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The American University in Cairo

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

# **Parents' Attitudes towards Their Children's Bilingualism and Cultural Identity in International Schools in Egypt**

A Thesis Submitted

To the Department of Applied Linguistics,  
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages Program

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Arts

By **Mona Aboulfetouh**

Under the supervision of Dr. Reem Bassiouney

**May 2014**

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines Egyptian parents' attitudes towards their children's bilingualism in the context of English-medium international schools in Egypt. It also aims at comparing their past aspirations and motives to choose international schools and their current attitudes towards their children's school and educational experience. Research has shown that learners' attitudes towards the second language affect their language development. In addition, parents play a vital role in influencing their children's academic progress and attitudes towards their first language. Therefore, examining parents' opinions and attitudes towards their children's educational system and language learning is important to understand how these attitudes may influence their choices and home practices.

The present study was conducted with the participation of parents of senior English-medium international school students in Egypt. In this study, 131 parents completed a survey; of those ten parents volunteered to be interviewed. Data has been analyzed qualitatively and descriptive statistics have been used to report findings. The findings confirmed the instrumental role of English in Egyptian society and parents' aspirations for their children to receive quality education and to find a good job in the future. Other motives for sending children to international schools have been found including the higher-socioeconomic level of students in international schools, acquiring a native-like accent and the highly qualified teachers hired in international schools. Parents discussed their former experiences that influenced their choice of the school, the skills their children develop in international schools and the fact that the other school systems in Egypt are deteriorating. In addition, the results revealed that parents believe that relatively little attention is given to Arabic by parents and even by the school. Some participants depend on the assistance of a private tutor or a sheikh to teach Arabic to their children. Other parents believe that English language is more important than Arabic nowadays for the academic and professional success

of their children. The study can also be extended in the future to include children's attitudes and examine school curricula.

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## CHAPTER 1 –INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

This study will examine the attitudes of Egyptian parents towards their children's bilingualism in the context of English-medium international schools. In this context, children's excessive use of English compared to their limited use of Arabic has become a prevalent phenomenon. These children have created their own community in which they engage in most social functions in English with peers, siblings, teachers and sometimes parents who use English exclusively. In spite of the fact that Arabic is the dominant language in the community, the higher socio-economic level of these children may play a role in isolating them from the surrounding Arabic-speaking community and they may not feel the need to interact with Arabic speakers. Although the number of children in this context is very small compared to the Egyptian population, they are part of the society and their maintenance of Arabic and the Egyptian culture is essential for the continued socio-cultural development of the region. Exploring parents' attitudes towards the school system of these children will help us understand how these attitudes influence parents' choices and children's language use (Baker, 1992).

In language acquisition, parents play a vital role in the language development of their children. According to Gunning (2007), achieving literacy and language learning goals not only depends on what is done in school but also on parental involvement in their children's learning progression. It has been shown in many studies that it is parents who provide the best support for the language development of their children in multilingual contexts and immersion programs (Dagenais, 2003; Dagenais & Day, 1999; Dagenais, Day & Toohey, 2006; Dagenais & Moore, 2008; Hudelson, 1994). This premise has also been supported by other researchers who argue that home practices and school instruction are both essential in

cases of minority languages (Riches & Genesee, 2006; Cummins, 1993; Hudelson, 1992; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1990). Although Arabic is not a minority language in Egypt and is spoken in the community, children in international schools communicate in English most of the time and they have created their own community where English is the dominant language of communication. Arabic in this case is threatened by the excessive use of English. In this context, Arabic is considered the heritage language and its maintenance is important to preserve the identity of these children as Egyptians. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the attitudes, motivations, and practices of parents in order to foresee the language development of children (Baker, 1992).

Before examining how Arabic is affected by the excessive use of English in international schools in Egypt and the role of parents in supporting bilingualism in children, it is important to establish the reasons why English has become so dominant to the extent that some parents ignore the first language and children shift entirely to English.

The rising status of the English language worldwide has led to a great increase in the number of English-language learners. The number of children learning English in schools at an early age is rapidly increasing (Graddol, 2006). This noticeable increase can be attributed to what Yashima (2009) referred to as the “international posture” of speakers of English. He defined “international posture” as the will to learn a language to work abroad, to communicate with people from other nations and for international business. This important role of English may justify the drive of Egyptian parents to send their children to English-medium international schools. Many studies have shown that the high profile of English motivates students to learn English and also parents to choose international-program schools for their children. For example, Dronkers (1993) conducted a study in the Netherlands on children who attend schools that offer the international baccalaureate program. They found that the international trend to learn English and the global importance of English were the main motives for these students to learn the language. In the Egyptian international-school

context, English has become excessively used, leading to the neglect of Arabic by both parents and children. The second language in this context receives more attention from the parents of these children and they have a more positive attitude towards English than towards Arabic because of its instrumental and integrative role.

The attitude of parents towards the second language plays a role in the development of their children's proficiency level in the target language (Chou, 2005; Ramos, 2007). Baker (1992) and Tse (1998) have argued that parents affect their children's attitudes towards languages. In fact, the involvement of parents in their children's learning process and educational life is viewed as the main reason for their success in school and their foreign language development (Genesee, 1978, 1987; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Swain & Lapkin, 1982). Many studies have demonstrated that home support generally leads to success in the learning process of children (Cashion & Eagan, 1990; Cooper, et al., 2000 Dagenais, 2003; Dagenais & Day, 1999; Davies et al., 2002; Fagan & Eagan, 1990; Geva & Clifton, 1994; Kendall, LaJeunesse, Chmilar, Shapson, & Shapson, 1987). Parents who have a positive attitude towards a target language are more likely to support their child's learning through home practices and more likely to choose bilingual education for their children (Bartram, 2006; Luo & Wiseman, 2000). This shows that by addressing the attitudes and practices of parents, it may be possible to understand their children's learning process, including first language maintenance as well as target language acquisition. However, before we examine language learning and identity, several terms that relate to second language learning need to be introduced.

## 1.2 Definition of bilingualism and other related terms

Many researchers have attempted to define bilingualism and identity its types. However, for the purpose of this study, I retain the definitions of Baker (2001) and Grosjean (1989) who defined bilingualism as the ability to speak two languages in different contexts.

Bilingualism can be divided into two types: additive and subtractive. Additive bilingualism refers to the development of two languages without losing the first language or mother tongue. Alternatively, subtractive bilingualism occurs when the learner loses the first language while learning the second (Baker, 2001). In Egypt, many international school students experience subtractive bilingualism; they sometimes lose their mastery of both written and spoken Arabic language. As a result, they shift to English or mix it with Arabic when trying to express themselves in Arabic. This phenomenon is referred to as code-switching.

Bilingualism and code-switching constantly appear together. While several definitions of code-switching have been suggested, one helpful definition is “the use of two languages/varieties in the same conversation” (Myers-Scotton, 2006, p. 239). This phenomenon occurs among children in international schools and also among their parents. The interviews conducted with Egyptian parents revealed that code-switching is a very common phenomenon between international-school children and their parents.

Early studies on code-switching viewed it as a lack of proficiency in the two languages or varieties (Myers-Scotton, 1993). Weinreich (1964) argued that bilinguals ideally switch from one language to another depending on the situation, but not within the same situation or speech. On the other hand, in many communities, people consider code-switching “the normal way of speaking” (Heller, 1988, p.7). Some researchers noted that code-switching is done intentionally by speakers and is governed by some non-linguistic aspects including social factors (Edwards, 1994).

### 1.3 Bilingualism, language and identity

The relationship between one’s language and cultural identity has become an essential theme among sociolinguists and anthropologists. Many researchers have explored the relationship between language and identity (Adger, 1998; Bucholtz, 1999; Delessy et al.,

2007; Fina, 2006; Fordham, 1998; Toohey, 2000; Varghese et al., 2005; Woolard, 2005). They have examined how language is used to form identity in bilingual contexts. Bucholtz (1999) noted that in bilingual contexts, speakers who reject the identity of a certain community try to distance themselves from that community and vice versa. In other words, they use the language of the identity group towards which they have positive attitudes. Liebkind (1999) stated that language and identity do not always reflect cultural ethnicity, because in many cases people may refer to themselves as being members of a specific ethnic group even though they do not speak its language. However, this idea is contrary to that proposed by Goffman (1963), who argued that individuals do not choose their identity; rather, it is imposed by others and their view of the individual. Thus, he argued that the hearer determines the identity of the speaker through the language used and by what they say. In the context of English-medium international schools in Egypt, many students communicate with each other exclusively in English, which according to Goffman (1963) may affect the way other people view their identity.

Cultural identity is a difficult term to define; it is not simply based on ethnicity. In fact, some people identify themselves with multiple cultures, even if they do not speak the language of that culture. However, in language learning, the concept of cultural identity is essential in examining the effect of the learning process and the target language on the learner's own culture. Leveridge (2008) stated that culture and identity are expressed through language, and according to Weedon (1987), language is the main constituent in the identity formation of an individual. Ethnic identity results in language attitudes because it is created by group members who differentiate themselves from other groups. Language is one way individuals can distinguish themselves from other identities and reflect ethnicity (Giles, 1977). Fishman (1968) argued that language and ethnic identity are strongly interrelated,

"Language is the recorder of paternity, the expresser of patrimony and the carrier of phenomenology. Any vehicle carrying such precious freight must come to be viewed

as equally precious, as part of the freight, indeed, as precious as in and of itself, the link between language and ethnicity is thus one of the sanctity-by-association" (p.32).

Learners' attitudes toward language learning have been examined from social and individual perspectives (Dörnyei & Csizer, 2002; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). The attitudes of learners to a language affect its maintenance, revival, death or deterioration. In addition, the value or status of a language is determined by the attitudes of either individuals or groups towards that language. Giles et al. (1977) introduced the linguistic vitality theory which states that when a language group has a negative view of its language in the community, the members of that group try to associate themselves with the members of the stronger group and distance themselves from their own group. This shows how the status of one's own language in the society influences the attitudes of its speakers. This concept may help us predict why Arabic is neglected by some parents and students in international schools in Egypt.

The study of attitudes towards languages is a major concept in social psychology, and is usually accompanied by the term motives (Baker, 1992). Attitudes and motives are usually measured by people's behavior, and can also predict behavior. However, not all behaviors reflect people's beliefs. For instance, in the context of Egyptian parents' attitudes towards bilingualism, we expect that parents will report having a positive attitude towards Arabic although their actual practices may demonstrate the opposite (Lareau, 2000; Melhuish et al., 2008; Mumtaz, 2001). It is important now to have a look at the school system in Egypt to understand how international schools are different from other school systems in the Egyptian context.

#### 1.4 School system in Egypt

There are four types of schools in Egypt; private, public, embassy schools, and national institutions (El-Meshad, 2012). Public schools are administered and funded by the Ministry

of Education in Egypt. UNICEF has reported that these schools are characterized by a lack of resources and poor teaching quality. The majority of students (92%) in Egypt attend public schools (El-Meshad, 2012). Public schools are divided into two main types: local Arabic schools where the Egyptian curriculum is taught in Arabic, and experimental schools that teach mathematics and science in English (or French), with the remainder of the subjects being taught in Arabic.

The national institutions are neither wholly public nor entirely private. Students pay fees that are slightly lower than private school fees. These institutes are administered and funded by social committees or national institutions such as the Ministry of Religious Endowments and follow a special curriculum that is somehow different from that of the Ministry of Education as it teaches Quran-related and religious subjects.<sup>1</sup>

Private schools come under different categories. Some offer the national curriculum while other schools offer international diplomas such as the British International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), an American certificate, the French Baccalaureate, and the International Baccalaureate (El-Meshad, 2012).

International schools are supervised by the Ministry of Education. However, they do not offer the Egyptian high-school diploma; *Thanaweya Amma*. Rather, the schools follow a special curriculum for accreditation by international systems (El-Meshad, 2012). In Egypt, English and French-medium schools have become more popular in contemporary society due to the benefits students can experience in terms of employment opportunities and the academic prowess of these schools (Hargreaves, 1997).

This study targets English-medium international schools which offer either the British International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) or an American certificate.

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<sup>1</sup> An example of this type of school are the Al-Azhar religious schools (El-Meshad, 2012).



## CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In sociolinguistics, the effect of language learning on attitudes and identity, and vice versa, has been an important topic of research. According to Jund (2010), learning a foreign or second language affects the attitudes of learners towards their mother tongue and their own culture. The same argument had been made by Segalowitz (1977), who demonstrated that bilingual speakers develop an internal duality of culture that synthesizes the cultures of the two languages they speak. Thus, when a new language is learned, people are exposed to a new culture and make adjustments to the way in which they view the world. Understanding learners' attitudes towards the target language is essential and therefore was addressed by many researchers in different contexts. The following section will discuss some studies of students' attitudes towards English language learning in the Arabian Gulf region and then in other, non-Arab contexts.

