

ENGLISH STUDIES DEGREE

FINAL UNDERGRADUATE DISSERTATION



**A STUDY ON LANGUAGE USE AND
LANGUAGE ATTITUDES BY ARABS
LIVING IN SPAIN**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	6
<i>1.1. Definition of language attitudes</i>	7
<i>1.2. Studies on the topic</i>	10
2. THE STUDY	11
<i>2.1. Aim of the study and research questions</i>	11
<i>2.2. Method</i>	12
2.2.1. Participants	12
2.2.2. Instrument	12
2.2.3. Procedure and data analysis.....	13
3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	15
<i>3.1. Results and discussion related to Research Question 1.</i>	16
<i>3.2. Results and discussion related to Research Question 2.</i>	21
4. CONCLUSION	27
5. LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH.....	28
REFERENCES	29
APPENDICES	30

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Three-component model of attitude	8
Figure 2. Languages spoken by Group A	15
Figure 3. Languages spoken by Group B	16
Figure 4. Languages spoken by Group A depending on contexts	17
Figure 5. Languages spoken by Group B depending on contexts	18
Figure 4. Languages used by Group A when performing certain activities	19
Figure 7. Languages used by Group B when performing certain activities	20
Figure 8. Preferred universities for a learner according to Group A.....	23
Figure 9. Preferred universities for a learner according to Group B	24

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Language attitudes by Group A depending on personal traits	22
Table 2. Language attitudes by Group B depending on personal traits.....	22
Table 3. Language attitudes towards Spanish	25
Table 4. Language attitudes towards Arabic	25
Table 5. Language attitudes towards English.....	26
Table 6. Language attitudes towards Catalan	26

ABSTRACT

Multilingualism is already a key concept when dealing with languages around the world and the Arab population in the Valencian Community, Spain, is a clear example of the presence of more than one language living in a society. Due to the influences of the languages spoken in Castelló on such community, language use varies among the Arabs from one context to another. In addition, the coexistence of languages within a society leads to the formation of a variety of attitudes towards the mother tongue and the foreign languages. Several studies (Lasagabaster, 2003; Safont, 2007; Portolés, 2011; Nightingale, 2012) have been carried out regarding attitudes towards Spanish, Catalan and English in the Valencian Community, but the Arab population has not been taken into consideration. This leads us to the aim of this study, which is to analyse language use and attitudes of Arab university students living in Castelló divided into born in Spain and born in an Arabic country. Therefore, this paper seeks to analyse the contexts in which the participants use each 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, 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 denoted towards all languages, except for Catalan, which received neutral opinions. After conclusions are drawn, suggestions for further research are presented.

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

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.

Based on multilingualism, people start to have preferences for using one language or another depending on with whom they are speaking, or which activities they are performing, among other factors. Moreover, due to the influence of languages, people’s attitudes towards speakers of other languages have been studied from the 1960s to the present day. Both concepts, language use and language attitudes, are key terms for sociolinguistics, and their study provide us with results that reveal the linguistic behaviour of people from a given social sector, as well as evidence of 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 bilinguals speaking mainly Arabic and Spanish. But, due to the linguistic situation of Castelló, in which Catalan is also spoken, most Arabs speak this language too. Having this in mind, the present study focuses on language use among Arab university students, especially among those born in Spain and those born in an Arab country

In summary, the present study starts by explaining the theoretical framework defining key concepts such as multilingualism, language use and language attitudes. It includes a wider definition of language attitudes based mainly on Baker’s (1992) model, and previous attitudinal studies regarding the Valencian Community. Section 2 of this paper concentrates on the study itself, establishing the aim and research questions as well as the methodology followed to carried out 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 section 4 presents the conclusions of the study. Finally, in section 5, the limitations found in the present study are evaluated and suggestions for further research are made.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Nowadays, the concepts of multilingualism and plurilingualism are being the focus of most studies due to the growing importance of a multicultural population, globalisation, and the diversity of languages. These phenomena have learning languages as a main consequence. However, both multilingualism and plurilingualism are often confused, so a basic definition of each concept is needed. Thus, the former refers to those societies where more than one language co-exist 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 co-existence of cultures and languages in one society. In fact, there are countries that have included the idea on their curricula, as is the case of Spain, where different languages, cultures, and people from different nationalities live side-by-side. More particularly, in the Valencian Community, there is a high percentage of foreign inhabitants, being the most predominant the Arab ones. Here, 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 the language use by Arabs differs from that made by 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 can 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. Here, a certain language will be used on particular topics and occasions.

