest in going to the QMC. She said that one of her dreams is to be a Quran memorizer and that she has enrolled in a memorizing program at a nearby
QMC to accomplish this goal. This made the practice of memorizing the Quran as a family goal that includes both parents and children, giving them (meaning the children) the notion that this is a lifelong religious commitment.

The reason I mentioned these details is that both practices, daily Quran reading and frequent attendance at QMCs, are likely to have a considerable influence on the family’s language use and FLP. Ahmed’s parents enrolled him in a QMC at a young age with the objective of memorizing the Quran, which he accomplished years later. During these years, Ahmed seems to have spent more time exposed to Arabic than to Urdu, which may explain his lack of skill in the latter as he rates his skill as (intermediate) and may also account for Ahmed’s siblings’ lack of Urdu proficiency, having them grown up during Ahmed’s Quran memorizing period.

*A pattern of repeating religious supplications.* This last subtheme emerged from both the observation notes and the NOD, and each source showed an interesting point. First, despite the fact that the NOD lasted around nineteen minutes, the family did not speak much, and when they did, it was entirely in Arabic over dinner. Both parents did not talk much throughout dinner, but something near the end of the recording prompted them to explicitly request that one of their daughters recite one of the meal supplications. See the following:

**Excerpt 39**  
NOD (Ahmed’s family, July 04, 2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sharifa:</th>
<th>Child 1:</th>
<th>Husain:</th>
<th>Child 1:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>kuli hadha yallah liatjini baedin</em> <em>unclear</em></td>
<td><em>ma abaghaa shabeanih shabeanih</em></td>
<td><em>quli alhamdalalah qawliha</em></td>
<td><em>alhamdalalah</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>Eat more of this, don’t come to me later</em> <em>Unclear</em></td>
<td><em>I do not want it, I am full full</em></td>
<td><em>Say Alhamdulillah say it</em></td>
<td><em>Alhamdulillah</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sharifa: yallah qawli alhamdalaluh aladhi aiteamna

Child 1: alhamdalaluh aladhi aiteamna *out loud*

In the excerpt above, it appears as though child 1, who is either Laura or Nouf, was the only one at the table with her parents, and when she expressed her fullness, her father Hussein reminded him to express gratitude to Allah (a common practice among Muslims), and when she thanked Allah, her mother mentioned another supplication to her, which is often said when eating is finished. This practice may be stimulated as a result of the recording and the notion that both parents want to demonstrate their religious practices to me. When I later visited the family and asked about this, the father explained that he does this on a regular basis to adapt his children to these Islamic behaviors, according to the field notes. However, this practice of praising God occurred twice with two more children who I was unable to identify due to sound quality issues; nonetheless, it occurred without the involvement of the parents.

Moreover, the field note also showed some other religious practices that I noticed while visiting this family. The parents were keen to remind their children of the importance of supplications and other Islamic practices at all times. For example, when I had an interview with Sharifa and her son Ahmed, Ahmed’s younger siblings stood outside the room and were too shy to join us. When one of them (Lara, 8 years old) came in, her mother encouraged her to come over and welcome me, saying, “Say Assalamualaikum to him,” which is the traditional greeting among Muslims. Additionally, when I met Hussain, the father, and his son, Ahmed, in a coffee shop where we did Hussain’s interview, Hussain reminded us, meaning me and his child, to recite the Basmalah when the barista served us the coffee (Fieldnote, July 10, 2019). In general, one may
observe that Ahmed’s family makes frequent religious supplications, and these rituals (e.g., thanking Allah for the meal in Arabic) may have facilitated the family’s use of Arabic and deeply ingrained a feeling of the Arabic language’s sacredness in their children from an early age.

**Urdu practice with the father.** Ahmed talked about his attempts to sit with his father and speak with him in Urdu. He said that his father always answers him in Urdu, and sometimes corrects his language and gives him feedback. Ahmed explains his motives behind these attempts; and said:

**Excerpt 40**

*Language and environment (Ahmed, July 02, 2019)*

Ahmed: Because of the Arabic language, you will inevitably learn it, I mean the environment will force you, and you are not stronger than the environment, the environment is stronger than you and will overcome you, it will force you to learn the language and you will acquire it like its people, but if Urdu gets away from you, you will not get it because it is not the language of the environment and it is not practiced around you.

لأنه العربي رح تتعلمها مافي مفر منها، يعني البيئة رح تجبرك، و انت مو اقوى من البيئة , البيئة اقوى منك وتحتجزك. حتجبرك على اللغة وحتكسبها زي اهلها, لكن الأوردو اذا فلت منك مارح تحصلها لأنها ماهي لغة البيئة وماهي ممارسة حولك.

In the above excerpt, Ahmed’s interest in Urdu appears to be motivated by his fear of losing it. He states that he is unconcerned about Arabic since it is the language of society and he would surely learn it; however, when it comes to Urdu, and because it is not spoken in his around him, he attempts to acquire the language by speaking with his father on occasion. His father expressed his gladness that his son was interested in Urdu and stated:

**Excerpt 41**

*Urdu will be needed in the future (Ahmed, July 02, 2019)*

Hussain: Look, I can tell you that there was no need for it (meaning Urdu in Saudi Arabia in the past), but I think that it will be needed in the future, and because of this, I am happy. To be honest, I really like his insistence on learning it, and even if it does not benefit him, it will not harm him, Masha Allah, his Arabic language is good, and Urdu is also nice, it can help him whenever he needs it.
Hussain expressed his happiness with his son’s attempts to learn the Urdu language and noted that the Urdu language might assist him in the future, maybe from an economic viewpoint in Saudi Arabia. Although the father is a first-generation immigrant, who may have ties to the Pakistani community in Madinah, his interest in Urdu was not to attach Ahmed with the Pakistani community, but rather connected to economic purposes. Finally, this practice may represent the family’s laissez-faire ideology by demonstrating that it is up to the children to decide the language they wish to study and speak in this family.

**The Saudi cousins and culture.** Ahmed’s family indicated two practices associated with the Saudi setting that played a significant role in their language use, and these practices have been going on for years, therefore they are worth mentioning.

**Hanging out with the Saudi cousins.** This theme is very interesting and one that was emerged among all family members. Sharifa’s sister, Sarah, who is a Pakistani as well, is married to a Saudi who only speaks Arabic. Sarah has four children, all of whom speak Arabic, according to Sharifa. Anyway, it became clear to me that these two families spend most of their time with each other, as they meet almost every day whether at Ahmed’s family’s house or at Sarah’s house. Ahmed mentioned in his interview that he grew up hanging out at his aunt’s house and with his cousins, where they played soccer and video games together.

**Excerpt 42**  
Sleepover at his aunt’s house (Ahmed, July 02, 2019)

Ahmed:  
...I spend most of my time with my cousins. You can call them my friends because you know we grew up with each other. I remember many days I would beg my mother to let me sleepover at their place.

... أقضي اغلب وقتنا مع عائلة خالتي. لقد تعلمنا عارف أننا عشنا وتربينا مع بعض.

Saad  
Were you sleeping there?

كنت تنام هناك؟
Ahmed explained in the excerpt above that he spends most of his time with his cousins, which is critical when we consider some facts about his cousins. Prior to my conversation with Ahmed, his mother, Sharifa, made two important facts regarding his cousins, she said:

**Excerpt 43** Sharifa’s sister (Sharifa, July 02, 2019)

Sharifa: My sister is married to a Saudi, and they only speak Arabic. Even her children only speak Arabic, and you also know that they are Saudis because they (meaning her nephews) obtained citizenship through their Saudi father.

أختي متزوجة من سعودي ولا يتكلمون إلا العربية. حتى أطفالها يتحدثون العربية فقط، وأنت تعلم أيضًا أنهم سعوديون لأنهم (أي أبناء أختها) حصلوا على الجنسية عن طريق والدهم السعودي

This implies Ahmed, and maybe his siblings, grew up and spent most of their time in an Arabic-speaking home, which may have contributed to Ahmed’s family’s shift from Urdu to Arabic. That is interesting since Sarah’s family is an extended family in this case, and we typically find extended families supporting the heritage language; here, we see that the extended family may be one of the factors pushing for the majority language.

Furthermore, when I asked about Ahmed's relationship with his cousins and how they communicate, he stated that he only speaks Arabic with them, but he also made an interesting statement about Urdu:

**Excerpt 44** Embarrassed to speak Urdu (Ahmed, July 02, 2019)

Ahmed: ...it was embarrassing, as I remember in the old days. I was embarrassed to speak Urdu; even my cousin who was my age was a little conservative about this step (meaning learning Urdu) and felt heavy about it, so he preferred to stick with Arabic only, and the environment helped him to do this, if he could deliver what he wanted in Arabic to his father and mother, why should he learn Urdu?

كان مرا مرا محرج لما أتذكر هذا الايام. كنت مرا انحرج لى أتكلم او ردو، حتى ولد خاليتي في نفس عمرى كان م newUservented شويا من هذه الخطوة (يمعنى تعلم الأردية) ويحس بتقل للموضوع هذا، وعشا وكذا أتوقع أنه فضل سيم يركز على العربية، البيئة كمان ساعدته على هذا الموضوع، إذا كان يقدر يوصل اللى يبغي بالعربي لأنه والده وابوه يتعلم الاو ردو؟
Two critical points were raised by Ahmed in his statement above. First, he stated that he felt embarrassed to speak Urdu at his aunt’s house, which is the opposite of what he does at home with his father. As we have seen above, Ahmed enjoys talking in Urdu with his father on occasion. It appears that Ahmed’s concerns about speaking in Urdu at his cousins' house, which appear to be affected by the monolingual Saudi culture, are due to Sarah’s family’s lack of interest in Urdu, as seen by the fact that her children did not learn it. Second, Ahmed informed me about his cousin’s efforts to learn Urdu, which felt “heavy,” meaning difficult and time-consuming, which is understandable given the lack of help from his Urdu-speaking mother, Sarah. As a result, Ahmad’s cousin saw no need for him to learn Urdu as long as he could communicate with his parents in Arabic. Ahmed’s cousin’s choice not only impacted him, but also framed Ahmed’s extended family language policy by causing him, Ahmed, and probably his siblings, to abandon the idea of speaking in Urdu in his aunt’s home and making him feel embarrassed about this matter.

Lastly, one thing I should highlight here, which is Asim’s statement. Asim is Ahmed’s younger brother; he is twelve years old and was not interviewed; however, he made an interesting statement when I first visited the family and talked about my study before I started the recording process. He said, “I cannot imagine our family speaking Urdu together; it makes me laugh when my brother talks about it.” When I asked him about the reasons, he replied: “it is weird and funny.” Such a statement may reflect the difference in birth order as the oldest child, Ahmed, might remember speaking more Urdu, therefore, has a more positive attitude toward it. Another thing that I took from Asim’s statement is that it may also reflect the family’s laissez-faire policy. That is, it seems that it is up to the children to choose which language they want to learn and speak at this home.
**The social media effect.** Ahmed’s interest in YouTube and Snapchat drew my attention; he informed me that he has a YouTube channel and a Snapchat account, and he asked me to post a picture of both of us on his account in Snapchat with a caption in Arabic says (welcome to our guest). When I asked him of who he follows, it became evident that he follows people from all around Saudi Arabia (Qassim, Eastern Province, Jeddah, Riyadh, and other regions), and he told me about events that are happening in those regions that I was unaware of. It is worth noting that he does not follow anyone from Pakistan, or at least anyone who speaks Urdu or is of Pakistani origin.

Nevertheless, I asked Ahmed to provide me with several accounts that he always watches, and I added them to my account and continued to follow them for a few days until I had a good notion of Ahmed’s interests. It turns out that the majority of these accounts are well-known on social media in Saudi Arabia, and that the majority of them are interested in online gaming and technology news. Regarding YouTube, I asked Ahmed to send me his account, but he informed me that he currently does not have any videos. However, he also informed me that his parents are concerned about the family’s privacy, since YouTube is an open platform, unlike Snapchat, which gives some privacy.

**5.2.3 Discussion about the Laissez-faire policy.**

In this section, I will go over some of the main findings in this case and compare these findings with other similar studies. However, before diving into such a discussion, I just want to give a general summary of this family. Sharifa and Hussain came from Pakistan almost twenty years ago and gave birth to four children, two boys and two girls, in Saudi Arabia. As shown above, this family was the only one that did not articulate their FLP; both parents reported using Urdu when they first came to Saudi and switching “unintentionally” to Arabic years later when their
first child reached the age of school and “praying.” Although Arabic is the family's dominant language, I should emphasize that neither parent openly discussed which language to use for family interactions. Such a strategy is referred to as a laissez-faire policy (Smith-Christmas, 2018; Elkhalik, 2018; King & Fogle, 2013; Curdt-Christsensen, 2013). Having said that, the following are some discussions of the main findings of this case.

**Views towards the Laissez-faire policy.** The findings suggest that Ahmed and his siblings were free to speak the language of their choice with their parents; yet Ahmed was the only child who spoke Urdu on occasion, while his other three siblings showed no interest in the heritage language. Both parents did not explicitly advocate a language policy in the home. Rather, the language transition, from the Urdu to Arabic, occurred gradually and unintentionally in this home. This case exemplifies parent-child discussions and a laissez-faire attitude to language policy (Caldas, 2012), both of which have previously been documented in FLP research (Smith-Christmas, 2018; Elkhalik, 2018; King & Fogle, 2013; Curdt-Christsensen, 2013). These studies showed how parents expressed a wish to raise their children bilingually without putting them under pressure or imposing certain rules during individual interviews and focus groups. Ahmed’s family case echoed the literature and was consistent with these studies as the finding showed that Ahmed was not under any pressure from his parents to speak either Urdu or Arabic. However, Ahmed described feeling little pressure or embarrassment about speaking Arabic at his aunts’ home, which has not been discussed previously in the literature as extended families are frequently found to be contributors to heritage language maintenance (e.g., Pauwels, 2016; Seals, 2013; Kouritzin, 1999; Fillmore, 1991). In fact, a recent study conducted on Vietnamese families in Australia emphasized the value of heritage languages in maintaining family ties (McLeod et al., 2019), which was not the case in Ahmed’s family, where it appears that there was an effect of FLP at the aunt’s house,
which either directly or indirectly, influenced the language usage and shift – from Urdu to Arabic – in Ahmed’s family’ house.

**The Ummah effect.** Moreover, parents in this house hope their children will have a clearer understanding of their religion. They believe in the idea of the crossed-border thought, one Ummah, united by one religion and one language, as it could be the ultimate solution that will stop the religious conflicts in Pakistan and the other Islamic nations. This was evident in both parents’ interviews, when they used terms such as “our language” and “Ummah” to emphasize the significance of Arabic to their family's faith. This attitude has also been echoed in Said (2018), as her Arabic-English speaking bilingual participants in the UK highlighted the sentiments such as: “without Arabic, how can I understand my religion?”, “translations of the Qur’an was a bad idea,” and “you never get the true meaning unless it is in Arabic.” (p. 90). She stated that Arabic was “singled out for its importance to religion, culture and family ties” (p. 90). The context of this family, however, agrees only with the first factor, religion, and differs from the other two. That is, when Ahmed’s family shifted to Arabic, it may weaken their family ties and heritage cultures.

**The sibling orders.** Many family language beliefs, such as the Ummah effect, religious conflict in Pakistan, and a positive attitude toward both Arabic and Saudi culture, have profoundly influenced the formation of this family’s language policy; however, the sibling order seems to have has had the significant impact on the language use patterns and practices in this family. The effect of birth order differences is noticeable in this family, as the family’s oldest child, Ahmed, who recalls his mother and father speaking Urdu, is the family’s only bilingual child. Also, according to Pine (1995), the first-born child has more chances for one-on-one interactions with mothers and caregivers, whereas the second-born child hears less parent communication. Ahmed, in addition to having more chances for one-on-one interactions with his mother and father, also witnessed the
period when his parents communicated in Urdu, which the rest of his siblings did not. Overall, this case contributes to a small but increasing number of articles that have begun to explore the significant role siblings play in the language patterns of bilingual children, which implies that the sibling order plays a critical role in the language use of family members (e.g., Kinsella, 2020; Kheirkah & Cekaite, 2018; Bridges & Hoff, 2014; King, 2013).