### 2.1 Students' attitudes towards English language learning

Many studies have been conducted in the Arabian Gulf region which examine the attitudes students have towards learning English. Their motivations for learning English are similar to that of Egyptians in international schools, and their excessive English use has led to a similar loss of proficiency in their Arabic L1 (Rushdi-Saleh, 2011). While the situations are not identical, it is instructive to review studies of students' motivation in the Gulf, where more studies on student motivation have been done than in Egypt. In the UAE, secondary school students reported that they considered English language to be important for effective communication and to find employment (Musa, 1985). Further investigation into the confluence between English language acquisition and personal, socio-cultural development was conducted in Kuwait with university students. The conclusions of this study

demonstrated that a key motivation to learn English was to gain education and to find an effective position of employment (Al-Shalabi, 1982). A similar study was also conducted into the motivations of medical school students who studied at Kuwait University (Vogt & Oliver, 1999). The authors found that students had predominantly positive attitudes towards English as the language of instruction although some of them had attended public schools and had a low proficiency in spoken and written English. Furthermore, a study conducted by Chalak and Kassaian (2010) in Iran showed that learners of Persian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) had very positive attitudes towards English for future ambitions and to communicate with speakers of English. The aforementioned studies emphasize how the instrumental importance of English leads to a positive attitude of learners towards English.

Dörnyei and Csizer (2002) conducted a study on children from Hungary to examine their motivation to learn English as a second language. They found that the instrumental motivation was starkly apparent due to the predominance of English as the language of instruction and was therefore necessary for academic success. They also found that children were aware of the importance of English for communication worldwide and of the international role played by English among other languages. Thus, their results demonstrated the motivation to learn English in an increasingly globalized world.

## 2.2 Socio-cultural context and language learning

The identity of the language learner is essential for the success of the language learning process. An example can be found in the examination of two language learners using qualitative research by Norton and Toohey (2001) which indicated that language learning is affected by the sociocultural context in which the language is attained. In that study, interviews and observations were used in order to collect data on two participants: an adult and a child; the adult was an immigrant to Canada from Poland and the child was also Polish of immigrant parents. Video recording of interviews and observations revealed that the adult

participant did not work in an environment that supported learning English, only receiving the opportunity to practice English with her workmates during monthly outings arranged by her manager. The participant reported that her Polish identity enhanced her self-confidence; while the younger participant used some of what she learned in her Polish-medium Sunday school and was very sociable in her interactions with her peers. Additionally, her teacher's awareness of the language process and her needs helped to improve her English and also encouraged her to compete with her classmates. The two participants were identified as good ESL learners and the authors explained how the social practices of these learners positively influenced their language learning. This study supports the claim that both the social environment and the identity of the individual are necessary elements of the successful language learning process. In the context of international schools in Egypt, supporting the Egyptian identity of students through teaching materials, books and activities may support their target language development.

### 2.3 First language status

The status of the first language also affects attitudes of people towards that language. This was emphasized by the work of Riches and Curdt-Christiansen (2010) who conducted a study on two sets of families in Canada. The investigated groups consisted of a Chinese family and a number of Anglophone families, all the children of which studied in French schools. The Anglophone families sent their children to these schools in order to develop a good quality of education whereas the Chinese family was legally obliged to send their children to French schools in Quebec. The results of the qualitative analysis of interviews showed that because Chinese was a minority language in that socio-cultural context, the parents were concerned about their children's loss of heritage. In contrast, the high status of English in Canada encouraged the Anglophone parents to support bilingualism in their children. In spite of the fact that the situation in international schools in Egypt is different

than that of the previous study, this study emphasizes the importance of valuing students' first language in school and in the community.

## 2.4 The role of siblings

The language spoken within the home environment has a significant impact on first-language loss, particularly among the young. When children and adolescents shift to the target language at home, in addition to its use at school, a greater degree of fluency loss can be experienced in the first language (see Keysar et al., 2012; McLaughlin, 2013; Montrul, 2005). Siblings offer an additional source of literacy and language development in children and adolescents (García, 2005). Stainthorp and Hughes (2000) maintain that older siblings are good language sources for their younger siblings. Older siblings who are speakers of the target language in the home environment with their younger siblings (even if they were proficient in the first language) experience some degree of first language loss (Kouritzin, 1999; Montrul, 2005). The interviews conducted in the current study revealed that most participants had all their children enrolled in the same international school and they reported that their children communicate in English among themselves.

## 2.5 Socio-economic status

The socio-economic status of the family can also determine the literacy and language development of children's L1 (Storch & Whitehurst, 2001). Learners from low-income families have limited access to books and language materials, which adversely affects their first language development (Burchinal et al., 2010; Welsh et al., 2010). This resource-poor environment further exacerbates their situation when they begin to learn English in school. Low socioeconomic children do not have a good chance to learn English because their parents lack the ability to provide access to language resources (Burchinal et al., 2011; Verhallen & Bus, 2010).

In Egypt, international–school students generally come from a higher socioeconomic level. Their situation gives them access to books, technological tools and electronic devices which allow their exposure to a plentiful supply of English materials and applications. Additionally, peer pressure holds an influential role in the causation of spoken English use as a communicative form which is indicative of the higher social classes. They also experience more international travel during vacations and interact with foreigners frequently using English. This endorses and supports the importance of English as a global language of communication and increases their appreciation of their mastery of English (Clyne & Sharifian, 2011; Elder & Harding, 2011; Kumaravadivelu, 2012).

## 2.6 Literacy practices

Home literacy practices include reading, playing games, writing, school homework, and other activities between parents and children (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1993), all of which take two key forms: formal and informal. Practice of the former involves reading novels, storybooks, or school textbooks, while informal practice involves the comprehension of the message conveyed in the book or within the story they read (Sénéchal et al., 1998).

The relationship among literacy practices, language, and identity indicates that these facets are strongly interrelated and have been studied from a sociocultural standpoint by many researchers (Bourdieu, 1977; Gee, 1996; Lantolf, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978; Wells, 2000). Bartlett and Holland (2002) argued that practices associated with literacy are intrinsically linked with the experiences of the learners who try to link what they learn to information which they already know. This study will explore the manner in which home literacy practices may be conducive to the maintenance of the home language.

## 2.7 School and language development

The language of instruction in schools is of critical importance when studying a new language through learning and development and every educational institution follows a language education policy. This policy determines the language of instruction and the way instructors should implement the policy. The implementation of this policy does not take into consideration student preferences, needs or even the quality of the policy itself (Shohamy, 2006). In many cases, the language policy in immersion-program schools may not consider the identity of its learners in the design process of teaching materials. Kouritzin (2000) and Merino (1983) indicated that school practices that neglect the first language of children in minority language contexts results in language loss instead of bilingualism. Although Arabic is not a minority language in Egypt, supporting the first language through the materials and the curriculum is still essential, particularly in an English-medium international school context. The curricula of these schools are taken from international education systems without making any changes to suit the social context or the ethnic background of Egyptian students.

## 2.8 First language loss

Some Egyptian parents of students who attend international schools use English to communicate with their children although they lack proficiency in English. This often occurs due to the belief that in doing so they are supporting their children's language proficiency and academic success. Research has indicated that the consequence of this situation is often the result that by not speaking Arabic at home, they are contributing to their children's loss of proficiency in their native language. In general, the research indicates that first language loss can be caused not only by the lack of engagement in literacy practices in that language (either in the home or at school) but also by the status of that language in the community (see

Clyne & Sharifian, 2011; Elder & Harding, 2011; Kumaravadivelu, 2012; McLaughlin, 2013; Welsh, 2010).

Kouritzin (1999) conducted a study in Canada involving five Canadian participants who had different origins to examine the factors that lead to language loss. One of the participants originated from Finland, another was of Chinese origin, while the remaining three were Hungarian, Cree-Indian and Japanese. All of the participants had been raised in Canada and their families had immigrated many years prior to the study. Participants of the study reported that the main reason behind their L1 language loss was the undervaluing of the language. The author also noted that the use of the target language at home led to the loss of the first or ethnic language (Kouritzin, 1999).

Fillmore (1991) discussed the consequences of first language loss, stating that when parents cannot communicate with their children, they are unable to teach them how to deal with life experiences. In addition, Kouritzin (1999) outlined the negative effects of first language loss, which include the loss of family ties and parental isolation from the lives of their children. Accordingly, Kouritzin (1999) and Fillmore (1991) reported that additive bilingualism helps children communicate with their relatives and parents, particularly in those instances in which their parents are not proficient in the second language, or do not speak it with as much frequency as is beneficial. Some parents try to use the L2 at home in order to help their children practice the target language (Thomas & Cao, 1999). Sometimes parents do this because their children's teachers ask them to do so in order to encourage their children to speak the second language (Kouritzin, 2000; Schecter & Bayley, 1997). However, because of the parents' low proficiency of the second language, their efforts do not help their children learn or even develop their target language, and therefore their efforts are sometimes considered essentially useless (Calderón, 2011; Halle et al., 2012).

Early exposure to a second language in children and adolescents is another factor that negatively affects their first language. This idea was supported by Fillmore (1991) who

conducted a study on immigrant families whose native languages were a minority in the United States. The study indicated that the children's first language was strongly affected by their early exposure to the second language. The aforementioned studies demonstrate that in some cases, the L2 may negatively affect the L1 if introduced at an early age unless attention is given to the first language.

## 2.9 Language attitudes and motivations

Motivation plays an important role affecting language leaning. This idea was introduced in Gardner's (1985) social context model, which states that motivation, anxiety and other psychological feelings affect second language development. Thus, one can predict success in language learning if learners are highly motivated and if negative feelings are reduced. This hypothesis highlights the importance of motivation and positive attitudes towards language acquisition for the development of any language. It will also assist the understanding of the situation pertaining to English and Arabic in English-medium international schools in Egypt through examining children's feelings and motivations from their parents' viewpoint.

Many recent studies on second language acquisition have also focused on attitudes towards language learning (Dörnyei & Csizer, 2002; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). According to Gardner (1985), attitudes and motivations strongly affect the success of the process of learning and developing a second or foreign language (Gardner, 1985). He argued that there are behavioral, cognitive and affective components of motivation which help learners develop a second language. The affective component implies that supporting the first language leads to the development of all the languages in contexts of multilingualism (Cummins, 1993; Genesee, 1987; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1990). Other research has indicated that the rejection of the culture of the target language and its identity leads learners to negative language behavior such as distancing themselves from the target language. However, when



the learner shows a positive attitude towards the culture of the second language, the individual is more likely to have successful language development (Bucholtz, 1999). Therefore, it is essential to understand attitudes, motivations and how they relate to each other to be able to see how they influence language learning.

### **2.9.1 Attitudes and motivations defined**

Bohner and Dickel (2011) defined attitude as a judgmental belief or feeling towards something or someone. Ager (2001) proposed that attitude helps understand motivation. According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), attitude and motivation affect each other. Motivation is another term that requires a clear definition to understand its relevance to language learning. The will of the learner to achieve a specific goal or progress in language is what Ager (2001) referred to as language learning motivation. There are two main types of language learning motives: integrative and instrumental (Gardner, 1985). The integrative implies the need of the learner to communicate with others using the target language. For example, in English-medium international schools in Egypt, English is the main language of communication at school among teachers and students and therefore its integrative role in this context is very evident. The second type of motives is the instrumental motive, which refers to the need to learn a language for future goals such as finding a job or having better educational opportunities. The willingness to achieve language proficiency and the positive attitude toward the target language motivate people to learn a language (Gardner, 1985; Dörnyei, 2003). Motivation is very important for learning because when learners set their goals, they perform better and achieve success in learning (Locke & Latham, 2006). Motives can also be understood by the needs theory. Learners who have personal needs such as raising their self-confidence through learning a language or promoting skills are more likely to be motivated. In second language contexts, the integrative motivation of language learning is more evident than the instrumental. However, the instrumental motivation is more

apparent in foreign language contexts because the target language is used in academic contexts (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003).

Ager (2001) argued that a hierarchical relation exists between motivation and attitude. He reasoned that motivation affects the attitude towards language and also language behavior. Baker (1992) stated that attitude and motivation both affect language behavior. All this research supports the claim that attitudes towards a language affect motivation and language use. Therefore, in international schools in Egypt, positive attitudes of learners as well as their parents towards English are reflected through their language use at home and in schools.

There are many factors that influence language learning and which may be helpful to examine when conducting a study of Egyptian parental attitudes towards bilingualism. The premise that the socio-cultural context and the support of the learner's identity lead to a successful development of the target language has been examined in the literature. The first language status, family support and literacy practices have been taken into consideration when designing the survey to draw conclusions on what affects language learning and attitudes towards bilingualism. In addition to this, a consideration of the socioeconomic level of the family affecting the literacy practices of learners was also applied. The forthcoming paragraphs review salient research on these topics and discuss these themes within the context of the investigation.

### **2.9.2 Studies on parental attitudes**

Baker (1992) and Tse (1998) mentioned that parents' attitudes have a strong impact on the language learning process of their children. In addition, Chou (2005) studied Taiwanese university students' attitudes and found that those with positive attitudes towards English had parents with a positive attitude and received encouragement from them.

Other studies focused on parents' attitudes towards their first language in bilingual contexts. One of these studies was conducted on Cuban-American mothers of children in immersion-program schools and revealed that the socioeconomic level and the educational background of parents may strongly affect their attitudes towards the first language (Lambert and Taylor, 1996). The study demonstrated that the socioeconomic level of mothers influenced their attitudes towards their children's bilingualism in English and Spanish. Working class mothers asserted that learning English was essential for their children for future success and to assimilate into the American community. These mothers paid more attention to English than to Spanish through encouraging their children to speak English at home. However, middle-class mothers emphasized the importance of Spanish to maintain their cultural heritage and identity. They were not as concerned about their children's need to speak English as they were with Spanish because they assumed they will get English naturally from school and the community. This study demonstrates how parents' attitudes towards their first language may vary depending on their educational and socioeconomic level.

