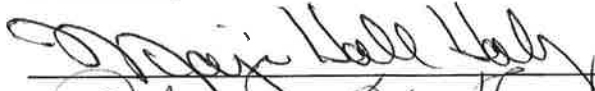TOWARD A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF ARABIC TEACHING AS A
HERITAGE LANGUAGE: A CASE STUDY OF A HIGH SCHOOL ARABIC
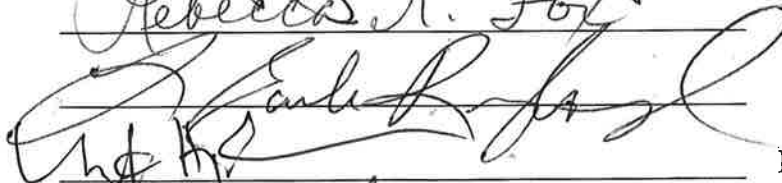LANGUAGE TEACHER

by

Faridah Turkistani
A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy
Education

Committee:

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George Mason University
Fairfax, VA

Toward a Better Understanding of Arabic Teaching as a Heritage Language: A Case Study of a High School Arabic Language Teacher

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Dedication

This is dedicated to my mom and to my wonderful children; Hisham, Essam, Adnan, Nada, and Rayn, and to my grandchildren; Hamza, Omar, Bader, and Yousef.

Acknowledgements

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List of Abbreviations

American Association of Teachers of Arabic………………………………………… AATA
American Council of Learned Societies .... ACLS
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages ....…ACTFL
Arabic Heritage Language .... AHL
Army Specialized Training Program ....ASTP
Basic Interpersonal Communication..BICS
Center for Applied Linguistics..CAL
Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency .... CALP
Colloquial Arabic...CA
Diploma Programme…………………………………………………………………..DP
Foreign Service Institute ....FSI
Heritage Language .... .HL
Heritage Language Learners...HLL
Heritage Language Speakers...………..HLS
Higher Level Arabic…………………………………………………….......HL
International Baccalaureate Organization………………………………………..IBO
International Baccalaureate...IB
Languages Other Than English………………………………………….LOTE
Middle Years Programme……… …………………………………………….....MYP
Modern Standard Arabic……… ………………………………………….....MSA
National Defense Act... NDEA
National Foreign Language Center .... NFLC
National Security Agency ....NSA
Office of the Director of National Intelligence……………………………………ODNI
Oral Proficiency Interviewer………………………………………………...OPI
Oregon's Assessment of Knowledge and Skills………………………………… OAKS
Primary Years Programme………………………………………………..PYP
Professional Development………………………………………………...…PD
Second Language Acqusition………………………………………………….SLA
Social Science Research Countil ....SSRC
Standard Level Arabic……… ……………………………………………........SL
Teaching English as a Foreign Language………………………………………….TEFL
United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization……………..UNESCO

Abstract

TOWARD A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF ARABIC TEACHING AS A HERITAGE LANGUAGE: A CASE STUDY OF A HIGH SCHOOL ARABIC LANGUAGE TEACHER

Faridah Turkistani,. Ph.D.

George Mason University, 2019

Dissertation Director: Dr. Marjorie Hall Haley

This case study of a teacher of Arabic-speaking heritage language learners (HLL) reported the experiences and pedagogical practices of a teacher to better understand the reasons for her success in preparing young HLL. The teacher's experiences informed findings regarding ways to improve HL teaching for Arabic-speaking students. This research study addressed a decided gap in the knowledge of effective teaching practices for Arabic as a heritage language (AHL) in high school. Therefore, the present study helps fill this gap by conducting a case study of an AHL teacher in the context of high school teaching.

Keywords: Arabic, case study, constructivist, dialectical, heritage language, International Baccalaureate

<center>**Chapter One**</center>

Introduction

Despite an across-the-board understanding and application of the general practices of heritage languages (HL) instruction, the how-to implementation in specific language contexts is still not well-understood. Carriera and Kagan (2017) argued that principles such as differentiation, HL sociolinguistic issues, and issues surrounding language variations indicate practices and pedagogical gaps that are specific to different heritage languages. Because current pedagogical and linguistic research has been confined within a small pool of languages, it is not well understood how language-specific factors manifest as a form of these principles (Carriera & Kagan, 2017). Unlike Romance, Eastern European and Chinese languages, there is limited applications of these principles to the Arabic language. While there is an abundance of literature regarding HL and teaching and learning AHL, past researchers focused on AHL learning and teaching at the university level. The specific problem addressed by this research is a decided gap in the knowledge of effective practices for Arabic as a heritage language (AHL) teaching in high school. Therefore, the present study helps fill this gap by conducting a case study of an AHL teacher in the context of high school teaching.

This chapter includes background information regarding the research questions. In this case study, I explored how learning occurs in the context of AHL and what activities,

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education, and beliefs influence the participant's performance. I explored specific strategies effectively used to teach AHL, and how the participant perceived her role as an AHL teacher. This chapter includes background information on HL, the definition of HL, and the profiles of HLL, as well as a summary of the epistemology and ontology of the qualitative researcher. To clarify terminology in this research, this chapter includes a list of definitions of key terms and researcher's epistemology. Finally, the purpose and the general statement of the study will conclude the chapter.

Overview and Background of Problem

The importance of HL and specifically AHL is the result of globalization and multilingualism existing in the United States. The current political and economic changes sparked increased attention to the strategic importance of Arabic as one of the 13 *critical languages,* as designated by the U.S. Department of State (Haley & Ferro, 2011). Multilingualism is necessary to drive economic, political, and demographic change in the world; multilingualism is a natural result of diverse ethnicities residing within larger communities. HL are languages that immigrants, refugees, and their families speak (Valdés, 2005). Acknowledging and preserving HL is essential as communication becomes more global.

> We need a national commitment to languages on a scale of the National Defense
> Education Act (NDEA) commitment to science, including improved curriculum,
> teaching technology and methods, teacher development, and a systemic cultural
> commitment. I offer the National Security Language Act as the first part of a
> solution that will give us a generation of Americans able to confront the new

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threats we face today. (Holt, 2004, p. 61)

Due to migration and globalization, HL speakers (HLS) are increasingly present in U.S. public schools. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, people in U.S. homes spoke over 350 languages in 2015. Twelve million school-age children (i.e., 22% of the U.S. population) are HLS (Carreira & Kagan, 2017). Camarota and Zeigler (2015) reported that 63.2 million Americans 5 years of age and older spoke a language other than English at home in 2014 and "that number is up 16.2 million since 2000, up 3.6 million since 2010, and up 1.4 million just since 2013" (p. 1). Of the languages they sampled, Arabic had the largest percent increase between 2010 and 2014. Spanish had the largest total increase in total speakers (Camarota & Zeigler, 2015). Table 1 lists the number of speakers and the percentage increase or decrease in speakers of languages other than English in the United States between 2000 and 2014.

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Table 1

Foreign Languages Spoken at Home, 2000-2014

Language	2000	2010	2014	Pct. Increase, 2010-2014
Arabic	614,582	864,961	1,117,304	29.2%
Urdu	262,900	388,909	477,701	22.8%
Hindi	317,057	609,395	723,829	18.8%
Chinese	2,022,143	2,808,692	3,139,432	11.8%
Hmong	168,063	211,500	236,377	11.8%
Gujarati	235,988	356,394	388,871	9.1%
Persian	312,085	381,408	416,119	9.1%
Tagalog	1,224,241	1,573,720	1,688,494	7.3%
French Creole	453,368	746,702	795,521	6.5%
Spanish	28,101,052	36,995,602	39,254,342	6.1%
Vietnamese	1,009,627	1,381,488	1,458,173	5.6%
Thai	120,464	150,885	157,421	4.3%
Hebrew	195,374	204,593	213,185	4.2%
Russian	706,242	854,955	890,120	4.1%
Armenian	202,708	240,402	240,623	0.1%
Yiddish	178,945	154,763	154,660	-0.1%
Korean	894,063	1,137,325	1,131,339	-0.5%
Portuguese	564,630	688,326	680,563	-1.1%
Japanese	477,997	443,497	437,541	-1.3%
Cambodian	181,889	220,900	216,522	-2.0%
Navajo	178,014	172,873	164,363	-4.9%
Greek	365,436	307,178	289,389	-5.8%
French	1,643,838	1,322,650	1,219,825	-7.8%
Laotian	149,303	158,847	146,156	-8.0%
Italian	1,008,370	725,223	641,352	-11.6%
Polish	667,414	608,333	533,942	-12.2%
German	1,383,442	1,067,651	934,438	-12.5%
Serbo-Croatian	233,865	284,077	246,196	-13.3%
Hungarian	117,973	90,453	78,175	-13.6%
All Others	2,960,522	4,390,894	5,106,514	16.3%
Total	46,951,595	59,542,596	63,178,487	6.1%

Note. Source is U. S. Census Bureau (2010, 2014); data for 2000 is from the decennial census (Camarote & Zeigler, 2015, p.4).

Bale (2010) noted that one of the most important reasons for preserving HL is the country's national and international interests. HL have gained the attention of government officials, economic professionals, and broader communities for their potential impact on national security and economic well-being. The events of September 11, 2001 emphasized the need to tap into HL to develop internal resources for the future (Bale, 2010; Holt, 2004). The State Department found that the government only had 54 genuine Arabic speakers working in the entire Foreign Service (Holt, 2004). Holt noted, "Our national deficiency in languages and cultures of critical areas around the world is compromising American security interest at home and aboard" (p. 58).

In December 2006, a long-awaited report by the bipartisan Iraq Study Group provided plans for U.S. occupied Iraq, and a lack of U.S. diplomats and government officials who spoke Arabic was evident (Bale, 2010). "[A]ll of our efforts in Iraq, military and civilian, are handicapped by American's lack of language and cultural understanding. Our embassy of 1,000 [in Baghdad] has 33 Arabic speakers, just six of whom are at the level of fluency" (Iraq Study Group, 2006, p. 60). The national need for foreign languages encouraged the teaching of HL in universities all over the United States. Proper knowledge of cultures and proficiency in HL, specifically Arabic, may facilitate effective communication for U.S. officials and citizens abroad.

This concern is not only limited to the United States, but in 1996, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) formally established the International Commission on Education for the 21st century in 1993 to study educational challenges. As part of the commission's report, Stavenhagen (1996)

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noted, "The majority of the dominant ethnic group manages to impose its own vision of 'nationhood' upon the rest of society" (p. 32). Most schools perpetuate dominating ideology through curriculum, pedagogy, and daily operations that cause "the marginalization and even the destruction of numerous ethnically distinct peoples whose cultures, religions, languages, beliefs, or ways of life [do] not conform to the so-called national ideal" (Stavenhagen, 1996, p. 33).

Stavenhagen (1996) recognized that a truly multicultural education should address the requirements of global and national integration and the needs of culturally distinct communities. It should foster respect and awareness of diversity (Stavenhagen, 1996). In 2001, a bilateral United States-Australia dialogue under the sponsorship of UCLA and Victoria University of Technology occurred in Melbourne. Results from this 3-day meeting emphasized the importance of languages for countries. Carreira and Armengol (2001) stated that the federal government had a rapidly expanding need for professionals who speak a wide range of foreign languages. The government and economic sectors favored foreign language acquisition (Seals & Peyton, 2017).

Definition of HL

Scholars have grappled with the definition of HL and used different interpretations. Linguists, cultural scholars, and historians look at the concept of HL from different angles. In Canada, different terms refer to HL (e.g., ethnic, minority, ancestral, and non-official) (Cummins & Danesi, 1990). In the United States, Fishman (2001) used the term LOTE (languages other than English) to describe HL, which is a very broad term to define a complex concept.

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Arriving at a precise definition of HL remains a struggle for scholars because circumstances and situations for speakers of HL vary from country to country and reflect changes in the world populations. Montrul (2016) referred to HL as immigrant languages, national minority languages, aboriginal languages, or any minority languages co-existing with majority languages. HL are cultural minority languages that develop in a bilingual setting where people speak a dominant language. According to Valdés (2001), HL describes a language other than English spoken by immigrants and their children. HLS are adults and children who grow up speaking the minority home language and the majority/official language in the broader speech community (Montrul, 2016).

Profile of HLL

A general profile of heritage language learners (HLL) emerged in a national survey of HLL conducted by Carreira and Kagan (2011). They described HLL as students who: (a) acquire English in early childhood, after acquiring the HL; (b) have limited exposure to HL outside the home; (c) have relatively strong aural and oral skills, but limited literacy skills; (d) have positive HL attitudes and experiences; and (e) study the HL to connect with communities of speakers in the United States and to gain insight into his or her roots (Carreira & Kagan, 2011).

According to Valdés (2001), HLL have unique schooling needs for bilingual education. These students have linguistic, academic and affective needs that are essentially different from any other language learners (Carreira & Kagan, 2017; Montrul, 2012; Valdés, 2005). Montrul (2016) referred to the process as early bilingual acquisition taking place in a specific sociolinguistic setting. HL learner's proficiency in the two

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languages usually falls along a continuum that may vary among individual language users depending on background and context, literacy access, and individual characteristics.

Definition of Terms

The following terminology is common in research on HL and Arabic heritage language (AHL).

Heritage language (HL). Immigrant languages, national minority languages, aboriginal languages, or any minority languages co-existing with majority languages (Albirini & Chakrani,2017; Montrul, 2016).

Heritage language learners (HLL). Any learner who wants to learn his or her heritage language (Carreira & Kagan, 2011; Montrul, 2016).

Heritage language speakers (HLS). Adults and children who grow up speaking the minority home language and the majority/official language in the broader speech community (Montrul, 2016).

Critical languages. The 13 languages that are crucial to U.S. national security and economic competitiveness: Arabic, Azerbaijani, Bangla, Chinese, Hindi, Korean, Indonesian, Japanese, Persian, Punjabi, Russian, Turkish, and Urdu (U. S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, 2018).

Arabic language. A language spoken throughout the Middle East and North Africa; 300 million people in over 20 countries speak Arabic (e.g., Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Eritrea, Iraq, Jordan, Israel, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Somaliland, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yamen, and Zanzibar Tanzania) (Al-Arabiyah, 2017).

Arabic heritage language (AHL). Arabic spoken by Arab immigrants in a country where the dominant language is not Arabic (Albirini, 2006; Albirini & Chakrani (2017).

Modern standard Arabic (MSA)/Fusha Arabic. A uniform classical variation of Arabic; variations are limited to choices of lexical items, expressions, and borrowings. People use MSA in formal, semi-formal, and literary contexts. It is the language of official settings, religious sermons, text books, school settings, and media all over the Arabic world (Albirini & Chakrani, 2017). Many Arabs use MSA and *Fusha* interchangeably; it is the language closest to the holy book Quran.

Colloquial Arabic/Arabic dialects. A version of Arabic language that people use across and within specific Arabic countries; it is the language of the home that people use in conversations and other informal communicative exchanges. Arabic dialects have no official status in the Arab world with no formal literacy (Albirini & Chakrani, 2017).

Diglossia. A unique variation in a community's language that is neither region-based nor class-based; two varieties of a language exist side-by-side throughout the community (Ferguson, 1959).

Diacritical symbols. Diacritics are accent marks above or below letters. They are fundamental for decoding but may not appear in texts because their functions are taken for granted (Temples, 2013).

Arabic as a foreign language learner. A learner who had no exposure to Arabic as a culture at home and does not have any ancestral ties (e.g., an American wanting to learn the language) (Albirini & Chakrani, 2017).

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Heritage language bilinguals. First, second, or third generation speakers of a language whose language acquisition was interrupted at one stage by English (Albirini & Benmamoun, 2012; Montrul, 2008, 2010).

Second language acquisition (SLA). The process of learning a second language. (Swain & Deter, 2007)

International Baccalaureate (IB). A program for children between the ages of 3-19 that encourages personal and academic growth. IB includes four programs that focus on teaching students to think critically and independently, and how to inquire with care and logic. IB teachers and coordinators develop curriculum in almost 5,000 schools in over 150 countries around the world (International Baccalaureate, 2018).

Constructivist theory. Constructivism is concerned with the ways in which people construct their worlds. In a constructivist theory approach, the researcher's background will influence the data collected; the researcher embraces an inductive style of reasoning and favors in context data collection where data naturally resides. There is an acceptance that data shapes and redirects their analysis as new issues emerge. There is a "fusion of planning and discovery," which results into "a mosaic of interpretation that emerges" throughout the inquiry process (Reybold, et al., 2012, p. 700).

Case study. According to Charmaz (2004), forming intimate familiarity with a phenomenon is the foundation of qualitative research. A case study is a qualitative research methodology that is expected to "catch the complexity of a single case" (Stake, 1995, p.xi). According to Stake, a researcher may be drawn to a phenomenon/phenomena and wants to study its complexity from all angles. In this case, he or she has an intrinsic

interest in the case. We may call this an *intrinsic case study* because the motive is to learn the particulars of that case. A case study can also be used to generalize and apply findings to understand other cases or situations or answer a research question. In this case, it is considered an *instrumental case study* (Stake, 1995, p. 3).

Purpose of the Study

Despite an abundance of literature regarding HL and teaching and learning AHL, past researchers have focused on AHL learning and teaching at the university level; a setting that is very similar to teaching Arabic as a second language. The present case study examined the work of a single AHL teacher in a high school setting to reveal effective practices from the participant's classroom experience over the course of a 1-year and 6-month scholastic period. Classroom observations, interviews with the teacher, and document analysis were the tools of this research.

Situating this study within general HL practices and pedagogical needs, this case study built on Carreira and Kagan's (2017) argument that HL is in dire need of classroom-based research. There is a lack of correspondence between linguistics research and pedagogical questions as they pertain to HL classrooms. Carreira and Kagan explained:

The field is poised to tackle two big-picture items: (1) developing a comprehensive HL pedagogy for different languages and instructional contexts by addressing knowledge gaps and reconsidering long-standing assumptions about language teaching and learning, and (2) at the institutional level, solidifying the place for HL education in foreign language departments on par with L2 education

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and mainstreaming HL teaching and learning in the larger school context. (p. 164)

Since methodologically the present study is contextual, the aim is to present new knowledge that is embedded within an AHL classroom environment. Data on HLL is usually survey data. Though extremely valuable, survey data may simplify findings regarding HL teaching and learning. Carreira and Kagan (2017) suggested that "important real-world complexities are over-looked" when researchers rely only on such measures (p. 157). To address this issue, they recommend a classroom-based study (Carreira & Kagan, 2017). Using a qualitative approach, a case study was conducted to investigate the experiences and pedagogical practices of an *information rich* AHL teacher to better understand aspects of her teaching.

According to Patton (2015), my participant is considered a *teaching case*. "A high impact case may become a teaching case: an in-depth case study that offers much deeper insight into a phenomenon that serves as a source of substantial illumination" (p. 275). Since the objective of this study was to present the greatest amount of exemplar information about HL teaching and learning, "a representative case of random sample may not be the most appropriate strategy. This is because the typical or average case is often not the richest in information" (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 229). Bronk, King and Matsuba (2013) implied that an exemplar/information rich sample "features an approach to research whereby individuals, entities, or programs that exemplify the construct of interest in a particularly intense or highly developed manner" (p. 1).

Among HL researchers, it is agreed upon that HL learners' linguistic, academic and affective needs are essentially different from any other language learners (Carreira &

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Kagan, 2017; Montrul, 2012; Valdés, 2005). Effective HL teachers take into account the staggering range of proficiencies this unique group brings to the classroom (Caballero, 2016; Montrul, 2010; Valdés, 2005). In addition, they need to be aware of other factors, such as length of exposure to HL, linguistic input in the home, sociolinguist issue, both learner and family attitude towards HL, and HL learners' motivation (Carreira & Kagan, 2017; Kagan & Dillon, 2009; Kibler & Valdés, 2016; Montrul, 2010, 2012).

Carreira and Kagan (2011) stated, "An instructor who does not know the community of speakers of the target language cannot be an effective instructor in an HL class" (p. 59). Both authors emphasized the importance of bringing the community into HL curriculum and classrooms. In this context, a study Wu and Chang (2012) conducted on Chinese HL learners' interaction level with a macro-approach, curriculum was designed to incorporate students' own background culture, and highlighted the need to acknowledge HL learners' hybrid identities and language uses. In another study, Palladino and Guardado (2018) found that using digital tools in the HL classroom promoted autonomous learning. Such approaches to teaching HL are valued and have proven to be effective for HL acquisition.

Another factor that is specifically relevant to teaching languages such as Arabic/Chinese HL involves teachers' competencies in teaching the standard variation of the desired language. It is essential that teachers possess good command of this important variation used in academic settings (Benmamoun, Montrul, & Polinsky, 2013).

With this in mind, I selected this AHL teacher as a teaching case for several reasons. This native speaker of the Arabic language has been teaching the language for

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over 30 years for native speakers, L2 learners and HLL and has consistently engaged in professional development. In a study on difference in teaching skills between novice and experienced teachers, Livingston and Borko (1989) found that experienced teachers were distinguished from their counterparts for their indepth and breadth knowledge of teaching practices. The wider academic community recognizes my participant as a language expert in teaching at local universities. She supports government needs for Arabic language instruction and is well-regarded in two renowned global educational organizations. The participant serves as a certified tester for the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) for the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The instructor not only teaches as AHL in an authorized diploma year International Baccalaureate school, but she serves as an examiner for this rigorous program.

The participant's rich teaching experience qualified her to fit the characteristics of an effective HL teacher. Since HLL fall within a wide range of language spectrums ranging from native-like/monolingual to L2/foreign language learners, my participant's experience in teaching in all these settings warranted that she was an information rich case for this study (Carreira & Kagan, 2017; Montrul, 2012; Valdés, 2005).

Problem Statement

This investigation aimed to identify effective teaching practices while addressing the current lack of empirical studies on Arabic-speaking HL students. In this context, Haley and Ferro (2011) noted, "There is an urgent need to expand the teaching force in these languages. Understanding how best to prepare critical language teachers from abroad is imperative" (p. 289). According to Al-Batal (2007), the paucity of qualified

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teachers is a critical problem in the Arabic language field: "The profession not only lacks but is also not producing sufficiently experienced and trained teachers" (p. 269). Several researchers indicated a need for qualified teachers in the field of Arabic language (Al-Batal, 2007; Alhawary, 2013; Haley & Ferro, 2011). Mouna (2012), who studied Arabic teachers' specific professional needs during the STARTALK program, argued that the problem in the Arabic teaching field is the lack of stringent higher education teacher training programs. This shortcoming adversely impacts teachers' overall performance and ability to address AHL learners' specific needs.

Similarly speaking, Valdés (2001) recognized fundamental needs in the area of HL instruction, one of which is the lack of empirical studies that "examine results of teaching practices in order to draw from these important insights about both heritage language and heritage language learning" (p. 51). Peyton et al. (2001) stated that, at first, teaching HLL might seem relatively simple, "but under scrutiny the task turns out to be complex" (p. 12).

One of the main concerns that HL researchers bring to the table is language variations and the difficulty of addressing them inside HL classrooms. In her study, Mouna (2012) found that teachers struggled to address language variations inside classrooms (e.g., varieties of Arabic dialects) and lacked knowledge of subject matter to present the language as appropriate for individual students' needs. Research underscores that providing students with clear input regarding the structures and rules of the language promotes its effective transfer to procedural knowledge (Alhawary, 2013). Alhawary argued that the field of AHL requires Arabic teachers to have formal training in the

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Arabic language (i.e., the required knowledge base), formal training in current foreign language teaching methodology, awareness of research findings from second language acquisition (SLA), Arabic language competence, talent, and primary interest in Arabic and teaching.

The goal of the proposed study was to better understand the practices and perspectives of an AHL teacher and situate this new knowledge within the larger framework of HL studies in general. To discover reliable quality data about an AHL teacher's experience, the research method mentioned earlier (qualitative case study) gave the participant an opportunity to collaboratively voice her opinion and share it with me in her own authentic context. These data revealed the complex, multifaceted phenomena of the participant's unique talent and approaches within the context of AHL teaching. The method valued context-dependent knowledge and experiences that resided at the "heart of expert activity" (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 222). Accordingly, the aim of this study was to unfold effective practices that were used within the context of teaching AHL.

Thus, in the context of AHL teaching, the following research questions were at the center of my design:

1. In what ways does learning occur in the context of AHL and what background experiences influenced the participant's instructional choices?

2. What steps does the participant take to identify and implement specific strategies used to teach AHL?

3. How does the participant determine usefulness and effectiveness of these strategies?

4. How does the participant perceive her role as an AHL teacher?

<center>**Chapter Two**</center>

Literature Review

The complex nature of the definition of a heritage language (HL) is due to the multifaceted factors that the topic encompasses. A language's sociolinguistic status affects its usage. According to Valdés (2005), "The term *heritage language* (HL) has been used broadly to refer to *nonsocietal and nonmajority* languages spoken by groups often known as linguistic minorities" (p. 411). The term HL emerged in the United States in the 1990s to refer to minority languages (Cummins, 2005). Montrul (2016) challenged the term *minority* as a characteristic of HL, defining it as a HL rooted in minority/majority sociopolitical issues. Social, economic, and political factors (e.g., colonization and immigration) affect the distinction between minority and majority languages. Arabic in Britain, Spanish in the United States, and Turkish in Germany are examples of languages with minority/majority status depending on their context. Other minority languages have a *kin-state*; they are minority in one state but official in others (e.g., Albanian in Italy or Greece) (Cenoz & Gorter 2011). Identifying a HL as minority status is an integral part of the definition in the United States, but this connotation changes as the geographic existence of languages changes. A central distinction defining HL is that it is a language *other than English* (Fishman, 2001; Valdés, 2001). This distinguishing variable may apply to Arabic, Chinese, French, German, or Persian in the

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United States; however, this description fails to describe HL in territories where English is not a majority language.

Peyton, et al. (2001) noted that there is a great deal of information about teaching foreign languages to English speakers, but research on teaching HL to learners who already have a home background in the HL is new. Today, research in the area of HL acquisition and its bilingualism has progressed (Montrul, 2016); however, the complexity of the field requires further research in the area of pedagogy. Wiley (2001) argued that the perceptions of language educators and linguists do not always coincide with those of the public, which creates a gap between pedagogy and the definition of HL. Polinsky and Kagan (2007) aptly distinguished between two types of heritage languages in the United States: HL *in the wild* and *in the classroom*. Peyton et al. stated that HLS in the wild vary widely in background, level of proficiency, and attitude toward their home culture and language. Descriptive HL studies of heritage speakers' and learners' linguistic profiles in various languages and dialects are now common (Montrul, 2016). This leads the discussion to understanding this unique group's profile.

Heritage Language Speakers' and Learners' Profiles

The intricacies surrounding HL intensified when researchers defined HLL. Defining HLL is a challenge in the field of language learning (Carreira & Kagan, 2011; Fishman, 2001; Hornberger & Wang, 2008; Montrul, 2016; Polinsky & Kagan, 2007; Valdés, 2001, 2005; Van Deusen-Scholl, 2003; Wiley, 2001). HLL can vary widely in language proficiency in both their first and second languages and hold varying attitudes toward their home language and its specific cultural background (Peyton et al., 2001).

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Therefore, identifying HLL is not an easy task. Van Deusen-Scholl (2003) stated that HLL are people "who have been exposed to another language at home and have either attained some degree of bilingual proficiency or have been raised with a strong cultural connection to a particular language through family connection" (p. 222). Hornberger and Wang (2008) defined HLL in the United States as "individuals who have familial or ancestral ties to a particular language" (p. 27). Drawing on second language acquisition (SLA) research, Valdés (2005) adopted the term second language (L2) *user* as someone with knowledge of an L2, rather than L2 *learner*, an individual who is acquiring the language. HLS are L1/L2 users with knowledge of two language systems that they use to carry out communicative needs. L1/L2 users do not always have opportunities to use both languages, and their level of proficiency in the two languages may differ. Valdés (2005) asserted that heritage L1/L2 users are bilingual, but different strengths manifest in the two languages.

Polinsky and Kagan (2007) and Carreira and Kagan (2011) presented broad and narrow definitions of HL and HLS. HL is a part of family or cultural heritage. HLS may study the language as L2 learners. A broad example is a third or fourth generation immigrant with a cultural connection to a language but not the ability to speak or comprehend it (Carreira & Kagan, 2011). A narrow definition of a HL speaker is someone who acquired HL since birth, but language acquisition stopped before completely acquiring the language and switching to another dominant language (Polinsky & Kagan, 2007).

Montrul (2016) described HLS as having bilingual competence with different

levels of proficiency in each language. The degree of command of the two languages

depends on frequency of use. The HL is useful in certain contexts but tends to be weaker

than the culturally dominant language. As Carreira and Kagan (2011) indicated, having

remote cultural ties and no prior knowledge of a HL places HLL in a different

instructional category. According to Montrul (2016), a group of HLL can be considered

L2 learners. Examples include Muslims who do not speak the language at home but learn

it at the mosque for religious purpose; these are HLS manifesting HL linguistic

characteristics (Carreira & Kagan, 2011). Montrul (2016) agreed HLL have exposure to

the HL at home and have a cultural connection to it. Valdés (2000) referred to HLL as "a

student who was raised in a home where a non-English is spoken, and who is to some

degree bilingual in English and heritage language" (p. 1). While HLS show command of

two languages, their bilingualism differs from other bilingual speakers.

Heritage Language Learners' Bilingualism and HL Research

Montrul (2016) depicted HLL as "bilingual native speakers of their language,

except that the degree of ultimate attainment in the heritage language is variable" (p.

249). They may be balanced bilinguals if use of the HL is favorable in their social

environment and may achieve native-like proficiency. HLS often start as monolingual

and then experience language shifts as the dominant language (e.g., in school) replaces

the HL, which becomes weaker and more like an L2 (Montrul, 2016). HLL and L2

learners share patterns of language dominance having learned one language at a later

stage of life. HLS have oral exposure to the HL and may speak it through oral interaction

with native speakers in a culturally embedded context. L2 learners acquire a language in

classroom settings with exposure to written materials (Montrul, 2016). Valdés (2005) examined the bilingualism of heritage speakers and shifted the focus of HLL from being L2 learners to L1/L2 users. The broad definition of bilingualism for HLL suggests that there are many different types of bilinguals among language speakers (Montrul, 2016; Valdés, 2005). Bilingualism encompasses competences in two languages, however small they might be. Scontras et al. (2015) defined HL speakers' bilingualism as being unbalanced bilingualism; these are speakers who shifted early in childhood from their HL to their communities' dominant language.

