



Arabic Heritage Language: Examining the Attitudinal & Motivational Factors Impacting **Parental Choice**

by

Hamsa Aburumuh-Mahafza, Ph.D.

Department of Curriculum & Instruction

College of Education - UAH

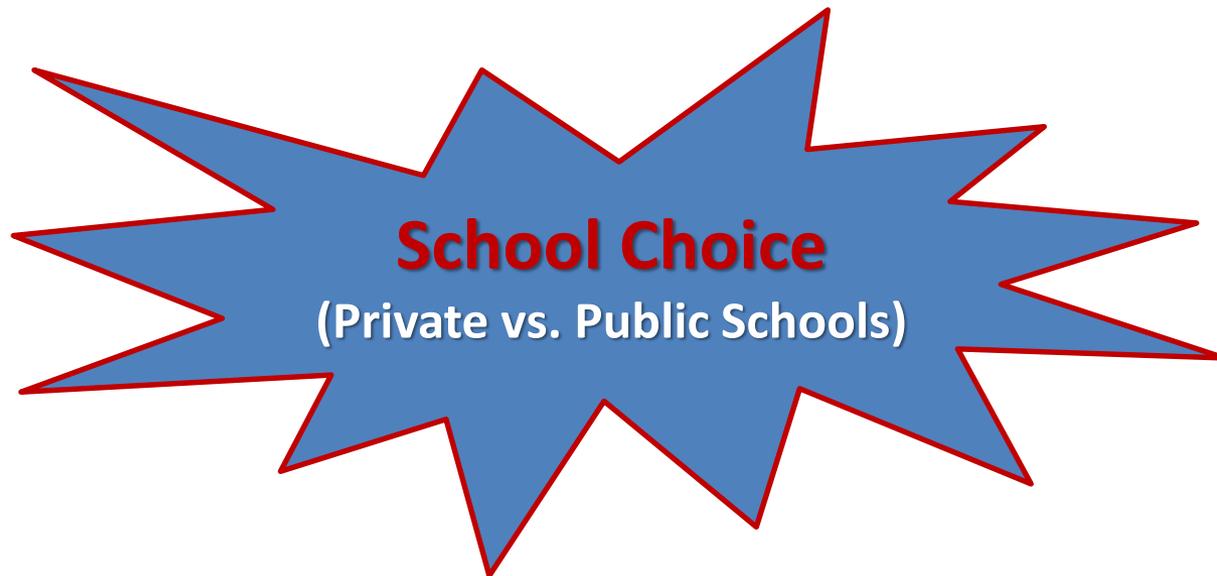
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Introduction

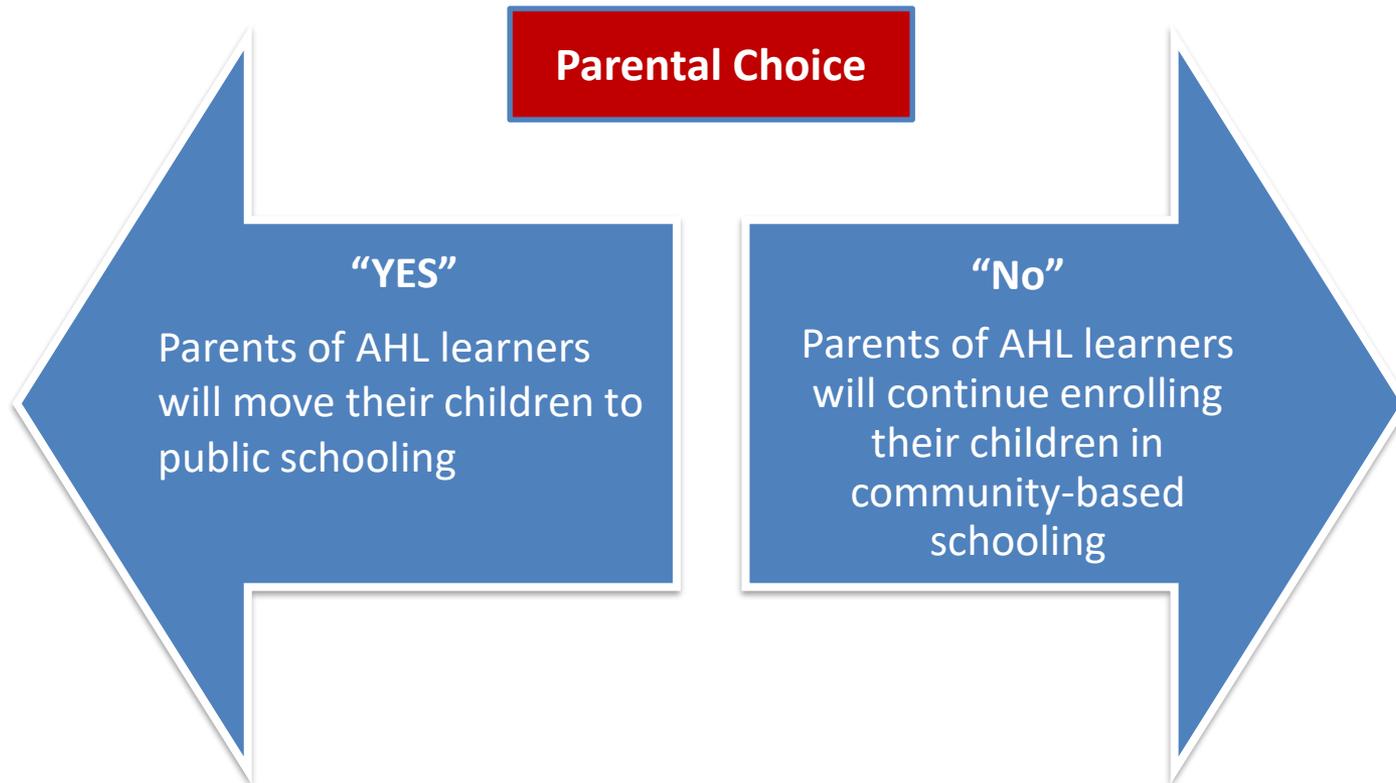
Weaving together principles of Sociocultural Theory and Sociopsychological Theory into Heritage Language (HL) education, a fundamental branch of applied linguistics, this presentation provides an overview of:

- A quantitative study that examined a set of sociocultural (e.g., ethnicity) and sociopsychological factors (e.g., attitudes and motivation) that are believed to have impact of the choice of parents of Arabic HL learners regarding the type of schooling for their children to learn Arabic, either in public schooling or community-based schooling (Aburumuh, 2012)



Statement of the Problem

- In Texas, there are more than 26 community-based schools that offer religious and Arabic instruction and Arabic for Muslim students (League, 2010)
- **Texas Education Agency (TEA)** approved teaching Arabic as a foreign language in Texas public secondary schools



Significance of the Study

1. Fill gaps in the literature
2. Identify new variables that influence Parental Choice (e.g., ethnicity)
3. Better understand the intertwined relationship between a set of socio-cultural factors (e.g., ethnicity, culture, and religion) and socio-psychological factors (i.e., attitudes and motivation) and how this relationship can impact parental choice
4. Provide an empirically-based instrument (i.e., the Aburumuh AMPC Survey)
5. Rethink a broader definition of the term 'HL'
6. Re-conceptualize Gardner's theory (1985)
7. Prompt careful planning of effective bilingual programs (Arabic-English dual-language program)
8. Provide policy-makers with quantifiable data to justify financial support for such language programs
9. Develop cultural and linguistic awareness

Working Definitions

- **Heritage language (HL) :**
 - The term 'HL' refers to the “home and/or ancestral language of students” (Wright, 2007, p. 3)
- **Community-based schools:**
 - Schools are supported and operated by members of the particular HL community (Compton, 2001)
 - Historically, ethnic and religious groups in the U.S. established educational institutions in order to support the teaching of their HLs, religions, and cultures (Compton, 2001; Shannon, 1989). This was supported by Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and the creation of the Separation of Church and State’s principle
 - One of the major reasons for learning Arabic in community-based schools is religious in nature. A principal says:
“We are teaching Arabic because it is the integral fact that it preserves the faith of our children...and to be able practice the religion in the right way” (Aburumuh, 2010)

Key Constructs:

- **Ethnicity:**
 - Ethnicity is the “subjective symbolic or emblematic use of any aspect of culture [by group members], in order to differentiate themselves from other groups” (De Vos, 1975, p. 16)
- **Attitude:**
 - Attitude is simply tied to social values such as beliefs and perceptions governed by their cultural values and their willingness to make specific choices and actions (Naylor, 1996).
- **Motivation:**
 - “the choices people make as to what experience or goals they will approach or avoid and the degree of effort they will exert in this respect” (Gardener, 2010, p. 8)
 - It involves a creation of a “felt-need” (Naylor, 1996, p. 154)

Research Questions

Given that the TEA approved teaching Arabic as a foreign language in Texas public secondary schools, the central research questions are:

- 1. What are the psychometric properties and dimensionalities of a set of socio-cultural (e.g., ethnicity) and socio-psychological (i.e., attitudes and motivation) factors believed to impact parents of AHL learners' choice to enroll their children in Islamic community-based schools as opposed to public schools in Texas?**
- 2. What impact does ethnicity (Arab vs. non-Arab), as well as attitudinal and motivational (integrative vs. instrumental) variables, have on parental choice regarding the enrollment of AHL learners in Islamic community-based schools versus public schools in Texas?**

Conceptual Framework

This study draws upon principles of socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky & Kozulin, 1986) and Gardner's (1985) socio-psychological theory. These theoretical frameworks were used as a lens through which to view, examine, and analyze the multiple factors that influence the choice that parents of AHL learners make regarding the type of schooling in which their children receive Arabic language instruction

Sociocultural Theory

The socio-cultural perspective (Vygotsky & Kozulin, 1986) emphasizes the role of social and cultural environments where HL learning emerges and individuals' identities are constructed.

