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# A study on language use and language attitudes

by Arabs living in Spain

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## I. Abstract

Multilingualism is a key concept when dealing with languages around the world. The Arab population in the Valencian Community, Spain, is a clear example of the presence of more than one language coexisting within the same society. Due to the influences of the local languages spoken in the area, the use of Arab by this population presents some distinctive features. Also the attitudes towards the mother tongue and the rest of the contextual languages presents idiosyncrasies. Several studies (Lasagabaster, 2003; Safont, 2007; Portolés, 2011; Nightingale, 2012) have explored the attitudes towards Spanish, Catalan and English in the Valencian Community, but the Arab population has not been taken into consideration. This study will analyse language use and attitudes of Arab university students living in Castelló, where both students born in Spain and in an Arabic country will be taken into account. The paper will seek to analyse the contexts in which the participants use the language they speak, and their attitudes towards Spanish, Arabic, English and Catalan. In order to collect data, a questionnaire with three parts was used: personal data and languages spoken, language use, and language attitudes. The preliminary results of the research show that Arabic and Spanish are more used than English and Catalan, which are scarcely ever chosen. Moreover, favourable attitudes were signalled towards all languages, except for Catalan, which received neutral opinions.

**Keywords:** Arabs, language attitudes, language use, Arabic, Spanish bilingual contexts

## II. Introduction

It has been claimed by Grosjean (1982) that «more than half of the world's population is bilingual, that is lives with two or more languages.» However, due to the changing situation of the world, multilingualism is having a more significant weight on the world's population lives due to the contact of languages as well as people getting more in touch with foreign speakers.

In this multilingual context, people have started to show preferences for using one language over any other depending on with whom they are speaking, or which activities they are performing, among other factors. People's attitudes towards speakers of other languages have also been studied since the 1960s. Both concepts, language use and language attitudes, are key terms for sociolinguistics, and their study provides us with results that reveal the linguistic behaviour of people from a given social sector,

as well as evidence on the use of languages and the choices made depending on different variables and contexts.

There is a large Arabic population in Castelló, Spain, whose members are at least bilingual speakers. Castelló is a bilingual area where Catalan and Spanish are spoken, and most Arabs have become multilingual by speaking both Arab and Spanish and Catalan. Bearing this in mind, the present study focuses on language use among Arab university students, showing any eventual differences between those born in Spain and those born in an Arab country

This study will first focus on the theoretical framework defining key concepts such as multilingualism, language use and language attitudes. The definition of language attitudes is based mainly on Baker's (1992) model, and previous attitudinal studies regarding the Valencian Community. Section 2 of this paper concentrates on the empirical study, establishing the aim and research questions as well as the methodology followed to conduct the study, giving details on the participants selected, the instrument used, and the procedure followed. Next, section 3 reports and discusses the findings regarding each research question, and finally, section 4 presents the conclusions to the study.



### III. Theoretical framework

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Nowadays, the concepts of multilingualism and plurilingualism are being the focus of an increasing number of studies due to the growing importance of multicultural populations, globalisation, and language diversity. These phenomena have led to an increase in foreign language learning. However, both multilingualism and plurilingualism are often confused. The former refers to those societies where more than one language coexist but are used separately. The latter, on the other hand, is related to a situation where a person, with competence in more than one language, can switch between languages according to the circumstances at hand.

The increasing presence of languages in the world is mainly due to multiculturalisation, a process by which the cultural and linguistic diversity among a group of people grows leading to multicultural societies. This practice has been already established by the creation of the European Union project, which defends the coexistence of cultures and languages in one society. In fact, there are countries that have included the idea in their curricula, as is the case of Spain, where different languages, cultures, and people from different nationalities live side-by-side. More specifically, in the Valencian Community, there is a high percentage of foreign inhabitants, with an Arab population being the most predominant. In education, three main languages coexist: Spanish, Catalan and English, but because of

the presence of Arabs, the use of Arabic is also noticeable, even though as a minority language.

The Arabic individuals living in the Valencian Community represent a clear example of plurilingual speakers since they master the languages of this region as well as their mother tongue, which in the majority of cases is different from the three spoken languages of the area (Spanish, Catalan and English). What this situation demonstrates is that language use by Arabs differs from non-Arabs, as well as the attitudes they may have towards languages.

The use of languages is directly related to the language choice a speaker makes depending on context and to whom he is talking to. According to Fishman (1965), language choice is when speakers choose what language to use in diverse social situations in bi- or multilingual communities. Therefore, in an encounter, where at least one participant speaks more than one language, the first choice to make is: in which language is the interaction going to take place. It is often argued that a person tends to choose his mother tongue because it implies being in a powerful position, while the use of a second or foreign language entails the renounce of control. Nevertheless, there are other factors affecting language choice, as for example the environment in which the speaker finds himself.

Moreover, when dealing with choice of language, different situations may occur: language shift, which refers to when one language is replaced by another; code switching, which implies the use of two languages by the same speaker within the same speech act; style shifting, which means the alternation of styles according to setting, interlocutors, and topic; and finally, accommodation, which involves adjusting the communicational behaviour to others, that is changing the way of speaking depending on the person we are addressing to.