Other researchers have focused on parents' attitudes towards the L1 and L2 in bilingual contexts. Craig (1996) examined the attitudes towards bilingualism of two groups of parents in the United States. His aim was to investigate how their attitudes relate to the reasons to choose bilingual immersion programs for their children. The two groups had different language backgrounds: English and Spanish. They both showed a positive attitude towards bilingualism for future opportunities, the essence of English in the American society and for cultural awareness. However, the Spanish group showed a positive attitude towards their heritage language and reported that it is important to maintain their identity, whereas the English-speaking parents did not view Spanish language as so important because it is not used for everyday communication.

Similarly, another study also examined parental attitudes towards immersion-program schools (Giacchino-Baker & Piller, 2006). The authors focused on the attitudes of parents towards two-way immersion programs of Spanish and English in the United States. They found that both Spanish-speaking and English-speaking parents had affirmative attitudes towards the program for a number of reasons; including biliteracy, improved employment prospects, and a greater multicultural awareness. In addition to these reasons the Spanish-speaking parents focused on the role of Spanish language in the preservation of their culture. The English-speaking parents were not as concerned about Spanish as they did not use it at home for communication. This study confirms the findings of the previously-mentioned research (Craig, 1996) which was conducted in the same context of Spanish-English immersion program schools.

Another study (Lee & Jeong, 2013) examined the attitudes of Korean-English bilingual students, their parents and their teachers in an immersion-program school in the United States. Observations and interviews were used for the collection of data. The results indicated that the parents reported they were concerned about the limited use of Korean compared with the use of English. The teachers mentioned that the materials which were taught in the program were taken from English monolingual programs and subsequently translated. According to the authors this ignores the cultural differences and the identity of the students. The authors believe that bilingual education is distinct and needs research and tailored materials that consider the culture and the identity of students (Lee & Jeong, 2013).

Although the previous studies discuss the situation of immigrant families and are not directly related to the situation of parents in Egypt, they support the notion that parental attitudes affect their home practices and the language they use with their children and accordingly affect their children's language use.

## CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

From an investigator's point of view, a number of gaps have been identified in the literature. First of all, little attention has been paid to attitudes towards language and identity from an Egyptian perspective. Researchers have not yet addressed the effect of bilingualism on cultural identity from the perspective of Egyptian parents. Therefore, there is a strong need to study Egyptian parents' beliefs and attitudes towards their children's bilingualism. Second, studies of parents' attitudes towards bilingualism have mostly been conducted in an ESL context. Very little research has examined cases where English is a foreign language. In addition, because the role of parents in establishing their children's identity has been confirmed in numerous studies, there needs to be a study of the role of Egyptian parents in their children's language learning and educational experience. Finally, the research conducted so far in the Arab region only addresses students' attitudes towards English and has not addressed parents' attitudes towards their children's language and identity. Given these reasons, it is appropriate that a study be conducted to investigate this issue. Research on this subject may help other researchers in the region to apply the study to different contexts and provide comparisons between data and findings.

### 3.1 Research questions

This study focused on Egyptian parents who send their children to English-medium international schools in Egypt. It investigated parents' attitudes towards their children's bilingualism. The different motives for parents to send their children to these schools were examined. Parents' home practices and beliefs were also addressed. The research questions of the current study are as follows:

- What motivated Egyptian parents to choose international or immersion program schools for their children?
- How do they feel about their children's educational and linguistic achievements?
- Were their past motivations to choose international schools different from their current attitudes towards their children's educational experience?

### 3.2 Research design

For the current study, a mixed-methods approach has been adopted. Due to the descriptive nature of this investigation; which will report attitudes, beliefs and opinion, both surveys and follow-up interviews were used to provide descriptions of participants' responses. The instruments that have been used to collect primary data consist of a questionnaire (Appendix A) and follow-up interviews (Appendix C). A Likert-type scale has been used to answer the questionnaire items. The follow-up interviews have allowed parents to fully describe their beliefs and attitudes. The mixed-methods design has provided a better understanding of the topic under investigation.

### 3.3 Participants

This study targeted Egyptian parents of senior high school students who have attended an English-medium international school for at least seven years. Attention was paid to the comparison between parental aspirations before choosing their children's school and their current attitudes towards the school. This number of years in international schools has helped conclusions to be drawn pertaining to parental attitudes and opinions; with particular regard to this specific school or education system. Two sets of participants were required for this study: a large group of parents were given the questionnaire, and from these subjects a smaller group of eleven parents volunteered to do the semi-structured interviews. The investigator has a large social network (neighbors and acquaintances) of parents who have

children who attend English-medium international schools in Cairo. These parents were asked to complete the questionnaire and volunteer to be interviewed and all participants have been assured confidentiality.

### 3.3.1 Survey participants

The questionnaire was completed by 131 parents of seniors that attend English-medium international schools in Egypt. The data was coded and then analysed using descriptive analysis. Microsoft Excel was used for data coding and analysis. The demographic part has been coded and then analysed. The majority of participants were females (74% F, 26% M). Approximately 70% held bachelor-degrees and had graduated from national language schools. Most of the participants had two children, and 37% make 16,000 EGP and above per month. The remainder of participants varied in terms of their monthly income (27% make 11,000-15,000 EGP, 25% make 5,000-10,000 EGP and 11% make less than 5,000 EGP).

The following charts provide a summary of some background information about the 131 survey participants:

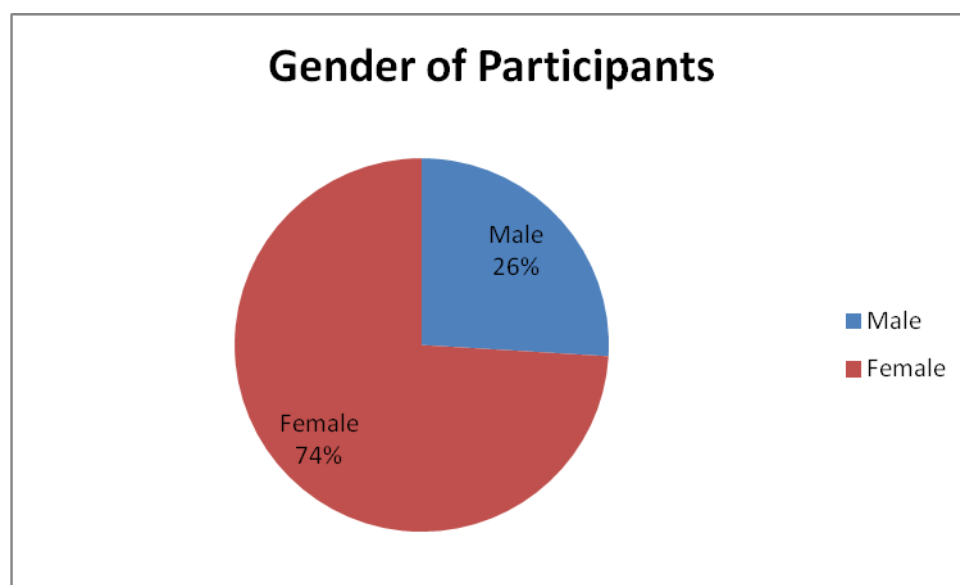
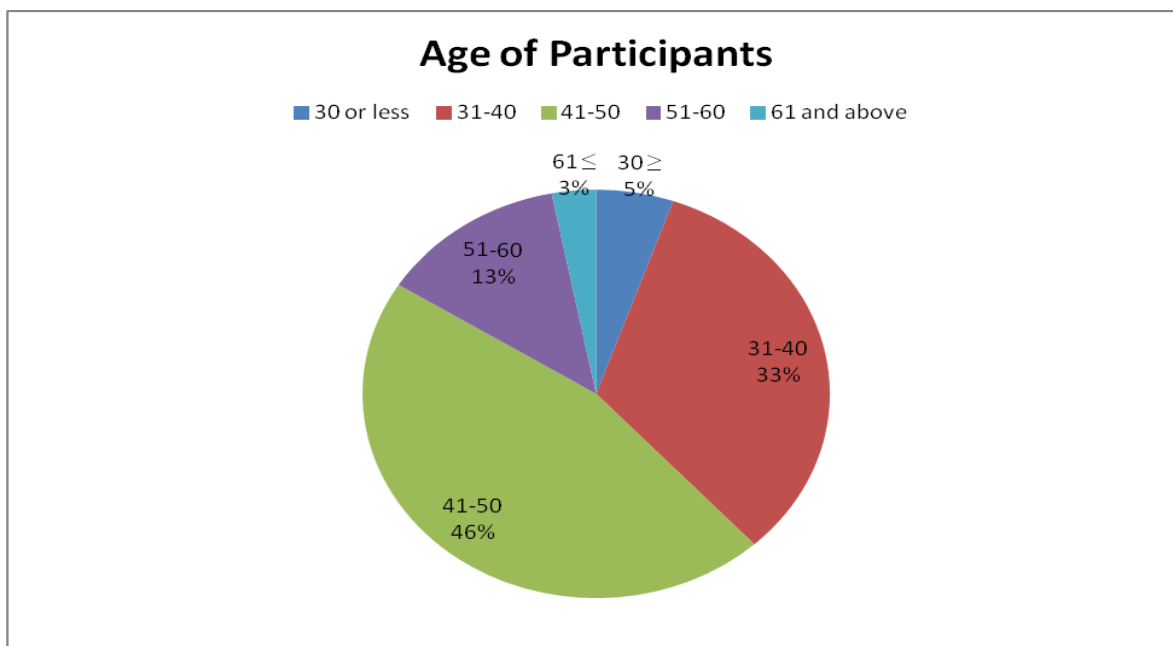


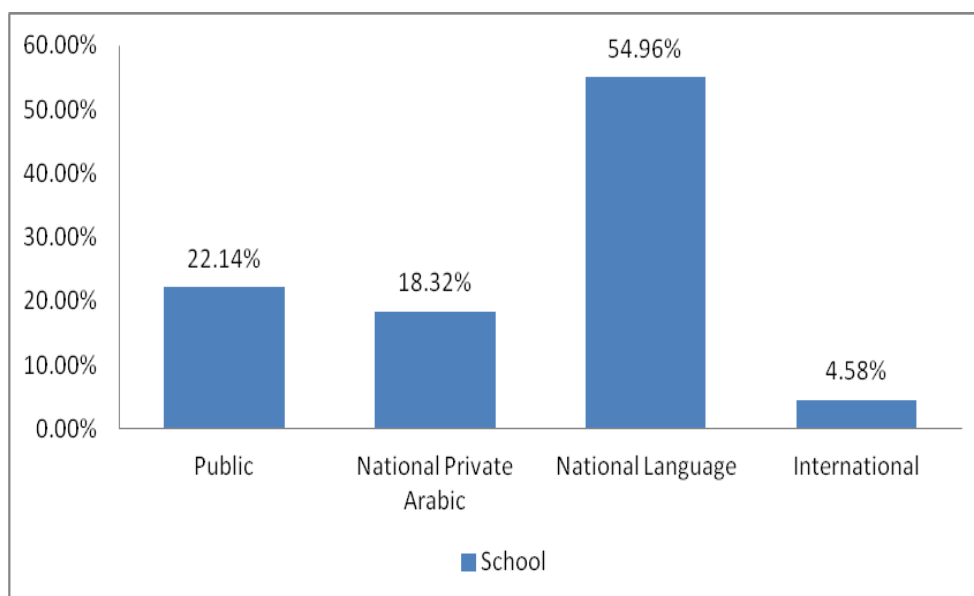
Figure 1. Gender distribution of the 131 parental surveys

The chart depicted above is indicative of the participants' gender and demonstrates that approximately one quarter of those surveyed were male.



**Figure 2. Age distribution among survey participants**

The chart above depicts the distribution of age among the participants indicating that the majority were between the ages of 41 and 50 years old while only 3% were over the age of 61. The second-largest category was between 31 and 40 years old, at 33%.



**Figure 3. Distribution of participants' schooling**



Figure 3, above, indicates the distribution of the school types attended by the participants showing that the majority of parents had attended national language schools (almost 55%).

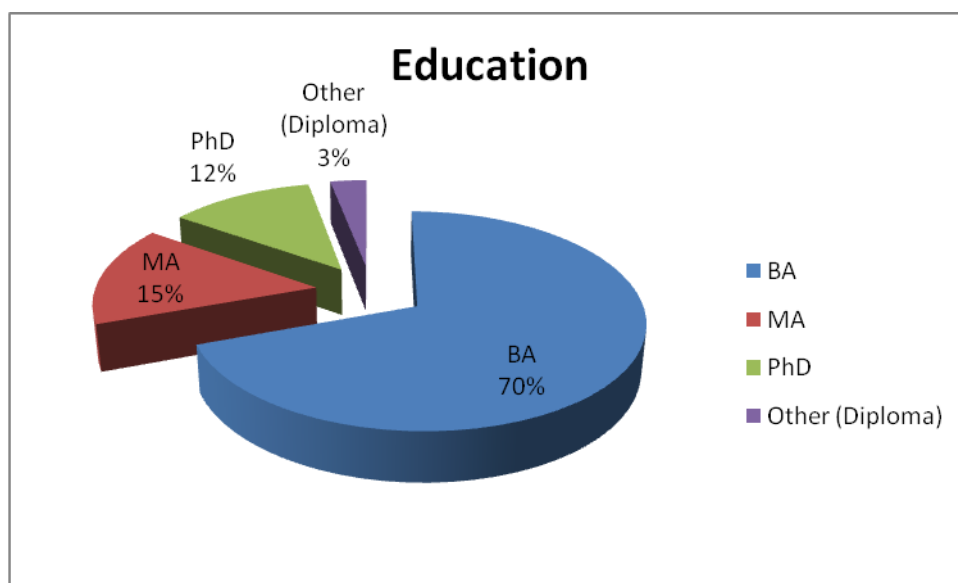


Figure 4. Distribution of participants' level of education

Figure 4, above, depicts the level of qualification earned by the participants and indicates that the vast majority of subjects had BA degrees with a total of 27% at a post-graduate level.