- HL development is embedded in the HL learner's participation and interaction in a variety of social practices (He, 2010, p. 78)

Gardner's (1985) Socio-psychological Theory

HL learning depend to a large extent on the conceptualization of language attitude and motivation as key variables where the learning takes place. Traditionally this area of research has been dominated by the seminal work of Gardner and Lambert (1972), which intimately connects individuals' attitudes and motivations with the process of SLA

1. **Integrative Motivational Orientation:** The desire to socially engage or integrate with people of HL groups (intrinsic, goal-directed, intangible) connectedness, solidarity, cultural & religious identity, & HL maintenance
2. **Instrumental Motivational Orientation:** The desire to learn a language because it would fulfill certain utilitarian goals (extrinsic, utilitarian, tangible)

Research Studies

▪ **Parents' Attitudes toward HL learning**

- HL is used as a “mean of communication and as a way of identifying and transforming sociocultural groups” (He, 2010, p. 66)
- “Arabs are passionately in love with their language” (Nydell, 2006, p. 2). This attitude points to several factors as proof of this assertion. The most important factor is that Arabic is the language of the Holy Qur'an (Moor, 2005; Mustafa, 1999; Syed, 2001)

▪ **Parents' Motivation**

- Lindholm-Leary (2001) and Torres (1988) extended Gardner's model to investigate parents' motives and reasons for choosing HL learning for their children

Motives for Religious Schooling

1. **Religious language learning** (Aburumuh, 2011; EK, 2009; Fader, 2001; Mustafa, 1999a; Syed, 2001; J. Zine, 2008).
2. **Heritage language maintenance** (Hornberger, 2002; Krashen, 1998; Lao, 2004; Tse, 2001)
3. **Literacy and HL development** (Ek, 2009; Perez, 2004; Rumsey, 2010)
4. **Language socialization** (Ek, 2000; Ochs, 1988; Pavlenko, 2001)
5. **School environment** (Haugen, 1972; Hornberger, 2002; Moore, 2005; Mustafa, 1999)
6. **Cultural heritage preservation** (Naylor, 1996; Seymour-Jorn, 2004)
7. **Membership and groupness** (Edward, 2009; Ek, 2008; Krashen, 1981; Tse, 1998)
8. **Identity construction**
 - Gender identity (Ek, 2009; Fader, 2001; Syed, 2001)
 - Religious identity (Ek, 2009a; Fader, 2001; Zine, 2008)
 - Cultural identity (Kramersch, 1991; Naylor, 1997; Norton, 1997 O'Hanlon, 2008; Walbridge 1992)
 - Ethnic identity (Edwards, 2009; Fishman, 1977; He, 2010; Myers-Scotton, 2006a; Schechter, 1996; Tse, 2001b)

Methodological Framework

■ Research Design

- Non-experimental, cross-sectional, quantitative research design. It involves “variables that are not manipulated by the researcher and instead are studied as they exist” (Belli, 2008, p. 60), such as gender, ethnicity, attitudes, motivation, or any other personal characteristic or trait. The aim is to develop and validate a predictive model

■ Pilot-Testing

- Allows the researcher to learn where the survey instrument may need redesign and it predicts possible problems may be encountered in using the instrument (2 quan and 1 qual)

■ Sampling Procedures

- Non-probability sampling techniques –purposive sampling procedures, which are based on selecting a sample that is “believed to be representative of a given population” (Gay et al., 2006, p. 113)
- Data collection took place during the school year 2011-2012
- Data was drawn from seven Islamic community-based schools in Texas which are located in the following cities: Houston, Dallas, Irving, Richardson, San Antonio, and Austin
- A total of three hundred eighty-seven ($n = 387$) parents of AHL learners were surveyed

Instrumentation

The Aburumuh's Attitudes and Motives of Parental Choice (AMPC) Survey

Section A:

Enrollment Choice

2 questions : "Yes" or "No"
categorical data

Section B:

Motives for Learning Arabic

5-point Likert scale
15 Items - ordinal data

Section E: Demographic Information

Consent Form: to assure confidentiality and anonymity

Parents' Comments Section: Qualitative

(Descriptive coding procedures based on Saldaña, 2009)

Section C:

Motives for Choosing Islamic Schools

5-point Likert scale.
20 Items - ordinal data

Section D:

Attitudes toward AHL Programs

5-point Likert scale
10 Items - ordinal data

Data Analysis and Procedures

Exploratory Factor Analysis

- **Psychometric Properties of Survey Items:** Examining the normality and distributional properties. *Low degree of skewness was found among items in the survey; accordingly, no transformation was necessary*
- **An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Method:** Describes & extracts latent factors by grouping together items that are correlated
- **Reliability Analysis:** Establishing internal consistency (the degree of interrelatedness among items within a scale)
- **Creating Final Factors:** Establishing a set of composite scores representing the latent constructs in the hypothesized model

Logistic Regression Analysis

- Based on the dichotomous nature of the dependent variable (DV), logistic regression predicts the probability of the contribution of each IV in predicting the DV. Indicators of goodness of fit were used to establish the predictability of hypothesized model:
- **Goodness-of-Fit Test:** Provides the following indices of model fit: - 2 Log Likelihood, Cox & Snell R Square and Nagelkerke R Square, and Model Chi-Square to ascertain the overall model fit.
- **Classification Table for the DV:** The percentage of cases correctly classified with the generated model (PCP)
- **Table of Regression Coefficients for Variables:** Provides the following statistics that determine the unique contribution of each IV to the model: β , Wald, *df*, level of significance, and odds ratio

