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A Study of Arabic Women and English Language learning

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ARABIC WOMEN AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING:
A CASE STUDY

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the Morgridge College of Education

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Ream Alkarni

March 2012

Advisor: Dr. Bruce Uhrmacher

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Abstract

The main goal of this study was to interview Arabic women students at Spring International Language Center to record their perceptions, rationale, goals, stories, and opinions about learning English in a U.S. language school. This research was conducted to understand the purposes and goals of Arabic women who come to the United States to study the English language, and the importance of English language proficiency, both within and outside the United States.

The findings of this study are not only relevant to English language centers in the United States, but also those in other countries. The information and methods used can provide background material to guide further study of Arabic women in general and those who come to the United States to study English for Arabic scholarship agencies and others who have a vested interest in the topic. Furthermore, the findings of this study indicate that English language programs should hire more qualified and experienced instructors. Evaluations of instructors can be used, as a tool for improvement and development of programs, and should also encourage participation by Arabic women inside the classrooms to increase their interaction and involvement with other students. Classes on U.S. culture could be offered before Arabic women come to the United States to learn the English language.

The findings of this study provide a basis for future studies of Arabic women and English language learning. The timing of this study is important. The number of Arabic

women studying the English language at academic language centers in the United States is increasing rapidly because Arabic countries, such as Libya and Saudi Arabia, are providing scholarships to citizens to promote a more highly educated population.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Background

A quote from the book *African Laughter* by Doris Lessing, “It is women everywhere in what is called the Third World who are changing things” (Saliba, 1995, p. 131). Arabic women have traditionally found their vocation in the home, taking care of their husbands and raising the children. “Arab traditional culture expects that the Arab women will choose to fulfill the role of homemaker, rather than work outside the home” (Tuma, 2002, p 2). Because it is culturally inappropriate for women to interact with men outside the immediate family, it has been difficult for them to work outside the home; however, as Arab women are becoming more and more educated, and are marrying later in life, their interest in a career, and the benefits of an independent personal income, has risen. All over the Middle East, medical centers and schools are divided by gender and there is more and more demand for educated women to provide services for other women. Doctors and teachers have high status and their hours are flexible, allowing women to meet their family obligations as well.

At the same time, the economy of most Middle Eastern countries has fallen and even male college graduates may now find it difficult to obtain a job. When men do not have a job, they often put off marriage and family. Even those who do have good jobs find that they are unable to live in the style that their parents became used to a generation ago. As a result many women, even married women, want to work if they can find a job.

Having an income gives them more balance in their marriage and helps to support the family. Women with an independent income are able to buy personal things for themselves and their children that they might not otherwise be able to obtain.

In Arab culture, it is the man's responsibility to pay for the home and the needs of his wife and family. If a woman has money, either inherited or earned, it should be hers to do with as she wishes. However, a woman's contribution to the household may give her more power in the household and more equality with her husband. If she is unmarried, an income may give her more freedom in her life in general. "There are women who do choose to work in Arab society, despite the situation, and may benefit from this experience through a sense of autonomy" (Tuma, 2002, p. 3).

Since most educated men want their wives to be educated as well, it has now become common for girls to attend college. Common majors are medicine and education because those jobs provide a more flexible schedule, allowing them to meet family obligations. Many families sending a son to the United States for a college education arrange a marriage because it is felt that the man will be more responsible and focus more on his studies if he has a family. The women commonly attend college at the same time, requiring a mastery of English. "Arabic American women become more public with their concerns. Arab American women's groups can be found on college campuses and in many communities" (Mankiller, 1999, p. 36). However, some of them face many acculturation issues because of hijab. "Some Muslim women wear hijab, a head covering, and were perceived as particularly foreign by U.S. society" (Mankiller, 1999, p. 35).

While mastery of English is necessary to enable them to complete their course of study, it is also very desirable since the world of business, medicine, and computers

functions in English. Therefore, learning English well is considered very desirable to most everyone in the Arab world, women included. “Arabic women worked hard to integrate their new lives in America. They organized committees and raised funds . . . they also joined PTAs, played school sports, and served on local councils as they embraced the wider community” (Mankiller, 1999, p. 35). The above comments reflect my personal knowledge and experience in the Arab culture. However, I recognize that their experience, may not speak to the needs of all Arabic women.

Significance of the Study

When I started researching questions related to this subject in order to define my dissertation topic, I found no information on the subject of Arabic women and English Language studies, either as a group or individually. In fact, I found little literature about Arabic women on any topic. Tuma (2002) commented that:

The research allows the minority group to be taken out of the invisible realm, and to become visible. Also, the gained knowledge of research both adds to the literature, as well as aiding in the development of treatment modality. There are minority groups that have yet to be studied, perhaps due to their slower population growth, or recent emergence into the United States. (p. 2)

Relatively few Arabic women come to the United States to study English compared to men or women from other cultures. I believe that Arabic women who come to the United States to study English have received little or no attention, although, they are a growing population in the United States. “This ethnic minority group is a growing population in the United States with an estimated range of 600,000 Arabs residing in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 1994) to 3 million (Abraham & Abraham, 1983, El Badry & Position, 1990) (Tuma, 2002, p 1). I have been unable to find specific literature

regarding Arabic women and the study of the English language that was helpful in writing this dissertation.

The English Language Dominates Worldwide

Many people will say that the English language has become more and more important in the 21st century. In many countries, including much of the Middle East, the English language is now taught starting in grade school. However, even when one spends time every day working on learning a foreign language, unless one has another person who is fluent in the language to speak with, it is difficult to get a comprehensive grasp of the language and build an effective vocabulary. Additionally, since many women want to orient their language studies towards a specific field; i.e., medicine or computers, there is a whole additional vocabulary to learn which is specific to that field but next to impossible to learn without a basic understanding of the English language and its structure first.

The English taught in the Saudi public school system is generally inadequate for a conversational knowledge of the language and totally inadequate for purposes of fluent reading and writing, much less a basis for learning a medical, scientific, or computer technology based language. Sultan Al-Hazmi argued

EFL teacher preparation programs in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia can be described as nonsystematic and inadequate. EFL teachers over the last four decades have mainly been graduates of colleges of education and faculties of arts affiliated with Saudi universities offering bachelor's and associate's degrees in English language and literature. (2003, p. 2).

Those who want to major in these fields need additional study in the English language. Even if one only wants to gain a strong business background, most Saudis want to be able to deal internationally. Fluent English is a requirement since English is the

international language for business transactions. All over the world, even if one is unable to speak the local language, there is usually someone who speaks English well enough to communicate and translators are readily available into English in most major cities.

“However, similar to other minority groups, it appears that it is time for the Arabic-American voice to be heard and understood” (Tuma, 2002, p. 6).

Essentially, the Arabic student has two choices. There are many private international schools in Saudi, taught in English, which parents can choose to have their children attend. These are especially popular among the large community of expatriate workers, who speak English at home and prefer to have their children taught in English; however, some of the local citizens want their children to have more English than Saudi public schools offer and choose to send them to private schools to that end. Alternatively, many adults choose to come to the United States or England to achieve this level of English capability while attending university or graduate school.

My study is important because:

1. We don't know why Arabic women choose to study English in the United States.
2. There is little information in the literature on the purposes and goals of Arabic women coming to the United States to study English. If educators understand what Arabic women want, they can design their schools to more effectively provide the appropriate and necessary information.
3. This study will help us understand the learning needs of Arabic women coming to the United States to study English.
4. This study will help us understand the appropriate learning environment for Arabic women coming to the United States to study English.

Problem Statement

There are many reasons for conducting this particular study. I intend to return home to Saudi Arabia and teach English language students, or supervise those who do teach these programs. I need to know as much as possible about the needs of my students and the best methods to meet those needs. I used the Spring International Center language program as my template. My rationale for the study is as follows:

- *To investigate how English language is taught at Spring International Center to non-English speaking students.* Spring works with a variety of students from different countries, teaching them the English language and the American culture. While a large percentage of their students are Hispanic, they also work with students from Asia, the Middle East, and Europe to improve English language skills at six different levels. They concentrate equally on reading, writing, and speaking. We need to know how English language is taught at Spring International Language Center.
- *To understand the purposes and goals of Arabic women in studying the English language.* Some women simply want to know English because they will be staying in the United States. Understanding the language is critical to their integration into the culture and functioning as a wife and mother. Others plan to attend school or work and need to speak English at a higher level in order to understand and respond appropriately. For example, all medical school, nursing, and computer classes in Saudi Arabia are taught in English because the terminology is in English. Finally, there are those who will go home and need to function in English at work and Arabic at home. As English is the international language of business, they still need to be adequate to communicate with other workers and make themselves understood. We need to know the purposes and goals of Arabic women in studying the English language.
- *To investigate how formal education setting enhances or distracts the Arabic women interest and rationale.* As a teacher of English as a Second Language in Saudi Arabia, could I help them accomplish the same goals? Can they learn English in Saudi Arabia without an immersion program just as well as if they were in the U.S.? Only if I can understand their needs and provide an appropriate learning environment. We need to know the Arabic women's needs in order to provide an appropriate learning environment.
- *To provide answers for other schools and universities wanting to organize English as a Second Language program for Arabic speakers, especially*

women. There is little information in the literature on this subject which will help us understand the learning needs of Arabic women, although I was able to access some information on speakers of European and Asian languages. If educators understand what Arabic speakers want, they can design their schools to more easily provide the appropriate and necessary information.

Spring International English Language Center

Spring International Language Center was founded in 1979 by Pambos Polycarpous, Connie Shoemaker, Barbra and Bob Sample and two others with the purpose of offering high quality intensive English as an ESL program. It offered strong support services. Originally it was called Spring Institute for International Studies. Polycarpous and Shoemaker assumed ownership of the intensive ESL portion of the school in 1984; its name became Spring International Language Center (SILC). Today, there are about 100 students from 22 countries in SILC in Littleton branch only. SILC offers six levels of instructions in nine-week terms throughout the year. The levels range from beginning to advance (pre-college/university).

SILC is a thirty-year old school which offers an intensive English immersion program including home stays, TOEFL preparation, executive English, vacation English and cross-cultural education to international students. It is fully accredited by universities and has three university locations in Arkansas and Colorado. Its website portal offers help in many ways from assistance with grammar to drivers licenses. It essentially covers everything a student needs to know and access whether the stay is long or short. Based on the research I have done at this point, their school offers an extremely complete program, which appears to be top of the line. The portal offered links to an amazingly complete list of informative and helpful sites for an international student.

Through my personal experience and my close observation of the success story of SILC, I can say that this school has a really advanced ESL adult learners program that meets the standards of the American Association of Intensive English Program. This success is accomplished through integrated factors such as excellent curriculum, fine teachers, cooperative staff, democracy in decision making, effective assessments and the great environment provided for students, all of which supports the purpose and the intended goals of SILC.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation emphasized the English language as spoken in the United States, since it is American English, rather than British English, which forms the basis of international usage, although the differences are limited. To determine the rationale of Arabic women studying English as a second language the researcher interviewed a group of Arabic women pursuing this course of study at the SILC. For this qualitative study the research methodology of case study was employed. The research questions for this study were:

1. What are the official aims in teaching English as a second language at SILC?
2. What do instructors try to teach at SILC?
3. What are the stories behind Arabic women rationale for studying the English language?
4. How does the formal education setting enhances or distracts Arabic women interest and rationale?

Research

To answer these questions, the researcher conducted an in-depth interview with the founder of the SILC including the aims in teaching English as a second language at

Spring International Center. Further, the researcher interviewed three instructors in depth including what are they trying to teach at SILC. Additionally, the researcher interviewed four Arabic women students (three married-one single) including their reasons for coming to the United States to study English at Spring International Center.

Definitions of Terms Used

Arabic women: Women whose primary language is Arabic regardless of their country of origin. “A member of a Semitic people inhabiting Arabia, whose language and Islamic religion spread widely throughout the Middle East and northern Africa from the seventh century” (Arabic Women, 2011, para. 1).

English language: English as spoken on the North American continent.

One impact of the growth of English has been to reduce native linguistic diversity in many parts of the world, and its influence continues to play an important role in language attrition. Conversely the natural internal varieties of English along with creoles and pidgins have the potential to produce new distinct languages from English over time. (English Language, 2011, para. 1).

English as a foreign language (EFL): English taught in a foreign country in order to give students familiarity with the language but without the assumption of comprehensive fluency.

English as a second language (ESL): English taught in an English predominant country to students who grew up speaking another language but need to have fluent English for work or education purposes. Students are expected to achieve mastery of the language with roughly equal levels of fluency to native English speakers if they complete the program.

Hijab: Head covering that some Muslim women wear when men are present. Muslim women wear Hijab to show modesty.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In this literature review, the researcher's objectives went beyond the scope of how to teach the English language and the role of teaching methods in learning English. The researcher reviewed the importance of English language learning for Arabic women. The literature review looks at the role of acculturation because acculturation is a process that every Arabic woman experiences when she comes to the United States.

Acculturation also provides opportunities for Arabic women to be more successful and assimilated with the American Culture. The researcher addressed the history of English language centers in general and the history of SILC in particular. The researcher reviewed literature that describes methods and systems of culturally responsive pedagogy for teaching English language skills to non-native speakers because it is the kind of pedagogy that English language centers should use in their classrooms. The researcher examined the difference between implicit and explicit curricula because the educational system in the Arab world has a different view of what kind of curriculum is more important and effective.

Importance of English Language Learning for Arabic Women

The benefits of learning more than one language are clearly demonstrated by Susan Dicker when she states:

Linguistic diversity helps sustain human existence...Languages contain other types of knowledge; they express particular ways of viewing life. ...A wealth of information about human survival and adaptation is embedded in the many

languages of the world. Linguistic diversity offers writers a wide range of artistic expression. In addition, research has shown that multilingual people have advantages over monolinguals in creative and divergent thinking, intelligence, and cognitive flexibility; investment in multilingualism thus means an investment in potential solutions to the problems humans face. (Dicker, p. 3, 2003)

Most Americans agree with the idea that the United States is a monolingual nation, since English is the official, dominant language. However, outside of the United States, multilingualism is the most common verbal communication. It is interesting to learn that “roughly 6,700 oral languages as spoken today...some countries have speakers of a great variety of languages; Nigeria, for instance, has over 500” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, p. 257). More important, however, is the widespread use of English throughout the world, where “English is an official language in over 70 countries, French in 25, Spanish in 18, Arabic in 19, Portuguese and German in 6, and Malay, Chinese and Tamil in 3” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, p. 298). It is evident that learning English as a second language for non-native English speakers is of utmost importance to communicate effectively in many aspects of our lives.

In China and other Asian countries, a high percentage of the students who went outside the nation for an education stayed to work outside China (Chung, 2004). It has only been recently that many Chinese have decided to return home because opportunities for work and entrepreneurship have increased dramatically in Asia. In the Gulf States, it was rare for people to leave for an education and not return home because of strong family ties as well as high salaries for citizens based on the oil wealth. Although they might prefer the freedoms of the West, the lack of income taxes on top of high salaries in the Gulf made coming home much more financially desirable for most people (Binmahfood, 2011).

Raizi (2004) completed a study during a sabbatical year she spent at University of Qatar. She enlisted 120 female students who spoke Arabic as a native language and who were majoring in English language and literature at Qatar University. These were considered average students who rated themselves as fair compared to native English speakers; however, they felt that becoming proficient at English was very important and they were felt to be highly motivated because learning English was required for graduation and would affect their future career potential.

Most Arabic women come to the United States to learn the English language because English is a universal language and has become the number one language in the 21st century. McWhorter (2010) stated

There are those who worry not only that English will become *primus inter pares*, but that it will finally eat up even the last remaining 600 languages as well. In Japan, a child raised in Osaka would speak English and think of Japanese as a language spoken by his family. He says that foreign immigrants who are attempting to improve their English communication skills in the U.S. were having difficulty talking to doctors and schoolteachers. As part of multicultural diversity, linguists and anthropologists believed that several languages must be kept as alive as possible since the Eyak language in Southern Alaska became extinct when its last communicator died. (p. 15)

After many wars in the Middle East area, some Arabic women came to the United States to escape war and bad living conditions and some just come to learn the English language or finding a better job either back home or here in the United States. Arabic women working outside the home indicated that doing so had increased their self-esteem by providing independence to their lives in the United States. Tuma (2002) stated

The Arabic culture is based on a particular system in which women have little if any level of power. The various restraints imposed on Arabic women are alluded to as well as their consequences. The influence of traditional Arab society is taken into account in the different aspects of an Arab woman's. (p. 2)

The Role of Acculturation

In studying Arab-American women's acculturation, Tuma (2002) mentioned the role of acculturation. She defined acculturation as "Acculturation involves the changes in behavior, beliefs, and attitudes of a minority group based on its interaction with the dominant culture" (p. 3). That is to say, acculturation is a result of Arabic-women's work or study outside the home. Acculturation also provides opportunities for Arabic-women to be more successful, and assimilated with the American culture. Tuma emphasized the importance of acculturation for Arabic-women because it impacts interaction and success within the dominant culture. "Thus, acculturation is not considered an individual process, but rather a component of the process of assimilation" (p. 44).

Furthermore, Lee and Green (2010) stated in detail the acculturation process that individuals could experience:

- Integration
- Assimilation
- Marginalization
- Separation

These acculturation processes lead to interaction with individuals and groups from other cultures. In this article, Lee and Green also emphasized that age is an important factor in acculturation:

The most integrated were those who came to the United States at younger ages, had been living here for longer periods of time, had higher levels of education, and had the abilities to speak, read, and write very well in English. In contrast, the most separated groups were those who came to the country at older ages and were not able to speak, read, and write well in English. (p. 1)

According to Blakely (2005), the strategies used by immigrants for acculturation vary from person to person. U.S. television programming also aided the acculturation process in acquiring English and becoming knowledgeable about U.S. culture. But “identification and acculturation may not imply satisfaction with the new culture or particularly satisfaction with family life within the new culture” (Fargallah, Schumm, & Webb, 1997, p. 183). They also added “To the best of our knowledge, no research has yet explored family life satisfaction among different Arab immigrant group in America today” (p. 184). Moreover, their research has found that characteristics of immigrant would influence the chances of greater acculturation and greater acculturation would increase the chances of higher satisfaction with life in the United States.

Declan (2001) has pointed out that acculturation may be defined as social interaction and communication response styles that individuals adopt when interacting with individuals and groups from another culture:

- The assessment of acculturation
- Communication difficulty
- The process and outcome of acculturation

He also added, “There has been a relative dearth of research that examines the acculturation patterns of East Asian (i.e., Chinese, Japanese, and Korean) and other Asian ethnic groups in the United States” (p. 1). The findings of this research suggest that the East Asian Acculturation Measure (EAAM) developed and evaluated by this study may be a useful tool for researchers to investigate the acculturation patterns of East Asian Immigrants (Declan, 2001).

Hamid (1996) explained that literature survey showed that acculturation was influenced by four variables: cultural differences; expatriates' rights and duties in the host country; work climate, and living conditions. In his article, he examined "the impact of a number of situational variables on acculturation of expatriates in Arab gulf countries. Cultural differences between expatriates and host gulf societies mean that any expatriate may experience cultural shock after arrival in the host country." He emphasized, "Acculturation can also be assisted by training programs designed to impart such information, and this especially recommended for managers and highly-talented professionals whose failure to adjust is costly" (Hamid, 1996, p. 46).

