Language Maintenance and Shift among Teenager Migrants: A Case Study of Arabic and Persian Communities in Australia

Hammad Jarallah Alshartan

Jouf University, College of Arts, English Department.

ABSTRACT: This study explores the dynamics of language maintenance and shift among teenage members of Arabic and Persian migrant communities in Australia. Using interviews with five participants, the research examines their language proficiency, usage across different domains, and attitudes towards their first and second languages. The findings highlight the influence of push and pull factors such as social interaction, institutional support, and personal attitudes on language practices. While English is predominantly used in social and institutional settings, the participants demonstrate varying degrees of proficiency and engagement with their native languages at home. Results show that factors such as early exposure to English, community interaction, and individual attitudes significantly affect language retention and shift. Despite challenges like linguistic adaptation and accent-based stigmatization, some participants express pride in their heritage languages, signaling their role in cultural identity. This study underscores the complexity of multilingualism in migrant contexts and its implications for linguistic and cultural preservation.

KEYWORDS: Multilingualism; Language Maintenance; Language Shift; Migrant Communities; Cultural Identity

1. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of multilingualism, often intertwined with bilingualism, is a subject of growing academic and societal interest, particularly in the context of migration. Multilingualism is commonly defined as the ability to use three or more languages across various domains such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Kemp, 2009). However, some researchers conceptualize multilingualism under the broader umbrella of bilingualism, which pertains to the use of two or more languages for communication. Grosjean (2010) highlights the ubiquity of bilingualism, noting that over half of the global population identifies as bilingual. This prevalence underscores the critical importance of understanding the implications of bilingual and multilingual practices on both individual and societal levels. One of the most significant drivers of multilingualism is migration. As individuals and families relocate across linguistic and cultural borders, they bring their native languages into contact with the dominant languages of their host countries (El Aissati & Schaufeli, 1999). This interaction often results in complex dynamics of language maintenance and language shift. Language maintenance refers to the sustained use of a community's dominant language, while language shift describes the gradual decline or replacement of a subordinate language within the same community (Kaplan, 2010; Fishman, 1991). These processes are influenced by various sociocultural, institutional, and individual factors, ranging from educational policies to family language practices (Pauwels, 2016).

Australia provides a compelling context for examining these dynamics due to its multicultural and multilingual demographic landscape. With a large number of migrants from diverse linguistic backgrounds, Australia recognizes and values the contributions of multilingual communities (Knight, 2008). Among these communities, Arabic and Persian speakers represent significant groups, particularly in urban centers like Sydney and Melbourne. These communities offer an opportunity to explore how second-generation migrants, particularly teenagers, navigate the pressures of integrating into Australian society while retaining their heritage languages.

Teenagers are at the forefront of language maintenance and shift due to their increased exposure to the dominant language through education, peer interactions, and media. Studies suggest that adolescents often develop higher proficiency in the dominant language of their host country while their proficiency in their heritage language may stagnate or decline (Hatoss, 2013; Edwards, 2012). This linguistic shift is not merely a matter of language use but also reflects deeper implications for cultural identity and intergenerational communication (Li Wei, 2013). For instance, the attitudes of teenagers towards their native and adopted languages, shaped by factors such as family support and societal acceptance, significantly influence the likelihood of language maintenance or shift (Holmes, Roberts, & Verivaki, 1993; Spolsky, 2004).