Findings

Descriptive Profile of Parents of AHL learners

Demographic Characteristics of the Parents of AHL learners (<i>n</i> = 387)		
Variable	Frequency (<i>n</i>)	Percent (%)
Gender:		
Female	220	56.8
Male	167	43.2
Religion:		
Muslim: 31 non-native born Muslims (8%)	383	99.0
Non-Muslim	4	1.00
Language:		
Arabic Speaker	146	37.9
Non-Arabic Speaker	239	62.1
Citizenship:		
U.S. Citizen 61% are naturalized citizens	314	82.4
Non-U.S. Citizen	67	17.6
Age Range: The average age was approximately 40 years old (<i>M</i> = 39.5) and (<i>SD</i> = 6.71)		
25 - 29	23	6.2
30 - 39	161	43.5
40 - 49	156	42.2
50 - 59	30	8.1

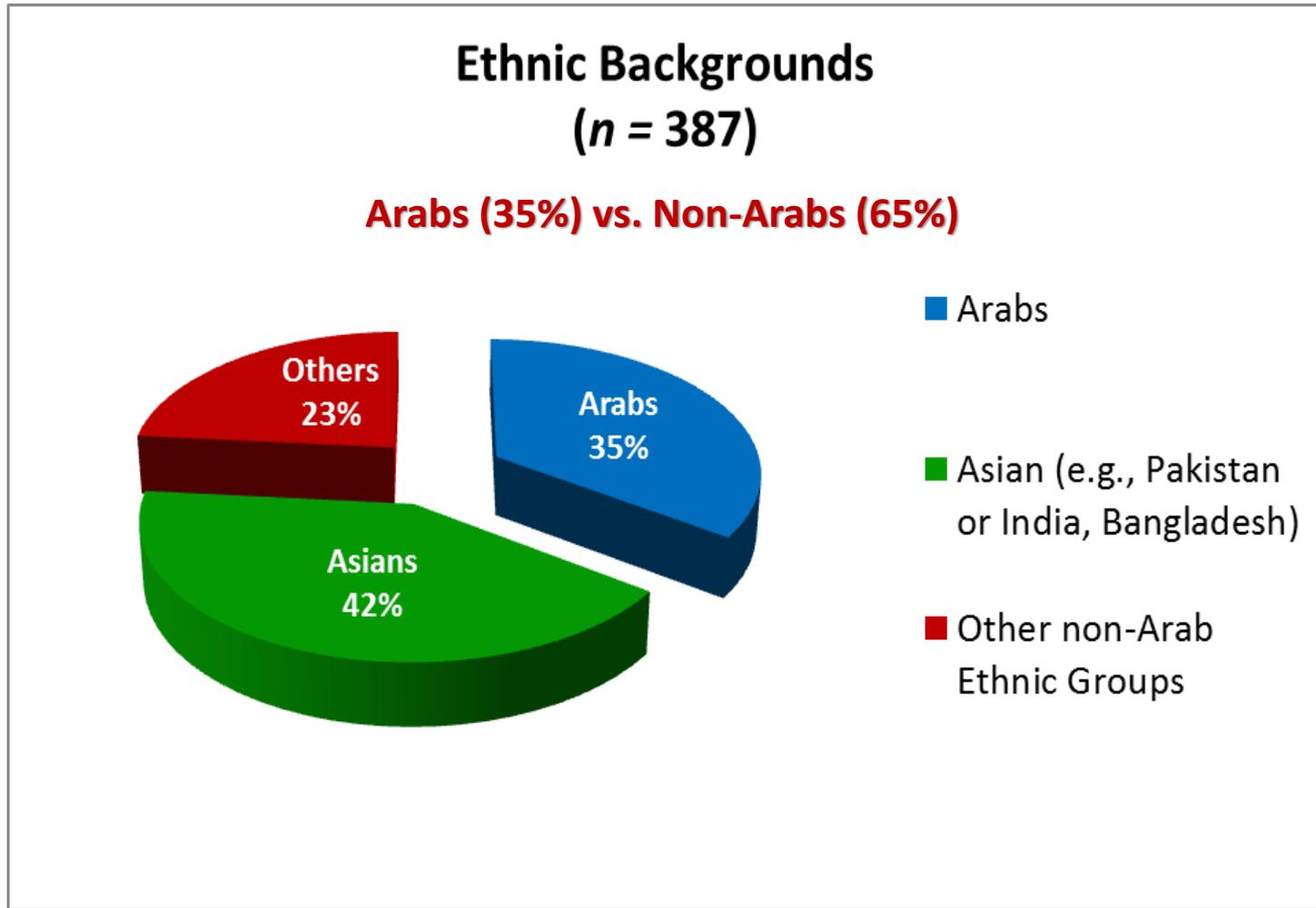
Educational Backgrounds of the Parents of AHL Learners

Demographic Characteristics of the Parents of AHL learners (<i>n</i> = 387)		
Variable	Frequency (<i>n</i>)	Percent (%)
Education:		
Less than High School	6	1.6
High School	19	5.0
Some College	36	9.5
Community College	35	9.2
Bachelor's Degree	144	37.9
Master's Degree	88	23.2
Doctorate Degree	32	8.4
Professional Degree	20	5.3

} ~ (75%)

This result reflects a higher rate than the national average for Americans, which is 20.3% earning bachelor's degrees and 7.2 % earning graduate degrees

The Parents of AHL Learners' Ethnic Backgrounds



Countries of Origin, Home Languages, & Occupations

▪ Country of Origin:

- Afghanistan, Austria, Bosnia, Britain, Canada, China, Denmark, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Senegal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Taiwan, Turkey, Ukraine, and the USA (i.e., Americans)

▪ Home Language:

- Arabic, Amharic, Assamese, Bahasa, Bangla, Chinese, Dari, English, Farsi, French, Gujarati, Harari, Hindi, Indonesian, Malay, Oromiffa, Panjabi, Pashto, Pashtu, Sindhi, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tamil, Urdu, and Wolof

▪ Occupation:

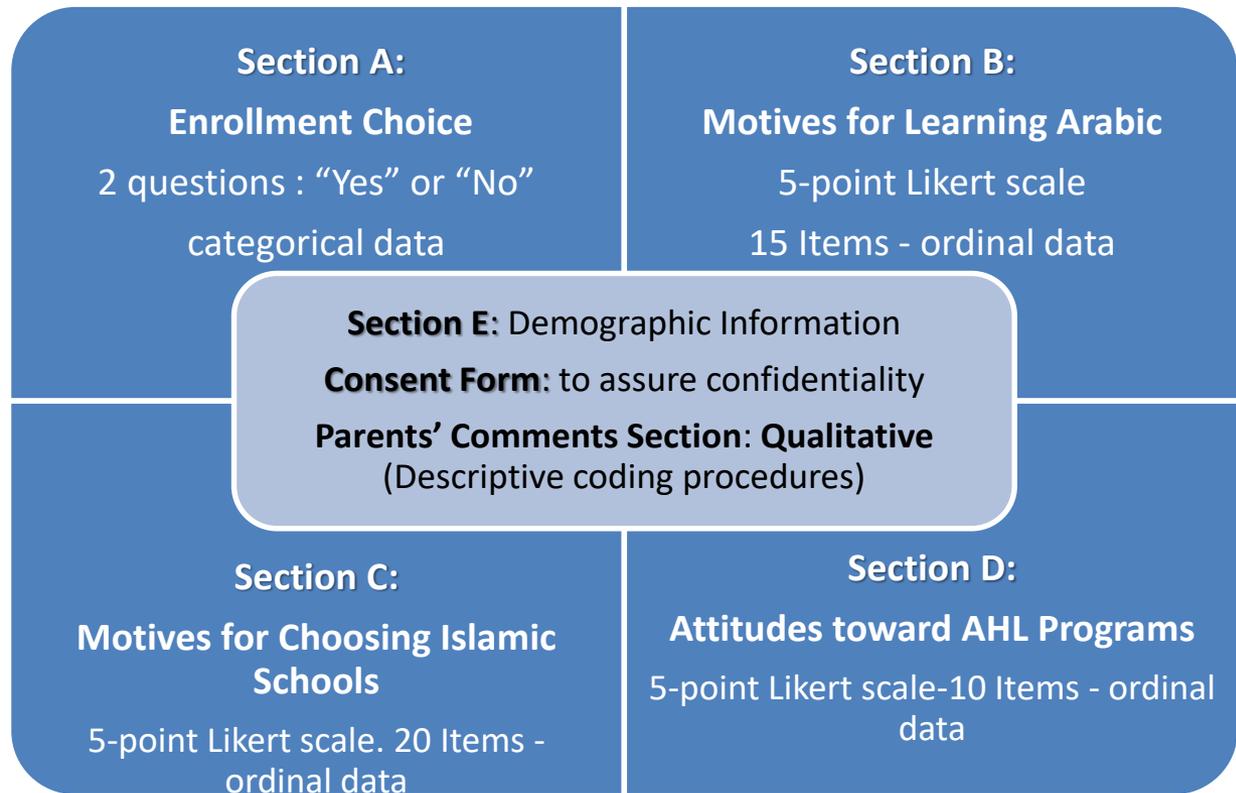
- Various professional jobs: 48 teachers, 20 physicians, 33 engineers, 18 software programmers and analysts, 11 accountants, 5 attorneys, and 31 of the participants work in business. Other occupations: airline pilot, dentist, artist, broker, lab technician, driver, salesperson, administrator, manager, bookkeeper, and halal butcher

82 housewives

Results of Factor Analysis

The Aburumuh's Attitudes and Motives of Parental Choice (AMPC) Survey

- Eleven latent constructs were found from among the items of the AMPC survey instrument.
- Cronbach's Alpha (α) values for the different scales in the study varied between **0.612** and **0.883** representing reliable scales with good internal consistency among their items.
- In section B of the AMPC survey, four components accounted for a total of 68.5% of the variance
- In section C, four components accounted for a total of 58% of the variance
- In section D, three components accounted for a total of 65.6% of the variance



Results of Logistic Regression Analysis

- Five predictors were found to be statistically significant; **ETHNICITY** was the strongest predictor of **Parental Choice** with an **odds ratio of 2.882**

The following factors were statistically significant and represented a good-fitting model in predicting parental choice:

- Two attitudinal (i.e., dissatisfaction with public schooling & perceptions about bilingualism)
- Two motivational (i.e., utilitarian reasons & Arabic proficiency and literacy development)