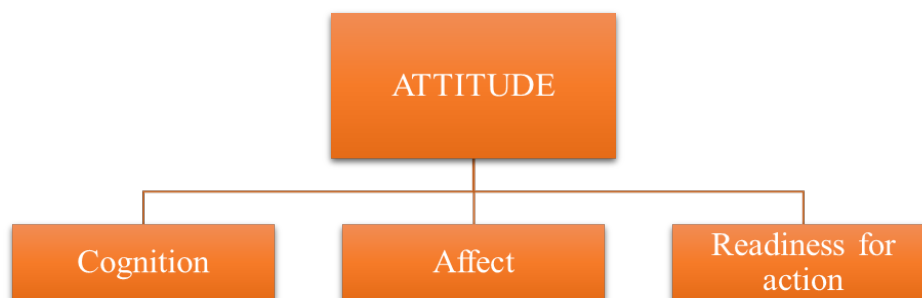
The theoretical framework regarding the analysis of language choice among Arabs living in Castelló de la Plana is based on Fishman's (1965) model of 'domains of language use', which refers to contextualized fields of communication, e.g., education, work, home, friendship, religion, family, etc. The assumption is that a certain language will be dominantly used on particular topics and in specific occasions.

Besides, by simply asking why certain languages are used in those particular situations, language attitudes can be identified. In accordance to Ryan and Giles (1982), language attitudes include attitudes that people have towards others speaking different languages from them, as well as towards speakers of the same language but who have different social and regional variations.

### 3 1. Definition of language attitudes

In general terms, language attitudes as a concept are the feelings and thoughts people have about their own language or the language of others.

From the 1960s to the present day, research on language attitudes has been developed according to a number of different theories. The two most important theories are the *mentalist* view and the *behaviourist* view, which differ mainly in their conception of attitude. The mentalist approach understands language attitudes as being located in the human mind, and cannot therefore be identified directly, but can be inferred using the right motivating force; on the contrary, the behaviourist theory sees attitudes as responses or behaviours to a given situation.



**Figure 1.** Three-component model of attitude

Nevertheless, there is one difference from a theoretical point of view between the two theories, and it has to do with the components and conception of language attitudes: the mentalist theory differentiates three components: the cognitive, the affective, and the readiness for action; for behaviourists, there is only one component: the affective. Since the mentalist theory enables the prediction of linguistic behaviour, it has become the predominant view for dealing with language attitudes.

Baker (1992) supports the mentalist view and he also separates these attitudes into three main components within the mind: cognition, affect and readiness for action. The cognitive component includes a person's thoughts and beliefs about an attitude object. The affective component, on the other hand, refers to the feelings and emotional reactions towards the attitude object. The third component, readiness for action, also known as behavioural, consists of an intention of acting regarding an attitude one has. That is, the way a person behaves when exposed to an attitude object. The three aspects, namely cognition, affect and readiness for action, conform a single concept referred to as an attitude. This three-component model is best illustrated in Figure 1.

Language attitudes can be measured following two main methods: direct and indirect. Both of them enable the measurement of language attitudes from the point of view of an individual and of a group of speakers of a language. Both methods gained in popularity especially in the 1950s and 1960s when some techniques of attitude measurement, such as the matched guise technique, were designed. The matched guise technique was first introduced by Wallace Lambert in 1960s to identify attitudes of bilingual French Canadians towards French and English. This sociolinguistic technique helped to determine the beliefs of a subject towards a language, dialect, or accent.

### 3.2. Studies on the topic

Several studies on language attitudes have taken place in Spain, especially in multilingual communities such as the Basque Country, Galicia, Aragón, the Valencian Community, and Catalonia. Nevertheless, although some of these studies do not take multilingualism into consideration, there are others which consider a multilingual approach: Lasagabaster (2003) investigates attitudes in the Basque Country; Safont (2007) explores language attitudes towards Spanish, Catalan and English in the Valencian Community; and Portolés (2011) focuses on attitudes of teacher training students in public and private universities in Castelló and Valencia.

As our main concern is to investigate attitudinal studies in the Valencian Community, we will now review studies considering language attitudes towards Spanish and Catalan in that community.

Lasagabaster (2003) found out that language attitudes are notably affected by the L1. The Spanish participants on the study have less positive attitude towards the minority language, which is Basque, and Basque subjects show the opposite trend. Lasagabaster also distinguishes several variables that affect attitudes in the Basque Country: level of competence, sociolinguistic context, age and gender.

Safont (2007) focused on how the competence in Spanish, Catalan and English affects attitudes in the Valencian Community. The study reflected positive attitudes towards Spanish, favourable and neutral attitudes towards Catalan, and neutral attitudes towards English. Moreover, she analysed some variables affecting participants' attitudes, and found out that the region of origin, mother tongue and linguistic model had effects on Spanish and Catalan, whereas a stay abroad period and language competence influenced English.

Portolés (2011) considers five factors, namely sociolinguistic context, linguistic model followed in formal education, mother tongue, stay-abroad period, and level of linguistic proficiency, and their effect on language attitudes of teacher training students. Her



study found positive attitudes towards the three languages (Spanish, Catalan and English) when dealing with the variables in general.

Nightingale (2012) studied how factors such as the sociocultural status, a stay-abroad period and the 'out-of-school' incidental learning influenced attitudes of multilingual students in Castelló. He found out that the attitudes towards Spanish, Catalan and English were all positive, and that the latter language was more affected by external factors.