Furthermore, Ahmed’s effect on his other younger siblings is also noticeable, since he began attending Saudi schools and the QMC at a young age, which may have prompted his siblings to begin speaking Arabic even before they began attending these institutions. According to Spolsky (2007), children of school age convey the language used in the larger community into the house and use it with other younger siblings. Several other case studies suggest that older siblings bring home the majority language through school, TV, and friends (e.g., Kheirkhah & Cekaite, 2018; Niño-Murcia & Rothman, 2012; Salvador, Nicoladis, & Diego, 2017). Overall, memorizing the Quran and QMCs on a near-daily basis, whether by children or parents, may have a significant role in shaping the family’s everyday lifestyle, and so I cannot ignore the possibility that these practices impacted their FLP. That is, Ahmed began memorizing the Quran at an early age and has already memorized the entire Quran. As a result, Ahmed seems to have spent more time exposed to Arabic than Urdu, which may account for his lack of Urdu proficiency. This may also explain why Ahmed’s siblings do not speak Urdu, having grown up during Ahmed’s Quran memorizing phase.

5.3 Multilingual Family Language Policy

This section highlights and analyze interesting findings regarding the family language beliefs, planning, and practices within this particular FLP – Multilingual Family Language Policy – which only includes one family (Mohammed’s family). I then discuss these findings and compare
them with other related studies. The multilingual strategy was implemented by one family, Mohammed’s Family. However, I did not categorize this family under the Laissez-faire policy because there was more tendency for multilingual practices by the family members.

Mohammed’s mother, Eve, is a single working mother who works as a receptionist at a five-star hotel in the center of Madinah, just across from the Prophet Mosque. She defines herself as a multilingual individual who speaks Arabic, Urdu, Turkish, and English. She believes that “everyone should learn a new language to gain an appreciation of this world.” Eve speaks Arabic at home with her children, but she has shown a strong interest in her mother tongue, Urdu, and other languages such as (English and Turkish). In this regard, the distinguishing feature that makes this policy different from laissez-faire is that there is an effort, made by the mother, to promote multilingual practices for her children. She said that her children learn these languages online through their smart tablets and that she sometimes addresses them in these languages as well. Thus, they were the only family in this study to follow a multilingual family language policy.

Having said that, the following sections present and analyze the findings of this family using Spolsky’s model as the framework for analysis. Following that, I discuss these findings and compare them to those of other relevant studies.

5.3.1 Family’s language beliefs.

In this section, I present the findings that highlight the Mohammed family’s beliefs in relation to languages. The first theme focuses on the mother’s divorce and its impact on her FLP with her children. The second theme examines how the FLP was influenced by the mother’s concern of religious consequences in the hereafter. The third theme explores how the mother’s prior experiences with her family – pre-marriage – have influenced her current FLP. Finally, the
last theme in this section examines the mother’s outlook on the increasing value of multilingual talents in the Saudi job market, and what this has to do with her family's language policy.

**Urdu is “Our own special language.”** I had two interviews with Eve, and during our first interview, she noted that the Arabic language was the family’s dominant language before and throughout marriage; but, following the divorce, she expressed an interest in teaching her children her heritage language as well as other languages, she said:

**Excerpt 45**

"*Our own special language*” (Eve, June 11, 2019)

Eve:  
... their father got the custody of the children. We agreed to that because I was busy studying and working at the same time. But when my children visit me during weekends and vacations, I always try to teach them my native language so that we can have our own special language. I know their father does not speak it, so I am the only source for them, why not, right? You know I think it will somehow benefit them, plus they will always know their origins, that they are half Pakistani. Another thing, look at their iPads, I can show you their iPads, there are many apps for other languages as well, when they are at their father’s place, I follow their progress on these iPads, but not every time. I think these things will benefit them one day.

Eve stated that she was the only member of her nuclear family who spoke Urdu before the divorce. Her ex-husband, who is a Saudi male, only speaks Arabic and does not speak Urdu. However, things changed after they went apart; Eve illustrates her sons’ custody situation during school as they stay at their father’s place during the workdays and spend the weekends at hers. Such an arrangement has been implemented because she works five days a week in order to afford her living. She then expressed concern that her children might forget “their origins” from her side of the family, considering their time spent with their Saudi father. Eve also expressed an interest
in teaching Urdu to her children on the days they stay at her place, stating that she wishes for this language to be her “own special language” with her children. One can see that Eve is not connecting Urdu to a community, but rather it is a private language between her and her children. That is, she does not seem so concerned about maintaining ties with the Urdu speaking community in Madinah but rather having something that sets her family apart from her ex-husband family. One can see the contrast between the two families (hers and her ex-husband); at Eve’s, it seems as though she is attempting to convey the notion that ‘this is my home with my children, we are going to do things differently, and we have our own private thing that does not involve my ex-husband.’

At our first meeting in the coffee shop, Eve revealed that she was not on good terms with her husband’s family (meaning her husband’s parents); she tried to explain to me how they negatively perceived and stigmatized Urdu, but she did not continue her statement as it was a very emotional silent moment.

**Fearing religious consequences in the afterlife.** The pattern of religious punishments and rewards in the hereafter (the judgment day), which emerged as a surprise to the researcher, has played a significant role in shaping Eve’s FLP. Some families in this study touched on this concept many times, often describing the way religious rewards and punishments fuel their motives and practices. Eve was the only family that focused only on the punishment’s aspect. See the following excerpt:

**Excerpt 46: Fear of judgment day (Eve, June 14, 2019)**

Eve:

.. at the day of judgment, they will put it on me, they stand before me at the gate of heaven, and they will say "you did not teach us, you did not teach us," If I didn’t teach them, how would they understand the Qur’an? They will not be able to read the hadiths of the Messenger, peace be upon him, and then day after day, the religion will disappear from them, and their understanding of the religion will be very weak.
In the above expert, Eve demonstrated a very positive religious perspective about Arabic. Unlike the other languages she chose for her children, she views this one through a different lens, a sacredness orientation. That is, she thinks of Arabic as one of the Parental Religious Obligations to Children; an obligation that may have the consequence in the afterlife. This religiously driven language ideology caused her to be afraid of committing a sin – meaning not fulfilling the duty of passing Arabic to her children – which could prevent her from entering “the gate of heaven.” Therefore, she believes that her children should learn Arabic so they can have an easy access to more religious knowledge and sources that will strengthen their faith. Such religiously driven language ideology must have a strong impact on the FLP of this family.

**Influence of Prior experiences.** I believe it is critical that we examine Eve’s past experiences in all of their complexities in order to understand how they have influenced her current circumstances. In her interview, Eve revealed that she was raised in different houses as a result of her father’s many marriages, and that this occurred throughout her mother’s sickness. She stated:

**Excerpt 47 “I was raised in a full foreign house” (Eve, June 14, 2019)**

Eve:

...I am my mother and father’s only daughter. I have one sister from my mother’s side who is 11 years older than me, and three brothers from my father’s side who are younger than me. Of course, you know my father and mother got divorced, my father married an Afghani woman who previously had children from an Afghani man, so it was the same language situation in all of these situations, but as you see, you could say I was raised in a full foreign house, yet with Saudi customs.

... أنا بنت امي وأبى الوحيدة. عدي أحدة من امي اكبر مني 11 سنة، وعدي ثلاثة اخوان من ابوبا اصغر مني. اكيد عارف الحين امي وأبوا انفصلوا، وتزوج ابوا من وحدة أفغانية كانت متزوجة وعندها أطفال من الأفغاني هذا، عشان كذا نفس الوضع لغوي في كل هذه المواقف، زي ماتمشوف تقدر تقول اني تربيت في بيت أجنبي كامل ولكن بطابع سعودي.
As mentioned above, Eve is the only daughter of her mother and father, but she also has siblings from both sides of her family. Thus far, no complications appear to exist, but there are two factors that have had a significant impact on Eve’s language belief. First, her father’s interest in his daughter’s Arabic fluency, and second, her mother’s illness who was the source of Urdu for Eve. See the following:

Excerpt 48 My father is all about Arabic (Eve, June 11, 2019)
Eve: ... My father is all about Arabic, but my mother occasionally brings in some words and even Pakistani meals to make Friday special for the family, but my father is only interested in the Arabic language, and he is concerned that our language does not break and that we speak in the same way that the Arabs do.

Excerpt 49 “Do not speak to my daughter in your language” (Eve, June 11, 2019)
Eve: ... even my grandma, may God have mercy on her, used to mix Urdu with Arabic, which angered and upset my father. He used to say do not speak to my daughter in your language, do not break her Arabic and then she becomes just like you.

The preceding two excerpts demonstrate Eve’s father’s strong interest in Arabic and his negative view of Urdu. Although Urdu is his native language, Eve described the way her father views Urdu using the phrase “your language” which may imply that he has distanced himself from the Urdu community. She also said that her father used to get angry when one of her relatives spoke to her (his daughter Eve) in Urdu; she said that he used to tell them, “do not break my daughter’s tongue,” which was a new phrase for me. Eve explained and said it is a phrase her father used to describe people who speak with a “broken Arabic,” meaning Pidginized Arabic. It seems
her father wanted her to speak dialectical Arabic and not the pidginized version of Arabic. However, Eve’s father’s attitude toward Urdu, on the other hand, forced her to rely on her mother to learn Urdu, which, as she noted, began to fade when her mother became ill. She said:

**Excerpt 50**  
The Urdu speaking mother (Eve, June 11, 2019)  
Eve: Many times, I heard my mother speak Urdu all day when her friend came to visit but this did not last long, my mother got sick and fell into a coma and is now half paralyzed, and after that, you can say the Urdu language has vanished.

في كثير من الأحيان اسمع ماما تتكلم بس اوردو طوال اليوم لما يزوروها صديقتها، لكن تعرف ماطولت لانه مرضت ماما ودخلت في غيبوبة وهي الآن تقريبا نصف مشلولة ، وبعد ماصار هذا كله تقدر تقول ان الاوردو اختفت

Considering Eve’s father’s attitude toward Urdu and her earlier memories of her mother and the Urdu language, it appears as though Eve has an emotional attachment to Urdu, and perceives it as a mother-daughter private language, just as she does now with her children. Eve did not abandon the Urdu language; rather, she attempted to develop it. In fact, once her marriage ended, she sought a close bond with her children and selected Urdu as the tool to achieve this purpose, as discussed earlier. This reinforces the argument stated in the previous theme that Eve is not connecting Urdu to a community but rather using it as a private language for herself and her children.

**The growing value of multilingual skills in the Saudi job market.** Along with Arabic and Urdu, Eve was also interested in teaching English and Turkish to her children. This came after she saw the increased demand for bilingual and multilingual workers in the growing tourism sector in Saudi Arabia; she said:

**Excerpt 51**  
The important English and Turkish (Eve, June 11, 2019)  
Eve: You know, after I got a job, I realized how important English was. Of course, my first job was at Madinah Airport, and you know the company that won the airport management contract was Turkish, with the majority of the employees
speaking both English and Turkish. Day by day, I learned from them as a result of our daily interactions.

Eve stated that her interest in the English and Turkish languages stemmed from her encounters with employees at Madinah Airport. However, Eve had a second job opportunity that changed her perspective on languages in general as she saw their economic value in the religious tourism sector in Saudi Arabia; she said:

**Excerpt 52**

**Value of multilingual skills in the job market (Eve, June 11, 2019)**

Eve: After that, I got a job at the hotel where I work now. Of course, why did they hire me in the first place? I have four of the most important languages they need, and I am stupid. If I had known, I would have asked for a higher salary on the contract.

Saad: Why?

Eve: You know most of the pilgrims and Umrah performers you meet, whether they are Arabs, Turks, or Pakistanis and Indians, and I can communicate with them practically in their own tongues; I can check them in easily to their rooms, so the hotel saw me as if I had come from sky hhh.

The data of this family shows that Eve was/is interested in teaching English and Turkish to her children, the above excerpts show how Eve saw the values of these languages, along with Urdu, in the Madinah job market, especially in the religious tourism sector. During my first meeting with her, Eve talked about her experience of getting the job at the hotel; she said that the human resource office of the hotel called her and asked her, “do you speak Urdu?” and when she said yes and talked to them in Urdu, they hired her the next day. She later told me that the hotel
management was amazed when they found she could communicate with pilgrims from Turkey and Europe as well in English and Turkish. Furthermore, during my interviews with Eve, it became clear to me that she had almost mastered the use of these languages for specific purposes, such as the language used in hotels (room types, rates, money exchange, etc.). Eve explained how she saw the economic advantages of these languages, and especially the value of her heritage language in this context. She stated that the hotel treated her “as if I had come from the sky,” implying that she was viewed as a valuable multilingual broker who met the hotel’s needs. Therefore, she wants to make sure that her children will get the same opportunity. She said that her children would be grateful and thankful for speaking these languages, which would make her feel that she was ‘successful’ in her role as a mother.

5.3.2 Family Language Practice and Planning.

In this section, I present the finding that highlight Mohammed’s family’s language planning and practices and management. The first finding discusses some of the family’s religious and cultural practices that contribute to the children’s increased usage of Arabic. The second finding explores the influence of Eve’s community of practice (workplace) on her children. Finally, the third finding discusses the role of technology in the FLP.

The influence of religious and cultural practices on children’s use of Arabic. All data sets (interviews, ethnographic notes, and NOD) revealed that Mohammed’s family engaged in a variety of religious and cultural practices that contributed to the children’s increased usage of Arabic. The following practices are as follows: 1) the Quranic memorization center, 2) the Quran recitation routine, and 3) the re-use of school textbooks as language resources.

Quranic Memorization Center (QMC). As all families in this study, Mohammed’s mother showed great interest in having their children memorize the Quran. She said:
Saad: Do they go to the Quran center?

Eve: Yes yes, they go, they go to the center, but you know where the problem is? You know, after the divorce happened, I went out and came here, so when my children come to me, how do they go, the center is far from them.

Eve explained that her children go to the center, but after the divorce and because she moved to an area that seemed to be far from her husband’s residence, the center became far from her, and as a result, her children do not attend the QMC during the three days that they spend at her house, which brings us to the following subtheme.

**Quran recitation routine.** Because her children do not attend the QMC while they are at her house, Eve established a religious practice that she constantly incorporates into her daily life with her children: a Quran recitation routine.

**Excerpt 54**  
**The proper pronunciation of Arabic** (Eve, June 14, 2019)

Eve: I want to make sure that they (her children) have the proper pronunciation of Arabic and the correct Tajweed (meaning intonation). I was tired of this subject when I was young, but I thanked God a thousand times that I learned it. Because now I see many Arab people and they read the Quran incorrectly, they do not know how to Al-iazihar and Al-iadigham and Alaqlabi, and nothing, they just read read, and this is wrong.

Saad: Ok, do you teach them these things?
Eve

They already know it, but when they read it to me, I see that they occasionally make a mistake or two, which I correct for them.

In the above excerpt, Eve expressed how concerned she is about her children learning both Quran and Arabic. Thus, when her children stay at her house, they have a routine of reciting the assigned chapters from the Quran to their mother who checks their “proper pronunciation of Arabic and the correct Tajweed.” One may comprehend such concerns when knowing that Eve speaks the Hijazi dialect, which differs from standard and Quranic Arabic in several ways. And before I provide an example, I should emphasize certain characteristics of Eve’s dialect in order to put the above comment about “the proper pronunciation of Arabic” into perspective. According to many studies conducted on Hejazi dialects, the Hejaz region is home to two distinct dialect groups: one spoken by the urban population, mainly in the cities of Jeddah, Mecca, and Madinah, and another by the urbanized rural and Bedouin communities. Eve speaks the urban Hijazi dialect, which has some characteristics that distinguish it from the standard and Quranic languages. For example, the Classical Arabic phoneme /ð/ (ذ) came to be pronounced /d/ as in ذَهَب /dahab/ ‘gold’ or /z/ as in ذَاكر /zaːkar/ ‘he studied,’ and the sound /θ/ (ث) is mostly pronounced /t/ as in ثُور /toːr/ ‘bull.’ Such differences are considered religiously unacceptable when reciting the Quran as many Muslim scholars highlight the importance of practicing Tajweed (improving or making something better) when one recites the Quran. Nasalla (2016) described the science of Tajweed and said:

“As a technical term, Tajweed means to make good or to better the recitation of the Glorious Quran by giving each letter its right with regards to the correct way of pronunciation... One of the famous scholars of Tajweed, Imuin Al-Jazr, stated that acquisition of theoretical and practical knowledge of Tajweed is mandatory (Wajib) on every Muslim man and woman for the recitation of the Quran. (Nasalla, 2016, pp.55:56)
During my meeting, it became evident that Eve was quite knowledgeable about this field and was eager to pass it on to her children. Nevertheless, while I was at her house, she asked her son Mohammed to recite a chapter from the Quran that he memorized, meaning without holding the Quran, so Mohammed recited nearly a whole page of the Quran with a balanced recitation indicating a very high level of Tajweed. Later Eve informed me that she does this practice almost every day with her children when they are at her house. She added that their father, her ex-husband, has enrolled them in a QMC, and she is also trying from her side to assist them in memorizing the Quran. This takes us to the interesting argument of “religious reward” and its influence on parental behavior. Parents usually encourage their children to learn the Quran because, according to Islamic beliefs, anytime someone reads the Quran, the religious reward for doing so is for both, the individual who reads it and whoever taught him/her how to read it. Thus, I think the concept of religious reward could be one of the factors that motives Eve as she noted earlier that her husband had enrolled their children in a QMC, yet she is also making attempts, such as this discussed practice, to support her children’s journey in learning the Quran so she, too, can get the religious rewards.