Baker (2011) stated that investing in children's HL in school creates full bilingualism. HL speakers' bilingual profiles may change depending on several factors, one of which is schooling. The trend of generational bilingualism differs among HLS; different generations have different proficiencies in English and HL (Valdés, 2015).

HL's initial recognition under the field of foreign language in 1990 impacted the choice of teaching methods. The foreign language field affected HL research and methodology choices. Valdés (2005) cautioned against blindly adopting foreign language methods, and indicated that this "ad hoc adoption of foreign language approach" may or not be appropriate for HL linguistic needs (p. 235). Valdés noted that SLA theories do not address HL speakers' complex needs. HL learners' specific linguistic repertoires are not adequately presented in the SLA field. HLL have a unique bilingualism. From a pedagogical perspective, the term *L1/L2 user* better serves their needs because this distinction designates how HL competence falls along a continuum. Providing appropriate language instruction depends on the level of fluency.

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Montrul (2012) and Rothman and Treffers-Daller (2014) contended that scholars should consider multilingual speakers' native languages. Montrul (2012) argued that HLS acquire language during their early years, so their HL are native languages. Without proper environmental support, the HLL may have incomplete acquisition or grammatical attrition. Cummins' (1976) threshold theory on bilingualism suggested that "there may be a threshold level of bilingual competence which an individual must attain before his access to two languages can begin to positively influence his cocognitive functioning" (p. 28).

Cummins (1976) postulated that the research on cognition and bilingualism is best explained by the idea of two thresholds: Level 1 is when the child reaches a level where he/she avoids the negative consequences of bilingualism, and Level 2 is required to acquire the positive aspects of bilingualism. Specifically, Cummins study indicated that there may be a threshold level of linguistic competence, which a bilingual child must attain to avoid cognitive deficit. A balanced, well-developed linguistic competence fosters the beneficial aspects of becoming bilingual. Results from Cummins' work highlighted that in every conversational language, basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) could be acquired in two years while cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) could take from 5-7 years (Baker, 2006). Cummins suggested that "access to two languages in early childhood can accelerate the development of both verbal and non verbal abilities" (p. 37). The threshold theory has been used in SLA and its applications have proven to be effective. With regard to HLL, the implications differ.

Although most HLL are usually past the first threshold and striving for later periods, interruption in HL may take place at any time during the language learning period: early childhood, middle childhood, or adolescence. HLS are bilingual, native speakers with different degrees of attainment (Montrul, 2012). If HL interruption occurs early in life, it may manifest in L2 characteristics in the HL speakers' language proficiencies (Montrul, 2012). Unlike Valdés (2005), Montrul favored the study of HL acquisition in the field of linguistics and applied linguistics. HL acquisition is another form of multilingual language acquisition, comparable to L1 learners, L2 learners, simultaneous bilinguals, and child L2 learners. Given the complex nature of cognitive, cultural, social, and biological HL acquisition, Montrul encouraged a multidisciplinary study of the phenomenon.

In a cross-sectional study of HL linguistics, Scontras et al. (2015) demonstrated the relevance of HL to the study of linguistic competence. HL bilinguals exhibit signs of transfer from the majority language, divergence (incomplete acquisition), and attrition (for older bilinguals). Using an idealized monolingual speaker as a base was not appropriate for the study of HLS (Scontras, et al. 2015). Cummins (2005) challenged applied linguists and language educators to critically re-examine monolingual assumptions that are counterproductive to HL policies and pedagogy. Cummins proposed a bilingual approach for HL acquisition and recommended the use of bilingual strategies as pedagogical approaches that transfer across languages to promote academic development in English and HL proficiency. In addition to their complex bilingual nature, HLL and HLS exhibit other factors and needs that are equally important.

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Language learners have various needs according to their identity, attitude, gender, and linguistic variation; treating all language speakers the same fails to identify their specific linguistic background and may decrease their linguistic gains (Menard-Warwick, 2009). Firth and Wagner (1997) indicated that second language acquisition (SLA) research ignored other social and individual identities associated with language learners and focused on quantification rather than ethnographic approaches to social contexts. Montrul (2012) stated that researchers cannot understand HL acquisition in isolation from its "socio-affective context" (p. 9). Motivational research in HL studies included participants from broader social contexts across long timespans to explore learners' multilingual repertoires, choices, and creativity (Henry, 2017; Ushioda, 2017).

HL research has been insufficient regarding bilingualism environments (Hoff, Rumiche, Burridge, Ribot, & Welsh, 2014; Sebastián-Gallés, Albareda-Castellot, Weikum, & Werker, 2012). A limitation in current bilingual research in the United States is its focus on high status and demographically large HL, such as Spanish-English or French-English bilinguals (Hoff, et al., 2014; Sebastián-Gallés, et al., 2012).

Broadening the scope of language studies to include Arabic may result in a better understanding of bilingualism mechanics; hence, this focus will shed more information on HL speakers' bilingualism.

Heritage Language Schooling, Policies, and Instructional Needs

Overview of HL schooling in the United States. Fishman (2001) categorized HL and HL schooling in the United States into three main historical periods: *indigenous*, *colonial,* and *immigrant* HL. Indigenous HL were languages of the Native Americans or

Amerindian languages. Colonial HL were languages such as Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Spanish, and Welch that faded away or lacked intergenerational transmission towards the end of the 18th century (Fishman, 2001). According to Fishman, any language that immigrant populations introduced between the end of the 19th century and early 20th century fell under the umbrella of immigrant HL (Fishman, 2001).

Early indigenous HL schools existed in the United States before settlers arrived. *Amerindian* schools were "the school of life, the noninstitutionalized means by which the young were socialized into daily rounds, beliefs, and practices that constituted the culture of their parents" (Fishman, 2001, p. 82). Noninstitutionalized education progressed into literacy-based, K-higher education institutions. For example, many Native Americans expressed interest in the formal attainment of their HL (Fishman, 2001).

The next category of HL is the *colonial* HL. According to Fishman (2001), only small language groups such as Dutch (introduced in the 17th century into Manhattan and along the Hudson River in New York), Finnish, Swedish, and Welch were colonial. All these languages faded away, leaving only names of places to remind us of their existence (Fishman, 2001). The main HL (French, German, and Spanish) lacked intergenerational transmission. German in Pennsylvania held "the distinction of being the only colonial language with uninterrupted, though not altered . . .of heritage schooling in the United States" (Fishman, 2001, p. 84). Schools maintaining these languages existed in communities of the language speakers.

The third period reflected a change in HL progression in the 19th and 20th centuries due to immigration. Fishman (2001) contended that the United States still failed

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to acknowledge immigrant's HL as national resources. Immigrant HL maintenance depended on heritage communities that struggled to ensure transmission of HL to their children. Documentation and official records were a means of recording progression and trends of educational programs in any community; however, there were no U.S. Department of Education official records of language changes (Fishman, 2001). Yet, Immigrant HL schools did contribute to American education and education laws. For example, in the Midwest, the number of German-English bilingual public schools equaled heritage schools (Fishman, 2001). The legal status of such bilingual schools was part of several state education laws. However, the German HL reflected the United States' political stance and foreign policies. World War I led to severe anti-foreigner and anti-German propaganda, which caused communities to close many HL schools. The Supreme Court permitted HL community-based teaching of HL, but social expectations made this difficult (Fishman, 2001).

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Civil Rights movement in the country reintroduced minority rights to conserve and foster HL resources before they fell out of existence (Fishman, 2001). The National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Education, and the National Endowment for the Humanities during the early 1980s supported such measures (Fishman, 2001). Another type of school and service that re-claimed power was the community-based HL school. Fallus and García-Moya (1976) noted that although community-based HL programs existed in the United States, school-based programs started in the late 1970s and were Spanish.

Community-based schools varied regarding population served, mission, vision,

funding, and organization; however, all helped transmit culture and HL to the next generation to maintain connection within families and communities (Corson, 1999). The number of community-based HL schools in the United States was approximately 8,000, teaching over 200 languages (Seals & Peyton, 2017). These private schools and programs resulted from a strong desire to maintain the community's HL and culture.

Many researchers and language professionals suggested that the people of the United States should embrace the nation's linguistic diversity, but K-12 public school language programs failed to represent HL (Van Deusen-Scholl, 2003). Wiley (2005) specified a critical need to advocate for the teaching of less commonly taught languages among policymakers and program developers. Seals and Peyton (2017) asserted that including HL and making use of multilingual education better serves students and societies. Ignoring these linguistic realities further damages potential gains in any language for HLS (Seals & Peyton, 2017).

In a study conducted by Bialystok and Codd (1997), concepts of numbers in 4 and 5-year-old bilinguals were ahead of monolinguals. According to Bialystok and Codd, for bilinguals, the ability to cognitively control when to use the appropriate language increases their sensitivity to the social nature and communicative function of language. So far, most of the studies suggested bilinguals have some direct cognitive advantages over monolinguals, which supports research in favor of children's and adult's HL bilingualism.

HL policy formation and implementation. Government support of HL education varied according to time and by language (Wiley, 2001). Federal bilingual

education policy for HL instruction was the subject of considerable disagreement and misunderstanding. Some opponents of federally funded bilingual schools suggested it was improper to promote any language other than English, and those in favor of bilingual education criticized an English-only policy as a "goal for Anglification" (Ruiz, 1995, p. 78). The federal government position towards HL shifted towards accommodation with the funding of Title VII transitional bilingual programs in 1968 (Wiley, 2001).

During the 1970s, English-only legislation supporters in California, where large numbers of diverse HL populations existed, attacked bilingual programs. This prevented bilingual schools from expanding and growing. The Native American Languages Act of 1990 stated the importance of preserving indigenous languages. "If in fact federally funded bilingual education programs in American Indian communities have served the purposes of language renewal and reversal of language shift, it is testimony to the ingenuity and dedication of staffs of programs, not the policy itself" (Ruiz, 1995, p. 79). Official organizations "with an overarching goal to produce a broad cadre of citizens able to function professionally in English and other languages" (Peyton, et al., 2001, p. 14) started initiatives. HL initiatives included programs by the National Foreign Language Center (NFLC) and Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) (Peyton, et al., 2001). The NFLC and CAL held the first National Heritage Language Conference in October 1999, in Long beach, California (Peyton, et al., 2001).

Wiley (2001) explained, "In order to formulate viable heritage language policy, the sociolinguistic context of a given heritage language must be understood, particularly as it relates to the dominant language(s) of wider communication" (p. 105). Alidou,

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Glanz, and Nikièma (2011) stressed that in "environments where multilingualism and cultural diversity are viewed as resources, these dichotomies are reinterpreted positively within a context of additive bi/multilingualism and multiculturalism" (p. 530). Individuals construct meaning at home; life begins with learning language in a unique cultural setting. By learning additional languages, people embrace values and connections between the HL and the language in school (Alidou, et al., 2011).

Wiley (2014) pointed out misunderstandings and mismatching of policies with proper forms of HL instructions create difficulties when defining the term itself. HL, HLS, and HLL require teaching programs to reverse language shifts. Wiley noted that attempting a single label for this complex situation is problematic. HL in the United States are important for the nation's economic and political future. Yet, government support for these programs fluctuates depending on economic factors, public pressure, and political stance.

One important factor that policymakers need to take into consideration is the HL sociolinguistic profile of the community to be served (Wiley, 2001). Horvarth and Vaughin (1991) cited an example of how an Australian well-intended effort to promote HL backfired. "An Egyptian teacher was hired to teach Lebanese children; although Egypt and Lebanon are both Arabic speaking countries, the spoken languages of these two speech communities are not mutually intelligible, although the formal spoken and written language is" (p.3).

According to Wiley (2001), this example underscores the importance of understanding HL speakers' embedded language varieties and sociolinguistic profiles.

The need for well-informed HL policies and the role that states and governments play in supporting and funding HL are of great importance for the future of maintaining and preserving HL in communities all over the United States.

HL instructional needs. Effective HL teachers take into account the staggering range of proficiencies this unique group brings to the classroom (Caballero, 2016; Montrul, 2010; Valdés, 2005). In addition, they need to be aware of other factors, such as length of exposure to HL, linguistic input in the home, sociolinguist issues, both learner and family attitudes towards HL, and HL learners' motivation (Carreira & Kagan, 2017; Kagan & Dillon, 2009; Kibler & Valdés, 2016; Montrul, 2010, 2012). Several HL schools succeeded in adopting these strategies to address HL learners' various needs; however political climates, policy issues, and budget have negatively impacted their optimum performance. Here are two examples of such school experiences.

Heritage Language School Challenges

Research on the implementation of a HL fully integrated in the life of a public primary school occurred in Carlin Springs Elementary, a school in a rural area in Oregon (Seals & Peyton, 2017). A new principal established a HL micro-policy for a HL program in 2007. The school had the highest numbers of immigrant students, students in poverty, and students who qualified for special education in the district, which negatively impacted standardized test scores on Oregon's Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS). The principal created a program to foster the success of all students, including HLS. In Carlin Springs Elementary, HLL achieved a 20% improvement in their OAKS scores and a 90% achievement rate on English reading (Seals & Peyton, 2017). Yet, due

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to substantial budget cuts, the new administration reduced the program; it no longer sustained services for other languages (e.g., Latvian, Russian, and Ukrainian) and only included minimal instruction in Spanish. This impacted HL communities, and HL learners' test scores dropped from a 50-15% pass rate (Seals & Peyton, 2017).

Another example of political pressure and public attitude toward certain HL schools is the Khalil Gibran International Academy in Brooklyn, NY. The school offered long-term Arabic language education as one of approximately 70 dual-language schools in the New York City public school system. In addition to local community resistance to the school, Bale (2010) explained that conservative columnists constantly wrote that the school espoused a fundamentalist Islamic curriculum. They misquoted the Arabic-speaking principal of the school as defending the Palestinian *intifada*. Instead of indicating the current political connotation of the word as Palestinian resistance to occupation, the principal explained the word's origin in Arabic. The *New York Post* labeled her as the *intifada* principal who would start Jihad in the Big Apple (Bale, 2010). This led to firing the principal and replacing her with a non-Arabic speaking Jewish principal. Bale pointed out that the hyperbolic commentary of this academy ignored the fact that the parents and community-based committees that developed the school curriculum included various faiths.

Arabic as a World Language

Unlike most languages, Arabic is not native to one country; it is the language of over 20 sovereign states with different colloquial dialects, even within the same Arabic countries (Albirini, 2006; Nydell, 2012). The Arabic language plays a central role in the

Arabic culture because it is the classical language of Islam; the Quran uses the classical Arabic language. All Muslims have a unified form of Islamic/Arabic identity. Hundreds of Islamic countries and states speak and learn Arabic for religious purposes. Despite the connection between Arabic and Islam, not every Arabic speaker is Muslim. Christians and Jews who are native residents of Arab countries (e.g., Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Yemen) speak Arabic. The variety of dialects and purposes of the Arabic language created debate among Arabic educators about what form of the language to use for instruction in the United States. Thus, "the multinational, multidialectal, multifaith, characteristics of Arabic indicate there can be no single Arabic identity either in the United States or the Arab world. Arabic means many things to many different people" (Bale, 2010, p. 127).

Compared to other HLS, Arabic speakers have a very intact linguistic profile (Albirini, 2006, 2014a, 2014b; Alhawari, 2013; Benmamoun, & Albirini, 2018; Benmamoun et al., 2013; Montrul, 2012). Ferguson (1959) indicated that high (H) level language (spoken among professionals, educators, media, religious sermons), modern standard Arabic (MSA), a standardized form of Arabic used in writing and in media, and a local dialect/law (L) form, exist side-by-side in any Arabic-speaking country. Code-switching between Arabic variations is common among this group, which adds another layer of multiplicity to the Arabic language. Another group of speakers of Arabic is Muslim non-Arabs. This group has limited access to natural Arabic at home; they are L2 learners of the Arabic language, not native HLS (Montrul, 2012).

History of Arabic Language Instruction in the United States

McCarus (1987) indicated that Arabic teaching in the United States existed over a century before the signing of the Declaration of Independence (United States, 1776) due to interest in studying the Old Testament of the Bible. The first American university that offered Arabic was Harvard under the Department of Sematic Languages between 1654-1672. Arabic classes started at Yale in 1700 and the University of Pennsylvania in 1788 (McCarus, 1987). The progression of teaching Arabic in America evolved from a purely theological process to a philological one in 1883 when Johns Hopkins University established a well-rounded program in sematic philology that became a model for other universities. World War II brought a revolution in the teaching of Arabic and other languages. McCarus stated, "The immediate need to train combat infantrymen and intelligence personnel to function in and to do research on the Arab world revealed how woefully unprepared the nation was in terms of this and other languages in the world" (p. 14).

The role of government agencies and educational institutions. The need to train combat infantrymen and intelligence personnel to speak Arabic after World War II brought a revolution in Arabic studies. Publications of textbooks, crash courses, and the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) to teach the language began with the help of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS).

The enduring results of such efforts equipped a cohort of American citizens with linguistic competencies in Arabic and other languages. For example, Ferguson set up an intensive Arabic program in Beirut, Lebanon for only two officials in 1947, and later

established the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) (McCarus, 1987). The modern FSI in Washington, DC, teaches MSA and dialects through experimentation with teaching and testing in Arabic. "Many instructional materials generated for internal use have found their way into the academic world and are still in use" (McCarus, 1987, p. 15). The most important contribution is the FSI oral interview to test foreign service personnels' speaking and reading proficiencies in Arabic; the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) use this test.

The development of Arabic within the academic world. Post-secondary level Arabic curricula began in the 1940s in the United States. Medieval Arabic and Lebanese dialect Arabic were courses at the University of Michigan and the Ford Foundation offered a $176,500 grant for the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) committee on Arabic instruction at five universities (Colombia, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Michigan, and Princeton) to initiate inter-university summer programs in near-eastern languages. A second Ford Foundation grant of $250,000 expanded the consortium with the addition of the University of California, Los Angeles, as a regular member and Georgetown University and University of Texas as associate members. As a result, several consortiums for the teaching of Arabic exist in the United States.

The sponsoring of an Arabic teachers' conference and workshop was another event of the inter-university program. In 1958, 20 teachers of Arabic conferenced in Cambridge, Massachusetts and made recommendations for research, textbook evaluations, and the preparation of Arabic readers. This series of conferences continued, and the recommendations of the 1962 conference led to the formation of the American

Association of Teachers of Arabic (AATA). The conferences created papers on methodology and content for intermediate level instruction and evaluation of textbooks. As a result, MSA instruction as a "living rather than a dead language" developed (McCarus, 1987, p. 19). McCarus stated that thanks to the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) and the Title VI, "There is probably no aspect of Arabic studies that has not been supported by Title VI of NDEA" (p. 20). This provided training for the teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL), introducing Arabic in secondary schools, and adopting proficiency tests for Arabic language learners with the support from Congress and the U.S. Department of Education.

Current need for Arabic as a critical language. The U.S. government recognized Arabic as one of the 13 *critical* languages after September 11, 2001. In 2006, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) launched STARTALK, a program to increase the number of U.S. citizens speaking and teaching critical foreign languages. The program's executive oversight was the National Security Agency (NSA); NSA awarded a contract to the National Foreign Language Center (NFLC) at the University of Maryland. The program provides critical language classes for K-16 with a focus on teacher training. In addition to teacher training summer workshops, STARTALK enabled George Mason University to enhance the enrollment in its licensure program.

Issues and Difficulties of Teaching Arabic

This section presents different levels of complexities that are specific to the Arabic language. It includes a quick overview of Arabic orthography, morphology,

variations, diglossia and the impact of language function and prestige on learning the Arabic language.

Orthographic and phonetic challenges. The alphabet in which Arabic is written presents the most daunting aspect of Arabic language learning for English-dominant learners. While English uses an alphabet writing system, Arabic employs *abjad,* a consonantal system of writing. Arabic consists of 28 graphemes, three of which are vowels, while short vowels are written with diacritics. Diacritics are accent marks that are put above or below the letters. Although they are fundamental for decoding, these marks may not appear in texts, because their functions are taken for granted. Only long vowels (ا /ɑ:/ or /æ:/, ي /i:/, و /u:/) are represented in written Arabic; readers must draw on grammatical knowledge to infer the locations of short vowels (Temples, 2013). The diacritical symbols representing short vowels are called *fatha* (a low mid or back vowel, approximately /ɑ/ or /ə/), *kasra* (a high front vowel, approximately /i/, /ɛ/, or /ɪ/), and *damma* (a higher, rounded back vowel, approximately /u/, /ʊ/, /o/, or /ɔ/). Diacritics may signal the lack of a vowel (ْ, *sukun*) and the lengthening or doubling of a consonant (ّ, *shadda*) (Temples, 2013, p. 23). These short vowels could very easily change both the meaning and pronunciation of words in Arabic texts.

Arabic words can be very confusing for language learners; diacritical symbols that may not appear in written text can completely change the meaning of words. For example: "hamam" with *fatha* حَمَام means pigeon, while "hamam" with *shadda* حَمّام means bathroom, and "heemam" with *kasra* حِمَام means death. In spite of the drastic difference in meaning, all three words are spelled the same way, and comprehension is

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based on context clues.

This is an example from the holy book, Quran, which shows how the same word is used in the same sentence but with different meanings; The word *assato* means "judgment day" and *assa* means "an hour." As we see, alphabetically the two words are written the exact same way; decoding and comprehension requires knowledge of the Arabic diacritics (Quran 30:55, Ar-Room).

قال تعالى: {وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُقْسِمُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ مَا لَبِثُوا غَيْرَ ⬚اعَةٍ كَذَلِكَ كَانُوا يُؤْفَكُونَ}

Another layer of complexity to note here too is the fact that the English alphabet does not change shape in writing except when used as cursive. Arabic alphabets, on the other hand, link with each other both in print and in writing. Arabic language learners, therefore, must know how to distinguish between initial, middle and end forms for the purpose of using them for different positions in texts (Temples, 2013).

Arabic morphology. According to Montrul (2010), the system of gender and plural morphology is very complex in Arabic with different endings for masculine and feminine, plural nouns, and adjectives. To add to these nuances, Arabic makes an important distinction between nouns for living creatures and nouns for things that are not human or objects. These objects have the property of either being feminine or masculine as well; *tawla* "table" is feminine and *khobaz* "bread" is masculine. In terms of plural, feminine words frequently end with –aat and masculine human plural end with –uun/-iin. However, there exists exceptions to these patterns and the most confusing exception is what is called broken plural. This very productive process requires changing the root of the word for example: *kitaab* "book" –*kutob.* In a study that targeted the production of

plural agreement patterns in HLS of Egyptian Arabic, HLS of Palestinian-Jordanian Arabic, and native speakers of Arabic found that native speakers produced 99-100% accuracy whereas HLS produced 33% error rates with words (Montrul, 2010).

Variations in lexicon. Although a difference in use and meaning of lexicon in both variations of the Arabic language exists; generally, they share most of the vocabulary. Learners and teachers must be aware of these differences. Not knowing a student's linguistic background knowledge of HL, a teacher may create confusion for the student. For example, the word "bag*"* in H/standard Arabic is *haggeeba*; however, Egyptians say *shanttah*, Palestinians say *jezdan*, Moroccans say *ssac*, Kuwaitis say *juntta*, and Lebanese say *shanta'iah*. The existence of diglossia in Arabic communities makes it hard to adopt a standard version of the language for teaching.

Diglossia in Arabic. Ferguson (1959) pointed out unique variations in a community's language that is neither region-based nor class-based, "where two varieties of a language exist side by side throughout the community, with each having a definite role to play" (p. 325). Ferguson labeled the *Fusha* classical Arabic as high (H) variety and colloquial dialects as low (L) variety. These variations generate difficulties for Arabic language learners and teachers; diglossia impacts function, prestige, acquisition, and lexicon of the Arabic language (Ferguson, 1959). Abirini (2014a) stated that

> The Arabic linguistic landscape is characterized by the co-existence of two
> varieties, Standard/ Formal Arabic (FuSħa) and Colloquial/Spoken Arabic
> (ʕaamiyya). The former is fairly uniform across the area, with variations limited
> to choices of lexical items, expressions, and borrowings. It is mainly used in

formal, semi-formal, and literary contexts. The latter varies across and within countries; it is the language learned in the home and used in conversations and other informal communicative exchanges (p. 733).

In this research, the terms *Fusha/ H/standard/ formal/ Modern Standard* Arabic are used interchangeably to mean the form of Arabic that is official and used in the media, text books and school settings. On the other hand, colloquial/spoken/dialects/L Arabic are the language used at home by different Arab communities.

Function and prestige. The importance of using the right variety of Arabic in the right situation "can hardly be overestimated" (Ferguson, 1959, p. 329). As an outsider, if someone learns standard, classical, or modern Arabic and uses it with local Egyptians at the supermarket or to run daily errands, the local people will ridicule the speaker. Similarly, using the Egyptian local dialect during an official speech, conference, or intellectual setting is incorrect.

"In all the defining languages the speakers regard of H is superior to L in a number of aspects" (Ferguson, 1959, p. 330). Most speakers use L, but educated Arabic speakers insist on using H. As the language of the Quran, H manifests eloquence, beauty, and the actual words of God. "The proponents of H argue that H must be adopted because it connects the community with its glorious past" (Ferguson, 1959, p. 338). On a similar note, "The proponents of L argue that some variation of L must be adopted because it is closer to the real thinking and feeling of people" (Ferguson, 1959, p. 339).

Specific AHL acquisition challenges situated within general HL acquisition. Children learn L at home in a natural setting from adults through daily interactions.

Children learn this form of the language before schools starts and continue using it at home and among their community. Children learn H, in media and newspapers, and in formal classroom settings in schools. School age children grow up switching between two forms of the same language. According to Ferguson (1959), this difference in the method of acquisition is very important. Children learn the grammatical structure in L Arabic without any explicit discussion, but the grammar of HLA has formal rules they must imitate. Usually, children grow up having a linguistic repertoire that cues them to use each form in its appropriate settings.

In a study, Albirini and Chakrani (2017) concluded that "Colloquial Arabic (CA), and Standard Arabic (SA) are part of the sociolinguistic reality of the families and communities in which many heritage Arabic speakers live" (p. 317). Results of this study indicated that in spite of their fluency, AHL students lacked the ability to socially and pragmatically deploy their CA and SA into their narratives. An important implication of this study states that full evaluation of HL students' aspects of sociolinguistic realities is important for HL acquisition.

In another study, Benmamoun and Albirini (2018) examined the influence of previously acquired language varieties, including CA on SA acquisition. The study investigated the knowledge that HLS bring to the Arabic classroom and its positive or negative impact on learning the SA in a university classroom setting. Both researchers argued that in most university classroom settings, AHL students' CA is neglected. In particular, the study examined AHL students' sentential negation in SA. From a pedagogical view, such a study helps language instructors identify and build on

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the strengths HL bring to language classrooms. Results indicated that these AHL displayed a clear effect of borrowing from their CA. Due to the phonological, lexical, and structural similarities between the two diglossic varieties of SA and CA, there seems to be a positive facilitative role that CA contributes to the acquisition of SA. HLS resort to their spoken language to fill in gaps that they find when learning SA. They leverage the overlap and treat them as if they were a continuum.

According to Benmamoun and Albirini (2018), a number of pedagogical issues emerge in university level language classrooms. Universities have no independent study sections for HLS, and there are no well-established guidelines to teach a HL that build on the language repertoires they bring with them to these classroom settings.

From the perspective of these two authors, HLS may resort to their stronger, more frequently used language to deal with processing delays resulting from intricate structures in another variety of the language. However, despite the similarities between the two language varieties CA and SA and the significant overlap, the two language variety systems differ along the following dimensions:

> phonemic inventories, syllabic patterns, phonological rules, size of nominal plural paradigms, presence of dual patterns in verbs, size of agreement paradigms, size of pronominal paradigms, structure of the comparative form, word order, patterns and markers of questions, relative clause markers, subordinators, tense, aspect, and negation, among many other patterns and forms. (Benmamoun & Albirini, 2018, p. 57)

HLS tend to pick up on the grammatical structure existing in their colloquial dialects. Flores (2015) stated that HL children are "only able to acquire what is present in their linguistic input," and they need to be "actively engaged in communication," as passive exposure is not enough; they should use language structure in their daily interactions (p. 253). Since the community and the family is the only source of input for this group, it is most likely that the HLS will not acquire the structure. She argued that this is not because of a deficit but because of the absence of input received. Both Flores and Montrul (2008) noted that HL children are bilinguals because their linguistic competencies reflect most of the bilingual characterizations such as "high proficiency in comprehension and production; native-like accent; language use in familiar contexts; and an affective and cultural proximity that generally has less weight in non-native acquisition" (Flores, 2015, p. 253). However, as stated earlier, Montrul noted that their bilingualism falls along different levels of proficiency. Some HLS achieve native-like competence whereas others may not have the ability to engage in prolonged conversations.

Another important point that Montrul (2008) stated is that age plays an important role in HL acquisition. According to the author, children who start learning the dominant language in early stages of language development will experience and show attrition in their HL knowledge. Yet according to a study Flores (2015) conducted on European Portugese speakers' acquisition of their HL in Germany, if HLL continue to be exposed to their HL, their HL faculty will enable them to acquire the desired language. The author argued that learning the dominant language does not mean the onset of the HL loss

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(Flores, 2015). According to Flores, HL learners' language competence is attributed to two types of factors: "factors that are in play in bilingual but not in monolingual acquisition, and, on the other hand, factors that influence monolingual language development as well (but generally to a lesser extent)" (p. 253).

It is worth mentioning here that according to research, children acquire their L1 in successive development stages; it is well recognized that certain language structures are acquired later than others (Tsimpli 2014). So, what does this mean for HL acquisition? For the learner, it means that certain language properties are still not in place when they switch to the dominant language. This point is worth exploring when planning instruction for students. Thus, HLL may acquire these "late" properties under a different condition than monolingual/foreign language learners do (Flores, 2015).

In a paper, Unsworth (2013) investigated the role of current and cumulative exposures in bilingual development and suggested that HLS need continued exposure through an extended period to guarantee successful attainment of the language. He stated that the acquisition process is influenced by the quantity of input received at all stages of development. Language teachers should be aware of language properties that have already been developed among their HLL and the ones that need to be emphasized during formal classroom instructions.

