



سارة الأنواري

Sara A Al Kuwari

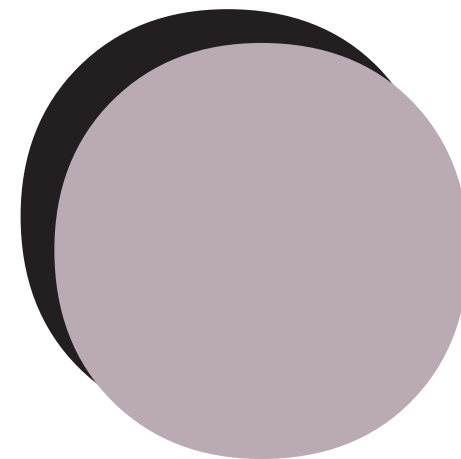
ميجان فاث

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I, Sara Al Kuwari, am developing an *Arabic language program for Arab parents living in the U.S* to help them teach their kids the language, maintain it and avoid significant communication challenges in the future.



Language is a communicational system and method, either spoken or written human use among them. Language is a very valuable source for a culture, there are around 6,500 spoken languages in the world today, and that number keeps declining every year.

Arabic language is my first language, it is my country official language. Arabic language is ranked the top 4th in most spoken language in the world with the number of 295 million speakers, and it is one of oldest languages. In the past decade, I have notice how Qatari young generation are influenced to use a foreign language (English) as their main one in communication that can eventually lead to a gap in communication between individuals, communities and affect social relations personally and professionally. It is known as Language shift, which is a process of gradual displacement of one language by another in the lives of the community members. This problem has grabbed my attention once I heard a grandmother expressing how frustrating it is for her not being able to communicate with her grandson because he can't speak Arabic and she can't speak English.

Communication is key to any relationships, Paul J. Meyer said, "Communication--the human connection--is the key to personal and career success." how will this young generation succeed if both parties do not share a common language, where they will be able to communicate.

After gate one, I have shifted my context from Qatar (young generation) to US (Arab families), due to audience accessibility, where it will be easy to reach and approach throughout my thesis process in terms of research, ideating and prototyping.

“If you talk to a man in a *language* he understands, that goes to *his head*. If you talk to him in *his own language*, that goes to *his heart*.”

Nelson Mandela

Problem Reframe +
6 - *Context*

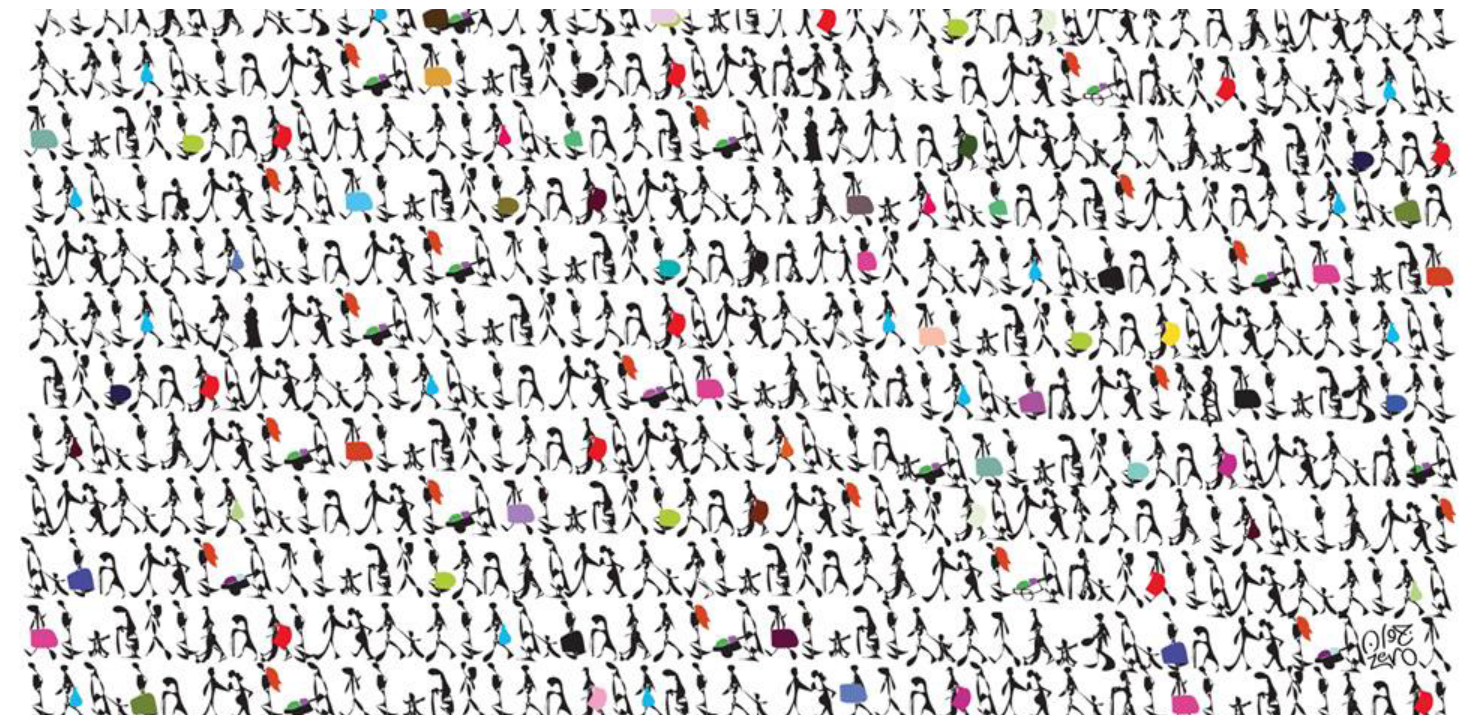
Arab countries are suffering from serious displacement, where so many families are moving abroad for a better opportunity for them. Mostly, because of the political issues, civil wars, job opportunities, and other factors.