As it may be observed in the research findings previously mentioned, the focus has been on language attitudes towards Spanish, Catalan and English in the Valencian Community. Since, in the context of those studies, the attitudes of Arab population have been disregarded, the aim of this study will be to analyse language choice and language attitudes of Arabs living in Castelló and the study will include Arabic in the languages explored.

In the next section, the aim of the study is described and the research questions are established. Then, the method followed is spelled out, including data on the participants, the instruments used, and the procedure and data gathered.

#### **IV. Aim and research questions**

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The use of languages and the attitudes towards languages are core concepts when dealing with multilingualism and multilingual contexts. Thus, the present study sets out to investigate how young Arabs use languages as well as their attitudes towards their mother tongue and foreign languages. Therefore, the emphasis of this paper is on studying the language choice by young Arabs in Castelló de la Plana, and investigating language attitudes held by them. Moreover, the purpose is to find out what the participants think about different European languages, and where and when they should be used. Besides, the subjects of this study will be divided between those born in Spain and those born in an Arab country. Following this line, two research questions are posed:

Research Question I: In which contexts do the participants use each language they speak?

Research Question II: What are the participants' language attitudes towards Arabic, Catalan, English and Spanish?

#### **V. Methodology**

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This section deals with the empirical part and how it was conducted. First, an explanation of the participants and their

characteristics is given; secondly, the instrument used to carry out the study is presented; and finally the procedure for collecting the data is detailed.

### 5.1. Participants

The main criteria taken into account when selecting the subjects was that they had to be multilingual, or at least bilingual. This is because the study analyses language choice and language attitudes and the individuals have to master or have a basic competence on foreign languages in order for the study to be successful.

The sample in the present study was made up of a total of 17 university students living in Castelló de la Plana, Spain. The subjects were pursuing different university degrees and their age varied between 19 and 28 years old. The participants were classified into two groups: those born in Spain (henceforth Group A), and those born in an Arab country (henceforth Group B).

Group A comprises a total of 10 students who were born in Spain, although their families were from an Arab country (Morocco and Algeria). They had Arabic and/or Spanish as their mother tongue and knowledge of Catalan and English.

Group B had a total of 7 students, who were born outside Spain, more specifically in Morocco and Algeria. Their mother tongue was Arabic and they had knowledge of Catalan, English and Spanish. Three of them came to Spain at the age of 7 years, one participant had 13 years when moving in to Spain, while the remaining participants had 18, 19 and 21 years old when they first arrived in the country.

The subjects were asked to answer a questionnaire regarding language choice and language attitudes towards their mother tongue and three other languages: Arabic/Spanish (depending on their mother tongue), Catalan and English.

### 5.2. Instrument

In order to collect the data, a questionnaire consisting of three parts was used. The questionnaire, adapted from Lasagabaster and Huguet (2007), was employed to assess students' language use and language attitudes towards four languages.

The first part of the instrument is related to personal data, such as name, age, email, mother tongue, spoken languages, place of birth, and linguistic competence in Arabic, Catalan, English and Spanish. It is relevant for the study to know the number of participants in each group and their place of birth as it might affect the results. The second section corresponds to language use, and participants were asked to indicate at what age they began to learn each of the four languages. Then, they had to complete two tables



concerning the use of the four languages with reference to: (i) different contexts or relations (parents, siblings, other relatives, at work, university, friends and social occasions) and (ii) activities (watching TV, reading books, listening to music, listening to the radio, watching movies/series). The purpose of this part was to find out which languages were known by the participants and when and with whom they speak each language. Moreover, the subjects were asked to rate their linguistic competence in such languages.

Finally, the third part deals with the participants' language attitudes towards the four languages: Arabic, Catalan, English and Spanish. First, the participants had to indicate which speaker they thought had the qualities regarding 6 items (intelligent, honest, educated, friendly, wealthy and helpful) in order to express their attitudes towards speakers of the four languages. After that, the students had to answer to 8 items on a five-point Likert scale for each of the languages: I like listening people speaking in 'language'; 'language' should be taught in all schools; I like speaking 'language'; 'language' is easy to learn; I prefer the classes to be in 'language'; learning 'language' enriches my cultural knowledge; learning 'language' is worth it; if I had children, I would like them to speak 'language'.

### **5.3. Procedure and data analysis**

The first step was adapting the questionnaire for the study. After that, the survey was distributed to the participants. Before the subjects were asked to complete the questionnaire, a short introduction was given in Spanish for each group in order to clarify the purpose of the study and the instructions for a successful completion. The explanation was in Spanish because it had been dispensed in English, but not all participants had a good level in such language. There was no established time given for handing over the survey. However, nearly everyone managed to finish in approximately 10 minutes.

Even though the study divided the participants into two groups (group A and group B), the subjects filled in the same questionnaire, and only one difference can be pointed out. This difference involved the answers in the «Personal data» section. Here, the participants of group B had to indicate how old they were when they arrived in Spain, since they were included in such group for being born in an Arab country, while those from group A just had to tell the place of birth.