Besides, by simply asking why certain languages are used in those particular situations, language attitudes can be identified. In accordance with 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.

1.1. 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, the research carried on language attitudes has been developed according to a number of different theories. The two most important 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 that cannot 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.

Nevertheless, there is one difference from a theoretical point of view between the two theories, and it has to do with the components-conception of language attitudes: the mentalist theory differentiates three components: the cognitive, the affective, and the readiness for action; for the behaviourist view 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.

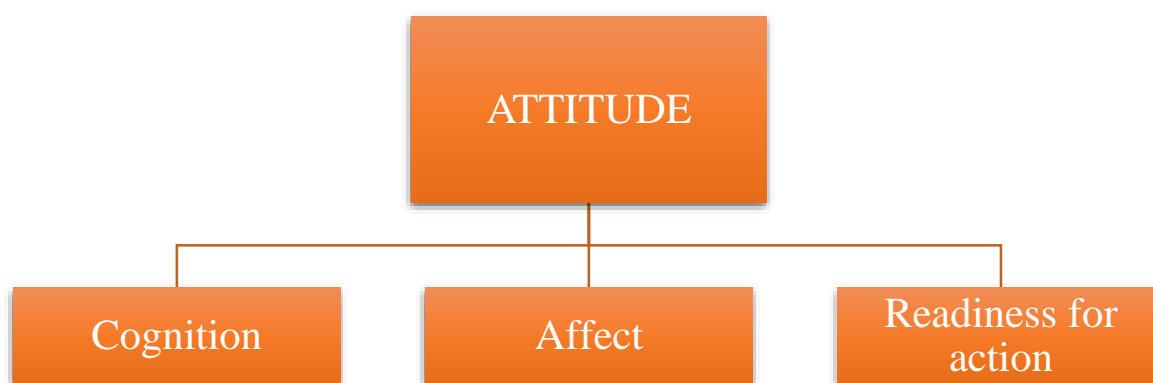


Figure 1. Three-component model of attitude

Language attitudes can be measured regarding 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.

This matched guise technique consists on playing recorded text passages of apparently different speakers interpreting guises in two or more languages. The individuals are asked to evaluate different speakers' character traits without knowing that it is the same person in all the recordings. The personal qualities being appraised include body height, good looks, leadership, sense of humour, intelligence, religiousness, self-confidence, dependability, entertainingness, kindness, ambition, sociability, character, and likability.

Returning to the direct and indirect methods for measuring language attitudes, the first one consist mainly of questionnaires and interviews. Here, the main point is to ask individuals about their language attitudes towards any language or its varieties. Interviews and questionnaires can contain either open-end or closed-end questions. The first type is often included when the participant has listened to a sample. The main point here is that individuals can use their own words to answer instead of completing scales provided by those carrying out the study. Nevertheless, close-end questions are often used when the subjects are asked about different statements concerning the language. The idea here is to choose the answer from the already proposed ones. According to Baker (1992), a scale designed by Likert is the most used in closed-end questions. This scale can include responses such as Agree/Disagree or it can incorporate multiple items: Strongly Agree – Agree – Neither Agree nor Disagree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree.

Regarding the indirect method for measuring language attitudes, its main aim is to analyse the participants' attitudes without letting them know that it is their language attitude which is under study. Therefore, the purpose is to observe subjective responses of the subjects. The matched guise technique, which has been previously explained, is the most representative practice for measuring attitudes indirectly. To maximize the effectiveness of the matched guise technique, all the factors such as intonation, pitch, etc. that might affect the participants' reactions and thoughts have to be minimized. It is often assumed that people tend to not only classify other people regarding their accent or dialect, but also try to define the speaker's personality depending on how he speaks. Thus, language seems to reveal very much about a person, and when an individual hears a foreign language spoken, different attitudinal reactions are activated in him, which have usually to do with a group of people who speak the language.