**The re-use of school textbooks as language resources.** Finally, and with regard to the cultural practices, the field notes revealed how Eve contributes to her children Saudi identity development as well as their Arabic handwriting skill. When I entered the children’s room, I saw that they had kept their textbooks despite the fact that the school year had ended. When I asked Eve about this, she stated that she wanted them to “develop their Arabic handwriting.” She later showed me Mohammed’s notebook that he uses to rewrite Arabic passages from the school textbooks. See the following picture (Figure 13).
In the above picture, Mohmmed was writing about the founder of Saudi Arabia, King Abdulaziz. This example is one of many that shows how Eve contributes to her children's cultural learning by encouraging them to develop their Arabic literacy through the use of textbooks that promotes the Saudi culture. Most of Mohammed’s writings were from these Saudi school textbooks, which usually promote the Saudi culture, and nothing was written about Pakistan or the Pakistani culture. However, that does not mean Eve is not interested in her heritage culture or language; but rather, I think her Urdu language planning lacks the focus on the writing skills.

The influence of Eve’s community of practice (workplace) on her children. This finding emerged from the NOD, revealing an interesting pattern of translanguaging during dinner time. That is, Eve and her children spoke Arabic entirely when they conversed in during dinner; then, after receiving an unexpected call from what appeared to be her employer, Eve began speaking in English and code switching with certain Arabic words. See the following excerpt:

Excerpt 55  Codeswitching practice during dinner (NOD, June 16, 2019)
Eve: ###, yes yes, I told him I’m not coming tomorrow qabl ma akhruj, shifti is not tomorrow.

1 %tra: ###, yes yes, I told him I’m not coming tomorrow before I left. My shift is not tomorrow.

Eve: Yes yes ok

2 %tra: Yes yes, ok

Eve: Thank you so much, shukran wa jazak Allah khir.

3 %tra: Thank you so much, thank you and may Allah rewards you

*Italicized English is the actual English words said by Eve*

In the above excerpt, which starts with few words that were difficult to capture and transcribe because Eve seemed to be far from the recording device; however, she appeared to be speaking with her employer because she was discussing her shifts arrangement at work the next day. I reached Eve later after the transcription process via WhatsApp and asked her whether she did this on a regular basis and also if she codeswitch using other languages (Urdu and Turkish). She informed me that she believes she does this on a regular basis, and she also stated that she regularly uses English and, on occasion, Urdu if the person speaking to her understands it. I should point out that this practice took place while her two children were present at the dinner table, which reflects the multilingualism orientation of this house.

**The role of technology in family language policy.** According to the data, Eve appears to rely heavily on the iPad to compensate for lack of Urdu resources in Saudi Arabia, to use language-learning applications, and to keep track of her children’s development when they are at her ex-husband’s house. That is, Eve uses the iPad as a language management tool within the home domain to increase the input of not only her heritage language, but also other languages such as English and Turkish. The followings are three technological practices that Eve uses to manage her FLP with her children.
Online Urdu stories for bedtime. Eve noted that finding Urdu tales for her children was difficult because the ones available in Madinah bookstores were either in Arabic or English; therefore, and to make up for this lack, she turned to technology. She said:

**Excerpt 56** Online children’s stories (Eve, June 14, 2019)

Eve

...when I give them the choice of what stories to read at night, they ask for the Urdu ones.

Saad

قصص ما قبل النوم بالآردو؟

Eve

Yeah, and do not ask me how I got them, hhh

Saad

ههه ليه؟

Eve

Hhh well, because we live in Saudi Arabia, I can only find stories in Arabic or English and I was so tired and tired of looking for stories in Urdu but one of my friends sent me a wonderful website that has many great children’s stories in Urdu, and they are with pictures and everything, I print them, and when my printer broke, I started to read them from the iPad.

In the above excerpt, Eve noted that her children prefer Urdu stories before bed and also discussed the dearth of Urdu children's stories in bookstores in Madinah. She did, however, mention that one of her friends recommended that she go to one of the websites that features a variety of children’s stories with graphics. Eve prints these stories and reads them to her children before bedtime, or, as she commented on sometimes, she reads them directly from her iPad. Later she showed me a preview of the website (see Figure 14) and stated that she was extremely comfortable with this option because fresh stories are uploaded there on a monthly basis.
In general, the concept of utilizing technology to help in the management of heritage languages within the home domain was rather interesting to observe since it provides her children with a rich linguistic environment in their heritage language. Additionally, this demonstrates Eve's commitment to creating ‘her own language and place’ with her children, as these Urdu stories are only available at her home.

**The Cambly Kids App.** Eve discussed some of the efforts she makes to help her children while they are at the house of her ex-husband and his family, who only speaks Arabic. First, Eve noted that she relies on some of the applications that she pre-installed on their iPads, where she can also track her children’s progress. One example she provided to me was the Cambly Kids App (See Fieger 15) which is advertised in the Apple store as “an online learning platform that teaches
English as it is really spoken in Anglophone countries such as the USA, the United Kingdom, and Canada.” (Apple store, 2022). Eve explained how she utilizes this application, which has two users: one for the parent and one for the children. She said that the application allows her to follow her children after each session. She added that she is also happy that she can monitor her children's language development remotely while they are at her ex-husband's house. Concerning privacy, she said that the app keeps video records of all children’s sessions with teachers, as well as messages and activities between the children and the teacher.

*Figure 15: A screenshot of the Cambly Kids App*

![Cambly Kids App](image)

Eve said that she found an offer for both of her children; the offer is four months of classes, three times a week, 30 minutes a session. Mohammed, who is 12 years old, demonstrated his excitement and interest in these sessions throughout our interview; he stated:

**Excerpt 57**

Mohammed: I wish our English classes at school were like this.

أتمني حصص الإنجليزي بالمدرسة زي كذا
Eve later explained the way Mrs. Aisha taught her English classes and showed me some videos of a previous class. It seemed that ‘Camply kids’ focuses more on speaking skills and uses many interactive games and videos, which differ from the English classes that Mohammed takes at school that are mostly based on the grammar-translation method.

**YouTube and TV.** The reflection of the multilingual mentality of Mohammed’s family can be seen on their TV and YouTube watchlist. While I was at their house, the children were on their tablets playing online games and shouting some English words to their online friends, and there was a Turkish TV show playing in the background on their big screen TV that has a variety of channels with different languages. In addition, Eve said that she also depends on YouTube for other language resources. (e.g., Turkish children’s cartoons). I asked her to show me an example of what her children watch, and she asked that her son Muhammad bring his iPad and show me his YouTube Watchlist the Eve created; they were full of Arabic, English, Turkish and Urdu cartoons. Eve explained that her attempts of trying to make her “kid's ear” open to many languages as much as possible.

**5.3.3 Discussion about the Multilingual Family Language Policy**

Mohammed’s family was the only family in this study that implemented the multilingual FLP. Eve, the single parent, speaks Arabic at home with her children, but she has shown a strong interest in her mother tongue, Urdu, and other languages such as (English and Turkish). She
believes that “everyone should learn a new language to gain an appreciation of this world.” Having said that, the following are some discussions of the main findings of this case.

**Heritage language as a tool for bonding.** Eve described Urdu as her “own special language” with her children, implying that she does not associate Urdu with the Pakistani community; instead, it is a private language between her and her children. That is, it seems that she does not appear to be concerned with keeping ties with the Urdu-speaking community, but rather with having anything that distinguishes her family’s identity from her ex-husband’s, who showed a negative attitude toward Urdu and are not in good terms with her as Eve explained. Wright (2020) stated that one of the reasons that single parents use the minority language is to “establish a family identity, belonging, and heritage connection” (p.30). One can see how Eve used the Urdu language as a tool to establish a strong bond with her children following her divorce from her ‘Saudi’ ex-husband as she does not want her children to forget their Pakistani heritage, which could affect their bond in the future. In addition, Wright (2020) has also found that single parents often use the collective pronoun “we” to refer to themselves and their children, indicating a distinct family dynamic among one-parent families (p.45). Eve showed a similar pattern throughout our conversations; for example, she uses the collective pronoun suffix (-na) in the word (*lughatuna*) meaning (our language) to define Urdu as her private language with her children. An Arabic speaker would notice this pattern – the usage of the suffix (-na) – in Eve's speech, which appears in many sentences during our interviews and appears to refer to herself and her children.

**Single parent family and the minority language.** Eve stands out as the only parent in the study who planned to maintain Urdu in the family as a tool to keep pond with her children and also as a means of assisting her children in obtaining jobs in the future. This shows how Eve seemed to be layering different reasons to maintain Urdu in her family. One can see the way that she turns
what is for her probably a very emotional thing to bond with her children using Urdu into an instrumental motivation for them to have jobs in the future. This could be because she stands out as the only single parent in this study, and previous research has shown that single parents utilize minority languages more frequently with their children than partnered parents (Wright, 2020). Wright (2020) wrote a whole chapter on single parent families and analyzed data from three studies of parents in a bilingual context and showed that “single parent in these studies had very different alignments to their children and interactional strategies in conversation than partnered parents” (p.36). She explained that in single-parent families, the presence of only one parent encourages a lot of collaboration and leads to a positive outcome for minority language maintenance. Mohammed’s family’s data, which stand out as the only single parent family in our study, reflected Wright's finding, since they demonstrated patterns that differed from any other family in this study.

The role of technology in family language policy. Based on the data, it appears as though Mohammed’s mother largely depends on the iPad for storytelling and language-learning applications, as well as for following her children’s progress when they are at her ex-husband’s house. That is, Eve uses technology as a language management tool within the home domain to transmit not only her heritage language, but also other languages such as English and Turkish. In general, the concept of utilizing technology to help in the management of heritage languages in the family domain echoed the work of Said (2021). Her study looked at two multilingual families in the UK where parents used technology as a way to pass down their heritage languages. She found that parents used technology in the home to help their children improve their heritage language skills (Said, 2021). Eve, on the other hand, seemed to use the technology as a development tool to create a rich linguistic environment of not only her heritage language, but of the other languages as well.
Furthermore, the data revealed that Eve appeared to be unconcerned with her children’s overuse of technology. She heavily relies on iPads to bridge the gap between her and her children by allowing her to monitor their language learning progress while staying at her ex-husband’s house. According to Said (2021), parents in multilingual families are less concerned about their children’s excessive use of technology; she stated, “the support parents feel technology offers them in transmitting the heritage language reduces their own anxiety over their children’s heritage language development whilst also unexpectedly relaxing their attitudes towards fears of (over)consumption of technology” (p.1). However, Eve’s reliance on technology was not only to support her heritage language but to support other languages as well.

The single-parent immigrant family’s ties with their ethnic community. Poveda et al. (2014) and Vorobeva (2021) demonstrated the importance of bonds for single parents by demonstrating their tendency to form networks in their communities that may grow into bonds. However, in contrast to this, our study finds that the single parent, Eve, was more interested in building bonds with her children and she does not seem so concerned about maintaining ties with the Urdu speaking community in Saudi Arabia. Her concern is that her ex-husband and his family’s negative perception of the Urdu language will be passed on to her children, hurting her future relationship with them.

5.4 Monolingual Family Language Policy.

This section highlights and analyze interesting findings regarding the family language beliefs, planning, and practices within this particular FLP – Multilingual Family Language Policy – which only includes one family (Salah’s Family). I then discuss these findings and compare them with other related studies.
The monolingual strategy was implemented by only one family, Salah’s Family. The father, Mohanad, who was born in Pakistan and migrated to Saudi Arabia with his family at the age of four, explained that both of his parents speak Urdu and Pidginized Arabic at home. Mohanad now holds two Ijazahs, which is, as I stated earlier, a license that permits its holder to transmit a particular way of reading the Quran to others and issued by someone already possessing such authority. He also holds a bachelor’s degree in English from Taibah University in Madinah. The Mother, Sabah, on the other hand, has a similar history as her husband. She migrated with her family to Saudi Arabia almost twenty years ago. They came directly to Madinah and lived in the same neighborhood that her husband grew up in. Sabah explained that her father and mother did also take her to a female QMC. She added that her parents found a chance at these types of centers as the outcome would not just be memorizing the Quran but also learning the Arabic language. Although she does not hold an Ijazah certificate, she voluntarily teaches Quran to Saudi and non-Saudi female students at a nearby mosque before the sunset prayer during workdays.

Mohanad and Sabah have been married for eleven years; they have three children, two girls, and a boy. They both intentionally chose Arabic as the only home language; they encouraged their children to speak Arabic as much as they could. Arabic was the medium of conversations between parents and children and the parents themselves at home. The family showed some interest in the English language for economic reasons, but the data do not indicate any presence of the English language use or planning. This sentiment emerged during the interview with the father. However, this monolingual FLP was based on some layered beliefs that both parents have, and we will be discussed in the following section.

Having said that, the following sections present and analyze the findings of this family using Spolsky’s model as the framework for analysis. Following that, I discuss these findings and
compare them to those of other relevant studies.

5.4.1 Family language beliefs.

In this section, I present the findings that highlight the family’s beliefs in relation to languages. The first finding examines the impact of religious beliefs, rituals, and values on the FLP of Salah’s family. The second finding focuses on the family’s beliefs and attitudes regarding Arabic and Urdu. Finally, the last finding concerned with the family’s perceptions and attitudes about English.

The influence of religious beliefs, rituals, and values on FLP. Several interesting religious subthemes emerged in the Salah family, defining them as a highly involved Muslim family where much of their choices are religiously driven. The following subthemes are as follows: 1) Phonological reasons, 2) Religious Rewards, and 3) One Ummah One Language Identity.

Phonological reasons: Salah’s parents, similar to the single parent Eve, appeared to be concerned about their children’s phonological proficiency in Arabic. During our interview, the father expressed an interest in the proper pronunciation of some Arabic characters that are difficult for non-native speakers to pronounce, he said:

**Excerpt 58**

Mohanad: Arabic sounds and the Quran (Mohanad, May 19, 2019)

... thank to Allah, I have two Ijazahs in the Quran, and I know that I would not have obtained them if I had not mastered the Arabic sounds since childhood like the (/ح/-/ه/) sound. So, I think it is very important for us, we as Muslims, and since we have this opportunity, to convey this language to our children.

The above excerpt shows how Mohanad uses his metalinguistic skills to explain his concern regarding his children’s phonetic competence in Arabic. Mohanad showed a strong desire for his children to learn the Arabic phonetic system properly, noting that Pakistanis who speak
pidginized Arabic, usually, have some phonetic modifications that are incompatible with Quran recitation and may prevent a person from receiving the Ijazah. Mohanad gave an example of his father who had these phonetic features, and he said:

**Excerpt 59  Grandfather’s Arabic pronunciation (Mohanad, May 19, 2019)**

Mohanad: My father may Allah have mercy on him had these problems, and he worked on improving his pronunciation for years, and he could not. You know these things: if you did not pick them up from an early age, it is going to be challenging

الوالد الله يرحمه كانت عنده هذه المشكلة، وحاول سنوات انه يحسن نطقه وما قادر. أنت تعرف هذه الأشياء إذا لم ما قدرت تكتسبها وانت صغير رح تكون مرا صعبة عليك

Mohanad informed me that when he initially arrived in Saudi Arabia as a child, his father enrolled him in a QMC, implying that Mohanad’s father was eager for his son, Mohanad, to learn the proper Arabic sounds. However, while describing the dialect spoken by his father in the previous excerpt (57), Mohanad used the term “problems” to refer to his father’s inability to pronounce some Arabic sounds as the native speaker, which might explain Mohanad’ interest in the Arabic phonetic system, as well as his concern for his children’s acquisition of it “properly.” Also, such an attitude might be one of the reasons Mohanad chose a monolingual FLP focused only on the Arabic language.