“According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), conflict is the primary reason that such staggering numbers of people have been forced to leave their homes and countries.”


Arab expats families temporarily residing in the US, unintentionally creating disadvantages for their children, who are losing their fundamental Arabic language skills. Parents lack advanced resources to keep pace with Arabic learning for their eventual return to their home country.

“Children of immigrants not only lose the ability to communicate with family members, but they also undergo a period of not being fluent in either language (Portes 1998; Wong-Fillmore 1991; McLaughlin, Blanchard & Osanai 1995). Their communities, their academic learning, and their cultural identity suffer because of their language loss.” (Tung)

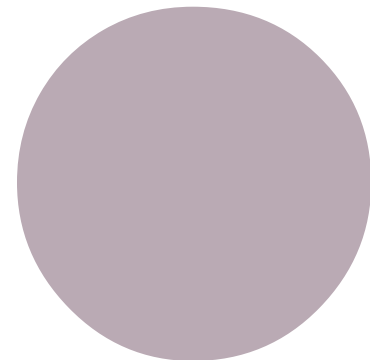
My cousin Al Anoud, most of her childhood she lived abroad because her father is a diplomat. She attended an international school where English is the main language. She grew up knowing her first language Arabic but due to her life abroad, she lost it with time and when she moved back home to Qatar. She has faced difficulties communicating with family members, and until this day she is facing struggled finding a job and doing her job because she didn't know the language. She always relies on someone to translate anything she would come across. Now, my niece, Rosa is in the same position as Al Anoud and many other Arab children.



Artwork - by Juan Zero



*Whats stopping parents
from teaching their
children the Arabic
language*



CONTEXTUAL INTERVIEWS



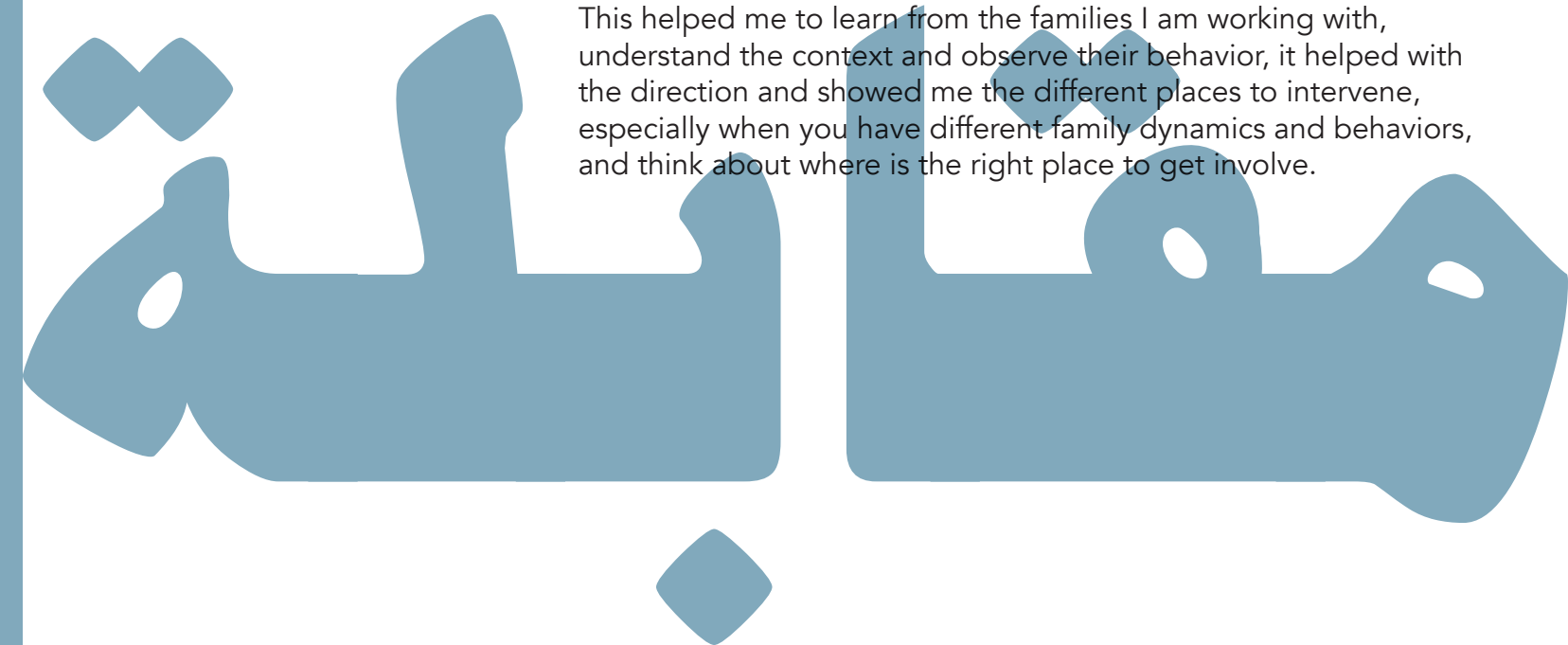
The research methods I have used are the following:

Contextual interviews

The research I have done is to know more about the problem through conducting long contextual interviews with
7 Arab Families
2 Arabic language teachers
2 Adults who are facing challenges with personal and career life because of language.

Before Interviewing people, I have set up a guide questions of the things I want to learn about the family dynamic with Arabic language, the value, behavior, how often they use it, when do they use it, do they read, do they get Arabic books and from where, family interaction with each other with both languages Arabic and English. The overall thoughts about language, language interaction within the family, community, friends and especially their extended family back home and community.

This helped me to learn from the families I am working with, understand the context and observe their behavior, it helped with the direction and showed me the different places to intervene, especially when you have different family dynamics and behaviors, and think about where is the right place to get involve.



"They are trying and sometimes they get frustrated, whenever they face a hard understanding from anyone they would come to me and I would help them understand by explaining to them what the other person said... it is very possible for parents to teach their kids if they have the knowledge, research and materials to teach their kids arabic."

Sara A - Sudan - Mother of 4 children

"I do different things and approaches here and there but it's not maintainable."

Neamat - Egypt - Mother of 4 children

"I want to teach her but time is really tricky and teaching can be really challenging"

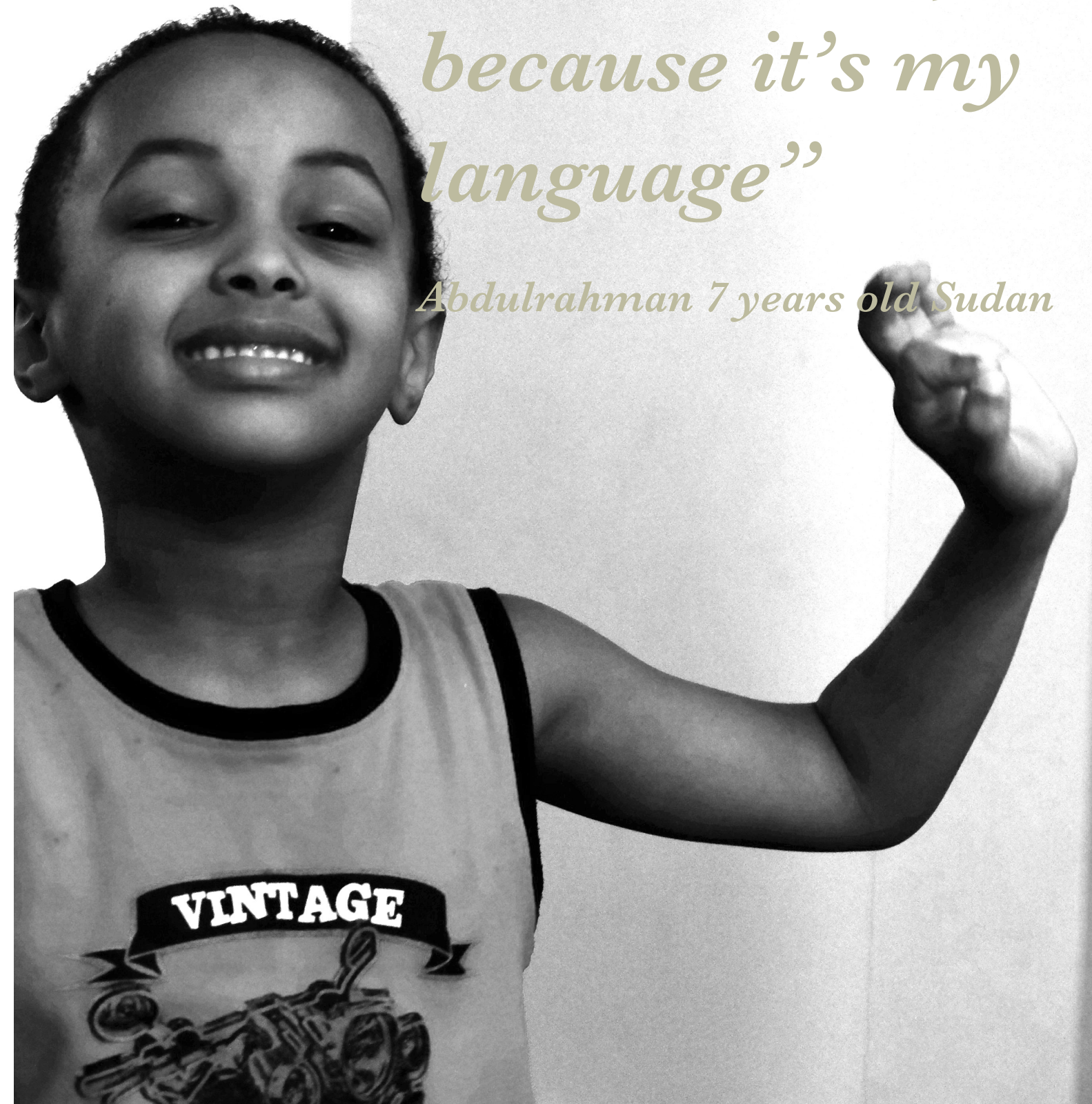
Muataz - Sudan - Father of 2

"I want to communicate with my father in his language (arabic) just like I'm communicating with my mom in her language (Spanish)"

Lily 7 years old

"I want to be able to read Arabic Books, because it's my language"

Abdulrahman 7 years old Sudan





Reframes

Before going through with the research I have listed assumptions about the problem, and with the research, it will help to validate those assumptions and reframe what I used to know and what I know now.

I used to think that parents did not want to teach their kids Arabic language, **now I know** they do not have the knowledge of language teaching methods and approaches.