1.2. 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 as: Lasagabaster (2003) who investigates attitudes in the Basque Country; Safont (2007) who explores language attitudes towards Spanish, Catalan and English in the Valencian Community; and Portolés (2011) whose study 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, the following studies consider language attitudes towards Spanish and Catalan in such 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 the 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 out 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 this last 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 not been taken into consideration, the aim of the present study is to analyse language choice and language attitudes of Arabs living in Castelló.

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

2. THE STUDY

This section focuses on defining the aims and the methodology of the present study. The research questions are established first, and then information on the participants, the questionnaire and the collection of data are explained.

2.1. Aim of the study and research questions

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, Spanish, English, and Catalan?

2.2.Method

This section deals with the study itself 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.

2.2.1. 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 in Spain. The subjects came from 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).

With regard to group A, it had 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 on Catalan and English.

Concerning group B, it 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 on Spanish, Catalan and English. Three of them came to Spain at the age of 7 years, one participant had 13 years when moving out to Spain, while the remaining participants had 18, 19 and 21 years old when they first arrived to Spain.

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 the mother tongue), English and Catalan.

2.2.2. Instrument

In order to collect data, a questionnaire consisting of three separate parts was used (see Appendix A). The questionnaire, adapted from Lasagabaster and Huguet (2007) was employed to assess students' language use and languages 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 Spanish, Arabic, English and Catalan. 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 the participants know and when and with whom they speak each language. Moreover, the subjects are asked to rate their linguistic competence in such languages.

And finally, the third part deals with the participants' language attitudes towards the four languages: Spanish, Arabic, English and Catalan. First, the participants had to indicate which speaker they think has the qualities regarding 6 items (more intelligent, more honest, more educated, more friendly, has more money and more helpful) in order to express their attitudes towards speakers of the four languages. After that, they had to rate which university they think would be better for a learner, provided that each university teaches only in one of the four languages. Finally, 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'. See the mentioned appendix for more details.

2.2.3. 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 was 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 it 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 were they when they arrived to 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 the collection of 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 tables and 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: Spanish, Arabic, English and Catalan. They had to answer three 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 was a hypothetical case in which the students had to order their choices regarding which university they think would be better for a learner to study provided that each university teaches only in one of the four languages. For instance, participant X thinks that the best institution would be the one teaching in Arabic, his second choice would be the Spanish one, his third choice would be the Catalan one, and his last option would be the English

university. Finally, the last type of question 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 tables and 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.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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 respond 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.

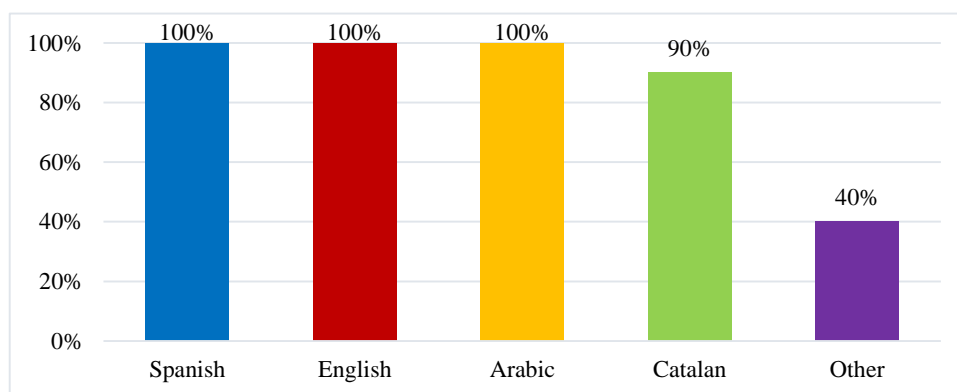


Figure 2. Languages spoken by Group A

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

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

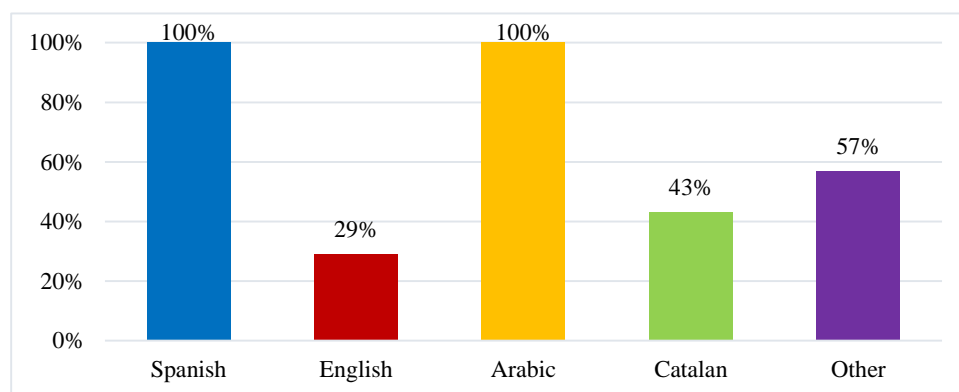


Figure 3. Languages spoken by Group B

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 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.