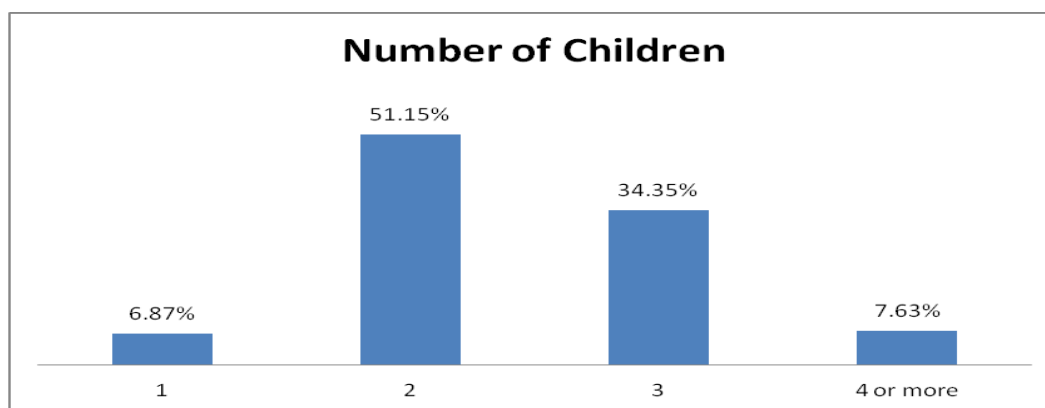


Figure 5. Distribution of the number of children per participant

The above chart shows that just over half the subjects involved had two children while about 7% had one child and only 41.98 % had 3 children or more.

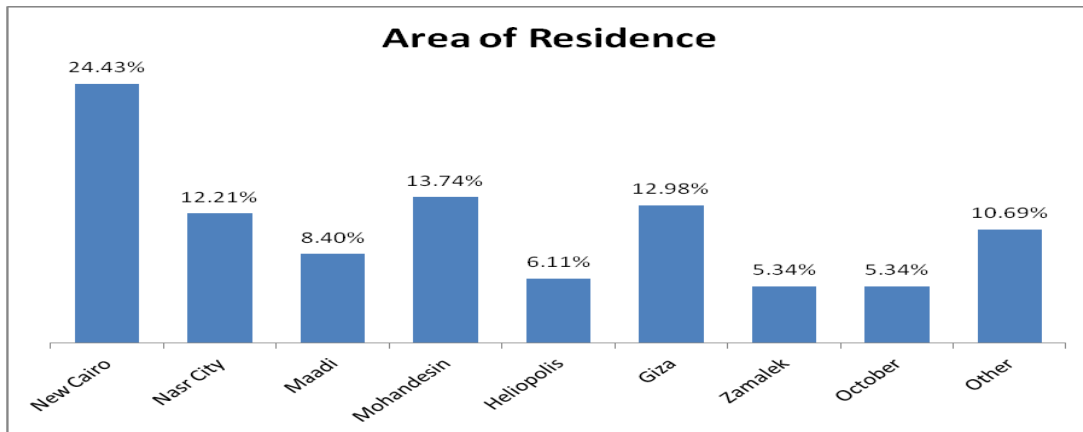


Figure 6. Distribution of area of residence of the 131 participants

The area of residence was broadly distributed; as is depicted in figure 6, above, which shows the majority of participants live in Cairo, while figure 7, below, shows that levels of income were also broadly distributed.

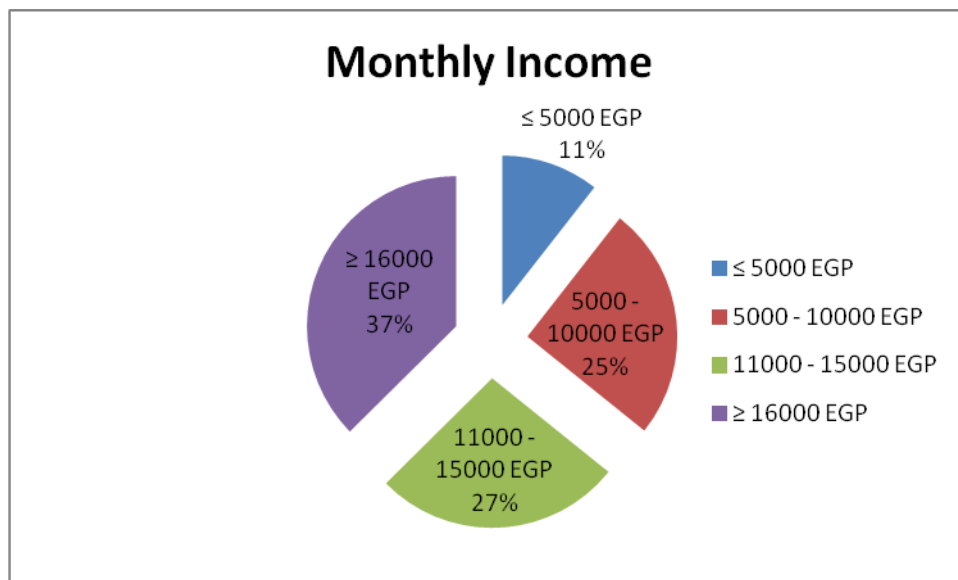


Figure 7. Distribution of participants' monthly income<sup>2</sup>

### 3.3.2 Interview participants

Interviews were conducted with eleven parents who volunteered to be interviewed after completing the survey. The interviews took place in some parents' houses and in two

<sup>2</sup> 7.13EGP=US\$1

sporting clubs: one in New Cairo and another in Zamalek. They were conducted in Arabic, audio recorded and then transcribed in the form of a summary (see Appendix C). The participants were eight females and three males of different ages. Five participants have attended a national language school and four have attended a public school. Only two participants have attended Arabic private schools. The majority of participants live in New Cairo and have BA degrees in various fields. Four participants are PhD holders and one parent has an MA degree. The number of children per each parent ranged between two and four children. Table 1, below, summarizes the background information of the interviewees.

**Table 1. Background information about the interviewees**

#	Gender	Age group	School	Education	Profession	Area of residence	Number of children
1	F	31-40	National school (Arabic)	BA and Diploma in Tourism	Tour guide (currently not working)	New Cairo	2 girls
2	F	41-50	National language school	MA in TESOL	Program director in an international school in New Cairo	New Cairo	3 girls
3	M	51-60	Public school	PhD	Physician	New Cairo	2 girls
4	F	51-60	Public School	BA in Arabic Language	Arabic teacher	New Cairo	3 boys
5	M	41-50	National language school (childhood in the States)	BA in Computer Science	Software Engineer	New Cairo	2 (a boy and a girl)
6	F	41-50	Public school	PhD in Psychology	University professor	Nasr City	2 (a boy and a girl)
7	F	41-50	National language school	BA	Assistant director	Maadi	2 ( a boy and a girl)
8	F	41-50	National language school	BA	House wife	New Cairo	2 boys
9	M	51-60	Public school	PhD	University professor	New Cairo	3 girls
10	F	41-50	National language school	BA	Program director	Mohandesin	2 (a boy and a girl)
11	M	41-50	National school (Arabic)	PhD	Physician	Mohandesin	4 (3 boys and a girl)

### 3.4 Pilot study

A pilot study which was conducted in April 2013 served to review the attitudes of parents towards their children's bilingualism and verify the assumptions made in this study. The pilot consisted of two interviewees and ten survey participants.

The results contributed significantly to the research questions of this study, revealing that parents seek good educational opportunities for their children and that they have ambitions for their children's future careers, for which international schools prepare their children. It also showed that parents are not too concerned about their children's loss of Egyptian identity. Participants commented that there is no relationship between the language their children speak and their culture or identity. Many of them reported that their children do not speak proper Arabic but are still considered Egyptians. In light of this finding, the semi-structured interview protocol was modified to explore this attitude in greater depth.

The final research question concerned parents' practices to preserve Arabic. The results of the interviews showed that some parents speak to their children in Arabic and encourage them to speak and read in Arabic. However, there were indications that Arabic materials (i.e., books, CDs, etc.) were not considered as good as English ones. In addition, the questionnaire results revealed that some parents have a neutral stance towards their children's Arabic language. They make no effort to preserve the Arabic language because English is considered more important for finding jobs or being accepted to a college.

### 3.5 Instrumentation and data collection procedures

For this study, a survey was used to collect data about parental attitudes towards their children's international school and whether they have noticed any influence on their children's first language and identity. Data collection was conducted over the period of one month (February 2014). Three hundred copies of the survey were distributed, some to acquaintances

and other to members in two sports clubs in New Cairo and Zamalek. Copies were also given to a school principal of an international school and some teachers in international schools. A total of 131 surveys were completed and returned. Additional surveys were returned but were excluded because some questions were answered randomly and showed a lack of legibility; some of the participants answered two similar questions randomly by choosing the opposite ranking for each item on the Likert scale. Surveys included a copy of the consent form for participants to sign, although fifty surveys were distributed by the school principal and did not include the consent form. These fifty participants were not forced or pressured by the school principal to participate in the study. The school principal distributed 112 surveys of which only 50 parents completed the survey. The survey was given in the participants' first language (Arabic), in order to ensure the participants' understanding of the questions; and also to enable them to respond to all the questionnaire items. Only two participants preferred to take the questionnaire in English. The translation of the survey from English into Arabic was checked by external thesis readers and also Arabic-speaking peers to ensure reliability of the survey results. The questionnaire included closed questions except for part C, which consisted of two open-ended questions. Part A included demographic information and part B consisted of statements that were graded on a five-point Likert-type scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree). The questionnaire items were extracted from a book on bilingualism and attitudes (Baker, 1992), and were adapted to suit the specific context of the study.

Part A covered demographic information; including gender, age, languages spoken, educational background, number of children, type of school participants graduated from, present area of residence, and monthly income. The second part included statements to be scored using a five-point Likert-type scale. The main themes in the questionnaire pertain to the instrumental importance of English as a motivation for parents to choose international

schools, the parental role in children's maintenance of the first language, the social motives for parents to send their children to international schools, and parental attitudes towards bilingualism.

Interviews were carried out on a one-on-one basis. Semi-structured interviews were directed by key questions but which allowed participants to raise other issues during the interviews. The interview questions were open-ended and therefore allowed the interviewees to express their beliefs and opinions, which was of great use for the investigator (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). All interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed for later analysis. Furthermore, each interview lasted for approximately 30 minutes and was conducted in Arabic to ensure that the participants fully understood the questions and were able to express themselves freely without any language obstacles. Only eleven participants volunteered to be interviewed after completing the survey. Six parents were interviewed in two sports clubs; one in New Cairo and the other one in Zamalek. The rest were acquaintances and were interviewed in their homes.

### 3.6 Data analysis

Data gathered from interviews was transcribed in Arabic and translated into English (see Appendix C), and the data was categorized according to their themes, and then coded to report the results. Content analysis was used to identify the main themes or patterns in the qualitative data and then coded for easier analysis (Patton, 1990). Data gathered from the surveys was analysed quantitatively using descriptive statistics. Verbal data gathered from both the interviews and the questionnaire helped the investigator reach coherent answers for the research questions.

## CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Survey results

From the questionnaires, the Likert-scale questions were coded to report the results. Table 2 summarizes the average scores of participants' various motivations to send their children to international schools. The instrumental importance of English and the deteriorating quality of public schools were the most common motivations among other social and personal drives: instrumental (M= 1.18, SD= 0.42); deterioration of the quality of public schools (M= 1.32, SD= 0.74); international schools' effect on children's worldview (M = 1.59, SD = 0.84); better future careers (M = 1.52, SD = 0.82); societal respect (M = 2.09, SD = 1.3); social pressure (M = 2.29, SD = 1.25); parents' past difficulties due to a low proficiency in English (M = 3.09, SD = 1.33).

**Table 2. Summary of parents' attitudes towards bilingualism**

Statement	M	SD
I faced many difficulties because of my low proficiency level in English.	3.09	1.3
Those who speak English in Egypt are classified as high-class people.	2.29	1.2
English competence is required to achieve high performance in a job or in any academic context.	1.1	0.42
People in the community respect a person who speaks very good English.	2.29	1.3
International schools help my children broaden their own worldview.	1.59	0.84
International schools prepare my children for future careers.	1.52	0.82
The quality of public schools is deteriorating.	1.32	0.74

Note. Entries are mean scores and standard deviation. Mean scores are based on a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly agree; 2=agree; 3=neutral; 4= disagree; 5=strongly disagree).

Table 3 presents a summary of parents' attitudes towards bilingualism and their practices or language use. The table shows that parents have positive attitudes towards Arabic/English bilingualism for instrumental and educational reasons. Among the reasons stated were the following: bilingualism makes children more knowledgeable (M = 1.09, SD = 0.32); bilingualism is beneficial for Egypt's future (M = 1.19, SD = 0.41); bilingualism plays



an instrumental role for achieving future goals ( $M = 1.09$ ,  $SD = 0.3$ ); and bilingualism makes children's lives more enjoyable ( $M = 1.38$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ ).