I used to think that parents had the accessibility to get Arabic books easily, **now I know** they don't have the option to choose from the variation of Arabic books

I used to think that kids did not have an interest in learning the Arabic language, **now I know** they identify their first language the Arabic and are willing to learn the formal Arabic (Alfoshah) and their own dialect and cultural literature.

I used to think that parents talk to their kids in English, **now I know** they communicate in Arabic, the kids will understand but wouldn't reply in the same language

I used to think that kids are not able to communicate in Arabic, **now I know** they are willing, but afraid of messing up, and get embarrassed.

Insights

These following insights and observations are conducted from the research:

- Parents lack time to plan, organize and teach their kids the formal Arabic language.
- Teaching the language requires research, planning, and knowledge
- Parents are not familiar with the teaching methods and approaches
- Lack of resources "modern learning materials" for the parents to use
- Parents are hesitant in ways to approach teaching their kid's Arabic language.
- Kids are willing to learn to communicate with others (family member + friends)
- Kids consider their first language is Arabic.
- Parents can't afford to take their kids to Arabic language classes.
- Parents are not basing their teaching materials on a reliable source.
- Lack of continuous program to leverage sustainable learning methods.

I am defining my target user to be Arab Parents and the beneficiaries their kids (6 - 10 years old)



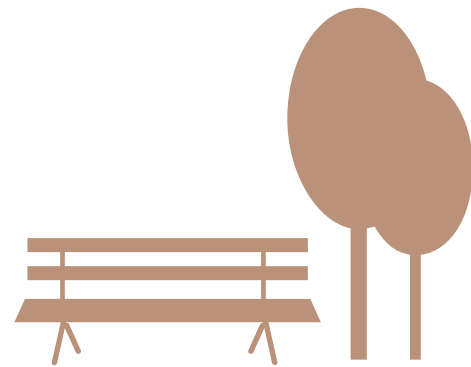
Family Book Club

How?
A weekly or monthly book for the family to read, then set a date to discuss it.
Translating an easy English book they like, to Arabic language - together or small groups.
Write a short story in Arabic, then sharing it with the family
Why?
Helping the child to explore Arabic books and encourage to widen his perspective on Arabic cultures and strengthen his Arabic reading, writing and speaking skills.



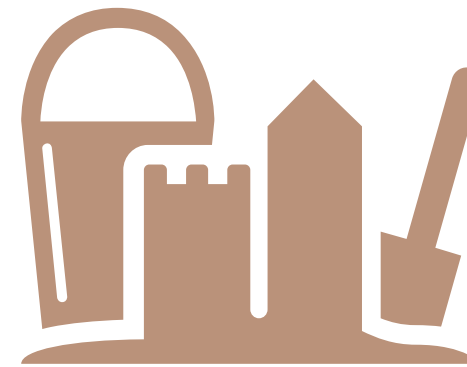
Family Calendar

*Each member log in when will be the best to have the Arabic learning sessions
*Each (older) member will have to take turns to plan and facilitate the Arabic learning sessions if younger family members want to do it, then a parent will help facilitate
*The calendar would compliment the family weekend class and the family book club.