3.1. 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 on group 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 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 it. The choice of Spanish is due to the academic and friendship environments, which use basically this language to communicate. Therefore, a tendency of using the official language is observed.

Regarding the use of English and Catalan, both are present but with less manifestation than the other languages, since only among two and three subjects use them. Thus, English is not spoken with family while it does 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.

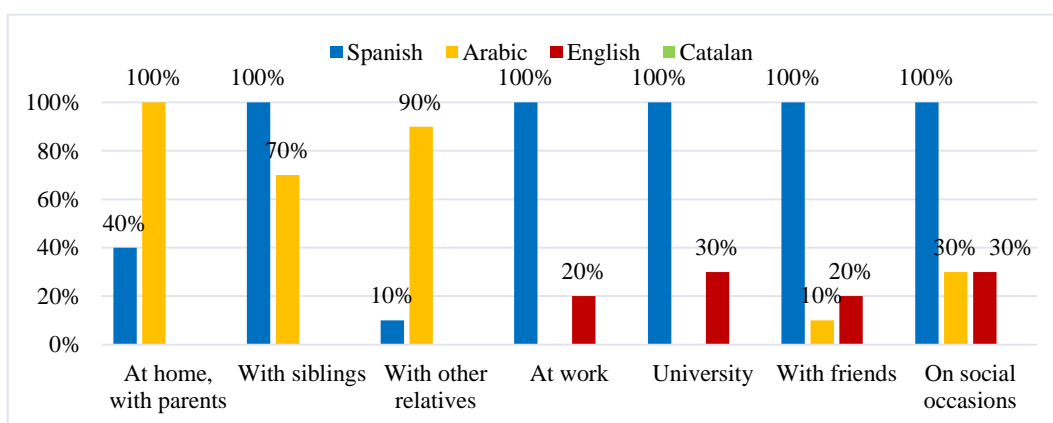


Figure 4. Languages spoken by Group A depending on contexts

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 among 20% and 30% of the participants use it with other relatives. Dealing with Arabic, there is a remarkable presence of it 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.

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.

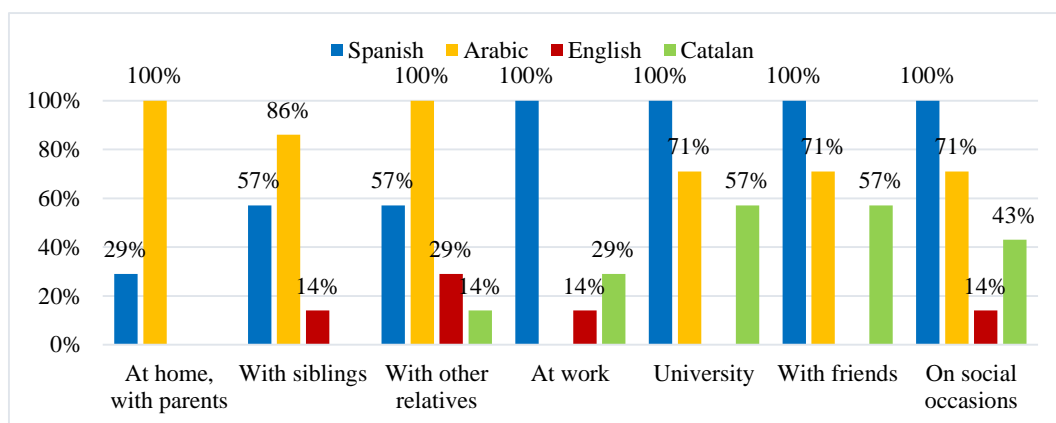


Figure 5. Languages spoken by Group B depending on contexts

When considering the overall results, the use of Arabic outside the family contexts demonstrates the fact 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 highly use by the opposite group, in which a 57% speaks it at university and with friends, and a 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.