Once all the participants had answered the questionnaire, they were collected and the answers were organised and measured statistically. After that, the results related to language use and language attitudes were obtained, which allowed us to identify the contexts in which each language is used and the attitudes towards

languages the participants have. Therefore, the results achieved were quantitative and qualitative (depending on whether the attitudes were favourable, neutral or unfavourable).

After collecting the data, the sheets were separated between group A (born in Spain) and group B (born in an Arab country). Then, regarding the first part of the survey, the gathering was carried out by writing down the languages spoken by the participants and the general linguistic competence in each of them. In the second section, namely language use, the compilation of data was performed by counting in which contexts each language was used and what language is used doing some activities. For example, participant X uses Arabic when speaking with other relatives, Catalan with friends, Spanish when watching TV, and so on. Then, the percentages in relation to the answers given by the subjects were counted. First, the answers given by group A were summarized in figures separately, and then the answers provided by group B. Subsequently, the same procedure was done when gathering the findings on the third section.

This section was about measuring the participants' language attitudes towards four languages: Arabic, Catalan, English and Spanish. They had to answer two types of questions. The first one had to do with their thoughts when hearing a person speaking in the previous languages. The subjects had to indicate which person is more intelligent, which one is more honest, and so on. The second question regarding language attitudes deals with answering to 8 statements, each language, on a five-point scale depending on whether they strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree. For example, subject X disagrees with the statement 'Spanish is easy to learn', strongly agrees with 'learning Arabic is worth it', and so on. Then the same process was done for the resting three languages. The answers of the complete language attitudes section were also gathered and summarized in figures.

Since the purpose of the present study was to analyse language choice and language attitudes, and respond to the previously established research questions, the following section deals with providing answers to such questions and discussing the findings.

## VI. Results and discussion

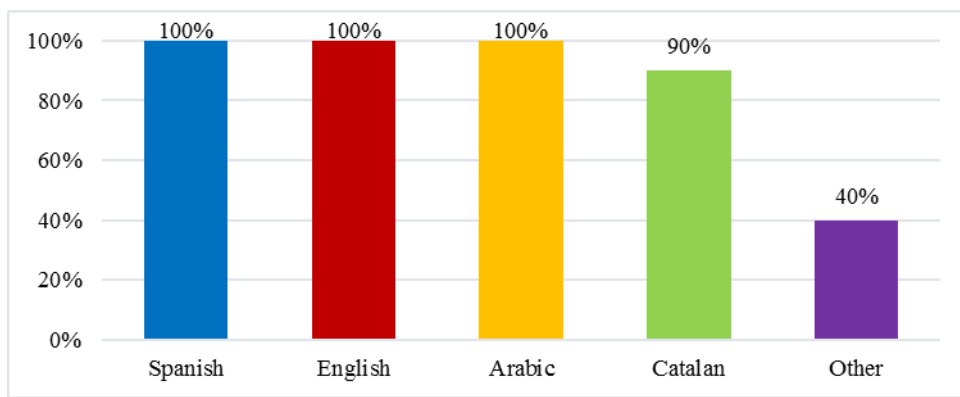
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Regarding the aims of the present study, this section concentrates on summarizing and analysing the findings. First, answers to the research question I will be reported dealing with language choice made by the participants. Secondly, the language

attitudes towards the four languages will be reported in the research question 2.

The data in each research question will be presented differentiating the results obtained in group A and those in group B. Then, the findings will be discussed regarding both groups.

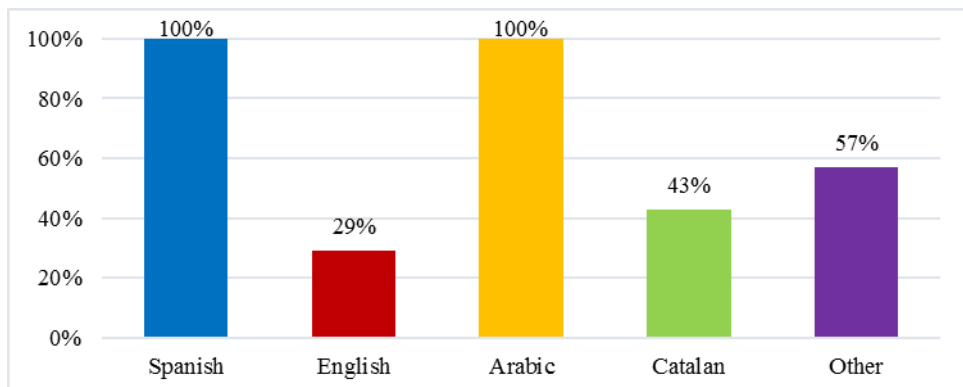
Before providing an answer to the research questions, it is worth mentioning that prior to responding the language use and language attitudes sections, the participants were asked to indicate what languages they speak by giving them five options (in which more than one language could be selected): Spanish, English, Arabic, Catalan, and Other. The figures below show the results in percentages.



**Figure 2.** Languages spoken by Group A

Figure 2 shows the languages spoken by participants of group A in percentages. All participants speak Spanish, English, and Arabic, while Catalan is spoken by 90% of participants. Moreover, 40% of subjects speak an additional language, which in all cases is French.

Results obtained from group B are represented in the following figure, in which the quantities have been rounded to avoid decimals.