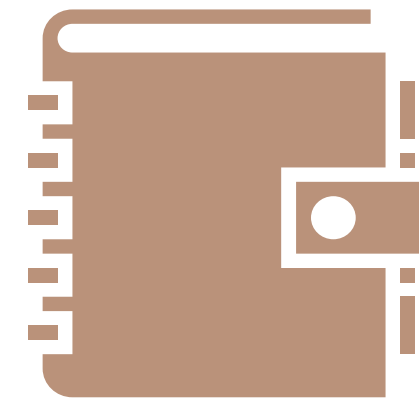
Outdoor Learning

A weekend outing, each member takes photos of things, they would want to learn about in Arabic.
Going to the park, picnic competition with another Arabic family - two families competing against each other to various activities and games regarding Arabic learning.
Going to the zoo to learn about animals in Arabic.



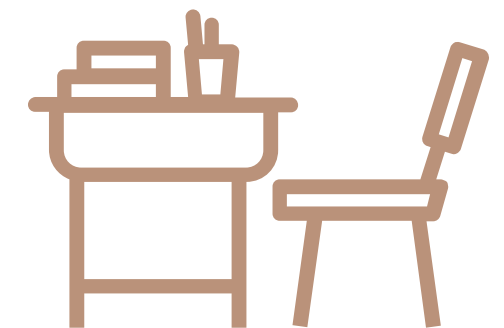
Active Learning

* (Alphabet Menu)
* (Numbers Menu)
a toolkit to teach the child the alphabets and numbers by activities such as connecting the dots, shaping letters and words with play dough and sand writing.



Journal

* A good design journal that would help the parent to plan Arabic learning sessions, activities, log in achievements and track goals



Weekend Class

* A class will take place on the weekend by a parent
* A well-designed guide that would help the parent teach the kids the basics of Arabic language
* The guide will have materials and tools to teach and guide the parent on how to teach the kids



More Culture

- * learning the culture and language together.
- * Specific Arab country (poem, words, Idioms and stories, food, music, and customs)
- To widen the kids perspective about the different cultures that speaks the same language, learning the language through it



Website

- * Contains Lessons
- * Kids could interact with other kids
- * Families interacting with other families
- * Competitions + Games
- * Game Levels



Phone App

- How?
- * It would contain: Lessons + games + activities
 - It would introduce Al fosha (formal) + different Arabic Dialects
- Why?
- * To learn the different dialect, so the kid wouldn't face any difficulties connecting and understanding to Arab people from different Arab countries.

Before deciding on what kind of intervention I am aiming for, I have done different prototypes of the previous ideas to get to know more about the kid's current knowledge of Arabic, the parents teaching skills, family dynamics, and common patterns. I was looking closely and paying attention to kids engagement with their parents, and when does the parent lose control and stray away from the purpose of teaching and learning the Arabic language.

FAMILY CLASS

Material:

Using Arabic Al phablets Cards (Insert pictures of the tool)

Process:

- The mom started introducing 4 letters
- pronouncing the letters and introducing words that started with these letters.
- Children guessing other words that start with these letters.
- Then each child would pick 2 letters they are familiar with, and give a lesson to the whole family, taking the teacher role with the help of their parents if they needed it.

Learnings:

- Kids were highly competing with each other in identifying the letters and vocabulary
- Parent was not confident with teaching the kids and easily distracted by other factors
- Material availability have helped tremendously with giving the parent direction
- A facilitation tool and guideline would help the parent to stay in control and push in confidence in what they are teaching their kids





BOOK CLUB

Material:

English + Arabic storybooks

Process:

Version 1

Each child would tell and translate one of their English story books to Arabic to the rest of the family, using as much Arabic as they know, with the help of the parent.

Version 2

Each child would narrate Arabic story based on the visuals, with as much Arabic language as they know

Learnings:

- Kids were highly engaged despite the fact they couldn't read the Arabic book
- Taking turns was really helpful for the whole family to be included and in control
- Making Connections between the two languages (Arabic + English) through vocabulary
- Family discussion about translating the content, opening conversation and dialog around the Arabic language.
- It would help to create themes for each week of the month, writing stories and reading them and discussion guide and goal list that would help that parent into a certain direction and measure achievements.



OUTDOOR LEARNING

Material:

Cards with Arabic nouns written in Arabic and English with the description on the back in the English language.

Process: (one example: grocery shopping)

-Mom gives the kids cards that contain the items she's shopping for. They would have to guess and help her get them.