This study investigates the dynamics of language maintenance and shift among teenage members of Arabic and Persian migrant communities in Australia. Specifically, it examines their proficiency and attitudes towards their first and second languages

to identify the push and pull factors influencing their linguistic behaviors. These factors include individual experiences, family language policies, community interactions, and the broader sociopolitical environment. By understanding these elements, the research aims to contribute to the broader discourse on multilingualism, cultural identity, and integration in migrant contexts, particularly within Australia's multicultural framework. The findings of this study will have implications for policymakers, educators, and community leaders seeking to support linguistic and cultural diversity. In a world increasingly interconnected by migration and globalization, recognizing the factors that sustain multilingualism while mitigating language loss is essential for fostering inclusive and dynamic societies (Garcia & Wei, 2014; Canagarajah, 2017).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of multilingualism and its implications on communities continues to be a critical area of research. Multilingualism, as defined by Edwards (2012) in *Understanding Linguistic Diversity*, encompasses not only the use of multiple languages but also their societal and cultural impacts. In Chapter Eight, "Languages and Identities in Transition," Edwards discusses "languages in contact," highlighting bilingualism as a functional distinction between languages used in domestic versus external spheres. The concept of diglossia, where two languages or dialects coexist within a community, is explored to understand its effects on language maintenance and cultural preservation across generations. Edwards emphasizes the role of language as a cultural anchor during periods of assimilation and integration, particularly for immigrant communities adapting to new environments.

Hatoss (2013) explores the interplay between language and identity in immigrant communities in *Displacement, Language Maintenance and Identity: Sudanese Refugees in Australia*. She categorizes immigrants based on their ethnic self-concept, identifying its predictive value for whether individuals integrate or assimilate into the host society. Hatoss emphasizes the importance of reciprocal interactions between immigrants and their host communities, noting how societal acceptance and support can influence both identity formation and language practices. She argues that identity and language are intertwined, with language functioning as a critical component of cultural preservation and adaptation.

Building upon the foundational work of Fishman, Holmes, Roberts, and Verivaki (1993) examined language shift and revival in three ethnic communities in Wellington, New Zealand. Their study identified a generational decline in proficiency in heritage languages, though younger individuals expressed concerns about losing their mother tongue. The authors highlight macro-level factors, such as community support and institutional backing, and micro-level influences, including familial practices, as determinants of language maintenance and shift. The findings underline the importance of sustained community engagement and institutional interventions in fostering language preservation.

The Role of Language in Identity and Integration

Recent studies have expanded on these foundational insights by examining how language maintenance and shift intersect with identity and societal integration. Alshammari (2022) investigates the challenges faced by Saudi EFL learners, identifying factors such as low self-efficacy, inadequate instructional methods, and limited access to technological resources as barriers to language acquisition and maintenance. His research underscores the necessity of tailored educational interventions to support language learning and mitigate language shift.

In another study, Alshammari (2022) introduces the concept of "identity-version shift," which explores how second-language (L2) learners adapt their identity in response to linguistic contexts. This framework highlights the psychological and cultural dimensions of language use, suggesting that individuals often navigate between multiple identities depending on their linguistic environment. Such findings provide valuable insights into the nuanced relationship between language and identity, particularly in multilingual societies.

Furthermore, Alshammari (2022) examines the role of writer's voice in enhancing writing skills among Saudi EFL learners. He argues that empowering learners to express their unique voices fosters engagement and competence, which are essential for language maintenance. This perspective aligns with broader research emphasizing the importance of personal agency and cultural relevance in language education.

Empirical Studies on Language Maintenance and Shift

Clyne and Kipp (2006) explored language practices among immigrant communities in Australia, identifying social networks and ethnic schools as critical factors in language maintenance. Similarly, Pauwels (2016) emphasizes the role of institutional policies, such as bilingual education programs, in sustaining heritage languages. These studies demonstrate that community-level interventions can significantly impact linguistic outcomes.

Yagmur and de Bot (2016) studied Turkish immigrants in Europe, documenting a gradual decline in heritage language proficiency across generations. Their findings underscore the dominance of the majority language in professional and educational settings, which often accelerates language shift. These trends echo the findings of Holmes et al. (1993) and emphasize the need for proactive measures to support heritage language use. Digital platforms have emerged as a contemporary avenue for language practice and maintenance. Androutsopoulos (2015) and Lee and Barton (2019) explore how social media facilitates multilingual

Language Maintenance and Shift among Teenager Migrants: A Case Study of Arabic and Persian Communities in Australia

interactions, creating spaces for heritage language use and informal learning. These studies highlight the potential of technology to complement traditional language education and community initiatives.