History of English Language Centers

In the United States, ESL programs are available at most major universities, community colleges and private and for-profit colleges and schools. ESL programs may be housed in various departments, depending on the preference of the school, including the English department or foreign languages. They can range from simple class offerings to an intensive, immersion program.

These programs generally cover a broad group of cultures and set class size depending on a variety of factors with up to five levels in the program. A survey of 60 schools offering ELS in 13 states indicated that Asian and Hispanic cultures were their major groups with Russian and Armenian ranked third and fourth (Shoemaker, 1996). Not one school mentioned Arabic students, much less Arabic females, in their answers. Some schools specialize in providing enough English for businessmen to function in a foreign culture. Others provide services to people going on vacation. Many have adult

education programs only. Still others emphasize preparation for the TOEFL and college preparation English. Some have a minimum English proficiency level for admission and others will take any student at any level and place him appropriately, offering as few as two or as many as 13 levels of study (Shoemaker, 1996). Some offer focused advising and help with such issues as obtaining driver's licenses and immigration. Some provide cultural training and orientation including social and cultural activities, housing and home stays. In general, the private and for-profit schools provide a more extensive offering, but there is great variation depending on the location and the facilities available.

SILC

Many Asian students come to the United States to study at SILC during the summer through student exchange programs. Most of these students stay at host family homes close to SILC.

Twenty-six students from the Japanese sister college of Colorado's Arapaho Community College visited Littleton and ACC to participate in vacation and English programs sponsored by the Spring International Language Center. The women planned to participate in English classes, stay in the homes of Littleton families. (Around Campus, 2010)

SILC is a privately owned institute, and is considered a model for other language institutes throughout the United States. SILC classes are considered a place for learning English and innovation where International students focus on improving their language abilities and interact with native speakers.

Spring International Language Center offers 9-week sessions, with 25 hours of language instruction per week. Six levels of language ability are offered, from beginning to advanced. Classes include a structural component integrated with a skill component (reading-writing and listening-speaking), plus elective courses. These elective courses may include modules designed to focus on specialized needs such as TOEFL preparation, conversation, pronunciation, vocabulary

building, or on integrated language use through content. (Dantas-Whitney & Dimmitt, 2002, p. 66).

According to Dantas-Whitney and Dimmitt (2002), all SILC teachers hold MAs in TESOL. Teachers are involved in teacher professional development. “A teacher brings to the classroom an awareness of language and learning acquired through study and personal classroom experience. The institute strives to bring these two strands of understanding into meaningful dialogue about teaching and learning” (p. 69).

SILC has been in partnership with the University of Colorado at Denver.

SILC was invited to the campus to operate an IEP design to serve all three institutes by preparing international students for entrance and academic success. The partnership with the University’s School of Education is one of the linkages designed to benefit the students on campus. (Dantas-Whitney and Dimmitt, 2002, p. 66)

The University of Colorado at Denver usually used SILC for observation and teacher training. International students usually interact with graduate students and find them useful. “The relationship was one of cooperation: SILC cooperated by making its classes available for observation, and the university cooperated by recommending qualified graduate teaching assistants to practice teach at SILC” (Dantas-Whitney & Dimmitt, 2002, p. 66).

In 1996, SILC and the University of Colorado at Denver started a partnership in different terms. They both accomplished partnership through these joint activities:

1. Teacher preparation
2. Professional development
3. Curriculum and instruction renewal
4. Inquiry and research

This collaboration is more focused on students' English language learning (Dantas-Whitney and Dimmitt, 2002).

In the summer of 1997,

. . . the two institutes established a new institute known as the Rocky Mountain TESOL Institute (RMTI) with the goal of creating a total learning environment in which everyone involved in the institute, students and faculty, were learning on some scale. (Dantas-Whitney & Dimmitt, 2002, p. 67)

At this Institute, graduate students from the university would be considered a resource for international students to improve their English skills. In addition, the SILC teachers and RMTI faculty would be engaged in personal and professional development (Dantas-Whitney & Dimmitt, 2002).

Spring instructors integrate multiculturalism into their lesson plans, enabling students to learn through their own culture. A sample technique that SILC uses in their school is to quote an English proverb, such as “the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence,” then ask students whether there is an equivalent proverb in their own languages. Next teachers ask students to work in pairs to discuss how this proverb illustrates incidents from their own lives, and then they write a short summary of what they have discovered about the other person. This informal GIST (Generating Interactions between Schemata and Text) strategy allows students to become acquainted with each other, while at the same time improving their English skills (Herrell & Jordan,

2004, p. 260). They also introduce the music and food from the cultures of their learners to enhance and enrich the classroom situation.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Four elements of culturally responsive pedagogy must be properly in place for English language learners to succeed. First, the language phase of the student must be determined. Second, the proper scaffolding must be provided. Third, the appropriate methods of instruction must be chosen, and fourth, motivating activities and content must be implemented.

Phases of language acquisition.

It is imperative that teachers of culturally diverse students understand in which phase of learning acquisition an ELL is, so that they can provide the appropriate scaffolding and instruction. Furthermore, it is indispensable to properly interpret valid, reliable, and authentic assessments in order know their “phase” and to place them where they will learn.

There are three English language acquisition phases that the Colorado public schools label. They are non-English proficient (NEP), limited English proficient (LEP), fluent English proficient (FEP). NEPs start out in the silent period when they only process incoming information and cannot produce language. It takes about six months for NEPs to actually repeat short language bits. Normally within a year, NEPs graduate to the LEP phase where they function well with basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS). It takes about three years for a LEP to begin comprehending academic language or cognitive academic language production (CALP). Depending on the personality,

motivation, consistent exposure to the target language and quality of instruction, the LEP will make progress towards becoming FEP. An FEP becomes more comfortable with comprehension and production of CALP, even while accomplishing cognitively difficult tasks (Escamilla, Chaves, Fitts, Mahon, & Vigil, 2003).

Once a teacher has pre-tested identified a student's phase, planning appropriate instruction for that student can begin. For NEPs, a teacher of culturally diverse students should prepare lessons where students can respond to illustrations and then demonstrate their comprehension. For LEPs, a teacher should design differentiated lessons on the scale of Bloom's Taxonomy to accommodate their various levels of BICS and CALP and then begin to introduce mini-grammar lessons that address their grammatical errors. For FEPs a teacher should focus on CALP with varying levels of scaffolding (Escamilla, et al., 2003).

Scaffolding

Scaffolding techniques to teach culturally diverse students can improve the students' engagement in different activities. Scaffolding "is a metaphor that has been invoked to describe the process by which adults foster the transfer of responsibility for tasks from themselves to unskilled (and often young) learners" (Biemiller & Meichenhaum, 1998). In the context of children with educational problems, "we will suggest that current practices in many schools result in a kind of reverse scaffolding, preventing rather than encouraging transfer of responsibility for tasks" (Biemiller & Meichenhaum, 1998). They also stated the process of scaffolding, which can be divided into two important steps:

1. Learning new skill or procedure
2. Gain experience in building new tasks

It is important that “scaffolding instruction address both skill acquisition and task construction using acquired skills” (Biemiller & Meichenhaum, 1998).

Scaffolding can be fostered through interaction between teachers and students, and among students, and is essential for culturally responsive pedagogy. It is not the teacher’s job to tell students what to think, but to allow students to discover for themselves what they think. Finn criticizes teachers who expect students to “just accept what they tell you, learn it and go on, no questions asked” (Finn, 2001, p. 162). On the contrary, teachers of culturally diverse students should accept the whole child, and what that child thinks and believes, no matter how different that child might be from them.

The classroom environment greatly affects student success. Every student, regardless of personal characteristics such as ethnicity, original language, gender, and religion should be valued and have equal rights to a voice and a choice in the educational process. They should have equal opportunities such as: excellence in teachers, instructional techniques, and school facilities. Education and literacy are tools of empowerment. Dewey has stated: “the ideal aim of education is creation of power of self-control” (Dewey, 1938, p. 64).

Discrimination should not be a part of teaching. However, teachers may discriminate out of ignorance when they have no experience of other languages and cultures. This lack of exposure makes them less accepting of the diversity of their students, instead of using that diversity as a teaching tool. This is the case for many

teachers in the U.S., who often have little experience outside their home environments. Such teachers are not equipped to teach students from diverse environments, because they have experience only of their own culture. Diversity can be a valuable teaching tool, instead of an impediment to teaching.

One excellent activity that can be performed through scaffolding is addressing the influence of different cultural values within multicultural classroom will be to discuss veiling. It also helps “to create a sense of security and predictability, both necessary for relaxed learning” (Clarke, 2007, p. 122). Since Saudi classrooms are segregated by gender, all of the students will be women, and they will all follow the practice of full veiling outside the classroom, since that is required in my country. All of them, however, will be aware that this practice is controversial in the West. This means that discussing the pros and cons of veiling, in English, will be an excellent way to bring issues of culture and language into the classroom. In such discussions the teacher should ensure that every student is allowed an opportunity to express a view, since it is common for three or four students to dominate discussions of a controversial nature, to the exclusion of other students. Teachers should do this by not calling on students who have already spoken until all students have expressed a view, and they should establish this rule ahead of time so that all students are aware of it.

Appropriate Methods of Instruction

Appropriate methods of instruction must be chosen for culturally responsive pedagogy because learning, involves both activity and change. It involves cognition and other activities as well. I agree with Clarke that “effective teachers have authenticity.

Authenticity means that teachers present meaningful, authentic activities through which students can learn because they connect in meaningful ways with their experiences, needs, and aspirations” (Clarke, 2007, p. 112). Authentic lessons capture the students’ attention. This is especially important for second language learners, because they have issues of culture and identity that may slow their learning process.

Culturally responsive pedagogy involves being friendly, modeling, using visuals and gestures, providing feedback, incorporating multicultural personal experiences into the classroom, and using teachable moments to further students’ learning. These are the techniques of cooperative learning. Additional techniques that can be found effective include storytelling, read-aloud, and blackboard composition. These activities help lead students toward literacy and personal empowerment. In addition, they provide opportunities for marginalized voices to be heard. In story telling, the teacher begins a story and the students complete it by using a grammatical point, such as the present perfect or present progressive. Pictures are a good way to begin this activity. However, the best technique, according to research published in 1979 by Battig and Belleza, is to use stories as aids to memory (Davis, 2003). In order to encourage student attention and feedback, the teacher can make deliberate mistakes while telling the story. They also might say the woman is wearing a green dress when she’s actually wearing a red dress, and then wait for students to correct the error. After one or two stories the teacher can pass out magazines and the students do the activity with each other. “A story provides a realistic context for presenting grammar points and holds and focuses students’ attention in a way that no other technique can” (Celce-Murcia & Hilles, 1988, p. 59).

Culturally responsive teachers can improve literacy through read-aloud strategies which allow students to listen to texts read by their teacher, then paraphrase and rewrite those texts in their own words. These activities enable students to gain information from the readings, while paraphrasing and rewriting help them to improve their writing skills (Dewey, 1938). Literacy is also enhanced through blackboard composition, which allows students to write their own sentences on the blackboard, then discuss these sentences with the class, receiving crucial feedback on expression, grammar, and word choice. In her dissertation, Chung (2004) reminds us of Topping's research which concluded that most humans learn about 10% of what they read; 20% of what they hear; 30% of what they see; 50% of what is both seen and heard; 70% of what they discuss with others; 80% from personal experience; and 90% of what they teach others. This research has been relied on in designing curriculum and planning classes since educators recognized that this validated what they had known all along. It applies to ESL classes as well as all other forms of learning. This is why working and learning in teams has increased in popularity more than any other innovation in education as well as on the job training.

An important part of the responsibility of culturally responsive teachers is multicultural literacy, which allows students to learn about and value other cultures while they improve literacy. Both story-telling through interactive read-aloud sessions and blackboard writing empower and enhance multicultural literacy, by giving students exposure to other cultures while they learn English. Stories that include individuals from diverse cultures are particularly useful in an ESL classroom. Memory researchers have

found that stories are an excellent way to evoke schemas and help people understand and retain information (Davis, 2003).

The “Cohesion Links Strategy” is another excellent technique for incorporating multiculturalism to teach English. An example of this technique is the distribution of handouts with information about important people from the countries of origin of the students, then asking students to answer questions about these people. Each student writes on the board the main idea of one paragraph in the handout, and the class provides feedback on elements such as parts of speech, ellipses, and word choice. This activity allows students to learn from each other, with the teacher providing guidance (Herrell & Jordan, 2004, p. 230). It incorporates Dewey’s point that “students learn best by doing, not by sitting in rows and being talked to” (Dewey, 1938, p. 99).

Motivating activities.

Motivating activities and content must be implemented in a culturally responsive classroom. The teacher of culturally diverse students can create learning activities that appeal to both the intellect and the emotions of the students. It incorporates Dewey’s point that “students learn best by doing, not by sitting in rows and being talked to” (Dewey, 1938, p. 99). An example is a lesson on how indigenous peoples in the Amazon are helping to preserve the rainforest. Such a lesson includes “hard” facts on conservation measures, and it also appeals to the heart by showing how two endangered populations—one human, the other plant—can help each other survive. Such a lesson gives both teacher and students chances for interaction, and also provides opportunities for feedback.

In practice, one way to achieve authenticity is by focusing lessons on news articles about issues from the students' home countries. When this is done, students do not have to struggle with both a foreign language and a foreign culture. They can use the target language to communicate about their own culture. When teachers focus on authenticity in this way they bring real life into the classroom. In addition to authenticity, it is important to establish a rhythm and a routine in the classroom by following Clarke's advice to divide the class into three sections: review of old material, presentation of new material, and assignment for the next class. Putting the lesson plan on the board is another way to help both teacher and students keep track of the lesson. It also helps "to create a sense of security and predictability, both necessary for relaxed learning" (Clarke, 2007, p. 122).

Wink (2005), as many educators, believed that it is essential in a culturally responsive class to avoid hidden curriculum "the unexpressed perpetuation of dominant culture through institutional processes" (p. 47). A hidden curriculum defines the standards of the dominant culture. It increases inequities among students by labeling some students as "better" than others. It is often such an integral part of the curriculum that no one notices it. An example of a hidden curriculum is the assumption that those cultures that do not live by Western values are inferior.

Implicit and Explicit Curriculum

It is appropriate in this section to discuss the difference between implicit and explicit curriculum because educational system in Arab world has a different view of what is more important and effective. According to Shepard and Jenson (1990), attention

to curriculum changes is focused on more knowledge, more skills, and more roles. They emphasized, teachers need to consider in deciding what to keep and what to eliminate from the curriculum. Elliot Eisner has proposed that three curricula are taught in all schools: the explicit curriculum, the implicit curriculum, and the null curriculum (Flinders, Noddings, & Thornton, 1986).

Shepard and Jenson (1990) have also discussed the difference between explicit and implicit curriculum. The explicit curriculum refers to “what is important to students and their families in terms of grades, clinical assignment, and program time and cost...One might believe that the explicit curriculum is the only curriculum” (p. 568). It is formal curriculum that students and teachers are expected to follow “specific goals and objectives pertaining to reading, mathematics, writing, science, and other object areas are examples of explicit curriculum” (Hoover, 1987, p. 59). In most Arab countries, the explicit curriculum is more recognized and used in the educational system. “In all Arab countries, the elementary school curriculum and textbooks are predetermined by the central ministry of Education. Private national and foreign schools are required to follow the essential elements of the program of study” (Qubain, 1979, p. 9). She emphasized, in most Arab countries curriculum has improved in recent years “despite this, however, it continues to be, in large measure, nonfunctional and divorced from the life and environment of the student.” Qubain (1979) also stated “teaching techniques tend to be authoritarian, dependent on learning by rote, and lacking in the development of curiosity and the thinking faculty of the child” (p. 9).

Shepard and Jenson (1990) also stated the definition of implicit curriculum.

Implicit curriculum

Includes values, beliefs, and expectations that are passed down from academic and clinical faculty members to their students. These values, beliefs, and expectations are not part of the formal explicit curriculum but nevertheless are learned by students as part of their academic and clinical experience...Other implicit curriculum components appear in terms of how knowledge is valued by use of explicit criteria. (p. 568)

They added: it is the students who can point to distinct features of the powerful second type of curriculum—the implicit curriculum. Here in the United States, explicit curriculum is more recognized and used in schools.

Through our school, the implicit message is clear: we deeply respect our students, not just because they are our students, but because all human beings have the right to be respected in these ways. The seminal idea of our program is not new. We have simply translated them into practical, day-to-day applications embedded in the school setting so that the entire school's culture becomes our implicit curriculum. Everything that we do and say teaches character. (Shepard & Jenson, 1990, p. 5)

It is understandable that implicit curriculum focuses on character building and beliefs and values learned from the curriculum.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The Role of the Researcher

The researcher is a Saudi National doctoral candidate who holds a Master's degree in Teaching English as a Second Language from Colorado State University and a Bachelor's degree in English language and translation from King Saud University. I am a female who was born in the United States in 1980, and my experience of learning English was painful and isolating. Until I was four years old, I had no exposure to English, because my family spoke Arabic with me during my early years. When I was four years old, my father sent me to a kindergarten where all the children were Anglo, and none spoke Arabic. I could not understand anything, and was completely isolated in this environment. The children avoided me and the teachers ignored me. They all thought me retarded because I did not speak English. I was painfully aware of my different skin color, language, and culture. I could communicate with no one. When all the children were called to come in from the playground I did not want to go in with them. The teachers let me stay outside alone and I spent my time on the playground instead of in the classroom. It was only with great difficulty that I was eventually able to learn English. I would not wish this experience on any of the many children of immigrants who find themselves in American classrooms, needing to learn English but not being provided with any tools for doing so.

If I had had the benefit of English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction as a child, I would have been able to learn English without such painful experiences. ESL is the tool that the non-English speaking population needs in order to learn and succeed in the American classroom and culture.

After I finish my doctoral degree, I plan to return to Saudi Arabia and teach ESL to undergraduate students at King Saud University in Riyadh. My goal as a teacher is to foster learning by encouraging interaction between students and the teacher. I hope to give students the opportunity to relate their own life experiences to the learning material, and to give all students equal opportunities for learning and future careers. My goal is to create critical thinkers who read and analyze the materials, and then express their own thoughts in clear, logical speaking and writing. My goal, in other words, is to give my students voice and choice.

Research Design

This qualitative research design involved a case study analysis of the perceptions and stories of Arabic women at SILC where many Arabic women study English as a second language. The study included why they are learning English, what are their purposes and goals for studying the English language. I also analyzed how formal education setting enhances or distracts Arabic women interest and rationale. In order to answer these questions, the researcher held in-depth interviews with four of these women (three married-one single). Further, the researcher conducted an in-depth interview with the founder of SILC including the aims in teaching English as a second language at Spring International Center. Additionally, the researcher interviewed three instructors in

depth including what are they trying to teach at SILC. Through one-on-one interviews, the researcher was able to answer the research questions and participants felt comfortable working and sharing their thoughts and ideas with the researcher because the researcher is also an Arabic woman who wears hijab. “Interviews are powerful tools for obtaining knowledge about human experience and behavior” wrote Kavale (1996, p. 72) and “the qualitative research interview is a construction site for knowledge” (p. 14).