-Kids would read the item name + hints (description) at the back of the card, guess and collaboratively get it.

Learnings:

Before introducing this prototype, I have asked the mom to teach her kids about grocery shopping or items using Arabic Vocabulary, to observe and gain perspective of her teaching style in another context (public place). The outcome was no control of the kids because they were distracted to get things, unorganized, forgettable.

After introducing the grocery learning game to the mom, the kids were more focused and interested, the parent was more in control on what she is teaching them, it created a conversation about difference between their dialect and the formal Arabic (the items name on the cards written in formal Arabic) It turned to be more of a conversation than a game.

Parents common feedback:

"The store was too crowded"

"The cards were helpful to guide and the kids were having fun"

"the process was quick and easy but some of the outdoor elements can affect it, it would work more with one child and if more than one, it would be helpful to turn this into a home setting, like after getting the groceries, and putting away in the kitchen setting and play that game."





From these three interventions, I am learning about the family dynamics, identifying the children knowledge of Arabic language, observing their attitude and mood (enjoyment vs. boredom) and their level of excitement and engagement, the parents teaching skills, interaction with the kids and when do they lose control, and when do they get distracted.

From all these pre-interventions, I have concluded I have to embed the Arabic learnings within the family daily life. Giving the parents the material of what and how they can teach their kids because one of the main issues, the parents not knowing the basic principles of how they go about it. One of the common concerns, they would question If they are giving too much knowledge in one lesson, and how do they teach these materials. I am trying to develop a simple, basic and knowledgeable program for them to use for their kids to learn weekly. I have a reliable source (an Arabic Language teacher) who is helping me with designing this program in terms of content.

OVERALL LEARNING



Lugaty is an Arabic language teaching program for Arab parents to use to teach their kids the language when they are living abroad. It will help Arab children maintain their fluency and avoid communication challenges in the future. The beginner version consists of three parts that would be eligible for children in the age range of 6 - 10 years old. The beginner version consists of three parts (Horoufy, Kalimaty and Yalla Nilaab)

HOW MY APPROACH IS DIFFERENT AND INNOVATIVE?

Intimate
Home Setting
Collaborative
Active
Fun
Interactive
Family
Oriented
Daily

The parents have said how the materials they got are outdated, they also explained how if they got them, the kids will be engaged for a short period of time. The learnings and maintaining the language is not sustainable.

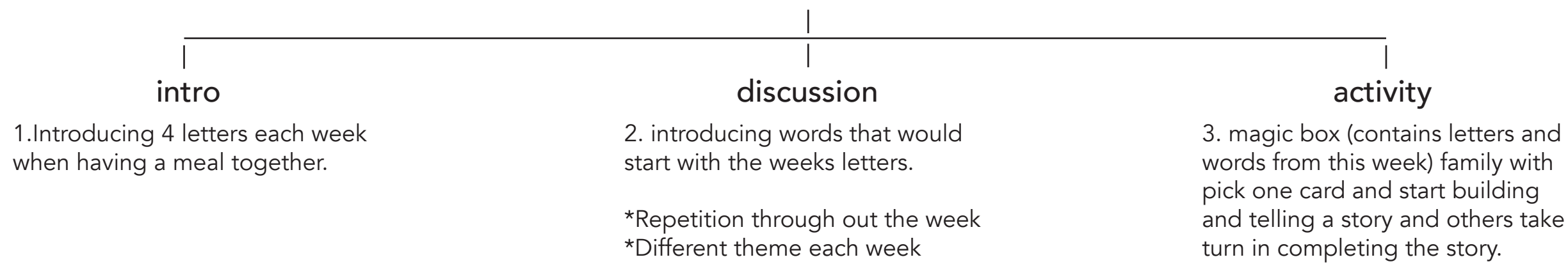
My approach is to

- Keep the learning sustainable for the long run.
- Providing the directions and resources for the parents to build their confident and teaching skills.
- Help the parents to organize the goals and outcomes.
- Simple directions for the kids, keeping them engaged, motivated, excited and be fun for them. A way that doesn't take much energy and time for both the kids and parents.



2-10 years old Parents

Phase ONE	1. introducing the vowels letters	2 - 10 years old
	2. alphabets (horouf) sounds not names (MAX 4 letters)	
	3. letters connected to the vowels letters (MAX 7 letters)	6 - 10 years old
Phase TWO	1. words that contains 2 vowels letters per word	6 - 10 years old
	2. 3 - 4 letters word breaking them apart (silent letter vowel)	
Phase THREE	1. Words with short vowel marks	6 - 10 years old