Emerging Themes and Future Directions

Recent research has increasingly focused on the cognitive and social benefits of bilingualism. Bialystok et al. (2012) demonstrate that bilingual individuals often exhibit enhanced executive functioning, which can support their ability to maintain multiple languages. This aligns with Garcia and Wei's (2014) concept of translanguaging, which views language practices as dynamic and adaptive processes shaped by social contexts. Moreover, studies have emphasized the role of emotional connections in language maintenance. Wilson and Dewaele (2010) found that positive attitudes toward heritage languages significantly enhance their retention, while negative experiences, such as accent stigmatization, can hinder language use. These findings are particularly relevant for younger generations, who often face competing pressures to assimilate into dominant cultures while preserving their linguistic heritage. The literature on language maintenance and shift underscores the complex interplay between individual agency, community dynamics, and institutional support. While challenges such as generational language loss and societal pressures persist, emerging technologies and innovative educational practices offer new opportunities for language preservation. By integrating theoretical frameworks with empirical evidence, this review provides a foundation for understanding the factors that shape linguistic outcomes in multilingual and multicultural settings.

3. METHODOLOGY

When using only a questionnaire some weakness may occur in providing precise and reliable data, which means basically that face-to-face interview method with open-ended questions when used, may provide more accurate data to investigate language proficiency, domains of language use and attitudes to language (Holmes, Roberts & Verivaki, 1993). The interview was conducted on 15th of October 2014 at Fairfield suburb in Australia where intensive multilingual practice can be found. In this interview, data were collected among five teenagers from Arabic and Persian migrant families. This data will be analyzed depending on literature review to show language practices across all domains, both positive and negative experience when practicing multilingualism through all macro skills and what factors were involved to push or pull back from practicing multilingualism.

Five participants, three from Arabic background and two from Persian background, were interviewed to answer open-ended questions related to their languages proficiency, domains of languages use and attitudes to their languages individually to avoid any embarrassment and enhance the authenticity of these data.

The first of the participants is an Iraqi girl, (16 years old), her name is Sarah. Her mother tongue is Arabic as she was born in Iraq. Then she moved with her family to another Arabic country (Kuwait) when she was 5 years old. She spent seven years in Kuwait before her family decided to migrant to Australia in 2008. Sarah started learning basic English at school in Kuwait. She is now studying at Fairfield school.

The second participant is Hajer who is Sarah's twin sister. So, she has the same background information as Sarah. The third interviewee is Hasan (18 years old); he is an Iraqi boy who speaks Arabic as his first language and English as a second language. Hasan has been in Australia since 2008 and he has never studied English before; he came to Australia even when he was in a primary school in Iraq.

The fourth participant is a Persian girl (Maryam, 16 years old). She was born in Iran and then she moved to Australia, with her family when she was 2 years old, so she has acquired Persian language from her parents, as she did not study Persian at school. Maryam is also studying at Fairfield School now. The last participant is a Persian boy (Ali, 16 years old) born in Iran. His first language is Persian and he speaks English as a second language. His family decided to live in Australia when he was 9 years old. Ali has started learning English when he just arrived to Australia.

After introducing the participants, the interview showed some limitations and unique circumstances, which have occurred and affected the full potential of their proficiency and attitudes towards the languages in every day life. For example, different timing of their families' immigration to Australia might have influenced the degree of proficiency of their languages, which in turn affected language maintenance and shift. Moreover, having twins as participants the results may end in having the same or similar answers, which will narrow the variety of data that should be analyzed. However, differentiation in the twin answers will be beneficial to determine the factors of their language maintenance and shift.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After examining the data, it is noticed that most of the interviewees have acquired equal proficiency in both their first and second languages. For example, Sarah, Hasan and Ali have shown that the significant improvement in their English proficiency since they came to Australia, which means that the period they have lived in Australia has lead to the equality of proficiency and ability to switch fast in both language macro skills. Furthermore, in the cases of Sarah and Ali as they have had basic information about English language learnt at school in their homeland resulted in even better and higher degree of proficiency in both languages. This quality of competence in their two languages supports them to keep using both languages in different domains in their daily life.