The results also showed that parents have concerns about identity loss and the cultural effect of speaking English on their Arabic language and Egyptian culture. Most participants agreed with the statement that children would lose their Egyptian identity if they did not speak Arabic ( $M = 2.46$ ,  $SD = 1.47$ ). The other items describing parent's concerns and attitudes produced the following results; "speaking English has westernized my children" ( $M = 2.4$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ); "I'm worried that the more English my children speak, the worse their Arabic will become" ( $M = 2.5$ ,  $SD = 1.45$ ); "my children are affected by Western culture and manners" ( $M = 2.74$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ ). The results also revealed that parents' encourage their children to speak or read in Arabic ( $M = 1.83$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ). Finally, there were various opinions from participants about speaking English to their children ( $M = 3.14$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ ) and regarding their opinion on the effect of English on their children's behaviors and way of thinking ( $M = 2.89$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ).

**Table 3. Parents' attitudes and practices**

Statement	M	SD
Speaking both Arabic and English helps children become more knowledgeable about the world.	1.09	.32
Speaking Arabic and English is essential for the future of Egypt.	1.19	.41
Speaking Arabic and English helps children to reach their goals.	1.09	.30
Speaking Arabic and English makes children's lives more enjoyable.	1.38	.65
Learning English has westernized my children and changed their culture.	2.4	1.17
I am worried that the more English my children use, the worse their Arabic will become.	2.5	1.4
Children who do not speak Arabic may lose their Egyptian identity.	2.4	1.4
My children are affected by Western culture and manners.	2.7	1.2
My children can think and behave like English-speaking people.	2.8	1.09
I encourage my children to speak and read in Arabic.	1.8	.88
I speak to my children in English most of the time.	3.1	1.2

Note. Entries are mean scores and standard deviation. Mean scores are based on a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly agree; 2=agree; 3=neutral; 4=disagree; 5=strongly disagree)

The open-ended questions in Part C of the questionnaire have been transcribed and coded based on themes. The main themes found were based on the content analysis of the qualitative data. These themes include the instrumental importance of English, better educational materials in English, the teaching techniques implemented in international schools, the surrounding environment, social pressure, living abroad for a period, the former educational experience of parents, and parents' roles in the maintenance of Egyptian culture and the deterioration of national and public education. Table 4 below summarizes the major themes found in participants' responses to the open-ended questions of the survey.

**Table 4. Major themes in survey open-ended questions on other motives that affected parents' choice of international schools**

#	Themes
1	The instrumental importance of English
2	The former educational experience of parents
3	Quality education in international schools
4	The deterioration of national and public education
5	Living abroad for a period
6	Social pressure
7	The surrounding environment and qualified teachers

The following quotes from the last part of the survey are representative of these themes. For example, the instrumental importance of English is illustrated in the subsequent quotes: "All jobs now require excellent command of English" and "Learning more than one language will help my children in the future and open more doors to them." In addition, many responses confirmed how the educational experience of parents affected their choice of their children's school such as is illustrated in: "I went to a French international school and I wanted a strong system for my children"; "I had a bad experience in national schools. They depend on private tutoring which wastes their time and effort, and my money"; "I went to an English national school but I cannot speak English because of the way we were taught" and "I wanted a better education for my children than what I had."

Some quotes also indicate that the international educational system is thought to be better than the national. This theme is demonstrated in the following excerpts: "I chose international education to get away from the Egyptian education system"; "I'm not in favour with the culture my children are exposed to but I didn't have an option"; "The national system doesn't give my children the skills they need for their future"; "I feel intercultural interaction

is essential for developing tolerance and understanding." "The corruption of the education system in Egypt and the quality of education are the reasons why I chose an international school" "I'm afraid this corrupt attitude will influence my kids" and "I started with my first daughter in an Egyptian language school because I wanted her to be more part of the Egyptian culture. She would come home crying almost every day. There was corruption and no real sense of caring for the kids. It was a business for profit scheme only."

Living abroad is another theme that affected parents' choices of the school such as illustrated in the following quotes: "I used to live in the States and I wanted a similar experience to my children" and "My children were born in the States and I wanted a similar curriculum for my kids. I had no prior knowledge about the quality of education in Egypt before returning after 12 years abroad. My friends helped me decide on this school."

Another major theme that arose was the social pressure from friends and relatives such as is demonstrated in: "My nephews are older and they went to international schools. I did the same with my children" and "My friend's children are in a very distinguished international school which has led me to choose the same for my children." Finally, the surrounding environment in international schools and also having qualified teachers led parents to choose international schools for their children as illustrated in the subsequent quotes:

- "The educational level and experience of teachers in international schools have led me to choose the school."
- "The surrounding environment, better education and the teaching style are why I chose this school."
- "They have an easier way to deliver information that does not depend on spoon-feeding."
- "I chose the school to help my children master English language and meet friends with a similar social and cultural background."

Although the main themes that arose from analysis of the results of the open-ended survey questions are represented in Table 4, there were also a number of minor themes that arose. These included the number of students in classrooms. An example of this is the following: "They have fewer students in each classroom which means that more attention is given to each individual." Another theme that was identified in some of the responses is immigration needs such as is illustrated in: "I want to prepare them for immigration if we ever need to." An additional minor theme that arose is that of the skills learned in international schools, as illustrated in the following excerpts:

- "As a university professor, I noticed the difference between national school graduates and international school graduates and they are much better and skillful;"
- "Public education does not encourage children to read nor think and do research. I believe my children are capable of thinking and using technology without being taught deductively;"
- "To change their way of thinking and studying that depends on comprehension and not memorization;" and
- "I want my kids to get a better education, learn to think and become creative."

## 4.2 Interviews results

One of the key reasons for choosing international schools that most interviewees discussed is their former experience in national schools; mentioning that the quality of public schools in Egypt is deteriorating, which led them to choose international schools for their children. In addition, the teaching style in international schools does not depend on memorization or spoon-feeding; and this theme has been identified from several interviews. Participants talked about the skills their children develop in school saying that they became creative, independent learners, in addition to being open-minded and that they work in groups on projects that involve thinking. Some of the participants also have elder children who went to national schools, and this provided a basis of comparison between their experience in

national systems and international schools. One parent was against gender segregation in schools; which is applied in public and national schools. Another interviewee talked about some positive aspects of national language schools, stating that they provide a good foundation of grammar rules and punctuation until Grade 4. She also talked about her eldest daughter's experience saying that they start to depend on memorization after Grade 4. She also mentioned that her youngest daughter, who is in an international school, is better at analysis and giving her opinion. One of the pitfalls of American schools mentioned by the same interviewee is that they ignore the fact that the students are second language learners. However, she likes that they foster creativity and critical thinking skills.

Some of the other motivations for choosing international schools include parents' involvement (parents' meeting and reports), the small number of students in each class, preparing students for future careers, developing a native-like accent, the social level of peers, the clean environment, qualified teachers and discipline.

As for the role of participants in their children's literacy practices, some interviewees explained how they encourage their children to read in Arabic and English. One participant used to buy puzzles and word games in Arabic and English. This participant was not in favour of speaking English at home or with relatives. However, she added that her children are very fluent in English because they pay money if they use Arabic in class.

Another participant encourages her daughters to learn languages. When I asked her about her role in her children's literacy practices she replied, "I think that no matter how much effort you exert to encourage them to read, they won't read unless they themselves really want to read." She added that her daughters read Egyptian colloquial books but she does not like to impose standard Arabic reading on her daughters.

One of the interview questions investigated parents' attitudes towards Arabic and the influence of school on Arabic. Most responses showed that parents believe that Arabic is affected by the society in general and not by the school. They mentioned that the society has become westernized and that Arabic language is not valued by many people in the community. One interviewee explained that Arabic as a school subject is very difficult and useless. She elaborated saying that the identity of her children did not change and that they are Muslims and they follow the Islamic rules and they know their limits. Another parent defended her choice of international school saying, "I'm not missing anything in national schools. They don't have good Arabic, either. My daughters read and write good Arabic. We speak Arabic at home and with family. However, they switch between Arabic and English in some cases and sometimes resort to English with friends. When they were young I used to speak English to them but now I don't. I sometimes intentionally shift to English to give them the vocabulary and terms they need to learn in certain contexts." She added, "I can say that there is no negative effect on their culture because the Egyptian culture is very strong in their school. They are not Americanized and that is one of the main reasons why I chose this school."

One of the participants agrees that Arabic language is affected by this learning approach and he can't help them improve their Arabic because his is also weak. Another parent focuses on Arabic by bringing a sheik to teach her children Arabic and Quran. She thinks her children are not weak in Arabic and that national schools also have a problem in Arabic language:

"The whole society is now Americanized not just the school. Even public schools are affected by this culture. I don't see any negative effect from the school on morals or traditions."

One of the parents talked about the influence of school on her children's Arabic, "Their spelling in Arabic is very bad and their handwriting also. Religion is very weak in the school. There is no curriculum. That's why I brought a sheikh to teach them Quran. But anyway, English is more important in work and they already know Arabic and can communicate in Arabic, their mother tongue."

Another interviewee was against speaking English with her children because Arabic adds to her children's identity as Muslims and Arabs:

"I prefer to speak Arabic with them all the time. I am totally against speaking English. Arabic is more difficult. It adds to their identity as Arabs and Muslims. It is sad that some people can only read the Quran in English. That is why I work hard on their Arabic. My Arabic is very good so I try to help them. Now, their handwriting is good and they can read and write in Arabic."

Some participants expressed their concern about Arabic language because their children do not take Arabic in school since it is an elective. Ironically, one of these parents tries to speak English at home as much as she can saying that it is "more practice". Her children also correct her English pronunciation and she sometimes asks them about words in English. On the other hand, she corrects their Arabic. She also talked about the beauty of Arabic language and poetry.

One of the parents mentioned that the Arabic language is very weak in school and that his children cannot read or write in Arabic. However, he believes it is not a problem because "Arabic is not important now. All jobs require English and skills that they can only develop in international schools."

Another major theme that was identified in the data is the instrumental role of English. Participants talked about the importance of English to exchange knowledge,



communicate with people and transfer our culture. One of the participants argued that all research now is done in English and that the internet is mostly in English. Because he is a physician, he thinks that international schools have clean bathrooms, which was very important for him as a doctor and a parent. He also chose the school because teachers were native speakers saying that "native speakers are good for the accent of my children". He talked about his personal experience saying, "I graduated from a public school. When I joined the faculty of medicine I used to suffer because my English was very bad and the terminology was all in English. I suffered more after graduation because all research is done in English."

He added, "My lack of proficiency in English is the reason why we speak Arabic at home. I wish I could speak English with them. But they communicate in English with each other and with their friends. We try to practice English and they help me improve my accent and my English. I also think that their school develops some skills which I don't have. They are open-minded, creative and have an American mentality."

Some parents identified some negative aspects of international schools such as that their children are not connected to the Egyptian society. One of the parents has provided very interesting insights about the educational system in Egypt in general:

"Education in Egypt has become a business. They make money out of it; they hire people who are not qualified. Some parents choose the school to show off and not for education. The school for them completes the social image."

She added that she found that the fees of the international school are about the same as paying for private lessons when her child was in a national school. This parent seemed to be involved in her children's education, having used to read English stories for them when they were young to prepare them for the school interview. This participant prefers the teachers to be native speakers because it is their language and because she wants her kids to sound like native speakers and have a British accent. However, she mentioned that if an Egyptian

teacher is qualified and has a good accent, she does not mind. Another parent said that they have some relatives who live in the States and she wanted her children to be able to communicate with them easily.

Another participant thinks that teachers in international schools are better because their monthly income is high and also because the selections criteria are very detailed and specific; his daughters' Arabic is very good and they like reading novels and writing in Arabic, although he does not encourage his daughters to speak English with relatives because some don't speak English and they misunderstand, believing that his children are speaking English in order to show off. This participant does not seek a certain accent; rather, his main purpose is for his daughters to have good English and communicate easily in English:

“It will never be a native accent. Americans who speak Arabic have a funny and nice accent and we accept it without making fun of them.”

A female participant mentioned that she prefers native speakers to teach her children but they're not available these days because many of them left Egypt because of the political situation. However, she believes that if her kids are not taught by native speakers, their language won't be good. She justified this point saying that students take the easy way and speak Arabic if their teacher knows Arabic. One of the benefits of international schools is that her children were introduced to tests (international tests) that prepared them for university such as the TOEFL test.

In summary, the results revealed that parents had positive attitudes towards their children's school. We have examined their various motivations to send their children to international school. The instrumental importance of English and the deteriorating quality of public schools seemed to be the most common motivations among other social and personal drives. As for parents' attitudes towards Arabic, their children's identity and the impact of

English on their children's behaviour, the results showed that parents have some concerns about identity loss and the cultural effect of speaking English on their Arabic language and Egyptian culture. The study revealed that parents' encourage their children to speak or read in Arabic. Finally, they were neutral about the effect of English on their children's behaviors and way of thinking. Parents discussed how international schools help their children develop critical thinking skills and do scientific research. Many parents discussed that they were seeking a high social level and a good environment for their children when they were searching for the school to send their children to.