أ alef

Monday 20.Feb.2017
الاثنين

ب baa

Tuesday 21.Feb.2017
الثلاثاء

ت taa

Wednesday 22.Feb.2017
الاربعاء

ث thaa

Thursday 23.Feb.2017
الخميس

ج jeem

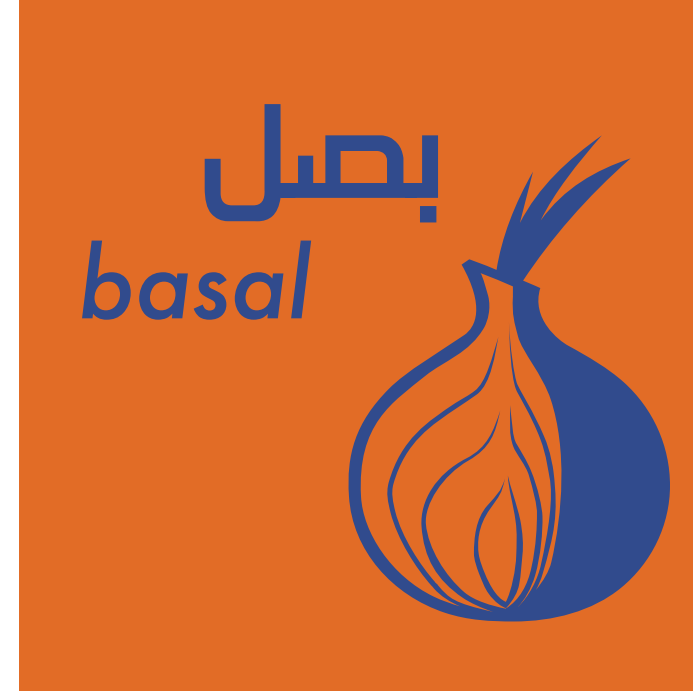
Friday 24.Feb.2017
الجمعة

ح haa

Saturday 25.Feb.2017
السبت

خ khaa

Sunday 26.Feb.2017
الاحد





حرف	اسم	جماد	حيوان	نبات	بلاد
أ	أحمد	آلة	أسد	أناناس	أمريكا
ج	جاسم	جسر	جمل	جزر	جيبوتي





HOROUFY (my letters)

is an interactive calendar, each day would have a letter of the day and how to pronounce it (written in English), the kids get to rip off the card and hang or stick it anywhere in the house.

For the children to see it whenever they pass by it, I am trying to embed one of the principles of learning "repetition" within the week, so they will eventually memorize it. They are learning 3 to 4 letters a week and they are repeated.





KALIMATY (my words)

A similar form of the calendar, except it, contains words that begin with the letter of the day, the children have learned earlier. For example, when the family gathers around the dining table for any meals. The mom introduces the word of the day and has an open discussion about the word or other words that begin with the same letter. They get to stick the word next to the calendar card. Each week, the words are thematized, for example, animals, objects, fruits, and vegetables.





YALLA NILAAB (lets play)

a weekend learning family activity that parents will coordinate the program, where they will get to test the children learnings through them. For example, Magic box: It contains all the words they have learned - family sits in a circle, one member pick a card and starts telling a story, and the next get to build up to their story and so on.



Worksheets + Printable

to help the kids to explore topics they have learned, practice skills and build their knowledge. It is also for parents to test their kids knowledge. The worksheets consist draw a line to match between two categories, writing and spelling exercises.



Mix & Match (words and visuals) 1st attempt

Children were really excited to play with what they have learned. Unfortunately, our first attempt with words and visuals wasn't really successful because they just have begun learning the alphabets and couldn't read the words, it was almost foreign language for the children. On the other hand, even they couldn't match them, they were able to recognize the alphabets within the words and discuss it among themselves. Then the mom started to guide and teach them.

Mix & Match (letters and visual) 2nd attempt

Our second attempt was with the letters and the visuals of the words only, it was really successful. They almost got every letter and visual right. It also created a very interesting conversation on dialect (formal and native), other names of the visual and pronunciations of letters and words. Two parents from two families were really happy with the results, both expressed how comfortable and simple it is, surprised how their children were engaged in these activities.





Memory Matching Game

The children would match Arabic letter with pronunciation written in English. This attempt was really successful as well. The children of both families managed to match them all. This game was more competitive because each child wanted to beat the other with who's going to finish the matching first.

I have prototyped with the families for almost 2 months, with on and off weeks in between. I have introduced Horoufy (my letters) and Kalimaty (my words) and explained the process to the parents. They used them for a week. over the weekend, I went to prototyped Yalla Nilaab. I have asked the parents about their feedback, what they think was successful, what didn't work out, how was the children behavior towards it.