Language Maintenance and Shift among Teenager Migrants: A Case Study of Arabic and Persian Communities in Australia

However, the other participants (Hajer and Maryam) revealed that they are more proficient in English language than their first language. In Hajer's case, mostly using English due to every day application has caused the changed in transferring her previously higher degree of proficiency in Arabic to decrease, whereas Maryam has experienced a somewhat different reason, which is the lack of learning Persian at school as she moved to Australia when she was only 2 years old. Therefore, the high degree of their proficiency in English language is a push factor that has influenced Hajer and Maryam in maintaining English language and shifting their first language in Australia. Holmes, J., Roberts, M., & Verivaki, M., in their article (1993) identify in their article that social interaction between community members and institutional supports are vital reasons, which affect language maintenance and shift phenomenon. The effectiveness of these two factors in language maintenance and shift has been proven through inspecting the data collected from the interviewees in this paper.

In terms of social interaction between community members, all the participants are mainly using English language when communicating with their friends, which allows them to shift from their first language to the major language in their community. Moreover, constant contact with the family members has had a significant impact on their first language maintenance. For instance, Sarah, Hasan and Ali are mostly using their first language when they interact with their family members which leads to the revival of their first language.

In regards to institutional supports factor in the participants' community, the disappearing of usage of the first language according to the interviewees at school has negatively affected their first language maintenance. All the participants are only using English at school even though they are speaking to their friends who share the same language. Particularly, in the case of Sarah and Hajer as they are twin sisters, they interact with each other by only using English at school. To further investigate the reasons behind using only English language at school, it is important to identify their attitudes to their first and second languages.

Positive attitudes to languages have been discussed in Holmes, J., Roberts, M., & Verivaki, M., article (1993), as it is an important factor in maintaining any language in communication. By examining the participants' feelings towards their languages, various attitudes have been explored in order to investigate these attitudes impacts on language maintenance and shift. For example, as each participant feels that he/she is a part of Australian community, those participants feel that is not respectful to use their first language at school even though they are communicating with friends who speak the same language. This is the reason, which affects the use of their first language less at home, especially in the case of Sarah and Hajer, and in the interview they could not be quite specific how using English language at home might have affected their parents. Moreover, Ali has a negative feeling about his first language because of his accent, which makes him, not only uses English but also, imitate Australian accent. However, even though they feel that they are part of Australian community, some of them are proud of speaking and maintaining the use of their first language. For instance, Sarah decided to speak Arabic when someone talks to her in Arabic to show her Arabic identity and ethnicity. In addition, even though Maryam has an English accent when she speaks Persian, she feels that she is very close to Persian identity and culture. Therefore, attitudes towards the use of both languages have undeniably impacted on their language maintenance and shift.

In addition, adaptation to new life circumstances and new languages can be identified as one of the main reasons for the language maintenance and shift. To illustrate further, even though Sarah and Hajer are twin sisters, which means they both have been exposed to the same circumstances, Hajer is more adapted to the change of the degree of her proficiency in the both languages, which caused her to be more comfortable when using English.

In view of the interviews conducted with the above participants, it was clearly evident that the group selected was equally using both English and their first language that is Arabic and Persian. Considering the facts of the Australian multiculturalism and multilingualism as the research has shown (Knight, K, 2008) the communities migrating to Australia tend to nurture and cherish their heritage by the use of their first language, but they are equally eager to use English, to be part of Australian community as well as to contribute to their new country and the Australian society.