Furthermore, Mohanad seems to be religiously driven as he wants to make sure that his children acquire the Arabic phonetic sounds from an early age so they can read the Quran precisely, which will ease the process for them to get the Quranic Ijazah. However, both the social and economic prestige attached to the Ijazah holder cannot be ignored. While Mohanad appears to be religiously driven to ensure that his children learn appropriate Arabic pronunciation, it also appears that there are other underlying motives, whether economic or social, all of which Mohanad gained after obtaining the Quranic Ijazah. That is, the Ijazah certificates improved Mohanad’s status in
Saudi society and permitted him to work as a private Quranic instructor; options that he appears to want his children to have in the future.

**Religious Rewards.** The sentiment of religious punishments and rewards in the hereafter (the judgment day) has emerged in this family as well; however, this family focused more on the reward aspect. It appears that the religious rewards have played a significant role in shaping some of the family language religious practices of Salah’s family as it worked as a behavioral motivation; see the following example:

**Excerpt 60 Parental Religious Obligations to Children (Mohanad, May 19, 2019)**

Mohanad: ..my father and mother, may God reward them, sent me to QMC when I was young, and thanks to Allah then them (meaning his mother and father), I memorized the whole Quran, and that is why I am doing the same thing for my children.”

الوالد والوالدة الله يجزاهم خير كانو يرسلوني للتحفيظ من أيام الابتدائي، وفضل الله ثم فضله، حفظت القرآن كامل وعشان كذا تعرف بسوي نفس الشي مع أطفالي

As stated earlier, In the Islamic faith, Muslims believe that when a family teaches their child the Quran, whenever this child reads the Quran, both parents will be getting religious rewards because they were the reason behind this act. That is, whenever this child reads the Quran or teaches the Quran, the person who taught him/her will get ‘ajr, ‘meaning reward or repayment, which refers to the reward that Allah will grant for the doing of good deeds in the hereafter. In the above excerpt, Mohanad acknowledged and prayed for his father and mother’s ‘good deed’ – sending him to a QMC – and he plans to do the same deed for his children respectively. One argument I make here is the impact of such belief on the parental religious obligations to children, which drives the family language use and planning. That is, Muslim parents are always keen to raise a ‘righteous Muslim child’ who memorizes the Quran, obeys Islamic rituals, and prays his/her five daily prayers, because according to the Islamic beliefs, a righteous Muslim child is one of the ways parents receive religious rewards even after their death. In the above excerpt, Mohanad stated
“that is why I am doing the same thing for my children,” which shows how his religious language planning replicates his parent’s religious practices (e.g., sending his children to a QMC), which he experienced as a child.

**One Ummah One Language Identity.** This sentiment has been echoed many times by both parents, and has been exemplified in many ways, often including “our *Ummah,*” “we as Muslims,” and “our language.” See the following excerpts:

**Excerpt 61**  
**One Ummah identity (Mohanad, May 19, 2019)**

Mohanad: ... So, I think it is very important for us, we as Muslims, and since we have this opportunity, we speak this language, we have to convey it to our children.

In this excerpt, Mohanad used two terms to clarify himself and the identity he meant, which was interesting. At first, he used the first term (*lena*) meaning “for us,” and at this point I thought he meant the Pakistani community; however, he paraphrased it and said (*ahna ka muslimeen*) meaning “we as Muslims,” which include me under the context of the one *Ummah* umbrella, a behavior that I expected before starting this study. In Chapter Three, I discussed my positionality and role as an ethnographer, stating that I considered myself a “partial insider” because I am a Muslim who knows a lot about Islam, and many of my participants perceived me through this perspective. In addition, data from his, Sabah, the wife, showed a similar sentiment, she said:

**Excerpt 62**  
**Our Ummah (Sabah, May 19, 2019)**

Sabah: ... This is our *Ummah* (meaning nation) and our language as Muslims. Look at Hajj, people of all races, ethnicities, and languages are there, yet when the imam announces prayer time in Arabic, they all understand.

*This excerpt is in Arabic, and the translation is as follows:*  
أحس أنه من مهم جدًا بالنسبة لنا كمسلمين وبما أن عندنا هذه الفرصة ، أنه أغلب شيء نسويه انه نقل اللغة هذه إلى أطفالنا.

هذه أمتنا ولغتنا كمسلمين. شوف الجذ و الناس من جميع الأجناس والأعراق واللغات تلاقفهم هناك. ولكن لما يقول الإمام حيا على الصلاة باللغة العربية ، كليم يفهموه.
Sabah explicitly stated, “this is our *Ummah* and our language as Muslims,” and she provided an example of what happens during the Hajj season. The concept of a one *Ummah* emerged from several other examples in this family, by both parents, through their use of certain expressions indicating this attitude; however, I should note that such concept is shared by a large number of Muslims around the world. The reason I brought this up here is that I believe this concept might have a significant influence in shaping the FLP of this Family. That is, the concept of one *Ummah* is deeply rooted in both parents, which appears to have pushed them, along with many other reasons, to accept a monolingual FLP and be relaxed toward their heritage language.

**Everyone around us speaks Arabic, why bother?** Sabah presented another interesting reason for why her family prioritized Arabic while being relaxed toward their heritage language. She stated that because her extended family communicates in Arabic, she found no reason to maintain her Urdu in her family. See the following:

**Excerpt 63  Extended family shifted to Arabic (Sabah, May 19, 2019)**

Sabah: ...the last time I went to Pakistan was before I got married, I went with my father for a month or so, and then we came back here. We have no relatives there; all of our relatives and friends are here. That is why Abu Salah (the father of Salah, meaning, Mohanad) and I did not see the need for it because all of our relatives are similar to us, they speak Arabic now.

أخرى مرة رحت فيها لباكستان كانت قبل زواجي، رحت مع أبيا لمدة تقريبا شهر أو شي كذا، وبعدها عطول رجعنا هنا. ما عندنا أقارب هناك، كل أقاربنا وأصدقائنا هنا. وعشقان كذا ما شفتنا انا وأبو صلاح (وأlad صلاح وتعني مهند) انه فيه حاجه ليا لأن كل أقاربنا كانا زينا يتكلموا بالعربية الآن.

In the above excerpt, Sabah stated that her family had never had any intention of returning to Pakistan; therefore, they did not see “the need” for their children to learn Urdu. Additionally, Sabah added that their extended family, who are also Pakistanis, communicate in Arabic. This means that Salah and his other two sisters were raised and spent most of their time in an Arabic-speaking environment, which may have contributed to Salah’s family’s preference for a monolingual FLP. This appears to be significant in FLP research since extended families are often
supportive of the heritage language; in this case, we observe that the extended family may be one of the factors promoting the majority language, and maybe pushing the family to a monolingual FLP.

**English as plan B.** This sentiment emerged during my interview with Mohanad as he was discussing the economic challenges that foreigners confront in Saudi Arabia. Salah’s father showed some interest in the English language; I should restate here that Mohanad has a BA degree in English and works as a private tutor, teaching both the Quran and English. Mohanad said:

**Excerpt 64**  
*English as plan B (Mohanad, May 19, 2019)*  
Mohanad:  
...because the possibility of living here in Saudi Arabia will be difficult in the future, so I do not think the Arabic language will do them very well outside of the country. That is why I feel the English language is very important to them. English, you can say for global economic and job reasons, the whole world is in English now.

In the above excerpt, Mohanad voiced concern about the deportation and expressed fear of being forced to leave Saudi Arabia, which caused him to rethink of his children’s future. He feels that, despite its religious significance, the Arabic language will not serve his children outside of Saudi Arabia in the same way that the English language does. However, although Mohanad showed some interest in the English language, the data do not indicate any presence of the English language use or planning in this family. Mohanad explains later that his family’s financial situation is the reason behind this.

**Excerpt 65**  
*English schools are expensive. (Mohanad, May 19, 2019)*  
Mohanad:  
... the advantage of the Arabic language, Glory be to Allah, is that they will learn it from the Quran, one hindered percent, God willing, just like what happened with me, for example. But the English language has to be established
from the beginning, so if I had the financial ability, I would enroll them in English schools.

Mohanad explains that he is not focused on the English language because he lacks the financial means to enroll his children in international schools in Saudi Arabia, which frequently use English as the primary medium of communication. This was rather surprising to me because Mohanad speaks English, holds a degree in teaching English, and also works as a private tutor teaching English, in addition to Quran, yet he did not teach his children English by himself, or opt for an OPOL family language policy where he would speak English to his children. Rather, and as I said earlier, the field notes show no evidence of English language use or planning in his home. One interpretation is that this is a new conviction for Mohanad, formed over the preceding two years as Saudi Arabia’s residence rules for foreigners became increasingly stringent. Especially since Mohanad lived the experience of the migration process of his childhood friend, Ryan, who migrated to Turkey recently after the new rules in Saudi, an experience that Mohanad may think is inevitable for his family as well.

5.4.2 Family language planning and practice.

In this section, I will present the findings that emerged from the Salah family's language practices and plans. The first finding highlights various religious rituals within the family that lead to the children's increasing use of Arabic. The second finding explores some of the children's Arabic writing activities and how they led to their higher usage of the majority language at the expense of the heritage language. The third finding, finally, discusses the use of technology for religious purposes, and how it impacted the FLP of Salah’s family.
Religious Language Practice and Planning. All data sets (interviews, ethnographic notes, and NOD) revealed that Salah’s family engaged in a variety of religious practices contributed to the children’s increased usage of Arabic. The following practices are as follows: 1) the Quranic memorization center, 2) Quran Practices at Home, and 3) Prayer training practices.

Quranic Memorization Centers (QMCs). As all families in this study, Salah’s parents showed great interest in having their children memorize the Quran. In fact, both parents are Quran teachers. Mohanad holds two Quranic Ijazahs that give him the opportunity to teach Quran for a living. On the other hand, although she does not hold an Ijazah certificate like her husband, Sabah voluntarily teaches Quran to Saudi and non-Saudi female students at a nearby mosque before the sunset prayer during workdays. She stated that she always takes her two daughters with her to the QMC. When I asked her what her two daughters do during the time she teaches, she stated that the older one, the five-year-old Maryam, usually sits with her and mimics her while the three-year-old Aisha plays with other children at her age.

Similar to his parents, Salah, who is ten years old, has been going to a QMC in his neighborhood since the age of seven. As of the day of the interview, he has memorized seven chapters of the Quran – around 150 pages – and seemed motivated to memorize it all. Both parents show some positive and proud feelings that their child memorizes the Quran. In fact, the father, Mohanad, asked Salah to recite some of the Quran verses during my interview with Salah.

Excerpt 66  Salah’s QMC experience (Salah, May 19, 2019)

Saad: ...You go there every day?

Salah  Yes yes اياوا اياوا

Saad  Tell me about it, Salah? Do you like it? How has it been?

Mohanad  Tell him about what your teacher said to you.
During my interview with Salah, both of his parents were seated next to him while he was sitting shy. Nonetheless, as I began to question him about his QMC experience, Mohanad joined us, and he seemed excited as he began to extract some details from what appeared to be a positive QMC experience for Salah. Later Mohanad asked Salah to recite a particular chapter of the Quran, which he did without committing any mistakes, which was expected given the parents’ competence in this regard.

**Quran Practices at Home.** Even though I asked the family to record NOD that occurred spontaneously, the recording had what I consider to be an inauthentic moment. That is, at the beginning of the recording, as it appeared that the food had not yet been served, the father started the recording and asked his son, Salah, to recite a Quran chapter for me. However, an interesting religious practice has emerged from this excerpt that I later found out to be one of the consistent practices in Salah’s family. See the following:

**Excerpt 67**  
**Quran practices pre-dinner (NOD, May 24, 2019)**

Mohanad:  
بسم الله نبدأ يا أخي سعد زي ما بلغتني هذا تسجيلنا أثناء العشاء وهو لسه ماجهز فا قلنا ايش صلاح عنده مشاركة ويبعنك تسمع تلاوته طيب يان الله صلاح ابدا الآن الله بارك الله فيهك
In the name of Allah we start, my brother Saad, as you told me this is the recording of our dinner, however, the dinner is almost ready but before that, Salah wants you to listen to him, ok Salah start now, may Allah bless you

Salah: *صَلاُح يَبِدا يَقُرَا مَا تَبَسُّرُ مِن الْقُرآن.*

%tra: *Salah starts to recite some Quranic verses*

Salah: *صَلَاح اَرْتَكَب خَطاَ.*

%tra: *Salah commits a mistake*

Mohanad: ارجع

%tra: Go back

Salah: *صَلاُح يَرْتِلَ نَفْس الْآيَة مَرَّة أُخْرَى.*

%tra: *Salah recites the same verses again*

Mohanad: ارجع من البداية

%tra: Go back from the beginning

Salah: *صَلاُح يَرْتِلَ نَفْس الْآيَة مَن بَدَايَتِهَا.*

%tra: *Salah recites the same verses from the beginning*

The above excerpt shows very interesting patterns that reflect a practice that usually happens in QMC. Mohanad asked his son Salah to recite a chapter from the Quran, and as Salah began reading, he made a linguistic error, prompting Mohanad to interrupt him by saying “go back,” which I later knew is a very common phrase in a QMC setting, which signifies there is a mistake and Salah must repair it. When Mohanad provided me with this recording via WhatsApp, I texted him and asked him, on the same platform, about this particular practice and how frequently it occurs. He explained that, as a result of his experience in teaching the Quran, he does this almost daily (at home or while driving with his children) to ensure Salah memorizes the Quran “properly.” Along with the QMC, this practice made it evident that memorizing the Quran was a top priority for both parents; as a result, many Quranic practices occurred on a daily basis and in a variety of locations (e.g., the mosque, the house, or the car), which may account for the family's monolingual
FLP adoption, which focuses exclusively on Arabic. Finally, I just want to restate the purpose of the NOD, which is to determine whether or not what occurs at home genuinely reflects the FLP given by parents. In this family, the NOD sets were all in Arabic; however, I underlined this segment because it had critical data that were revealed later when I pursued the father, Mohanad, with certain inquiries via WhatsApp, as explained in the methodology chapter.

**Prayer Training practices.** Training for prayers is one of the critical religious matters for parents, and it is considered one of the parental religious obligations to children, as it was repeated in several families in this research. Typically, parents begin teaching their children to pray at a young age so that they are accustomed to doing it five times a day by the time they reach puberty. Salah’s parents began this practice with their children at a young age and created a log to track their children’s prayer activities (Figure 16)

*Figure 16: Salah's prayer activities*
The above figure shows Salah praying activities every day; the paper contains five prayers for each day of the week, where Salah colors the prayer slot that he performed. Sabah stated that she creates a new check-prayer list every week and follows up with Salah to ensure that he prays at least three days a week, and as he grows and matures, another day will be added until he prays all of his prayers at adolescence. However, whether parents are aware of it or not, I believe this practice has a significant impact on family language policy. That is, one should note that prayer training includes language instruction by the parents; this process, in addition to increasing Arabic language use to at least five times per day, connects the Arabic language to the religion, promotes its sacredness, and makes it the default language for every Muslim family.

**Arabic Writing Practices.** During my interview with the mother, Sabah, she shared with me that she places a strong emphasis on her children’s writing skills. She stated to me that she goes to the bookstore regularly and purchases materials to assist her children in improving their handwriting. I asked her for some samples, and she provided me with the followings (Figure 17).

*Figure 17: Samples of Salah’s Arabic writing practices.*
The picture above displays several samples of Salah and his sisters’ Arabic writing practice over the summer vacation. When I asked Sabah about her interest in writing, she said the following:

**Excerpt 68** Arabic writing Practices (Sabah, May 19, 2019)

Sabah: ... I think the writing skill increases your knowledge of the language and the spelling; look at this generation, their writing skill is very bad, they have many spelling mistakes, and they all rely heavily on their mobile phones.