There are numerous researchers (Creswell, 1994, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Erlandson, Harris, Slapper & Allen, 1993; Marshal & Rossman, 1999; Nachmias & Nachmias, 1979) who recognized case study as an appropriate research method to investigate Arabic women from different viewpoints. The case study promotes “complex interrelationships and multiple realities to the intended audience in a way that requires that the audience interact cognitively and emotionally with the setting” (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993, p. 163). The researcher interviewed the participants in order to gather their experiences and stories about English language learning at SILC.

The storied professional knowledge landscape in which we all live our lives is, understood from a narrative knowledge standpoint, perhaps better seen not as the war zone of reform with front lines, teachers, action plans, buy-ins and buy-outs, strategies, and so on. (Clandinin & Connelly, p. 162, 1998)

Research Questions

1. What are the official aims in teaching English as a second language at SILC?
2. What do instructors try to teach at SILC?
3. What are the stories behind Arabic women’s rationales for studying the English language?
4. How does the formal education setting enhances or distracts the Arabic women interest and rationale?

- A. As perceived by one of the founders.
- B. As perceived by the instructors.
- C. As perceived by the Arabic women.

For the purpose of building a good relationship with the study participants, the researcher visited SILC before starting to collect data and met the founder of the school, the instructors, and the Arabic women. During these meetings, the researcher explained the purpose of this study and the consent forms to the study participants. The researcher also informed the study participants that they are going to be interviewed and audio taped at any location of their convenience. All of the study participants agreed to participate in this study.

The researcher began by interviewing the founder of SILC for about an hour. Second, the researcher interviewed each of the three instructors at SILC separately for about an hour each. Although they agreed to participate in this research via emails, two of the instructors did not replay quickly to the researcher emails in order to schedule the interview time and location. Therefore, the researcher had to visit their offices and meet them personally in order to schedule the interviews time and location. Finally, the Arabic women were interviewed and tape-recorded by the researcher at the location and time of their preference such as: library, their homes, and the researcher house. All of the study participants were audio taped and interviewed by the researcher.

Setting of the Study

Despite the debate on bilingual education in the United States, there are many ESL adult learners' public and private programs here in Colorado. Public ESL adult

programs are mostly supported by churches and directed to low-income English learners or refugees to provide them with basic English for the students to be able to communicate in daily activities. These programs are the clearest example of the linguistic paradox reflected in the quality of English as a second language, such as “classes for Indo-Chinese adult refugees who have recently arrived in the United States. The rationales behind these classes are that proficiency in English will allow the refugees to find a decent job and to escape poverty” (Tollefson, 1991, p. 234).

On the other hand, there are private schools for ESL adult learners such as SILC. I have chosen to write about this particular school in my research paper for two main reasons. The first reason for choosing SILC is because I was an adult learner myself. When I arrived to the U.S five years ago, I went to Spring International School and I studied there for about four months. Second, I know some critical information about this particular adult English language school. According to Eisner (1985), consistently can enhance qualitative research.

This research study takes place at Spring International language Center which is a private ESL adult schools that prepare the students to enroll in graduate and undergraduate schools and universities, work or start a business. This Language Center is recognized nationwide and recommended for pre-academic preparation. In this research, study participants will describe their experience at SILC from different perspectives.

Participants

The participants of this study were four adult Arabic women studying at SILC, one of the founders of SILC, and three of the teachers at SILC.

Arabic women.

The Arabic women who participated in this research were the Arabic women who chose to participate in this study by contacting the researcher. The Arabic women were recruited through a flyer posted by the researcher on a bulletin board located at SILC. Having an English language diploma from an academic English language center such as SILC is a requirement for all Arabic women coming to the United States in order to study at American universities. Four Arabic women participated in this research (three married – one single).

All of the Arabic women who participated in this study were not immigrants of the United States; they were all students who came to the United States for the purpose of completing their education. The Arabic women were studying English at either intermediate or advanced levels at SILC. Arabic women study core classes such as: reading, writing, listening, grammar, and speaking. And they can choose from many elective classes offered by SILC such as: conversation, accent improvement, and research. Two of the Arabic women were from Saudi Arabia and the two others were from Libya. The age of the Arabic women ranged from 25 to 30 years old. (See Table 1 for more details about the Arabic women personal history).

Instructors.

Some of the instructors who participated in this research were the instructors' of the Arabic women studying at Spring International Language Center. Three of the instructors had administrative responsibilities as well such as: director, assistant director, and student's coordinator. All of the instructors had taught different core and elective

classes and some of them preferred teaching certain subjects. Three of the instructors were Angelo and one of them was originally from the Philippines.

The instructors' age varied from 35 to 55. Their educational background and work history varied. The highest work history was 30 years and the lowest was 15 years. All of the instructors carried a master degree in different fields such as: Teaching English as a Second Language, International Studies, Library Science, and English Literature. (See Table 2 for more details about the personal data of the faculty at SILC).

The founder.

The founder of the school had many important responsibilities at SILC such as: supervisor and administrator. The founder was very active and had positive attitude toward both instructors' and Arabic women. The instructors' and the students' at SILC can discuss any issues or questions with the founder easily.

The founder is originally from Cyprus and married to the assistant director who is a Colorado native. He is about 60 years old. At the beginning he came to the United States on a full-scholarship in order to complete his studies. After that, he started the school with other partners in 1979. The founder taught English as a second language at his own country Cyprus before he got involved in the founding of Spring International Language. He also has a degree in Linguistic studies. The founders opened the school for the purpose of providing an excellent instructional program and other supporting services such as: housing, transportation, and orientation that help international students to pursue their education here at the United States. (See Table 2 for more details about the personal data of the founder of SILC).

Development of the Interview Question Guides

There were some important factors that helped the researcher develop this question guide. First, the researcher is an Arabic women and a second language learner of English herself. Second, the researcher has a bachelor's degree in English language and translation and a master's degree in teaching English as a second language. Finally, the researcher made good use of the literature review presented in Chapter Two about Arabic women and English language learning.

For example, Finn (2001) suggests that interaction among teachers and students, and among students, is essential for learning. It is not the teacher's job to tell students what to think, but to allow students to discover for themselves what they think. Finn also criticizes teachers who expect students to "just accept what they tell you, learn it and go on, no questions asked" (p. 162). In addition, Dewey has stated: "the ideal aim of education is creation of power of self-control" (1938, p. 64). Therefore, the researcher developed these question guides listed below.

Question guide for Arabic women.

1. Tell me about yourself?

Early years

Education

Work history

Recent career experience

2. When did you come to the United States?

3. When did you start studying at SILC and why?

4. What are your purposes and goals for studying at SILC?

5. What do you like/dislike about SILC?
6. What are your future goals after you finish studying at SILC?
7. Can you describe your experience at SILC?
8. Can you describe your experience at the United States in general?
9. Why are you studying English?
10. What tensions if any, come up for you in learning English?

Personal

Economical

Social (family-community)

Question guide for instructors.

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. When did you start teaching SILC started and why?
3. What are your aims in teaching English as a second language at SILC?
4. What kinds of classes do you teach at SILC?
5. What are the kinds of qualifications do you have to be able to teach English as a second language at SILC?
6. When did Arabic women start to study at SILC?
7. From your point of view: what are the purposes and goals of Arabic women studying at SILC?
8. Do you think that Arabic Women accomplish their goals by studying at SILC?
Why or why not?
9. What kinds of personal or social tensions if any, do you think Arabic women face in learning English?
10. How do they negotiate these tensions?
11. Do you think that Arabic women want to be part of the American culture?
Why or why not?

Question guide for founder.

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. How did you become involved in the founding of SILC and why?
3. What are your aims in teaching English as a second language at SILC?
4. What kinds of classes are taught at SILC?
5. What are the kinds of qualifications that a teacher at SILC must have?
6. Can you please describe SILC in general?
7. When did Arabic women start to study at SILC?
8. From your point of view: what are the purposes and goals of Arabic women studying at SILC?
9. Do you think that Arabic Women accomplish their goals by studying at SILC? Why or why not?
10. What kinds of personal or social tensions if any, do you think Arabic women face in learning English? How do they negotiate these tensions?
11. Do you think that Arabic women want to be part of the American culture? Why or why not?

Methods

To answer these questions, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews on four Arabic women students (three married-one single) including their reasons for coming to the United States to study English. Also, three instructors and the founder of SILC were interviewed by using the semi-structured interview guides. Data was collected from September until November 2011. The researcher started to collect data after the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects at the University of Denver in order to protect human subjects (see Appendix C). The

researcher also followed the IRB guidelines during the entire research process. And posted a flyer on a bulletin board at SILC to recruit participants instead of using the researcher personal connection in order to comply to the IRB guidelines. The researcher also explained and collected consent forms from study participants who chose to participate in this research study (see Appendix A). In depth tape-recorded person-to-person interviews were used in order to gather their experiences and thoughts about English language learning and Spring International language center. The researcher conducted the interviews after school hours and during break time. Moreover, the researcher conducted these in-depth interviews with Arabic women students mainly in English, but some of the Arabic women also used Arabic to explain some sophisticated ideas and after that the researcher translated what they said in English for two main reasons. First, the Arabic women that the researcher interviewed were still learning English as their second language on various levels at SILC and cannot conduct all of the in-depth interviews in their second language yet. Second, the researcher has a bachelor's degree in English language and translation and can translate what they say in these in-depth interviews from Arabic into English professionally. Three teachers at SILC were also interviewed in order to get information about Arabic women experiences, English language learning, and SILC. Further, the researcher conducted in-depth interview with the founder of SILC including the aims in teaching English as a second language at Spring International Center. Researchers such as Glesne (1999) and Seidman (1998), suggested in depth interviewing as a way to share their experiences and thoughts "In

order to give details of their experiences, ... people must reflect on their expediencies” (p. 1).

Data Analysis

The purpose of analyzing data from this case study was to explain the purposes and goals of Arabic women coming to the United States and their experiences of learning English at SILC through their personal stories. These experiences included their learning needs and appropriate learning environment. Moreover, how formal education setting enhances or distracts the Arabic women interest and rationale.

The researcher analyzed the findings of the interviews for the founder, the director, the teachers, and the Arabic women. Patton (2002) proposed that in-depth data collection such as interviews can discover important themes and patterns “Immersion in the details and specific of the data to discover important patterns, themes, and interrelationships; begins by exploring, then confirming, guided by analytical principles rather than rules, ends up by creative synthesis” (p. 41). In qualitative research, researchers can either analyze their data by using new computer programs or doing it by hand (Creswell, 2002). Analysis of data begins simultaneously as the researcher is collecting data so the researcher can shape the study as it proceeded (Glesne, 1999). The researcher preferred to analyze data by hand in order to have a chance to read data, code data, and then divide the data into meaningful themes and categories.

Following are the themes and categories identified by the researcher during the coding of the data:

Theme 1: The aims in teaching English as a second language at SILC

1. The school's aims in teaching English
2. The Arabic women's aims in studying English
3. The difference between Arabic women's aims in studying English at SILC before and now.

Theme 2: The purpose of SILC

1. The school's purpose
2. The teachers' qualifications
3. The classes taught at SILC
4. The importance of the English language for Arabic women

Theme 3: The rationale expressed through stories of Arabic women studying the English language at Spring International language Center

1. Personal rationale
2. Professional rationale

Theme 4: The effect of the formal educational setting of SILC on Arabic women rationale in studying the English language

1. Enhances Arabic women to study the English language at Spring International Language center
2. Distracts Arabic women to study The English language at Spring International Language center.

Theme 5: The tensions that Arabic women face in learning The English language at SILC

1. Personal tensions
2. Economic tensions
3. Socially (family-community)

4. How do Arabic women negotiate these tensions?

Implications of the Research

This research has provided the researcher with some ideas about the purposes, motivations and goals of female learners of English as a Second Language in Saudi Arabia. This was achieved by interviewing several Arabic female language student, teachers, and one of the founders of SILC. Fortunately, this research can be considered as a basic groundwork and give the researcher answers not currently provided by the literature of Arabic women and English language learning. “Cover stories enable teachers whose teacher stories are marginalized by whatever the current story of school is to continue to practice and to sustain their teacher stories” (Clandinin & Connelly, p. 25).

Chapter Four: Findings

Overview

In this study, the purposes and goals of Arabic women in studying ESL in the United States were examined, particularly their experiences of learning English at a Colorado language school called SILC. In Chapter 4, a summary of findings based on interviews with a founder and current president of SILC, four teachers (one of whom was also a director of the school) and four Arabic women students is presented based on participants' comments regarding the learning needs and learning environment at SILC and how the formal education setting enhanced or distracted from the Arabic women's interests are provided, moreover, how the formal education setting enhanced or distracted from the Arabic women's interests is described. The researcher interviewed the participants of the study, one of the founders of the school, the director of the school, and two teachers, to gather their opinions and impressions of the purposes and goals of Arabic women studying English. The SILC curriculum is discussed as an example of a program used to teach academic English language to international students. Also reviewed are participants' backgrounds, including personal information, education, work history, and recent career experience. The research data based on in-depth interviews with each participant were analyzed manually (i.e., without the use of a computer program designed for that purpose) and divided into meaningful themes and categories.

The following research questions guided this research:

1. What are the official aims in teaching English as a second language at SILC?
2. What do instructors try to teach at SILC?
3. What are the stories behind Arabic women's rationales for studying the English language?
4. How does the formal education setting enhance or distract from the Arabic women's interests?
 - a. as perceived by a SILC founder.
 - b. as perceived by the director of the school.
 - c. as perceived by the teachers.
 - d. as perceived by the Arabic women.

In this chapter the researcher summarizes the findings of the interviews of the founder, the director, the teachers, and the Arabic women. Patton (2002) proposed that in-depth data collection such as interviews can discover important themes and patterns "Immersion in the details and specific of the data to discover important patterns, themes, and interrelationships; begins by exploring, then confirming, guided by analytical principles rather than rules, ends up by creative synthesis" (p. 41). In qualitative research, researchers can either analyze their data by using new computer programs or doing it by hand (Creswell, 2002). Analysis of data begins simultaneously as the researcher is collecting data so the researcher can shape the study as it proceeds (Glesne, 1999). The researcher preferred to analyze data by hand to have a chance to read data, code data, and then divide the data into meaningful themes and categories. A brief examination of the

curriculum of the SILC, the personal history of the Arabic women, and the personal history of the faculty of SILC begin this section.

The SILC Curriculum

SILC was created in 1979. It runs a rigorous English language program for business people and students from foreign countries. At the moment, SILC is implanted in several academic campuses—the University of Colorado-Denver, Arapahoe Community College, and Arkansas University. Due to its strategic location, SILC offers several university services to students. It serves the needs of students from over 90 countries, from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. Many graduates of this institute have pursued higher education in colleges in the United States. Furthermore, SILC students are privileged to conditional admission to the University of Southern Colorado, the University of Northern Colorado, and the University of Arkansas (Spring, 2011).

In terms of extracurricular activities, SILC students take part in organized social events, where they further develop their proficiency in English. Language immersion for students is also facilitated, at their request, by placing them with host families. There is also the option of a conversational partners program, which encourages students to improve their listening and speaking skills through interactions with native-English speakers. As a language institute, SILC is accredited by ACCET (Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training) and CEA (Commission on English Language Program Accreditation). Also, SILC is a member of AAIEP (The American Association

of Intensive English Programs), a group that encourages professional standards and cutting edge language programs (Spring, 2011).

The curriculum of SILC essentially aims at giving students tools for adequate mastery of writing, speaking, and reading of English in order for students to seek admission in colleges and universities and to compete academically with their peers. Special classes are also organized to prepare students for either the TOEFL or the IELTS tests. In addition, SILC offers Executive English for business people seeking business English. Instructors at SILC all have recognized language teaching certification and extensive experience in overseas teaching (Spring, 2011).

Classes begin in mid-January, March, May, August, and October; the class size is typically 10, but can reach a maximum of 15. All SILC classes are coeducational; classes are full time, part-time, or by special design. SILC can also tailor special programs to the needs of individuals or groups. Students have access to services such as the library, cafeteria, the language lab, the computer lab, and Internet. At the SILC website, students are introduced to several interesting links that supplement research, reading, research, writing, and listening activities of students. Finally, SILC assists students with essential living skills, finding accommodation, getting driver's licenses, and overcoming cultural challenges. Average expenditure for a 9-week session, including tuition, books, fees, books, supplies, room and board, is \$3,380 (Spring, 2011). Figure 1 provides an overview of the SILC curriculum.

		Grammar	Writing	Reading	Listening Speaking	TOEFL Preparation	Research Writing	Computer Lab	Accent Improvement	Conversation	Modules	
OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM	Level 6	Advanced										
	Level 5	High Intermediate										
	Level 4	Intermediate										
	Level 3	Low Intermediate										
	Level 2	High Beginning										
	Level 1	Beginning										

Figure 1. Overview of the Curriculum at SILC (Spring, 2011).

Description of Course Levels

Level One (beginning).

Students at this initial level are expected to master the alphabet and numbers as the minimum entrance prerequisite. At the beginner's level, emphasis is placed on developing basic sight vocabulary, and fluency in reading through sounds and symbols. Writing tasks focus on the basic sentence structure, paragraphing, and punctuation. Concerning grammar, priority is given to the construction of compound sentences and the formulation of questions using several tenses—present, past, and present continuous. Listening/speaking assignments involve practicing how to use English in formal academic settings and with native speakers (Spring, 2011).

Level Two (high beginning).

Students who can begin at, or progress to, this level concentrate on expanding their vocabulary, and increasing their speed at both written and oral expression. They are

taught how to orally summarize a text, and make conclusions about what they have read. Writing exercises task students with expanding sentences into paragraphs and developing paragraphs into longer essays. With regard to grammar, students are taught the use of future and progressive tenses, gerunds and infinitives, comparatives, and direct and indirect objects. At this level, complex sentences with adverb clauses are introduced; students are also expected to have considerable proficiency in social and academic conversations (Spring, 2011).

Level Three (low intermediate).

At this level, emphasis is on developing critical reading skills, deemphasizing decoding and translating. As a result, students are expected to write longer compositions in appreciable English style and form. These compositions should have depth, thesis statements, and should be complex in the development of ideas. This entails greater use of complex sentence structures, perfect tenses, and modals. Moreover, students start work on aural comprehension, honing their speaking skills through interactions with several people, especially in informal contexts (Spring, 2011).

Level Four (intermediate).

At this level, students are expected to have appreciable mastery of English. They are also required to create simple sentences, although occasional instances of obscurity in their speech are expected. The writing and reading of students are expected to help them make critical judgments and interpret ideas in a refreshing way. Grammar tasks are more complex and students are required to demonstrate mastery of these complexities in their communication. New grammatical structures such as noun clauses, passive and active

voices are introduced to students. Through exposure to diverse written materials, students enhance their fluency in English while also demonstrating mastery of grammar, and competency in listening and speaking (Spring, 2011).

Level Five (high intermediate).

At this juncture, the reading and writing of students should demonstrate an above average competency in English. The progress made by students in the use of language can be discerned through the organization and development of ideas in their essays. As a result, errors of punctuation, spelling, and capitalization are minimal. Grammar, likewise, should indicate admirable command of tenses, clause structures, modals, gerund, conditionals, and infinitives. Students are expected to understand lectures and conversations with minimal difficulty; they should also be capable of speaking fluently with negligible idiomatic impediments (Spring, 2011).