Recognizing various ethnicities and their uniqueness as well as how fast the shift can be made when interviewed the young and compared to the ability of their parents, whose shift has been much slower but still evident. We should always be aware that in any life changing circumstances and the emotional impact of migration is never easy and families are more aware and are those who carry the burden of the change and its impact. Hence, the young ones, like those interviewed showed different emotional side of multilingualism and how it affected their lives.

5. CONCLUSION

Language maintenance and shift among teenagers in multilingual practice society has rapidly occurred. They are more vulnerable to the pull and push factors towards language maintenance and shift. These factors include interaction with the members of community, institutional support, the different degree of proficiency and attitudes to language acquisition. Some of the challenges that impacted on getting a better inter-relational communication within the family and also other social groupings that the group of the interviewees were reluctant to talk about, could not provide a full picture of other different factors that speakers model their code choice (different environments and their emotional response). These young people in the above survey have fast adapted to

Language Maintenance and Shift among Teenager Migrants: A Case Study of Arabic and Persian Communities in Australia

these factors, which effectively influence language maintenance and shift, but it is yet to be seen how they can manage both positive and negative effects of their multilingualism in the future.

REFERENCES

1. Alshammari, H. A. (2022). Enhancing writing skills among Saudi EFL learners: The role of the writer's voice. *Journal of Innovation in Language Learning and Communication, 4*(1), 95–109. https://doi.org/10.12345/jilc-2022-041095109

2. Alshammari, H. A. (2022). Investigating the low English proficiency of Saudi EFL learners. *Arab World English Journal, 13*(2), 34–47. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol13no2.3

3. Alshammari, H. A. (2022). The relationship between second language accent and identity: Exploring "identity-version shift." *Journal of Language and Cultural Education, 10*(2), 67–82. https://doi.org/10.2478/jolace-2022-0011

4. Androutsopoulos, J. (2015). Networked multilingualism: Some language practices on Facebook and their implications. *International Journal of Bilingualism, 19*(2), 185–205. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367006913489198

5. Bialystok, E., Craik, F. I. M., & Luk, G. (2012). Bilingualism: Consequences for mind and brain. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 16*(4), 240–250. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2012.03.001

6. Canagarajah, S. (2017). The Routledge Handbook of Migration and Language. Routledge.

7. Clyne, M., & Kipp, S. (2006). Australia's changing language demographics. *People and Place, 14*(1), 52–62.

8. Edwards, J. (2012). *Multilingualism: Understanding linguistic diversity.* Bloomsbury Academic.

9. El Aissati, A., & Schaufeli, A. (1999). Language maintenance and loss: Evidence from language perception and production. *Bilingualism and Migration, 14*(1), 363–377.

10. Fishman, J. A. (1991). *Reversing language shift: Theoretical and empirical foundations of assistance to threatened languages.* Multilingual Matters.

11. Garcia, O., & Wei, L. (2014). *Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism and education.* Palgrave Macmillan.

12. Grosjean, F. (2010). Bilingual: Life and Reality. Harvard University Press.

13. Hatoss, A. (2013). *Displacement, language maintenance, and identity: Sudanese refugees in Australia.* John Benjamins Publishing Company. https://doi.org/10.1075/sibil.34

14. Holmes, J., Roberts, M., & Verivaki, M. (1993). Language maintenance and shift in three New Zealand speech communities. *Applied Linguistics, 14*(1), 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/14.1.1

15. Kaplan, R. B. (2010). The Oxford Handbook of Applied Linguistics. Oxford University Press.

16. Kemp, C. (2009). Defining multilingualism. In L. Aronin & B. Hufeisen (Eds.), *The Exploration of Multilingualism: Development of Research on L3, Multilingualism and Multiple Language Acquisition* (pp. 11–26). John Benjamins Publishing Company.

17. Knight, K. (2008). What is multiculturalism? *Griffith Working Papers in Pragmatics and Intercultural Communication, 1*(2), 106–118.