سأجد أن مهارة الكتابة رح تزيد من معرفتك باللغة والتهجئة، شوف الجيل هذا كيف وشوف مهاراتهم في الكتابة جدا سببية، عندهم خطأ إملائي عد واغلط، وكلهم يعتمدون بشدة على جولاتهم.

Saad yeah your are right, one of my relatives sends me voice-text1 instead of written-texts

صحيح صادقة، وحدها تقريباً ليس الرسائل الصوتية

Sabah hhh, because of his spelling mistakes?

ههه، بسبب أخطائه؟

Saad I think so, hhh

أتوقع ههه

Sabah Yeah yeah they do that, this is why I feel it is necessary to have my children learn this skill at this time when they are young and listen to me, because when they grow up, it will be very hard to control them and take their devices (meaning their phones or their tablets) away from them, I wish their writing will be excellent by that time.

صحيح صحيح يسوا كذا،عشان كذا قلت ايش خليني اركز عليها واعلامها اطفالي وحده صغار ويعملوا الكلام عشان ما يكرروا ويصير صعب اني اتحكم فيهما واخذ اجهزتهم (تقصد جولاتهم او اجهزتهم اللوحية) منهم لاني مرا أتمنى يكون وقتها كتاباتهم ممتازة.

Sabah stated in the above excerpt that writing enhances “knowledge of the language and the spelling,” and she wishes for her children to have this skill at an early age and before they grow up and have smartphones, which, as she believes, would hinder their development of this skill.

This practice reflects the family’s monolingual FLP as it only focuses on one language, Arabic.

**The use of technology for religious purposes.** This practice was interesting as I noticed that the family is very interested in technology, but for religious reasons. The following sub-practices demonstrate how the Salah family utilizes technology.
**E-Quran: the Quran reading pen.** When I was in the children’s room, I found an electronic device, which later turned out to be an E-Quran learning tool (Figure 18). It turns out that the electronic pen is a small computer in the form of a pen that can read and recite any verse or chapter from the Quran just by pointing to it.

*Figure 18: The E-Quran reading pen*

Both parents shared their experience with this device, which they use with their two young daughters. The mother noted that her five-year-old daughter Maryam frequently goes to the QMC with this device, which helps her start learning the small chapters at this age, so that she can memorize some of them when she reaches the age of seven, which is the prayer training phase. This practice demonstrates how early the family begins religious practices, including Arabic practices, within the context of the parental religious obligation to children.

**Other religious resources at home.** In terms of house entertainment, the family has a TV that has just Arabic and English channels; however, Mohanad is the only one in this house who
speaks English. While I was taking a tour of their house, I asked both parents about their TV and what they watch, both of them affirmed that their children are allowed to watch just one channel because they ‘trust’ its contents; they want to make sure that their children are exposed to channels that conform to Islamic values. This channel, “Baraem TV,” meaning “Kids Tv,” is directed to children and promotes the Arabic language along with some Islamic values such as praying, respecting the elderly, honesty, etc. In addition to that, I was also interested in going through the books in the library of this family’s house. It appears that most of the books are in Arabic, except for some books that teach the English alphabet. In general, one can see that the Urdu language is absent in this house, and that both parents show no interest in teaching their heritage language to their children, which may reflect the family’s religious beliefs and identity.

5.4.3 Discussion about the Monolingual Family Language Policy.

A monolingual family language policy (Arabic only) was only implemented by Salah’s family. Both parents intentionally chose Arabic as the only home language; however, both mentioned different motives. The father, Mohanad, was more focused on the Arabic phonetic competence for religious purposes, and the mother saw no “need” for Urdu as long as they plan to live in Saudi Arabia and their extended families have shifted to Arabic as well. In addition, Salah’s parents held similar impact beliefs; it became much clearer when they implemented explicit Arabic-only management strategies, despite the father’s wishes for his children to be able to speak English and the absence of both parents’ desires for their children to be proficient in the heritage language. The filed notes, together with parental responses to language usage and activities at home, acknowledged the children’s use of Arabic and endorsed it further as parents motivated their children to have more Arabic/religious rituals and practices at home. It seemed that both parents recognized their influence on their children’s language development; however, they did
not implement language management strategies that encouraged heritage language use. I think that the Salah family’s religious conservatism, which appears to have been passed down from the grandparents’ generation, as well as the indirect motive of extended relatives who have shifted to Arabic, has pushed Salah’s family to concentrate purely on the Arabic language, seeing no “need” for Urdu in their current situation. Having said that, the following are some discussions of the main findings of this case.

Conservative parenting. Salah’s family shows an authoritative parenting style on many occasions. For example, children are restricted to watching only one channel, expected to do language exercises to the children throughout the summer vacation, and expected to always listen to their parents and not refuse their commands, which is similar to the authoritative parenting style in Hispanic and Ethiopian homes (see Gebrekidan, 2012; Varela et al. 2013). Although the two studies emphasize the use of authoritative power in heritage language use, Sabah, the mother, uses her authoritative power to improve her children’s Arabic language skills at this age, because, according to her “when they (meaning her children) grow up, it will be very hard to control them.” Varela et al. (2013) reported a similar parenting method in Latino families; they found that Latino parenting methods place a larger emphasis on “unquestioning obedience” from their children (p.172). This could allow parents to have additional power over their children’s language use. According to Spolsky (2009), a critical part of family language policy is “control of the home language environment” (p. 17). According to these studies, Sabah's authoritative power may help the family maintain their heritage language; yet, we have observed her utilizing it – meaning the authoritative power – to help her children enhance their Arabic language skills, as she has shown little interest in passing on Urdu to her children.
The acquisition of the Arabic phonetic system. Salah’s father, Mohanad, expressed his concerns over his children’s acquisition of the Arabic phonetic system. This is due to the fact that Urdu and Arabic belong to two different language families, which may account for the diverseness of the two languages. Urdu, much like Bengali, Punjabi, and Sindhi, belongs to the Indo-Aryan group of the Indo-European family of languages (Jain & Cardona, 2007). Arabic is a member of the Semitic language family, a family that flourished in the middle east and southwestern Asian countries (Hetzron, 1997). Having said that, one should note that the Arabic phonemic inventory includes sounds that involve a ‘pharyngeal’ constriction, which means they are articulated with the tongue root against the back of the throat, such as (/ʕ/ and /ħ/). This place of articulation could be challenging to pronounce for non-native Arabic speakers, especially for those who speak a language from a different language family (Alwabari, 2013). Having said that, Mohanad seems to be religiously driven as he wants to make sure that his children overcome this issue and acquire the Arabic phonetic sounds from an early age so they can recite the Quran precisely.

One Ummah one identity. In contrast to some FLP and bilingual studies which showed how transnational families view their heritage language as a marker of their cultural identity (Zen, 2021; Geerlings, Verkuyten & Thijs, 2015; Mu & Dooley, 2015), this family did not follow this pattern. Instead, Salah’s family, driven by religious beliefs, views Arabic, the dominant language, as a marker of their identity in general, as they have never identified themselves as Pakistanis. Both parents referred to Arabic as their language using pronouns such as “our” which brings me back to the topic of the cross-border identity that promotes a one Ummah one identity concept. In addition, in FLP studies, identification is usually associated with the host country and the country of origin (Schwartz, 2010), and we have not encountered studies that exemplify religious identity. One may argue that Salah’s parents adopted Arabic, the host country’s language, which falls under
Schwartz’s two classifications, yet during my interviews with both parents, they do not refer to Saudi Arabian culture or identity; they always refer to the religious notion of the *Ummah* identity.

In the case of Israel, Ben-Rafael et al. (1998) conducted a study on Russian-Jewish immigrants who moved to Israel, and they found their readiness to acquire the new host culture with its own language, Hebrew, which is another sacred language such as Arabic. However, these immigrants did not highlight the religious identity, but instead the “diaspora identity” (p. 351), which is similar to the one *Ummah* identity in its crossed-boarder feature, though differs in its core. That is, the diaspora identity is based on the concept of immigration, while the one *Ummah* identity is deeply rooted in the religion.

**5.5 Chapter summary.**

This chapter has presented, analyzed, and discussed the findings of the study. The chapter was divided into four sections, each one devoted to different FLPs that were reported by the families. In each of these sections, the findings of each family were presented in many formats (e.g., excerpts from interviews, pictures, notes, or NOD); all of these findings were then analyzed using a within-case analysis approach in which I analyzed the findings of each family. However, through the within-case analysis of each FLP, I was able to determine four main themes that were common among the families. First, in all families, parents put great emphasis on Arabic as a sacred language of their religion. They believe it is their parental responsibility to ensure their children learn Arabic in order to practice their faith. Second, the fear of religious consequences in the afterlife, which emerged as a surprise to the researcher, played a significant role in shaping some of the families’ language beliefs and practices. Third, several families highlighted the notion of the one *Ummah* identity and that Arabic is the default language of this Ummah. This notion revealed how the majority language, Arabic, became equal to the heritage language, and in some
cases, had the highest status as a result of this identity. Lastly, the study found that family's religiosity, parental language competence, and life experiences determine the FLP followed.

Having said that, the following chapter (Chapter Six) provides a cross-cases analysis of all FLPs combined, while addressing the study questions, to provide a thorough picture of how Pakistani expatriate families in Saudi Arabia develop and construct their FLPs, as well as the influence of religion on these policies.
CHAPTER SIX: CROSS CASES ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

6.0 Introduction

The previous chapter presented, analyzed, and discussed data from six participating Pakistani families, a total of 17 individuals, in Saudi Arabia. These families reported four different FLPs, and each one was analyzed and discussed individually using a within-case analysis. Given the ethnographic nature of this study, the data analysis showed salient episodes and significant experiences of each family; this should explain why I focused on each FLP individually in the previous chapter, as I considered each FLP as a case study. However, the strength of findings from single case studies is limited, and it is argued that using multiple cases has the ability to increase the robustness of the study’s conclusions (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2003). As a result, and as I previously stated, the use of a multiple case study design should not be regarded as an attempt to increase sample size, but rather as a means of enabling me to do a thorough cross-cases analysis of the data and provide more explanation for the study’s findings by shedding light on similarities and differences across cases (Gustafsson, 2017; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Merriam, 1998). Therefore, this chapter answers the research questions by presenting a cross-cases analysis and discussion of the findings of all six families combined. These questions explore how families across all FLPs exhibit similar patterns, with a particular emphasis on their language beliefs, practices, and management (Spolsky, 2004).

6.1 Answering the research questions

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the impact of religious beliefs and practices on the FLPs of religious immigrant families from a different perspective that has not been explored before. That is, and as stated earlier, most earlier studies focused on immigrant families whose heritage language was also their religious language, hence these studies looked at how
religion contributes to the ‘maintenance’ of that heritage language (see Yazan & Ali, 2018; Gogonas, 2012; Gomaa, 2011). However, these studies do not answer the questions proposed in this paper; what if the family’s heritage language is distinct from the language of their religion? How would that affect the FLP of these religious families? To what extent do religious beliefs and practices in specific play a role in FLP? Therefore, the context of this study presents a unique setting to answer these questions, the participants in this study are Pakistani immigrant Muslim families; their heritage language is Urdu, but at the same time, they are devoted Muslims, which means they are expected to perform their five daily prayers in Arabic, recite and memorize the Quran in Arabic, and use Arabic for many other religious practices and rituals.

These religious obligations present several questions about how a non-Arab Muslim family manages their language policy while raising their children in light of their religion’s linguistic requirements? The answer to this question will fulfill the main objective of this study which is to discover the religious impact on FLP in a context that has not been previously researched. Thus, the three research questions listed below, which serve as the framework for this chapter, offer a structure for exploring the issues raised about religion’s impact on family language beliefs, practices, and management (Spolsky, 2004). These questions are as follows:

1. How do bilingual Pakistani families in Saudi Arabia shape and construct their family language policies?

2. What languages do bilingual Pakistani families in Saudi Arabia use, and how do they manage language in family interactions?

3. To what extent do religious beliefs and practices play a role in the FLP development process of bilingual Pakistani families in Saudi Arabia?
One can see how these three questions are interrelated and rooted in the very nature of Spolsky’s (2004) three domains (family language beliefs, practices, and management). As a result, these questions will be addressed in conjunction with the emerging themes, from all families combined, for each of the three domains that address the research objectives. By utilizing this framework, I expect to gain a thorough perspective of these families’ experiences, with an emphasis on the religious impact on language use and choice, which is the core of this study. As I stated before, the data analysis of this chapter is accomplished using a cross-cases analysis of the six families combined to enable me to capture the common themes that emerged among these families for each of Spolsky’s three domains.

6.1.1 Families’ language beliefs:

As stated earlier, most of the previous studies that examined the role religion plays in the FLP have targeted immigrant families whose heritage language was also the language of their religion, and they looked at the maintenance of the heritage language (see Yazan & Ali, 2018; Gogonas, 2012; Gomaa, 2011). In this study, however, I was able to examine the effect of religion on immigrant families whose heritage language differs from the language of their religion. Table (18) shows the major themes highlighting the language beliefs across all six Pakistani families. As stated in the conclusion of the previous chapter, the studied found that all parents, across all families, put great emphasis on Arabic as a sacred language of their religion. They believe it is their parental responsibility to ensure their children learn Arabic in order to practice their faith. Second, the study found that the fear of religious consequences in the afterlife, which as I sated earlier, emerged as a surprise to me, played a significant role in shaping some of the families’ language beliefs and practices. Also, several families highlighted the notion of the one *Ummah* identity and that Arabic is the default language of this *Ummah*. This notion revealed how the
majority language, Arabic, became equal to the heritage language, and in some cases, had the highest status as a result of this identity. Lastly, the study found that family’s religiosity, parental language competence, and life experiences determine the FLP followed.

Table 18: A cross-cases analysis of families concerning language beliefs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Cross-cases Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1</td>
<td>Religion as a core value in FLP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 2</td>
<td>Religious consequences in the hereafter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 3</td>
<td>One Ummah (Muslim) identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 4</td>
<td>Family’s religiosity, parental language competence, and life experiences determine the FLP followed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Religion as a core value in FLP. All the six families in this study expressed a strong interest in the Arabic language, and the study found that this interest stemmed primarily from its connection to the Islamic religion. Accordingly, all families, across all FLPs, listed Arabic as one of the languages used at home. All Pakistani parents, whether they speak Arabic or not, expressed an interest in their children learning the language of their religion so that they can comprehend their faith, pray, memorize the Quran, and participate in various religious practices and rituals that necessitate the use of Arabic. For example, in section (5.1.1), I discussed how all the three OPOL families favored Arabic over their heritage language because they consider Arabic to be “their” language, and it belongs to all Muslims, not just Arabs (see Excerpts 1; 2; 3; 4; 5). For example, Kholod stated that the Arabic language is not “exclusive to Arabs,” and she added, “I believe that it is for everyone because my Lord has chosen it for the Quran” (Excerpt, 4). Accordingly, all of these parents felt obligated to teach Arabic to their children, which was expected behavior given that they are deeply involved in their religion and consider it to be central to their lives. The same
religious devotion can also be seen across the other three FLPs who showed other interesting sentiments (e.g., one *Ummah* identity or the fear of the consequences of the afterlife), which I will discuss in this section, but they all revolve around the idea that the religion is the core value in the FLPs of these Pakistani families. Such behavior is echoed in Khan’s (2020) study which observed the parenting styles among the Pakistani Muslim communities in Canada; one of his findings suggests that “Muslim Pakistani immigrant parents feel obligated to teach their children their language and religion so that it does not get lost in the generations to come” (p. 58). This goes in line with my argument that the religious factor plays a fundamental part in shaping the FLPs of all the six Pakistani families. These families view Arabic and religious literacy as one type of literacy because of the strong bond between them; most of the religious commitments are performed in Arabic. One can see how these religious commitments drove the families in this study to incorporate Arabic into their daily lives, even among parents who did not know much of Arabic. This goes in line with Spolsky’s (2009) notion that “Muslim might not set out to learn the language, but will probably believe that he should, and will be willing for his children to be taught it” (p. 49), which was the case with two parents in this study (i.e., Wateen’s father and Sophia’s mother) who, according to them, knew a little Arabic for religious purposes; however, they were insistent that their children learn Arabic.