Results of Logistic Regression Analysis

LRA Predicting the Likelihood of Parental Choice for Public Schooling

Five Factors	Beta Weight β	Wald	Sig.	Exp (β) Odds Ratio
Ethnicity (Arab vs. Non- Arab)	1.059	9.949	.002	<u>2.882</u>
Utilitarian Reasons	.277	3.887	.049	<u>1.319</u>
Arabic Proficiency and Literacy Development	.727	9.855	.002	<u>2.068</u>
Dissatisfaction with Public Schooling	-.712	16.639	.000	<u>0.491</u>
Perceptions about Bilingualism	.631	7.871	.005	<u>1.880</u>

Motivational Factors

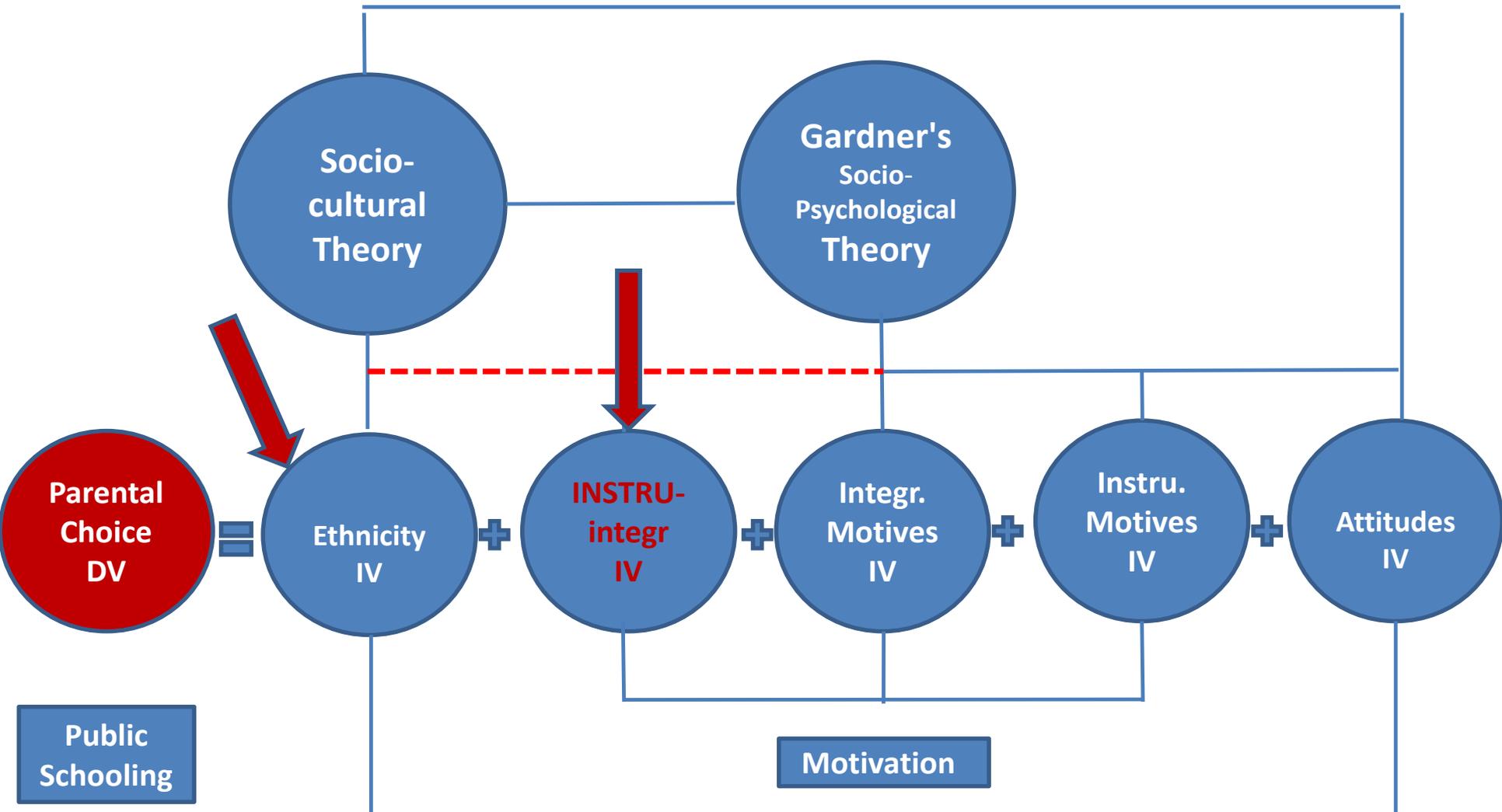
Attitudinal Factors

Arabic Proficiency and Literacy Development

1. Be able to speak, read, and write by using Standard Arabic.
2. Communicate effectively when traveling to the Arab World.