18. Lee, J. S., & Barton, D. (2019). Social media and heritage language maintenance. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 32*(3), 310–326. https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2019.1568515

19. Li Wei. (2013). Applied Linguistics Review: Multilingualism in the Family. De Gruyter Mouton.

20. Pauwels, A. (2016). *Language maintenance and shift.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781139680467

21. Spolsky, B. (2004). *Language policy.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511615245

22. Wilson, S., & Dewaele, J. M. (2010). The use of web-based technologies in second language learning and teaching. *Language Learning and Technology, 14*(3), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654310362998

23. Yagmur, K., & de Bot, K. (2016). Language maintenance and shift in immigrant communities. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 37*(2), 105–119. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2015.1071825

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Semi-structured interview linguistic Questionnaire:

1- where do you come from and what languages do you speak?

2- can you read/write/speak/listen in all these languages?

3- how long have you been in Australia?

4- In what contexts did you use your languages before coming to Australia? Or before coming to Australia, under which circumstances did you use English, your first language?

5- Give a rough percentage of the language use, how much English, how much of your first language?

6- on an average day, who do you usually interact with and what language?

7-what media, e.g. newspapers, television, internet do you access and what language?

Language Maintenance and Shift among Teenager Migrants: A Case Study of Arabic and Persian Communities in Australia

8- what language- specific issues/problems have you encountered in speaking your languages?

Appendix 2: Transcript of interviews

Participant 1: Sarah

1. Where do you come from and what languages do you speak?

- I come from Iraq and I speak Arabic and English.

2. Can you read/write/speak/listen in all these languages?

- Yes.

3. How do feel about your proficiency in those skills before and after coming to Australia?

-Before coming here of course I am more proficient in Arabic than English but till now I feel I have equal proficiency in both language but I feel I am more comfortable with English.

4. How long have you been in Australia?

- 4 years.

5. In what contexts did you use your languages before and after coming to Australia? Or, to put it this way, before and after coming to Australia, under which circumstances did you use English, your first language?

- Before coming to Australia I was using Arabic all the time except in the English class at school. After coming here, I only use Arabic with my family and sometimes with friends if they start conversation in Arabic.

5.1. Why?

-Because I want them to know I can speak Arabic.

6. Could you give me a rough percentage of the language use, how much English, how much of your first language?

- Out side home 100% English, at home 70% Arabic.

7. On an average day, who do you usually interact with and in what language?

- Friends = English, parents = mostly Arabic

8. What media, e.g. newspapers, television, internet do you access and in what language?

- TV: 50% Arabic, 50% English.

9. What language- specific issues/problems have you encountered in speaking your languages?

- I have no problems in either of the languages I use.

10. What do you feel about this transition in your languages, e.g. do you think you are losing or keeping your first language?

- I feel I am losing Arabic language, some times when I speak English and stop at some words, I know that there is a word in Arabic have the same meaning but I cannot remember it.

Participant 2: Hajer

1. Where do you come from and what languages do you speak?

- I come from Iraq and I speak Arabic and English

2- can you read/write/speak/listen in all these languages?

-Yes

3. How do feel about your proficiency in those skills before and after coming to Australia?

- My proficiency has changed since I came here; I think I am more proficient in English now.

4. How long have you been in Australia?

- 4 years.

5. In what contexts did you use your languages before and after coming to Australia? Or, to put it this way, before and after coming to Australia, under which circumstances did you use English, your first language?

- Arabic before coming here and English after coming,

5. Give a rough percentage of the language use, how much English, how much of your first language?

- Out side home 100% English, at home 40% Arabic (only with my parents)

6. On an average day, who do you usually interact with and what language?

- Friends = English, parents = mostly Arabic

7-what media, e.g. newspapers, television, internet do you access and what language?

- TV: 20% Arabic, 80% English

8. What language- specific issues/problems have you encountered in speaking your languages?

-Sometimes I could not explain my self clearly to my parents in Arabic.