The results also showed that parents have very positive attitudes towards English language for its instrumental and integrative roles. To them, speaking English is very essential for academic success and to engage in the global world. Some parents were influenced by their own experience in national schools. They explained the difficulties they faced because of the lack of proficiency in English and how English facilitates their children's life.

## CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1 Discussion

The results of the current study have contributed to the research questions. The first question addresses the motives for Egyptian parents to choose international or immersion program schools for their children. The results justified the inclusion of this question, revealing that parents seek good educational opportunities for their children and that they have ambitions for their children's future careers, for which international schools are perceived to prepare their children. They also revealed the integrative role of English to facilitate communication with native speakers and develop fluency. The results also showed that the deterioration of other national system schools has played a role in their choice to escape the bad quality of these schools (Al-Shalabi, 1982; Musa, 1985).

The second research question addresses parents' feelings about their children's educational and linguistic achievements. The results showed that some parents are not satisfied with the quality of international schools yet they have no other choice. Some parents were very concerned about their children's loss of Arabic. Many of them reported that their children do not speak, read or write proper Arabic because the school ignores the Arabic language. This view is mirrored in the literature previously covered which indicates that there is an increasing number of immersion-program schools and English-medium schools all over the world which do not support first or heritage language maintenance (Graddol, 2006).

Although some participants tried to preserve Arabic by reading stories to their children when they were young or bringing a sheikh as a tutor to teach them Arabic grammar and how to read the Quran, the majority of participants reported that they are less concerned about Arabic language due to their belief that Arabic is nowadays of little importance

compared to English. This attitude has also been demonstrated in the literature review by Lee and Jeong (2013) who maintained that due to limited native language use in schools, external assistance was brought in to ensure that children did not lose a grasp on their heritage and culture. Parents also reported their future ambitions and aspirations for their children and how international schools help their children develop critical thinking skills and language competence.

The interviews and the open-ended questions in the survey revealed that parents' former experiences affect their current attitudes, practices and also their choice of their children's school. Many participants compared their experience in national system schools with their children's educational experience in international schools. They focused on the negative aspects of the public school system, given that the majority of participants have attended a national language school. Other participants used to live abroad and were looking for an educational experience similar to their own for their children.

The final research question concerned parents' current attitudes towards their children's school or educational experience in comparison with their past motivations to choose the school. The results showed that parents have a positive attitude towards this education system because of the skills their children have developed in addition to their proficiency in English. This again relates to previous academic work which has indicated that due to the prominence of the English language throughout the world, parental attitudes are placated so long as their children are educated in this language to an extent regardless of the degree to which this leads to a deterioration in their native language (Kassaian 2010; Vogt & Oliver, 1999).

The results of the questionnaire revealed that some parents have a neutral stance towards their children's Arabic language. They make no effort to preserve the Arabic language because English is considered more important for finding jobs or being accepted to a college although many of them expressed their concern about Arabic language.

Another male participant mentioned that there is “no value for those who speak Arabic in our society. They respect only those who speak English, especially if they have another nationality. I want them to live abroad or immigrate and escape the bad quality of education and the bad manners. I want a better future for my children.” This again is indicative of attitudes which were demonstrated in the literature review and previous academic endeavors (see Al-Shalabi, 1982; Hargreaves, 1997; Kassaian, 2010; Giacchino-Baker & Piller, 2006; Musa, 1985) which indicated that motivations behind English schooling for children were largely based upon parental wishes for a better quality of life and future for their offspring; and due to the status of the English language in an increasingly globalised world, education in this is considered to be very important.

Several participants reported that they used to speak English with their children when they were young to help them practice the target language (Thomas & Cao, 1999), but now they communicate through their mother tongue and sometimes use code-switching.

Although the majority of parents expressed their concern about their children’s loss of Arabic and had a positive attitude towards Arabic, they reported that they are not taking any action to help their children improve their Arabic. This supports the argument that beliefs are not necessarily reflected through behavior (Lareau, 2000; Melhuish et al., 2008; Mumtaz, 2001).

## 5.2 Conclusion

The results of this study showed that parents had positive attitudes towards their children’s international school and English language because of its importance in finding jobs, achieving future goals and because of the skills they develop in this school. Their children, as they noted, are highly motivated to learn English. This according to Gardner’s motivation theory (1999) has positively affected their second language learning. In addition,

their lack of motivation to learn Arabic in school may justify their neglect of Arabic language.

The quality of national system schools compared to international schools represented another major motive for parents to choose this particular system. As for their former experiences, parents discussed their past experience in national schools to explain why they prefer international schools. One of the parents had a negative attitude towards using Arabic and he believed that the society nowadays respects those who speak English. This concept relates to Giles' language vitality theory (1977) and also Bucholtz's (1999) belief which indicate that in bilingual contexts, people use the language of the identity group towards which they have positive attitudes and try to distance themselves from the group towards which they have negative feelings.

The results revealed that attitudes towards Arabic were different among parents. Some of them expressed their concern about their children's Arabic whereas others showed indifference towards Arabic language. The findings also demonstrated how beliefs can differ from practices or behavior. Some parents reported some beliefs about the importance of their mother tongue for maintaining their Egyptian identity even though they mentioned that they are not paying much attention to Arabic. This supports the argument that beliefs are not necessarily reflected through behavior (Lareau, 2000; Melhuish et al., 2008; Mumtaz, 2001).

The parents' educational background may have affected their attitudes towards their children's education. The majority of them have university degrees and have attended a national language school. Also, the majority of the interview participants were working women. They reported that they wanted a better future or at least a similar experience for their children and they were seeking both academic success and language competence. They also reported that they seek a good environment that is similar to their own and want their children to socialize in a high-level social class. This finding is similar to the study by

Lambert and Taylor (1996) on Cuban-American mothers of children in immersion programs which revealed that working class mothers paid more attention to English than to Spanish and encouraged their children to speak English at home. Although the context of the current study is not similar to this study since English is not spoken in the society, the interviewees' educational level and the fact that they are working women and are exposed to the needs of the job market influenced their view of the importance of English for finding a job and achieving academic success.

The study revealed that some parents neglect Arabic language and sometimes do not recognize its importance for preserving their children's identity as Egyptians. This study can raise parents and schools' awareness of the importance of Arabic language and the fact that it should not be neglected in school and at home. If English language teaching in national system schools were of the same quality as that of international schools, we might not have these very negative attitudes towards national education.

The findings of the current study show that parents have positive attitudes towards international schools and also towards English, which are similar to Giacchino-Baker and Piller's study (2006) on the attitudes of parents towards two-way immersion programs of Spanish and English in the United States. They found that both Spanish-speaking and English-speaking parents had favorable attitudes towards the program for a number of reasons; including biliteracy, improved employment prospects, and a greater multicultural awareness.

Similarly, another study (Lee & Jeong, 2013) examined the attitudes of Korean-English bilingual students, their parents and their teachers in an immersion-program school in the United States and revealed that the parents were concerned about the limited use of Korean compared with the use of English. The materials taught in the program were taken from English monolingual programs and subsequently translated which, according to the



authors, ignores the cultural differences and the identity of the students. In the current study, parents expressed their concern about their children's loss of Arabic and this may lead to more studies in the future on the influence of international education on Arabic language.

Although the previous studies discuss the situation of immigrant families and are not directly related to the situation of parents in Egypt, they support the notion that parental attitudes affect their home practices and the language they use with their children and accordingly affect their children's language use.

### **5.2.1 Limitations**

The following limitations have made the results of this study constrained. The total number of participants is only 131, which is not representative of all Egyptian parents of children in English-medium international schools in Egypt. In addition, some participants provided very interesting insights in the survey but declined to be interviewed. Therefore, the interview sample included parents who volunteered to be interviewed and who sometimes had similar backgrounds and opinions. Another limitation is that not all international schools were included in the study due to time constraints and about 50 surveys were completed by parents of children in the same school, which might introduce unintended bias. This however did not lead to biased results since no generalizations will be made based on the results of the study. Moreover, the study only focused on English-medium international schools. It would be useful to conduct the study on French or German international schools and compare the results.

### **5.2.2 Implications**

The current study investigated Egyptian parents' attitudes towards their children's educational experience in English-medium international schools. It would be beneficial in the future to study children's attitudes and compare them to their parents' attitudes. It would also

be interesting to investigate how their parents' attitudes affected their own and whether they prefer to speak Arabic with their parents.

Another future study can be done on international school curricula to see if students' Egyptian identity is supported in the teaching materials and books. It can also be extended to study Arabic teacher's attitudes towards both Arabic and English in international schools.

Although this study has targeted a small proportion or a minority in the Egyptian society, it is very important because these children are considered the elite and the well-educated, and their maintenance of Arabic language is important for them because it carries their Egyptian identity.

The current study is highly important for English language teaching in Egypt. While the curricula of international schools help students develop a high level of proficiency in English, the content may be irrelevant to Egyptian culture and does not promote the children's feeling of belonging to the Egyptian community. These arguments are based on parents' input during interviews. Unfortunately, I was not able to analyze school curricula because of time constraints. However, these parents have provided me with some background about school curricula and textbooks, and it would be beneficial in the future to see studies done in Egypt on school curricula of different school systems in Egypt and compare between them. It would also be interesting to examine the relevance of international school curricula and teaching materials to the Egyptian identity of students.

Although the effect of parents' attitudes towards bilingualism on their children's attitudes was not addressed in Egypt, it is still important to explore their feelings and beliefs since many studies focused on parents' views and attitudes. It is parents who choose the school for their children and choose the social environment they raise their children in; therefore, it is important to have more studies done on parents' attitudes in various contexts in

order to compare results and report complexities and contradistinctions behind parents' ideas and practices.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### English questionnaire Sample

Dear parent,

I am conducting this study to investigate parents' attitudes towards learning/speaking two languages. The following questions will help me gather information about these issues. The collected information will be confidential and will be used for this study only.

Your assistance is appreciated.

#### Part A

##### Personal information:

- Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )
- Age: Less than 30 ( )  
31–40 ( ) 41–50 ( )  
51–60 ( ) Above 60 ( )
- Educational background: BA ( ) MA ( )  
Other ( ) Please, specify.....
- Type of school you graduated from: Public school ( )  
National private Arabic school ( )  
National private language school ( )  
International school ( )
- Number of children: 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 ( ) 4 or more ( )
- Area of Residence in Cairo (circle one):  
New Cairo Nasr City Maadi Mohandeseen  
Other: Please, specify .....
- Monthly family income: Less than 5000 EGP ( )  
5000–10000 EGP ( )  
11000–15000 EGP ( )  
16000 EGP or more ( )

Part B

1. Please read the following and indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement.

Note: Strongly agree = SA; agree = A; neutral= N; disagree = D; strongly disagree = SD.

I believe that:

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. Speaking both Arabic and English helps children to be more knowledgeable about the world.					
2. Speaking Arabic and English is essential for the future of Egypt.					
3. Speaking Arabic and English helps children to reach their goals.					
4. Speaking Arabic and English makes children's lives more enjoyable.					

2. Please read the following and indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement.

Note: Strongly agree = SA; agree = A; neutral=N; disagree = D; strongly disagree = SD.

The reasons for sending my children to international schools are:

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. I have experiences of past failure because of a lack of proficiency in English.					
2. Speakers of English in Egypt are classified as upper-class people.					
3. English competence is required to achieve high performance in a job or in any academic context.					
4. People in the community respect a person who speaks very good English.					
5. International schools help children broaden their own worldview.					
6. International schools prepare my children for future careers.					
7. The quality of public schools is deteriorating.					



**3. Please read the following and indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement.**

Note: Strongly agree = SA; agree = A; neutral= N; disagree = D; strongly disagree = SD.

**I believe that:**

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. Learning English has westernized my children and changed their culture.					
2. I am worried that the more English my children use, the worse their Arabic will become.					
3. Children who do not speak Arabic may lose their Egyptian identity					
4. My children are affected by Western culture and manners.					
5. My children can think and behave like English-speaking people.					
6. I encourage my children to speak and read in Arabic.					
7. I speak to my children in English most of the time.					

**Part C**

1- Is there anything else you would like to add about the reasons which led you to send your children to an international school?

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2- Do you have a former experience that affected your decision to send your children to an international school? If yes, please explain.

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Thank you for your time and cooperation ☺

## Arabic questionnaire sample (A translation the English survey)

يهدف هذا الاستبيان إلى دراسة موقف و آراء الآباء تجاه تعلم و تحدث لغتين (عربي / انجليزي). ومن أجل الوصول لمعلومات حول هذا الموضوع فقد قمت بإعداد هذا الاستبيان و صياغة الأسئلة بأسلوب يصل إلى نتائج البحث المرجوة. إن المعلومات التي سأحصل عليها من خلال هذا الاستبيان تتصف بالسرية التامة ولن تستخدم إلا في هذا البحث.

شكرا جزيلا على الوقت و الجدية في المساعدة.