**Figure 3.** Languages spoken by Group B

Figure 3 shows the percentages of the 7 members of this group and the languages they speak. Here, all the participants speak Spanish and Arabic, while English and Catalan are spoken by just the 29% and 43% of subjects respectively. Besides, four of them speak another language, which is French.

As seen above, there is a difference between both groups and the spoken languages. In group A there is total presence of English and Catalan, which are spoken by almost all subjects. However, in group B, there is not such knowledge of English and Catalan, since they are only spoken by a third part approximately. Regarding additional languages, 3 members of each group speak French, so this coincides in both groups.

### 6.1. Results and discussion related to Research Question I. In which contexts do the participants use each language they speak?

Our first research question deals with language use depending on context and the activities done. The participants of both groups have answered two questions in relation to language choice. The first question was about the languages used by them in a series of contexts, while the second one had to do with the languages used when performing some daily activities.

The figures below show how the subjects in groups A and B answered the first question related to language use depending on contexts. A distinction of seven contexts has been made: at home with parents, with siblings, with other relatives, at work, university, with friends, and on social occasions.

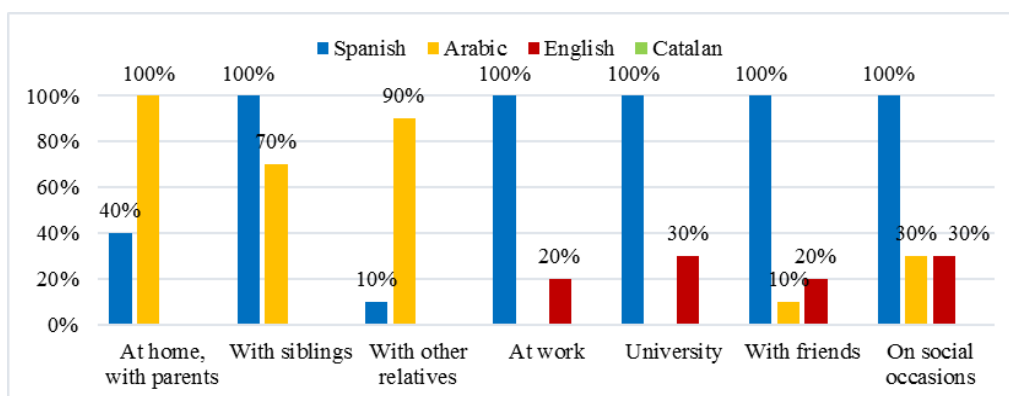


Figure 4. Languages spoken by Group A depending on contexts

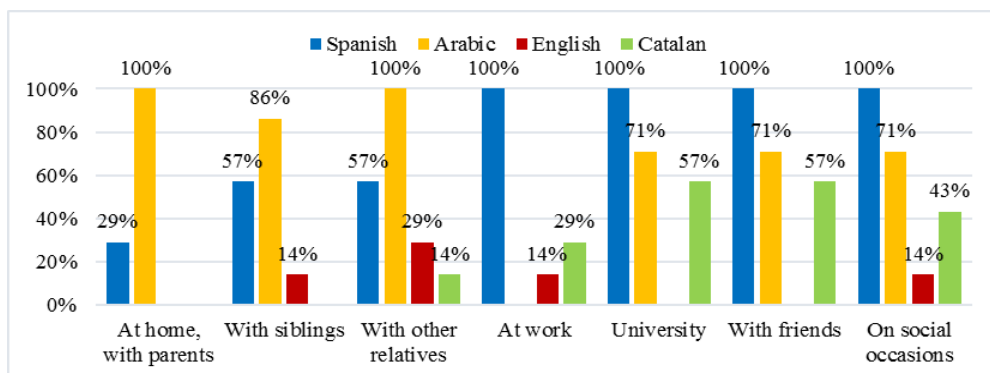
with friends, and on social occasions.

Figure 4 shows the use of languages depending on context by group A, which corresponds to those participants born in Spain. As it can be seen in the figure, there is a considerable use of Arabic and Spanish compared to English and Catalan. Both predominant languages are used in all seven contexts except at work and university, where Arabic is not spoken by any participant. Although Spanish is used in all contexts, its use decreases when dealing with

parents at home, since just two out of ten subjects use this language. The choice of Spanish is due to the academic and friendship environments, where this language is predominantly used to communicate.

Regarding the use of English and Catalan, both are present less so than the other languages, since only two and three subjects use them. Thus, English is not spoken with family while it is in the rest of contexts, which is mainly due to the lack of knowledge by the parents, who tend to use the mother tongue with their children. Furthermore, Catalan is not used at all by any participant although 90% of them indicated that they speak it.

As may be observed in Figure 5 below, Spanish and Arabic are the dominant languages in the previously mentioned contexts, followed by Catalan and finally English. Spanish is used in all contexts, although 20%-30% of the participants use it with other relatives. Dealing with Arabic, there is a remarkable presence of this language when speaking with parents, siblings and other relatives because of their origin and mother tongue, although it is also present at university, when dealing with friends, and on social occasions.