Level Six (advanced).

After completing Level 6, students should be highly proficient in English. Language can be seen from a holistic perspective because of the combination of skills. Students now read and write effortlessly using an elegant style that demonstrates lovely organization and development of ideas. The student is also sensitive to his/her writing and reading as he/she engages in self-editing. Students are taught research skills helpful in college and university. Their vocabulary is expressive with minimal errors in parts of speech. Advanced students are expected to intelligibly converse with native speakers in formal and informal settings (Spring, 2011).

Arabic Women Personal Histories

This section provides a summary of research participants' personal information such as pseudonym name, age, maternal status, country of origin, degree of education, previous work experience, and date of coming to the United States. After that, other personal information, such as early years and education, are listed in a question and answer format. The researcher through audio taped, in-depth interviews gathered this information from all Arabic women who participated in this research. In addition, this background information also includes the participants' views on English language learning in their own countries.

Table 1
Personal Data of Student Participants

Name	Place of Origin	Age	Marital Status	Degree	Work Experience	Date Entered the U.S.
Yomna	Aljabil Al-Garbee, Libya	28	Married w/16-month old daughter	BA in English Literature: University of Al-Jabil Al-Garbee	Teacher for 2 years at a public middle school in Libya	May, 2010
Maram	Dammam, Saudi Arabia	25	Married w/two daughters (3 yrs. & 7 mos.)	Science, High school	None	March, 2008
Dareen	Banee Waleed, Libya	28	Married w/ 2 girls and 1 boy (5 yrs., 1 yr., and 4 mos.)	BA in English language, 7 th of October University	Teacher for 2 years at a public elementary school	August, 2010
Samerah	Jeddah, Saudi Arabia	30	Single	BA and MS in physical chemistry, King Abdul-Aziz University	Lecturer at King Abdul-Aziz University	October, 2010

Two of the student study participants were from Libya and two were from Saudi Arabia. Three of four student participants were married with one to three children; one was single with no children. Two of the participants had undergraduate degrees, one a high school degree, and one an undergraduate and graduate degree. Degrees were in English literature, English language, physical chemistry, and science. Three of the study participants entered the United States in 2010, and one in 2008.

The following section includes excerpts from the audio taped transcripts regarding additional personal information provided by each student participant.

Maram.

Tell me about yourself

My dream is to finish studying English at SILC and to earn my bachelor's degree at the University of Denver in management of information system, so I can work at ARAMCO, which is an oil company, located at Saudi Arabia. I lived in Saudi Arabia all of my life and came to the United States to study English to get accepted at the University of Denver. I can get accepted without the [Test of English as a Foreign Language] (TOFEL) scores because the University of Denver waives the TOFEL score requirement for SILC graduates.

Early Years

I was born to a big family. I am the fourth of nine brothers and sisters and the second girl. My childhood was happy but did not have lots of attention because of my position in the family. My father is a military officer and my mother is a housewife.

My father has a bachelor's degree in Computer Science from the United States. He always recognized the importance of education and higher education as well. He always encouraged us to learn English to become bilingual and come to the United States to complete our education. My mother stayed home and helped us with our homework and studies. I will never forget how she cooked, cleaned, and looked after us and also took care of our education.

Education

I started my education when I was 6 years old. Our elementary school system consisted of 6 years. The subjects are Arabic language, geography, math, religion, and science. No English language at all. I loved my elementary school experience but wished that we learned English. I was an A student. My school was a public school and there is no English in public school at our time, only private schools had English language instruction.

In middle school, which was 3 years, I was an A student as well. We started learning English. Introductory English means alphabets and simple word structure. Our teachers were not that qualified in teaching English. They only knew simple English. I really enjoyed learning English and wished that we learned more advanced English because we were young and ready for more. Our

teachers were all Saudi teachers; we did not have foreign teachers. English meant vocabulary, reading, and writing. No listening or speaking.

In high school, which consisted of 3 years as well, we had more subjects such as chemistry, biology, science, and advanced English. High school was always tough for students because it consisted of many subjects and we had many exams that needed memorization. I needed to pass all final exams to pass to the next school year. Our English books were all from Britain. Most of the teachers were Saudi but some were from Egypt, Jordan, and Sudan. I passed high school with a B, which means 86%. Therefore, I was not accepted at the university or college. So I stayed home until I got married and after that we came to the United States.

Recent Career Experience

None, a full time student at SILC.

Dareen.

Tell me about yourself.

Hi! We live with the dad that we cannot imagine the life without him. Both of my daughters cannot sleep at night if they did not play with him before going to bed as if they did not kiss him. Sometimes bedtime comes and the dad does not show up, so the old one asks me to wake her up as soon as the dad comes. The other one does not speak—she is 15 months—but I can tell that she misses the dad when she knocks the apartment door while she says ba-ba-ba...! [dad in Arabic].

I was raised in a family that consists of 11 members. I am the third child in the family but the first girl. My father was a teacher and my mother was a housewife. My mother had the elementary certificate only but she was very smart that she was able to learn from our textbooks and teach us and never forget it. I still remember how she was able to check the multiplication without looking at it from the actual book. I don't know how she memorized it first, either she learned it from her own schooling or by teaching us how to memorize it.

My father was even more and more concerned about our early education because he believes that early education is the base for the best education. He was a teacher for about 30 years and after that he became a teacher supervisor for early education for the rest of his life. He was a great model for his own children as well, so we all became highly educated and have important careers.

Early Years

If you mean my childhood, I can say that it was a mixture of happiness, fun, and honor. I felt the happiness because I lived with my mom and my dad, and I was

able to know this feeling because I have my cousins whose parents were divorced; therefore they have had hard times. It was fun because I used to go to the capital city where there were many ways to have fun. In my childhood, it was hard for many people to go to the capital city, while it was accessible for me because my grandma and grandpa were living there. I was proud because I was good in school; the only thing I believe that kids should be doing in their childhood, so bravo for those who finished school with high grade. Those who have or had trouble with their school-I feel- they lost a valuable time of their lives. Hence, I have to be proud of myself!

Education

I started elementary school when I was 5 years. Our elementary school system in Libya consists of 6 years. Some of the subjects that I learned in elementary: math, Arabic Language, Religion, history, geography, social education, but no English at all. In fact English previously was prohibited from being taught in Libyan classrooms because of political reasons. In the fall of 1986, students started their school year as usual. However, something unusual was happening. Students did not start their school day. Instead, they were told that they would have a conference. At the conference, students were told that the Ministry of Education had canceled English from the educational system. I do not know the reason behind this unexpected decision, especially since the students were in the middle of the school year, but what I do know is that it happened immediately after the America invasion of Tripoli. Students were not sure if they believed it or not. Some liked the news and started to celebrate because English, for them, was a hard subject to learn. Many disliked the news because they wanted to learn that new language. Moreover, students were asked to collect any English books they had and burn them.

Middle school in Libya consists of 3 years. At middle school we learned a little English from one book that only talked about the life of one person and that book was used again and again for middle school and even secondary school. The reason behind using this book again and again was that all the other books had been burned at the crazy celebration at 1986. The second reason is that there were no qualified English teachers at that time. Most of our teachers were Egyptians. The long prohibition of English language that lasted for 10 years made many teachers forget their English and some of them even changed their teaching field.

For my bachelor's degree, I majored in English language. At the 7th of October University, I learned English in general. They did not concentrate on one part of it. I think that was a big problem because I did not know what part of English language I preferred. In fact, English was only 20% of what we learned there. The majority of what we learned was in Arabic language. I graduated after 4 years but I did not feel that I learned English although I graduated with honor, which after that gave me the chance to study abroad.

When I came to the United States in 2010 to complete my higher education at the University of Colorado in Teaching English as a Second Language, I discovered out that I had no English compared to native speakers of English. It was a disaster.

Recent Career Experience

None! Just a full time student at SILC.

Samerah.

Tell me about yourself.

I have innate love for learning and for learning English in particular. Therefore, I came to the United States to achieve my goals.

Early Years

I was born in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in a family of six brothers and sisters, three girls and three boys. I am the third born in the family and the second girl. My mother is a housewife and my father was a policeman. My mother only studied until the second grade in elementary school and my father is a high school graduate. I lived a really happy childhood within my big family.

Education

I started my education when I was 6 years old in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Our school system of elementary school consisted of 6 years. No English was involved. We had many subjects such as math, Arabic language, religion, geography, history, and science. My elementary school experience was great, I learned a lot and had a good experience but I wished that we had computer and English language.

Middle school consisted of 3 years and we started to learn English but very simple English which means the alphabets and some simple words. The problem was that the teachers were not native speakers and lacked the proper accent.

High school also consisted of 3 years and we studied more advanced English. Advanced English means writing simple paragraphs in English. We did not speak English in the classroom.

In high school, the focus was mostly on teaching grammar, with very little reading and speaking. Therefore, I feel that my English was weak but all the other subjects were good. I did not think that I will need English later on in college and on graduate level but I was surprised that everything was taught in English at college.

In high school, we learned more advanced subjects such as: chemistry, physics, biology, advanced math. In high school we had to choose between literacy and science at the second year. I chose science because I like math a lot. The high school curriculum had lots of materials that require lots of memorization and studying, especially the second year of high school. We had many exams and they were tough and challenging. We were required to pass the final exams with good grades after we finish the third year to go to college. These final questions come from the Ministry of Education and they are very tough especially in science. Many students end up staying at home after they graduate from high school because they did not get high grades. I graduated with an A or 95%, which means that I was able to go to college in the field that I wanted, which was chemistry.

I studied my undergraduate at the girl's college at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. My major was chemistry and it was a 4-year major. The first year, we focused on all kinds of science, I mean fundamental science. The last 3 year, focus on all fields of chemistry such as: physical chemistry, organic chemistry, analytical chemistry, and inorganic chemistry. I graduated in 2005 with a bachelor's degree in general chemistry.

After I finished my bachelor's, I stayed home for about a year because I did not find a job. Therefore, I decided to complete my higher education at King Abdul-Aziz University in physical chemistry. I studied for my master by research for about 3 years and graduated in 2008.

Recent Career Experience

I am a full time student at SILC

Yomna.

Tell me about yourself.

I spend my free time watching TV, visiting my friends, and sometimes go shopping. I was born in a family with six sisters and one brother. I lived with my parents in a city called Yefren in the west of Libya. I like this city and that is why I decided with my husband to live there all our life. Even though I like Colorado life, I always feel home sick. I miss my family and every side in my home. I worship the social relationship. I always like to be in touch with my family, friends and visit them frequently.

Early years

I can describe my childhood experience as happy and full of excitement. Both parents were present and grandparents as well. I was part of a really big family: eight sisters and one brother, I was the sixth girl in the family. My grandmother had a big effect on our lives as children because she used to come to our house

everyday and tell us stories and anecdotes that I still remember and won't forget her stories for the rest of my life.

During my early years, we used to play outside the house inside our neighborhood all the time from the time we come to school until we go to bed. I still remember how I enjoyed playing with our neighbors. I used to love school a lot and enjoyed it a lot although both of my parents were not educated at all.

Education

I have a bachelor's degree in English literature from the University of Al-Jabil A-Garbi in my country, Libya. I chose to study English for several reasons. From my childhood I have dreamed of becoming proficient in English. Because of the supremacy of the English language in the last decades, we have equated success with learning English. The person who speaks English has a distinct advantage in all career fields since English has become the dominant language utilized among many countries of the world. I tried to be successful in my culture by becoming an English speaker.

My culture has also had an important role in my choice of a teaching career. Certain features of my culture have affected my choice to become a teacher. In our culture married women must give more time to their family. This preclude too much time spent outside the home. Teaching is considered one of the suitable careers for women in our country. Our school starts from 8:00 and continues until 1:00, which makes it easier for women with families to teach. This is completely different for males. There are no limitations for men in choosing their careers; in fact we value men who work hard spending many hours outside the home.

I studied English literature at the Aljabil Algarbi University of my country. I decided to study literature, as this was the only area of English language study in my University. We focused on literature courses such as the novel, poetry, and other English literature topics. In addition we studied grammar, writing, speaking, and listening. There was always a shortage in teachers and books.

My early education, which means elementary, middle, and secondary school, has a different story. My elementary school consisted of 6 years of no English language at all. We studied subjects' such as: Arabic language, religion, math, science, history, and geography.

My middle school consisted of 3 years and fortunately we studied English language but we studied the same book for 3 years. In English language, they concentrated on reading, writing, and grammar only; we had no speaking or listening. All the teachers were originally from Libya. The classrooms were all teacher-centered and we had many exams every year and exams determined our grades and passing to the next year.

In secondary school I chose a science path and it consisted of 3 years as well. The English language was simple and we studied the same book for 3 years as well. The stories in the book were the same as in the book used in middle school and all the stories were around farmers and farms. When we had exams in English they were always easy because the book had little information or context. In all of my education, I was an A+ student and passed all the exams with an A grade. Therefore, I was able to go to college and study English there.

Recent Career Experience

Recently, I do not have a career. I am just a student at Spring International Language.

Faculty Histories

In this section, the faculty research participants' personal information including name, marital status, degree of education, work history, and recent career experience are provided in Table 2. The researcher audio taped in-depth interviews to gather this information from those faculty members that participated in this research.

Table 2

Personal Data of Faculty Participants

Name	Marital Status	Degree	Previous Work Experience	Career at SILC	Classes at SILC
Peter	Married: wife Sandy is assistant director and teacher at SILC	BA in linguistic studies	Worked as a teacher of English as a second Language in his home country; Cyprus	Started the school in 1979	As president of SILC, Peter does not teach
Randy	Married w/1 daughter (4 yrs.)	BA in international education	15-year career in international education	Started as a full time instructor 6 years ago; became assistant director after 6 months, director after 2 more years.	As director of SILC, Randy does not teach. Used to teach advanced-level reading, writing, and research.
Sandy	Married to the president of SILC	MA in library science from the University of Arizona.	Taught at the University of Denver. Teacher at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Overseas teacher in both Germany and Cyprus.	Started to teach in 1983	Teaches all core classes except a few of the elective classes. Recently, Sandy works part time as an administrator in addition to teaching
Sherry	Married w/2 daughters (13 & 20 yrs.)	MA in teaching English as a second language from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign	Taught at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign	Started teaching a SILC in 1990	Teaches all the classes offered by SILC

Interviews of Faculty and Students

In this section, the researcher presents results of analyses of her findings according to the themes and categories listed below. The material in this section includes the participants' opinions, motivations, and purposes and goals of Arabic women coming to the United States and their experiences of learning English at SILC through their personal stories.

These themes and categories are included in the following discussion of the research findings:

Theme 1: The aims in teaching English as a second language at SILC

1. SILC's aims in teaching English
2. Arabic women's aims in studying English
3. Difference in Arabic women's aims in studying English at SILC from 40 years ago as compared to currently.

Theme 2: The purpose of SILC

1. SILC's purpose
2. Qualifications of SILC teachers
3. Classes at SILC
4. The importance of The English language for Arabic women

Theme 3: The rationale expressed through stories of Arabic women for studying English at SILC

1. Personal rationale
2. Professional rationale

Theme 4: The effect of the formal educational setting of SILC on Arabic women's rationales in studying English

1. Enhances Arabic women to study the English language at SILC
2. Distracts Arabic women to study the English language at SILC

Theme 5: The tensions Arabic women face in learning the English language at SILC

1. Personal tensions
2. Economic tensions
3. Social tensions (family-community)

How do Arabic women studying English at SILC negotiate these tensions?

Theme 1: The Aims in Teaching English as a Second Language at SILC

For this theme, three categories were identified during the coding of the data of the interview section. These categories were

1. SILC's aims in teaching English
2. Arabic women's aims in studying English
3. Difference in Arabic women's aims in studying English at SILC from 40 years ago as compared to currently.

SILC's aims in teaching English.

It is essential for SILC administrators and instructors to acknowledge their aims in teaching English as a second language, so they can know if they share the same aims and follow the school's mission or do they have more personal aims. SILC was invited to the University of Colorado at Denver (CU Denver) to operate an IEP design to work with CU Denver, the University of Arkansas, and Arapahoe Community College by preparing

international students for academic success and future achievement. The partnership with CU Denver's School of Education was designed to benefit students (Dantas-Whitney & Dimmitt, 2002). By working together and maintaining close connections between all the departments of the school, they hoped to ensure success.

When SILC's founder and current president, Peter, was asked about the school's aims in teaching ESL, he talked about the importance of a program that offered an excellent instructional program but also provided services to the students, who came from all over the world to study English in the United States. Peter said:

We feel that we look at the student as a whole person. They are here to study, but also they have other needs and we felt that providing services to them, that would make it easier for them and it would make it possible for them to be more successful in their pursuit of their education here in the United States.

And so we have a school, we wanted to have a school that has excellent teachers and excellent instructional program, but also provide a lot of services, such as meeting the students at the airport when they arrive, finding home stays for them, giving them orientation when they are here, meeting with them and the host families to make sure that things work well.

Peter and his co-workers were in agreement about providing an excellent instructional program. Sherry said, "My personal aims are the same as the aims or the mission of the school, which is to prepare students for their academic studies in two American universities."

In comparison, Sandy stated:

I think that that is all part of our school's mission to prepare international students in the best way possible, both with their language and with their adjustment to the culture and so that is what I hope we can do.

Randy, however, had additional thoughts about achieving the school's aims in teaching ESL:

As director, my goal here at Spring International is to motivate all of the different constituencies (faculty, staff, students, host families, sponsors, etc.) to cooperatively “row the boat” in the same direction at the same time. This is no easy task. While everyone agrees that the goal is to produce a graduate with the highest possible English proficiency, I am afraid that we do not always meet this ideal. Every constituency has their own agenda and reasons for doing what they are doing. So, I see it as my job to use every policy, rule, trick, “carrot and stick,” and joke to bring these disparate groups together harmoniously.

Arabic student’s aims in studying English.

It is important that Arabic women students studying English at SILC recognize their aims and stay focused on their goals. Arabic female students were described as more serious than Arabic male students. When asked when Arabic women started to study at SILC, Randy (SILC’s director) replied:

It is very clear that the, especially the Saudi women and the Libyan women, they work so hard and they are the best students. They have the most straight A certificates and the most perfect attendance certificates.

Sandy (teacher) said:

Many of the Arabic women come in at the advanced levels, they have already had a good background in English and many of them have already got university degrees in their own country.

Sherry (teacher) said:

I have seen a lot of very smart Arabic women who come here and actually, their drive and their motivation are really, seriously there. I would say all Arabic women. The Libyans, the Saudis, I have seen more. I mean it is never all of them are here and motivated.

Finally, Peter (founder, president) claimed:

Arabic women from Saudi Arabia that come. I must say that they tend to be very good students and maybe better than the male students. They have excellent motivation and they study hard, they attend well. In general, I think that they seem to have the skills and the motivation to succeed and so they do well.

The four Arabic women student participants were asked about their aims and purposes of learning English at SILC, and expressed specific aims. For example, Yomna (student) stated:

My goal is to improve my English language since I am going to get my MA degree from an American university. Especially in speaking and listening because when I watch a movie I do not understand most of what they are saying. Therefore, I need to improve my skills in these areas because I cannot imagine myself not understanding what is the instructor is saying in the university. Learning English at Spring International Language Center is a good introduction to study at an American university. It will give me a chance to learn how American people study at schools. Before I wondered if they had exams? Do they have teacher-centered classrooms?