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 appreciated 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 a 50% for watching movies/series, and by a 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.

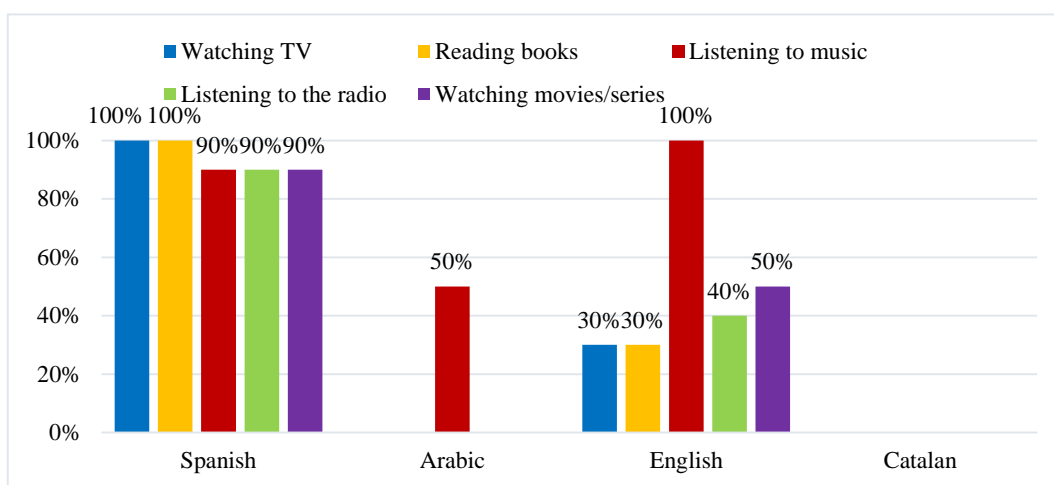


Figure 5. Languages used by Group A when performing certain activities

In contrast with the preceding figure, the following one 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 the 30% of subjects each, 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: the 100% of students listen to music in Spanish, the 86% do it 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 the 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.

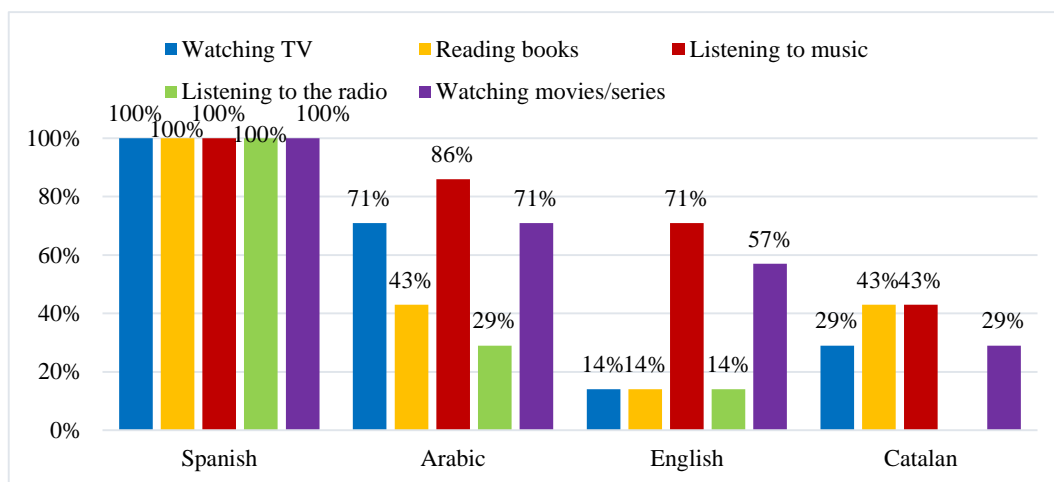


Figure 7. Languages used by Group B when performing certain activities

With regard to Figures 6 and 7, the results show great differences in the choice of Arabic and Catalan. The 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 doing the five activities. This language is chosen by almost all participants excepting listening to music, listening to the radio and watching movies, which the 10% prefer to do it 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 is going to be provided. The question was *'In which contexts do the participants use each language they speak?'*, therefore, two main situations may be 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.