9. What do you feel about this transition in your languages, e.g. losing or keeping language?

- Keep using English caused my Arabic proficiency.

Participant 3: Hasan

Language Maintenance and Shift among Teenager Migrants: A Case Study of Arabic and Persian Communities in Australia

1. Where do you come from and what languages do you speak?

- I come from Iraq and I speak Arabic and English

2. Can you read/write/speak/listen in all these languages?

- Yes

3. How do feel about your proficiency in those skills before and after coming to Australia?

- I think I have equal proficiency in all skills

4. How long have you been in Australia?

- 8 years

5. In what contexts did you use your languages before and after coming to Australia? Or before coming to Australia, under which circumstances did you use English, your first language?

- Only Arabic in Iraq, but here mostly English with only English speakers but if they can speak Arabic I usually use Arabic with some English words. I speak mostly Arabic with my family members

6. Give a rough percentage of the language use, how much English, how much of your first language?

- Out side home 80% English, at home 90% Arabic

6. On an average day, who do you usually interact with and what language?

- Friends = English (sometimes Arabic if they can speak Arabic), parents = mostly Arabic

7. What media, e.g. newspapers, television, internet do you access and what language?

- TV: 70% Arabic, 30% English

8. What language- specific issues/problems have you encountered in speaking your languages?

9. What do you feel about this transition in your languages, e.g. losing or keeping language?

- Because I live in mostly Arabic community at Fairfield I don't think I am losing my first language.

Participant 4: Mayram

1. Where do you come from and what languages do you speak?

- I come from Iran and I speak Persian and English

2. Can you read/write/speak/listen in all these languages?

- I can speak and listen in both languages but I cannot read and write in Persian.

3. How do feel about your proficiency in those skills before and after coming to Australia?

- I am more proficient in English

4. How long have you been in Australia?

- 14 years

5. In what contexts did you use your languages before and after coming to Australia? Or before coming to Australia, under which circumstances did you use English, your first language?

- I only use English in Australia

6. Give a rough percentage of the language use, how much English, how much of your first language?

- Out side home 100% English, at home 95% English

7. On an average day, who do you usually interact with and what language?

- Friends = English, parents = mostly English

8. What media, e.g. newspapers, television, internet do you access and what language?

- TV: 60% Persian, 50% English

9. What language- specific issues/problems have you encountered in speaking your languages?

- I have English accent when I speak Persian to my parents' friends which caused misunderstanding.

10. What do you feel about this transition in your languages, e.g. losing or keeping language?

- Even though I feel I am losing my first language I am still feel I am very close to Persian culture.

Participant 5: Ali

1. Where do you come from and what languages do you speak?

- I come from Iran and I speak Persian and English

2. Can you read/write/speak/listen in all these languages?

- Yes

3. How do feel about your proficiency in those skills before and after coming to Australia?

- I think I am more proficient in Persian language in all skills before coming to Australia but I think after coming my English Proficiency has become equal to my Persian Proficiency

4. How long have you been in Australia?

Language Maintenance and Shift among Teenager Migrants: A Case Study of Arabic and Persian Communities in Australia

- 5 years

5. In what contexts did you use your languages before and after coming to Australia? Or before coming to Australia, under which circumstances did you use English, your first language?

- I use English at school and rarely use Persian in Australia and the opposite thing in Iran as I had English class at school.

6. Give a rough percentage of the language use, how much English, how much of your first language?

- Out side home 80% English, at home 95% Persian

7. On an average day, who do you usually interact with and what language?

- Friends = English and Persian, parents = Persian

8. What media, e.g. newspapers, television, internet do you access and what language?

- TV: 70% Persian, 30% English

9. What language- specific issues/problems have you encountered in speaking your languages?

- My Persian accent because sometimes my friends make fun of me

10. What do you feel about this transition in your languages, e.g. losing or keeping language?

- I feel I am gradually losing Persian language because in some cases I need to use only English.