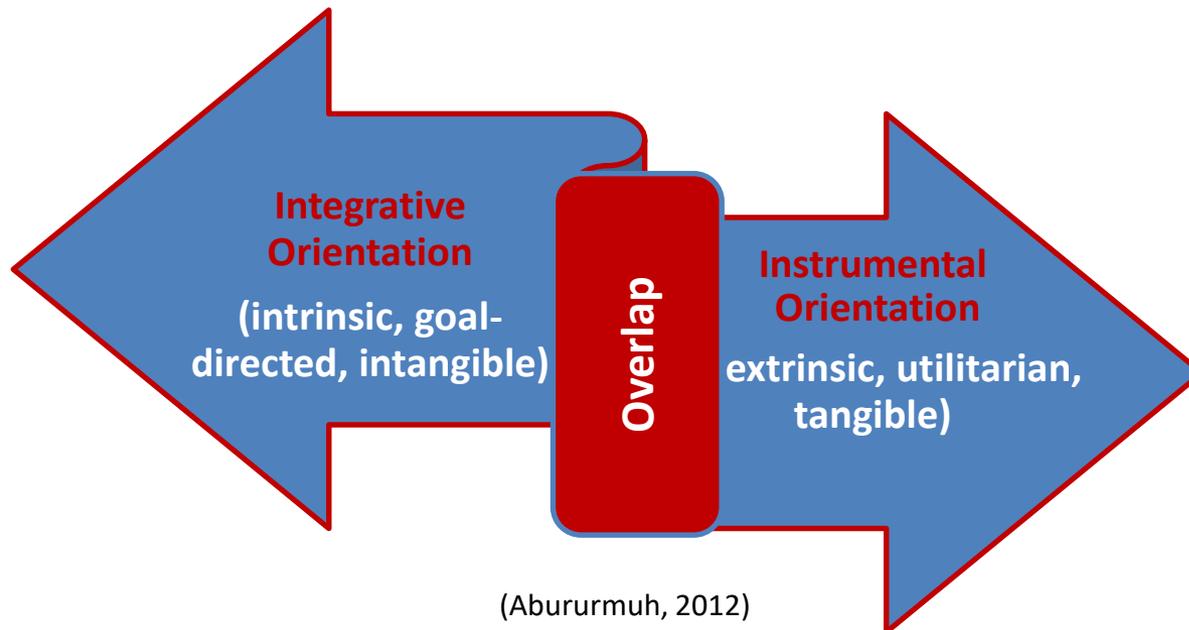
Predictor Variables for Indicating Parental Choice of Public Schooling

(Aburumuh, 2012, p. 204)



The Impact of Motivation for Learning Arabic on Parental Choice

“...by combining the constructs of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation...a more complete understanding of particular orientations and their role in language learning motivation can be achieved” (Noels, 2001, p. 43)



Emergence of Two Types of Motivational Orientations

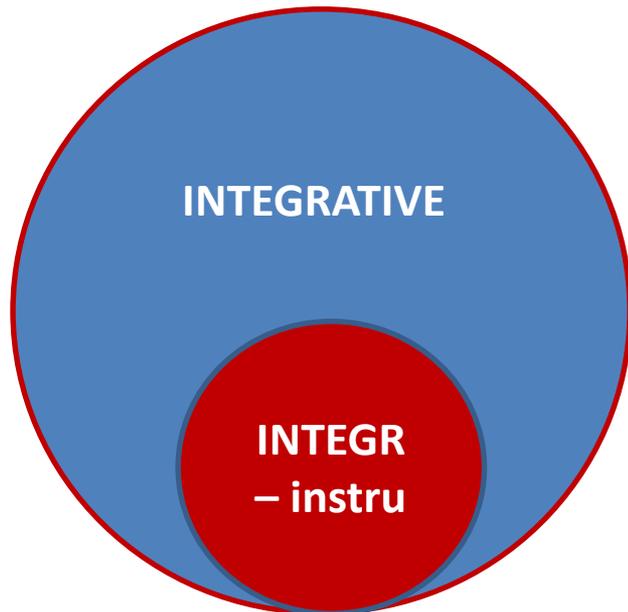
(Aburumuh, 2012, p. 175)

INTEGR- instru

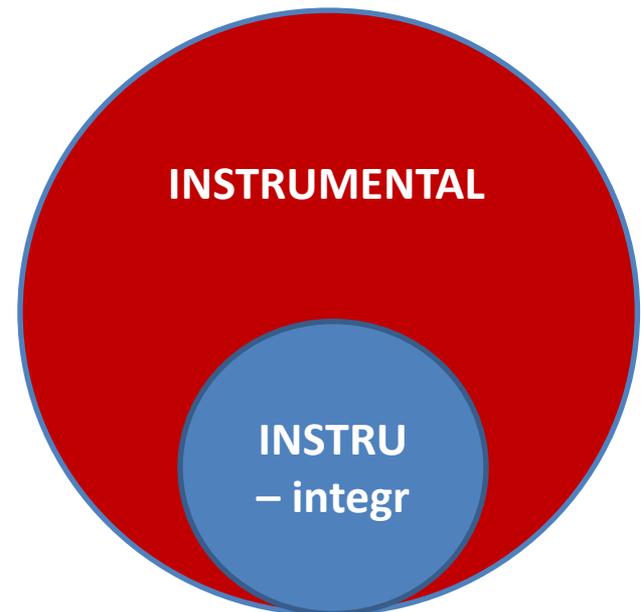
The process of using integrative motives (e.g., groupness & religious identity) as a medium for HL learning; while achieving this goal, AHL learners gain extrinsic outcomes (e.g., social prestige, literacy development)

INSTRU- integr

The process of utilizing instrumental motives (e.g., functional aspects of language learning) to serve as means to achieve intrinsic outcomes and goals (e.g., connectedness, identity construction)