A relevant point to be made here is Tsimpli's (2014) thought-provoking language acquisition explanation. She compared a group of monolingual and bilingual children with a focus on age verses input. Results indicated that in monolingual development certain language properties develop earlier in children and some others are acquired late.

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Having said this and for pedagogical purposes, these late acquired language properties need to be addressed differently among HL students. The amount of input is indicative of successfully developing these language properties, which are evident in late monolingual speakers as well. Exposure to such techniques will enhance student HL acquisition.

Generally speaking, we can see that these points are invaluable when planning instructions for all HLL. However, for AHL learners with their multifaceted, complex needs, this focus becomes a preordained requirement. Kibler and Valdés (2016) argued that formal language teaching institutions classify and categorize language learners in a way that is not "neutral" and that often have life impacting consequences on them. When language is seen as an academic subject, it fails to be treated as a "species-unique communicative system acquired naturally in the process of primary socialization" (Valdés, 2015, p. 262). Researchers not only argue against the harm classifying language learners may cause, but they urge educators to collaborate to better understand the demand of this group of language learners in our globalized society (Benmamoun, et al., 2013; Carreira & Kagan, 2017; Kibler & Valdés, 2016; Montrul, 2012; Valdés, 2005).

As Tian (2017) pointed out in a case study conducted in an Ivy League institute on Chinese HLL, language programs need to dispel two myths surrounding language acquisition of Chinese-heritage students. First, instead of "blindly exaggerating" Chinese HL learners' competencies, they should pay attention to student challenges. The second myth is that language instructors cannot in such a short period of time reverse or "undo" bad language habits Chinese HLL acquired at home. To better serve the need of HLL and communities, Carriera and Kagan (2017) made several proposals regarding these and

other pedagogical issues. As a central point for arguing for HL advancement in both research and classroom instructions, the authors noted the fact that HLL now constitute "a major demographic learning group for a large number of language programs within the United States" (p. 154). Hence, the next section will share one of the authors' proposals with regard to research and pedagogical development in the field of HL.

Research and Pedagogy

The central tenant of current understandings of HL is that the needs of HLL differ from the needs of L2 learners. But it is only recently that the nature of these needs and what impact they have on instruction has been addressed (Carriera & Kagan, 2017).

In general, HLL are strong in vocabulary and grammar learned by children at the early stages of any language development (Flores, 2015; Montrul, 2010, 2016; Flores, 2015). Regarding their functional skills, HLL are best at communicating informally about predictable, familiar topics (Kagan & Kudyma, 2012). In addition to these language abilities, HLL possess relational needs that originate from their bilingual, bicultural experiences; this need makes them different from L2/foreign language learners. HLL aspire to connect with their community and culture by using their heritage language and this need is not "fixed but evolves over time" (Carriera & Kagan, 2017, p. 155).

Montrul (2010) (Table 2) summarized the main feature of L1, L2 and HL language acquisition patterns; HL acquisition characteristics in italic bold represent the intersecting subsets between L1 and L2 acquisition. Just like L1 speakers, Table 2 shows how HLL command the basic structure of the language through aural medium in a naturalistic context during their early childhood; they acquire phonology, some

vocabulary, and some linguistic structures. But their language starts showing attrition and incomplete acquisition as the dominant language is introduced during their school years. Evidently, HL acquisition has some features of L1 acquisition but not all; it also exhibits some adult L2 acquisition features such as transfer error due to their interrupted HL acquisition. Compared to L2 learners, HLS are typically described as having good phonology (Montrul, 2010).

Table 2

Characteristics of L1, L2, and Heritage Language Acquisition.

L1 Acquisition	L2 Acquisition
Early exposure to the language	Late exposure to the language
Abundant input in a naturalistic setting (aural input)	Varying amount of input in instructed and/or naturalistic setting (aural and written input)
Control of features of language acquired very early in life (phonology, some vocabulary, some linguistic structures)	Grammar may be incomplete (no chance to develop other structures and vocabulary).
Developmental errors	Developmental and transfer errors
Outcome is successful and complete	Outcome is variable proficiency. It is typically incomplete.
Fossilization does not occur.	Fossilization is typical.
No clear role for motivation and affective factors to develop linguistic competence	Motivation and affective factors play a role in language development.
More complex structures and vocabulary developed at school after age 5, when metalinguistic skills develop	Experience with literacy and formal instruction

Note. Source is Montrul (2010, p. 6). Reprinted with permission.

Linguistics and pedagogical research have recognized a "series of grammatical areas" that affect HL speakers' knowledge acquisition. According to Montrul (2010), these include "vocabulary, morphosyntax (case, verbal and nominal agreement, tense, aspect, and mood), pronominal reference, article semantics, word order, relative clauses, and conjunctions" (p. 5).

As mentioned earlier, HLS have sufficient functional language skills that allow them to communicate basic familiar and relevant topics. One of the instructional approaches that are commonly discussed (Kagan & Dillon 2001, 2008, 2009; Lynch, 2003) that builds on this strength is the top-down-or macro-approach (Wu & Chang, 2012). Encouraging discourse and using genre-based activities, the approach aims at helping HLL develop their grammatical and lexical knowledge. In a study conducted during a STARTALK summer Chinese HL learners' program, the focus was on a macro-approach curriculum taking into account the HL learners' experiences as Chinese Americans, and their global knowledge in Mandarin. Wu and Chang found out that the approach was not only engaging, but it also helped students take ownership of their learning. In addition to telling and recording their life stories and discussing them in Mandarin, this classroom interaction extended to the internet by creating a blog. Authors noted that designing a curriculum that takes into account students' "lived experiences and needs" is critical for maintaining students' HL; they suggested that the "macro-approach provides such a frame" for HL teachers (Wu, & Chang, 2012, p. 135).

Unlike the micro/bottom-up approach that teaches language elements in isolation based on the dynamics commonly used for L2/foreign language learners, the macro-

approach is more contextualized and addresses HL needs better. Kagan and Dillon (2001) noted that HLL find it hard to comprehend grammatical explanations. Table 3, based on the work of Wu and Change (2012) and adapted from Kagan and Dillon (2001), clarifies micro and macro approaches. According to Wu and Chang, HL teachers should affirm HL students' "cultural, linguistic, and personal identities" by investing in them when designing classroom instructions (p. 148).

Table 3

Micro-Approaches for Non-HLL versus Macro-Approaches for HLL

Teaching Domains	Micro-Approaches (non-HLL)	Macro-Approaches (HLL)
Vocabulary	Full range	Age appropriate/literary/academic/ formal
Reading	Small texts, gradually and slowly increasing in volume and complexity	Fairly large and complex texts almost from the beginning
Writing	Sentence level, gradually advancing to paragraph level	Emphasis on the content and gradually improve spelling, grammar, and stylistics
Speaking	Initially restricted to dialogue, gradually progressing to monologue and discussion	Emphasis on monologue and discussion
Listening	Short simple texts, gradually increasing in volume and complexity	Full range of native language input (i.e. movies, documentaries, lectures)
Culture	Initially isolated and decontexualized cultural items that learners have very limited experience with.	Full range of language input (e.g. audio, visual, and print) that contain pertinent cultural information

Note. HLL = heritage language learners. Adapted from Kagan and Dillon (2001, p. 513), (Wu, & Chang, 2012, p. 148).

While classroom activities that build on HL students' life experiences are crucial for language development studies on incorporating digital tools and virtual communication, online forums have been suggested to be engaging and motivating for this group of language learners (Palladino, & Guardado, 2018; Wu & Change, 2012). Due to time constraints during actual classroom time, these web-based platforms help students "find spaces to experiment with the language and build their skills at their own pace" (Wu & Chang, 2012, p. 161).

Current Language Needs in the United States

Carreira (2018) noted that the year 2017 saw "the publication of one of the strongest endorsements of language education on record" (p. 5). Two years' worth of data and investigation were put in the report: *America's Languages: Investing in Language Education for the the 21st Century*, commissioned by a bipartisan group of members of Congress and authored by the Commission of Language Learning of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2017). Advocating for the importance of building on the HL capacities residing within the fabric of the United States as a society, the report included the following graphic (see Figure 1) that represents the main languages spoken at home in the United States. Hence, outlining national strategies that aim to "improve access to as many languages as possible for people of every region, ethnicity, and socioeconomic backgrounds" (viii).
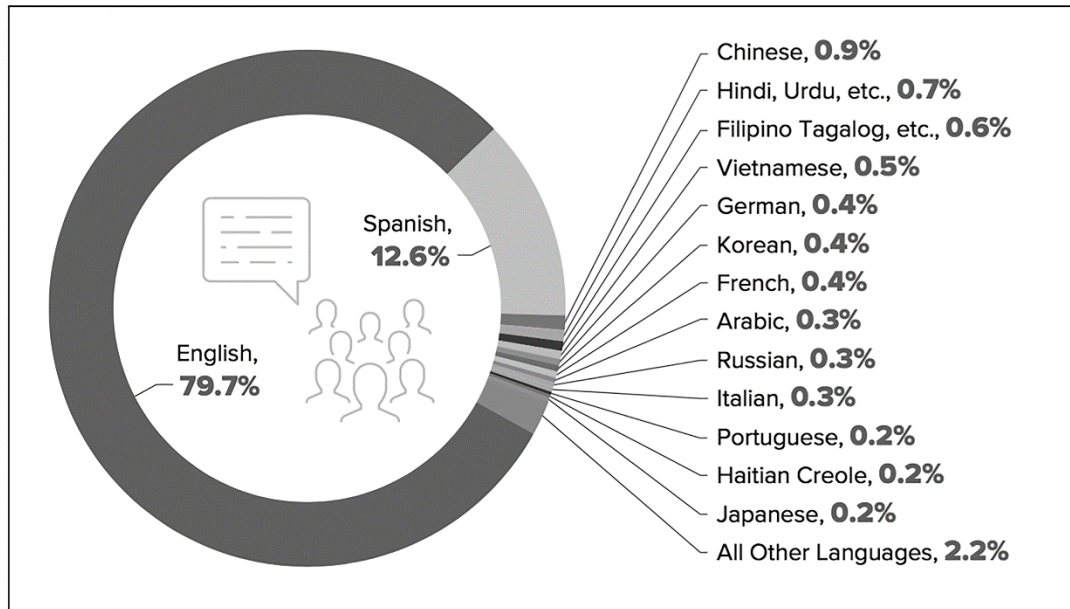
Figure 1. Main languages spoken at home by U.S. residents aged five years and older, 2008–2010.
Source: American Community Survey, 2008–2010 merged files, as quoted in Rumbaut, R. G. & Massey, D. S. (2013). Immigration and language diversity in the United States, *Dædalus, 142*(3), 146. Reprinted with permission.

Numerous reports highlight similar focal points about HL, namely that the United States has a pressing need for multilingual individuals, and HLS help fulfill "that need building on their home-based bilingualism and biculturalism through formal instruction and community based activities" (Carreira, 2018, p. 5). The report specifically states that supporting HL that are already spoken in communities across the nation, will create the "nucleus of a truly multilingual society" (p. 22).

With regard to HL preservation, the report advocated for these languages to persist from one generation to the next by recommending the following measures: (a) encouraging HLS to pursue further instruction in their HL, (b) providing more language learning opportunities for HLS in classrooms or school settings, (c) expanding efforts to

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create college and university curricula designed specifically for heritage speakers and offering course credits for proficiency in HL (Commission on Language Learning, 2017, p. x).

To conclude, one can clearly realize the United States' strong need for languages, specifically languages that are residing within the fabric of the United States of America. According to Carreira (2018) "*America's Languages: Investing in Language Education for the the 21st Century* is both a powerful testament to the value of languages and a call to action to strengthen language education by investing in high-priority areas" (p. 8).

The decided gap in pedagogy addressing existing HLL with their various language backgrounds is noted by HL researchers. Kibler and Valdés (2016) and Carreira and Kagan (2017) contended that as different kinds of learners come to the forefront of researchers' attention (e.g., new immigrants, refugees, and indigenous minorities), current curricula, assessments, and pedagogical traditions often fail to address these leaerners' instructional needs. Current categories do not account for the contextual or political exigencies that directly influence the mechanisms that inform language instruction in today's globalized world (Kibler & Valdés, 2016). Presently, Arabic is one of the languages that students bring to the increasingly-diverse classrooms, and the aim of this study is to unfold effective practices that are used within the context of teaching Arabic as a HL.

Chapter Three

As a language teacher, my love for the constructivist approach in education stemmed from my deep belief in the role of authentic communications in promoting language learning. A classroom environment that provides language learners with various social interaction opportunities lends itself to helping students construct their thoughts and to communicate them successfully in the targeted language. Vygotsky's (1978) constructivist theory, where higher level thinking is developed through social interaction, was always part of my pedagogy. Later in my career, I led a bilingual school through the process of adopting the International Baccalaureate (IB). The program was designed to help students construct their knowledge through authentic interactions with issues and build upon their Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). Additionally, providing an environment where students could find their voices and exercise critical thinking based on Freire's (2012) pedagogy was an important part of the IB program and a focus of my leadership and daily interactions.

This section sheds light on my ability to ethically and genuinely retell in writing my participant's stories and daily experiences. This is an attempt to disclose my own personal traits and role as a researcher to achieve integrity (Yin, 2016). As a novice researcher, I have always grappled with the term *conceptual framework.* Ravitch and Riggan (2017) defined conceptual framework as the process of linking all elements of

research: researcher interest, positionality, identity, research design, choice of methods, context and setting.

Although constructivism is a noteable pedagogical paradigm, it is also a trustworthy conceptual framework for approaching research. This section describes constructivism as a basis for research and its impact on the process of my inquiry. A constructivist approach claims that an individual's subjective perspectives and realities are very critical in social science research. To these scholars, "What the world means to the person or group being studied is critically important to good research in the social sciences" (Willis, 2007, p. 9).

According to Crotty (2015), such a stance in research is linked to the thoughts of Weber (1846-1920). Weber's (1949) methodology emphasized that the main target of social science is *Verstehen* (understanding). I, as a researcher, totally agree that understanding social phenomenon is the essence of my qualitative research. I full-heartedly take the stance that there is no objective reality in social settings. Not only is the daily interactions of individuals within their environment complex and multifaceted, but the relationship between the researcher and the phenomenon studied is intricate and hard to distill.

Weber (1949) expressed the need to focus social research on the individual's meaning constructions and values that stem from their subjective views of the world and complex actions. This view complements my epistemological belief. However, for the purpose of achieving an objective scientific study of individually created realities, Weber suggested creating an ideal criteria-based reality with which to compare the social

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phenomenon against. His methodology aimed to provide a causal interpretation of the process. Weber's *ideal type,* a reality that the social scientist makes up, brings us back to a positivist view of research that is focused on achieving generalizable data (Weber, 1949). In this sense, I disagree with Weber's stance.

Using a standardized measurement may reflect the numeric value of the experience, but I strive not to control the teacher's everyday activities. "Quantitative researchers have pressed for explanation and control; qualitative researchers have pressed for understanding the complex interrelationships among all that exists" (Stake, 1995, p. 37). Merriam (1995) agreed, "When dealing with human beings it is difficult, if not impossible, to apply statistically-based generalizations to individual persons" (p. 57). Through a qualitative case study, my aim was to showcase my participant's multifaceted experiences.

The fundamental premise of constructivism, a sociological theory, is that knowledge is a human construction, and the learner is an active participant in this learning process. This theory focuses on how individuals come to construct their own form of knowledge influenced by entangled environmental and personal experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 2011). Researcher and participants work jointly to co-construct the reality perceived (Stake, 1995).

Since my study focused on the participant's experiences as an AHL instructor on a daily basis, the study was conceptualized as the practices that occurs through social and environmental interaction of this particular teacher's engagement with her classroom environment and subject matter. Because knowledge is a fluid set of understandings that

is shaped and constructed by those who produce and use it, my research cast the teacher as an active decision-maker and constructor of her knowledge about teaching AHL.

To discover trustworthy data about this AHL teacher's experience, I selected a method that gave my participant the opportunity to collaboratively voice her opinion; share her own authentic context; bring to light the complex, multifaceted phenomenon and her unique talent and approaches; within the context of HL teaching. The method I chose valued the context-dependent knowledge and experience, which resided at the "heart of expert activity" (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 222).

According to Charmaz (2004), forming intimate familiarity with a phenomenon is the foundation of qualitative research. With this in mind, a case study was selected here. A qualitative case study is a research design that is expected to describe "the complexity of a single case" (Stake, 1995, p. xi). According to Stake (1995), a researcher may be drawn to a phenomenon and wants to study its complexity from all angles. In this case, he or she has an intrinsic interest in the case. We may call this an intrinsic case study because the motive is to learn the particular of that case. A qualitative case study can be used to draw comparisons and apply findings to understand other cases or situations or answer a research question. In this case, it was considered an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995, p. 3).

This leads me to propose that a qualitative case study conceptually framed in a constructivist design is more useful and appropriate to study the tacit knowledge that this particular teacher created to teach AHL. A qualitative case study design allows the researcher to get as close as possible to the subject of interest and deals with the

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participant in their actual context. I wanted to be able to closely examine this information rich AHL teacher. The foremost concern of a qualitative case study is to generate knowledge of the particular; the case itself is at the center of the design (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2016). My participant's context of learning, daily activities, her beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives were all valuable sources of data that I intended to understand. I was delving into my participant's experience with an intrinsic case study lens (Stake, 1995, p. 3).

My research, on the other hand, was grounded in the constructivism paradigm where an individual's unique experience is studied as a phenomenon. Crotty (2015) stated that constructivism suggests that "each one's way of making sense of the world is as valid and worthy of respect . . . , thereby tending to scotch any hint of a critical spirit" (p. 58). As a researcher, I registered data similar to how a video camera would be. This stand is similar to what Crotty indicated; it was a stance that "[was] overwhelmingly oriented towards uncritical exploration of cultural meaning" (p. 60). Therefore, the lens that I intended to use was more of an emerging and developing lens.

My study explored the classroom experiences and practices of an AHL teacher instructing second-generation immigrant Arabic HLL. Charmaz (2004) stated, "We can know about the world by describing it from the outside. Yet to understand what living in this world means, we need to learn from the inside" (p. 980). By creating a design that was built on the principles of constructivism, I aimed to immerse myself in this teacher's experience and environment. Moreover, by assuming the role of a team participant rather than a data gathering researcher, and by adapting an iterative analytical process, I was

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seeking to construct a quality version of my participant's story. The constructivist, iterative conceptual framework used gives attention to the phenomenon itself. As Charmaz (2004) stated, "Give first attention to the phenomenon itself, rather than to the methods to explore it" (p. 983).

Immersing myself in the research environment so that I was less of a critical judge allowed my participant to voice her opinion and share her experience as a veteran HL teacher. To reflect my participant's real voice regarding HL, my interviews were less structured and more interactive (Corbin & Morse, 2003).

My data collection method was purposefully designed to create opportunities for discovery to develop. Stake (1995) explained that qualitative research takes the researchers in unexpected directions, "So the researcher makes a flexible list of questions, progressively redefines issues, and seizes opportunities to learn the unexpected" (p. 29). Based on my epistemological and ontological beliefs, the design of this research was intended to construct knowledge about the phenomenon in an iterative and emergent way.

An iterative stance is a continuous and systematic repetition of the process of analysis that may impact the design. The process led me, the researcher, to go back and forth between analysis and data collection; both analysis and data collection informed and advanced each other. The rigor of the process used allowed for the emergence of findings that were as faithful to the participant's experience as possible. Since I am the instrument of my research, this iterative process complemented my constructivist conceptual framework. A constructivist researcher adjusts to changes in design as findings unfold. Therefore, this repeated process of mining the data was appropriate for this purpose.

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During this process, I interacted with the data by asking analytical questions that led to the quality of findings. This iterative process entailed an active and engaged analysis. Results of engaged analysis influenced my interactions with my participant and my interview protocols. Although my research questions guided me, they did not dictate the results. They only served as open-ended statements that provoked further discovery of themes to describe the case. There was a "fusion of planning and discovery," which resulted in "a mosaic of interpretation that emerged" throughout the inquiry process (Reybold, Lammert, & Stribling, 2012, p. 700). This approach helped me, the researcher, embrace anomalies. "Treat bewilderment as a sign that you are entering the phenomenon. Through struggling with ambiguity and bewilderment you may sense hidden meanings and gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon" (Charmaz, 2004, p. 980). Reflecting on my identity as a novice researcher in the field of education has been a confusing ride; I have always noticed a certain level of non-conformity in my attitude as an educator. Because I always met deadlines, followed structures and was known for being a conformist, such a strong feeling of rejecting certain conventions in the field was hard to explain.

It was not until one day Dr. Reybold challenged us in a qualitative methodology class to explain the difference between *systematize* and *standardize*. This is when I had the answer to my long-sought question. "That's it!" I said. Having a clear systematic process for doing things was important for me, but I did not like standardization. I did not like isolating issues or matters from their contexts for examination purposes and measuring them against a pre-determined set of criteria. For example, both as a teacher

and as an administrator, I was never fond of standardized tests. I leaned towards formative ones. Standardization for me was restricting and painted the world in either-or perspectives. Students should not be measured based on a one size fits all standard. In fact, they should be given multiple opportunities to display their knowledge over a long period of time. To me, truth was never an absolute matter; I avoided proving or disproving points. Consequently, hypothesizing was neither an appealing nor an engaging activity. I enjoyed the organic nature of finding patterns and the beauty of unfolding unexpected realities. Hatch (2002) stated, "While it sounds oxymoron, I encourage students to design qualitative studies with a flexible structure" (p. 38). So, in pursuit of unfolding realities, the term *oxymoron* applies. I aimed to create a detailed systematic process of investigation. But my system or structure was flexible enough to accommodate all anomalies that may emerge.

The complexity of the phenomenon and the value I foresaw in my participant's experience, incited me to choose the qualitative case study approach as a method for my inquiry trajectory. For this study, I used Guba and Lincoln's (1994) definition of constructivism: "Realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially local and specific in nature and dependent on the individual holding the constructions" (p. 110).

Currently, effective practices for HL teachers specifically for Arabic are not known, and there is a decided gap in literature on this topic. Thus, in the context of AHL teaching, the following tentative research questions were investigated:

1. In what ways does learning occur in the context of AHL, and what background experiences influenced the participant's instructional choices?

2. What steps does the participant take to identify and implement specific strategies used to teach AHL?

3. How does the participant determine usefulness and effectiveness of these strategies?

4. How does the participant perceive her role as an AHL teacher?

The next section will include a description of a pilot study that informed the process of the current research. Then the work will provide an overview of research design, methods of data collection, and the selection process of the participant for the proposed case study.

Pilot Study Overview

Before delving into the current research design, I would like to give an overview of a pilot study of a single case study AHL teacher's classroom practices' research conducted in the Fall of 2017; the process I used has helped me refine procedures that I used for my dissertation. The intent of the pilot case study was to investigate and report on the teacher's classroom practices to understand the reasons for her success. The research was conceptually framed around a constructivist, qualitative, case study research design model. The teacher's experiences were explored and findings were summarized (Turkistani, 2017). It should be noted here that one of the global themes from the pilot study (teacher as a lifelong learner) was used in Chapter 4 to introduce the participant. This theme was an integral part of her personality; therefore, I used it as a platform for

her profile. I also combed through my data from this pilot study coupled with my dissertation one. As a result of this final process, one global theme emerged as a summary of all my findings.

Since the site and the participant that will be described in detail later in this chapter are the same as in my dissertation, I did not refer to them here. This overview only highlights the value gained in enhancing and informing my dissertation processes and data analysis.

I used a constructivist, iterative process for my pilot study and dissertation. My coding process started with familiarizing myself with the data as soon as it was gathered (i. e. reading, rereading, highlighting words that were meaningful). Then I used *open-coding*. "These are initial codes that stick closely to the orginal data . . . reusing the exact words in the orginal data" (Yin, 2016, p.169). I used an *emic* approach to compare incidents in transcriptions that honored the participant's voice (Emmerson, et al., 1995). Then, I used an *etic* approach "an imposed frame of reference" (Silverman, 1993, p. 174). This is where I anchored my organized codes around my research questions (Turkistani, 2017).

My analysis moved through several phases. First, it was verbatim open-coding of the texts. Then I combed through my codes and organized according to emerging themes I was able to notice the emergence of 15 organizing groups; they were "the middle-order themes that organized the basic themes into clusters of similar issues" (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 389). Attride-Sterling defined these networking themes as:

Basic themes. This term describes lowest-order themes that are derived from the textual data. They are simple premises or characteristic of the data, and on their own they say very little about the text (p. 386).

Organizing themes. These are middle-order themes that arrange the basic themes into clusters of similar issues (p. 386).

Global themes. These components are super-ordinate themes that encompass the principle metaphors in the data as whole. It is like a claim in that it is a concluding or final tenet (p. 386).

Working inward from basic themes to organizing themes, I was able to create a network of broader themes. My basic and organizing themes became the basis for my global themes (Turkistani, 2017). For the purpose of the pilot study and because of time constraints, I only included three of the major themes that emerged. Table 4 below shows how I interrelated my organizing categories into similar issues and networked them into global themes (Turkistani, 2017).

Table 4

Organizing Categories and Themes

Organizing categories	Global themes
Love for learning and experimenting with new ideas Modeling love for learning Pursuing certification as a teacher, ACTFL, IB Seeking IB PD and discourse with peers Accountability	Teacher as a lifelong learner
Collaboratively designing curriculum with students Giving them choice Student-centered classroom Student autonomy Active student role	Teacher as developer of student autonomy
Engaging students in identity discourse Engaging students in role of Arabic in future jobs Highlighting importance of language in bridging cultures Gearing activities to promote pride in identity and culture Modeling open-mindedness	Teacher giving purpose and relevance to learning Arabic

Pilot Study Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore the following question: How did the teacher get to that place in her teaching? Thematic networking of data as described in the previous section has suggested three traits were dominant.

Teacher as a lifelong learner. A noticeable trait that continuously kept reemerging in the data was the teacher's love for knowledge and professional development. In my first interview, I asked the teacher to talk about herself, and she responded, "I was a very good reader. I remember when I was in 10th grade most of the books at the library I read." On a similar note, in another interview she indicated that she

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published her work while in 11th grade. Also, the teacher kept saying that the opportunity for learning is incredible in the United States, and the reason they came here was for better schooling: "We came for better education." She indicated that due to family obligations, she had to decline a PhD acceptance from an Ivy League university. The following statements kept coming up: "Always, I like to develop myself," "No one will give you knowledge unless you seek it," and "I worked very hard to teach myself the concept of IB." When I asked the teacher to share her growth as a teacher in the United States, she said, "I had to stop and reflect on my teaching and how to cater for language learners in here." This was reflected in her ability to grasp the concept of IB pedagogy and successfully implement the program (Turkistani, 2017).

To adapt to the U.S. educational system, the teacher worked hard to obtain certification, which opened doors for her to join local and national workshops wherein she was offered the opportunity to pursue a year and a half intensive program to get certified as an oral proficiency interviewer (OPI) through ACTFL. Later, when her school adopted the IB program, she found it challenging to understand the subject-specific workshops presented in English. So, she decided to professionally collaborate with an English-speaking teacher in the school who was teaching HL as well. This first-year collaboration positively impacted her first-year results as an IB teacher. She indicated that,

> I believe in collaborating with other colleagues for the purpose of learning. We
> worked together even during evaluation periods, and we were still new in the
> program. She attended my class, I attended hers, and we both evaluated each

other's students, and we were both thrilled when our evaluation matched the IB external audit evaluation. Let me remind you this was my first year in IB.

Several times during the interview, the teacher indicated that her students were sources of knowledge and enrichment for her classroom teaching. This continuous need to pursue knowledge positively impacted her teaching. The aforementioned evidence showed that continuous learning was an integral part of the participant's personality that extended to all facets of her life, including teaching HL (Turkistani, 2017).

Teacher and student autonomy. Seeking students' points of view and encouraging them to help design the curriculum were core strategies mentioned in our interviews and were also evident during my classroom observations. Giving students' choice develops autonomy, which will eventually lead to intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2004). The way the learning community was designed allowed for students to work in close proximity; the small groups formed by the students themselves created a natural environment for dialogue to take place and for higher level thinking to develop (Vygotsky, 1978). The students were bouncing ideas off each other with the aim of reconvening and presenting their findings for us. A key element in the teacher's pedagogical philosophy was supporting students' voice and choice (Turkistani, 2017).

Encouraging student's own agency when developing language skills was crucial: "Becoming literate is a process not only of acquiring functional skills of decoding and encoding printed materials, but also of developing critical awareness and agency in one's own life" (Alvermann & Hinchman, 2012, p. 7). By extending the learning environment to include the students' own interests and selected materials, the teacher helped diminish

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the authoritative relationship that traditionally existed between teacher and students and helped students develop their own agency (Freire, 2012). Students constructed the curriculum with their teacher.

> Another thing, at the beginning of the year I start off by asking my students, what topic do you want to study, and I create a big list. The students feel happy with these own choices of topics and videos, and this becomes our curriculum . . . We arrange these topics based on students' interest. We don't have books.

So, it was evident that developing students' autonomy took many forms, and it emerged in the teacher's lesson plans, classroom discourse, and preparation for the year (Turkistani, 2017).

Purpose and relevance. The teacher used students' individual home cultures, community service, global issues, and commonality among humans as a vehicle to teach Arabic in a purposeful, relevant way. By presenting language in a student driven, goal-oriented, self-initiated learning style, the teacher was able to emphasize individualized inquiry questions. The teacher supported and facilitated such inquiry. In fact, she played the role of a coach, and her students became the creators of knowledge. According to Cambria and Guthrie (2010), there are two sides to reading; one side is the skills such as phonemic awareness, word recognition, and comprehension, and the other is students' willingness to read. My participant's students read, analyzed, presented, and owned their knowledge because they co-constructed their knowledge with the help of everyone in the classroom. In one of the interviews the teacher indicated,

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Students come up with very, very beautiful topics. We discuss most of them. We relate them to the students' lives, to our lives. We compare between here and living in our country of origin. It is very interesting, and students are very engaged.

The teacher anchored her curriculum around relevance and purposeful, meaningful teaching (Turkistani, 2017).