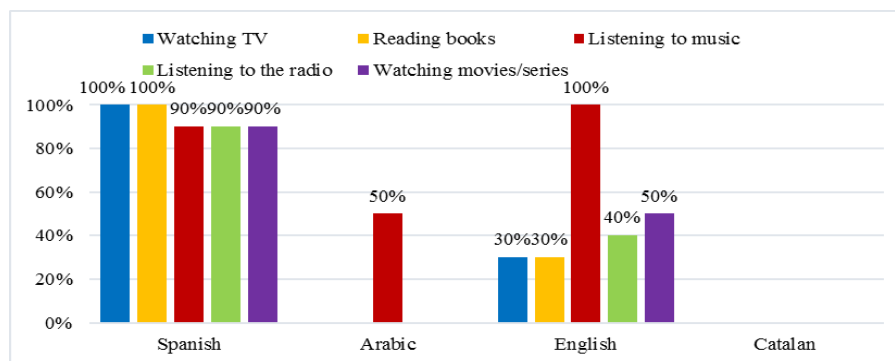


**Figure 5.** Languages spoken by Group B depending on contexts

With reference to Catalan and English, the former prevails in being spoken at university and with friends by four participants, on social occasions by three of them, and by two subjects at work, whereas the latter is utilized by only one person with siblings, at work and on social occasions, and by two subjects with other relatives.

When considering the overall results, the use of Arabic outside family contexts reveals that participants from group B are more in contact with Arabs than group A. Besides, although there are more speakers of Catalan in group A, we can observe a high use by the other group, in which 57% speak Catalan at university and with friends, and 43% on social occasions. It is followed by the use of English, which in group A has no presence in the first three contexts related to family, but it does in lower percentages at work, at

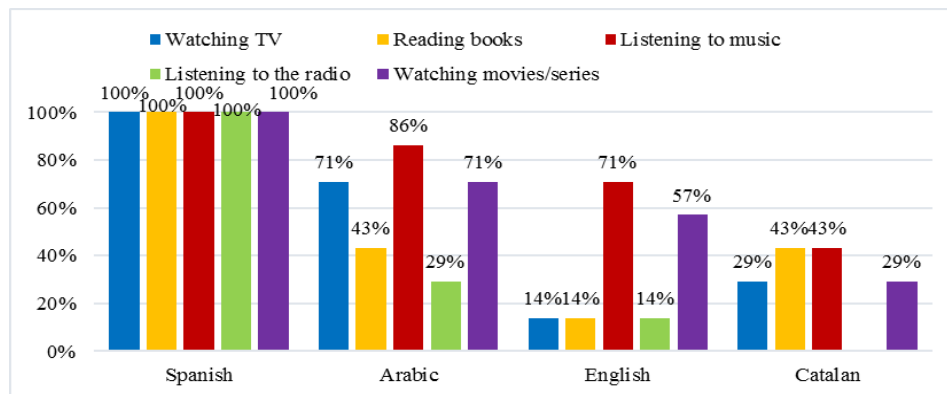
university, with friends and on social occasions. On the contrary, group B speaks more languages per context since, as it can be seen in the figure, Catalan and Arabic are used together with Spanish and/or English when communicating with other relatives, at university, at work, with friends and on social occasions. The four languages (Spanish, Arabic, English and Catalan) coincide in being spoken with other relatives and on social occasions in group B, which does not happen in group A, where the four of them does not occur simultaneously in any context. Furthermore, the previous findings confirm that there is a high predisposition on using the mother tongues (Arabic and Spanish) by both groups, even though the participants born in an Arab country make more use of Arabic.



**Figure 6.** Languages used by Group A when performing certain activities

Once the first question regarding language use has been exposed, answers to the second question are going to be provided in the following lines. The students were asked to indicate the languages they use when performing certain activities. The data regarding group A can be seen in Figure 6.

As may be seen in the following figure, Spanish and English are the languages used when participants of group A carry out the mentioned activities. The former is used by the vast majority in all five activities, while the latter is chosen by all subjects for listening to music, by 50% for watching movies/series, and by 40% and 30% for the rest of activities. Figure 6 also shows the minimal use of Arabic, since it is only used by half of the subjects for listening to music. Moreover, no participant chooses Catalan in these daily activities.



**Figure 7.** Languages used by Group B when performing certain activities

Figure 7 shows the data gathered from Group B answers. Figure 7 evidences the presence of the four languages in the five activities we are dealing with, excluding the radio, which is not listened in Catalan. All the subjects perform the mentioned activities in Spanish, and this is followed by a high use of Arabic and English for listening to music, with the 60% and 50% of participants respectively. In relation to reading books, all the participants read in Spanish; Arabic and Catalan are chosen by 30% of subjects, and English is preferred by only one student.

As it can be observed in Figure 7, listening to music is the activity with more supporters in the different languages: 100% of students listen to music in Spanish, 86% do so in Arabic, 71% in English, and 43% in Catalan. On the other hand, watching movies/series is also performed in the four languages by almost a majority of participants, excluding Catalan, which is only used by two subjects. Finally, it can be claimed that English is the less chosen language for watching TV, reading books, and listening to the radio.

With regard to Figures 6 and 7, results show great differences in the choice of Arabic and Catalan. 50% of participants in Group A listen to music in Arabic but the other activities are performed in different languages, rather than Catalan or Arabic. The main similarity between both groups consists in the use of Spanish for conducting the five groups of activities. This language is chosen by almost all participants in all activities but listening to music, listening to the radio and watching movies, which 10% prefer to do in another language.