**Religious consequences in the hereafter.** An interesting theme this study revealed was the fear of religious consequences in the afterlife, which has played a significant role in shaping some of the families’ language beliefs and practices. The fear of the consequences of the afterlife motivated many parents to ensure that their children learn the Arabic language in order for them to grow up as Muslims and perform their religious duties, which necessitate the use of Arabic. For instance, Eve, the single parent, stated that she thinks of Arabic as one of the parental religious
obligations to children, an obligation that may have a consequence in the afterlife. This religiously driven language ideology caused her to be afraid of committing a sin – meaning not fulfilling the duty of passing Arabic to her children – which could prevent her from entering “the gate of heaven” (Excerpt, 46). Therefore, she believes that her children should learn Arabic so they can have easy access to more religious knowledge and sources that will strengthen their faith. Eve’s behavior echoed the findings of Özdikmenli-Demir and Şahin-Kütük (2012) who examined the family agents who facilitate religious transmission to children in Turkey, and they found that mothers “teach their children Islamic religious practices and talk about God, the Prophet, Hell, and Heaven” (p. 390). However, Eve’s afterlife sentiments caused her to shape her FLP in a manner that is consistent with her religion’s linguistic requirements – focusing on Arabic – in order to avoid the guilt of not passing Arabic to her children. Eve was the only one who talked about the concept of hell and heaven explicitly; the other families were more implicit in this regard.

Moreover, unlike Eve, the other families expressed a greater interest in the concept of “religious reward,” which also refers to the afterlife’s consequences. That is, parents usually encourage their children to learn Arabic, memorize the Quran, and practice their daily prayers because, according to Islamic beliefs, anytime someone does a religious practice (e.g., reading the Quran), the religious reward for doing so is for both, the individual who does it and whoever taught him/her how to practice it. This ideology seems to have influenced parents’ behavior in this study. That is, the Pakistani parents believe it is one of their responsibilities as parents to raise their children to be Muslim and participate in religious practices, and they linked this to the success of their role as Muslim parents. They believe that for every religious act a child does (e.g., reading the Quran), the parents will have religious rewards for that if they contribute to this practice.
Mohanad, for example, somehow touched on this topic, and he said, “my father and mother, may Allah reward them, sent me to QMC when I was young, and thanks to Allah then them (meaning his mother and father), I memorized the whole Quran, and that is why I am doing the same thing for my children” (Excerpt, 60). One can see how this concept of religious reward resulted in a sequential practice that continues over generations, as all parents want their children to memorize the Quran in order to increase their religious rewards (for parents and children), as in the Islamic belief. This is not limited to memorizing the Quran, but also to other rituals and practices that parents expect their children to learn and perform.

Consequently, parents in this study begin planning this from an early age by 1) including Arabic as one of the languages, or the only language as in Salah’s family, spoken at home, 2) sending their children to QMC to memorize the Quran form an early age, and 3) training their children to pray the five daily prayers. These three major practices fall under the parental religious obligations to children that every parent in this study expressed. It is worth noting that all of these obligations necessitate the use of Arabic, which highlights how Arabic is strongly intertwined with religious practices, which gives it a more sacredness orientation among non-Arabic speakers, as seen in this study, and was also highlighted in others (see Al-Shlowiy, 2019; Moore, 2016; Albirini, 2016; Spolsky, 2009; Brenner, 2001; Fishman, 2002).

Overall, this study reveals that the religious consequences in the afterlife, whether it is fear of guilt or the desire to earn religious rewards, have played a significant role in influencing many of the families' language beliefs and practices.

**One Ummah identity.** In contrast to some FLP and bilingual studies, which showed how immigrant families view their heritage language as a marker of their cultural identity (Zen, 2021; Geerlings & Verkuyten, 2015; Mu & Dooley, 2015), four families in this study did not follow this
pattern. Instead, driven by their religious beliefs, they viewed Arabic and their membership in the *Ummah* (Muslim nation) as a marker of their identity in general; they have never identified themselves as Pakistanis. First, the families of Salah and Ahmed has explicitly stated their *Ummah* identity in many excerpts (see Excerpts 31; 32; 61; 62). They have also identified Arabic as the default language of this *Ummah*, and every Muslim should learn it. On the other hand, Kareem and Mohanad demonstrated a more implicit pattern, since both of them addressed me as “brother” (see Excerpts 1; 15; 67). This concept has its origins in the Islamic belief as one of the Quranic verses stated that “The Believers are but a single Brotherhood” (Quran, *Al-Hujurat* chapter, 49:10), which also reflected one of the Prophet Mohammed’s sayings, which affirms that all believers are brothers and sisters regardless of their ethnicity, color, location, or language (Widhiyoga, 2019).

Nonetheless, one could argue that these two families referred to me using the term “brother” because I am a Saudi which already puts me in a position of power. However, the situation is different here because the data indicates that the term was mostly used while discussing Arabic and religion combined; in other contexts, both of them referred to me by my given name, which made the use of this term “brother” distinctive that I even wrote it down in my e-note App the first time I heard it. Besides, I have observed the use of this phrase, i.e., brothers and sisters, among the Muslim communities here across the United States, as many of them use it to express their affiliation with the Ummah whenever I visit Mosques. Rosowsky (2020) also observed a similar sense of identity among Muslim youth who were originally from Pakistan in a northern city in the United Kingdom.

Finally, as I explained in Chapter Four, the term "*Ummah*" is often used in the Quran to refer to a single group with identical religious beliefs, and it may be thought of as a supra-national society in which people from different states share common beliefs. Having said that, and looking
backward to connect the dots of the above four families who ascribed themselves to this identity, it appears to have influenced parents' perspectives about Arabic, prompting them to prioritize it over other languages by incorporating it as one of the primary languages used at home, or the only language, as Salah's family did. This goes in line with findings in social studies that found Muslims sometimes resort to their religious affiliation as a cultural resource for identity construction (Yilmaz & Albayrak, 2022; Holtz, Dahinden, Wagner, 2013; Frisina, 2010). For example, in the European context, Holtz et al. (2013) examined the discourses of 56 German Muslims and found that many of them construct their identity based on their Muslim affiliation, believing that all Muslims are brothers and sisters. However, in FLP studies, identification is usually associated with either the host country or the country of origin (Schwartz, 2010), and we have not encountered studies that exemplify religious identity. One may argue these parents may have adopted Arabic and the host country’s identity, which falls under Schwartz’s two classifications, yet throughout my interviews with parents, they never mention Saudi Arabian culture or identity; instead, they constantly refer to their religious affiliation ‘as Muslims’ (see Excerpts, 58; 61; 62).

**Family’s religiosity, parental language competence, and life experiences determine the FLP followed.** Finally, the last interesting theme this study revealed was that the family’s religiosity, the parental language competence, and the life experiences determine the FLP followed. The first part of this theme is level of religiosity as I find that the extent of the family's religiosity determines the FLP followed. That is, the findings revealed that the family with high religiosity followed a monolingual FLP that concentrated entirely on the religious language, as was the case with Salah's family. Salah’s parents were so concerned about their children’s phonological proficiency in Arabic as they prescriptively noted that Pakistanis who speak pidginized Arabic, usually, have some phonetic modifications that are incompatible with Quran
recitation and may prevent them from receiving the Ijazah (e.g., Excerpt, 58). Therefore, this family not only sends their child to the QMC every day, but they do many Quran Practices at home as well. They also created a log to track their children’s prayer activities as part of the prayer training practice that they start with their children from an early age. Further, the family even managed the TV exposure as they affirmed that their children are only allowed to watch just one channel because they ‘trust’ its contents; they want to make sure that their children are exposed to channels that conform to Islamic values. I will discuss this even particular practice – managing the TV – more when I discuss the families’ language management; however, I bring this up here because it demonstrates how the family’s religiosity prompted both parents to pursue a monolingual FLP focused on Arabic, despite the fact that both are first generation immigrants who spoke Urdu fluently. However, as I indicated in Chapter Four, both parents spent most of their life in Saudi Arabia, which may be another reason for their interest in a monolingual FLP.

The other families (Sophia’s and Wateen’s) had a high religiosity as well, but there were other factors (i.e., parental language competence and life experiences) that played a role in the construction of their FLPs. These two factors are important in some families as they determine what FLP to be used in the house. First, the parental language competence was an important factor in the families of Sophia and Wateen who chose the OPOL policy. For instance, both parents in Sophia’s family demonstrated a strong desire for their children to learn Arabic, which was one of the primary reasons for their move to Madinah in the first place. However, not all of the parents knew Arabic; the father was the only adult in the family who could speak Arabic, while the mother could not, prompting the family to resort to the OPOL in order for their children to learn the language. Wateen’s family experienced the same situation because her mother was the only adult in the house who spoke Arabic. Thus, the family adopted the OPOL strategy as a result of each
parent’s strong desire for their children to learn Arabic. In fact, the father, Waleed, the barber, shared his earlier plan to marry a bilingual Arabic-speaking wife in order for his children to learn Arabic from her (see Excerpt, 8). This shows the religiosity tendency in this family; thus, it appears as though the father's language situation is the cause for maintaining the heritage language in their home.

Overall, although all three above families (Salah’s, Sophia’s, and Wateen’s) demonstrated a similar level of religiosity, it appears that parental language competence was the key factor in deciding which FLP to follow in each of these families. That is, due to one parent’s lack of Arabic, Sophia’s and Wateen’s families adopted the OPOL strategy to facilitate communication inside their homes while also ensuring their children acquire Arabic. This, however, was not the case with the FLP of Salah’s family with was a monolingual FLP that focused heavily on Arabic where both adults spoke Arabic; and given their high level of religiosity, one should not be surprised that their home experienced a language shift.

Lastly, the life experiences seemed to play an important role in shaping the language ideologies of two mothers in this study, which determined their FLPs. First, Eve stated that her family’s FLP prior to and throughout her marriage was the use of just the Arabic language; but, after the divorce, she expressed an interest in teaching her children Urdu, her heritage language, as well as other languages. Eve’s experience led her to change her FLP and include Urdu, in her FLP, as a tool to establish a strong bond with her children following her divorce from her ‘Saudi’ ex-husband. She revealed that she does not want her children to forget their Pakistani heritage, which could affect their bond together in the future (Excerpt, 45). Nevertheless, I should note that Eve’s plan to change her family language policy was not met by any pressure or opposition from other stakeholders, notably adults, as she was the only adult in her house. I argue that the
circumstances and conditions, in which Eve found herself, marginalized her to some extent and perhaps made her more flexible in terms of her FLP without any negotiation from her Arabic-speaking ex-husband. This goes in line with Vorobeva’s (2021) finding that being the sole caregiver enables mothers to implement language practices “that they themselves find beneficial for their children” without facing any opposition from other family members (p, 12), as was the case with Eve.

Additionally, the second example of how life experiences can shape language ideologies and FLPs comes from Kareem’s family (OPOL). In Chapter Four, I showed how Samar’s experience (Kareem’s mother) of living inside a gated compound in Jeddah affected her current FLP with her children. Although she is multilingual who speaks Arabic, Urdu, and English, she is oriented toward bilingualism as she and her husband focus on Arabic and English, and there was not any sign of Urdu presence in their house. Samar, perhaps, since she lived with her father in an English-speaking environment in Saudi Arabia, recognized certain advantages that motivated her to concentrate on English for economic reasons. Therefore, Samar and her husband adopted the OPOL policy; she concentrated on the English language for economic reasons and her husband focused on the Arabic language for religious purposes and to operate in a good way in society, although they did not emphasize the latter. Overall, Samar appeared to be a clear example of a mother whose own experience growing up in what appears to be an unusual environment in Saudi Arabia and using English clearly relates to the FLP that she is enforcing on her family.

6.1.2 Families’ language management and practices:

This section brings into discussion four themes that highlight parents’ language management and practices. Curdt-Christiansen (2018) defined language management as “the implicit/ explicit and subconscious/deliberate parental involvement and investment in providing
linguistic conditions and context for language learning and literacy development” (p, 420). Language practices, on the other hand, are more concerned with individuals’ actual language practices and uses, or as Spolsky (2007) puts it, “what people actually do” (p.3). As previously stated, I combined these two elements (management and practices) in the context of this study since they are connected and, in some way, related to one another. According to Curdt-Christiansen (2014), the boundary between language practice and management is “blurred” inside the home domain, as parents might exert control over or intervene in their children’s language practices every day (p, 38). This is the case with the families in this study, as all parents make implicit/explicit efforts to influence their children’s language use and choice for religious reasons every day (e.g., pray five times a day, memorize the Quran, etc.).

The followings table (19) highlights the four common themes that emerged from the cross-cases analysis of the six Pakistani families. The first major theme discusses the presence of the Arabic language in the homes of the six Pakistani families. The second theme sheds light on religious practices that fall under what I call ‘the parental religious obligations to children,’ and how these practices affect the language use and choice of these families. The third theme addresses the efforts made by all families to further the development of Arabic – the majority language – of their children. Finally, the study explores an interesting pattern in which extended families, in fact, encourage the use of majority language, which was not recognized in previous FLP studies.

Table 19: A cross-cases analysis of families concerning language management and practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Cross-cases Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1</td>
<td>The presence of the Arabic language in the homes of the six Pakistani families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 2</td>
<td>Parental Religious Obligations to Children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme 3  Focus on majority language development
Theme 4  Extended families encourage the use of dominant language

The presence of Arabic in the homes of Pakistani families. The language practices of family members can shed light on the actual language use and choice among family members; therefore, I constructed a descriptive table (Table 20) of the participating families’ language practices using data from three different sources (interview, ethnographic notes, and NOD). Additionally, and to ensure the validity of the findings presented in the table, I forwarded them to each of the six families to confirm my conclusion, which they all approved of without modification except for Eve, the single parent. She noted that she is unsure whether her children exhibit the same language behavior – when children speak with each other – at their father’s house or not, which I have considered in the table. Overall, when analyzing the data holistically, one cannot ignore the existence of the Arabic language, which was a common pattern among all families, especially among children when they converse with each other (see Table 20).

Table 20: Actual family language practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Family Language Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salah</td>
<td>Monolingual Family Language Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Both parents speak Arabic with each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Both parents speak Arabic to their children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) Children Speak Arabic with each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammed</td>
<td>Multilingual Family Language Policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Single parent: she reported that her ex-husband only speaks Arabic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) The mother speaks Arabic to her children; she reported sometimes she speaks Urdu, English, and Turkish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) Children Speak Arabic with each other and have been reported to reported to use some phrases in Urdu and English (<em>in their mother’s house</em>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kareem</td>
<td>One-parent-one-language policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(1) Both parents translanguage between Arabic and English with each other
(2) Father speaks Arabic to his children, and the mother speaks English to her children
(3) Children translanguage between Arabic and English with each other

Ahmed  Laissez-faire policy
(1) Both parents speak Arabic with each other
(2) Both parents speak Arabic to their children, with the exception of the oldest child, Ahmed, who sometimes prefers to communicate in Urdu with his father.
(3) Children Speak Arabic with each other

Sophia  One-Parent-One-Language Policy (Urdu & Arabic).
(1) Both parents speak Urdu with each other
(2) The father speaks Urdu and Arabic to his children, and the mother speaks just Urdu to her children
(3) Children Speak Arabic when they are alone.

Wateen  One-Parent-One-Language Policy (Urdu & Arabic).
(1) Both parents speak Urdu with each other
(2) The mother speaks Urdu and Arabic to her children, and the father speaks Urdu to his children
(3) Children Speak Arabic with each other

*Additional comment made by the mother, Eve.