My ability to thoroughly describe the themes that emerged during my pilot study relied on the coding skills I gained during this process. For example, immediate interaction with data (i.e. writing side notes of key words that emerged while conducting interviews or actually being inside the classroom observing) helped me better understand how the teacher handled her daily routine and activities. These highlighted words labeled as codes geared me towards crafting future interview questions and digging deeper into documents to search for more emerging themes. At this point, I kept checking for patterns among all three sources of data collection (interviews, observations, documents). Finally, I color-coded similar codes and turned them into categories, which in turn supported emerging global themes. My aim was to ensure quality of outcomes and to stay as close as possible to the teacher's true story in teaching AHL.

Current Research Design

The design of the current research was a qualitative case study that was conceptually framed around a constructivist approach. It aimed to explore the classroom experiences and practices of an AHL teacher instructing second-generation immigrant

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Arabic HLL. The analysis was the same as my pilot study iterative and dependent on emergence of themes.

Patton (2015) noted that "a design is a plan" (p. 244). When Patton described the design/plan of research, he used words such as "not mechanical, non-linear, or set-in-stone," but as a process and a way of thinking (p. 244). He stressed that the researcher's knowledge of the design will unfold as it guides the process of gathering data, analyzing data, and reporting findings. Thus, my design and I evolved throughout this journey, where we both recognized that we have changed, learned, and developed together (Patton, 2015). The participant's story was across all elements of the design such as "research questions, selection criteria, interview style, analysis techniques, and countless other choices" (Reybold, et al., 2013, p. 700).

Stake (1995) noted, "Issues are not simple and clean, but intricately wired to political, social, historical, and especially personal context" (p. 17). Therefore, a design that allowed my research questions to evolve and take the shape of the realities perceived by the HL teacher and learners was what I was aiming for, or as Stake relayed, "The best research question evolves during the study" (1995, p. 33).

The combination of the simultaneous data collection and analysis process, the inductive iterations of meaning making approach, and the flexibility provided by the design to embrace emerging data, makes the qualitative case study method a good fit to study my participant's experience. Baxter and Jack (2008) asserted that a case study offers researchers the means to study a complex phenomenon within its context using a variety of data resources. To be able to reflect on the variety of discourse patterns,

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different levels of interaction inside the community of the HL classroom, body language, subtle choices, and decisions the teacher exhibits while teaching HL, necessitated a qualitative case study method that helped these factors to emerge and develop.

Thus, I chose a qualitative case study method for this research because writing on the different factors that intersected while teaching AHL was a mosaic and the experience warranted an in-depth investigation of its interwoven parts. The complexity of the phenomena required me to tease apart the qualitative data in hopes of discovering quality assertions. In an article on the sociocultural complexity associated with HL, He (2010) presented a body of research conducted from quantitative and qualitative perspectives. In conclusion, He noted, "Research will challenge us to reevaluate our unit of analysis from a single snap shot . . . to trajectories of growth and change over space and time for all participants" (p. 78). He's argument supported my choice of a qualitative approach for unfolding the complex and multi-layered issues that resided within the context of HL learning and teaching. A qualitative case study design helped me discover realities that existed within this phenomenon.

Site Selection

The site for this AHL study was a K-12 Arabic English bilingual school. The school was an authorized 6-12 International Baccalaureate (IB) school serving a population of around 800 Arab diplomats' and Arab/Muslim American community of children in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. The school's state of the art design was conducive to promoting student-centered, inquiry-based learning. The school was designed to provide separate gender-specific learning communities from grades 5-12.

In fact, my participant teaches in two 11th and 12th grade learning communities; one for boys and one for girls. Both learning communities have large technologically equipped rooms designed to foster optimum interaction among learners, smaller areas for individual tutoring or smaller group discussion, and a central space where students can use rolling white boards to present their findings to the whole class. It should be noted here that this research is a continuation of a pilot study I conducted earlier. I self-selected this site because this is where my participant worked, and I continued with both site and participant for my dissertation research as well.

In addition to the school's mission, the IBO mission is woven into the school's culture. IBO aims to "develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect." (IBO, 2018). The program serves students ages 3-19. My participant is involved in teaching at the diploma program (DP).

The IB continuum includes three programmes,

- The Primary Years Programme (PYP) for students ages 3-12
- The Middle Years Programme (MYP) for students ages 11-16 (grades 5-10)
- The Diploma Programme (DP) for students ages 16-19 (grades 11-12)

DP is taught during junior and senior years. The curricula for these years are made up of DP core and six subject groups. The students are to pick six subjects from the following subject group: studies in language and literature, language acquisition, individual and societies, sciences, mathematics, and the arts. For the purpose of obtaining the full diploma, students must finish three subjects at the standard level (SL), junior

year, and three others as higher level (HL) subjects during their senior year. In addition, as requirements for attaining full IB dimploma, students must finish DP core: A Theory of Knowledge course that focuses on philosophy of learning and the meaning of truth; 150-hours of creativity, activity, service; and a 4000 extended research essay on one of the six subject groups. Teaching at the DP level is focused on global contexts and developing international mindedness.

One of the main documents shared in the IBO continuum is the IB learner profile; the outcomes for these guidelines are critical and flexible thinking, applying and creating knowledge, risk taking, global competence, open-mindedness, caring, and being principled. The IBO constructive approach applies inquiry-based practices such as project-based learning, and in depth, real-world problem solving with values based on equity, tolerance and social responsibilities.

Under the subject group language acquisition, my participant's school offers Arabic as HL or Language B as recognized by IBO. According to the IBO *Language B guide* (2013), one of the factors that determines proficiency for Language B is "languages spoken at home" (International Baccalaureate, 2013, p. 7). At this site, my participant teaches standard level (SL) and higher level (HL) Arabic B. The unit of teaching specifies assessment objectives and language acquisition skills. These skills should be developed through the study and use of a range of written and spoken materials; these materials should be relevant to the culture concerned. The Language B syllabus approaches the learning of the language through meaning and relevance while aspiring to connect local topics to global ones.

Participant Selection

As mentioned in Chapter 1, according to Patton (2015), my participant was considered a teaching case. "A high impact case may become a teaching case: an in-depth case study that offers much deep insight into a phenomenon that serves as a source of substantial illumination" (p. 275). Since the objective of this study was to present the greatest amount of information about AHL teaching and learning, "A representative case of random sample may not be the most appropriate strategy. This is because the typical or average case is often not the richest in information" (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 229). For this study, I used Patton's purposeful sampling:

> The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling. (p. 170)

I selected this teacher as a teaching case for AHL teaching and as a participant for several reasons. Not only has she been teaching the Arabic language for over thirty years, but she is consistently engaging herself in professional development. She is a recognized language expert in the wider academic community, teaching at local universities and supporting government needs for Arabic language instruction.

When her school adopted the rigorous International Baccalaureate (IB) program in 2009, she sought out Language B training. The Arabic Language B program offered in this school is a language program mandated by the IB. The Language B program is designed to include both the interactive, student-centered, constructivist instructional

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practices and the learners' own way of knowing and learning the language and the world surrounding them. For the past six years, 87% of my participant's 104 diploma candidate students have earned a 6:7 or 7:7 on their IB Arabic B externally graded exams.

In 2010, to better assess her students, this teacher was certified as a tester for the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). She took on the role of IB examiner in 2013. In 2015, she was one of four Arabic teachers selected from around the world to go to Cardiff, Wales to define a new outline and standards to be implemented in 2019. It is this commitment to continuous self-improvement that distinguishes this teacher as an exemplar.

In addition to her job as an IB AHL teacher, this teacher held and continues to hold teaching positions at top universities in the metropolitan area. Currently, she teaches two introductory level Arabic courses at one of the local universities. She has a very strong working relationship with the America Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and an Ivy League university program that offers Arabic to government officials in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. The results she has garnered, and the kind of work ethic she exhibits, are the bases for these organizations to offer her full-time positions. Yet, because of the love she has for her current school and students, she decided to work only part time with these organizations.

Procedure

Although my pilot study finished toward the end of the semester, I continued visiting the school. For convenience purposes, I observed the girls' section until the end of the year. Their period was the first in the morning, and it gave me enough time to get

back to my afternoon classes. I conducted several lengthy interviews. I literally sat with the teacher and reviewed students' work. These documents prompted me to ask more questions. My interviews became more of a conversation than a formal interview. I was able to listen to three of her students' end-of-year Oral Commentary audio recorded tests. These tests are mandated by the IB programs and moderated externally by the organization. Listening to these tapes opened up a different level of dialogue between me and the teacher. These types of classroom visits, interviews and documents collected set the stage for my dissertation data collection. The meetings and interactions I had with my participant during my pilot study helped refine our already existing relationship and familiarized her with the process. The process I used for my current research included multiple sources of information; these sources offered an authentic picture of my participant's teaching experiences.

For the present study, I started off my data collection process by calling the participant; the phone call was to inform the participant of my intention to continue working with her. I again read her rights to withdraw from this research at any time and thanked her for her cooperation. Once she agreed to continue, I asked her permission to allow me to visit her during the semester. I discussed with her that my intention was to observe the flow of a full unit of teaching. These observations helped me focus on finding data for the following research questions: In what ways does learning occur in the context of AHL? What steps does the teacher take to identify and implement specific strategies and how does she measure their effectiveness? How does the participant determine usefulness and effectiveness of these strategies? How does the participant perceive her

role as an AHL teacher? (see

Appendix A and B for the IRB approval letter and consent form).

I wanted to observe her in two different levels, a 90-minute block for the 11th grade and a 90-minute block for the 12th grade. The reason for this was to find rich data about her strategy choices. By attending these two different level classes, I hoped to form a rich description of how learning occurs in the context of AHL. My focus during these observations was on what strategies were used to develop the four skills of the languages in these AHL classrooms.

After this visit, I read the IB *Language B guide* (International Baccalaureate, 2013) for teaching the HL. The reason for looking into this document was to find answers for my research question stating: "What background influenced the participant's instructional choices?" This question would also be answered through interviews conducted once a week. The interviews focused on finding data for what background experiences influenced the participant's instructional choices and how she perceived her role as an AHL teacher.

Another document that helped answer my research question about strategy choices and teaching approaches was the teacher's lesson plans. For the purpose of this research, and in addition to the *Language B guide* (International Baccalaureate, 2013), the teacher's lesson plans were coded. Table 5 shows a timeline for the research process.

Table 5

Research Timeline

Tasks and procedures	Duration and time	Remarks
Initial phone interview	Depended on teacher schedule no less than an hour	Discussed purpose, shared unit flow chart, shared observation chart, set dates for classroom visits
In person interview	Depended on teacher schedule	Reiterated purpose, Answered questions Reminded her that the purpose is to observe how AHL instruction is being conducted in her classroom.
Classroom observation	First 90-minute block of the week	How does learning occur in the context of AHL? What strategies are being implemented? Teacher lesson plan Read *Language B guide* to assess alignment with teaching practices
Coding	Next few days	Interacted with texts, transcribed, dissected text to manageable chuncks. Looked for basic themes. Looked for organizing themes if evident
Classroom observation	Second 90-minute block of the week	Focused on RQs and teacher's strategies. Got documents as needed including lesson plans
Interview	After second observation	Interviewed and asked for supporting documents
Coding	Next few days	Transcribed, dissected text to manageable segments basic themes Looked for evidence of organizing themes Rearranged basic themes and used them to come up with organizing themes Checked for emergence of global themes.
This process continued until the end of the unit.	8 weeks	Until I came up with themes that described my research questions
Culminating interview	As long as time permits	Focused on student language acquisition, progress, and final results.

Each one of the methods that I coded and used for this process, whether through interviews, observations, or documents review, targeted answering my research questions. Initial open coding segments of the texts were networked as basic themes; these basic themes were organized into larger organizing themes and eventually led me to find larger global themes. The thematic network analysis process continued throughout this process.

Table 6 shows the methods and data resources which addressed the research questions. This again was only a preliminary sketch of the process that changed as I moved forward based on the coding process. Any changes were reported and justified in the results section.

Table 6

Research Questions and Data Resources

Research Questions	Method	Data Resources
In what ways does learning occur in the context of AHL and what background experiences influenced the participant's instructional choices?	Thematic networking	Classroom observations Interviews IBO documents Lesson plans
What background experiences influenced the participant's instructional choices?	Thematic networking	Interviews IBO documents Lesson plans
What steps does the participant take to identify and implement specific strategies used to teach AHL?	Thematic networking	Classroom observations, Lesson plans, Students work, Interviews
How does the participant determine usefulness and effectiveness of these strategies?	Thematic networking	Classroom observations Lesson plans Students work Interviews
How does the participant perceive her role as an AHL teacher?	Thematic networking	Interviews Observations

Data Collection

Data was collected from three different sources: interviews: participant,

observations, and documents. These sources helped me achieve quality in my findings. I

used three data collection methods for this study to see if the phenomenon observed or

the case studied stays "the same at other times, in other spaces, or as persons interact

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differently" (Stake, 1995, p. 112). It should be noted here that the main source of data was the interviews.

My query started with open-ended interview questions: "Tell me about what happened or how you came to . . . ?" (Charmaz, 2003, p.315). Then, I supported my inquiry by doing classroom observations and document analysis. These supportive data collection tools helped me refine my follow-up interview questions. Additionally, observations and documents analysis helped support the themes that emerged from the interviews. Since the process was iterative, "This sequence was repeated several times during (the) research project" (Charmaz, 2003, p. 312). The cycle of studying data was as such: I would go back to the the field to gather more focused data through targeted interview questions, observations, and document analysis. In addition, I would be doing more literature reviews as needed to answer some questions regarding my findings. The range of my interview topics and questions thus became narrower and more specific as I moved forward in my research trajectory (Charmaz, 2003).

I used my research questions as an open-ended framework that led to the discovery of the teacher's instructional practices. My four research questions guided me to mine my data repeatedly to find themes that described the teacher's classroom context, teaching strategies, assessment methods and perspectives. My repeated process of networking similar codes and going back again to reread the data gradually unfolded findings that described the essence of each research questions. I continually checked alignment between the research questions, methods, and emergent themes throughout the analysis and interpretation.

I used an iterative process to comb through my data. At each iteration of the process, I was able to make changes to the networking of my themes. Using this constructive iterative research process answered my questions without preconceived assumptions. My systemization helped prevent standardization of my data.

To illustrate, here is an example of the emergence of one of my basic themes. When I was reading the *Language B guide* (International Baccalaureate, 2013), I noticed that the IB program focused on providing meaningful language opportunities for learners. The program did not prescribe the curriculum, but it provided general topics that the teacher and her students could select to create a curriculum. The mission of the IB emphasized strong communication skills and global interactions. These words sparked an interest in me. I read my research questions and saw a link between meaningful language and context. When I entered the classroom to see how the program's objectives were met, I noticed the elements of meaningful language within the teacher's classroom context. I took notes of how the Arabic language was used in the class as a meaningful media for interaction. I observed my participant's strategies, activities, and teaching approach. I saw how she was using the Socratic seminar to start a thought-provoking discussion. After my two observations for 11th and 12th grade, I interviewed the teacher.

To be able to see beyond the obvious, I had my participant comment on certain scenarios from the class. I asked her to comment on how she was teaching research skills and why she wanted her students to use survey for data collection. She responded that surveys gave authenticity to their research; the research became meaningful and relevant when it involved this kind of expressive data. I immediately began to notice words that

would serve as potential, telling open codes: "meaningful," "communication," "global citizen" (from the documents) and "authentic," "relevant" (from discussions, observation notes and interviews). These codes were networked as a web to create a basic theme. This non-linear process led me to dive deeply into my data to answer my research questions in a descriptive way. The emergent theme created an aha moment. So, she teaches language in a meaningful way; I saw the web of codes revealing this theme.

This is only one example of how a theme emerged to describe the teacher's AHL context. Research question 1 states, "In what ways does learning occur in the context of AHL, and what background experiences influenced the participant's instructional choices?" In this case, there is no mention of the theme "language context is meaningful." My research question did not dictate the outcome of "language taught in a meaningful way." The question was not used used to hypothesize that the context was meaningful, but rather the theme emerged and described what the context was.

The process did not stop here but was repeated every time a new set of data was collected. Most of the time, the linking of codes in a web unfolded findings that described one of the four areas I stated in my research questions. But sometimes they did not. In these situations, I relied on the cognitive interview. I used emergent probes to elicit information from the teacher. I also read, reread and combed through my data.

Interviews. Qualitative interviews are used in social science research to investigate varieties of human experiences. The method serves as a way to understand the world from the subject's point of view and unfold meaning of the participant's daily

experiences. Through interviews, participants share personal experiences, lay their private lives open, and disclose information for the researcher (Kvale, 2006).

Kvale (2006) discussed the asymmetrical power relationship of the interview and objects to using the word dialogue by stating that "referring to the interview as dialogue is misleading" (p. 483). He defended his point by listing seven different motives behind the interview dialogues that present power dynamics and noted that it is "a one-way dialogue, an instrumental and indirect conversation, where the interviewer upholds a monopoly of interpretation" (p. 484).

Although the relationship between myself and my participant was built on mutual trust and respect, I wanted to choose a protocol that supported both my conceptual framework and my participant's experiences. In light of this concern, I decided to use the Platonic Dialogue mentioned in Kvale (2006). According to Kvale, the interview process is described as a "conversation where two persons understand each other, where it is not the will of the individual that matters but a law of the subject matter" (p. 486). Having said this, the flow of the interview was based on mutual reflections between my participant and myself. The statements in the documents and scenes from the observations played against each other until we both reached an agreement. The aim was to unfold the participant's version of the reality as existed in her classroom. As described by Kvale, the research interview is no longer understood as "via regia to an authentic interviewee and interviewer but becomes a conversation that stimulate the themes, potentially increasing knowledge of a common themes of interest" (p. 486). Here is a set of questions from my interview protocol that supported the Platonic Dialogue approach.

1) Can you share with me a time where you felt your classroom activity was engaging?

2) Can we both define engaging before we move forward. What does it mean to you?

   a. Interesting. Can you walk me through this interesting classroom activity you mentioned?

   b. What kind of questions did students ask?

When explaining qualitative interviewing, Charmaz (2003) stated that interviews help elicit data in a flexible way that provide opportunities for ideas and issues to emerge. As a result, "Interviewers can then immediately pursue these leads" (p. 312). With this process in mind, my initial interview protocol included a set of lead-off questions. During the process, I jotted down some newly formed questions that emerged within the realm of my research questions (Carspecken, 1996). Then, coupled with other forms of data, my follow-up-interview questions became more specific and targeted. The interview questions at later points included "definitions of terms, situations and events, and tapped the participant's assumptions, implicit meanings, and tacit rules" (Charmaz, 2003, p. 317). The questions were built on what had been observed inside the classroom and what was revealed through observations and document analysis. The nature of the open-ended interview questions and the multiple sequential interviews got me closer to the phenomenon (Charmaz, 2003). In addition, I also used a form of interview called cognitive interview.

My goal was not to study the participant's processes, but rather her perspectives of teaching. Although, for the most part, my interviews were generalist, I still used some aspects of cognitive interview. I used this type of interview protocol to confirm the constructivist framework I developed. My research questions did not focus on studying a process, but I still used it to ensure the quality of my findings. That is to say, what I understood was reflective of the participants' experiences. Cognitive interview is a form of a qualitative method that emerged as one of the tools used to identify and correct problems with survey questions. Beatty and Willis (2007) stated that cognitive interview is a method used to collect additional verbal information about survey responses. It is used "to help determine whether the question is generating the information that its author intends" (p. 287). With this point in mind, I used a form of cognitive interview that was more of a "probing centered paradigm" (p. 293). This form of interview helped me elicit information that may not emerge unless I asked more focused questions. In justifying this type of interview, Beatty and Willis noted that it may generate verbal materials that "may not emerge unless a cognitive interviewer specifically asks for it" (p. 294). The authors stated four types of probes: anticipated probes, spontaneous probes, conditional probes and emergent probes. This current study relied heavily on emergent probes; as I observed the teacher instructing her class, I looked for specific scenarios that helped me elicit her strategies. I used this method of probing to get to the process and different teaching strategies she used to teach the language. Here is an example of the process:

ME: I noticed as I was observing your reading lesson today that you were using root words to further explain the meaning of the words, for example: "Taaleem."

Can you explain why and what is the benefit of using this strategy?

The aim here was to find out what vocabulary teaching strategies she used, why she used it and its impact on language development. Most of my probes helped focus on the teacher's process and behavior, and it came from observations, documents, and students' work. This means that interviews were my main source of data, and observations, documents and students' work were considered supporting data.

So, these interviews served as tools to help me, the researcher, look for potential themes, develop understanding of the context my participant was operating within, and identify trustworthiness of claims that point to subjectivity. Through interviews we "maximize what we can learn" (Stake, 1995, p. 4). For the purpose of this project, I conducted as many interviews as needed and allowed; they were transcribed, analyzed, and included in the findings. (see attached protocol in Appendix C).

I informed the participant that I was planning to interview her after the last block of observation for the week. The purpose of the interview was to discuss why, how and when certain things were usually done in her classes; this technique would reveal the process and strategies used to teach AHL. The meeting was designed to find out what influenced her decisions. I also aimed during these interviews to unfold any background experiences that led to her choices. It was a way to check on the authenticity of the data that I gathered and how these sources truly reflected the teacher's experiences. With my research questions in mind, the conversations unfolded realities that were hard to observe in class or see in texts.

Observations. In an effort to gain a fine-grained understanding of this AHL teachers' pedagogical practices, I chose observations as a source of data collection. These in-depth experiences served as interview prompts and helped me establish quality in my study. For example, if the participant stated that she ensured a safe classroom environment to promote AHL, I focused my attention during my observation to check for the trustworthiness of such data. As themes emerged during classroom discourse, I compared them to my interview transcripts. I asked for elaboration and explanation to focus on my participant's experiences.

Observations took me inside this AHL teacher's tacit and implicit norms that took place on a daily basis. A teacher's classroom management, daily routine, philosophies, views, attitudes, and teacher-student rapport may be revealed during these observations. Therefore, a qualitative observation means "finding good moments to reveal the unique complexity of the case" (Stake, 1995, p. 63).

To help me focus, I created a chart. The chart started with listing engagement activities. These were activities the teacher did for motivational and preparation purposes. Then, there was a section on the connection between activities. The third section centered on assessments, and the unit ended with a culminating activity. This chart highlighted the teacher's range of activities conducted throughout the unit. On the side, I took notes.

Since language teaching revolves around developing the four main skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), the breakdown of these main skills into sub-skills and how they are scaffolded in class was carefully observed. Through data analysis and interpretation, these sub-skills were incorporated within the research process. For

example, the teacher's strategies were assessed as a means of developing these sub-skills, (author's purpose, context clues, reading graphs, voice, etc.). This process was applied to all main skills of language acquisition.

Document analysis. Stake (1995) stated that qualitative researchers study the uniqueness of individual cases and treat its context as an important part of understanding the phenomenon. For them "particularization is an important aim, coming to know the particulars of the case" (p. 39). Thus, three types of documents were used to help me understand the particulars of my case and to contextualize it. To understand my participant's educational setting, which is the IB program, I studied the IB philosophy, mission and vision, IB learners' profile, and the IB language documents, specifically Language B documents. These documents gave an overview of the program used by the teacher. It was data needed to find out what influenced her choice of strategies or ways of approaching language teaching. I studied the teacher's lesson plans and looked at student's work from the perspective of what strategies/educational approaches were used to enforce language skills. According to Yin (2016), students' work "can go a long way toward helping you to understand the content of instructional lessons occurring in the classroom" (p. 155). The teacher's lesson plan and the IBO language documents were coded to find out themes for teacher's background experiences.

Data Analysis

For my pilot study, I conducted several rounds of data analysis, which merged in the process of data collection. As a new researcher in the qualitative field, my repertoire of coding to find basic themes using Attride-Stirling (2001) thematic networking was

challenging. My interviews, observations, and document analysis served as prompts for data gathering and data analysis (Turkistani, 2017).

As for my current research, I also continued to use the same iterative process and thematic networks. Attride-Stirling (2001) stated that applying this tool is "simply a way of organizing a thematic analysis of qualitative data" (p. 387). These thematic networks were a way to help me go from text to interpretation. The process systemizes the extraction from basic themes that are first evident in the text, then groups these themes into organizing themes; finally, a super-ordinate theme "encapsulates the principle metaphors" in the text as global themes emerged (p. 388) as presented below.
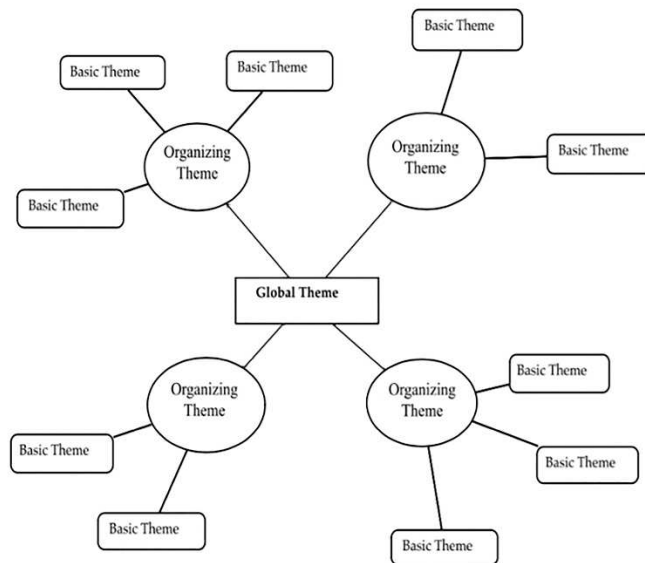
Figure 2. Structure of a thematic network. From "Thematic Networks: An Analytic Tool for Qualitative Research," by J. Attride-Sterling, 2001, *Qualitative Review, 1*(3), 385-405. Copyright 2001 by SAGE Publishing Inc.

The process for my analysis started immediately. Every Friday I would come home, transcribe the interview and code the texts. By the end of the 8-week period, I was able to look at my data again and come up with over 498 codes; these codes were networked into 26 basic themes. These themes were then networked into nine organizing themes to answer my research questions. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic networks were constructed to look at the data to understand the participant's role as an AHL teacher (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The following description outlines the process.

As soon as I completed my data collection, I started the process of thematic analysis and established codes in order to construct the thematic networks. Attride-Stirling (2001) described the process as involving two stages. Stage 1 is the break down or reduction stage, and Stage 2 involves description and exploration of thematic networks. The following section provides a step by step overview of the analysis.

Stage one. My initial coding started with familiarizing myself with the data as soon as it was gathered (i. e. reading, rereading, highlighting words that jumped out at me). I pulled out meaning from my 498 codes into chunks of words or phrases that were similar. I used open coding, a process of giving meaning to the codes based on my research questions. I looked at each one of my questions and arranged my codes into meaningful groups. For example, my research question related to the context included words or statements that reflected the teacher's classroom management, classroom activities, strategies, and teaching approach. Under the assessment research question, I looked for words or statements that reflected ways of checking for understanding and

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tools used by the participant for evaluation purposes. My research question pertaining to my participant's ways of perceiving her role as an AHL teacher included words and phrases such as "I love," and "I believe." These words described the essence of the teacher's experiences.

Step one: Coding. At this point I had almost 498 codes. These codes were verbatim from the text. I mined interviews, documents (IBO mission, the *Language B guide* [International Baccalaureate, 2013], teacher lesson plans, grade books) and my classroom observation notes. I used open coding; the codes encapsulated the essence of the experience and what I was studying (Saldaña, 2009). My coding included one to two word labels that expressed the teacher's beliefs, teaching approach, interest, and assessment preferences in the context of teaching AHL.

Step two: Identifying themes. At this point, I reduced the texts into manageable segments and basic themes, on the basis of my research questions and any salient issues that arose. I refined my themes and narrowed them; the following table includes basic themes for my research questions.

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Table 7

Initial Themes for Each Research Question

Research question 1	Research question 2	Research question 3	Research question 4
Language is relevant	IBO guide	IBO exams,	Guardian
Language is	Level appropriate	criteria	Role model
communication	Students' interest	Strong receptive skills	Extra-curricular coach
Agency in driving	backgrounds	Strong productive skills	Educational coach
design	Vocabulary in context	Continuous assessment	Start with self first
Agency in voicing	Scaffolding genre	Self-assessing tools	Respect individuality
opinion	Focused follow up	Individual conferences	Respect authenticity
Agency in setting goals			
Vocabulary fundamental			
Focus on comprehension			
All leads to scholarly			
writings			

Then I combed through my data and networked these basic themes into a cluster of themes that described AHL context; the teacher's beliefs, background, and choice of effective practices; determining assessment tools; and her role as an AHL instructor. I identified themes out of these dissected data into organizing themes. As I was moving forward, I defined these themes. Then I constructed thematic networks. My basic themes were rearranged into organizing themes from which I deduced answers for my research questions. The following section describe the themes that answered my research questions.

Stage two: Describing themes. Once I was done with the analysis, I started the next step of describing and exploring the network. Going back to the original texts, I started reading deeper into the meaning of the words. In other words, "The themes that emerged now have to be explored, identifying the patterns that underlie them" (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 393). At this point, the themes were not read in a linear manner; they

were read through my research questions, organizing themes and basic themes. This process brought about the data and the interpretation and the analysis. At first, I only compared incidents in transcriptions to honor the participant's voice (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw,1995). Then, I arranged these codes into categories. My analysis involved grouping these categories by relevance. I used the findings to describe emerging themes.

Through this process, I identified the emergence of organizing groups (approximately 26 organizing themes). These are middle-order themes that organize the basic topics into clusters of similar issues" (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 389).

After placing my organizing themes, I used my resaserch questions as global themes. Global themes are superordinate and provided both a summary of the basic and organizing themes, as well as revealing interpretations of the findings (Attride- Stirling, 2001).

Research question 1 states, "In what ways does learning occur in the context of AHL? And what background experiences influenced the participant's instructional choices?" This question focused on describing and explaining the context of the AHL classroom and what influenced the teachers' choices. I networked my basic themes that were relevant to how language was taught inside the participant's classroom. Why did she choose to teach in this way? How was language presented? What role did the students play? What background experiences influenced the teacher?