Community-Based Schooling



Public Schooling

The Impact of Attitudes toward Arabic Language Programs on **Parental Choice**

Dissatisfaction with public schooling

An attitude which was expressed by parents of AHL learners influenced their choice/ decision of not enrolling their children in public schools because they believed that these schools:

- do not offer religious instruction
- provide a two-year Arabic as a foreign language program which is not sufficient for their children's education
- Muslim children "disassociated themselves from their cultural and linguistic heritage in order to fit in with the new culture" (Rouchdy, 1992, p. 18)

Parents of AHL learner(s) state:

- Public schools will never offer religious education even if they teach Arabic. Because my son is at an Islamic school he is not bombarded with so much Christmas and other holiday festivities. It's too confusing at such young age. Once he is old enough to make responsible decisions I would not be so opposed to him attending a public school. (AMPC 207, 2011)
- We ourselves are non-Arabs and we do not speak Arabic, and I think that it will be helpful for my children to know Arabic as a language. But the main purpose of being in Islamic school is to keep them in an Islamic environment where they can learn good Islamic education. They can be very good Muslims even without knowing Arabic, but it comes as a **Bonus** with Islamic education. (AMPC 109, 2011)

Implications for Practice: Redefining the Term HL

- The term 'HL' denotes a “language other than English that is associated with an individual’s ethnic or cultural background” (Chinen & Tucker, 2005, p. 27)
- Despite the validity of the definitions of the term 'HL' (Fishman, 2001; Valdés, 2001; & Wright, 2007), I strongly believe that the current definition of 'HL' conceptually does not encompass a wide range of characteristics and qualities of individuals from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds

“The ancestral and family language associated to an individual’s ethnic and cultural backgrounds, keeping in mind that religion, whether born into or adopted, is a dynamic product of culture” (Aburumuh, 2012, p. 172).

31 non-native born Muslim parents (8%)

Consider the *diglossic* nature of the Arabic language and the complexity of Arabic language teaching by providing what I call “Additive Heritage Language” programs (Aburumuh, 2012, p.174)

Implications for Future Research

To date, there has been a dearth of research on areas that focus on AHL learning, AHL learners, and parents of AHL learners, as well as community-based schooling

- These areas need to be explored and both quantitative and qualitative studies are recommended to be utilized
- At this stage of the inquiry, Lamb (2004) states, “qualitative approaches may be more productive than quantitative, because the identification processes being proposed are by definition **highly context-sensitive**” (p. 15)
- Future research must replicate the present study in order to verify and compare the data findings of this study among diversified groups of parents of AHL learners across the U.S.

Limitations of the Study

- The extent to which the findings can be generalized beyond this study
- Non-probability sampling methods (i.e., purposive sampling procedures) do not have random sampling at any stage of sample selection
- It is difficult, if not impossible, to represent the entire U.S. population of parents of AHL learners who enroll their children in community-based schools in Texas, and also to describe to whom the results of parental choice can be generalized

Conclusions

- Values derived from the factor analysis supported the psychometric soundness of scales extracted from the AMPC Survey
- The results of the logistic regression analysis indicated that ethnicity was the strongest predictor of parental choice
- Two attitudinal (i.e., dissatisfaction with public schooling & perceptions about bilingualism) and two motivational (i.e., utilitarian reasons & Arabic proficiency and literacy development) factors were also found to be statistically significant and represented a good-fitting model in predicting parental choice
- Districts would be well-advised to consider these findings when deliberating on the development of Arabic language programs for public schools; dual language programs are recommended in this regard

A parent of AHL learner(s) states:

Islamic schools offer an “environment” where the kids can grow as Muslims in America. There is a difference between an “environment” vs. “program” for a year or two. A program is designed to add/enhance a skill, but an environment is designed to influence thinking and progress. I chose an Islamic school because that is the **best gift** I can give to my child in America. To have him grow up as an American Muslim. (AMPC 366, 2011)

In Summation...

The unique contribution of this study is that it explored the significant impact of ethnicity in combination with other attitudinal and motivational factors on parental choice

Although this study primarily focuses on parents of AHL learners and the choices they make for the type of schooling for their children in which to learn Arabic, the conceptual framework and approach of this study have ramifications that extend beyond the sample, and can effectively be implemented in the study of HL education among other minority groups within the US. This study contributes to:

- **Redefine the Term HL:** Despite the validity of the definitions of the term ‘HL,’ it conceptually does not encompass a wide range of characteristics and qualities of individuals from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds
- **Reconceptualize Gardner’s (1985) Socio-Psychological Theory:** Two motivational factors (INSTRU - integr and INTEGR - instru) emerged from the study representing an overlap among Gardner’s concepts of integrative and instrumental motivational orientations
- **Rethink Foreign Language Programs in Public Schools:** Dual language programs are recommended. A parent in this study states:
Islamic schools offer an ‘environment’ where the kids can grow as Muslims in America. There is a difference between an ‘environment’ vs. ‘program’ for a year or two. A program is designed to add/enhance a skill, but an environment is designed to influence thinking and progress. (AMPC 366, 2011)



Questions?

Hamsa Aburumuh-Mahafza, Ph. D.

ham0007@uah.edu

**Department of Curriculum & Instruction
College of Education - UAH**

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Thank You!

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