The above table shows many interesting patterns that emerged across the participating families. First, with the exception of Salah’s family, who follows a monolingual FLP, all Pakistani immigrant families showed aspirations toward bilingual and multilingual orientations for their children. In order to do so, they use different family language policies to reach their goals that satisfy their needs and beliefs. I discussed these four policies in detail in Chapter Four, which was dedicated to introducing the participating families and was divided into sections according to the language policy that was followed by each family. As for now, the concern is about the patterns that are related to the religion factor and languages (the religious/majority language vs. the heritage language) practiced by the family.
Moreover, the above table also shows an interesting pattern about the use of the majority language across the participating families. It shows that Arabic was the primary medium of interaction in the homes of three Pakistani families (Mohammed’s (Multilingual FLP), Salah’s (Monolingual FLP), and Ahmed’s (Laissez-faire policy)). I should mention here that, while both of Mohammed’s and Ahmed’s families expressed an interest in other languages, Arabic was more prevalent than other languages in all data sources. However, one possible explanation for why Arabic was the primary medium of communication in these three families is that all parents spoke Arabic fluently, which was not the scenario in the other families in this research who used the OPOL strategy. That is, with the exception of Kareem’s family, the other two OPOL families (Wateen’s and Sophia’s) had at least one parent who did not speak Arabic. As I explained in Chapters Four and Five under the OPOL section, each of these two families had Urdu-speaking parents who reported to know limited Arabic, which they used in their daily prayers and other religious rituals, but they mostly interacted in Urdu with their spouses and children. This brings me back to the topic I discussed earlier which explains how the parental language competence was an important factor in the families of Sophia and Wateen. While all adults in these two households speak Urdu, their intention of adopting the OPOL strategy was mainly to ensure that the Arabic-speaking parent passes Arabic to their children for religious reasons (see Excerpts, 4; 5; 6; 7). For example, Wateen’s father, who communicates in Urdu, previously indicated his earlier intention of marrying a Pakistani woman who speaks Arabic in order to ensure that his children acquire Arabic from her (Excerpt, 8). Interestingly, these two OPOL families did not address the second outcome of their family language policy, which is for the Urdu-speaking parent to pass on Urdu to their children, which is a positive outcome given the importance of maintaining the heritage language in the family for the future generation (see Gharibi & Seals, 2020; Curdt-Christiansen &
La Morgia 2018). Only Sophia’s mother, Abeer, spoke about this briefly as she mentioned that her children might benefit from Urdu ‘if they return to Pakistan’ (Excerpt, 12).

Kareem’s family reported a different pattern, in which Arabic was not the primary mode of communication in the house although both parents speak the language just like the above two OPOL families. Instead, Kareem’s family focused mostly on Arabic and English. The father would speak Arabic to his children, the mother would speak in English to her children, and both portent translanguage between Arabic and English when they speak to each other. However, they showed no interest in passing on their heritage language to their children, despite the fact that it is both of their native languages.

Another interesting pattern that I observed across the six families when I looked at the data holistically was the language children use with each other. With the exception of Kareem’s and Mohammed’s families, the data revealed that the children of the other four families use Arabic as the medium of interaction when they speak to each other. On the other hand, data from Kareem’s family revealed that the children translanguage between Arabic and English; they did so even during my presence in their home. Mohammed’s family reported a similar pattern as Eve, and her child, Mohammed, stated that the children communicate in other languages besides Arabic; however, the data, including the NOD and fieldnotes, failed to catch any of these moments, demonstrating instead that the children communicate mainly in Arabic. This could be due to my presence, as I spent most of my time in their house speaking Arabic with their mother, as well as the short duration of the NOD.

Overall, three major points can be drawn from the above analysis: 1) Arabic was present in the homes of all Pakistani families in this study, 2) Arabic was the primary medium of interaction in the homes of three Pakistani families, and 3) The majority of children communicate
with one another in Arabic. This obvious interest in Arabic stems mostly from its connection to Islam as all Pakistani parents, whether they speak Arabic or not, expressed an interest in their children learning the language of their religion so that they can comprehend their faith, pray, memorize the Quran, and participate in various religious practices and rituals that necessitate the use of Arabic. This behavior supports Spolsky’s (2009) argument that “Muslim might not set out to learn the language, but will probably believe that he should, and will be willing for his children to be taught it” (p. 49). This also goes in line with Khan’s (2020) study in Canada which found that “Muslim Pakistani immigrant parents feel obligated to teach their children their language and religion so that it does not get lost in the generations to come” (p. 58). Pakistani parents, in the Saudi context, also felt obligated to teach their children Arabic as well as their religion so that they would not be lost in future generations.

**Parental Religious Obligations to Children.** Parents across the six families in this study believe that it is one of their responsibilities as parents to raise their children to be Muslim and participate in religious practices, and they linked this to the success of their role as parents. Therefore, they implement multiple practices that fall under what I call ‘parental religious obligations to children’ that occur on a daily basis, and all of these practices necessitate the use of Arabic. For example, all the parents in this study aspire for their children to memorize the Quran, and this aspiration is manifested in practices that occur almost daily; thus, all of their children attend QMCs every day to memorize the Quran and to ensure their children acquire Arabic (Excerpts, 17; 18; 37; 38; 54; 59; 66). This finding supports several studies indicating that non-Arabic speaking Muslim parents enroll their children in these religious facilities in order for them to acquire some proficiency in Arabic (Alam, 2020; Moosa, 2015; Moore, 2016; 2006; Özdikmenli-Demir & Şahin-Kütük, 2012; Zaman, 1999). However, unlike Moore (2016), who
found in his study that children in a West African context can only reproduce the Quran in Arabic without comprehension or the ability to develop new and meaningful words, this study found the opposite, as I interviewed children from all six families, although many of them were shy to speak, they were able to develop new and meaningful sentences when answering my questions (see Excerpts, 12; 18; 22; 25; 30; 57; 66). This might be due to a variety of factors, but it is most likely due to this study’s environment, as all of the Pakistani families live in an Arabic-speaking country, and with at least one Arabic speaking adult in the house, which was not the case in Moore’s (2016) study.

Moreover, Pakistani parents have also implemented other ‘parental religious obligations to children’ practices such as praying. In fact, performing the five daily prayers is a top priority of all the parents in this study. Parents use a variety of ways to teach their children to pray, including taking them to the mosque or keeping a prayer training log to motivate their children to pray. This practice is strongly tied to the Arabic language since children are expected to read verses from the Quran and pronounce certain religious phrases in Arabic (see Moore 2016; 2013; Özdikmenli-Demir & Şahin-Kütük, 2012). Overall, this study finds that all Pakistani parents have associated their parental responsibilities with the development and transmission of religious literacy to their children. That is, the success in transmitting the religious literacy (e.g., praying, memorizing the Quran, etc.) means the success of their role as ‘Muslim parents.’

**Focus on majority language development.** This theme was echoed in all Pakistani families, as parents stepped in and provided several resources and practices to help their children develop Arabic language skills. For example, Salah’s family (Monolingual FLP) showed their interest in developing their children’s Arabic writing skills. Salah’s mother, Sabah, stated that writing enhances “knowledge of the language and the spelling,” and she wishes for her children to
have this skill from an early age (Excerpt, 68); thus, she goes to the bookstore regularly and purchases materials to assist her children in improving their Arabic handwriting (Figure, 17). The same pattern was echoed in Mohammed’s family (Multilingual FLP) as Eve, the single parent, aims to develop her children’s Arabic writing skills by giving them writing exercises almost daily when they are at her house (Figure 13). Although Eve showed an interest in her heritage language, and many studies showed that heritage language literacy help maintain and promote heritage languages in the immigration context (for this, see Beaudrie, Amezcua, & Loza, 2021; Liang, 2018; Curdt-Christiansen & La Morgia, 2018), Eve’s Urdu language planning lacks the focus on the writing and reading skills as she only focuses on the speaking skill and that all of her writing practices for her children were focused only on Arabic literacy.

Moreover, the language preference for bedtime stories varies across families, with many of them focusing on majority language development. Three families reported to use bedtime stories with their children (i.e., Wateen’s, Sophia’s, & Mohammed’s). However, these families have different approaches when it comes to the language used in these stories and who reads them. In terms of languages choice, Wateen’s and Sophia’s families displayed only Arabic bedtime stories in their libraries (see Figure 8; 9); however, Wateen’s mother, Kholod, showed some interest in stories in the heritage language, Urdu, but stated that due to the lack of Urdu resources in Saudi, she sometimes makes up stories from her imagination and tells them to her children before bedtime in Urdu. Mohammed’s mother, Eve, faced the same shortage issue but she resorted to her iPad to fill this gap and found many websites that provide Urdu bedtime stories (Figure 14). Eve was also interested in other bedtime stories in other languages, including Arabic, which reflect her flexible and multilingual orientation.
With regard to the reader of these bedtime stories, the data showed an interesting pattern as the mothers were the storytellers in Mohamed’s and Wateen’s families. However, the oldest daughter, Sophia, was the storyteller to her younger siblings in her family, although there was one adult who spoke Arabic (i.e., her father, Ayman). One possible explanation for the father’s absence as a storyteller is his work hours; at our first meeting, the father informed me that he often comes home late from work because he runs the shop by himself, which might prompt the older daughter to take the role as the Arabic storyteller in the house. This, however, raises another question which is the absence of the mother’s role in reading bedtime stories in Urdu to her children, given that she communicates with them in Urdu. Two possible explanations for this are, 1) there are no sources for Urdu bedtime stories in Saudi Arabia, as happened with Wateen’s mother, or 2) the mother is interested in developing the Arabic language literacy for her children and uses her daughter as a language mediator to achieve this, or both. I should note here that Sophia had also worked as a language mediator when I interviewed her mother, which is a very common practice among bilingual families. Many studies showed that older siblings sometimes serve as mediators in language literacy in the majority language (see Kibler, Palacios, Simpson-Baird, Bergey, & Yoder, 2016; Orellana, 2009; De la Piedra & Romo, 2003). For example, according to Kibler et al. (2016), older siblings occasionally function as models and enact their competence in the English language (which is the majority language in their study) and literacy practices. This shows the critical role Sophia plays in her family as she helps her younger siblings in their Arabic language development as she takes her mother’s (or even father’s) role in reading bedtime stories to her siblings.

Moreover, the use of technology as a language management tool for the development of Arabic, which is the majority language, was a common theme among three families (Salah’s family
(Monolingual FLP), Mohammed’s family (Multilingual FLP), Wateen’s (OPOL)). The study shows that these families utilized the technology to expose their children to more religious content and to help them develop Arabic language skills as well. For example, Salah’s family used the technology to help their children to learn more about Arabic and religious literacy as they subscribed to a TV service called “Baraem TV” to expose their children to the Arabic language along with other Islamic values such as praying, fasting, respecting elderly, honesty, etc. (Fieldnote, May 19, 2019). They also bought an electronic device (E-Quran) which is a small computer in the form of a pen that can read and recite any verse or chapter from the Quran just by pointing to it (see Figure 18). Another example comes from Wateen’s family; the mother, Kholod, highlighted a daily practice that she does every day; she said that she turns on the Makkah channel every day to “make the Quran the first thing we (her family) hear in our day” (Excerpt, 19). Wateen’s father, the barber, demonstrated an interesting pattern in this regard, as he attempted to reduce Urdu content in his home and chose to have Urdu channels only at his shop, ensuring that his daughters are only exposed to Arabic content in their home. (Excerpt, 16). However, there was only one family that made such efforts for the heritage language development (i.e., Mohammed’s family).

Eve, the single parent, was the only parent in this study who provided Urdu resources to her children, and she utilized the technology for this purpose. This demonstrates Eve’s commitment to passing on her heritage language to her children; she did not stop when she could not find Urdu stories in Saudi Arabian bookstores, as Wateen’s mother did who resorted to using her imagination, but Eve went a step further and resorted to the technology indicating her insistence that her children’s exposure to Urdu increases. This goes in line with Said’s (2021) study which observed two multilingual families in the UK, and she found that parents used technology in the
home to help their children improve their heritage language skills. However, Eve’s use of technology was not limited to developing her children’s heritage language; she also used it to develop their Arabic (i.e., the majority language) along with other languages as well, which somehow contradicts Said’s (2021) finding. In fact, the above-mentioned technology practices in both of Salah’s and Wateen’s families were heavily focused on the development of the majority language. This could show the fundamental impact of religion on FLP as most of these practices were intended to improve not only the children’s Arabic literacy but also their religious literacy (e.g., Makkah channel, E-Quran, Baraem TV, etc.).

**Extended families encourage the use of dominant language.** This theme was common among three families in this study since they all stated that their extended families somehow pushed them to utilize Arabic when they get together, rather than their heritage language. For instance, in Salah’s family (monolingual FLP), Sabah noted that her extended family, who are also Pakistanis, communicates in Arabic; as a result, she and her husband “did not see the need” for the Urdu language to be spoken in their home (Excerpt, 63). Consequently, Salah and his two other sisters spend most of their time in an Arabic-speaking environment as a result of their frequent visits to their extended relatives, demonstrating how extended family can have a negative impact on heritage language maintenance.

Moreover, a similar pattern was echoed in Ahmed’s family as Ahmed himself noted that he grew up hanging out at his aunt Sarah’s house (which is an Arabic speaking environment) and with his ‘Saudi’ cousins, where they played soccer and video games together. Although he enjoys talking in Urdu with his father on occasion at his home, Ahmed raises some concerns about speaking in Urdu at his cousins’ house as he feels “embarrassed” about it (Excerpt, 44). One can
see how Sarah’s FLP affects Ahmed’s family, illustrating another complicated example of how extended families could have a negative impact on the maintenance of heritage language.

Finally, the last example comes from Wateen’s family (OPOL), where both parents, Kholod and Waleed, emphasized the importance of Sufi Arabic practices to their Pakistani relatives who came to Madinah for Ziyarat (visiting the Prophet) or performing pilgrimage; these relatives usually expect them, Wateen’s family, to perform some of these Sufi Arabic *Nasheeds* for them, as explained in section (5.1.1). However, it is worth noting that these *Nasheeds* are religious in nature, as they reference the Prophet and Islam, and they are all in Arabic. Rosowsky (2020) observed similar behavior among the Pakistani community in the United Kingdom; he stated that “the recitation/performance of religious poetry is associated, generally speaking, with the Pakistani-heritage mosques of the UK linked broadly with a Sufi tradition” (p. 43). Kholod explained that because she lives in Madinah, the birthplace of Islam, she feels a greater obligation to their Pakistani relatives, who expect her and her daughters to perform similar *Nasheeds* for them when they visit them in Madinah (Excerpt, 21). Thus, she noted said, “I try to memorize them, I keep forgetting them, but I always try with my daughters” (Excerpt, 21). This example demonstrates how extended family expectations drove Kholod and Waleed to incorporate these Arabic practices into their daily lives.

The above three cases appear to be significant in FLP research since extended families are often supportive of the heritage language (e.g., Pauwels, 2016; Seals, 2013; Kouritzin, 1999; Fillmore, 1991). In fact, in a recent study conducted on Vietnamese families living in Australia, McLeod et al. (2019) stated that one of the most important reasons for maintaining Vietnamese was “maintaining bonds with relatives” (p, 55). However, this study shows the opposite, as we see how the extended family promotes majority language use, possibly driving the above families to
alter their FLPs in order to match their relative FLPs (as in Ahmed’s case) or expectations (as in Wateen’s case).

6.1.3. Closing remarks

While many studies suggest that immigrant families often provide heritage language support to their children as an attempt to maintain the language for the following generations (Gharibi & Seals, 2019; Curdt-Christiansen & La Morgia, 2018), the above themes, from the three Spolsky’s domains, demonstrate that the religion factor can significantly alter the equation if the family’s heritage language differs from the sacred language. This study shows how religion, as well as religious beliefs and practices, could have a significant effect on language beliefs, practices, and management in the family domain. Pakistani Muslim parents in this study, driven by their religion, their desire of raising their children to practice their faith, the concept of ‘reward and punishment’ in the afterlife, and the One Ummah identity felt obligated to teach or pass Arabic to their children. In other words, the language restriction in the Islamic language policy, as manifested through its practices that necessitated the use of Arabic, impacted the language use and choice in the Urdu speaking families in this study.

Other studies on non-Arab Muslim communities have shown a similar tendency. For example, Tawalbeh et al. (2013) attributed socio-religious practices and beliefs as one of the reasons behind the “fast shift” from Hausa to Arabic that occurred among the Hausa Nigerian community in Saudi Arabia (p. 128). In addition, Mills (2004) studied the language perceptions of ten Pakistani families in the U.K., and she noticed a close relationship between religion, identity, and language. She also found that the Arabic literacy for reciting the Quran was an important component of their identities. Also, Khan (2020) mentioned in his study about parenting in Muslim Pakistani communities in Canada and stated that “Muslim Pakistani immigrant parents feel
obligated to teach their children their language and religion so that it does not get lost in the
generations to come” (p. 58). However, to the best of my knowledge, there are not many FLP
studies that focus exclusively on the impact of religious beliefs, religious identity, and religious
practices on the heritage languages as well as parental language/religious behavior with their
children. Pandharipande et al. (2019) stated that “there is not much research available at present
which focuses exclusively on the role of religion in the maintenance and shift of languages” (p.
279), although there were some studies that looked at the role of religion in the maintenance of
languages (for this, see Yazan & Ali, 2018; Gogonas, 2012; Gomaa, 2011). However, this current
study filled an important gap in the existing FLP literature by showing how religion can be a source
of language shift, instead of maintenance, and revealing interesting parental patterns that have not
been seen in previous studies.
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.0 Introduction.