Through this process, three major themes emerged. One was that language was a living breathing thing. Two, students were active participants, and they were driving classroom instruction. Three, language skills were built gradually to achieve quality in

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productive skills (writing and speaking) as required by IBO. The teacher first targeted her instruction to develop receptive skills (listening and reading) comprehension, which eventually paved the way for her students to develop fluency in speaking and writing as shown in Figure 3.
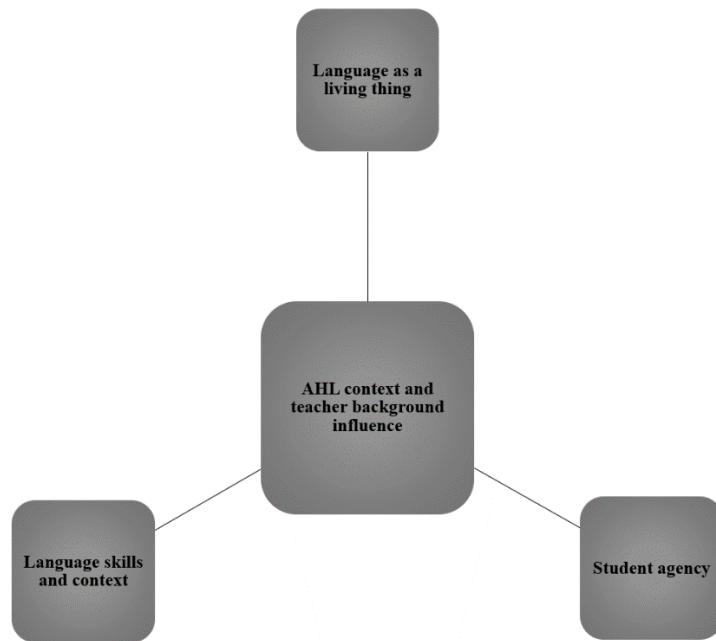
Figure 3. Thematic network for research question 1.

Research question 2 states, "What steps does the participant take to identify and implement specific strategies used for AHL?" As I was answering this question, I kept looking for the way the teacher chose and designed her materials. I also looked for ways the teacher identified her choices. As I networked my basic themes, two themes emerged; one of these themes was designing the materials. This theme encompassed several basic themes, such as using IBO guide, students' interest levels, and students' background. The

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second theme was the implementation of the design, which embraced types of genres used, vocabulary approaches, and checking for understanding. Figure 4 shows the networking process.
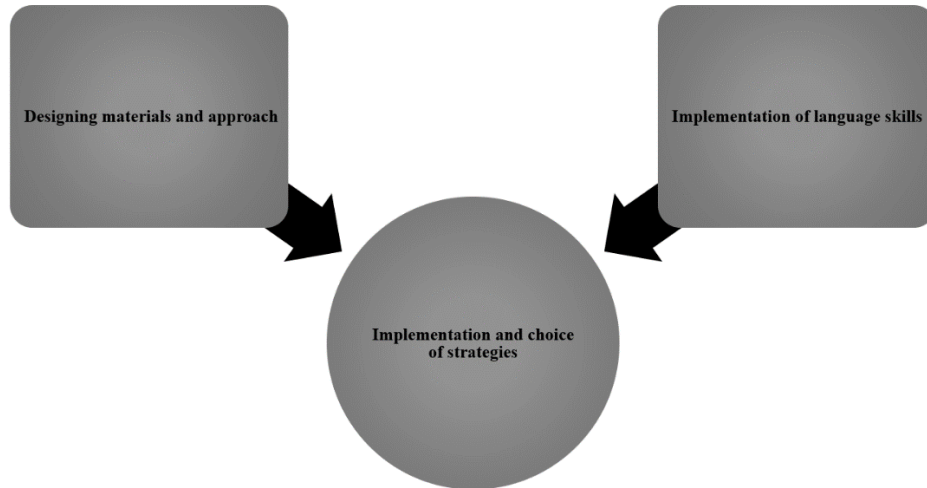
Figure 4. Thematic network for research question 2.

Research question 3 states: "How does the participant determine usefulness and effectiveness of strategies?" I wanted to investigate the teacher's ability to determine if the strategies she was using produced desirable results. In other words, how are her students meeting objectives set by the school and the program for learning AHL? I networked the following basic themes: IBO exam, criteria, strong receptive skills, strong productive skills, continuous assessment, self-assessment tools, and individual conferences. Two major themes emerged, including summative assessment and formative assessment. These two themes helped answer my research question which served as a

global theme while the research question guided the interpretation of these themes (see Figure 5).
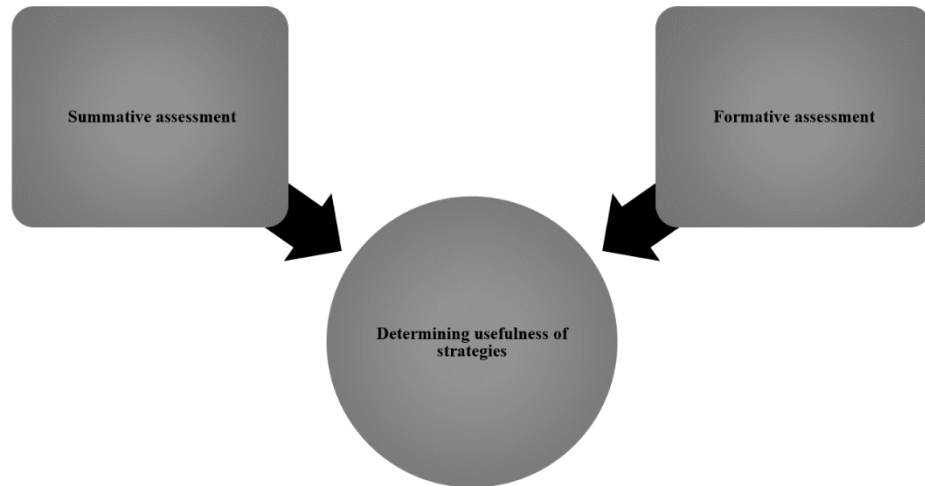
Figure 5. Thematic network for research question 3.

Research question 4 states, "How does the participant perceive her role as an AHL teacher?" To answer this question, I relied on networking the following basic themes: guardian, role model, extra-curricular coach, educational coach, start with self, respect individuality, and respect authenticity. These were networked into two major themes: teacher wearing so many hats and teacher advocating for her students' both academic and personal growth as shown in Figure 6.

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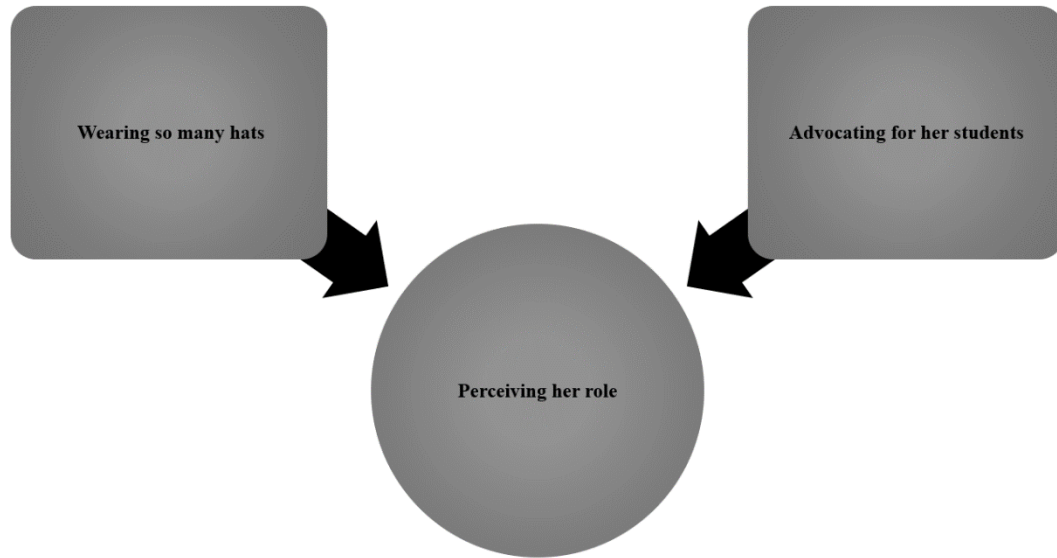
Figure 6. Thematic network for research question 4.

To create a framework for my analysis and to systematize the process without distorting emergent rich meanings, I kept this quote in mind: "When you code, construct patterns, certainly-but do not let those one or two codes that do not fit anywhere frustrate you . . . Use these fragments as stimuli for deep reflections" (Saldaña, 2014, p. 7). When the teacher drifted and talked about personal issues, I allowed it to happen. I gave her all the time needed to share what was important to her. I did not try to fit codes into any of the categories. I used these basic themes and categories to think deeply about my data.

For the purpose of being fair to my participant, I decided to go back to all my data from day one, including my pilot study, and mine through them to find global themes. I wanted to summarize my findings and make sure that I did not neglect any salient information. The same process above was used to look for basic themes that were then

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clustered into organizing themes. Finally, I was able to see the emergence of one global theme as a summary of all my findings.

Since all my data was coded, I used these sources to arrive at basic themes. The basics themes of making language meaningful; meeting IBO standards; the impact of IB on her, on her students, and on the curriculum; her heritage background; and the influence of living in the United States were arranged into three organizing themes. The following organizing themes were networked: overarching goals, teacher, student and IB, local and overseas connection. Finally, I went back to the data and read it again and again for deeper meaning. I looked for "a claim that it (was) a concluding or final tenet" (Attride-Stirling, p. 386). One global theme emerged through networking (see Figure 7).
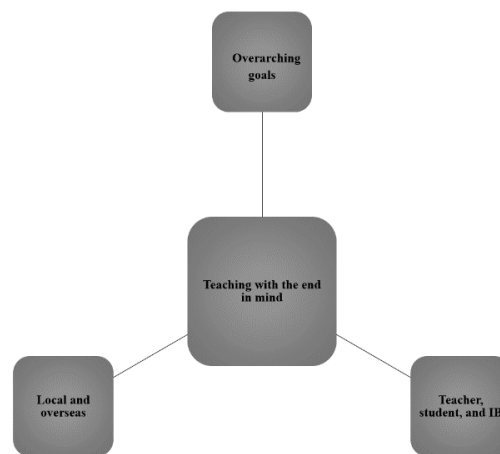
Figure 7. Networking summary of findings.

Quality

As I conducted analysis, I realized that having a clear system was very important to me. But I was aware that being sensitive to my participant's true story was what distinguished my research as being more authentic.

Achieving quality in research is a continuous process meaning it starts with knowing one's epistemological and ontological beliefs. I am a constructivist; to me truth is relative. My paradigm "recognizes the importance of the subjective human creation of meaning but does not reject outright some notion of objectivity" (Miller & Crabtree, 1999, p. 10).

The choice of design, the crafting of the methods of collecting data, research questions, and data analysis should complement each other. For me, quality was contextual. Constantly re-examining the rigor of my methods (Patton, 2015), being aware of my epistemological beliefs, and being attentive to my participant's story and voice (Reybold, et al., 2013) were my guides throughout my research journey. Just as I did in my pilot study, I used more than one means to arrive at my findings. I compared and cross-checked the consistency of information derived at different times from different means (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). This strategy helped me watch for indications of emerging themes and patterns in every source of data that I collected and across all my data. In addition, awareness of my own constructivist conceptual framework helped me filter my data with mindfulness of what covers my critical lens (Saldaña, 2014). I aligned my choices of methods and analysis to my conceptual frame, which was influenced by theory (Charmaz, 2004; Stake, 1995).

To address quality in my dissertation research study, I would like to talk about my subjectivity, assumptions, and bias toward verifications. I would like to reflect on my process as an indication of transparency.

Subjectivity

The ultimate goal of every qualitative researcher is to achieve trustworthiness. In my research I use the definition of trustworthiness provided by Harrison, MacGibbon, and Morton (2001); *trustworthiness* means "the ways we work to meet the criteria of validity, credibility, and believability of our research" (p. 324).

My method of site and participant selection were two areas my professor pointed out in my research. In her remarks, she indicated the possibility for future trustworthiness issues as I proceeded, and she recommended that I revisit my choices and defend them well. Freeman (2000) presented several thought-provoking questions that need to be answered before selecting a site and participants: "What I meant by know, who I thought should do the knowing, and where I thought this knowledge could be found?" (p. 360). The answer for question one (What I meant by know?) was extensively explained earlier as a researcher having a constructivist lens into the world and aware of her epistemological and ontological beliefs. To answer questions 2 and 3, I would like to start by sharing the following: Stake (1995) used the term *intrinsic.* According to Stake (1995), when a researcher has a genuine interest and the intent is to better understand the case, it is worth investing as a case study. For me the case itself is of interest.

Reflecting on Freeman's (2000) questions has helped me focus on why I chose this particular participant and her setting. To start with I kept asking myself, "What do I

want to know?" So, I went as far back as I could remember on how the relationship between me and my participant had developed. My interest in this particular teacher started when we were colleagues; we used to serve on lunch duty and several other committees. Being a reserved personality, it took her awhile to open up. I used to be the one who initiated conversations about daily life matters and about our profession as teachers. I was always impressed by her strong work ethic and sincere passion toward her students. Students used to come to her during lunch for help, and her interactions with them was very professional.

My relationship with this teacher did not surpass a professional colleague rapport; especially given the fact that very soon I become her principal. Respect between us was mutual, though. In my role as head of the school, I was able to notice her growth and her ability to quickly and effectively embrace a rigorous and demanding program concept such as the International Baccalaureate. Her work was reflected in the external IB results; she was able to achieve outstanding results teaching Arabic as a HL.

Being part of this Arabic English bilingual school, I was always fascinated by how the Arabic teachers were able to not only teach but instill in the children the love for Arabic. I noticed how proud the parents were and how many hurdles and obstacles they had to overcome to put their children in this school. I knew that several families commuted for over an hour to get to the school, and they worked two jobs and struggled to pay tuition. With this in mind, I always advocated for a strong Arabic program comparable to the English program provided in the school.

As a doctoral student, I became more interested in the area of HL and its

importance. I read research advocating and stressing the importance of maintaining heritage languages or home spoken languages. As indicated in my literature review, there exists a gap and a paucity of empirical research in the area of effective Arabic as a AHL teaching. This is when I realized that what I want to know is *how best to teach Arabic for Arab children born in the United States,* where English is their first language.

Although my choice for my participant and her setting was based on purposive selection, I still made sure there existed some external evaluations that vouched for her being an information rich teacher that resided in an Arabic teaching school. The following paragraphs address my selection decision.

My main objective was to select a case that was information rich and lended itself to providing quality data. Since I was mainly looking for an expert AHL teacher from whom I could learn the craft of teaching, this teacher, whose work I watched for over fifteen years was an ideal choice. I used Patton's (2015) description for a teaching case to guide me in my search: "A high impact case may become a teaching case: an in-depth case study that offers much deep insight into a phenomenon that serves as a source of substantial illumination" (p. 275). Again, I will reiterate since the objective of this study was to present the greatest amount of exemplar information about AHL teaching and learning, "A representative case or random sample may not be the most appropriate strategy. This is because the typical or average case is often not the richest in information" (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 229). Consequently, I selected a teacher that fit the criteria of an exemplar AHL teacher. Because the IB organization is an external,

impartial reviewer of teacher's performance, I relied on its end-of-year students' summative exam results for my participant's selection.

Not only has this particular teacher been an instructor of the Arabic language for over thirty years, but she is consistently engaging herself in professional development. So, my participant was a teacher who I worked with in different capacities. She was someone I highly respected for her integrity, work ethic, and passion.

I acknowledge as a friend and previous administrator that I had my own view of this teacher's performance, and I am considered an insider. However, this subjectivity helped me bring social reality into my participant's experience (Flyvbjerg, 2006). According to Stake (1995), I am the instrument of my research and my input during all phases of the research is valued. I view my subjectivity as an instrument that helped shape my research.

Assumptions and bias towards verification. To enhance trustworthiness of my findings, I used peer debrief (Carspecken, 1996). It is a well-known practice used to respond to threats to credibility and quality inherent in my design. In my pilot study, my peer reviewer was from a completely different field, and her passion was quantitative methodology. Our two completely opposing views served me well in locating my biases. This method helped me uncover taken-for-granted biases and assumptions on my part as a researcher (Patton, 2015). From my experience working with her, I noticed that although our two views conflicted harshly, eventually we both saw our shortcomings as researchers. Reybold, et al. (2013) stated, "We must 'accept unintended consequences' of our inquiry, whether those consequences are opportunities or disappointments to our

original research goals" (p. 714). This was an example of a fundamental inquiry approach that my peer had difficulty accepting as a positivist researcher. I learned during this process that my role was not only to research but also to educate.

Based on Polkinghorne (2007), threats to trustworthiness in qualitative research relate to two areas: "the difference in people's experienced meaning and the stories they tell about this meaning and connection between the texts and the interpretation of those texts" (p. 471). To minimize this threat, I used member checking as another tool to achieve quality. I continuously used texts by my participant to confirm meanings.

Ethics: Relationship and power. Saldaña (2014) stated, "The root meaning of datum is something given, not something collected" (p. 81). I was aware of the relationship dynamic that existed between me and my participant. For more than ten years, I was her principal and this relationship involved power. I had a genuine respect for her as a colleague and as a teacher. To maintain proper ethical codes in such a sticky situation, I had to communicate to my participant that anything she gave me in the form of "interviews, observation opportunities, documents, and so on, should be seen as not just as data but as gifts" (Saldaña, 2014, p.80). Saldaña uses member checking as a means to establish an equitable relationship that balances status and power. Honoring her consent to participate and to withdraw from the study at any time with no reason was repeatedly communicated to my participant.

Also, being an insider and a friend gave me privileges that other researchers might not enjoy. Yet, I was sensitive to the fact that I was still an intruder to the participant's and the school's time and resources. I conformed my schedule to meet my participant's

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schedule. I gave her ample opportunity to carve time for my visits. All interviews were conducted at the school and during her break. I respected her time and kept a close eye on time. For confidentiality purposes, none of the documents were taken outside the school.

Process Transparency and Reflection from Pilot Study

In my pilot study, I followed Adair and Pastori (2011), Saldaña (2014), and Attride-Stirling (2001) as guides. A key aspect I focused on during my pilot study was the simultaneous iterative data collection and analysis process (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). According to Corbin and Strauss, immediate analysis of data was used to "direct the next interview and observations" (p. 6).

For my analysis, I used an emerging process where themes emeged as I was looking through the data. When the teacher started drifting and talking about personal issues related to her current schools, I provided time for her to talk and listened attentively. I did not try to fit dialogue into any of the categories. This part of the conversation was the "bewilderment" that Charmaz (2004) talked about (p. 980). These are the anomalies I was expecting to see. They might not fit into any of my themes, and they might become part of a future research.

Having a clear system was very important for me. But I also had to be sensitive to my participant's real story as perceived by her. As a qualitative researcher, I was aware of the interpretive nature of my findings. Yet, my role as a researcher required me to interpret the data ethically and with no preconceived assumptions. To do so, I present Yin's (2016) *declarative self* and *reflective self* terms. According to Yin (2016), my declarative self wants to tell the world what I learned and my reflective self helps me

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admit how I learned it including "reservations about the methods" (p. 280). Going back to my relationship issue: How then was I going to distinguish between fake gestures to please me as her previous superior and true meaningful social data I was reporting?

Also, as a colleague whom I highly respected, would my participant's story be distorted with my subjective view of her? How could I avoid this ethical issue? How could I develop a way to successfully build my story around my empirical base? To be objective and genuine to my participant's story, I kept rich notes of my observations. I observed her as she was playing different roles and supported my findings with other data collections methods such as documents and interviews. Prolonged engagement is a practice highly recommended by scholars, thus, my long relationship and the length of my study helped me enhance the authenticity of my data.

For the readers to make an informed judgment about my claims resting in the text, I spelled out my understanding of the nature of the collected data as evidence (Polkinghorne, 2007). My conclusion was based on data rich sources; this data as evidence was cited, and the connection between the evidence and conclusion appears in the results section (Polkinghorne, 2007). I fully understand that transparency is key for the quality of my arguments.

Social settings are dynamic and exhibit constant motion and change. To try to box social reality into a prescribed method means that the researcher is not reflecting reality; the researcher is creating a reality that fits his or her research questions. So, my research methods conformed to leverage social reality and not the other way around. However, I

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do not claim full objectivity in findings. After all, I am a constructivist and truth is the result of perspectives (Crotty, 2015).

Reflecting on my experience as a researcher, I learned that every single decision I made had to be purposeful. I questioned and reflected on my perceptions before and after application. My decisions led me to unfold reality which was full of surprises.

Finally, going back to the in-class discussion about the precise meaning of the two terms "systemization" and "standardization" worked miraculously to validate my life long assumptions; I call it my epiphany. Reflecting on my uncompromising objection towards standardized tests, I always assumed that I was an unmethodical professional who hated systems. However, precise knowledge for the meaning assured me that my objection was not systemization; in fact, I thrived and felt safe in good systems and routines. But I objected standardizations because they impeded differentiations and equity among learners. As a consequence, I came to realize that thorough understanding of research terms, their history, how they are used among scholars, and how I was going to use them in my own research were key for ensuring quality in any research. Precise knowledge of the terms I was using such as quality were crucial. I was aiming at achieving quality in my data through using best researched practices in the field of qualitative research, yet my data was context-dependent so I could not treat it as independent and dependent variables. In other words, I could not separate my research elements into different variables and compare them to control groups. Consequently, validity as perceived through a positivist lens might not be feasible. The term that I prefer to use here is trustworthiness, and my role in this research was to enhance it. My process,

my interview protocol, choice of methods and epistemology led me to stay genuine to my

participant's story.

Chapter Four

In this chapter, in addition to presenting the findings for my current research based on my dissertation data, I used one global theme from my pilot study to present my participant's profile. I also combed the data from my pilot and my current study and noticed the emergence of one global theme that summarized everything. For this study, using thematic analysis, I looked at my data through an emerging lense as a process; yet used my research questions as a guide to anchor data. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis, and then thematic networks were constructed to understand the participant's role as an AHL teacher (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

For my summary analysis, I looked at all my data for the second time in an emic way. I carefully combed through my data (both pilot study and dissertation). At this point, I was able to network my nine basic themes into three organizing themes. Finally, one major global theme emerged from my second data analysis. Table 8 provides a review of the guiding research questions and themes whereas Table 9 serves as a guide for the summary analysis provided in Chapter 4.

Table 8

Research Questions Thematic Analysis

	Research questions	Organizing themes	Basic themes
1.	In what ways does learning occur in the context of AHL? And what back ground experiences influenced the participant's instructional choices?	• Language as a living thing • Student agency and drive • Language skills and context	Language is relevant Language is communication Agency in driving design Agency in voicing opinion Agency in setting goals Vocabulary fundamental Focus on comprehension All leads to scholarly writings
2.	What steps does the participant take to identify and implement specific strategies used for AHL?	• Designing material and approach • Language skills and implementation approach	IBO guide Level appropriate Students' interest backgrounds Vocabulary in context Scaffolding genre Focused follow up
3.	How does the participant determine usefulness and effectiveness of strategies?	• Summative assessment and quality assurance • Formative assessment and follow up	IBO exams, criteria Strong receptive skills Strong productive skills Continuous assessment Self-assessing tools Individual conferences
4.	How does the participant perceive her role as an AHL teacher?	• Wearing so many hats • Advocating for students personal and academic growth	Guardian and role model Extra-curricular coach Educational coach Start with self first Respect individuality Respect authenticity

Table 9

Sammary of Analysis

Global theme	Organizing themes	Basic themes
	• Overarching goals	• Making language meaningful and meeting IBO standards
Teaching with the end in mind	• Teacher, student and IB design	• IB impact, student impact, teacher role
	• Local and overseas connection	• Heritage, United States

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One of the three global themes from my pilot study continued to re-emerge in the present study and served as a way to introduce my participant. The primary global theme from my pilot study led to my participant being a lifelong learner. This theme re-emerged and connected to my findings from my dissertation as well.

The theme of being a lifelong learner continued to constantly resurface as I was collecting data for my current study. Since the term is used in several educational or non-educational settings, I deem it necessary that I define it from both my perspective, and my participant's perspective. To me, being a lifelong learner means one's ability to continue with one's intrinsic motivation and curiosity to pursue what is new and challenging in the field; it is the ability to bring all that knowledge back and to implement it wisely and creatively. When I asked my participant what being a lifelong learner meant to her she stated,

> Continuous education and learning is a fundamental part of our lives. As Muslims, we are urged to pursue knowledge for as long as we live. I should pursue it voluntarily to advance my thinking, to serve my community and most importantly to become better at what I am doing. I have an intrinsic passion and hunger for knowledge; learning is a means to live a quality life and get merited by God.

The Participant as a Lifelong Learner

The participant has been a lifelong learner in every sense and aspect of her life. This lifelong learning intersects her personal and professional journeys in a transcending

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way that is visible in her passion for education. Here are the three subthemes that emerged under being a lifelong learner in the present study.

A strong student, avid reader and a resilient will to pursue passion. Since she was 13 years old, my participant's love for reading was apparent to her teachers. She would constantly be reading books at a higher level. For example, she completed Homer's, *The Iliad* before entering high school. She received an award from her school for having read all the books in the library. In her 11th grade year, she became editor of the school newspaper, and her role also included printing a weekly short story. This is how she described her school experience:

> When I was very young, I was a very good reader (pause). I was an avid reader, I remember when I was in 10th grade, I read most, if not all, of the books at the library. In 11th grade, my teacher recommended some studies in poetry and in Arabic literature for this reason. I fell in love with Arabic a lot. In fact, in 11th grade I started publishing some work.

After earning high marks in her senior exams, she received a spot in the "Top Ten Students across the Kingdom of Jordan and the West Bank." For her achievement, Jordan offered her a full scholarship to study in Jordan University. Initially, Israel refused to let her leave the West Bank to pursue her studies. After some difficulty, my participant and her grandfather left the Occupied Palestinian Territories to go to college.

In just three years, she completed her bachelor's in Arabic Language Studies, and due to her being the best student in the department, Jordan University covered her tuition every semester. She then pursued her master's degree in Arabic literature. The master's

program in Jordan is a bit different. Students finish their classes in 1.5 years, and then take time to write their dissertation. When she was talking about this particular educational junction in her life she sadly said,

> After that I continued my master's degree at the same university, the University of Jordan, but unfortunately at that time there was no PhD (stressed) . . . I taught at one of the most famous schools in Jordan. This school was very (selective); the teachers in this school were the best graduates from the university.

As mentioned, she was recruited by the best K-12 school in Amman, Jordan, as soon as she began her master's. Although this conflicted with the department's master's scholarship requirements, my participant was allowed to gain experience teaching full-time at an excellent school that offered her the best teachers as a mentor.

My participant's teaching career continued in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the United States, when she immigrated with her family. One of the main reasons driving her family's moves included better educational opportunities for her kids. After arriving to the United States, she was interested in pursuing a doctorate but decided the time, patience and dedication required would be better devoted to raising her five young children in a new country with a different language and different cultural customs. This is when she told me, "I got accepted at Georgetown University to continue my PhD degree in Arabic, but at this time, my children were very young, so I stayed with them and worked at their school as an Arabic teacher." This sacrifice was felt by her kids which motivated them to be at the top of their own classes and to pursue their undergraduate studies at top-tier universities.

Continuous improvement through networking. To improve her English language skills, my participant enrolled in workshop and community college classes. She took education classes to obtain her Virginia Department of Education teaching license and worked hard to earn ACTFL certification as an oral proficiency interviewer. Here is how she networked during one of the local workshops to obtain this very demanding certificate:

Another thing that really helped is that during one of my STARTALK workshops, I saw one of the publishers, and he was the supervisor for the PD, and he encouraged us all 25 to continue our education and aim for a full certificate in ACTFL oral proficiency interviewer (OPI). We were 25 and only three of us completed the certificate requirements. It was not easy, but I thank God of it.

When the school she worked for adopted the IB program, it was a difficult transition. She collaborated with her peers to overcome this obstacle.

To tell you the truth, the IB program created a big jump in my growth. Being here in the United States, I could not find schools that taught my subject area. I worked very, very hard to teach myself the concepts of IB. I also collaborated with other colleagues for the purpose of learning. This inspires you as a teacher. When we went for an IB training for the first time, all instructions for the B Language were in English. Then when we came back, myself and my colleague who is teaching English B, we collaborated to understand the concepts, and together we implement(ed) the program at our school. The curriculum of English B and Arabic B are the same and the skills are also the same. Don't say you are weak in

a language; whatever skills apply in one language can be transferred to the other. We worked together even during the evaluation period, and we were still novice(s). She attended my class, and I attended her class, and we both evaluated each other's students, and we were both thrilled when our evaluation matched the IB external audit evaluation. Let me remind you, this was our first year. This was a golden opportunity that helped me to know my student's exact level in the IB program and how to cater to their individual needs.

She continued to describe to me how all this knowledge has helped her when the IBO chose her and two other teachers worldwide to write the Language B standards.

Another thing that added to my growth was when IBO chose me to write the standards for the Language B program written assessment for 2015-2019. So, when I worked earlier with ACTFL as an oral proficiency interviewer and with IB as examiner, I felt (pause) thanks God all my skills has developed in a well-rounded way. When the IBO opportunity knocked (on) my door, I was ready for it.

The community and the participant. This teacher believed her most important role was to instill in her students the love and respect for the language. She does it because

I love this profession (her voice getting excited). The other day one of my students said, "Mrs. N, you really love teaching." I believe if a person does not have the passion for the profession one must leave. Yes, leave quietly.

She is a passionate, knowledgeable educator, and the best feedback is when her former IB Arabic B students return and specifically seek their Arabic teacher to thank her for what she taught them, how she taught them, and how they apply the knowledge they have gained in their college classes. One particular student stands out.

Before the participant taught "Mary" in eighth grade, she was an unmotivated and low-performing student. By the time she graduated, she was an honors student who earned all A's and got into the top school of her choice. Mary's family thanks her teacher constantly for instilling a love for learning, and especially a love for her heritage language and culture. Mary today has been offered a position as a translator for a foreign minister in Canada.

Not only is she a great teacher, but she is an active member of the school community. She has led the community service club since 2005, in which they engage in six big projects annually to support local and global communities. She several times indicated that it is not only important for each person to focus on his/her own life and career, but it is very important to think of how they can contribute to the society they are in. When I asked her about this year's community service activity her eyes lit up and she said,

> I wish you were with us today. The experience was (pause) an exceptional experience, very, very, very exceptional. The reason of the visit was to deliver to The Children's Hospital the books we collected from the book drive. We allocated two weeks for this drive because we have other activities this year. During the first week the boxes were empty, but by the end of the second week

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our number reached 1200. This is because of the collaborative effort of the community service members that I am proud of.