### الجزء الأول

#### معلومات شخصية

النوع: ذكر	أنثى				
العمر: أقل من 30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60 فما فوق	
حاصل على: بكالوريوس	ماجستير	أخرى (يرجى التحديد)			
نوع التعليم المدرسي: عام	خاص عربي	خاص لغات	دولي (أجنبي)		
عدد الأبناء: 1	2	3	4 فأكثر		
محل الإقامة في القاهرة:	القاهرة الجديدة	مدينة نصر	المعادي	المهندسين	أخرى .....
دخل الأسرة الشهري: أقل من 5000 جنيه	5000-10000	10000-15000	15000-20000	20000 فأكثر	

### الجزء الثاني

1- يرجى قراءة العبارات التالية و الاجابة بالموافقة أو عدم الموافقة:

(م ج = موافق جدا، م = موافق، ح = محايد، ع = أعارض، ع ج = أعارض جدا)

أعتقد أن:

ع ج	ع	ح	م	م ج	
					1- تحدث اللغتين العربية والانجليزية ينمي معرفة أبنائي للعالم.
					2- تحدث اللغتين العربية والانجليزية ضروري لمستقبل مصر.
					3- تحدث اللغتين العربية والانجليزية سيساعد أبنائي على تحقيق أهدافهم.
					4- تحدث اللغتين العربية والانجليزية يجعل حياة أبنائي أكثر متعة.

2- يرجى قراءة العبارات التالية و الاجابة بالموافقة أو عدم الموافقة:

(م ج = موافق جدا، م = موافق، ح = محايد، ع = أعارض، ع ج = أعارض جدا)

لقد اخترت المدارس الأجنبية لأبنائي وذلك للأسباب التالية:

ع ج	ع	ح	م	م ج	
					1- واجهتني صعوبات كثيرة و فشل بسبب عدم إتقاني للغة الانجليزية.
					2- يصنف الذين يتحدثون اللغة الانجليزية في مصر كطبقة عليا في المجتمع.
					3- إتقان اللغة الانجليزية ضروري من أجل تحقيق الأهداف في الدراسة أو العمل.
					4- يحترم الناس في المجتمع من يتقن اللغة الانجليزية.
					5- المدارس الأجنبية تنمي رؤية أبنائي للعالم.
					6- تعد المدارس الأجنبية أبنائي للوظائف في المستقبل.
					7- تتدهور جودة المدارس الحكومية في مصر.

يرجى قراءة العبارات التالية و الاجابة بالموافقة أو عدم الموافقة:

(م ج = موافق جدا، م = موافق، ح = محايد، ع = أعارض، ع ج = أعارض جدا)

أعتقد أن:

ع ج	ع	ح	م	م ج	
					1- تحدث اللغة الانجليزية جعل أبنائي متأثرين بالثقافة الغربية.
					2- أشعر بالقلق تجاه اللغة العربية وتدهورها بسبب تحدث أبنائي باللغة الانجليزية.
					3- الأطفال الذين لا يتحدثون اللغة العربية قد يفقدون هويتهم المصرية.
					4- تأثر أبنائي بالثقافة و التصرفات الغربية.
					5- يستطيع أبنائي التفكير و التصرف بطريقة غربية كالأجانب.
					6- أشجع أبنائي على القراءة و التحدث باللغة العربية.
					7- أتحدث إلى أبنائي باللغة الانجليزية معظم الوقت.

الجزء الثالث

1- هل هناك ما تود أن تضيفه حول الأسباب وراء اختيارك للمدارس الأجنبية لأبنائك؟

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2- هل لديك تجربة سابقة ساهمت في اختيارك للمدارس الأجنبية لأبنائك؟ إذا أجبت بنعم فما هي؟

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😊 شكرا على تعاونكم و مساعدتكم

Consent forms



**Documentation of Informed Consent for Participation in Research Study**

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Project Title: Parents' Attitudes towards Their Children's Bilingualism and Cultural Identity in International Schools in Egypt

**Principal Investigator:** *Mona Aboulfetouh/ 01211500188*

\*You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of the research is *to examine Egyptian parents' attitudes towards their children's bilingualism in the context of English-medium international schools*, and the study will be published as a master's thesis at AUC.

The expected duration of your participation is an hour.

The procedures of the research will be as follows : Participants will complete a questionnaire and then might be selected for an interview.

\*There *will not be* any risks or discomforts associated with this research.

\*There *will be* benefits to you from this research. You will help the researcher learn more about your attitudes and how your choices may affect your children's identity. The discussion of this topic in the interviews and in the questionnaire may draw your attention to the importance of the maintenance of the first language and you will compare between your attitudes before and after participating in the study.

\*The information you provide for purposes of this research is confidential. Data and recordings will be stored in a password-protected laptop.

*"Questions about the research, my rights, or research-related injuries should be directed to Mona Aboulfetouh / Mob: 01211500188.*

\*Participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or the loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_



## استمارة موافقة مسبقة للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية

عنوان البحث : موقف الاباء تجاه هوية أبنائهم الثقافية و ثنائية اللغة في المدارس الأجنبية في مصر  
الباحث الرئيسي: منى أبو الفتوح  
البريد الإلكتروني: mona.aboulfetouh@aucegypt.edu  
الهاتف: 01211500188

انت مدعو للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية عن دور الاباء و موقفهم في دعم هوية أبنائهم و لغتهم الأم في المدارس الأجنبية في مصر.  
**هدف الدراسة** هو المقارنة بين أهداف و دوافع الأباء لاختيار نظام التعليم الأجنبي لأبنائهم و رؤيتهم الحالية لنتائج هذا الاختيار و كذلك دورهم في تنمية انتماء أبنائهم للمجتمع المصري .  
نتائج البحث ستنشر كرسالة ماجستير في الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة.

المدة المتوقعة للمشاركة في هذا البحث ( ساعة )

اجراءات الدراسة سيقوم المشاركون في الدراسة بإكمال استبيان و قد يتم بعد ذلك اختيارهم للمشاركة في المقابلة الشخصية .

المخاطر المتوقعة من المشاركة في هذه الدراسة ( لا توجد أية مخاطر مترتبة على المشاركة في هذا البحث)

الاستفادة المتوقعة من المشاركة في البحث: (المساعدة في الوصول لنتائج قد تفيد في معرفة دور الأباء في التأثير على هوية أبنائهم).

السرية واحترام الخصوصية: المعلومات التي ستدلى بها في هذا البحث سوف تكون ( سرية). (ستحفظ المعلومات و البيانات وكذلك التسجيلات على حاسوب شخصي محمي بكلمة مرور سرية).

" أي أسئلة متعلقة بهذه الدراسة أو حقوق المشاركين فيها أو عند حدوث أي اصابات ناتجة عن هذه المشاركة يجب ان توجه الى ( منى أبو الفتوح 01211500188)".

ان المشاركة في هذه الدراسة ماهي الا عمل تطوعي, حيث أن الامتناع عن المشاركة لا يتضمن أى عقوبات أو فقدان أى مزايا تحق لك. ويمكنك أيضا التوقف عن المشاركة في أى وقت من دون عقوبة أو فقدان لهذه المزايا.

الامضاء: .....  
اسم المشارك : .....

## Appendix C

### Interview questions

- What do you think are the differences between international and other national schools?
- What strategies do you follow to encourage your children to learn Arabic or English?
- Why did you choose to send your children to an international school?
- Are you concerned about your children's first language?
- Do you think that international schools guarantee a better future for your children?
- Would you mind if your children were being taught by non-native speakers of English?
- Do you prefer your children to speak English or Arabic at home or with relatives?
- Do you have a former experience that affected your choice of international schools?
- Do you want your children to sound like native speakers?
- Do you try to speak to your children in English or Arabic?
- Do you see that English is affecting your children's morals or Egyptian traditions?
- Were your motivations to choose an international school for your children different from your current attitude towards international schools?

## Interviews

### Interview 1:

**What do you think are the differences between international and other national schools?**

I had a bad experience in national schools. In the past, national schools were different. Now, they are deteriorating.

They depend on spoon-feeding. There is no creativity fostered in national schools. They do not work on projects.

I am against gender segregation which is applied in public and some national schools.

**What strategies do you follow to encourage your children to learn Arabic or English?**

My daughter does everything on her own. I don't help her with her homework.

We receive reports from teachers and we have parents meetings.

They speak Arabic at home and English in the school. They pay money if they speak Arabic

I used to buy them puzzles and word games in Arabic and English.

**Why did you choose to send your children to an international school?**

They have fewer students in class. More attention is given to each individual student.

The international system helps students remember information because they look for it themselves.

**Are you concerned about your children's first language?**

Arabic is a useless and heavy subject.

My children are always anxious about the Arabic exams unlike the rest of the subjects.

The curriculum of Arabic and history books in national schools changes according to the historical changes.

**Do you think that international schools guarantee a better future for your children?**

International schools guarantee a future for my children.



International-school graduates are skillful and creative.

**Would you mind if your children were being taught by non-native speakers of English?**

Teachers don't have to be native speakers. Some native speakers don't have experience in teaching. They teach bad manners and sometimes they don't teach. We complained and the school fired some of them. Other Egyptian teachers (with American citizenship) are better teachers.

**Do you prefer your children to speak English or Arabic at home or with relatives?**

I don't like them to speak English with relatives.

When they were kids, I taught them basic vocabulary like fish/ samaka in both languages.

When they watch an English movie without subtitles, they understand. They switch to English with friends over the phone and in school.

**Do you have a former experience that affected your choice of international schools?**

In international schools you are encouraged to express yourself. This is something I was never taught in my school.

**Do you want your children to sound like native speakers?**

I want them to acquire a native-like accent.

I like it when they correct my pronunciation.

**Do you try to speak to your children in English or Arabic?**

I only use English with them when I help them with their homework.

**Do you see that English is affecting your children's morals or Egyptian traditions?**

Their identity hasn't changed and their morals because we are Muslims. It depends on the parents and not the school. The school does not impose the foreign culture on students.

They take the best from the foreign culture.

They want to be more open-minded because they are teenagers but they know the limits and they follow our rules.

**Were your motivations to choose an international school for your children different from your current attitude towards international schools?**

Nothing is 100 % perfect but I really like the school.

They are independent learners.

I think my efforts also contributed to their excellent performance because other classmates are not as independent or as successful as my children.

## **Interview 2:**

### **What do you think are the differences between international and other national schools?**

National schools give good foundation such as grammar rules until grade 4.

They then start to memorize and there is no analysis or synthesis, and no opinion formation.

American schools don't consider that students are second language learners

They focus on thinking and creativity.

I think it is a good idea to send them to national schools and then to an American-system school.

### **What strategies do you follow to encourage your children to learn Arabic or English?**

I try to encourage them to learn languages. One of my daughters has an American friend who encourages her to read.

The other one refuses reading. But in high school, she discovered the importance of reading and after some time she started to love reading.

I feel that no matter how much effort you exert to encourage them to read, they won't read unless they themselves want to read.

My daughters read Egyptian colloquial books (rob3 gram/ a7mad 7elmi)

I don't like to impose Arabic reading on her.

### **Why did you choose to send your children to an international school?**

I was looking for a strong school and the teachers and the administration are good.

After a big survey I found this school and the teachers were very competent.

I believe education should not be based on memorization. That's why I chose international schools. I like critical thinking and the other good skills they develop in school.

The job market respects an international certificate more than the national Thanaweyya Amma.

**Are you concerned about your children's first language?**

My daughters learned Arabic very well in national schools in the beginning.

Their Arabic is good.

I'm not missing anything in national schools. They don't have good Arabic, either.

They read and write good Arabic.

**Do you think that international schools guarantee a better future for your children?**

They don't guarantee the future. It depends on the tools the child uses and learns from/

Some national grads are excellent.

It depends on the person and how he is utilizing these tools.

**Would you mind if your children were being taught by non-native speakers of English?**

I don't mind non-native speakers as long as they are proficient and professional

They have a vision and they are qualified to develop the children's skills.

I want them to develop a native-like accent but it's not my only concern, not my optimum goal.

**Do you prefer your children to speak English or Arabic at home or with relatives?**

We speak Arabic at home and with family.

They code-switch in some cases.

They sometimes resort to English with friends.

When they were young I used to speak English with them.

I sometimes intentionally shift to English to give her the vocabulary and terms she needs to learn in certain contexts.

I have always been interested in language learning.

**Do you see that English is affecting your children's morals or Egyptian traditions?**

Egyptian culture is very strong in their school, they are not Americanized and that is one of the main reasons why I chose this school.

I wanted an environment similar to ours.

**Were your motivations to choose an international school for your children different from your current attitude towards international schools?**

I trust the school and their way of thinking and I'm satisfied with the results I gained from the school.

Sometimes they set high expectations which causes frustration to my children.

That's when I think (if only had I put them in another school with lower expectations, they would have been happier.)

**Interview 3:**

**What do you think are the differences between international and other national schools?**

International schools choose qualified teachers.

They follow up on students and focus on languages.

The environment and the social level of students are similar to ours.

**Why did you choose to send your children to an international school?**

Now we care more about English to transfer culture and exchange knowledge and communicate with people all over the world.

Internet and research is worldwide. In medicine all research is done in English.

I wanted a good quality of education and a clean environment.

Bathrooms are very clean.

**Are you concerned about your children's first language?**

Arabic is not affected at all.

**Do you think that international schools guarantee a better future for your children?**

Their future is somehow guaranteed. They speak good English. And they developed good skills that can help them find a good job in the future.

**Would you mind if your children were being taught by non-native speakers of English?**

I prefer native speakers for their accent. I choose the school that has native speakers (teachers).

My lack of proficiency in English is the reason why we speak Arabic at home but they communicate in English.

I graduated from a public school. When I joined the faculty of medicine I suffered a lot. My English was very bad and the medical terminology was all in English.

I suffered more after graduation because all research is done in English.

I love the American accent and I want my children to acquire it.