3.2. 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, the participants of the study were asked to complete three types of questions regarding language attitudes towards Spanish, Arabic, English, and Catalan. The first question was about indicating which language speaker has certain personal traits. The second one dealt with ordering four universities according to which would be better for a learner providing that each university teaches only in one of the mentioned languages. The last question was completing a five-scale statements about each language. The data gathered from group A and group B will be shown below.

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

Table 1 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

Table 1. Language attitudes by Group A depending on personal traits

Table 2 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

Table 2. Language attitudes by Group B depending on personal traits

Following with language attitudes questionnaire, the second question deals with a hypothetical situation where participants have to choose which university would be better for a learner providing that each university teaches only in a unique language. Students had to order the four given options depending on their choices and thoughts about the different programs.

Figure 8 shows the percentages of the choices made by the 10 students belonging to group A. It can be seen that the preferred university is the one teaching only in English, which has been voted with a 35%. This is followed by the Spanish university, which has 27%, and by the Arabic one which has been selected with a 27%. Finally, the last choice is the university teaching only in Catalan, with a 10% of the votes.

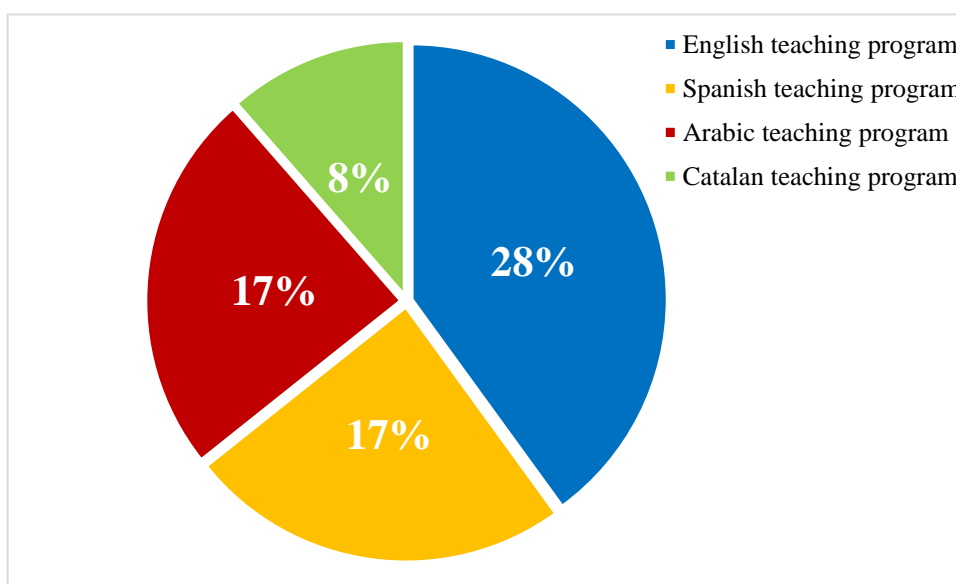


Figure 8. Preferred universities for a learner according to Group A

In comparison to the previous figure, Figure 9 presents the answers collected by Group B. Since there are only 7 participants, the sum of percentages is equal to 70%. Therefore, the university teaching in English has 28% of votes, while the Arabic and the Spanish teaching methods have the same amount of votes and they are in the second and third position. In relation to Catalan, it only has 8% of votes, so it would be the last choice for a learner to study.