The participant managed creatively and effectively to bring these experiences into her language classroom. When I asked her how important these activities were for language learning she replied,

I am making them live true experiences so they can use them when answering questions on their IB exams. Some of the questions, for example: "You are responsible about the community service in your school. Write a report about how the money was spent." Or another question is, "You are in the environment club in your school. In your city there is a conference on water conservation, and since you are a journalist in your school create a pamphlet about this event. Write a letter this (on) how the connection is made." So, I try to relate curriculum to their own lives and their personal experiences; this makes language a living breathing thing.

During my last visit, my participant told me that she got the honor of working for IBO again. This time she showed me an email from IBO stating, "Your application was considered to be impressive, and the subject manager would like to offer you the roles of External Advisor and Scrutineer. The External Advisor and Scrutineer roles are also assessment production roles . . ." And when I asked her how she keeps up with all this work, she smiled and said, "I always like to improve myself and develop my skills. When you believe in something, it happens."

The theme continued to emerge, and the teacher continued holding a position at IBO and continued working for nearby colleges and universities to improve her skills and knowledge.

Research Question One

In what ways does learning occur in the context of AHL? And what background experiences influenced the participant's instructional choices?
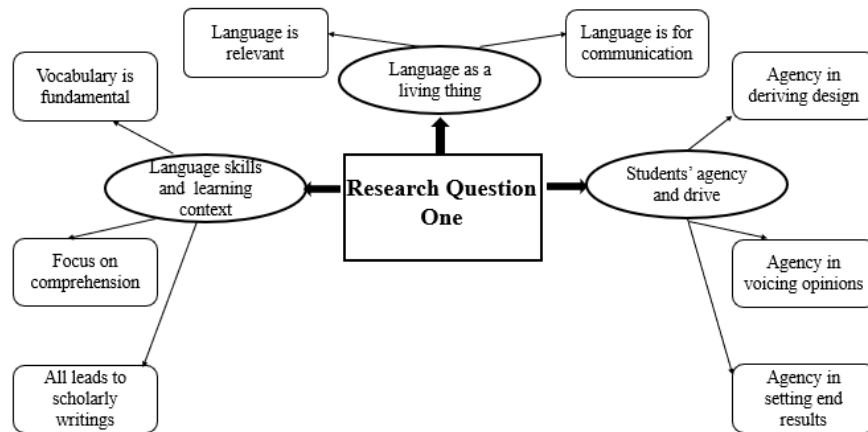
Figure 8. Network analysis for research question 1.

Physical context. I was able to observe the teacher in two different classrooms in 11th and 12th grade. The 11th grade class had 10 students (seven Saudi, one Egyptian, one Moroccan, one Jordanian) and the 12th grade class had 15 students (two Egyptian, three Palestinian, one Moroccan, one Algerian, one Lebanese, two American, five Saudi).

I would like to draw the reader's attention to the fact that most of the Saudi students were either born in the United States or have been living here since a very young age.

The physical context of these classrooms was very conducive to student-centered learning. Both classes were located in a huge area called a learning community. As soon as you entered the learning community, you saw a large central area equipped with colorful and inviting chairs, coaches and desks where students sat either in pairs or groups to discuss their projects/tasks. This area also had several mobile white boards. These were used by students to sketch their findings after their small group discussions. Surrounding this area were large classrooms and two or three small rooms for conferences. Each community also had its own age and grade appropriate science lab. Students started their class in one of the large classrooms. Then they were asked to go to the area they chose in the learning community to continue discussing the topic with their groups. Depending on the task they had to do, sometimes they were asked to come back to class, other times they were asked to generate the information on the white boards outside their classrooms. The 90-minute class was never held in one area; students were given the opportunity to move around to finish their tasks. Figure 9 includes some images of these boards.
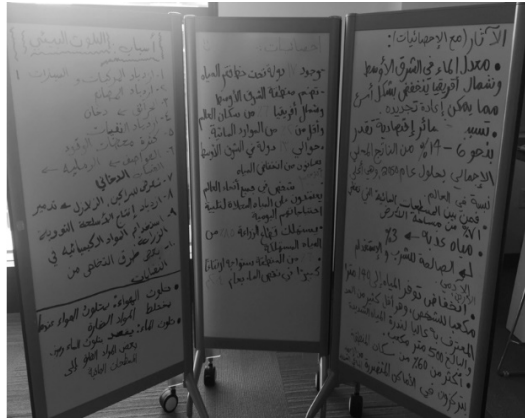
Figure 9. Student discussion boards.

The school's official program was the IB, and the subject matter I was interested to see was Arabic Language B. Language B is an Arabic course that is designed to teach first/second generation Arabic speaking children their HL. Arabic B starts at 11th grade and continues until 12th grade. Students who want to graduate with an advanced level Arabic continue taking it in their senior year. I purposefully chose to observe both of these levels to see the progression of skills among the students. I wanted to see how the participant managed to meet the IB standards at the end of the two-year program. Here are the themes that emerged to answer research question 1.

Language as a living thing. Insides these two classes, language was a living breathing thing. It was a vehicle for the students to proudly share their own unique heritage with the rest of the class. Language was also an open window to global affairs, cultures, and issues. The participant stated,

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I believe language is a means of communication and connecting with others; this is the essence. We learn a language so we can communicate our ideas. So, the essence is getting connected whether it is a cultural connection, social connection . . . so, the aim of it is communication. Another point here. I work on all four skills in addition to the cultural aspect. The IB curriculum helps me promote the language in a communicative way.

The participant used photos to help promote language.

I believe in using photos very much. They are attractive. The photo has to be chosen carefully. They serve a psychological purpose. The student will find out that they are able to use the language. The experience gives them a sense of accomplishment. It expands their horizon.

She continued to say, "The picture should be expressive of the topic, so the student can capture it in his/her own words. In a very relaxed way, he/she talks, expresses himself/herself and connects ideas together."

To create a safe environment, the teacher started her classes with a thought organizing and promoting activity: "What I know, What I what to know and What I have learned?" (KWL) chart. This chart allowed students to put on paper what he/she knew about diversity (unit topic). Then, students were asked to move around the room and buddy up with another person to share their writing. To empower students and encourage dialogue, the teacher used Think, Pair, Share. This gave students enough time to think before they spoke. The teacher provided her class with a safe space to hear native speakers emulate good pronunciation and enrich vocabulary.

During the topic on diversity, 11th grade students were asked to search the internet for clips that represented diversity. After 20 minutes, the class gathered again. A group of Moroccan students showed an annual cultural event that takes place in Morocco. Students from Egypt showed a clip about a traditional wedding party. These video clips became the point of departure for a very rich discussion about diversity and cultural awareness. The participant was able to hit several language targets through the student chosen clips such as correct pronunciation, vocabulary development, sentence structure, fluency and most importantly preparation for Language B final oral exam.

Students' agency as a drive. Because the teacher involved her students and gave them opportunities to bring topic relevant materials, students showed interest in what was being discussed in class. Through these choices, students learned the language in a more individualized personalized approach. The teacher expressed this very clearly when she said,

> This is the beauty of the IB program; it is an international program that respects
> individuality as well. It respects student's background. By nature, people tend to
> gravitate to their own familiar culture . . . ah, I always notice this in my students. I
> never tell my students you are from Morocco, find information or video about it.
> No, they do it on their own. Since the student belongs to a certain ethnicity, he/she
> will bring knowledge about that culture. This is what I call diversity. I never tell
> them to bring this or that. No, they went and brought topics relevant and dear to
> them. Diversity is an attractive element and students love to bring their own
> diverse culture to class. When learning is internally driven, it becomes more

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attractive for the students. But when I force things, and I tell them to bring this and that (pause) based on my choices, they are going to resent the language. The varied video clips that are brought to class makes learning more attractive.

Authenticity of materials used in class are achieved by involving students in real life experiences. For example, on the topic of immigration, students were asked to interview their own parents about their immigration experiences. Students surveyed colleagues and family members to collect data about journalism. During a unit on journalism, one particular group wanted to find out students' opinions on Arabic media. Another group of students interviewed friends and family members to learn more about Arabic children's programs. When I asked the teacher if she required her students to include such data in their final research she said, "Writing surveys is a skill I teach, but I like it when students use it in their final project because it gives credibility and authenticity to their work." She also stated that when discussing the topic of immigration, she asked the students to interview their parents because "I want them to have conversations with their parents; being an immigrant is hard, and they have to learn to have conversations with their parents."

Language skills and the learning context. The teacher's strong knowledge of Arabic and her long experience in teaching has influenced her instructional choices. She full-heartedly believes that rich vocabulary acquisition is the building block for both listening and reading comprehension. She is against teaching vocabulary in isolation; vocabulary should be presented in context. She stated,

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In my opinion, word lists without using them and giving the students the opportunity to use them and learn them in context is an ineffective way of presenting vocabulary because you are teaching vocabulary in isolation. The student will memorize, but he/she will not internalize them. If vocabulary is not being presented in context, they become meaningless and the student will for sure, for sure, for sure will forget them. Also, when he sees this long list, he loses interest.

The participant believed that rich vocabulary acquisition results in strong comprehension which eventually leads to better speaking and writing. She goes out of her way to stress its importance in her class. She relentlessly recycles these words to achieve proficiency and strong mastery.

Language is not like other subjects. To own a language, one needs sufficient time, and to own the language and become proficient, materials need to be recycled. Language needs time and repetition. That is why I recycle. In Arabic and the eloquence of the language, you see a lot of synonyms. If a student knew how to use the words in the language and knew what function it serves in so many different contexts, here we say he owned the skill, and he is proficient in the language. But if he did not know how to make use of the set of vocabulary he has and did not know how to use them in different contexts, he is going to forget them quickly. And even if he tried to recollect his knowledge of them, they will be misused. If asked about the meaning, he/she might use it in a sentence that is completely different from what it meant to be used for in that different context. I

want students to own these words. To own them we have to recycle them. Or else these words will become fossilized and their vocabulary will be limited.

Classroom observations also highlighted the importance of building skills on previous knowledge. Classes usually started with a quick formative self-assessment activity. This approach helped the teacher cater to students' needs, and scaffolding was done accordingly. In 12th grade class, when a student brought the wrong article on journalism, the teacher turned it into a learning opportunity for students to learn this core word. Because of the phonemic similarity between journalism and education, two students brought an article about education. Here, the teacher asked for the root of the word journalism, "ellam." It is "elm," and a student mentioned the synonym "ekhbar." Using root words was an approach the teacher used to scaffold meanings of certain words or concepts. Also, when a student brought a dictionary definition of the word "journalism," the teacher asked her to read it. The student read it with difficulty. The teacher then had another student in class read it. Then, she broke the definition into smaller increments, and literally dissected the definition. Finally, students were able to restate the definition in their own words. This time it was very close to the original definition. By developing rich vocabulary, the teacher believed that her students were able to develop reading; for her reading was a fundamental skill.

When the speaker or writer has wealth of knowledge, he/she delivers ideas flawlessly, creatively and beautifully. I believe that writing will not come without reading. Reading, and saturation in reading, produces excellent writing. I believe in this 100%. If a writer does not have good command of the topic, how is he or

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she going to write (emphatically)? If he/ she does not have good command of the topic how is he/she going to have that deep thinking (emphatically)? When you have rich knowledge, varied exposure, deep knowledge of content, then you own all skills needed for writing. (laughs) Here you see where does shallow thinking come from, and where does deep thinking come from. It comes from knowledge (emphatically). It comes from reading.

Language learning was a dynamic, living and growing process in this teacher's classrooms. Although the setting provided by the teacher appears to be organic, long hours of purposeful planning was responsible for this to happen. The rigor of the IB Language B standards had a great impact on the teacher's instructional choices. In their external summative IBO exams, students needed to synthesize information from four research articles about a certain topic to write their essay. They were interviewed individually and talked flawlessly about a topic of the examiner's choice. The teacher started preparing materials for this day during her summer break. She started the year with carefully designed materials that were scaffolded to help them get to where they should be in 12th grade.

This kind of learning environment, conducive to learning the language in an authentic way, was mapped out carefully by the teacher. The teacher stated that routine was very important, and she set procedures from day one. She also indicated that constantly communicating and demanding clear expectations was essential for her daily lessons to succeed. Being a very "organized" person, as she said in one of her interviews,

was what got you through the year. The next research question will answer how this preparation is done.

Research Question Two

What steps does the participant take to identify and implement specific strategies used to teach AHL? Two organizing themes emerged for this question as shown in Figure 10.
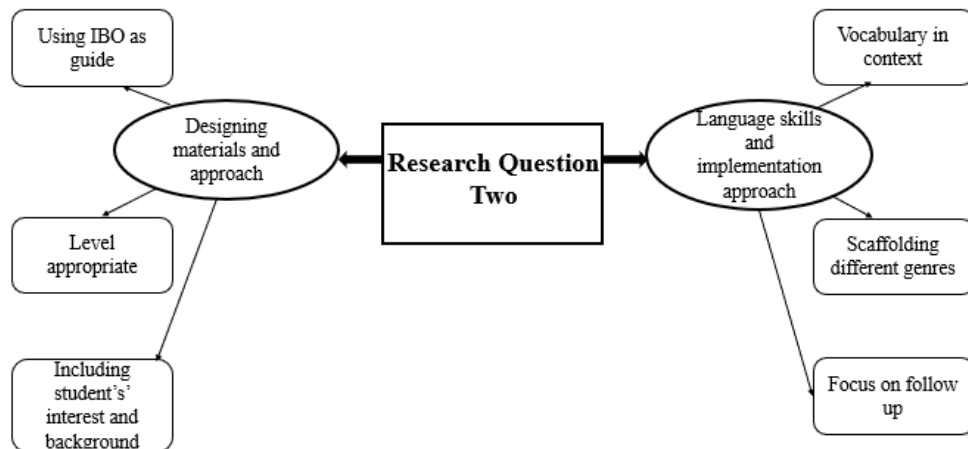
Figure 10. Network analysis for research question 2.

Designing material and approach. My participant spends her summers preparing materials for her classes. She said, "I update my materials every summer." In an earlier interview, she stated, "I am ashamed to use the same materials I used previously." Using end of the 12th grade IBO summative exam, the teacher mapped out her year accordingly. This backward process allowed her to proactively address problems

that may hinder students' achievement. She was very appreciative of the Language B conceptual framework which promotes global perspectives, respects individual cultures, and deems languages as valuable assets for connecting with others. Here is her description of the evolution of curriculum designing process.

Another thing, at the beginning of the year I start off by asking my students, "What topics do you want to study?" and I create a big list. The students feel happy with their own choices of topics and videos, and this becomes our curriculum. Sometimes we arrange these topics based on students' interest. We don't have a book . . . But now, (my students and I), we appreciate this program because it offers the criteria and general topics that we have to cover, and we have the freedom to choose and discuss and create our own curriculum. I have a big binder of topics.

Involving students in the process of designing the curriculum added a very unique personalized element to classroom instruction.

But students come up with very, very, beautiful topics. We discuss most of them. We relate them to the students' lives, to our lives. We compare between here and our countries of origin. It is very interesting, and students are very engaged.

These materials pulled out of the internet were carefully read and screened by the teacher for relevance, quality and credibility of information. Then, they were designed to match the students' appropriate language levels.

Sometimes the article is good but too long for me to use at this stage. I spend a lot of time designing it to their exact level. I summarize it (in) only 100 words. Even

the font that I use is 14. I choose that carefully because I want to facilitate their initial reading comprehension. I also leave enough marginal space so they can take side notes as they are reading. Then we go up from one article to two articles. At this stage, I provide them with both articles. Then, I assign students to bring an article that relates to the topic. Sufficient and enough time is given to the student between the initial phase and the third phase, let's call it that, of developing reading skill. I take my time before I task them to bring their articles.

The teacher always operated with her students' language levels in mind. When things did not work in class, the teacher immediately switched gears.

I offered the kids a listening activity, but it was very hard, so I stopped, and I started enriching their vocabulary and language skills with reading for comprehension. This is how I gauge things in class. If it does not work, I switch to simpler tasks. Same with reading; these kids still didn't reach higher level thinking. The students complain that they are unable to understand what they read. Based on Bloom's taxonomy, they barely make it to Bloom's first three levels. But the level of synthesizing, analyzing and critiquing the piece of writing is still hard for them.

Although the teacher was flexible in terms of switching her activities when needed, she was also very demanding. She demanded hard work and diligence from her students as soon as she established fundamental skills.

Language skills and implementation approaches. The teacher incorporated practices that were proven to be generally effective for reading comprehension. These

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proceses ranged from developing rich vocabulary, presenting vocabulary in contexts, recycling them frequently for retention purposes. "They have to own these words, be able to use them/understand them in different settings." The teacher demanded that students use specific strategies when reading their articles such as using different color highlighters, taking notes in the margins, posing questions, and paraphrasing.

When I ask them to read an article or poem, I ask them to underline the new vocabulary or to use a highlighter or they could sometimes . . . They use different colors to underline the words. Then we tackle the vocabulary by using them frequently in different context and forms. Sometimes students extract familiar words out of the article and make a list of them . . .words that he/she has the ability to use. Sometimes his or her list includes new vocabulary . . . Sometimes he/she makes a list or comes across words that he/she has never seen before, but it is hard for them to use appropriately. I always encourage them to use these words. Images of students' reading strategies appear in Figure 11.

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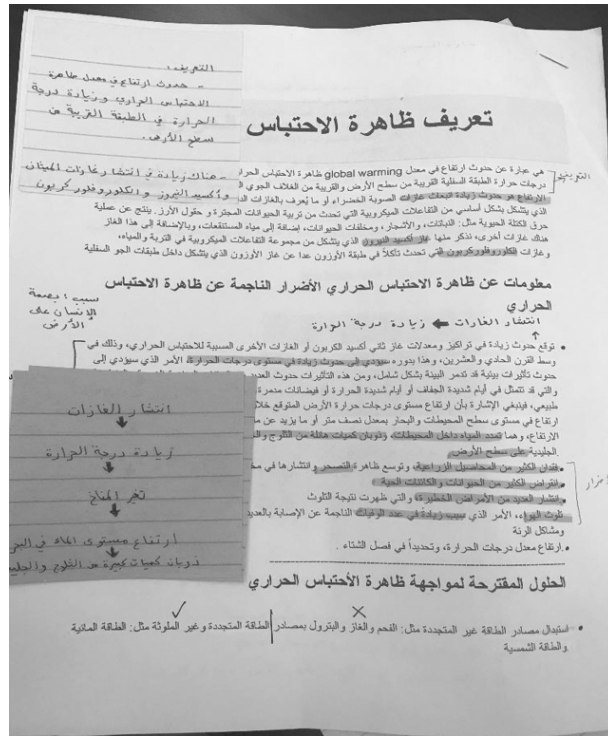
Figure 11. Student reading strategies in Arabic.

These skills were monitored closely by the teacher. The teacher literally asked the students questions on why they highlighted this section and not that, how can they paraphrase this statement or why did they underline this word. The ways in which she assesses the effectiveness of these strategies is answered below in research question 3.

Research Question Three

How does the participant measure usefulness and effectiveness of these strategies? Two organizational themes continued developing for research question three as shown in Figure 12.

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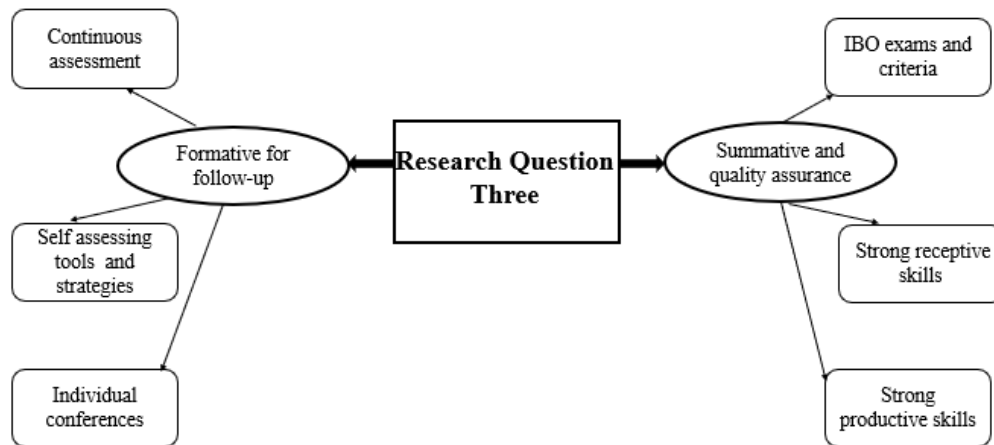
Figure 12. Network analysis for research question 3.

Summative assessment and quality assurance. The teacher relied on the IBO

benchmarks, and the criteria for the Language B derived her instructional choices. These

benchmarks served as evaluating tools for their effectiveness on language acquisition.

We judge students' competence according to his/her vocabulary acquisition and

ability to express themselves eloquently with the right word choices. These are

the benchmarks. These benchmarks are fundamental components of the IBO

rubric. Do they have the ideas? How are these ideas being developed? Coherence

of ideas. Also, appropriateness of word choices, how they are being used,

statements that complement the topic, the level of depth in tackling these ideas.

How the message in the student's writing is being conveyed to the reader is an

approach we use to judge his/her writing. Our evaluation depends on all these

elements stated.

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According to the *Language B guide* (International Baccalaureate, 2013), this course is developed at two levels; the standard (SL) and higher level (HL). At these two levels, the syllabus of the course approaches language through language meaning. The core syllabus is communication, media, global issues and social relationships. Teachers also have the options of including cultural diversity, customs, traditions, health, leisure, science and technology. The form of Arabic used in the course is the Modern Standard Arabic. However, because of the different dialects that exist, students are allowed to use simplified variations of the standard form of the language. They are also penalized during their oral exams for using their own dialect language repertoire.

The IBO uses several methods to assess work produced by the students. When the task is open-ended, the teacher uses a criterion-based assessment. Each criteria concentrates on measuring a particular skill. The teacher ensures that students easily move from one language skill to another, and students are given choices. Materials used should be authentic and language is taught in context.

IBO requires two compulsory summative assessments. In Language B, students are required to sit for an internal individual oral and interactive oral activity assessment. Then they should take an externally graded written exam. Demand of the exam depends on the SL or HL level. But they both share a general framework in that paper one consists of text handling exercises and paper two requires them to produce two types of written tasks.

Formative assessment and follow up. Usefulness and effectiveness of strategies used in class were reflected upon continuously to develop needed skills. The teacher used

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different kinds of formative assessment tools to measure effectiveness of her choices. One key skill she focused on was developing autonomy and self-regulation among her students.

> The context that the student will be asked to tackle in the IBO exams are unknown to both me and the student. So, unless he is trained properly to use the right strategies to guess the meaning of the words, he/she will be at a disadvantage. The article in IBO exams are new and sometimes some of the core vocabulary are new so they are to have good command of comprehension by using context clue skills and through being exposed to other readings during the year on related topics. Yes, this strategy is a strategy that I encourage a lot, context clues and educated guess. I believe this strategy is 100% appropriate to develop vocabulary.

She provided her students with self-assessment tools where they could assess their knowledge. For example, KWL charts gave both the student and the teacher a quick check of what the students' language abilities are. Several strategies were used in class to help monitor skills development. Here is an example of how she checked for understanding.

> Aaaah, sometimes the student may not have a good command of the language. He/she just throws a word at you, and sometimes it not even related to the topic being discussed . . .You ask, "Stop," and ask the student to give you the meaning of the word.

The teacher used Think, Pair, Share, a collaborative learning strategy and Socratic seminar, a dissection strategy to see if they were ready to articulate their thoughts. Students were also encouraged to fix their own mistakes and they were even rewarded for doing so. In their binders, students had a section where they kept records of their own and the class' common mistakes.

Individual conferences were used extensively in this teacher's class. They were used as frequently as needed, but generally each student was entitled to three personalized sessions: one advisory session as soon as the task was assigned, the second was a close follow up with both written and oral feedback, and finally a session after the work was graded. Feedback was elaborate and specific. In her gradebook, the teacher kept an anecdotal record of all her remarks.

> I use individual conferences to help them. What did you choose? What did you write? How are you going to present your ideas? This is not proper. Find another research (article). This is not relevant. These individual conferences eliminate any confusions, and the student will not be surprised that he/she was not doing it right. It is to support during the process of learning and doing. I don't (want to) hear that their work was not acceptable at the final stage only; I help them get back on track along the way. This way I feel comfortable, and the student is comfortable too. Even, you might have noticed from my gradebook, I keep thorough records of these individual conferences . . . I write all the remarks that (were) given to them, and where they are in the project . . .

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The process of getting to her final satisfactory result was tedious and required diligent and continuous work. She aimed to help her students write well for their IBO final exams, and she viewed this as very important.

What I noticed during my observation period was that the teacher refused to front load students with information. However, she focused heavily on developing needed skills to seek information and generate both in speaking and writing.

> Writing is the highest level of the language acquisition . . .The student, with my close follow up and reviews/writes three drafts to express and communicate his ideas till they research a satisfactory level. I also let them read peer work and work from previous years. I provide them with good models. I tell them if you want to get a good grade, these are my expectations, and these models should help. (pause) Before the final or summative evaluation, most of the work is done in groups or in pair, but at the end (emphatically), you as a teacher need to reach to a point where they can write on their own. The student knows that when I let you work within a group or in a pair, there has to be engagement. Students should not be passive. He or she should be the receiver of knowledge and sender or transmitter of knowledge. (The) student has to remember that he will be tested individually at the end, and this is communicated to them constantly.

Research Question Four

How does the participant perceive her role as an AHL teacher? The teacher played an important role in her students' lives, and she was mindful at all times of this

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role. To answer this research question, two organization themes have emerged as shown in Figure 13.
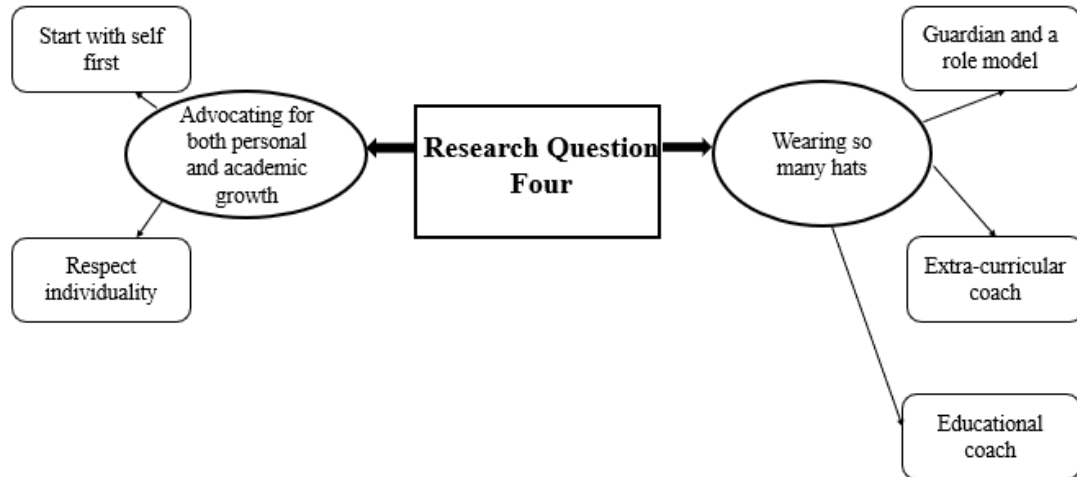
Figure 13. Network analysis for research question 4.

Wearing so many hats. The participant viewed her role as a model, facilitator, coach, guardian and mentor. With this in mind, she operated with her students as the focal point of her daily activities. Their interests, identities, language levels, voice and gender were all respected. In one of the interviews, she explicitly expressed her views on teaching.

> To educate is to foster morale. I, as a teacher, should be a role model for them; honesty, in my research, in my knowledge, in my love for them. My role is to love and encourage them to have good relationships among them as brothers and sisters. For this reason, and to be close to my kids in most of the schools that I

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worked, I always sponsored community service programs. This is my understanding of teaching. I consider it to be a responsibility not only to deliver curriculum and content but to build good citizens and characters.

Usually in student-centered classrooms where students' agency and voice are valued, teachers tend to become vulnerable, and they might lose control. However, this teacher maintained a level of energy and motivation among her students that supported the quality of work produced. Here is an example of how she monitored students' work and kept them on track.

The goal is to present on journalism. Research it and present it. This is a preparation for a summative material that they will be submitting in writing to the IB. Now my role is to give them enough needed guidelines and feedback. Here I give them a true taste of how they are going to be graded in their real IB exam. I use the same rigor to help them achieve quality work. In the final exam they have to read four different articles about the topic. These resources have to discuss different areas about journalism. The student has to extract the gist from all (emphatically) these resources and then write a creative, authentic piece for their final exam. Here, I have to know and see how they are getting the gist out of their resources. At this stage, I conference to develop this skill in them. How do they comprehend? What strategies they can use to get to the true message in the articles. For example, as you have seen, some of the students highlighted things in their articles as way of getting the main ideas in the article. So, I was asking them to paraphrase statements in their own words. In the final, they are not allowed to

use English. They should comprehend what they read and be able to share it in their own words. I always remind them of their audience during the presentation, and how they are going to share what they got out of their readings. This presentation is the preparation for the final writing test that they have to do on their own for their IB exam.

The teacher viewed her role as well as the commander-in-chief who sets routines.

In my opinion, routine is very important. Classroom routine can positively effect students' classroom performance as well as their behavior. When students get into the habit of following a routine, the whole process will be conducted smoothly and effectively. Routine will give the student opportunity to learn more."

It was a balancing role between the facilitator, the guardian and the figure of authority.

Advocating for students' both personal and academic growth. As mentioned earlier, the teacher cared about the students' future, and character. To support their proper growth both academically and personally, the teacher embraced two paths. One was becoming a dynamic AHL teacher who viewed the world with a positive lens; a lens which allowed her as a teacher to view her students' voice, culture, concern, and religion as assets.

I am a firm believer that a school culture that promotes diversity and respects it will bring to the world well-adjusted individuals. I view this generation as the hope for the future. I always tell them, "You can do it. You can do it." And the IB program supports their leadership skills. Critical thinking. Deep, genuine thinking.