Another student said:

The reason was to refresh my English and to get academic acceptance in one of the academic schools here.

Samerah expressed the following specific goals regarding her study at SILC:

First, I want to improve my English skills especially in speaking and writing. Second, I want to be able to write my assignments and research in English successfully when I study my PhD. Moreover, after I finish my PhD I want to be able to read books in my field in English in order to improve myself. Also, I want to be able to write my research in English and publish it in famous scientific magazines when I return to Saudi Arabia.

In contrast, Maram's aims were more general:

In order to improve my English language to be able to communicate with other people all around the world. Moreover, my success at the university depends on my language ability and competence. Therefore, I feel that this stage is very important for my success at the university level in general and my whole life in particular.

Difference in Arabic women's aims in studying English at SILC from 40 years ago as compared to currently.

It is important to know when did Arabic women started to come to SILC to learn the English language in order to know the difference between their aims 40 years ago, 20 years ago, and now.

Sandy (teacher, assistant director) stated that Arabic women started to attend SILC in the 1970s. More than 40 years ago, Arabic women came to SILC with their husbands and were often very young (i.e., 14 to 18). In the beginning, women came to study at SILC for survival English only. Currently, Arabic women come in at advanced levels. Sandy said:

In the late 1970s, Spring International Language Center started in 1979, and both here and at the University of Denver, where I taught before, we would have special women's programs, because at that time they, well they were, Saudi women and we would get a few from other gulf countries, like United Arab of Emeritus. In those days, the women we had where typical, they were almost always here because they were together with their husbands and they were typically very young. For the most part, they did not have much interest in learning English, except for just what they needed to be able to live comfortably here, to be able to go to the drug store, and ask a question or something.

So it was much more kind of survival English that were teaching at that time and they were, again, less educated, I think, in general, than our current Saudi women and certainly did not have the English skills when they came, I mean, that was a very almost pre-basic kind of level that we were teaching at that time. Where now many of the Arabic women come in at the advanced levels, they have already had a good background in English and many of them have already university degrees in their own countries.

Sherry, a teacher, said:

When I started teaching here in 1990, where were not as many Arabic women, maybe 5 years after I started they came, but with their husbands. They were not F1 students. They were not the main students like you when you came. So we had, I remember having a second group for them. They were like the support English classes just for the Saudi wives of the men who were the students.

Randy (director) stated:

Arabic women have been studying here for decades. We had Arabic families coming here back in the early 80s, late 70s, because Spring International Language Center is 32 years old now, but in my experience in the last 6, 7 years, in fact, you were one of the first female Arabic students that I had. In 2010, we had more and more Arabic women coming here.

Peter (founder, president) concurred:

In the 80s when we had a number of Saudi students, most of them were male students. Very occasionally we had a female Arabic student then. Arabic women started coming here more recently, in the last 6, 7 years. I think when the Saudi government decided to send more students to the United States and I think that decision was made then [to] include a lot of female students. We started when the scholarship program started but gradually we got more Arabic female students in the last 2 or 3 years.

Three of the four Arabic student participants came to SILC in 2010, and one came in 2008.

Theme 2: The Purpose of SILC

For the theme “English language at SILC,” four categories were identified during the coding of the data of the interview section. These categories were:

1. SILC’s purpose
2. Qualifications of SILC teachers
3. Classes at SILC
4. The importance of The English language for Arabic women

SILC’s purpose.

Dantas-Whitney and Dimmitt (2002) stated that all teachers at SILC held master’s degree in TOEFL and brought a better understanding of language and learning acquired through classroom experience and study. Peter (founder, president) said the following when asked about the purpose for starting a school like SILC:

We wanted a school that provides both the instructional program and also the services for students to be successful here in their lives in the United States and their academic studies when they go to the university and that's why we founded the school.

Sandy (assistant director, teacher) agreed:

I think that that's all part of the school mission to prepare international students in the best way possible, both with their language and their adjustment to the culture and so that is what I hope we can do.

Sherry (teacher) also agreed:

My personal aims are the same as the aims or the mission of the school, which is to prepare students for their academic studies into American universities. And so we have an intensive English program and that is what we have.

Randy (director) qualified that purpose by saying, also believes that the purpose of the school is to produce a graduate with the highest possible English proficiency but this is not always the case. She said:

While everyone agrees that the goal is to produce a graduate with the highest possible English proficiency, I am afraid that we do not always meet this ideal.

Qualifications of SILC teachers.

ESL teachers should be highly qualified in their field. Although most of the teachers at SILC have master's degrees in teaching ESL, some have equivalent degrees such as linguistics or English, with additional courses in teaching ESL. When Peter (founder, president) was asked about qualifications for teaching at SILC, he said:

Teachers are expected to have a master's degree in teaching English as a second Language or an equivalent degree. They have a degree in linguistics, for example, they may have a degree in English with some courses in teaching English as a second language. Most of our teachers have their master's degree in teaching English as a second language. A lot of them also have experience, they have taught overseas or here in the United States in an intensive English language program, but generally the teachers have a master's degree or an equivalent degree that qualifies them to teach English in our school.

Sandy, assistant director and a teacher, agreed with Peter by saying:

We basically prefer, if possible to have someone with a master's degree in either teaching English as a second language or a closely related field. Some of our newer instructors are in the process of getting a master's degree or they may have a master's degree in something related and they at least have a certificate in teaching English as a second language. Besides teaching here, I have taught overseas in both Germany and Cyprus and also studied library science at some point. I started teaching here in 1983 and before that I had been teaching at the University of Denver and before that I taught at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

In comparison with what Peter said, Randy, the director, said:

I prefer to hire instructors who have an MA or an area close to it such as Linguistics. I personally have a 15-year career in International Education.

When I asked Sherry, a teacher, about the qualifications that she has to be able to teach English as a second language. She replied as follows:

I was an English major in the Philippines and I have a master's from the Philippines where I taught at the university before I came. And so I have a second master's from the University of Illinois at Urban Champaign and then I was also a composition coordinator there and now I am here.

Classes at SILC.

It is important for Spring International students to have an academic program that matches the students' interests and needs. Teaching English as a Second Language requires teaching them different skills such as speaking, listening, reading, writing, grammar, and electives. When Peter, one of the founders of the school, was asked about the classes taught at SILC. Here is what he said:

Our program is an academic program. This emphasis is on the skills that they need in their academic area here in going to the universities. So our classes include reading, writing, listening, speaking. We also have some electives such as pronunciation, conversation, and accent improvement. In the upper levels we also have a research class, for example, in our advanced level where the students learn how to do research, write papers, so that when they go to the university, practically at the graduate level, they know how to use the library. They know

how to do the research, how to collect information. Write their papers and begin successful in their academic studies. Those are the classes that we usually offer as part of our program. We also have six levels in the program. So we begin at level one with students that have some English and go through level six, advanced level, by then they should have the level of English that they need to do well at the university. And all the students that we have right now, probably the average, a student stays here for about 10 months and some of them stay a little longer, some of them, well it is depending on how much they have when they came.

Randy, the director and a teacher, said:

I love to teach advanced-level students reading, writing, research, and writing.

Sherry, a teacher, stated:

Since I have started I have taught all of the classes since I have been here for so long. I am focusing more on core classes, the reading, writing, and grammar classes and then I do a lot of research class for the most advanced level, but for the most part I have taught all of them.

Sandy, assistant director and a teacher, said:

Well over the years I have actually taught, except a few elective classes, I have taught everything that we offer here. More recently, in the past ten years I have been an academic coordinator, so I am partly an administrator and partly an instructor and most recently I attend to teach a class and it is kind of whatever is left after we have scheduled the other instructors.

The importance of the English language for Arabic women.

The English language has become more and more important worldwide. Arabic women have become aware of the importance and fast spread of English all around the world. Most of the students that the researcher interviewed mentioned the importance of the English language in their lives and how English is a universal language used worldwide. They also said that they came to the United States to learn English from native speakers to find better jobs when they go back home. Raizi (2004) completed a study during a sabbatical year she spent at University of Qatar. She enlisted 120 female

students who spoke Arabic as their native language and who were majoring in English language and literature at Qatar University. These were considered average students who rated themselves as fair compared to native English speakers; however, they felt that becoming proficient at English was very important and they were felt to be highly motivated because learning English was required for graduation and would affect their future career potential.

Yomna said that her lack of English proficiency affected her teaching and students' learning. Yomna recognized the importance of English language proficiency in her career. Yomna said:

After graduation, I taught two years in a public middle school. In our country, English language is a required subject in the school where I taught. The curriculum of this class is focused more on grammar and reading. Since we lacked a teacher who is proficient in English, the skill level was low. During these two years of teaching, I had a challenge in teaching English. My lack of English language negatively affected my teaching and students' learning.

In agreement with what Yomna said, Daren added:

For my bachelor's degree, I majored in English language. At the 7th of October University, I learned English in general. They did not know what part of English language I preferred. In fact, English was only 20% of what we learned there. The majority of what we learned was in Arabic language. I graduated after four years but I did not feel that I learned English although I graduated with honor, which after that gave me the chance to study abroad. When I came to the United States in 2010 in order to complete my higher education, I discovered that I had no English compared to native speakers of English. It was a disaster.

Another student, Maram, said:

I did not start learning English at Spring until 2010 because I was busy with my new life, husband, and kids. I am so excited now that I am able to learn academic English in order to reach my dreams.

Samerah, agreed with what other students said:

In general, English is an international language, so it is required for a lot of people in order to communicate. Concerning my career, I want to be able to become a qualified professor at King-Abdual Aziz University and supervise my students' research by using the English that I learned at Spring International Language Center.

Theme 3: Rationale Expressed Though Stories of Arabic women Studying English at SILC

For the theme “rationale expressed through stories of Arabic women studying English language at SILC, ” two categories were identified during the coding of the data of the interview section. These categories are:

1. Personal rationale
2. Professional rationale

Personal rationale.

It would be useful for all English language centers all around the United States to know the personal rationales of Arabic women coming to the United States to learn the English language. This knowledge will help English language centers work toward meeting the interests and needs of Arabic women. It will also help Arabic women to reach their personal goals. When Arabic women were asked about their personal reasons for coming to SILC, they replied differently and had various rationales such as teaching their kids, interacting with people from all around the world, and learning the English language from native speakers, or even to be more independent such as using local transportation without their husband.

Samerah said:

In general, the English language is an international language, so it is required for a lot of people in order to communicate. All the teachers at Spring International Language Center are native speakers of English and I will be able to learn English

from qualified teachers who have master's degrees in teaching English as a second language. In general, the books at Spring International Language Center are carefully selected and I like how English is taught as different skills such as speaking, reading, writing and listening. Also, one of my friends advised me to study English at Spring International Language Center because she studied there before and her English was strong. Also, Denver is a nice and quiet city in the United States and has many strong universities such as the University of Denver, School of Mines, and Colorado State University. Therefore, I chose Spring International Language Center because it is considered one of the best language centers here at Denver and it is recognized by Colorado State University. Also, Spring International Language Center has a high reputation among Saudi students and universities.

In agreement with Samerah, Dareen said:

Personally, I want to be a capable teacher of English when I go back to Libya, my home country or maybe just start to learn real English. I just worked two years as a fifth grade English teacher even though I could have chosen to teach high school. I preferred fifth grade because the school was close to my house. I almost had the chance to teach undergraduate students but I did not do so because it was the time to leave the country to study English abroad. As a teacher, I felt competent because I only taught the alphabets and very simple English. All the other teachers of English were at the same level of English, so I felt that I was the best teacher of English. One day the supervisor at our school came to my classroom as I was teaching English and he was so impressed and happy with my English language and teaching style. When I came to the United States in 2010 in order to complete my higher education at the University of Colorado in Teaching English as a Second Language, I discovered that I had no English compared to native speakers of English. It was a disaster.

Some students, like Yomna, had a different personal rationale:

I want to be able to travel around the world and people all around the world speak English. I want to be able to become fluent in English, so I can communicate with people from all around the world. I started at Spring International Language Center in June, 2010. A family friend told us about it when we first came to Denver, CO and this friend was a student there. He recommended Spring International Language Center for us and said that it was an excellent language center that concentrates on writing, speaking, and listening that we need in American Universities. Spring International Language Center was close to the university, so the location was great and I could use the light rail in order to go there. Plus, all the teachers were native speakers of English and had master degree in teaching English as a second language. They are also specialized in teaching academic English that will allow me to become successful in American University and especially in my major, which is Teaching English as a Second

Language. I have a bachelor's degree in English literature from the University of Al-Jabil A-Garbi in my country, Libya. I chose to study English for several reasons. From my childhood I have dreamed of becoming proficient in English. I tried to be successful in my culture by becoming an English speaker. My culture has also had an important role in my choice of a teaching career. I studied English literature at the Aljabil Algarbi University of my country. I decided to study literature, as this was the only area of English language study in my University. We focused on literature courses such as the novel, poetry, and other English literature topics. In addition we studied grammar, writing, speaking, and listening. There was always a shortage in teachers and books.

In comparison with what Yomna said, Maram had a different story:

My husband had an acceptance at the University of Denver and his major is computer science and engineering. He did not find an acceptance at Tampa, Florida, so we had to move to Denver, Colorado. Spring International Language Center was one of the few language Centers that prepare students for academic English. Also Spring International Language Center building is close to the University of Denver, which is convenient for my husband and me since I do not drive. As you know women cannot legally drive in Saudi Arabia. We asked the University of Colorado about the best language center that is close to them before we move here. Therefore, they told me about Spring International Language Center and they recommend it to me because of its location and its strength in teaching English. It was really convenient for both me and my husband at the same time because I do not drive and my two daughters needed to be in the same daycare. Moreover, the University of Colorado at Denver is where I want to study my bachelor's degree. Spring International Language Center is close and considered inside the University campus and I can get used to the university atmosphere and know the location of the buildings inside the university, so when I start my bachelor's I know my way around the university. In addition, I can use the library inside the university and study there and borrow books that can improve my English. Also, the light rail is five minutes walk from the university and I can go back and forth very easily without my husband. I want to be able to go back home, which is Saudi Arabia, and return to my lovely family and friends and live there for the rest of my life. I want to go back and live there with my small family within my large family. I made lots of friends, some are from Saudi Arabia and some are from Korea and others from the United States which I am proud off and wish that that we stay in touch via emails, Facebook or twitter for the rest of our lives. I learned many things about other cultures and language, which enlarged my experiences and knowledge.

Professional rationale.

Knowing Arabic women's professional rationales and keeping good relationship between Arabic women and SILC are major factors for the success of both Arabic women and SILC. In fact, a professional rationale is what made Arabic women come to the United States to study at SILC. The English language is not only becoming a universal language but there is the fear that English will diminish the remaining 600 languages as well (McWhorter, 2010). Because all Arabic women have their own professional rationales, we need to know their own stories. When the Arabic students were asked about their professional rationale for coming to the United States and study at SILC, they replied as follow: Yomna said:

One of the conditions of the scholarship is to learn English at a recognized language center and they gave us more than a year to study English language such as Spring International Language Center. I will get my master degree in Linguistically Diverse Education since I am going to teach English to adults in my country. When I return to Libya after I graduate, I want to find a good job. God jobs require English language diploma and fluent English speaking. Spring International Language Center will give me the diploma that I need and teach my how to speak English fluently, therefore, I can find the job of my dreams. Because of the supremacy of the English language in the last decades, we have equated success with learning English. The person who speaks English has a distinct advantage in all career fields since English has become the dominant language utilized among many countries of the world. Learning English at Spring International Language Center was a good introduction to study at an American university.

Maram said:

My dream is to finish studying English at Spring International Language Center and to earn my bachelor's degree at University of Denver in Management of Information System, so I can work at ARAMCO, which an oil company located at Saudi Arabia. I lived at Saudi Arabia all of my life and came to the United States to study English in order to get accepted at the University of Denver. I started to learn English in August 2010 at Spring International Language Center because I can learn academic English at a well-known language center recognized by the

Ministry of Higher Education. I am so excited now that I am able to learn academic English in order to reach my dreams.

Like other Arabic women studying at SILC, Samerah said:

After I graduated I stayed home for about one year again because I did not find a job. Finding a job in Saudi Arabia especially for women is very hard because of limited job opportunities and decomposition. Finally, I found a job as a lecturer at King Abdul-Aziz University. I worked there for about one year and a half before I came to the United States to get my PhD degree in Engineering and Computer Science at 2010. Spring International Language Center is a recognized language center by many universities; some universities do not require the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOFEL) exam for international students if they graduate from Spring International Language Center. Also, Spring International Language Center was a recognized language center by the Ministry Saudi Higher Education. I want to be able to write my assignments and research in English successfully when I study my PhD. Moreover, after I finish my PhD I want to be able to read books in my field in English in order to improve myself. Also, I want to be able to write my research in English and publish it in famous scientific magazines when I return to Saudi Arabia. The University of Denver in which I applied for my PhD require a high TOFEL score, so I need to study English at a good language center that will help me to pass the exam in order to be accepted at the university of my dreams. Concerning my career, I want to be able to become a qualified professor at King-Abdul Aziz University and supervise my students' research by using the English that learned at Spring International Language Center.

Like the other students Dareen said:

I like English, as my father decorated this specialization in my mind. Studying English or being fluent in English can be like a magic way to get a better life in an Arabic speaking country. Getting a job is easy especially that there are not many who choose doing so because they believe that it is difficult to learn a foreign language. Beside the material benefit, there is a moral benefit where I can say it is a prestigious language. After I am done with Spring, I will go to the university; I will look for the school that can enhance my English as I can learn about how to teach English for second language learners. Studying at Spring International Language Center (SILC) is just a transitional way to the academic program at the university. I can also say that it is the place where I can refresh and enhance my English. Or maybe start to learn real English. I wanted to learn academic language that can help me succeed at the graduate level or in American universities. Because I only learned how to write a paragraph in English not a whole essay that I need to be able to do my assignments in English.

Theme 4: The Effect of the Formal Educational Setting of SILC on Arabic Women's Rationales in Studying the English Language

For the theme "The effect of formal educational setting of SILC on Arabic women's rationales in studying the English language," two categories were identified during the coding of the data of the interview section. These categories are:

1. Enhances Arabic women's study of the English language at SILC
2. Distracts Arabic women from studying the English language at SILC

Enhances Arabic women to study English at SILC.

The formal educational setting at SILC is supposed to have a positive impact on Arabic women's rationales in studying the English language. Tuma (2002) emphasized the importance of acculturation for Arabic women to interact and succeed within the dominant culture. Acculturation is a process of assimilation rather than an individual process (Tuma, 2002). When Arabic women students were asked what do they like about SILC, the students replied differently. Here are some of their comments:

Yomna said:

I like the cooperative learning such as partner work and small groups since it is a good way to practice speaking skill. I also like cooperative learning since it is a good way to learn from other classmates. I find it easier to solve tasks with others.