**Do you prefer your children to speak English or Arabic at home or with relatives?**

We try to practice English and they help me improve my English.

**Do you see that English is affecting your children's morals or Egyptian traditions?**

No influence on morals. Learning English does not affect their morals or traditions

**Were your motivations to choose an international school for your children different from your current attitude towards international schools?**

I changed the school because the administration and the teachers' level deteriorated.

I look for a certain level of language. All educational systems are equal in my opinion.

International schools develop skills I don't have.

**Interview 4:**

**What strategies do you follow to encourage your children to learn Arabic or English?**

I used to bring a sheikh to our house and he taught them Arabic, religion and Quran

Arabic is the language of our religion.

Their Arabic is very good.

**What do you think are the differences between international and other national schools?**

Public schools are very bad. They have no discipline at all.

**Do you think that international schools guarantee a better future for your children?**

There is no guarantee for the future.

**Are you concerned about your children's first language?**

They read English very easily compared to reading in Arabic.

They don't read in Arabic.

**Why did you choose to send your children to an international school?**

Teachers of my elder children in national schools are very bad. They spoon-feed them. They care only about the money.

Teachers in international schools give more attention to students' needs.

**Would you mind if your children were being taught by non-native speakers of English?**

Egyptians are sometimes better than foreigners.

They are better teachers only if they like to work.

**Do you prefer your children to speak English or Arabic at home or with relatives?**

We speak Arabic at home and with relatives and friends.

**Do you have a former experience that affected your choice of international schools?**

Relatives and nephews had a great experience in international schools. That's why I chose the same for my children.

**Do you want your children to sound like native speakers?**

Not necessarily.

**Do you try to speak to your children in English or Arabic?**

Arabic.

**Do you see that English is affecting your children's morals or Egyptian traditions?**

Morals come from parents.

Our school is so disciplined and they care about morals and discipline.

They visit poor areas and they encourage them to help them and do charity (food/ clothes).

Their personality changed.

I teach Arabic in KG 2 in the same school.

I like the cartoons that teach Arabic and the new books for kids in Arabic.

### **Interview 5:**

**What do you think are the differences between international and other national schools?**

International schools are more open-minded.

**What strategies do you follow to encourage your children to learn Arabic or English?**

I hide subtitles from movies.

I can't help them with Arabic because my Arabic is bad.

**Why did you choose to send your children to an international school?**

Discipline.

**Are you concerned about your children's first language?**

I worry about Arabic. I don't have time to teach them Arabic or help them improve their Arabic.

**Do you think that international schools guarantee a better future for your children?**

Future is not guaranteed. Education in Egypt is bad. There is a huge gap between school and college in general. I think university is more important.

**Would you mind if your children were being taught by non-native speakers of English?**

I don't care.

I care about ethics and of course their accent (teachers).

**Do you prefer your children to speak English or Arabic at home or with relatives?**

They communicate in Arabic (mother-tongue).

When they were young I used to teach them English but now we communicate in Arabic.

**Do you have a former experience that affected your choice of international schools?**

I used to go to a private national language school but before that I used to live in the States.

**Do you want your children to sound like native speakers?**

I like them to acquire an American accent.

**Do you try to speak to your children in English or Arabic?**

Both.

**Do you see that English is affecting your children's morals or Egyptian traditions?**

Morals are bad because of the environment and the society but not the school.

I try to eliminate the negative effect of school on my children's morals.

**Were your motivations to choose an international school for your children different from your current attitude towards international schools?**

I don't have another choice. I'm not satisfied with the school though.

**Interview 6:**

**What do you think are the differences between international and other national schools?**

International schools don't have rules (freedom). But more attention is given to students by teachers.

**What strategies do you follow to encourage your children to learn Arabic or English?**

I encourage my daughter to read English books and sometimes she reads Arabic books.

My other daughter prefers songs.

Arabic and English are both very important.



**Why did you choose to send your children to an international school?**

I chose this school to avoid the national system.

**Are you concerned about your children's first language?**

They don't take Arabic in school (elective).

**Do you think that international schools guarantee a better future for your children?**

It guarantees the future for my kids. It enhances the CV.

**Would you mind if your children were being taught by non-native speakers of English?**

The accent is important.

**Do you prefer your children to speak English or Arabic at home or with relatives?**

I try to speak English at home as much as I can.

I sometimes ask them about some words in English.

**Do you have a former experience that affected your choice of international schools?**

Language is very important to facilitate life.

**Do you want your children to sound like native speakers?**

I like the British accent more. I wanted my kids to acquire it.

**Do you try to speak to your children in English or Arabic?**

I like the beauty of Arabic language and poetry.

I correct their Arabic if they produce errors.

**Do you see that English is affecting your children's morals or Egyptian traditions?**

I feel that my children live in a bubble and have no connection with the society.

**Were your motivations to choose an international school for your children different from your current attitude towards international schools?**

Before choosing the school I was aware that it's lower than my expectations. I only wanted to escape the other national system which is more difficult.

#### **Interview 7:**

#### **What do you think are the differences between international and other national schools?**

Education in Egypt has become a business; they make money out of it. They hire people who are not qualified. Some parents choose the school to show off because it completes their social image .

International schools work on the skills and teach them critical thinking, presentations skills and creativity. My children depend on themselves. They don't memorize. They can be leaders in the future.

National schools are very complicated. They don't learn and they keep postponing the academic year.

I pay the same amount of money because I give private lessons. I force them to study.

I pay the same amount of money in international schools. They have time to play sports and they enjoy life and also learning.

#### **What strategies do you follow to encourage your children to learn Arabic or English?**

I teach them sometimes but now I started private tutoring.

#### **Why did you choose to send your children to an international school?**

In national schools Arabic is also weak, unlike in Syria and other Gulf countries

My children are not weak in Arabic.

IG and SAT have become Egyptian.

You need to choose a good school because not all international schools are good.

#### **Do you think that international schools guarantee a better future for your children?**

It guarantees the future but university is more important; if the school is bad they won't be able to go to a good university.

#### **Would you mind if your children were being taught by non-native speakers of English?**

I seek qualified teachers regardless of whether they are native or non-native speakers.

**Do you prefer your children to speak English or Arabic at home or with relatives?**

I use Arabic at home. I try to make sure they know words in both languages.

**Do you have a former experience that affected your choice of international schools?**

The social level of students is very high. I wanted a school that doesn't make my children live in a bubble. For example, my niece thinks all people live in villas that have swimming pools. I wanted a similar level that's not so much higher than our level and a school within my budget because you do not just pay the school tuitions; you have other expenses and trips and other stuff.

**Do you want your children to sound like native speakers?**

I look for a good accent but not for showing off.

**Do you try to speak to your children in English or Arabic?**

I used to read to them stories in English (bedtime) when they were young to prepare them for the international school interview because they expect them to speak very good English even before they join the school.

I used to bring a sheikh to teach them Arabic and Qur'an.

My daughter doesn't like Arabic or reading in general.

I correct their Arabic language errors.

**Do you see that English is affecting your children's morals or Egyptian traditions?**

The whole society is now Americanized not just the education. Also public schools are affected by this culture (the way we speak and dress).

We always take the negative sides of the West.

I don't see any negative effect on morals or traditions from schools.

**Were your motivations to choose an international school for your children different from your current attitude towards international schools?**

I would definitely choose the same school. I also learned that school is not everything. You need to send them to camps and summer schools.

My children used to think that they don't have to study in these schools but now they know that they have to study in order to go to a good university. Some people think American schools are easier but they're not.

## **Interview 8:**

**What do you think are the differences between international and other national schools?**

International schools are better. The social level of students is higher. The educational methods are more advanced and the teachers are better.

**What strategies do you follow to encourage your children to learn Arabic or English?**

I tried to encourage them to travel and take language courses (summer schools).

Languages are very important now in the job market.

I like the school the environment and the administration that we can communicate with and that can understand us.

**Are you concerned about your children's first language?**

Their spelling in Arabic is very bad and their handwriting.

**Do you think that international schools guarantee a better future for your children?**

They guarantee the future.

**Would you mind if your children were being taught by non-native speakers of English?**

I prefer native speakers.

Some Egyptians are qualified to teach and have a good accent.

**Do you prefer your children to speak English or Arabic at home or with relatives?**

We use Arabic at home.

I tried to teach them English when they were kids to send them to an English medium school.

Some relatives live in the States and my children can communicate with them easily.

My nephews and nieces who went to international schools were very good and proficient and I wanted the same for my children.

**Do you want your children to sound like native speakers?**

I like the native accent, "accent zay bta3et beladha".

**Do you see that English is affecting your children's morals or Egyptian traditions?**

The school has affected their mentality. They are more open-minded.

The way they think is different. They don't memorize.

**Were your motivations to choose an international school for your children different from your current attitude towards international schools?**

I wish it were better. The teachers were sometimes not very qualified.

I would choose the same system but a different school

Religion is very weak in the school. I used to bring a sheikh to teach them Quran. Their Arabic is very weak, but in general English is more important. They already know Arabic and can communicate in Arabic (mother tongue).

**Interview 9:**

**What do you think are the differences between international and other national schools?**

The teachers in international schools are better. Their monthly income is higher. The selections criteria of teachers are very detailed and specific. The curricula and the educational system are better and also the teaching environment.

**Why did you choose to send your children to an international school?**

They like reading and libraries.

My daughter chose this school and we were able to afford it.

**Are you concerned about your children's first language?**

Their Arabic is very good. They like reading novels and their Arabic grammar is very strong.

They like to learn about languages.

Their writing is very good, too.

**Do you think that international schools guarantee a better future for your children?**

They guarantee the future because they can get better jobs and they know how to use technology and learn language skills.

They are experts and they are better than us in English.

**Would you mind if your children were being taught by non-native speakers of English?**

Accent is important that is why it is better to have native speaker. But some Egyptians are qualified.

**Do you prefer your children to speak English or Arabic at home or with relatives?**

They communicate in Arabic and use English only in schools because some people don't speak English and they misunderstand that my children speak English to show off.

**Do you have a former experience that affected your choice of international schools?**

I let my older daughters choose the school for their young sister.

**Do you want your children to sound like native speakers?**

I only care about their proficiency.

It will never be a native accent. Americans who speak Arabic are nice and we accept their accent.

**Do you see that English is affecting your children's morals or Egyptian traditions?**

Home and parents affect their children's morals (not the school).

They are not affected by the school. They know the limits and we (my wife and I) always discuss issues and understand their needs.

**Were your motivations to choose an international school for your children different from your current attitude towards international schools?**

Schools don't depend on memorization. They foster thinking, analysis and comprehension and they develop critical thinking skills.

I searched for schools and chose the best one. I'm satisfied with this school.

**Interview 10:**

**What do you think are the differences between international and other national schools?**

International schools have good curricula but the teachers are Egyptian. The system is Egyptianized now.

**What strategies do you follow to encourage your children to learn Arabic or English?**

I prefer to speak Arabic with them all the time. I am totally against speaking English. Foreigners don't teach their kids another language before they join school.

Arabic is more difficult and it adds to their identity as Arabs and Muslims.

Some people can't pray and they read Quran in English.

**Why did you choose to send your children to an international school?**

I went to a language school. I wanted something similar.

I work hard on their Arabic. My Arabic is very good. Their handwriting is good.

**Do you think that international schools guarantee a better future for your children?**

Some people succeed without languages; it depends on the personality.

Some people work on their skills and become better than international school graduates.

**Would you mind if your children were being taught by non-native speakers of English?**

Many foreigners now left Egypt for the political situation. That's why I cannot complain because the school can do nothing about that.

I prefer native speakers but they're not available now. I believe if they weren't taught by native speakers, their language won't be good because students would speak Arabic since the teacher knows Arabic.

**Do you prefer your children to speak English or Arabic at home or with relatives?**

We speak Arabic at home. We watch English movies but we still use Arabic at home.

**Do you have a former experience that affected your choice of international schools?**

I work in exchange program office and I noticed from panels that international school grads are better and skillful.

**Do you want your children to sound like native speakers?**

I care about proficiency and also their writing skills.

**Do you see that English is affecting your children's morals or Egyptian traditions?**

The whole society is westernized. Parents are more important.

TV shows, the internet and songs affected the society and not the school.

**Were your motivations to choose an international school for your children different from your current attitude towards international schools?**

I wanted to escape Thanaweya Amma.

They were introduced to tests (international tests) that prepared them for university.

I don't like the fact that they are not taught religion and that they don't know about our history.

**Interview 11:**

**What do you think are the differences between international and other national schools?**

The environment is better in international schools. Do you know how much we pay?

The social level is higher. They develop critical thinking skills and self-expression.

**Why did you choose to send your children to an international school?**

I want them to live abroad.

They are taught bad manners in national system.

The bad quality of education in national schools led me to choose international schools.

**Are you concerned about your children's first language?**

People respect only those who speak English, especially if they have another nationality. My wife is trying to convince them to immigrate.

Their Arabic is very weak; they can't read nor write in Arabic. But I don't care because Arabic is not important these days.

**Do you think that international schools guarantee a better future for your children?**

International education gives a person a higher status.



Education is the best investment and that is why I sent my older children to AUC.

**Do you prefer your children to speak English or Arabic at home or with relatives?**

English, but we use both.

**Do you want your children to sound like native speakers?**

They already sound like native speakers and are very fluent in English.

**Do you see that English is affecting your children's morals or Egyptian traditions?**

I think they have better morals than we do. They respect each other.