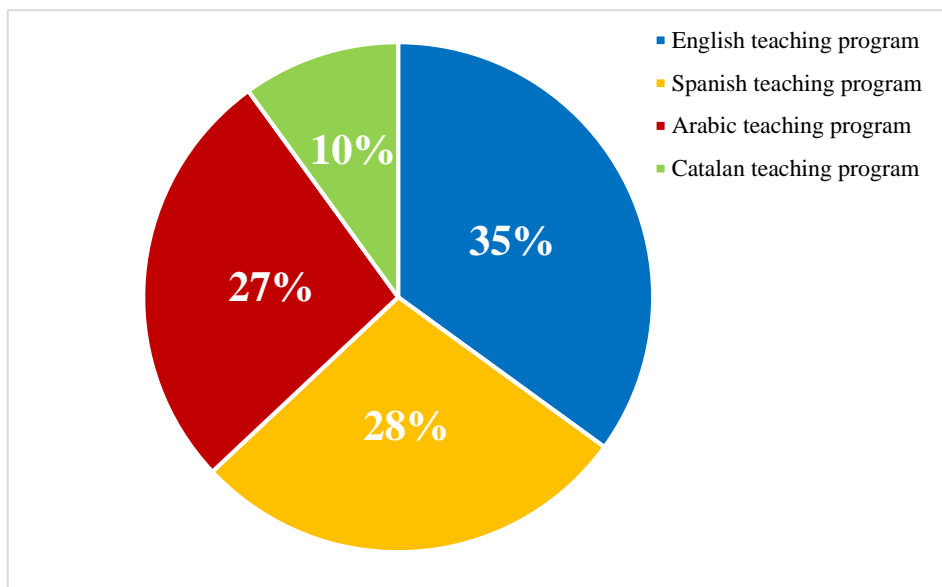


Figure 9. Preferred universities for a learner according to Group B

When facing Figures 8 and 9, there are similar results, especially in the choice of university teaching only in English because it takes the first position in both groups' choices. Moreover, the Spanish and the Arabic teaching programs occupy the second and third position respectively in both figures. Furthermore, the university teaching only in Catalan is the worst punctuated in both groups, with just 10% and 8% in each group. Thus, it can be concluded that regarding the opinions of the participants in groups A and B, the better university for a learner would be the English one, followed by the Spanish and Arabic ones, and finally the Catalan one.

Last but not least, the third question dealing with language attitudes has to do with completing a five-item scale about 8 statements for each of the four languages. The items are: Strongly Agree – Agree – Neither Agree nor Disagree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree. The results will be presented in a table for each language in order to assess their attitudes.

Table 3 deals with attitudes towards Spanish, and it can be seen that participants of both groups have favourable attitudes towards the language. They most frequent answers were *Strongly Agree*, *Agree* and *Neither Agree nor Disagree*, although a 20% in group B disagrees about the classes being in Spanish, and a 14% in group B strongly disagrees about the 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%			

Table 3. Language attitudes towards Spanish

Regarding Arabic, table 4 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 a 70% prefers 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, the 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%		

Table 4. Language attitudes towards Arabic

Table 5 includes the data gathered regarding language attitudes towards English. All the subjects of the study have favourable attitudes towards it, 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*. A 43% of participants in group B sees English as difficult to learn, while a 14% strongly disagrees about loving speaking it and the same percentage does not prefer the 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%				

Table 5. Language attitudes towards English

Table 6 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 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, a 14% does 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%		

Table 6. Language attitudes towards Catalan

4. CONCLUSION

In general, the purpose of the present 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. Moreover, the data gathered was represented by means of tables and 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. Thus, 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 it speaking Arabic in the majority of the proposed contexts. Moreover, although there are more speakers of Catalan in group A, subjects of group B show more predisposition of 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 discovered that in general terms, participants of 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 than the other group.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The first assumption of the present study was to establish a conceptual framework regarding the Arabic population and the language use and language attitudes concerning Spanish, Arabic, English and Catalan in the Valencian Community, more specifically in Castelló. However, the research process has found two main limitations, which consists on previous research about the topic and the number of participants.

With regards to the previous studies on the topic, it has been difficult to direct the present paper towards a specific framework because language use and language attitudes have not been studied in the concerned context, that is dealing with Arabic. Thus, a review of the existing studies on analysing language attitudes towards Spanish, Catalan and English, has been done in order to have a basis on the three studied languages, and then including a fourth one: Arabic. In relation to the second limitation, it has been complicated to found Arab students in Castelló in order to have a wider sample for the study, which is the reason why the present study has a total of 17 participants.

So far, research on language use and language attitudes has mostly been carried out without enough available data. Therefore, topics for further research on the basis of the present study can be suggested.

In the first place, further research including the Arab population would be useful. In other words, future studies could focus on analysing language use and language attitudes including the Arabic language. For example, research in Castelló could be carried out for studying the use of Arabic among the population, which would help the data to be more precise compared with the findings of the present study.