Maram expanded on what Yomna said:

The time is distributed between different skills such as grammar, reading, writing, listening, and speaking equally. Therefore, I can learn all the skills that I need in order to learn English the way I need at the University. The teachers respect that I do not prefer working with men when doing groups inside the classroom. So I feel comfortable and respected inside the classroom although it is a mixed classroom of both men and women. The level consist of only nine weeks and I feel it is the right time for one level not like the Tampa language Center where we studied for three months for only one level. Moreover, I think that nine weeks is the good amount of time that I can yet improve my language and pass the test to the next

level. When I started level three at Spring International Language Center I was pregnant with my second girl and they really cooperated with me and they allowed me to not come if I was tired. Not all language centers cooperate with students when they are sick. When I was at the Tampa language Center I was pregnant with my first daughter and they did not cooperate with me or supported me instead they did not repeat exams when I missed them because I did not attend some classes due to my pregnancy. Spring International Language Center offered conversation tables once a week after class where many native speakers came from outside the university in order to practice our speaking and listening abilities. I enjoyed it because plus we practiced our English we made friends and learned American culture as well. I always prepare some questions for them every week so I can answer them these questions are related to places that I can go to, best daycare, family practice doctor that I can go to. Plus questions about special occasions such as Christmas, Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day. We respect each other's cultures and religion. They also learn from us our language, cook recipes, and culture.

Dareen felt that she became a member of a big family. She said:

I like how a teacher treats us and respects us as international students. I also enjoyed the teaching environment; I mean the teaching techniques and the books they use. I feel that I am a member of a big family.

In agreement with what Dareen said, Samerah said:

Support that I find from teachers, director, and administration by doing many tasks for us such as finding acceptance in universities and many other life stuff such as getting a car license and finding a house or a host family. They always help when we have medical issues or a problem.

I like how they respect all students and treat them equally who came from all parts of the world. Most importantly, they respect our religion and hijab. Also, they have a room where we can pray inside Spring International Language Center. Spring International Language Center staff is always encouraging us to learn English by many ways such as providing conversation tables with native speakers after classes in order to improve our speaking skills. They also give students TOFEL waiver letter, so they can take it to Colorado State University if they are applying there. They offer many elective classes, such as advanced writing for advanced levels such as level 4, 5, and 6, conversation, idioms, connect with English. Most importantly, they have a new elective class where the student choose the subject that he or she feels weak in and two teachers focus on what he or she needs to improve his or her skill in the subject and they meet the student two hours a week and the teach him on one to one basis.

Distracts Arabic women from studying English at SILC.

The formal educational setting such as SILC sometimes distracts Arabic women rationale in studying the English language. When Arabic women students were asked what they dislike about SILC, the students' responses varied:

Samerah said:

If a student complains about a teacher because the teacher is not doing a good job teaching the students or he or she is not qualified enough to teach English although he or she has master's degree in the field, the administrator does not take our teacher-evaluation seriously.

There are many Arabic students and they speak Arabic all the time even inside the classroom, so I cannot use my English. TOFEL, GRE, and GMAT classes are not offered in all SILC branches.

There many breaks between classes and the breaks last for about two hours, so I cannot use my time in order to learn English. Sometimes the teachers are concerned with the quantity of the assignments that they gave us not the quality of the assignments. Therefore, they waste our time on doing things that will not improve our English and it makes feel bored and frustrated.

I do not feel comfortable inside the classroom because of mixed classroom, male and female. In Saudi Arabia we don't have mixed classrooms. In fact, we have separated schools for boys and girls. Therefore, I have to wear my hijab inside the classroom because men are present.

In agreement with Samerah said, Maram said:

When I first started I did not like the size of the Spring International Language Center although they have a great location inside the University of Colorado at Denver. I think that the sizes of classroom are small and the students are a lot. I believe that if they had more space students and teachers will feel more comfortable and they can accept more international students as well. Every year more and more international students come study English at Spring International Language Center from all over the world such as: Korea, Twain, Middle East, Japan and much more. They concentrate on grammar and writing skills but they do not concentrate on reading. Although reading skills is essential when studying at the university. I am not saying that they do not teach reading skills or that I am not reading but I mean that they need to concentrate more on it because Spring International Language Center teaches academic English not communication or everyday language. I feel that they started to become to work for business and to

get more money to help international students to improve their English and get accepted at American Universities. Plus they accept many students from Arabic countries, so my class is all Arabic speaking students and only one Korean girl. Therefore, I do not practice my English and we speak Arabic inside classrooms. I think they need to accept students that they have the ability to work with successfully in order to improve their English and to the size of the language center in general and classroom sizes in particular. The assignments were either too easy or hard for the level of English that we are learning. As if they are saying help your self at home. Although all teachers have master degree they some times give use difficult exercise that they need to look the answers up for us. Some teachers talk about controversial issues in our countries such as why women do not drive in Saudi Arabia? When they are looking for a conversation topic they use women driving issue in Saudi Arabia, and I did not like it because I felt it was something personal and did not make sense to others. I believe that they should choose more important issues or topics such as: What is the difference between American Culture and other culture so we can learn the American culture more in order for as to learn what is appropriate to do or not in The United States. I believe that assimilation is very important for any foreign student who is intending to study here at the United States and stay here for many years.

Another student, Yomna, said:

Most of our classmates were Arabic students learning English, so I cannot practice my English. Moreover, sometimes I feel embarrassed to talk to Arabic man because I used to study at girls only schools but during my Bachelor's degree it was mixed boys and girls but we used to sit separately inside the same classroom and not talk to guys because it is teacher-centered classroom. Here inside Spring International Language Center, teachers put us in groups and we have to talk to them because it is cooperate learning classrooms. Some teachers do not treat us "Arabic people" fairly especially women maybe because we wear "hijab." I believe that some teachers like students from south Asia such as: Japanese and Korean students. I believed that because when teachers have free time they chat with Asian students or sometimes "Arabic men" and become friends with.

In contrast with what other Arabic women said, Dareen said that she feels that a formal educational setting such as SILC always enhances Arabic women's study of the English language but she had one thing that she disliked about Spring International Language setting, which all Arabic women mentioned above as well. Dareen, however, noted this very important issue that SILC has to recognize and solve. Dareen said:

The only thing I dislike is the huge population of the Arabic students who study there. This can be an authentic challenge for English language learners who try to make use of each moment to learn the target language.

Theme 5: The Tensions That Arabic Women Face in Learning the English

Language at SILC

For the theme “The tensions that Arabic women face in learning the English language at SILC,” four categories were identified during the coding of the interview data. These categories are:

1. Personal tensions that Arabic women face in learning English language at SILC.
2. Economic tensions that Arabic women face in learning English language at SILC.
3. Social (family-community) tensions that Arabic women face in learning the English language at SILC.
4. How Arabic women studying English at SILC negotiate these tensions.

Personal tensions that Arabic women face in learning English at SILC.

It is important to recognize the personal tensions that Arabic women face in learning English at SILC to help these Arabic students overcome these tensions and be able to learn the English language in a healthy teaching/learning environment. Fargallah, Schumm, and Webb (1997) pointed out that no research has yet examined Arabic women’s degree of satisfaction with their family life within the new country and culture. When Arabic women were asked about the personal tensions that they face in learning the English language at SILC, the students responses varied. Samerah said:

Missing my family and country, I always feel lonely and homesick. I came with my father and left my mother and unmarried sister back home. I have a problem in learning the regulations at the United States such as the insurance regulations here at the United States because we do not have some kinds of insurance at my

home country such as house insurance. When I first came I was not able to speak English even if I understood what other people are saying. I did not have enough vocabulary, so I could not express myself or read newspapers or magazines. I was afraid to walk anywhere alone because I was not used to walking in Saudi Arabia but I was driven by the driver everywhere I want.

In agreement with Samerah, Dareen said:

When I first came to the United States I experienced the cultural shock and I felt homesick. Now, I overcame the cultural shock but still feel homesick. I miss my family and friends a lot. My oldest daughter lost her Arabic and started to learn English slowly at school. It was also hard for my husband because he has no English at all, so it was hard to adjust to the life here at the United States. Also, he does not have a scholarship; therefore, he cannot study English because we cannot afford it.

In contrast with what Samerah and Dareen said, Maram added:

At the beginning, I did not enjoy learning English because I felt that it was difficult because I had a bad experience in learning English back home from a teacher that taught me English at high school. So when I came here I was concerned that I will not learn English and I did not have self-esteem that I needed to learn English. My main concern was that nobody would understand me when I speak English. I am married and have two young children. Many things were new in my life: new husband, new kids, new life and a new country. I always said to myself that I will never learn the English that I need to become successful at the University. Plus my husband was spoiled when he was at his parent's home, so he expected me to do the same to him. I did not have time to spoil him the way that he expected me to do such as: choosing his clothes and ironing them every day. In fact, I did not have the time to take care of my two kids, doing my assignments, and studying for exams. Finally, the difficulty of learning English itself. It required lots of time that I do not have. And it needed lots of attention inside and outside the classroom. Learning another language when you are an adult needs more time and effort. I had difficulty in improving my vocabulary and reading skills and had difficulty in doing my homework assignments. I am really afraid from my university experience because I always hear from my husband and friends that the university assignments are difficult and challenging. When I first came to the United States, my husband sometimes pushed me to speak English at home and I did not like it because his English was more improved than my English. Sometimes he will say tell me a bed time story in English so he can practice his English and for me in order to improve my English but I did not like it and sometimes I was even mad at him because of his pushing or speaking of English at home.

In contrast to what the other Arabic students said, Yomna said that she is worried about her speaking and listening ability and is anxious to follow her teachers' advice.

Yomna, however, is also worried about her future studying at the university. Yomna answered:

I was worried about my speaking and listening abilities and was even too anxious to follow our teachers' advice to listen BBC news and other programs. I did not think that I could catch up what it is said. My anxiety continued until now.

I am worried about my future studying at the university. I know that I am going to study with native speakers. I am worried that our professors do not put in their minds the needs of the international students and value my writing and speaking as native speakers.

When Sherry, a teacher, was asked about the personal tensions that Arabic women face in learning the English language at SILC. Sherry said:

The hijab, if it's just this and we see the face, it doesn't create a problem, but it creates a problem when they cover and we only see their eyes. It creates a problem I think more for the teachers and for the other students who are not Arab students because we don't see the expression. We don't know if they really understand because we're not seeing the facial expression. And so they're all almost like, they just look the same. That's a problem. Hijab is not a problem, to me with the population that we have, the Arab population. I think the ones without the hijab are the ones with the problem because we do get a sprinkling of students, one or two who are not covered. So it's almost like it became an opposite thing because now you're the one not following and like, why are you so modern? You know, when we still have our traditional, conventional woman and then here's one who's very, you know. Who's open just like any western woman and yet still Muslim, an Arab, you know. So it's almost like an irony. It went a different way at this time.

In contrast with what Sherry said, Peter, one of the founders of SILC, said that Arabic women do not face any personal problems in learning English at SILC because they have good learning habits and they are very motivated. Peter said:

I mentioned earlier that I believe that they tend to be very good students. They have, excellent motivation, they study hard, they attend well, in general, I think that they seem to have the skills and the motivation to succeed and so they do

well. It takes time to learn a language and if they have any concerns or any problems, the teachers will step in and help them. They, again, their study habits tend to be very good, uh, and the motivation that they have, I think, definitely helps them in achieving their purposes here.

Economic tensions that Arabic women face in learning English at SILC.

All the Arabic women that the researcher interviewed have full scholarships from their countries that include tuition and other life expenses to study English in the United States. The Arabic women from Saudi Arabia seem to have enough funding for living in the United States, but Arabic women from Libya complained that the funding that they receive is not enough and their husbands are not included in their scholarships, therefore, their husbands cannot study English or even work in the United States.

Samerah, from Saudi Arabia, said:

I do not have any economic problems at all because I came with my father and he helps me when I need anything. King Abdul Aziz gave me a full scholarship, which includes tuition, health insurance, and monthly salary.

In agreement with what Samerah said, Maram, who is also from Saudi Arabia, added:

I did not have any economical issues because I had a full scholarship that pays for tuition but the books were expensive and we need new books every level for six levels and they do not offer used books. The scholarship gives me a monthly salary as well for other life expenses and I think that the salary that they gave me for my husband, girls, and me is more than enough for housing, food, clothes, and weekend. Sometimes I save some too because one dollar is equivalent to 3.73 Saudi Riyals, so saving some dollars means that I will have good saving when I go back home in order to buy a car and furniture when I go back to Saudi Arabia.

In comparison with what the two Saudi women said, the Arabic women from Libya complained about their salaries and American regulations concerning work policies because their husbands cannot work due to their visa status. They replied as follow:

Yomna said:

The expensive life in America has made me worried about my living here in America. Even though I have monthly living is paid by my embassy, it is not enough for me to buy everything I need. For example, I could not put my daughter in daycare since I do not have enough money and always let her with my husband and sometimes with my friends.

The expensiveness especially in food made me depend on myself to prepare food daily because it is expensive to eat outside. For example, I learned how to cook some food such as bread, which I never cooked in my country

In agreement with Yomna, Dareen Said:

The Libyan government provided the scholarship for me but not for my husband and gave us a small amount of salary that does not cope with the high expenses of life here at the United States. Plus, we cannot work because of our visa status, which is student visa.

Social (family-community) tensions that Arabic women face in learning

English at SILC.

For Arabic women to properly study, interact, and succeed they should feel comfortable inside the classroom. Failing to do so may have a negative effect on Arabic women who are studying at SILC. Arabic women were asked about social (family-community) tensions that Arabic women face in learning the English language at SILC. The Arabic women students that the researcher interviewed did not mention social problems caused by Arabic male students at SILC. However, the Arabic women students pointed to their lack of social interaction with other families, especially American families.

Maram, a student, said:

I did not like to go anywhere alone I always accompany my husband because I could not speak English fluently. So I had some emotional problems when going out of the home because of the lack of speaking ability and confidence. Even simple talking was a problem such as ordering a meal or asking for something in

the supermarket. Even inside the language center or classroom. The problem is even more when I speak with foreigners because of their accent. So I avoided speaking to them or becoming friends with my classmates. I did not speak English in front of a person who had more English than I have because I was afraid that he or she would laugh or criticize me. Homesick, I suffered from homesickness a lot because I belong to a family that has a very strong family bond. Since I came in 2008 until today I call my family back home every day and travel to Saudi Arabia two times a year. Two of my brothers came to visit me here at the United States several months ago. One of them just came for about 10 days and he paid expensive over seas tickets and have airplane phobia as well. I really love them and feel alone and isolated here at the United States. As you know, I wear hijab because I am a Muslim. Sometimes hijab cause me some problems especially after 9/11 especially when walking alone at night or using public transportation. Some people look at me and some people treat me differently. I should not be treated that way because I respect everybody and everybody should respect me in return. It is not my fault that some extremist did something wrong and I should not be judged of what he did. Islam is like all other religions that ask its people to protect the lives of other and treat other people like brothers.

Samerah said:

I do not have any American friends, so I don't have a chance to practice my English or accent. My father is an old man so he always wants to stay home and I usually stay home with him and help him by doing the cooking, laundry, and cleaning the house.

I am a shy person, so I don't always feel like interacting with other people and that effected my English improvement. Just a few months ago I learned how to drive the car and get my license and my father bought me a car but I do not drive around a lot because he was afraid that I would not follow the traffic signs and get into a car accident.

I don't have a close friend that I can share my problems in learning English with and help me or advise me in order to overcome the problem from his or her own experience. I really miss my friend in Saudi Arabia because of the time difference I cannot call her every day.

In agreement with what Maram and Samerah said, Yomna said:

Since I am a student and spend most of my time studying, I do not feel that I lacked to the social relationship as much as my husband. My focus has been to achieve my goals by finishing my MA degree. The problem was with my husband. He does not have a scholarship to study and he also was not able to work since he is f2 visa. He was unhappy at staying at home without work and

friends especially in the first months of our coming. After few months, he had some Libyan and Arabic friends. This helped him to start enjoying his life here.

Dareen added:

In Libya, we used to live in a big family and had a very social life such as having social activities like going to wedding celebration, family gatherings, and many other celebrations. Here at the United States, I felt that the life was very cold and we had no social life, so we felt lonely and homesick all the time. We even did not know what to do in our free time. Here at the United States, we gather with some other Libyan families but we are all students and come from different cities and backgrounds, so we don't always go along and everybody is busy with school and their own lives as well. I wish that I know an American family, so we can spend our free time with them and also learn more about the American social life and practice my English. At Spring International language Center, every student can list his or her name in order to be acquainted with an American family according to his or her own interests and needs. Therefore, I wrote my name but they are still looking for a friend family that has the same interest as my family has. I hope they will find one for me soon.

The administration and the teachers at SILC had a different opinion about the social tensions that Arabic women face in learning the English language at SILC. They discussed the social tensions that arise from Arabic male students inside the classroom. On the other hand, Arabic women did not mention any problems of this kind, possibly due to their conservative culture.

Peter, one of the founders of the school, said:

They have to study with males' maybe. Sometimes, I think they do pretty well, I think, and our teachers are also sensitive to the cultures that we have here and they try to take those things into consideration in conducting the class. So if there is a tension in class, they try to deal with it. The Saudi ladies that study here have access to the female teachers, for example, the director and other teachers. Most of our teachers are female anyway and they do create a rapport there and they're welcome to go and talk to, you know, the teachers and the administration if there's any problem. At times there may be a complain that somebody, for example, using language or, addressing in a way that may be not proper. In that case, then we'll call the student in and we'll try to delete the problem and so forth. Some teachers have also done informal gatherings with the female teachers and Saudi students, for example, where they're more open, you know, to talk and either in problems, to raise concerns and so forth. But, in general, I think things,

you know, go well. Our purpose is to provide the opportunities for the students to learn about the culture and be comfortable in their academic environment here. We have the personnel and we have the cultural, the knowledge of the culture, that is the Middle Eastern culture and the Saudi Arabian culture and our culture. Because these teachers have worked overseas, many of them dealt with these things before and so I think that that sensitivity helps them to deal with the differences in the cultures and I think, in general, the students do very well adjusting to the culture.

Randy, the director, added that these social tensions can reach sexual harassment:

I think with learning the language itself, I don't know that there are any particular tensions that they experience, not with the language itself. In terms of being in the classroom, for sure there might be some issues in that they are the minority gender. There's definitely more men here, Arab or otherwise, there's more men than women in the classroom and for some women it seems to not be an issue at all. They interact with everyone, they're very verbal in small group dialogue but there are other women who prefer to only have partners or small groups with other women. So if there are not many other women in the class, it affects their learning possibly, one could make an argument it affects their learning, because they just end up speaking with other women and they don't interact as much with a broader variety of students. That's in the classroom, outside of the classroom, as Director, I'm privy to some of the social problems that occur and I think some of the problems that the guys have with like being out drinking and getting drunk downtown and those kinds of things, they don't have that. If they wanna party on their own, they party very, very privately. I have found that they have their own, um, like secret social parties where they can drink and they can smoke hookah and stuff like that if they want to, and it's like everyone is very, it's very confidential information. So they have a safe place to kind of party. That being said, in the hallways, lunchtime, getting back and forth to school, I think some of the women, at times, hear comments from male students that they don't need to hear. Sometimes it's to the point of sexual harassment. We have had sexual harassment cases and we deal with them appropriately. Um, other times it doesn't go that far, it's that from the guy's point of view they feel like these women are smarter than them and if they're uncovered here in the U.S that these are kind of freer women, so to speak. And so it's this strange combination of these younger guys, you know, 18, 19 year old single guys making comments about the women because (a) they're jealous, that here these women are so respected and study hard, but (b) I think they're also interested in some of the women and they don't know how to flirt or interact in a very polite way. So they end up saying some stupid things that they shouldn't say. So when I have confronted these guys, it kind of is this mixture of jealousy and intrigue. From the women's end, for the most part, I have heard that this occurs with single, married, married women with children, it kind of happens to everyone, whether they're covered or uncovered, it happens to all of them. And from the women's point of view, most of them feel

like those guys are just kids and they just ignore them, they just totally ignore them and it never usually becomes a big issue.