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To encourage confidence in learning, she delegated their own personal trajectory of learning Arabic to them by asking them the following question at the beginning of the year: "What do you as a language learner want?" If for example, they said, "I want to become a better writer," she then told them to list tools that they have used in English to get to such goal. The teacher said, "They have to find the tools that leads them to get to where they want to be." She also, through the community service outreach activities, advocated for their growth as well-adjusted citizens. She taught about their home heritage and culture, but she reminded them that they were also Americans. She helped them see the positive in having two cultural identities. To her, students came first.

The teacher not only enjoyed but took pride in making Arabic fun and meaningful for her students. She used all resources, local, national and international, to make the language meaningful. A good example for this was when she took her students to the Children's Hospital so they could authentically live and experience the essence of community serve. As mentioned previously, the teacher stated that one primary goal for such experiences was to bring back the experiences into the classroom for discussion purposes. She mentioned in her interview that IBO required them to talk about similar experiences during their oral interview exams. To develop her students' fluency and to provide them with substance and enough content to talk about, she organized fundraising events.

She also required students to validate their research topic by backing up with real data, such as data extracted from interviews and surveys with family members and

classmates. When I asked the teacher for the reason behind this component, she said it adds a level of authenticity to their research.

Summary Analysis of the Case

The findings from my research question analysis led me to wonder about my participant's true story from a different angle. In this section, I will include my emic analysis; one primary global theme emerged as I was mining and combing through my data for the second time. "Teaching with the end in mind" developed as I was networking my theme for this second analysis (see Figure 14).
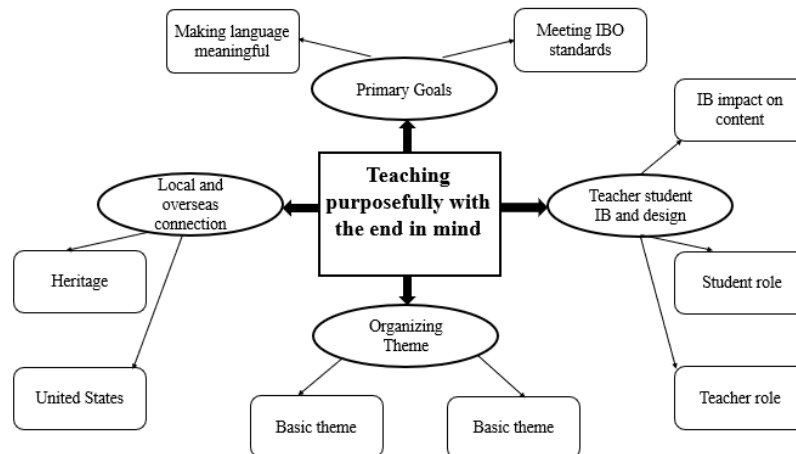
Figure 14. Summary analysis of case study.

Teaching Purposefully with the End in Mind

Overarching goals. The teacher was concerned with two main goals as she was teaching AHL. The first focus was presenting the language as a functional, meaningful way of communicating ideas as she was getting her students ready for goal two, Arabic B

end-of-year exams. Every step she took during the planning period, whether it was preparation of reading materials, writing units plans, choosing activities, strategies, or designing rubrics, all led to achieving the above two central outcomes: exams and meaningfulness of the language. In fact, the following quote clearly defined expectations and set the tone for upcoming goals.

> I work on developing all four skills in the language: listening, reading, writing and speaking. I always tell my students from day one, "This is the rubric, and these are the standards, and if you want to get better at reading, you have to read articles. These genres have sophisticated and eloquent content and different ways of expressions . . .What do you as a language learner want? You have to find the tools that lead you to improve." I tell them, regarding the IB requirements, reading comprehension is very important. Not just reading, it is reading with comprehension. There are ideas in the text that require them to read between the lines to get the message being conveyed. So, the student has to learn subject specific terms, and do an in-depth research to understand topics. The skills that no two agree on, and we have to work very, very, very hard on developing writing skill. The IB requires the students to attain three different types of (writing skills). In the reading comprehension, there is writing. In paper one, there is writing In the writing assessment, there is writing. The kind of writing I need to develop in the students is scholarly writing.

This end-of-year assessment drove instruction in her class. However, the content was what gave it meaningfulness and authenticity.

Teacher, student, IB, and content design. The teacher stated that collaborative planning of the curriculum by involving the students in the process was key to developing meaningful materials. Since this was an IB requirement, she ensured authenticity by giving them choices.

> IB likes to give the students more experiences to work with these sources and gives them the freedom to choose their topics. The curriculum is designed with the IB mission of developing global citizens in mind. IB students are part of this world. They have to live with the world problems, and they have to find solutions, I mean for global issue(s) . . .The opinion of the students (is) very important to express his/her idea, to analyze what is happening around them, find solutions. Their writing should reflect the fact that they are being an open-minded person. One who has the leadership ability: principled, balanced, inquirer. He is a thinker. He is knowledgeable. All (emphatically) these characters must be embraced by the IB student. So, we can see that the curriculum is designed to help students embrace these traits as they are learning their heritage language. This transcends language learning from being only a subject to being a way of expressing themselves in their community and in the national and international community at large.

Although the technical goal set by IB requirements is for the the learner to reach a near proficiency level, the teacher proudly stated,

> Every year, thanks God, we have good number of students. Those students, according to ACTFL, at the end of their 2-year study in IB, they reach the

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advanced proficiency level. That means that those students have reached the level of what we can consider native speakers or close to native speakers.

But the more rewarding goal for the teacher is when they make use of this language in their future endeavors. "I feel elated when they tell me, 'You know Mrs. N., I minored in Arabic at Georgetown,' or 'My major is Arabic at George Mason.' Two of my students in medical school at Georgetown and their second majored in Arabic."

With these goals in mind, the teacher carefully plans her year. Every year was a new slate for her. "When I prepare my material for the year, I am ashamed to use the same materials I used previously. I have to get new articles and current events. It is a main part of the IB program." As mentioned earlier in my analysis, the teacher involved her students and relied on their interests to make choices. The teacher told me, "We don't have a book," but the process of designing the material is a joy for both teacher and student.

> My students and I, we appreciate this program because the criteria are clear and the big topics that we have to cover are listed by IB. So, we have the freedom to choose and discuss and create our own curriculum. I have a big binder of topics; if I cover them, students know they can easily get the diploma.

This selection process was refined by the teacher as mentioned here.

> But when I look for materials, I recreate them to fit their needs. Regarding my students here at the school, I look at IB samples to guide me to choose materials for my class. I start with simple materials until I reach advanced level materials. And I encourage the students to get there by giving them extra points.

The teacher always referred to her planning as the cornerstone of her success; this planning if done well, and with the help of God, her dream of teaching is fulfilled. "And I plan for it, and I pursue it with praying that it would get achieved. With hard work it is done." To enable students to reach their end-of-year results in a meaningful way, the teacher emphasized character building. She stated, "So, if I focus only on teaching, I am not accomplishing the goal. The goal is to foster morals, to educate. I, as teacher, become a role model for them." This guardianship role she embraced was manifested in her passion for community service activities. These authentic experiences, as mentioned earlier, were woven into her daily instructions. Such activities then ultimately enhanced the quality of meaningfulness of the language.

Finally planning material for the students all depended on what was appropriate for their level.

> When I know my students' exact level, I can design the proper material that is
> appropriate to everyone's individual needs, and it will also help design the right
> assessment and the right criteria for each individual one. Not only that, but this
> will help me design the appropriate tasks and activities for them.

Local and overseas connection. Teaching with students' choice, agency as the focal point of the process of teaching was a joy for both of them.

> Students come up with very, very, beautiful topics. We discuss most of them. We
> relate them to the students' lives, to our lives. We compare between here and our
> countries of origin. It is very interesting, and students are very engaged.

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During classroom activities, students compared/contrasted global issues to local ones. They brought issues from their own heritage or from their country of origin and tried to find solutions for them. Global warming, diversity, media education and other topics were networked and connected to their county of the United States, to their country of origin and to the globe.

> The rigor in the program pushes them to want to learn more . . .The program curriculum is very interesting. It includes global issues and see it as part of their personal environment and to find solutions for these big problems. So, they eventually realize that these topics help them bridge gaps between them and the rest of the world. And bridge gaps between Arab countries as well. When I ask them to think deeply to find solutions, I encourage them to not only find information in what we read, but how do we apply it. They feel proud of themselves being Arab Americans here and trying to find solutions for issues overseas is a joy to them.

Since her classroom consists of diverse Arab and Muslim backgrounds, classroom activities become a cosmopolitan forum for making changes. Discussion and materials were relevant, yet diverse. A student from Dubai, when discussing the topic of global warming, brought up the dilemma of industrial rain. The topic got heated and students were attentively engaged and asking higher level questions. A Sudanese student brought her traditional wedding to share during the topic of diversity. Students' brought materials to enrich language acquisition process by making it real.

As I mentioned in my analysis, the teacher's summative goal was the product of several embedded measurements and formative assessments that were used throughout the journey. Besides sharing her criteria and the end of the journey with her student, the teacher took the time to support each and every student along the way to learn their heritage and language in a meaningful way. Skillfully blending students' heritage background with current living experiences created an environment of growth for both their language and their identity as Arab-Americans.

Chapter Five

There is a need to better understand Arabic heritage language (AHL) teaching

practices in K-12 school settings; most previous research in this area was done either at

the university level or was conducted in an Arabic foreign language setting. Literature

indicates that there is a need to understand how Arabic is taught for those who speak it as

a HL. In this chapter, I discuss major themes that have emerged from the study. In the

following sections, I summarize these themes in order to evaluate the context of existing

research in the area of HL learning in terms of K-12 language programs.

Research in general identified the unique needs of HLL (Carreira & Kagan, 2011;

Montrul, 2016; Valdés, 2005). This group was depicted as "bilingual native speakers of

their language, except that the degree of ultimate attainment in the heritage language is

variable" (Montrul, 2016, p. 249). These students often start as monolingual and then

experience language shifts as the dominant language (e.g., in school) replacing the HL,

which becomes weaker and more like an L2 (Montrul, 2016; Valdés, 2005). HL and L2

learners share patterns of language dominance. Therefore, research in both fields may

help address the language gaps experienced by these learners.

In this regard, this study was based on Carriera and Kagan's (2017) research,

which indicated a gap in the teaching practices of less researched heritage languages.

Principles that relate to HL learning, which have not been studied closely, include

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differentiation, assessment choices, best practices, HL sociolinguistic issues, and issues surrounding language variations.

This case study presents findings from an AHL classroom in an IBO setting and its findings unfold practices that are supported by HL and second language acquisition (SLA) research. The findings are bounded to this case study and are related to the context of this research. The primary themes have emerged in response to the following research questions and are supported by the literature review informing my study.

1. In what ways does learning occur in the context of AHL, and what background experiences influenced the participant's instructional choices?

2. What steps does the participant take to identify and implement specific strategies used to teach AHL?

3. How does the participant determine usefulness and effectiveness of these strategies?

4. How does the participant perceive her role as an AHL teacher?

To answer the research questions, I did a thematic analysis of my data. Although I anchored my research analysis to my research questions, the questions only served to guide my processes of analysis. They were not used to prove a certain hypothesis. In this sense, my process of analysis was more of an emergent one. The applied themes were the teacher's teaching context, best practices and strategies, her ability to check and assess understanding of her students' and her perspectives. Later, I looked at the data again and combed through it for the second time with the hope of finding global themes. One primary global theme emerged during this analysis. The following discussion begins with

analyses based on my research questions and concludes with a discussion of the analyses of my findings from all data since the pilot study.

Research Question One Themes

This theme emerged as I was observing the teacher's classroom activities; it was also confirmed by interviews and document studies. A boundary of this study was that AHL has not been researched in K-12 settings. So, the aim was to study the context of this particular teacher's 11th and 12th grade AHL classes and her instructional approach.

Language as a living thing. This theme is in response to the first research question on the teacher's context, and the observations and interviews steered by the teacher's actions and interviews. The course that the teacher was instructing was a Language B course, and one main goal for the course set by IB requirements and valued by the teacher was to present language in a meaningful way. Several elements supported the teacher in fulfilling this goal. The most important one was the curriculum. Since the course was part of the IB program, the course encompassed its mission. With respect to each student's individuality and unique background, the IB aims to develop internationally minded global citizens who embrace IB learners' traits from differing backgrounds. To develop these traits and instill in the students a love for learning and the open-mindedness to serve, the teacher involved her students in the process of curriculum design. Students' agency created relevance and gave authenticity to materials used for daily interactions.

In addition, the school's physical environment, which was conducive for student-centered teaching and collaboration, enhanced the emergence of this theme. Montrul

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(2016) stressed the importance of the quality of exposure to HL; researchers also stated that HLL learn the language to find identity, communicate with family members and to explore their cultural roots (Carreira & Kagan, 2011; He, 2010).

Allowing students to bring in educational resources such as videos, reading materials, and pictures from their own culture through research and actual interviews and discussions with their parents and family members has made the language a way for communicating and connecting to their cultural roots. Wu and Change (2012), in a study on Chinese HL, indicated that incorporating topics such as Chinese immigration, history, and personal memories has helped to not only improve language skills but also validate students' hybrid Chinese American identities.

HL bilingualism is considered a combination of L1 and L2, which research referred to as L1/L2 users (Valdés, 2005). In that sense, HL research overlaps with second language acquisition (SLA) research. In my study, the teacher was giving her students opportunities to voice their opinions, thoughts, and feelings by providing pictures and video clips that were relevant to their cultures.

Students' abilities to create meaning through discourse to learn the language is another important research trend in the area of SLA that is relevant to HL learner's development. By allowing her students to have a discussion around topics such as culture, immigration, global warming, and education, the teacher was using an array of sociocultural strategies informed by research in SLA (Swain & Deter, 2007). Language becomes a living thing when it is used to reflect and communicate ideas, feelings, and personal experiences about oneself. This was always apparent in this

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teacher's classroom. This focus was best expressed by the participant: "I try to relate curriculum to their own lives and their personal experiences; this makes language a living breathing thing."

Students' agency as a drive. This second theme is also in response to the first research question, and it shows how the teacher was able to facilitate learning in the classroom environment for her students by giving them the chance to include topics that were relevant and dear to them. The most important factor in the framework of any classroom environment is the student. From observations, students played a very central role in their learning; the teacher on the other hand was a coach and facilitator of their progress. With this approach, students were empowered, and their voices and opinions were actually heard during classroom discussions. Teaching literacy skills in a language is not only about helping the learner to decode texts; it is about "developing critical awareness and agency in one's own life" (Alvermann & Hinchman, 2012, p. 7). Teacher's trust in students' selection of curriculum topics has empowered the students. For example, students at the beginning of the year brought all topics of interest to class; these then became the curriculum for the course.

Students' agency is key for intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2004). In fact, out of the 90-minute block period only 15 minutes or so were used for lecturing. Activities in class included Socratic seminar, debates, student created Kahoots, individual tasks, paired work, and group work. Such an environment encouraged engagement and healthy interactions among students. Because the classroom was designed with students' interests in mind, students valued the goal of learning the language. "When a person identifies

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with an action or the value it expresses, . . .they are personally endorsing it" (Ryan & Deci 2004, p. 17). In the context of this teacher's AHL classroom, students were involved in the process of learning the language; it was clear in their interactions with each other, with their teacher, with their curriculum, and with their community.

Language skills and the learning context. In this case study, I wanted to specifically find out how AHL skills were being developed among this unique group of learners as opposed to students of foreign languages. HL learners have sufficient functional language skills and they have the ability to communicate and discuss basic, familiar, and relevant topics. Based on this information, the most appropriate approach to teaching HL would be a holistic approach that builds on this strength.

Observation of the participant's teaching style indicated a research-based approach. It was supported by research as being the top-down or macro-approach (Kagan & Dillon, 2001, 2008, 2009; Lynch, 2003). The method encouraged discourse using genre-based activities which eventually helped develop HL learners' grammatical and lexical knowledge. The framework of this approach takes into account students' lived experiences (Wu, & Chang, 2012), and this was exactly what the teacher was using to promote dialogue and discussion inside her AHL classrooms. The context appeared to be conducive for promoting AHL in a meaningful way. In the study, Wu and Chang used a blog to motivate the learners to create agency and encourage them to use Chinese HL skills. Likewise, the participant provided her students with opportunities to use the language in a natural setting. These language activities included role play, live interviews with family members, sharing personal stories, and reading to younger children at the

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school in Arabic. The participant's activities helped students bring their personal life experiences as Arab immigrants into the classroom. The classroom was a natural extension of what was going own in their homes and root culture. Using the language to express emotions, feelings and personal interest is a process called "languaging" (Swain & Deter, 2007, p. 822). A growing body of research in SLA is examining its importance to develop meaningful language acquisition. In this sense, the teacher's classroom context was conducive to developing expression of thoughts and feelings of the students' cultures using the Arabic language as a means for such a process. Also, sociocultural theory (SCT), which views language as a tool that "contributes to the cognitive development and is constitutive of thoughts" (Swain and Deter, 2007, p. 822), was part of this teacher's pedagogical approach. The teacher was giving her students the opportunity to develop higher level thinking and expression skills through fairly complex texts, which emerged during classroom discussions and unfolded in the interview anlysis. Deep interactions with reading texts was also apparent from the side notes that I saw in students' reading articles. In her interview she stated that, "We learn a language so we can communicate our ideas." With the help of the IB interactive and communicative approach, the teacher was able to contextualize her beliefs on how language should be taught.

Research Question Two Themes

   Designing materials and approach. For the purpose of learning and identifying best practices to teach AHL in K-12 settings, this case study aimed at finding out how AHL teaching resources were selected, what main points were taken into consideration when

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planning for this particular group of students, and what strategies and methods were used to enhance their learning. This section is in response to research question 2, which considers steps the participant took to identify and implement specific strategies.

The teacher did not have a textbook for this course, so all materials were designed by her. The process she used for designing materials was supported by Wiggins and McTighe (2013). The two authors promoted backward design and encouraged teachers to unpack overarching standards into smaller more manageable objectives for daily classroom activities. These activities then served as formative assessment tools. The teacher relied on the course's standards, criteria and end-of-year outcomes to craft her trajectory. She used the IB language overarching conceptual framework to choose her genre. In addition to that, she involved her students throughout this process to make materials more relevant and appealing to them. An essential part of teaching is designing the curriculum. Therefore, when both teacher and students had a say in what should and should not be taught, ownership was endorsed.

The teacher was using the students' personal experiences when presenting the topic of immigration. She was bringing in students' stories when talking about media and fake news. She was discussing global warming from the perspective of a Sudanese student and how she would help solve this issue in Sudan. Classroom topics included discussions such as education in the Arab world. These topics opened the floor for further discussions of equity of education in the Arab world. The teacher chose strategies like Socratic seminar to debate the topic and had students bring in videos of successful educational systems from around the globe to compare.

The teacher designed her daily activities so students could master key tasks such as writing a scholarly paper for their final summative exam. To add to the value and credibility of their writings, the teacher showed students how to strengthen their research using methods such as surveys and interviews. All steps the teacher took led her to meeting standards required by the program with the intention of making Arabic a tool for communication. The process of purposefully planning daily activities to achieve the program's overarching goals was evident in this study. This process also reflected the work of Wiggins and McTighe (2013) on how to incorporate activities into classroom time to determine and achieve students' understanding. This was another approach the participant used to check for her student's comprehension. The teacher identified and used Wiggins and McTighe's (2013) understanding by design approach as a roadmap to present reading materials in an interactive way.

Language skills and implementation approaches. The aim of the study was to learn from this teacher how best practices were being implemented in her classroom per research question 2. To develop all four language skills, the teacher primarily focused first on developing reading comprehension through enriching her students' vocabulary. She exposed students to different types of genres and provided them with proper comprehension strategies while emphasizing content. Varied types of language inputs (e.g. videos, visuals, and prints) with cultural information were used to target language skills. The teacher was using fairly complex texts to gradually improve spelling, pronunciation, grammar and writing style. Again, her approach was the top-down macro-approach (Kagan & Dillon, 2001, 2008, 2009). Classroom activities focused on

encouraging students to pose essential questions, take notes, or paraphrase what they a were reading. These strategies served the teacher well in determining students' knowledge gaps. As suggested by Carreira's (2016) research, the teacher used genres such as research, articles, and poetry as a means of teaching elements of the language.

Another point worth mentioning is that the teacher recycled vocabulary and presented the terms in different contexts for the purpose of better acquisition. Words were presented in sophisticated contexts and then pulled apart for the purpose of understanding them. Her approach used authentic contexts and engaged the students in complex tasks at the onset of instruction rather than starting with vocabulary lists and grammar explanations. Carreira (2016) indicated that this top-down or macro-based teaching is oriented to develop higher-order skills and multiliteracies.

The participant taught the Arabic language through content; she selected topics that were relevant to students' backgrounds to develop language acquisition. Cammarata and Tedick (2012) studied using language as a "vehicle for teaching subject matter" (p. 252), and their study highlighted an imbalance between language acquisition and content knowledge. Cammarata and Tedick studied an immersion program where teachers had to teach content in two languages. However, in this study, the program offered freedom of choice for both students and teachers. This level of autonomy played an important role in focusing on language development. The content in this teacher's classroom was used as a vehicle to meaningfully develop the Arabic language.

In the participant's classroom, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) was the only form of Arabic that was permitted in class although her classes had students from different

parts of the Arab world (i.e. Egypt, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Algeria, Yemen, Pakistan, and Turkey). Arabic dialects were part of the makeup of the classes. Yet, the students all used one form of the language. One of the issues described in the literature review chapter for Arabic was diglossia. As stated earlier, diglossia is "a unique variation in a community's language that is neither region-based nor class-based; two varieties of a language exist side-by-side throughout the community" (Ferguson, 1959, p. 325). This form of variation exists in every Arab country. Every member in the community knows that the dialect he/she speaks is different from the one used in the school setting, media, newspapers, religious sermons, and official documents. Also, it should be noted that every community is well aware of the fact that the version of the Arabic they speak as a dialect is different from other regions.

School-age children automatically switch between these two versions, and they know when to use the appropriate version of Arabic. There is rarely any confusion, and this behavior was noticed in this class. The teacher did not even perceive this point as an issue. Although I stated the observation to her several times in my interviews, she seemed to look at it as something natural. Students in her class did not have difficulty switching as well. Not only that, but they knew that the Arabic dialect that their classmates spoke might differ from theirs. What mattered here was that the MSA brought them together.

As part of this study, I wondered how diglossia was being addressed in this AHL classroom. The fact that the IB required only MSA for instruction had eliminated this concern for the teacher. In this teacher's classroom, using a standard form worked to her advantage. All dialects were brought together around one common/standard form of the

language. She was still able to celebrate the uniqueness of the students' cultural backgrounds. Students were able to use their dialect sometimes, but for their final assignments, they had to use the MSA mandated by the IBO.

Teaching AHL is different from teaching Arabic as a foreign language. AHL students know the culture and have a sense of what is appropriate and what is not. They understand that the standard version of Arabic is only spoken in school and in official settings. They know which version to use when and where.

However, Arabic foreign language learners may not understand that there is a difference between MSA and colloquial Arabic. They may not realize that it is not appropriate to use MSA in the streets of Egypt with local Egyptians. Using the wrong form of the language could put the learner in an unpleasant, awkward position with native speakers of the language. This particular group needs to be informed about diglossia and the importance of knowing the difference between colloquial Arabic and MSA. They also need to decide what version of Arabic they want to learn. Depending on the purpose, for example, if the learners are going to Iraq, it is not recommended that they learn Egyptian Arabic. To mix with local Iraqis, the learner needs to learn the Iraqi accent and to be able to read the newspaper and listen to the media; the learner has to learn MSA.

So, diglossia in this participant's class was treated as in the rest of the Arab world; it was treated as a natural part of the Arabic language. School is where all Arab speakers are brought together around MSA, and home is where they use their colloquial version of Arabic with their own community members.

Research Question Three Themes

Summative assessment and quality assurance. One of the goals of this study, stated in research question 3, was to identify how this AHL teacher determined the effectiveness of her instructional choices and of her teaching in general. Summative assessment was the primary driving mechanism for this teacher's classroom instruction. Getting over 87% of her students to achieve 6:7 or 7:7 on their external exams is a strong indication of the quality of her teaching. But grades are not indications of proficiency. Besides grades, the nature of these assessments needs to be discussed. The IB program's both internal and external assessments ensure measuring total language abilities of the learner through a performance-based measure.

The internal assessment is an integral part of the course. It measures students' abilities for interactive skills. Ten percent of a student's final grade is allocated for their ability to hold a conversation in Arabic. To measure this skill, the teacher required students to bring any form of stimulus that could be used as a prompt for talking. For example, if it was a picture, the teacher asked the student to describe the item. Then she asked questions relevant to the picture and linked her questions to one of the six IB subjects. This was done during the year in an informal way.

As for the final exam, 20% of the grade was allocated for testing their interactive oral skills. At this point, students were shown a visual they had never seen before. Then, they were required to sit privately for 15 minutes and take notes on the visual. During their individual oral interviews which lasted 3-4 minutes, students were evaluated on their ability to fluently (without interruption) describe and talk about the visual. The teacher then asked the student questions. This final step took up to 6 minutes. These recordings

were submitted to IBO for grading.

It should be noted here that this teacher, who is also an evaluator, does not only have solid IB training, but she also served as an IB examiner, as a writer for standards, and as an evaluator for IBO. She is also certified as an Oral Proficiency Interviewer (OPI) by ACTFL. All these elements add to the authenticity of the results and help achieve quality of language instruction in terms of alignment between assessment and instruction. In response to the third research question, these experiences not only allowed her to assess her students' progress, they also helped her reflect on and advance her growth as a language teacher.

Research has pointed out the limitation of using existing language proficiency scales as a measure for HL learners' proficiency (Kagan & Dillon, 2001), and according to Malone, Peyton and Kim (2016), "foreign language assessments fail to measure HL-specific skills. For example, they do not rate learners' abilities to interact with many different individuals in the target language for a variety of purposes, interpret subtle meaning in both oral and written texts, or present information in both oral and written texts" (p. 352). Yet, I believe that the IBO measures were well suited to measure student's communicative competencies. I also believe the teacher's vast experience with Arab speakers and her solid knowledge of the subject matter were fundamental elements that worked in her favor.

Here is an example from her class. I was able to observe all the IBO mandated abilities being assessed by the teacher throughout the unit I attended. My data indicated that materials designed for daily instruction gave students opportunities to show their

skills. In a final presentation on Arabic children's television progrms, students played the role of interviewer and interviewee to talk about the generational influences of these shows. They also presented results of surveys sent to their peers regarding their favorite childhood television shows, which were then compared to younger generations' favorite shows. Students in this final presentation were evaluated for their deep comprehension of researched topic and their ability to present them both orally and in writing. This was a summative assessment for the unit I observed, in which the teacher was responsive to the growth level of the students' language proficiency.

With regard to receptive skills, the teacher submitted an oral interview to the IBO. For their productive skills, during their final exams, students submitted a creative writing assignment (for higher level (HL) it was 500-600 words plus a 150-250-word rationale based on one or both of the literary works they read. For the standard level (SL) they produced a 300-400-word assignment plus a 150-200-word rationale on three resources they researched on a core topic). The teacher's role here was to supervise and guide them throughout this process. In March, students were administered two written tests consisting of text exercises on a minimum of four comprehension passages and a written task appropriate to their creative writing level (i. e. HL/SL). All work was submitted to the IBO for grading.

The rigors and the structure of the program assured quality of results in terms of mastering performance. An essential part of ensuring quality of outcome was the teacher's ability to follow up and give needed feedback to her students. This will be discussed in the following theme.

Formative assessment and follow-up. Close observations and data analysis and interpretation in this study (and in conjunction with research question 3) showed formative assessment was an essential component of this teacher's strategies. This element was what distinguished high levels of achievement from mediocrity. Effective teachers rely on formative assessments to check on the trustworthiness of their delivery (Wiggins & McTighe, 2013). Reading the teacher's gradebook, I noticed elaborate anecdotal notes of communications between the teacher and her students. The teacher asked her students to set individual language skills goals to show progress. Follow-up on these skills were elaborately written in her gradebook. Her notes reflected dates of conferences, reasons for conferencing, specific recommendations, days of follow-up on progress, and notes of how she determined the progress of her students. I reviewed one note, and it was about a Morrocan student who used to mix his dialect with the standard one. The teacher's anecdotal note indicated how she used the student's dialect to scaffold his language progression to use the standard form of Arabic.

Formative assessment is a continuous assessment tool used to check on students' progress, comprehension and interaction. It helps teachers identify gaps and address needs before it is too late (Wiggins & McTighe, 2013). When she was conferencing with one of her students about the resources the student chose for the final paper, the teacher realized that the learner had comprehension issues. Based on this observation, she had her student re-read the article. She asked her to paraphrase or write questions in the margins. Later, the teacher discussed the article with her student using these side notes and questions. As I was observing, the student's level of interaction improved.

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This approach was encouraged by IBO, and the teacher was required to follow up on certain skills using specific rubrics designed for this purpose. During one of the end of the unit presentations, students in the class were using a teacher designed rubric to evaluate their friends' performance.

In this teacher's class, rubrics were shared with students; it was also a common practice that students would take part in designing them. One other primary method of following up was individual conferences. As mentioned before, each student was entitled to three individual conferences at different junctions. As we know, classroom learning processes are inseparable. This discussion is also related to my two other research questions because skills are interrelated. I present the discussion here to show how formative assessment was used as a strategy to develop the language, and how the practice served to determine the effectiveness of her teaching approaches.

The teacher mainly focused on developing skills needed to tackle any form of genre; she enforced comprehension skills using context clues, highlighting main ideas, posing essential questions, and paraphrasing. These skills were closely monitored and checked by the teacher during the individual conferences.

Peer assessment was used to check for understanding and fluency. The teacher used group activities where students went outside the classroom to discuss ideas, and then they wrote their ideas on mobile boards in the common area to present to the whole class. This gave both the teacher and students the opportunity to check for any instructional or language acquisition gaps. Students were given the chance in this exercise to interact with their peers, extract main ideas and consolidate their writing, and then present these ideas

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to the audience. This was a natural routine in all her units and lasted for a good 40-50 minutes. This routine served as a way of checking for understanding and fluency. Overall, the teacher's daily embedded measures positively impacted the progression of language learning.