Secondly, the small number of participants has excluded the possibility of drawing strong conclusions on language attitudes of Arabs. As a consequence, it would be interesting to carry out studies in which the sample includes a high number of subjects. This would be considerably better in order to get more information on the reasons of language choice and the origins of the language attitudes of Arabs.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Language use and language attitudes questionnaire

PERSONAL DATA

Participant number:

Name..... Sex: Male..... Female.....

Age: Degree:

E-mail:

Mother tongue:

- What language(s) do you speak?
a) Spanish b) English c) Arabic d) Catalan d) Other
- Where were you born?
- If you were born outside Spain, what is your country of birth?
- If you were born outside Spain, how old were you when you arrived to Spain?
.....

In the following section, we would like you to answer the following question by simply rating your abilities on a scale from 1 to 5.

1 = poor 2 = improvable 3 = good 4 = very good 5 = native

- In your opinion, which is your linguistic competence in...?

	Spanish	Arabic	English	Catalan
General competence				
Writing				
Speaking				
Reading comprehension				
Listening comprehension				

LANGUAGE USE

1. At what age did you first begin to learn...

Spanish	Arabic	English	Catalan

2. What language(s) do you speak in the following contexts? Mark your answer with an X (more than one option is possible)

	Spanish	Arabic	English	Catalan
At home, with parents				
With siblings				
With other relatives				
At work				
University				
With friends				
On social occasions				

3. What language(s) do you use when doing the following activities? Mark your answer with an X (more than one option is possible)

	Spanish	Arabic	English	Catalan
Watching TV				
Reading books				
Listening to music				
Listening to the radio				
Watching movies/series				

LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

4. When you hear a person speaking in these languages, which person do you think...

	Spanish	Arabic	English	Catalan
Is more intelligent?				
Is more honest?				
Is more educated?				
Is more friendly?				
Has more money?				
Is more helpful?				

5. Imagine that there are four types of universities in Castellon. In one, they teach the students to read and write ONLY in Spanish. In the second one, they teach the learners to read and write ONLY in Arabic. In the third one, the teaching is ONLY in English, and in the fourth one, ONLY in Catalan. Which university do you think would be better for a learner? (Rate the following options on a scale from 4 to 1, where 1 stands for your first choice and 4 for your last one)

Spanish	Arabic	English	Catalan

6. Here are some statements about the SPANISH language. Please, say whether you agree or disagree with them. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be as honest as possible. Answer with ONE of the following:

SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree NAND = Neither Agree nor Disagree D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
1. I like listening people speaking in Spanish					
2. Spanish should be taught in all schools					
3. I like speaking Spanish					
4. Spanish is easy to learn					
5. I prefer the classes to be in Spanish					
6. Learning Spanish enriches my cultural knowledge					
7. Learning Spanish is worth it					
8. If I had children, I would like them to speak Spanish					

Language Use and Language Attitudes Questionnaire

7. Here are some statements about the ARABIC language. Please, say whether you agree or disagree with them. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be as honest as possible. Answer with ONE of the following:

SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree NAND = Neither Agree nor Disagree D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
1. I like listening people speaking in Arabic					
2. Arabic should be taught in all schools					
3. I like speaking Arabic					
4. Arabic is easy to learn					
5. I prefer the classes to be in Arabic					
6. Learning Arabic enriches my cultural knowledge					
7. Learning Arabic is worth it					
8. If I had children, I would like them to speak Arabic					

8. Here are some statements about the ENGLISH language. Please, say whether you agree or disagree with them. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be as honest as possible. Answer with ONE of the following:

SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree NAND = Neither Agree nor Disagree D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
1. I like listening people speaking in English					
2. English should be taught in all schools					
3. I like speaking English					
4. English is easy to learn					
5. I prefer the classes to be in English					
6. Learning English enriches my cultural knowledge					
7. Learning English is worth it					
8. If I had children, I would like them to speak English					

9. Here are some statements about the CATALAN language. Please, say whether you agree or disagree with them. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be as honest as possible. Answer with ONE of the following:

SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree NAND = Neither Agree nor Disagree D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
1. I like listening people speaking in Catalan					
2. Catalan should be taught in all schools					
3. I like speaking Catalan					
4. Catalan is easy to learn					
5. I prefer the classes to be in Catalan					
6. Learning Catalan enriches my cultural knowledge					
7. Learning Catalan is worth it					
8. If I had children, I would like them to speak Catalan					