After analysing the answers of the participants in the two questions relating language use, different findings have been observed and an answer to the research question will be provided. The question was 'In which contexts do the participants use each language they speak?'. Two main situations were differentiated: language used depending on contexts, and language use when performing certain activities. Regarding contexts, it can be summarised that Spanish and Arabic are the preferred languages by

participants in both groups, although in group A Arabic is not highly used outside family environments. Moreover, group B makes use of Catalan, in 71% of contexts.

In relation to the performance of certain activities, it can be claimed that Spanish is the selected language by both groups for carrying out the five activities. On the other hand, there is no choice of Catalan by group A, and a limited use of Arabic in such performances. However, group B chooses these two languages more often.

In the following section, we turn our attention to research question 2, which has to do with the second part of the questionnaire, dealing with language attitudes.

## 6.2. Results and discussion related to Research Question 2. What are the participants' language attitudes towards Arabic, Spanish, English and Catalan?

As regards the second research question, participants in the study were asked to complete two types of questions regarding language attitudes towards Spanish, Arabic, English, and Catalan. The first question was about personal traits pertaining to language speakers. The second asked respondents to complete five-scale statements about each language. The data gathered from group A and group B will be discussed below.

Starting with the first question, the following figure summarizes the language attitudes of the participants in group A concerning the following personal traits: intelligent, honest, educated, friendly, wealthy, and helpful. The exact question was *'When you hear a person speaking the following languages, which person do you think is/has...?'*

Figure 8 represents the participants' thoughts when hearing a person speaking one of the four mentioned languages. According to 6 participants, Spanish speakers are more intelligent and more honest, while 9 participants think they are more friendly, and 4 out of 10 consider them more helpful. In more or less the same line, English speakers are thought to be more educated, according to 9 subjects, while 4 think they are more intelligent, 2 consider them as more honest, and 3 out of 10 conceive them as having more money.

Dealing with Arabic, its speakers are taken as having more money by 7 subjects, 5 out of 10 think Arabic speakers are more helpful, whereas 2 voted them as being more honest, and 1 as being more educated and more friendly. Finally, Catalan speakers are considered more helpful by only one person.



	SPANISH	ARABIC	ENGLISH	CATALAN	PARTICIPANTS
More intelligent	6		4		10
More honest	6	2	2		10
More educated		1	9		10
More friendly	9	1			10
Has more money		7	3		10
More helpful	4	5		1	10

**Figure 8.** Language attitudes by Group A depending on personal traits

Figure 9 shows the thoughts of the seven participants included in Group B. It may be seen that English has had more votes, with 6 participants considering its speakers as having more money, 4 subjects think they are more intelligent, 3 conceive English speakers as being more honest and educated, and finally, they are seen as more friendly and more helpful by 2 and 1 participants respectively. Regarding Arabic speakers, they are seen as more intelligent and more educated by 3 out of 7 students, more friendly by 2 subjects, and only 1 participant voted them as being more honest and having more money.

Spanish speakers are conceived as more helpful by 4 students, whereas 2 out of 7 see them as more honest and more friendly, and 1 out of 7 thinks they are more honest and have more money. Finally, Catalan speakers are contemplated as more honest and more friendly by 1 student, and more helpful by 2.

	SPANISH	ARABIC	ENGLISH	CATALAN	PARTICIPANTS
More intelligent		3	4		7
More honest	2	1	3	1	7
More educated	1	3	3		7
More friendly	2	2	2	1	7
Has more money		1	6		7
More helpful	4		1	2	7

**Figure 9.** Language attitudes by Group B depending on personal traits

The second question dealing with language attitudes requires respondents to complete a five-item scale about 8 statements for each of the four languages. The scale comprised the following

options: Strongly Agree – Agree – Neither Agree nor Disagree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree. The results will be presented in a figure for each language in order to assess their attitudes.

Figure 10 deals with attitudes towards Spanish, and it can be seen that participants of both groups have favourable attitudes towards the language. Their most frequent answers were *Strongly Agree*, *Agree* and *Neither Agree nor Disagree*, although 20% in group B disagree about the convenience of classes being in Spanish, and 14% in group B strongly disagrees about Spanish being easy to learn.

	GROUP A					GROUP B				
	SA	A	NAND	D	SD	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
I like listening people speaking in Spanish	10%	70%	20%			14%	57%	29%		
Spanish should be taught in all schools	10%	90%				29%	43%	29%		
I like speaking Spanish	50%	50%				14%	57%	29%		
Spanish is easy to learn	30%	60%	10%			14%	71%			14%
I prefer the classes to be in Spanish	10%	60%	10%	20%		43%	43%	14%		
Learning Spanish enriches my cultural knowledge	10%	70%	20%			14%	57%	29%		
Learning Spanish is worth it	20%	70%	10%			43%	29%	29%		
If I had children, I would like them to speak Spanish	80%	20%				43%	57%			

Figure 10. Language attitudes towards Spanish

Regarding Arabic, figure 11 reflects the subjects' opinions, in which some items do not coincide in both groups. The most common answers in group A were *Strongly Agree*, *Agree* and *Neither Agree nor Disagree*. However, all the participants in this group think that Arabic is not easy to learn, and 70% prefer the classes not to be in Arabic. Regarding group B, the answers coincide with the other group by conceiving Arabic as difficult to learn and preferring the classes not to be in Arabic. In general terms, participants in both groups show positive attitudes towards the language.