Research Quesiton Four Themes

Wearing so many hats. This case study focused on presenting emerging themes that described how this AHL teacher perceived her role. The teacher indicated that she was an educator, explaining and describing the differences between the two terms as follows: teachers only focus on delivering the content and meeting deadlines but, "I view my role as being more noble." This noble notion is the byproduct of her religion which demands high morals and principles; these principles are honesty, sincere work, and love for humanity which were central to her belief system. This focus on moral principles was stated during several interviews. It was also reflected in her personality as a lifelong learner who wants to offer her AHL students notable language experiences.

In the study, the participant viewed her role as entailing many different roles. Inside her class, she was very firm and adhered to the role of an instructional coach. She presented new information yet refused to front load her students with knowledge. She viewed herself as being the facilitator for their learning. With students who were new to the school or to the United States, she took on the role of a mother or a guardian. However, as an evaluator of their work, she was a firm transmitter of accurate feedback. The teacher cared about fulfilling students' affective needs; students did not hesitate to share their personal stories with her. She also played an important role being the

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supervisor for the community service club. Through this club, she was able to establish a more relaxed and informal relationship with her students. She shared several successful stories of character transformations that took place as a result of these community outreach activities. These roles played an important part in the participant's teaching practices. For example, in one of her interviews when I asked her why she is involved in community service, she stated,

> I view this generation as the hope for the future. I always tell them, "You can do it. You can do it." And the IB program supports their leadership skills. Critical thinking. Deep, genuine thinking.

I have seen how these community service projects developed into forums to use AHL in purposeful meaningful way.

Advocating for students' growth. Since one primary goal of this case study was to find out what traits or sets of beliefs support AHL teaching, I closely observed the participant, especially during extra-curricular activities. This focus was in response to research question 4. The dominant trait that emerged as I was observing her was a sincere commitment to her students' growth. The teacher perceived the students' growth holistically. She viewed them as humans with basic needs that required nurturing and fulfillment.

To her, Arabic was a means for the students to connect with their cultural roots and community members. She provided them with different opportunities inside and outside the schools to get exposed to such environments. This led to their social growth and promoted healthy networking opportunities. Arabic was the way to practice their

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religion and to read the holy book. To address their spiritual needs, she pulled content from the Quran and Arabic literature to enrich their vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension. She always augmented her teaching with moral stories from the Arab community to reinforce better behavior. Arabic was used to watch movies, listen to music and to cheer a soccer team. The language was used to foster good citizenship wherever students went.

Summary of Analysis Global Themes

In addition to responding to the above discussed research questions, my inquisitiveness led me to re-examine my data to find out what this teacher's story was in teaching AHL and what approaches she used. I wanted to find out what global theme/themes would emerge as I was combing through the data to present the participant's emerging story as a trustworthy summary.

Teaching purposefully with the end in mind

The decided gap in the knowledge of effective practices for AHL teaching in high school was one of the main boundaries for this study. The aim of my case study of an AHL teacher in the context of high school teaching was to identify best practices for this unique group of HLL. The one global theme that summarized this study was how purposeful each classroom activity was designed and implemented to accomplish end-of-year goals. The teacher used every activity inside and outside the classroom whether it was a community service activity, classroom interaction strategy, or assessment method to prepare the students to meet the IBO standards. Meaningfulness of language delivery complemented the rigor of the standards. End-of-year oral interviews were rigorous yet

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required a level of authenticity and meaningful engagement. Writing and reading comprehension tests, on the other hand, required deep understanding and fluency in using vocabulary. Teacher developed language skills gradually ensured conherence between all elements of the Arabic language. Starting with vocabulary building to develop reading, listening, speaking and writing, the teacher was able to intertwine all these language skills into one cultural entity that presented Arabic as a meaningful tool for communication.

For example, the teacher's community service activities usually became a point of departure for expressing meaningful ideas in Arabic. The teacher stated that one primary goal for such experiences was to bring them back into the classroom. Their community involvement served as content for classroom discussions and as preparation for end-of-year oral interviews. Organized fundraising events' phases and logistical planning became the substance for practicing their language skills. In their AHL classroom, students calculated the budget, distributed fliers, read books to younger children and wrote reports. The teacher gave several examples of how similar community service actvities can be used to prepare students for the IB's final exams.

Overarching goals. Close observations, interviews, and document analysis indicated that the participant's choices revolved around two major goals: preparing the students for the end-of-year final IB exams and making the language meaningful. Both of these goals were mandated by IBO.

The participant provided the students with opportunities to communicate effectively in a range of situations. Students in class discussed current events in their

global warming unit, local and cultural events in their journalism unit, and personal family stories in their immigration unit. They interviewed family members, brought videos, and sat in Socratic seminars to discuss global warming. The focus was to study the impact of global warming on their cultural root countries such as Sudan, Emirates and Palestine. The students researched the topic of education in Japan for example and compared it to their education in the United States and to their relatives' education in other Arab countries. They were able to synthesize their findings and present it to the class in 20-minute interactive presentations.

The backbone of all of these activities depended on the teacher's ability to scaffold the Language B objectives and the IBO overarching goals and infuse skills in her daily instruction. With the help of her students, she created appropriate rubrics to evaluate their work and designed units that not only fulfilled the IBO's objectives and goals but also sustained students' interest in the language. The teacher worked diligently to meet the following overarching goals as described in the IB guide:

Within the course framework, through the study of authentic texts, students investigate and reflect on cultural values and behaviors. The Language B course achieves this reflection on cultural values and behaviors in different ways. The course is organized through a core and options, all of which are well suited to fostering an international perspective. The Language B course seeks to develop international understanding and foster a concern for global issues, as well as to raise students' awareness of their own responsibility at a local level. It also seeks to develop students' intercultural awareness, which contributes to the relationship

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between language B and the international dimension. (International

Baccalaureate, 2013, p. 8)

She created opportunities for her students to reach out to the community around

them; for over 10 years she has been sponsoring a community service program. This year,

1200 Arabic and English books were collected and donated to the Children's Hospital in

Washington, DC. The students took the time to read to individual students in both Arabic

and English.

Teacher, student, IB, and content design. The premise of this study was to find

out what teaching strategies, methods, and approaches were most effective for teaching

AHL. This case study's findings supported Wiggins and McTighe's (2013) study on the

power of teacher designed units. In addition to her IBO and ACTFL training, the teacher

had been trained to use Wiggins and McTighe's recommendations for unit planning. The

two authors specifically emphasized the importance of backward design where the

teacher uses end-of-year standards, unpacks them, and scaffolds them to create daily

activates. The authors assert that "evidence of understanding means crafting assessment

to evoke transferability: finding out if students can take their learning and use it wisely,

flexibly, creatively" (p. 48).

Although the general content of the curriculum was mandated by the IBO and

overarching standards were part of the program, the participant skillfully unpacked these

standards and collaboratively turned them into interesting daily activities that led to

achieving the final goal. Findings indicated that the teacher was well aware of how to

provide her students with appropriately challenging reading texts that helped them gain

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deep understanding of what the text might mean. She provided them with unfamiliar tasks, yet she also offered them enough cues and skills to solve the mystery. Her individual conferences focused on sharpening the students' comprehension skills; her strategies of presenting the same words in different contexts allowed them to own their vocabulary. Students in her class were encouraged to choose and bring supporting documents that helped them understand the topics presented. This process allowed them to personalize the content. Discussion was a big part of the class whether it was paired (Think, Pair, Share), individualized (using a KWL chart), or a whole class (Socratic seminars), these discussions led to empowering the students and eventually developing their language skills.

Local and overseas connection. The study focused on finding effective ways to encourage students to learn AHL. With this in mind, I was wondering what really sustained this second generation's Arabic language learning interest. I found out that the IB program played an important role in motivating the students to enjoy learning their HL. Through document analysis I was able to extract this from the program's objectives for HL learners. Here is what the IBO aims for this group:

> The Diploma Programme is a rigorous pre-university course of study designed for students in the 16 to 19 age range. It is a broad-based two-year course that aims to encourage students to be knowledgeable and inquiring, but also caring and compassionate. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging students to develop intercultural understanding, open-mindedness, and the attitudes necessary for them to respect and evaluate a range of points of view. (International

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Baccalaureate, 2018, p. 2)

To achieve these goals, the teacher used her curriculum as a bridge between the United States, student's first language and culture, and their cultural roots. She encouraged her students to bring in YouTube videos about cultural events in their own HL. Several students chose cultural videos to watch in class, and this media was related/compared to similar events in the United States. Discussions afterwards were rich, and language extended classroom boundaries. On the topic of global warming, final presentations included finding solutions for drought in Yemen and the Sudan. A student shared the concept of unnatural rain and experimental methods used in Dubai to solve water scarcity problems. Topics in class were discussed from several perspectives ranging from economic, social, educational, religious, and political viewpoints. Students' findings and ideas were always related to contexts in the United States and then referred back to other heritage countries.

One thing which was witnessed in class was the pride the students and the teacher had in being both American and Arabs. They had no difficulty dancing between the two cultures and enjoying their dance. I have noticed that the participant helped this new generation of AHL students find a way to integrate their heritage ideologies with the American ideology. This merger created a way of thinking that was unique for them. From observations, students appeared to be comfortable not to choose between East and West. The curriculum encouraged them to enjoy both cultures; they appeared to be skilled at looking at things from different perspectives.

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In summary, Figure 15 includes the main points of my findings related to the purpose of my case study. It describes effective practices used by my participant to teach AHL in a K-12 setting. The four main elements that impacted teaching were the teachers' approach, assessment, classroom environment and the form of the Arabic language used for instruction. The approach included the participant's choice of teaching materials, and the strategies she used to deliver the material. It was evident throughout the study that the teacher was building new information and developing language skills based on students' prior knowledge and skills. During my classroom observations, I noticed that she gradually developed their reading and listening comprehensions by using a genre such as articles, poems, and novels. These materials progressed in style, sophistication, and vocabulary as the students' language proficiency improved. Students were finally able to produce a scholarly piece in writing and spoke with poise about topics they chose to address. The process included a built-in monitoring formative assessment system that reassured students of their progress. The process developed autonomy and competence along with the ability to interrelate with others from their cultural background. By using interactive activities throughout the lesson, the participant's classroom environment became a forum for socializing, discussion and voicing of opinions in Arabic. These conversations were carried out in modern standard Arabic; This unified form of Arabic mandated by IBO has brought all Arabic dialects in class together under one learning community.
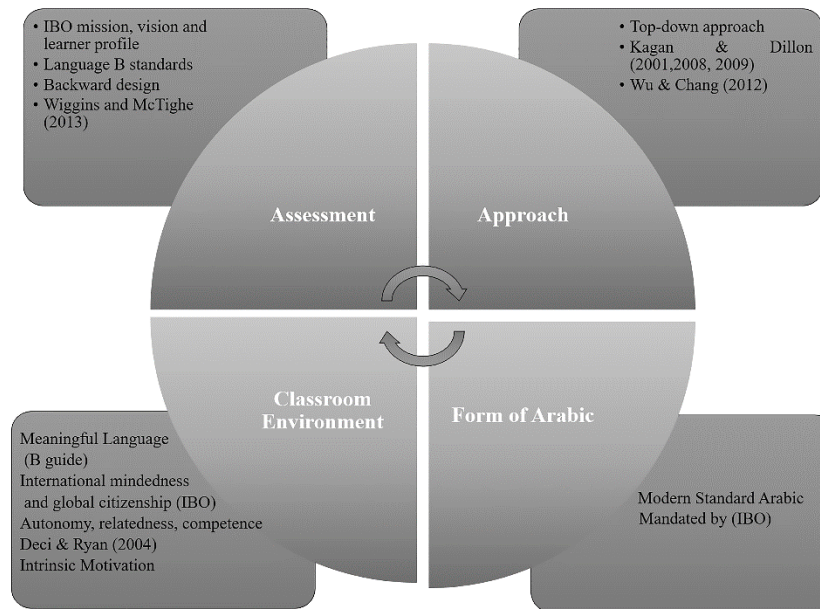
Figure 15. Components of AHL teaching: Approaches, assessments, classroom environment, form of Arabic used.

The teacher in this study used the top-down approach to design and deliver the language; this approach takes into account students' previous knowledge of AHL and their cultural literacy. The approach was supported by research as an effective practice for HL in general (Kagan & Dillon, 2001, 2008, 2009).

To assess this group, the teacher wove the IBO mission, vision and learner profile that includes international mindedness, global citizenship, and 10 learner profile traits and incorporated them into daily activities. These activities were measured in compliance with the Language B standards. To achieve and leverage effective attainment of skills and comprehension, the teacher used backward design suggested by Wiggins and McTighe (2013).

As suggested by Deci and Ryan (2004), the participant's classroom environment and management approaches appeared to also promote intrinsic motivation in her students. Researchers listed three main components for promoting intrinsic motivation: relatedness, autonomy and competence. The teacher's interactive classroom approach allowed students to relate to classroom members as well as family and community members to use the language in a meaningful way. This satisfied the need for relatedness. Not only that, but by involving students in curriculum design, choice, and rubric creation, the participant catered to students' need for autonomy and competence.

The *Language B guide* (International Baccalaureate, 2013) recommendations for curriculum topics and the IBO overarching vision for the kind of learner the IBO program wants to graduate has supported the participant in creating a student-centered, friendly environment. The form of Arabic used in this class was MSA, a form of Arabic mandated by IBO; emerging data from this study indicated that it was one of the most suitable forms of Arabic for this group of AHL learners.

Implications

In this study, I sought to respond to a number of research questions related to how AHL teaching was understood and practiced in everyday K-12 classroom settings. In particular, I wanted to describe the context of teaching AHL, how best practices were identified, and how this information supported or hindered the process of learning AHL.

The main aim of the study was to address the lack of research in the area of teaching AHL in K-12 classroom settings. Insights gained from this case study contribute to a wider understanding of practical implications on AHL practices and some of the

directions for future research in the area of AHL.

Implications for practice. By observing and reporting on the daily teaching of AHL, the teacher was able to relate the students' growth to effective practices identified by researchers in the area of teaching HL in general. Results will allow policymakers, practitioners, and researchers to view this group of students' unique needs from the perspective of an actual teaching and learning setting. The disparity between existing research done on AHL in university settings using surveys and knowledge in real K-12 classroom settings was an important contribution of this study. In this sense, findings from this study point to specific strategies, activities, decision-making practices and attitudes of this AHL teacher's classoom. The following writing describes some useful implications from this study for AHL teacher education programs at universities and professional development provided by schools.

For AHL teachers, current training opportunities typically involve workshops, presentations, and summer programs, such as those offered by STARTALK for teachers of strategic languages (Carreira & Kagan, 2017). For teachers who are committed to teaching the Arabic language and its cultural heritage roots, the area of AHL is in dire need of better teacher education opportunities. One important factor creators of teacher education programs should take into consideration is focusing on raising teachers' awareness of this group's unique needs as language learners.

As indicated in the literature review, this group's language use and acquisition continuum ranges from a native like L1 acquisition, which has not been fully developed to that of a foreign language L2 user (Monrul, 2008; Valdés, 2005). Among other best

practices in the HL areas, teacher education programs should introduce teachers to the top-down approach recommended by Kagan and Dillon (2001). This approach introduces students to fairly large and complex texts from the beginning. Through discussion, the approach places emphasis on the content and gradually improves spelling, grammar, and stylistics. It also provides learners with a range of native language inputs, such as movies, documentaries, audio, visual and print that contain cultural information (Wu & Chang, 2012).

The teacher indicated that it took her a long time to scaffold articles for her students. Time and energy were two factors that created external challenges for her. Therefore, teacher education programs and professional development (PD) for HL should focus on providing resources, materials and clear roadmaps for language instruction.

Qualified AHL teachers are also needed to fill the gap in developing AHL curriculum materials and other pedagogical resources. Teacher education programs should encourage opportunities for collaboration among teachers to address the paucity of teaching materials in existence today. The programs should prepare HL teachers to create and design materials that are responsive to their particular language, context, level, among other factors.

Another implication for teacher education programs draws attention to the number of pedagogical issues emerging in Arabic language classrooms due to teachers' difficulties in assessing HL students' different levels. Teacher programs must prepare teachers to use and design appropriate measures for this purpose so they can effectively cater to their students' language needs.

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Next, for heritage schools as they seek to include PD programs for their AHL teachers, the focus should be on supporting instructors to become designers of their own materials. It is highly recommended that teachers get training on how to scaffold materials and activities backward to fulfill end-of-year targets. Wiggins and McTighe (2013) present a very clear step-by-step approach to designing teaching activities for understanding. The authors also focus on developing student agency and meaningfulness of the subject matter taught.

As mentioned previously, these learners' language acquisition is incomplete. Heritage language speakers have significant gaps in their vocabulary and find it difficult to retrieve words (Montrul, 2008). To help target these gaps, HL teachers should effectively use formative assessments during classroom time. Individual conferences, self-assessment and peer assessment should be part of AHL teacher's teaching pedagogy. These continuous assessment tools will inform teachers of students' language gaps thus enabling them to support and develop proficiency in AHL.

Another implication stems from reframing the issue of diglossia (different dialects used within Arabic speaking communities), and how this language component was addressed within the context of this study. Although the Arabic language speaking community uses two varieties of a language colloquial and standard that exist side by side, Albirini and Chakrani (2017) indicated, "Colloquial Arabic (CA), and Standard Arabic (SA) are part of the sociolinguistic reality of the families and communities in which many heritage Arabic speakers live" (p. 317).

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In my participant's classroom, this variation was not an issue. Similar to all students in the Arab world, the students in this AHL class knew that only the standard form of the language was accepted. When the students resorted to their CA or home spoken version of the language to fill in gaps in standard Arabic, the teacher allowed them to do so. She used their CA as a scaffold to help them become proficient in the standard version of the language. The teacher leveraged the overlap and treated them as if they were a continuum. Due to the phonological, lexical, and structural similarities between the two diglossic varieties of SA and CA, there seems to be a positive facilitative role that CA contributes to the acquisition of SA (Albirini & Chakrani, 2017). The participants used their home variation of the language to facilitate the development of the standard form of Arabic. However, it should be noted, students were only allowed to rely on their CA until they gained enough confidence and proficiency in the standard version of Arabic mandated by IBO.

Most importantly, this research points to the need to revisit the critical role of AHL instructors' teacher education and PD programs. The training platform is in dire need of a diverse range of SLA and HL theory-based strategies that will help fill this gap.

Implications for future research. Being explanatory and interpretative in nature, this case study raises a number of opportunities for future research. It offers a prospect in terms of theory development and practice validation in the area of AHL in particular and HL in general. The complexity of understanding the HL learning process in general, and AHL in particular, requires a qualitative examination of students' sociocultural needs as well as their cognitive development. Drawing from different disciplines, SLA has taken

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in "a variety of theoretical perspectives and applied them to create, expand, and enrich its theory and research" (Swain & Deter, 2007, p.831). Situating my research within SLA research, I see an opportunity for future SCT research and the impact on AHL students' language acquisition. Such research will draw attention to individual's identity, agency, and home culture. Findings also indicated the need to attend to this group's cognitive, affective and social needs. This point sparks an interest for future research on how to provide a balanced teaching approach that responds to all these needs.

Finally, findings from this study show that the teacher's instructional style was positively impacted as a result of the influence of IB's pedagogical approaches. To generalize results, the IBO research center may consider using qualitative research designs to further understandings of the effectiveness of these approaches on HLL in the program.

Limitations

A limitation in this study was access to students' perspectives; having interviews with the participant's students would have given my findings another layer of quality. However, to mitigate this issue, I conducted more than 21-hours of classroom observations. With my participant's guidance and permission, I also listened to students' end-of-year oral interviews, studied their written work and compared their progress. In addition, I shadowed the teacher during her community service meetings and visits. This gave me the opportunity to talk to the students on an informal level.

Finally, because this study was focused on one teacher, it is important to replicate this research with a larger sample. Although this may be a limitation, I purposefully

selected an information rich participant to describe best teaching practices for AHL. Future researchers might consider selecting from a range of teachers, some beginners and some more advanced, to understand how practices of teaching HL evolve with experience.

Conclusion

The goal of the case study was to learn and explore effective approaches to the teaching of AHL; it was to identify these strategies as they emerged in the participant's classroom. The method I chose for this study (case study) allowed me to address the needs mentioned in the field of HL for classroom-based data. Carreira and Kagan (2017) suggested that "important real-world complexities are over-looked" when we rely only on quantified data (p. 157). To address HL's complex needs, both researchers recommend a classroom-based study (Carreira & Kagan, 2017).

Insight gained from my study supported the use of the top-down or macro-approach recommended by several researchers in the field of HL teaching (Kagan & Dillon 2001, 2008, 2009; Lynch, 2003; Wu & Chang, 2012). This approach takes into consideration a student's general knowledge of the language and their global perspective driven from personal knowledge of the HL. The top-down or macro-approach is characterized as "discourse-based, content-based, genre-based, task-based, or experiential" (Wu & Chang, 2012, p. 145). In addition to fostering HL learners' identities and cultural roots, the curriculum is built on their prior knowledge of speaking and listening as a platform to develop all four skills of the language (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Regarding the use of this approach with AHL, three pedagogical

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suggestions have emerged from this study.

First, engage students with authentic activities. Since this group of HLL come equipped with cultural literacy and have sufficient oral and spoken command of the language, teachers must include authentic materials and activities that involve students in informal language learning, such as: video clips, songs, comic books, music, art, and Arabic books. Teachers can also include topics of interest to the students, current events, global issues, and students' perspectives about these topics to make the material more engaging. Teachers should use a collaborative design approach and ensure students have input into the material they study in each unit. The classroom, on the other hand, should be conducive to student-centered learning; the teacher is the facilitator and coach, and the student is the implementer. Strategies and instructional tools, such as KWL; think, pair, share; Socratic seminar; and Kahoot are highly recommended. Fear inhibits language learning; therefore, it is critical that teachers establish a safe classroom culture to facilitate language learning.

The second recommendation is for teachers to target language skills using formative assessment. One finding of this study is the importance of formative assessments when teachers are following up on students' daily progress of language acquisition. Skilled teachers regularly share course expectations and end-of-year rubrics with students. They also help students understand how to implement these tools. A final method of including formative assessment in language learning is to use periodic individual conferences to support, clarify, and target needed areas.

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Finally, teachers can cultivate both receptive and productive skills with the language by building a solid vocabulary. To build the students' vocabulary, the participant in this study recycled vocabulary words and presented them in many different forms. She also provided students with different genres and encouraged reading for comprehension.

This study revealed the important relationship that well-designed and well-delivered language programs have on the quality of instruction for AHL learners. During their journey of learning, AHL students benefit from and improve their proficiency in Arabic by learning the language alongside a competent, passionate teacher. As students are learning the mechanics of the language, they and their teacher search for common ground together and develop new understandings and a broader perspective of the language. As AHL educators, we must take part in the continual exploration, assertion, and development of effective strategies, strong language programs, and competent teachers. We must also learn from teachers and students and let them guide our work and provide a compass to better understand key features of AHL teaching.

Appendix A

IRB Approval

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

Office of Research Development, Integrity, and Assurance

Research Hall, 4400 University Drive, MS 6D5, Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Phone: 703-993-5445; Fax: 703-993-9590

DATE:	July 12, 2018
TO:	Marjorie Haley, PhD
FROM:	George Mason University IRB
Project Title:	[1114931-2] Towards a Better Understanding of Arabic Teaching as a Heritage Language: A Case Study of a High School Arabic Language Teacher
SUBMISSION TYPE:	Amendment/Modification
ACTION:	DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE:	July 12, 2018
REVIEW CATEGORY:	Exemption categories 1, 2

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this project. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

Please remember that all research must be conducted as described in the submitted materials.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be submitted to the IRB office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

If you have any questions, please contact Bess Dieffenbach at 703-993-5593 or edieffen@gmu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of five years, or as described in your submission, after the completion of the project.

Please note that department or other approvals may also be required to conduct your research.

GMU IRB Standard Operating Procedures can be found here: http://oria.gmu.edu/1031-2/?_ga=1.12722615.1443740248.1411130601

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within George Mason University IRB's records.

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Appendix B
IRB Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT Form

Title of Study: A Case Study of an Arabic Language Teacher in an International

Baccalaureate School Setting

Principal Investigator: Dr. Marjorie Haley

Co-investigator: Faridah Turkistani

This study is about the Arabic language and culture teaching among multicultural / multilingual Arabic students in an International baccalaureate program setting. Arabs and or Muslims living in the Washington, D.C. metro area tend to send their children to King Abdulla Academy for the purpose of learning and maintaining their own language, culture and religion. In this study, I would like to learn your thoughts about what roles you as an IB Arabic language B teacher play in helping them with their Arabic language learning. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to have a face-to-face 60 to 90-minute interview. I would also be observing your class at least 3 times and study some of the work you do with your students.   Please let the researcher know whether or not you agree to have your interview and classroom observations audio recorded.

RISKS and BENEFITS
There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research and no deception will be employed. There are also no benefits to you as a participant.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The data in this study will be confidential. Confidentiality will be maintained by asking you to choose a pseudonym for yourself and through the codification of data. The recording will be transcribed by the researcher, and she may take notes during the interview and or observations and type them in a Word document afterwards. Members of the researcher's doctoral committee may listen to the audio recording and/or read the transcription and/or read the interview and observation notes.

PARTICIPATION
Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you or any other party.

CONTACT
This research is a for a GMU doctoral level class and might be used for a dissertation project being conducted by Faridah Turkistani, a PhD student at the College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University. She may be reached at fturkist@masonlive.edu.gmu or faridahat@yahoo.com or (703) 6292402 for questions or to report a research-related problem. This study is being supervised by Dr. Haley, a professor at George Mason University, who may be reached at mhaley@gmu.edu or 703-993-8710.   You may contact the George Mason University Office of Research Integrity &

Appendix B (Continued)
IRB Informed Consent Form

Assurance at 703-993-4121 if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research.

CONSENT

I have read this form and agree to participate in this study. ___I agree to audio taping ___I do not agree to audio taping. I understand that all audio recordings related to the project will be kept in password protected computers and will be destroyed five years after the completion of the project.

_____ Signature

_____ Printed Name

_____ Date

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Appendix C
Interview Guide

Title of Study: Toward A Better Understanding of the Teaching of Arabic as a Heritage Language: A Case Study of a High School Arabic Language Teacher

Research Questions:

1. In what ways does learning occur in the context of AHL and what activities, education, and beliefs influenced the participant's performance?

2. What steps does the participant take to identify and implement specific strategies used to teach AHL?

3. How does the participant determine usefulness and effectiveness of these strategies?

4. How does the participant perceive her role as an AHL teacher?

Principal Investigator: Dr. Haley
Co-investigator: Faridah Turkistani

Biographical Interview Guide
Opening questions
  o Tell me about your background.
  o Where were you born?
  o Where did you grow up?
  o What kind of schools did you attend?
  o How long have been teaching?
  o What kind of school did you teach for?
  o What is your teaching philosophy?

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Teachers' perspectives of Heritage language Learning Lead off question:

Tell me about a time when you felt your classroom activity was very successful?

Articulation of foci categories of interest:
- Teacher's attitude towards teaching Arabic in an International Baccalaureate (IB) setting
- Impact of IB/other teaching skills & approaches on students' engagement
- Impact of IB/ other teaching skills on students' retention of knowledge
- Subject matter knowledge in relationship and its impact on teaching
- Impact of IB/other teaching skills on higher level thinking?

Possible follow-up questions:
1) Can you share with me a time where you felt your classroom activity was engaging?
2) What does engaging mean to you?
3) Can we both define engaging before we move forward?
    a. Interesting, can you walk me though this interesting classroom activity you mentioned?
    b. What kind of questions did students ask?
4) Do you remember a time where it was not so engaging?
    a. Aha, please I would love to learn more about it. Can you walk me though it?
    b. What do you feel like you could have done better in that instance?
5) What advice would you give new teachers to make Arabic more engaging?
6) Why would you specify these tips?
7) During my observation, I noticed that your students were asking a lot of interesting information about…………….. Can you elaborate on what kind of questions they usually ask during the class?
8) Tell me about a time one of your students came to you during a break to learn more about a topic you had covered?
9) Can you tell me about an "aha" moment your students had in one of your class?
10) Do you ever feel that a certain activities are a waste of time and not relevant to topic knowledge?
    a. Can you share with me more about such experience?
    b. What do you think teachers should do in situations such as this?
11) Do you remember a time where you felt your students were bouncing off ideas about the topic during class? Interesting, can you please elaborate?
12) Do you remember a classroom discussion where students were not asking the kind of questions you wanted them to ask? Tell me about that.

13) Tell me about a time when you felt stressed about teaching Arabic?
    a. How did you feel? Can you share in details?

14) Tell me a time when a student seemed to really get the language and enjoy the assignment you gave them?

    a. What did you do in response?
    b. How did you further capitalize on this?
    c. What advice would give to new teachers to achieve this moment in their classrooms?
15) Tell me a few tips on how to set up activities that can achieve this moment?
16) Why do you think students enjoyed the assignments the most?
17) How do you know that they enjoyed it?
18) Tell me about a time when a student did not seem to get it?
    a. Can you share with me in details?
    b. What do you feel like you could have done better in that instance?
    c. Interesting what tips would you give new teachers to avoid this from happening?
    d. Can you talk about how you engage your students in your class??
    e. And approaching the curriculum?
19) Can you share with me your experience with developing specific skills?
    a. let's start with writing ……..reading………speaking………listening.
    b. When do you develop each skill?
    c. Which one do students enjoy the most?
    d. I saw you discussing or not discussing current events in your class? Can share your thoughts on this as one of   as an approach.

20) How do you address student's language variations?
21) How do you handle variations from MSA?
22) Thank you for your valuable contribution to this study. Do you have any questions for me or about the research?

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Biography

Faridah Turkistani received her Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from King Abdulaziz University in 1985. She was employed as an English as a Foreign language teacher and supervisor in Saudi Arabia for over 16 years. In 2001, Faridah, moved to the United States to work for a bilingual school in Virgina. She then received her master's in Multilingual Multicultural Education from George Mason University during which time she was teaching English as a second language. From 2003-2016, Faridah served as vice-principal, principal, and then finally as director general of a K-12 IBO bilingual school in Alexandia, Virginia. She also worked as an ESOL science teacher for the Arlington County Public School system. In 2018, as she was completing her PhD dissertation, she worked as graduate research assistant for project Excel at George Mason University. Project Excel, is a problem- based intervention implemented in Fairfax and Prince William Counties in Virginia, and Charleston City School District in South Carolina.