This chapter concludes the study by first providing a summary of the overall study in relation to the major findings. Next, this chapter discusses the significance of the current dissertation in terms of its contribution and implication to FLP literature. Finally, the chapter concludes with the limitations of the current study and recommendations for future research.

7.1 Research Summary.

Earlier FLP research has concentrated on ethnic identities, mobility, and transnationality, as well as, to a lesser extent, gender and familial kinship; few studies have focused primarily on religion as a factor in FLP processes. Religion is particularly important in the FLP of Muslim families who speak Arabic as a first or additional language, as many of the daily Islamic practices necessitate the use of Arabic. Therefore, this dissertation sets out to investigate the impact of religious beliefs and practices on the FLP of non-Arab Muslim families. I particularly focused on Pakistani expatriate/immigrant families raising their children bi-/multilingually in Saudi Arabia to see how they navigate and construct their family language strategies while following and practicing a 'linguistically foreign,' i.e., not native to Pakistan, religion. I explained in chapter one how this context was/is quite interesting because it involves families whose heritage language is Urdu while simultaneously adhering to a religion with a restricted language policy that necessitates the use of Arabic almost daily.

Six families (including one single parent family) of Pakistani origin living in Saudi Arabia who had at least one child participated in the study. The data sources included approximately 20 hours of naturally occurring data, multiple home observations, and in-depth interviews with the families. All of these data were transcribed, analyzed, and triangulated. Moreover, the previous
two chapters (Five and Six) have presented, analyzed, and discussed data from six participating Pakistani families, a total of 17 individuals. The data were considered first using a within-case analysis (Chapter Five), in which I analyzed each family independently. Following that, I answered the research questions by presenting a cross-cases analysis and discussion of the findings of all six families combined (Chapter Six) in order to strengthen the study’s conclusions’ robustness. This enabled me to do a thorough analysis of the data and provide more explanation for the study’s findings by shedding light on similarities and differences across cases.

The study revealed how religion in general, and religious beliefs and practices in particular, may significantly influence language beliefs, practices, and management in the family domain. The Pakistani Muslim parents in this study, driven by their religion, their desire of raising their children to be practice Muslims, the concept of ‘reward and punishment’ in the afterlife, and the One Ummah identity felt obligated to teach or pass Arabic to their children. In other words, the language restriction in the Islamic Language Policy, as manifested through its practices that necessitated the use of Arabic, impacted the language use and choice in the Urdu-speaking families in this study.

7.2 Contribution and implication of the study.

Focusing on the Muslim immigrant/expatriate Pakistani families who live in Saudi Arabia provided a unique and interesting case study of how religion can play a profound role in the families’ language use and choice. This study highlighted the role of religion and its impact on the other factors (e.g., beliefs, identities, emotions, cultures, etc.) as demonstrated in this study. It introduced new themes, in FLP literature, that depict another perspective of the religious impact on the FLPs, and showed that most of these themes are related to the micro internal factors (beliefs, identities, etc.) rather than just macro external factors. In other words, this study showed how
religion could have an impact that extends beyond the gates of religious institutions, and it is manifested in the families’ beliefs, identities, and cultures.

In addition, this study introduced a new research context. To my knowledge, this is not only the first FLP study conducted in Saudi Arabia, but also the first ethnographic sociolinguistic study conducted on non-Arab expatriates (Indians, Pakistanis, Bengalis, Indonesians, etc.) in that context. Most of the previous linguistic studies conducted on these communities were phonetically focused as they studied ‘pidgins and creoles’ of Arabic (for this, see Hobrom, 1996; Albakrawi, 2012). Tawalbeh et al.’s (2013) study could be the only one that I found which examined the language maintenance and shift among Saudi Hausa pilgrims who came from Nigeria; however, their participants are Saudi nationals who settled in Saudi Arabia for generations. This means they are not vulnerable to deportation because they were in Saudi before the implementation of the Saudi Nationality Law, which allowed all residents at that time to obtain Saudi citizenship. However, the families in this study are expatriate families who consider themselves immigrants; however, they are expected to leave the country once their contract expires, which takes me to the third contribution of this study.

This study highlights very serious concerns that decision-makers should be aware of and aim to avoid. The loss of the heritage language has caused many identity crises for the children of expatriate communities. In the introduction chapter, I provided some real examples of families, documented by the children, that went back to their home countries; some of the children could not speak their heritage languages which caused them to have an identity crisis. A similar pattern has been seen among children in this study as they were brought up in an environment isolated from their heritage language. Their parents hoped to obtain the Saudi citizenship and settle in Saudi Arabia, which did not happen to thousands who faced the inevitability of deportation.
Nevertheless, many studies discussed the benefit of maintaining the heritage language in shaping identities and socializing children into their heritage culture (Kharchenko, 2018; Pandey, 2014; Lee, 2013; Fishman, 2001). Fishman (2001) argues that heritage languages should be preserved and valued in order to benefit society as a whole. In fact, not supporting (or discouraging) children in developing their heritage language could harm the children’s cultural identity development (Ennser-Kananen, 2012). Therefore, parents should be taught about these benefits so that, in the case of a return, they can help their children integrate more successfully into their home countries.

7.3 Limitations and directions for further research.

The primary limitation that this study experienced is the potential to generalize the findings to a larger population. The main characteristic of ethnographic qualitative studies, such as this one, is their narrower scope; that is, this study was conducted in a specific context with specific participants which makes it difficult, if not impossible, to generalize to other families or communities. In order to strengthen the results of this study, future research should further investigate the impact the religion on other non-Arab communities (e.g., Indian Muslims, European Muslims, American Muslims), or even with the same Pakistani immigrant families but in other contexts (e.g., Pakistani families in UAE, UK). Although Khan’s (2020) study in Canada highlighted that “Muslim Pakistani immigrant parents feel obligated to teach their children their language and religion so that it does not get lost in the generations to come” (p. 58); however, his research was not an FLP study as he focused on parenting styles in general rather than these parents’ family language policies.

The second limitation of this study was the NOD analysis as I did not make sufficient use of this data and only used it to triangulate the results and get a snapshot of language practices that occur naturally in the house. Future research might get a more detailed picture of the family’s
language dynamics by analyzing the data in a ‘turn-by-turn fashion’ using Said and Zhu’s (2019) conversation analysis model. However, my lack of Urdu competence was the primary reason I was unable to do such type of analysis.

Furthermore, future research can also focus on the religion’s impact on FLPs of families who recently converted to Islam – meaning when parents decide to convert to Islam. In this case, we may gain a better understanding of the impact of religion on FLP by comparing the FLP of the families before and after their religious conversion process. I bring this here because I have been following a similar case of an American family, from Texas, who converted to Islam and settled in Madinah. A child named Mohammed uploaded a 40-minutes video to YouTube in which he interviewed his father to tell the story of his conversion to Islam years ago (Figure 19). In his interview, the son asked his father why he chose an Arabic medium school for him (meaning his son, Mohammed) instead of an English medium school? The father replied, “because of the struggle I had, and I am still having, learning Arabic and being able to understand the Quran and the Hadith and just operate good way in society, I said, my boys are going to study Arabic.” He later added, “I learned that the Arabic language, let us face it, is the key to understanding our deen (meaning religion) so that was my decision” (Flood’s YouTube channel, 2019).
The video Titled “The story of my father's conversion to Islam.” (Flood’s YouTube channel, 2019)

Ethnographic FLP studies of cases similar to this are needed to better understand the impact of religion on micro internal factors, which influence the development of these families’ FLPs. Lastly, previous studies have labeled families according to the western family orientations, which highlights the need for more diverse orientations from the other side of the globe; the families in this study labeled themselves religiously rather than ethnically, geographically, or in other orientations.

7.4 Epilogue.

In recent decades, the field of family language policy has grown and expanded as it has closely investigated language usage in bi/multilingual families. While FLP research has centered
on ethnic identities, mobility, and transnationality as well as, to a lesser extent, gender and kinship in the family, few studies have focused primarily on religion as a factor in FLP processes. In this study, I filled this gap and showed how the religion factor could have a significant effect on language beliefs, practices, and management in the family domain. I then concluded the study by highlighting the importance of broadening the scope of the study to other contexts in order to have a better understanding of how family language policies are shaped in other parts of the world. This might explain why a certain factor is significant and impactful in one setting but not in another.

Finally, the fieldwork of this ethnographic research was carried out in the summer of 2019. Through these four months, the six families and I shared the time and the place, and we shared and discussed stories, experiences, and values. Though they were only brief episodes, it was a privilege to get access to the families’ most private place, their homes, and live with the realities of their lives. Despite the fact that we live in the same city, I just recently developed a deeper grasp of their lives, beliefs, and values, as well as the wider social and social-religious contexts in which their everyday activities took place. Finally, I am grateful that they allowed me to share my findings in this dissertation, and perhaps publish them later, giving their stories and linguistic/religious challenges a voice in the academic community and among policymakers as well.
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VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR A RESEARCH STUDY

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES ON FAMILY LANGUAGE POLICY

Does your family speak Arabic as a second language? Are you an immigrant or sojourner in Saudi Arabia? If yes, then I am interested in talking with you about the role of Arabic at your home and how you maintain your native language (i.e., Urdu, Filipino, or English) while living in Saudi Arabia. I am a researcher at a U.S. university, and I am conducting a research study about the Family Language Policy (FLP) of the immigrant communities in Saudi Arabia. My aim is to examine the influence of religion and religious beliefs on the FLP among these communities.

If you are interested, we are looking for families that:
1- Arabic is not their native or heritage language.
2- Bilingual: speaks the native language along with Arabic or Pidginized Arabic.
3- Participants must have at least one child who is attending or has attended a school in Saudi Arabia.

Please note that the data that is required for this study will be collected through an interview with all family members (adults and children), will last for approximately one hour, and will take place at your home. You will also be asked to record one of the family’s occasions (e.g., at dinner table) three to five times. All information obtained will be audio recorded and transcribed.

For more information please contact:
Saad Alamri at U.S. (__________); SA +__________; email: salamri1@memphis.edu
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This research is conducted under the direction of (Saad Alamri, English Department, University of Memphis)
APPENDIX B

Institutional Review Board
Division of Research and Innovation
Office of Research Compliance
University of Memphis
315 Admin Bldg
Memphis, TN 38152-3370

May 10, 2019

PI Name: Saad Alamri
Co-Investigators:
Advisor and/or Co-Pi: Evelyn Fogle
Submission Type: Initial
Title: The Effect of Religion and Religious Beliefs on Family Language Policy (FLP): The Case of Non-Arab Immigrants (Sojourners) in Saudi Arabia
IRB ID: #PRO-FY2019-491

Expeditied Approval: May 10, 2019

The University of Memphis Institutional Review Board, FWA00006815, has reviewed your submission in accordance with all applicable statuses and regulations as well as ethical principles.

Approval of this project is given with the following obligations:

1. When the project is finished a completion submission is required
2. Any changes to the approved protocol requires board approval prior to implementation
3. When necessary submit an incident/adverse events for board review
4. Human subjects training is required to be kept current at citiprogram.org every 2 years

For additional questions or concerns please contact us at irb@memphis.edu or 901.678.2705

Thank you,
James P. Whelan, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair
The University of Memphis.
APPENDIX C

Interview with Parents.

1. Background

- What is your nationality?
- Which country were you born in? Where were you raised?
- Why did you choose to come to Saudi Arabia?
- How long have you been in Saudi Arabia?
- Have you spent time outside of your country before coming to Saudi Arabia?
- What is your level of education?
- What do you do for living?
- How many languages do you speak?
- What language was your education in?
- Did you learn Arabic before coming to Saudi Arabia? If yes, where?

2. Social Networks

- Where and how often do you meet others from your country in Saudi Arabia?
- Have you traveled in Saudi Arabia? Was it to visit other friends from your home country?
- Who do you talk to when you need advice? Emotional support?
- With whom do you play any kind of sports?
- Are you involved with any association from your country?
- How satisfied are you with your friendships and activities here?
- How do your friendships and activities compare to those in your home country?
- How many family members live in your house?
  - How old are they?
  - How many languages do they speak?
  - Who are their friends?

3. Linguistic Proficiency:

- In your opinion, how proficient are you in Arabic on a scale from 1 to 10 (speaking, listening, writing, reading)?
- How proficient would you say are your children in Arabic on a scale from 1 to 10? (speaking, listening, writing, reading)?

4. Ideologies and Attitudes Towards Arabic and Bilingualism:

- What are your feelings about Urdu? About Arabic?
- How important do you think it is ...
  - to speak Arabic when you live in Saudi Arabia?
  - for Urdu speakers to speak Arabic in Saudi Arabia?
- Which language is most important for your children at the moment? Why?
- How about in the future? Do you think your child will still use Arabic then?
- How important is it for you that your children continue speaking Arabic?
• Do you think all Urdu-speaking people from your country here should teach their children Arabic? Why?
• How would you feel if your children ...
  o couldn’t speak Arabic?
  o didn’t want to speak Arabic?
  o couldn’t speak Urdu?
  o didn’t want to speak Urdu?
• Have you ever worried about ...
  o your communication with your children?
  o other family members’ (grandparents, uncles, and other relatives back home) communication with your children?
• What do you think about bilingualism?
• What do you think your child thinks about bilingualism?
• Which languages would you like your family to speak in the future?
• Should the Saudi government give more support for other languages such as Urdu?
• Do you think that it is important to have some ASL classes at the Saudi School?
• Have you ever talked with your spouse about which languages you speak at home?
• Do you have rules? What are they?

5. Ethnic Identity

• Which cultural and social group do you feel you belong to?
• With which language do you identify yourself?
• Do you want this to change in the future? Why/why not?
• Do you believe your family has developed a new sociocultural identity since you’ve left your home country?

6. Children’s Language Use:

• How would you describe the experience of your children at the Saudi school?
• Do they ever speak Urdu at school?
• Has the school given any support for Urdu?
  o If not, would you like the school to support the use of Urdu?
• In case your children do not speak Arabic, has the school given any help for Arabic?
  o If not, would you like the school to provide ASL classes?
• Do you think it might be bad for your children’s education if you speak Urdu at home?

8. Parents’ Language Use:

• Do you speak Urdu here in Saudi Arabia? With whom?
• Do you read the newspaper in Urdu? Arabic?
• Do you watch movies/TV in Urdu? Arabic?
• How many hours do you spend on the internet every day? In which language?
• Do you sometimes mix languages when you speak?
• Who do you speak Arabic with?
9. Integration

☐ Do you feel affected by what you have experienced when you fled your country?
☐ What were some of the challenges and barriers you faced when you came to Saudi Arabia?
  o Have you overcome them now?
☐ Have you experienced any kind of racism or discrimination?
☐ What do you think about the Saudi Arabian culture?
☐ Do you feel welcome in Saudi Arabia?
Interview with Children

- Where were you born?
- What did you do today?
- Do you watch TV?
  - In what language?
  - How much time do you spend watching TV?
- What kind of music do you like to listen to?
  - Saudi songs or Urdu songs?
  - When do you usually listen to music?
- Do you meet up with friends sometimes?
  - What are your friends’ names?
  - Where are they from?
  - What languages do you speak together?
- Have you ever forgotten any words in Urdu?
- Do you like Urdu?
  - What do you like about Urdu?
- Do you like Arabic?
  - What do you like about Arabic?
- Which language do you feel most comfortable to use to express your feelings when you are happy? Angry? Or sad?
- Do you always know which language to use to a person?
- What language do you speak with your parents?
  - Have you ever switched between Urdu and Arabic when you speak with your parents?
  - How about with your siblings?
  - In what conditions do you change to Arabic when you talk with them?
  - Have you ever hoped your parents could speak Arabic with you?
- How might Urdu/Arabic help you in your future life? Work? Studies?
- What’s the most difficult thing about Urdu/Arabic?
- Are you proud of knowing Urdu/Arabic?
- If you have children one day, what language do you want them to speak? Urdu/Arabic?
- What do you think about ...
  - Saudi culture?
  - Saudi schools?
    - Do you like it when your parents visit your school? Why/why not?
- What can you remember about your home country?
- Do you want to go back to your home country one day?
- What do you like about living in your home country?
- Where would you rather live?
- Are you in touch with friends from your home country?