In agreement with Randy, Sandy, the assistant director and teacher said:

I think the social tensions, maybe it's not in learning so much as, being in a society that's very different from what they're accustomed to and I think sometimes one of the biggest problems is the pressure that the men students in the class put on them. And one example from a very long time ago, was when I had a husband and wife together in one class and the woman came to me in my office and said, I'm sorry I can't really answer questions and participate as much in class as I would like to because if I do the other guys will tease my husband. Recently we had an issue where a male student came to me and complained that a teacher had shown a movie with some inappropriate content and the complaint was not so much that he cared, the complaint was that there were women students in the class and he felt kind of protective over them. So I think that, again, and occasionally I think that the women students have trouble participating in, not always, but sometimes they have a problem participating in group activities and, again, I don't see that this is probably gonna be a problem when they go to the university and they're with students from other places, but with students from their own country, particularly the ones that are cousins and brothers and so on, it becomes a little difficult for them.

The teacher Sherry blamed Arabic male students for the social tensions that

Arabic women face in learning the English language at SILC. Sherry said:

Specifically in our institution the big problem of course is being with so many other Arab students. So in a classroom full of maybe ten to twelve male Arab students you get the woman. You know, two or three of them. If they are wives of husbands who are there then it creates more tension for them because the husbands are there. It's almost like they are being judged the entire society. If they are single woman, it's also another tension for them because they are single and they are accompanied by somebody so they tend to feel that they don't need to be the stars. They don't want to see their people to see their real potential because of that. It almost seems like having a majority of men there, they're stagnated

How Arabic women studying English at SILC negotiate these tensions.

Negotiating personal, economic, social tensions is important, and it is always hard for Arabic women to handle these tensions due to the very conservative culture that they

belong to. To know more about how Arabic women at SILC negotiate these tensions, the administration and teachers were asked.

Peter, one of the founders of SILC, said:

They may come and talk to the director, for example, the academic coordinator, and they can explain what they want to see happen. If they feel that they need, you know, some assistance or if there are any tensions or any problems, you know, how to deal with them. And let's say as an example, for example, the housing in their home stay. Some of the students may stay with host families and sometimes there may be some misunderstandings there. So the host family may talk to our home stay coordinator, the student may talk to the home stay coordinator and then the home stay coordinator will try to mediate between the two sides, find out where the problem is and try to solve it and so forth. Academically, when there are concerns there, again, we have the advisors here, we have the director, the international student advisor, they're very open and inviting to students to come and talk to them if there is a concern, if there is a problem. If there is a problem with a teacher, then the director will talk to, we find out what the situation is, talk to the student, talk to the teacher, so that they can resolve the problem and so most of the problems are resolved by that sort of a thing. The students are advised to talk to the teacher, for example. If there's a problem, then they talk to their academic coordinator or their, we have a faculty coordinator. Her name, for example, is there, and so in doing that I think we deal with concerns or problems, if there are any, before they really get to be bigger problems.

In contrast, Randy, the director, said:

I see more and more supportive men, in that they understand when I give them this direction and this goal. The guys understand it and I think sometimes it's the tension within the woman that she should defer to this, you know, husband, cousin, brother, her escort. And so I think that it takes time, it takes practice and it takes constant reminders about you need to do this yourself, stop relying on a man and it even gets to the point here, when I have tons of students out here and they're all guys, but one woman walks in last and they all let her go to the front of the line and I say, no, you go to the back of the line. This is not your culture, this is our culture and all the guys are like, no, no, no, it's okay, let her go to the front and I say, no, this is important for all of you to learn. She's just treated equally, like everybody else, for better and for worse.

Sandy, assistant director and a teacher, added:

I think that, for the most part, they're very direct with the instructor, as in the example I gave, they're pretty direct with the instructors in saying, look, here's

this problem that I have, because in my culture we can do this and this and I think that they work it out.

Sherry, a teacher, had an interesting answer about how Arabic women negotiate these tensions. She said:

For most of the women I think what they do is they speak to the teachers. Like if it's the classroom thing, they come to teacher in confidence, you know. Not opening up in class, but letting the teacher know that, "Yes, I'm here. I really know what I'm doing. You know even if I'm not able to do it in class." Others actually break the barrier when we talk to them, especially if they come in level 1, when they're starting; it's really hard for them. They don't want to interact with men; they shy away, you know, "I can't. I'm not supposed to be with men. I can't be in that group." But as they move on into our system and we tell them, "You know, you've chosen to study here. If you really go to the university, professors will not really say, oh okay, you're an Arab woman you can't be paired with somebody else." This is the reality of our academic world. And so they actually do start to just force themselves to do it until they feel comfortable. Some of them go past that and become really comfortable like, "I don't mind, yeah I can work with this person." Others would come to us like, "Please. Can I not be with men, can I just stay with the women." You know. So that's how they negotiate all of that.

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the curriculum at SILC, the personal history of Arabic women at SILC, and the personal history of faculty of SILC. In the fourth section of this chapter, the researcher analyzed the findings of this research study according to the identified themes and categories. The final chapter of this research presents the discussion of the findings, conclusions, suggestions for further studies, limitations, personal statement, and an abstract of the dissertation.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Overview

Based on the coding of the interview data and related documents, a number of categories were identified, and five themes emerged from the categories. In this Chapter, the findings and themes are discussed. In addition, the summary, recommendations, and limitations of the study are discussed in this chapter.

Four research questions guided this study. Each of these questions was explored as perceived by participants representing three groups of stakeholders at SILC:

administrators, teachers, and Arabic women students:

1. What are the official aims in teaching English as a second language at SILC?
2. What do instructors try to teach at SILC?
3. What are the stories behind Arabic women's rationales for studying the English language?
4. How does the formal education setting enhance or distract from the rationale Arabic women give to study English?

Official Aims

RQ #1: What are the official aims in teaching English as a second language?

Theme 1: SILC's aims in teaching English.

As discussed in the literature review, it is essential for administrators and teachers at English language schools to understand their goals for teaching English as a second language. No studies were identified that contributed to understanding goals for teaching

English that would serve to support or contradict the results that the researcher presented here. Through all the interviews with the founder, director, and two instructors, their vision was clear: to prepare international students for academic success and future achievement at American universities. Sandy, one of the two teachers said:

I think that that is all part of our school's mission to prepare international students in the best way possible, both with their language and with their adjustment to the culture and so that is what I hope we can do.

One of the founders confirmed this in the following statement:

We feel that we look at the student as a whole person. They are here to study, but also they have other needs and we felt that providing services to them, that would make it easier for them and it would make it possible for them to be more successful in their pursuit of their education here in the United States.

They perceived their role as going beyond mere academic instruction, however.

Peter, one of the founders, said:

And so we have a school, we wanted to have a school that has excellent teachers and excellent instructional program, but also provide a lot of services, such as meeting the students at the airport when they arrive, finding home stays for them, giving them orientation when they are here, meeting with them and the host families to make sure that things work well.

It was clear from the instructors' answers to interview questions that they had learned what was important to teach through their own academic studies and experience.

They both felt that providing these additional services was essential to students' adjustment and comfort, which would lead to success and future achievement.

SILC's founder was the only respondent who mentioned the importance of providing an excellent instructional program for international students. Unfortunately, only the founder of the school saw the significance between the importance of a strong instructional program and international students' academic success. It is important that all

faculty members acknowledge the same aims in teaching English. In addition, the cost of these instructional programs is high, and therefore the quality arguably should also be high. The average cost of each nine-week session is \$3,388, which includes tuition, student services fees, books, supplies, and health insurance (Spring, 2011). Bartelett and Fischer (2011) claimed that many English language learners come to the United States expecting to stay for a few months to learn English at language centers and they end up paying in excess of \$2,850 per eight-week session. The researcher suggests that the placement exams that determine a student's level of English competency should be conducted more carefully by SILC because some students are placed below their competency level and therefore required to take and pay for classes that they do not need.

The ultimate goal of the faculty members should be to work together to motivate the students, faculty, sponsors, and host families, however this ideal was not always met. Only the director, Randy, recognized the difficulty in achieving this by saying:

This is no easy task. While everyone agrees that the goal is to produce a graduate with the highest possible English proficiency, I am afraid that we do not always meet this ideal. Every constituency has their own agenda and reasons for doing what they are doing. So, I see it as my job to use every policy, rule, trick, "carrot and stick," and joke to bring these disparate groups together harmoniously.

Theme 2: Arabic students' aims in studying English.

Due to the worldwide use of English, Arabic women often come to the United States to learn English as a second language. Scott Stevens, director of the English Language Institute, stated that male students cheated by using female students work and should be expected to use their own intelligence (Bartelett & Fischer, 2011, p. 26). All SILC faculty members agreed that Arabic women were more serious than Arabic male students. Sherry expressed the following about Arabic women students:

I have seen a lot of very smart Arabic women who come here and actually, their drive and their motivation are really, seriously there. I would say all Arabic women. The Libyans, the Saudis, I have seen more are here and motivated.

One of the major aims provided by the Arabic women students interviewed for this research was to improve their English skills—specifically speaking and writing— for the purpose of fulfilling future university assignments and conducting research independently. The Arabic women understood that the English language learning was an important stage in their future academic success. One of the Arabic women students said she was afraid she wouldn't understand the instructor or the materials presented in a lecture. When studying English in their own countries, different instructional methods and assessments were used, creating a gap between what they learned in their countries and here in the United States. Despite these hindrances, Arabic women were seen to have more skills, motivation, and English background than Arabic men.

Because Arabic women are increasingly traveling around the world for conferences, business, and as tourists, interaction and communication was another major aim for them to learn English in the United States.

The researcher believes that SILC should offer more elective classes that concentrate on research tools and computer skills to ensure students' future success at American universities. They should also make sure that these elective classes are designed according to international students' interests and needs in order to increase their language skills.

**Theme 3: Differences in Arabic women's aims in studying English at SILC
40 years ago compared to currently.**

Arabic women started to enroll at SILC to learn English in the 1970s, but had different aims as described by Sandy:

In those days, the women we had were typical, they were almost always here because they were together with their husbands and they were typically very young. For the most part, they did not have much interest in learning English, except for just what they needed to be able to live comfortably here, to be able to go to the drug store, and ask a question or something. So it was much more kind of survival English that were teaching at that time and they were, again, less educated, I think, in general, than our current Saudi women and certainly did not have the English skills when they came, I mean, that was a very almost pre-basic kind of level that we were teaching at that time.

Arabic women in this study displayed an innate love of learning, were more serious than other students about their studies, more motivated, and came to study academic English to pursue higher education. Furthermore, the Saudi and Libyan governments started scholarship programs to increase the number of highly educated people who would return to serve their countries from the United States. Many Arabic women have taken advantage of these programs and have come to the United States with full scholarships that include tuition, food, and housing. Mankiller (1999) asserted that Arabic women were becoming more public about their concerns and could be found everywhere, such as on university campuses in the United States.

Research question #1 summary.

To summarize, the four aims of SILC administrators and faculty in teaching English were:

1. To prepare international students for future academic success.
2. To provide an excellent instructional program.

3. To offer other services for students such as housing and transportation.
4. To create harmonious relationships between faculty, students, and sponsors.

Current Arabic women students at SILC were seen as more serious, motivated, and had a more extensive English language background than female students at SILC in the 1970s. Arabic women now need academic English to achieve their future goals. The student respondents expressed the following four aims in learning English as a second language:

1. To improve their English skills, especially in speaking and writing.
2. To be able to write future university assignments, including research articles.
3. To support their travel to conferences and as tourists.
4. To effectively interact and communicate with people around the world.

SILC administrators and faculty had also changed their expectations and preparations for Arabic women by providing professional English instruction for serious and enthusiastic learners.

Purpose

RQ # 2: What do instructors try to teach at SILC?

Theme 4: SILC's purpose.

The SILC faculty members asserted that the purpose of the school was to fulfill the mission of the school: to prepare international students with English language skills and adjustment to the U.S. culture in the best way possible. Dantas-Whitney and Dimmitt (2002) stated that SILC prepared international students for entrance and success at U.S. universities by offering a high intensive English language program. Sherry, a teacher, stated:

My personal aims are the same as the aims or the mission of the school, which is to prepare students for their academic studies into American universities. And so we have an intensive English program and that is what we have.

Despite the fact that faculty respondents felt the mission statement of SILC was also the purpose of the school and their personal purpose as well, the director revealed that although the SILC administrators and instructors tried to produce graduates with the highest English proficiency, unfortunately this goal was not always accomplished. It is essential that SILC administrators develop a clearly stated mission, which all faculty members can follow. However, administrators could not change other circumstances that affected students' ability to reach their highest potential.

Theme 5: Qualifications of SILC teachers.

Highly qualified teachers were thought to bring the best instructional methods and cultural awareness to students. Dantas-Whitney and Dimmitt (2002) thought the teachers at SILC brought the best teaching methods and classroom experience to foreign students learning English as a second language.

SILC's founder, Peter, said the following about the credentials of SILC's teachers:

Teachers are expected to have a master's degree in teaching English as a second language or an equivalent degree. They have a degree in linguistics, for example, they may have a degree in English with some courses in teaching English as a second language. . . . A lot of them also have experience, they have taught overseas or here in the United States in an intensive English language program, but generally the teachers have a master's degree or an equivalent degree that qualifies them to teach English in our school.

Peter qualified this statement by stating that some current faculty members were in the process of earning a master's degree in teaching English as a second language. The two faculty member respondents disagreed with Peter, saying that they had master's

degrees in unrelated fields: i.e., international studies and library sciences. However, each had more than 15 years of experience in teaching English as a second language. Only one of the teachers confirmed that she had an undergraduate degree in English from her home country (i.e., the Philippines) and also had two master's degrees: one in English and the other in an unspecified major. (See Table 2 for a listing of the credentials and experience of the faculty of SILC.)

Few universities offer a master's degree in teaching English as a second language, and many English language centers are competing for these individuals as teachers. The more qualified teachers move to schools that offer better benefits and salaries. The best possible scenario is to hire teachers who already have degrees in teaching English as a second language and who have a minimum of five years experience in teaching English at another language center. However, given the small numbers of potential teachers with master's degrees in ESL, an alternative might be to require new teachers to sign a contract agreeing to enroll in an ESL master's degree program while they are teaching at SILC, and also require an agreement to continue working at SILC for a designated amount of time.

Theme 6: Classes at SILC.

Classes taught at SILC include English grammar, reading, writing, listening, and speaking; also offered are electives. The students at SILC must study the core classes and can also choose from the elective classes according to their needs and interests. Peter, one of the school founders, explained the available curriculum as follows:

Our program is an academic program. This emphasis is on the skills that they need in their academic area here in going to the universities. So our classes

include reading, writing, listening, speaking. We also have some electives such as pronunciation, conversation, and accent improvement. In the upper levels we also have a research class, for example, in our advanced level where the students learn how to do research, write papers, so that when they go to the university, practically at the graduate level, they know how to use the library. They know how to do the research, how to collect information. Write their papers and begin successful in their academic studies.

Lee and Green (2010) emphasized the importance of acculturation for individuals and groups in order to interact and communicate. SILC's role should include more than teaching the core and elective classes that are currently offered; additional class offerings should include opportunities to learn about and understand American culture. Also needed is a faculty member designated to work with international students to help them solve their problems.

The teachers stressed the importance of these skills offered at SILC in improving English language proficiency. The teachers expressed preferences about the classes they taught, for example, one teacher preferred teaching core classes. SILC faculty should guarantee that all students acquire the language skills they need to meet their goals and level expectations. SILC administrators and teachers should carefully assess and understand the needs of Arabic women in learning the English language, and SILC teachers must be qualified, competent, and experienced in teaching the English language to international students.

Theme 7: The importance of learning English for Arabic women.

Due to the prevalence of English around the world and particularly in the Middle East, many Arabic women often travel to other countries to learn English. Countries in which English is the primary language—the United States, Great Britain, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand—have English language centers whose purposes vary. For

example, some of them teach communicative English while others specialize in academic English. Learning the English language can provide many opportunities for Arabic women, such as qualifying for jobs requiring some degree of English proficiency (Al-Essa & Abdulkareem, 2003), being independent, learning English from native speakers, and traveling around the world. .

Some of the Arabic women students stated that their reason for learning English was to improve their future career potential; inadequate language proficiency had a negative effect on their careers. For example, although two of the student respondents had degrees in English language and taught English at public schools in their home countries, they still felt challenged as English teachers. Other students mentioned the importance of learning English from native speakers, as English classes were not taught adequately in their countries. For example, Yomna said:

After graduation, I taught two years in a public middle school. In our country, English language is a required subject in the school where I taught. The curriculum of this class is focused more on grammar and reading. Since we lacked a teacher who is proficient in English, the skill level was low. During these two years of teaching, I had a challenge in teaching English. My lack of English language negatively affected my teaching and students' learning.

Research question #2 summary.

More Arabic women have become independent and enthusiastic about their lives in general as a result of globalization, professionalism in the work place, and changing attitudes in the Middle East. The need for more professional English speakers in Middle Eastern countries has created a high demand for English language centers by Arabic women. Providing Arabic women with good academic language centers can help them succeed in reaching their future goals. While the underlying interests and needs of Arabic

women differ in learning English, all have the same goal: to attain a high level of English proficiency and to learn the culture. Some are married and come with their spouse and children; others are single and may come with their families. The school environment enhances the productivity and motivation of Arabic women.

The purposes of SILC administrators, faculty, and Arabic women students should be unified and focused toward the same school mission: to prepare students for their academic studies, high English language proficiency, and adjustment to the new culture. In addition, the teachers must be highly qualified with degrees in teaching English as a second language, must use the best instructional methods, must display a high level of cultural awareness, and must be experienced in meeting the Arabic women students' interests and needs.

Rationale

RQ #3: What are the stories behind Arabic women's rationales for studying the English language?

Theme 8: Personal rationale.

The Arabic women student participants in this study provided stories to express their personal rationale for studying English in the United States, and some of these stories changed over time. For example, some of the Arabic women students said that at the beginning of their English language study they only wanted to communicate and be able to use public transportation without the help of their husbands; later they wanted English language proficiency to be able to teach their children in English so the children could attend international schools in their home countries. Al-Essa (2003) stated that

increasing numbers of Saudi parents have recognized the importance of the English language for their children, and face pressures due to their children's weakness in English. One of the students mentioned that a friend had told her that Denver, Colorado was a nice, quiet city and recommended SILC to her. Another stated that she wanted to be successful in her own culture. Some of the Arabic women wanted to be able to travel around the world and interact with people from other cultures. It is important for SILC administrators and teachers to understand and meet these personal rationales. A lack of interaction between Arabic women and SILC administrators and teachers could have a negative impact on the benefits Arabic women derive from learning English.

Theme 9: Professional rationales.