	GROUP A					GROUP B				
	SA	A	NAND	D	SD	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
I like listening people speaking in Arabic	20%	40%	40%			43%	43%	14%		
Arabic should be taught in all schools		20%	80%			14%	43%	43%		
I like speaking Arabic	20%	60%	20%			43%	29%	29%		
Arabic is easy to learn				50%	50%				43%	57%
I prefer the classes to be in Arabic			30%	70%			29%	29%	14%	29%
Learning Arabic enriches my cultural knowledge	40%	60%				71%		29%		
Learning Arabic is worth it	40%	60%				57%	29%	14%		
If I had children, I would like them to speak Arabic	90%	10%				86%		14%		

Figure 11. Language attitudes towards Arabic

Figure 12 includes the data gathered regarding language attitudes towards English. All the subjects of the study have favourable attitudes towards this language, although a small percentage in group A disagrees about three items: *I like listening people speaking in English*, *English is easy to learn*, and *I prefer the classes to be in English*. 43% of participants in group B sees English as

difficult to learn, while 14% strongly disagree about loving speaking it and the same percentage does not prefer classes to be in English.

	GROUP A					GROUP B				
	SA	A	NAND	D	SD	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
I like listening people speaking in English	30%	40%	20%	10%		57%	43%			
English should be taught in all schools	60%	40%				86%	14%			
I like speaking English	30%	40%	30%			43%	29%	14%		14%
English is easy to learn		20%	50%	30%			29%	29%	43%	
I prefer the classes to be in English	30%	20%	40%	10%			29%	57%		14%
Learning English enriches my cultural knowledge	40%	50%	10%			29%	57%	14%		
Learning English is worth it	50%	50%				57%	29%	14%		
If I had children, I would like them to speak English	80%	20%				100%				



Figure 12. Language attitudes towards English

Figure 13 presents the data collected concerning Catalan. In group A, no one has chosen the *Strongly Agree* option, and between a 10% and a 40% of subjects disagree about 6 out of the 8 items included. There is a 10% which does not prefer the classes to be held in Catalan, and the most frequent answer among the participants was the *Neither Agree nor Disagree* option. Group B shows a more positive attitude towards Catalan, with more *Strongly Agree* answers than the other group. Besides, 14% of respondents think Catalan is easy to learn. The most common answer among the participants of group B was *Neither Agree nor Disagree*, followed by the *Agree* and *Disagree* options. Comparing both groups, it may be concluded that the participants show a neutral attitude towards Catalan.

	GROUP A					GROUP B				
	SA	A	NAND	D	SD	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
I like listening people speaking in Catalan			80%	20%		43%	14%	43%		
Catalan should be taught in all schools		30%	60%	10%		29%	29%	43%		
I like speaking Catalan		10%	60%	30%		29%	29%	43%		
Catalan is easy to learn		60%	40%			14%	43%	29%	14%	
I prefer the classes to be in Catalan			50%	40%	10%		29%	71%		
Learning Catalan enriches my cultural knowledge		30%	60%	10%		43%	29%	29%		
Learning Catalan is worth it		30%	50%	20%		14%	57%	29%		
If I had children, I would like them to speak Catalan		30%	70%			57%	14%	29%		

Figure 13. Language attitudes towards Catalan

## VII. Conclusion

In general, the purpose of this study was to analyse language choice and language attitudes held by Arab students towards four different languages, namely Spanish, Arabic, English, and Catalan. The subjects were divided into two groups depending on whether they were born in Spain or in an Arab country, and they were asked to answer a questionnaire regarding language use and language

attitudes. The data gathered was represented by means of figures in order to study the main differences and similarities in the answers of each group.

To achieve our goal, two research questions have been established. In response to research question 1 (*in which contexts do the participants use each language they speak?*), the findings have revealed that Arabic is spoken just in family contexts, while group B makes a more extensive use of Arabic, which is used in the majority of the proposed contexts. Moreover, although there are more speakers of Catalan in group A, subjects of group B show an increased predisposition for speaking Catalan. Furthermore, when the participants were asked to indicate the language used in certain activities, it has been observed that Spanish is used in all activities by both groups, but Arabic and Catalan are not that used by group A, while they are in group B. Besides, English is used by all participants when listening to music.

In response to research question 2 (*what are the participants' language attitudes towards Arabic, Spanish, English, and Catalan?*) it has been revealed that, in general terms, participants in both groups denoted positive attitudes towards Spanish, Arabic and English, and neutral or less favourable attitudes towards Catalan.

Although the views on the four languages were quite similar in both groups, a remarkable aspect has been found concerning group A. Those participants born in Spain have less linguistic competence in Arabic and are less in contact with the language, but they strongly agree with wanting their children to speak Arabic and with the idea of Arabic enriching their cultural background. This demonstrates that regardless the place of birth, Arab students conserve highly positive attitudes towards Arabic.

In addition, participants of group A have the advantage of having two mother tongues, Spanish and Arabic, even though they manage better the first one. Regarding group B, it is worth mentioning that they show more predisposition to use Catalan, although there are fewer speakers of this language than in the other group.

## VIII. References

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