In addition to personal rationales for studying English at SILC, all the Arabic women students expressed professional rationales, such as earning a master's degree in linguistically diverse education; working at ARAMCO, an oil company located in Saudi Arabia; finding a good job; getting a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOFEL) waiver from the University of Colorado at Denver; and complying with a condition for a scholarship. Regardless of the professional rationales expressed through their stories, the Arabic women were highly motivated. Women in Arab countries are often limited to jobs such as teaching and nursing. There is a high unemployment rate for young Saudis due to the presence of millions of foreign workers (Al-Essa, 2003). Most of the Arabic women students revealed that they were looking for a job or found it hard to find a job, as illustrated by Samerah's comments:

After I graduated I stayed home for about one year again because I did not find a job. Finding a job in Saudi Arabia especially for women is very hard because of

limited job opportunities and decomposition. Finally, I found a job as a lecturer at King Abdul-Aziz University. I worked there for about one year and a half before I came to the United States to get my PhD degree in engineering and computer science in 2010. Spring International Language Center is a recognized language center by many universities; some universities do not require the TOFEL exam for international students if they graduate from Spring International Language Center. Also, Spring International Language Center was a recognized language center by the Ministry of Saudi Higher Education. I want to be able to write my assignments and research in English successfully when I study my PhD. Moreover, after I finish my PhD I want to be able to read books in my field in English in order to improve myself.

Most of the Arabic women students expressed more than one professional rationale for studying the English language at SILC. Most already had bachelor's degrees and were here to earn master's degrees in various fields of study. All the student participants in this study had scholarships provided by their home countries, covering tuition, food, housing, and airline tickets, so they could finish their degrees.

The two Libyan women participants mentioned financial issues as a concern while studying at SILC. Their monthly stipend from the Libyan government was only enough to cover a modest standard of living, so they had to bake their bread at home and cook everyday. Husbands could not study or work due to their visa statuses. Two of the Saudi students said they did not have financial issues and were able to save money from their monthly salaries. Their husbands couldn't work, but could study.

The researcher suggests that SILC should offer some job opportunities inside the school for those international students who cannot work outside the school due to their visa status to help them with financial issues. These financial issues were clear from the two Libyan women complains. Helping international students studying at SILC with financial issues that can affect their learning ability should be one of the important priorities of SILC, because it can ensure their wellbeing and also their success in learning

English. In addition, no connection was found between the researcher's results and the literature because to the best of the researcher knowledge no research has discussed this topic before. As a result, in the literature review chapter, the researcher discussed topics related to professional rationale of Arabic women such as the importance of English language learning for Arabic women and the role of acculturation.

Research Question #3 Summary

Arabic women students expressed both personal and professional rationales for studying English at SILC based on the individual goals they wished to accomplish. Personal rationales included tourism, helping their children with English homework, using public transportation, the ability to communicate, and being independent. Professional rationales included: studying at an American university, English language proficiency, finding a good job, and working in a particular company. As previously mentioned, SILC should provide a faculty member to specifically focus on understanding these rationales.

The Saudi Arabian and Libyan students were studying in the United States on scholarships provided by their respective countries. The Libyan scholarships were offered through universities, while the Saudi scholarships were offered through the Ministry of Higher Education. These entities should play a significant role in providing job opportunities to the students after they finish their degrees. The administrators and teachers at SILC can meet Arabic women's needs for learning English if both parties work together to insure the best possible English language proficiency. It is also

important that the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education and Libyan universities monitor and help these Arabic students to reach their goals.

The Formal Educational Setting

RQ # 4: How does the formal education setting enhance or distract from the rationales Arabic women give to study English?

Theme 10: Enhances Arabic women in studying English at SILC.

The formal education setting at SILC had many positive impacts on Arabic women, who realized its importance on their English language learning. This is difference between what is found in the literature and the researcher findings; Mankiller (1999) found that Arabic women worked hard to integrate into American society by participating in activities such as school sports and local councils. One of the Arabic women mentioned the importance of cooperative learning in which students learned from each other. Another said that the formal education setting helped her by the equal distribution of time given to the various skills she needed to learn. Another women felt that she was a member of a big family at SILC, and mentioned the great teaching environment provided by the school. Two of the students noted that they were treated equally and respectfully even though they are wearing the hijab. All the student participants agreed that the formal education setting enhanced their education in important ways.

Theme 11: Distracts Arabic women in studying English at SILC.

Most of the distractions for Arabic women were typical for any formal education setting. For example, students cited complaints about some teachers, that the

administration did not take teacher evaluations seriously, and that there was a need for more reading and writing classes. Samerah stated

There are many Arabic students and they speak Arabic all the time even inside the classroom, so I cannot use my English. TOEFL, GRE, and GMAT classes are not offered in all SILC branches.

Yomna said:

Most of our classmates were Arabic students learning English, so I cannot practice my English. Moreover, sometimes I feel embarrassed to talk to Arabic man because I used to study at girls only schools but during my bachelors it was mixed boys and girls but we used to sit separately inside the same classroom and not talk to guys because it is teacher-centered classroom. Here inside Spring International Language Center, teachers put us in groups and we have to talk to them because it is cooperate learning classrooms. Some teachers do not treat us Arabic people fairly especially women maybe because we wear *hijab* [traditional head covering worn by some Muslim women]. I believe that some teachers like students from south Asia such as Japanese and Korean students. I believed that because when teachers have free time they chat with Asian students or sometimes “Arabic men” and become friends with.

The Arabic women attributed some of their distractions in learning English at SILC to other Arabic students and teachers. The Arabic women blamed the SILC administration for not solving these problems, saying the school had become a business more than an English language center to help international students learn English properly. Lacking research on this topic, no literature was found that supported or contradicted the results presented here; Tuma (2002) emphasized the importance of researching minority groups, such as Arabic women, so they could become more visible, and so their voices would be heard. She argued that the lack of literature on these minority groups was due to a slow growth rate and late emergence into the United States.

Theme 12: Tensions Arabic women face in learning English at SILC.

The tensions Arabic women faced while learning English at SILC were personal, economic, and social (family-community). Arabic women expected some of these tensions even before they came to the United States, and repeatedly mentioned their fears and anxieties. For instance, Yomna said:

I was worried about my speaking and listening abilities and was even too anxious to follow our teachers' advice to listen to BBC news and other programs. I did not think that I could catch up what it is said. My anxiety continued until now. I am worried about my future studying at the university. I know that I am going to study with native speakers. I am worried that our professors do not put in their minds the needs of the international students and value my writing and speaking as native speakers.

Personal tensions ranged from feeling lonely and homesick, to learning U.S. regulations. Culture shock was mentioned as a significant issue, along with concerns about their language abilities and whether they would understand their future university lectures and native speakers.

One of the teachers claimed that hijab was not a problem unless an Arabic woman only showed her eyes, because she could not see her facial expressions. Other research found that Americans treated some Arabic women like foreigners because of hijab (Mankiller, 1999). Although participants' answers about personal tensions differed, SILC's founder mentioned an important advantage of Arabic women, i.e., they were motivated students with good study habits. In addition, Peter stated that Arabic women students could always ask for help from their teachers or school administrators about any problems they were having.

Arabic women from Libya faced economic tensions for two main reasons: the monthly salary from their government did not cover the high cost of living in the United

States, and their husbands couldn't work due to visa restrictions. Saudi women did not face financial issues because the monthly salaries provided by their government were adequate. Yomna, from Libya, said:

The expensive life in America has made me worried about my living here in America. Even though I have monthly living is paid by my embassy, it is not enough for me to buy everything I need. For example, I could not put my daughter in daycare since I do not have enough money and always let her with my husband and sometimes with my friends. The expensiveness especially in food made me depend on myself to prepare food daily because it is expensive to eat outside. For example, I learned how to cook some food such as bread, which I never cooked in my country.

The Arabic women did not emphasize any social problems regarding learning the English language, but did cite the lack of close social relationships with other families, especially U.S. families. Most Arabic women wanted to practice their English and improve their accents. Other Arabic women just wanted a close friend to share problems with. Students also mentioned the difficulty in calling family and friends in their home country due to the high cost and time zone differences.

A faculty member stated that Arabic women did not have problems learning the language but had other issues of concern, for example, being the minority gender, sexual harassment from male students in the classroom, and other cultural issues. The researcher supported this theme and other themes presented by the researcher by stating what SILC study participants said because there were no studies that support or contradict the results presented here.

Theme 13: How Arabic women studying English at SILC negotiate these tensions.

Based on the interviews with the Arabic women students, it was clear that negotiating the tensions they faced while studying English at SILC was difficult due to their conservative cultural background. For example, Arabic women commonly did not speak to or interact with other people while a male relative was present; Arabic men often speak on Arabic women's behalf in public. Despite this, some of the students had increased their independence from husbands and family. According to Tuma (2002), increasing numbers of Arabic women chose to work outside the home for the experience of doing so, regardless of the surrounding circumstances. The faculty respondents noted that Arabic students usually consulted their teachers privately to discuss their problems; for bigger issues, students consulted an administrator directly.

Increased attention to cultural differences and instruction in American culture by the administrators and teachers of SILC would support Arabic women to interact and communicate independently. This assistance in assimilating to American culture while maintaining their original culture would solve some of the tensions students faced while studying English at SILC. In addition, no connection was found between the researcher results and literature.

Question #4 summary.

Arabic women students encountered significant obstacles based on cultural differences when learning English at SILC. However, regardless of personal, social, or economic tensions, the students were motivated and eager to learn the English language

and were excellent students, achieving the highest grades and attendance certificates. The students often tried to negotiate these tensions by discussing them with their teachers or the SILC administration privately; the faculty thought handling matters confidentially was due to students' conservative cultural background. Most of the students did not learn about the American culture before they came to the United States, so their first experience of these tensions occurred at SILC.

SILC did not have a designated faculty member to work as a consultant with international students. The Arabic women students also felt that the school administrators did not take teacher evaluations seriously, citing that some teachers treated them unequally and were not qualified.

Offering classes in American culture to help Arabic women students assimilate more easily, along with increased collaboration between students and faculty would lead to a healthier learning environment at SILC. Designating a specific faculty member as a consultant for international students would also help. In addition, the Arabic women students should address these tensions independently or through community organizations.

Section 2: Summary

The purpose of this study was to interview Arabic women students at SILC to record their perceptions, stories, and opinions about learning English in an American language school. In addition, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to understand what other scholars had concluded about the purposes and goals of Arabic

women who come to the United States to study the English language, and the importance of English language proficiency, both within and outside the U.S.

A total of eight individuals participated in this study: four Arabic women students (three married, one unmarried), in addition to one of the founders, the current director, and two instructors at SILC. The four Arabic women students learned of the study from a flyer posted at SILC and volunteered to participate. The teachers and director were selected to participate by the SILC founder.

All interviews were conducted between September and November, 2011. Interviews with the SILC founder, director, and instructors were conducted at the SILC facility. The Arabic women students preferred to be interviewed at the researcher's home or the University of Denver computer lab.

Recommendations

Based on the data analysis and related documents, the researcher identified the following recommendations to improve the satisfaction of Arabic women studying English at SILC

1. SILC administrators should place greater emphasis on reading and writing classes to insure the academic success of Arabic women at American universities.
2. More academic English language centers should be opened to accommodate the increasing number of international students coming to the United States to study English.
3. SILC should hire more qualified and experienced ESL teachers.
4. SILC administrators should take teacher evaluations more seriously.
5. Classes on American culture should be offered before Arabic women come to the United States to learn the English language.

6. SILC should provide a consultant to help international students solve their academic and cultural adjustment problems.
7. SILC should offer more elective classes that concentrate on research tools and computer skills to insure students' future success at American universities.
8. The Libyan government should increase the amount of monthly stipend for Libyan students studying English in the United States.
9. Greater attention should be paid to cultural issues that Arabic women face in learning English.
10. Spontaneous visits to the classroom by administrators to evaluate classroom instruction would lead to a higher quality of teachers at SILC.
11. The placement exams that determine a student's level of English competency should be conducted more carefully by SILC, since this determines the student's placement in classes.
12. Ongoing professional development for SILC instructors will ensure the most current and effective teaching methods are practiced.
13. Because international students cannot work outside the school due to their visa status, job opportunities should be offered inside SILC to help with financial issues.
14. Encourage participation by Arabic women inside the classrooms to increase their interaction and involvement with other students.
15. Help international students meet requirements and gain acceptance at American universities.
16. Students should be able to choose the classes they need to increase their language skills.
17. Scholarship agencies and SILC should work together to insure that Arabic women students reach their goals in learning the English language.
18. More advanced English language computer labs should be provided by SILC to increase the benefit provided by new technology.

Suggestions for Further Research

This appears to be the first qualitative study to investigate Arabic women regarding their experiences in learning the English language in the United States in

general, and the first study to specifically examine their rationales and purposes in doing so. Therefore, the findings of this study provide a basis for future studies of Arabic women and English language learning. The timing of this study is important. The number of Arabic women studying the English language at academic language centers in the United States is increasing rapidly because Arabic countries, such as Libya and Saudi Arabia, are providing scholarships to citizens to promote a more highly educated population. Based on the findings of this study, recommendations for further studies are as follows: Studies should be conducted to

1. Extend results to other English speaking countries outside the United States, such as Great Britain, New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa. Moreover, the same study should be conducted in two English language centers and the results should be compared.
2. Determine the needs and interests of Arabic women prior to their arrival in the United States to learn English.
3. Investigate the effectiveness of academic English language centers for Arabic women.
4. Evaluate the curriculum and teaching methods used by SILC.
5. Investigate the personal, social, and economic tensions facing Arabic women in studying the English language.
6. Investigate English language centers located inside Arab countries.
7. Track Arabic women after they graduate from SILC to determine if they achieve their goals.
8. Deepen understanding about the obstacles Arabic women face in interacting and participating in U.S. classrooms.
9. Understand the history of Arabic women coming to the United States to learn English at English language centers.
10. Conduct a study to evaluate the impact of English language diplomas on the employment rate of Arabic women when they return to their home countries.

Limitations

Although this study was conducted at a specific academic English language center in the United States, the findings can be generalized to Arabic women students attending other English language centers. I have identified several limitations in this study:

1. There is a dearth of literature examining the experiences of Arabic women at English language centers.
2. Due to their conservative cultural backgrounds, Arabic women did not feel comfortable speaking about personal or controversial issues.
3. Recruiting Arabic women participants was limited by the IRB decision to only allow advertising of the study by posting a flyer at SILC.
4. Limitation due to small number of interviews and only one English language school in one area.

Personal Statement

As an Arabic women and an English language learner myself, this study was personally interesting to me, but also important for several other reasons. This researcher could find no previous research that existed on the topic. Second, the number of Arabic women coming to the United States to study English has increased due to scholarships offered by Arab countries such as Libya and Saudi Arabia. Al-Turayfi (2010) pointed out that the new generation of Saudis who study in the United States is part of King Abdallah scholarship movement in the United States and considered one of the priorities of the educational policy of Saudi Arabia. Finally, English language centers are increasing in the United States due to the widespread adoption of English as a second language around the world.

The findings of this study are not only relevant to English language centers in the United States, but also those in other countries. The information and methods used can

provide background material to guide further study of Arabic women in general and those who come to the United States to study English for Arabic scholarship agencies and others who have a vested interest in the topic.

Aside from being the first contribution to the academic literature on Arabic women and English language learning, this research will further my own goal to open English language centers to teach English to Arabic women in their own countries. The valuable information revealed by this research will be used to support Arabic women like myself to achieve their goals without the obstacles inherent in moving to a foreign country.

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Appendix A: Consent Forms for Study Participants

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

DISSERTATION RESEARCH

A study of Arabic Women and English Language Learning

You are invited to participate in a study that will help us understand the reasons of Arabic women coming to the United States to study English at Spring International Language Center. In addition, this study is being conducted to fulfill the requirements of my doctoral degree (dissertation). The study is conducted by Ream Ali Alkarni. Results will be used for the purpose of understanding the learning needs of Arabic women and to receive my doctoral degree. Ream Ali Alkarni can be reached at 303-601-3137/kra_505@hotmail.com. This project is supervised by the course instructor, Dr. Bruce Uhrmacher, Morgridge College of Education, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208, 303-871-2503, www.du.edu/education.

Participation in this study should take about 60 minutes of your time.

Participation will involve responding to 8-10 questions about Arabic Women coming to the United States to study English. Participation in this project is strictly voluntary. The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort you may discontinue the interview at any time. We respect your right to choose not to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your responses will be identified by code number only and will be kept separate from information that could identify you. This is done to protect the confidentiality of

your responses. Only the researcher will have access to your individual data and any reports generated as a result of this study will use only group averages and paraphrased wording. However, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. Although no questions in this interview address it, we are required by law to tell you that if information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, it is required by law that this be reported to the proper authorities.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the interview, please contact Susan Sadler, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-3454, or Sylk Sotto-Santiago, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 303-871-4052 or write to either at the University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

You may keep this page for your records. Please sign the next page if you understand and agree to the above. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher any questions you have.

I have read and understood the foregoing descriptions of the study called (A Study of Arabic Women and English Language Learning). I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form.

Signature _____ Date _____

___ I agree to be audio taped.

___ I do not agree to be audio taped.

Signature _____ Date _____

_____ I would like a summary of the results of this study to be mailed to
me at the following postal or e-mail address:

APPENDIX B: Permission Letter From the Founder of SILC

Hi Ream,

This is to let you know that I received your email, and we are delighted to hear that you are working on your Ph.D. at D.U.

With regard to your request, I am pleased to let you know that you have our approval to work with our students and teachers in gathering data for your dissertation. Just let me know when you are ready to interview our students and some teachers, and we'll make some time available for you to do your work.

Thanks again, and best wishes for success in your doctoral work. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any assistance.

Best regards.

Pambos

Pambos Polycarpou
President
Spring International Language Center
E-Mail: spring@spring.edu
303-797-0100

Appendix C: Permission Letter From the IRB

The following human subjects protocol application has been approved by the IRB, effective 08/09/2011.

Protocol Director: Ream Alkarni

Protocol Title: A study of Arabic Women and English Language Learning

Protocol Number: 2011-1826

Submission include confidentiality Agreement, Interview Guide for Arabic Women studying at Spring International Language Center, Interview guide for instructors at Spring International Language Center, Interview guide for one of the founders of Spring International Language Center, project_info, Spring International approval

For New/Renewals:

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects has reviewed the above named project. The project has been approved for the procedures and subjects described in the protocol for a period of 12 months.

This information must be updated on a yearly basis, upon continuation of your IRB approval for as long as the research continues. Please submit any changes, revisions and unanticipated events reports in a prompt manner. We will send you a courtesy continuation/renewal email reminder as this expiration date approaches. However, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to keep track of the expiration date for each protocol. No human subjects-related work can take place during an expiration period. Please see your official IRB approval letter.

Approval Letters:

You may find your approval letter on eprotocol as well. Your IRB application will now be listed under protocols approved. Select the protocol ID of interest and open in view mode. On the left menu, please select "Event History."

For Revisions:

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects has reviewed revisions to the above named project. The revision has been approved for the procedures and subjects described in the protocol. The expiration date for this revision is the same as the original IRB approved application. Revisions do not extend the approval period.

The Institutional Review Board appreciates your cooperation in protecting subjects and ensuring that each subject gives a meaningful consent to participate in research projects. If you have any questions regarding your obligations under the Assurance, please do not hesitate to contact Research Compliance at du-irb@du.edu