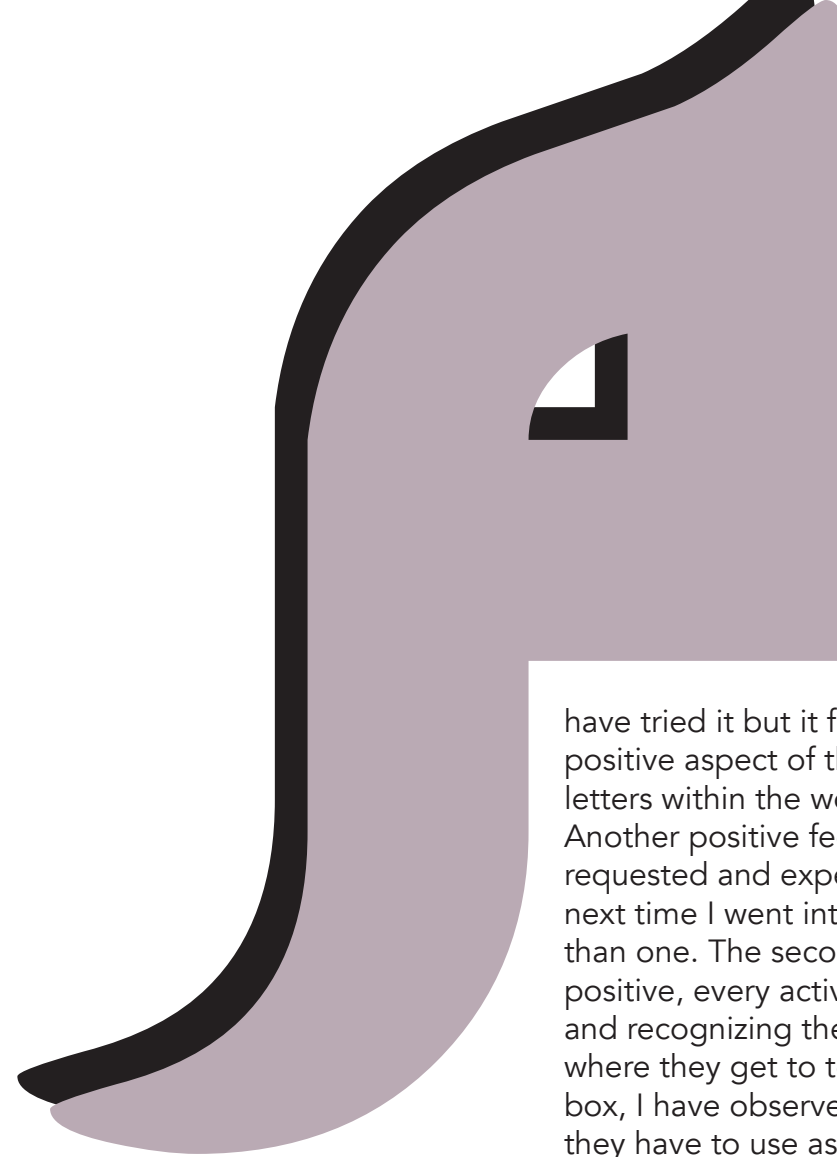
Most of the feedback I have gotten back from the parents when they were using it for a week, is that the format was simple, easy to use, at first it was challenging to get it in the daily habits.

One of the parents, Razaz said, **“even though it is just the basic Arabic alphabets and the process is simple and smooth, but I think my kids are learning and a conversation started to emerge about the Arabic language which is something promising.”**

Neamat said **“I like how the calendar has the letter was written in Arabic, but also the pronunciation in English because my kids are not familiar at all with the Arabic, even though they are certain pronunciations are not very accurate because of the difference of language but I take that opportunity to teach them.”**

Yalla Nilaab is a set of activities for the kids to do over the weekend to test their learnings and play around with they have learned. It is designed for the parents to keep track on her kid's knowledge and learning through them as well.

One parent suggested with the Mix and Match, we should put words and visuals, even though I disagreed because her children didn't know how to read, but she thought her kids would be able to recognize the words and match them to the visual. We



have tried it but it failed due to the fact they couldn't read but the positive aspect of this attempt, they were able to recognize the letters within the words.

Another positive feedback I got is from the children when they requested and expected to be more activities. That's why the next time I went into the prototype, I made sure to include more than one. The second time, the results of all the activities were positive, every activity they did have proven they were learning and recognizing the letter and words. When they did magic box, where they get to tell a story with what card they draw from the box, I have observed they weren't as confident because the rule is they have to use as many Arabic words as they know. There should a way to improve the Magic Box to boost their confidence, a tool where it would help connect words and form sentences.

“we need to shift the paradigm by increasing the opportunities and choices for students and families to those that support the acquisition of academic English, while simultaneously developing the students' native language and teaching the students content.”
(Tung)

I've shared this program with Arab parents living in New York City, they have expressed how they talked to their friends and relatives who lives abroad about it and said they are community and parents who are struggling with this problem, witnessing their kids losing their first language and worried about the consequences in the future. I believe there is a great need for this teaching method and approach to families who are living in a foreign country and I also believe, there is a possibility for this program to be applied to other languages. The world is becoming more diverse and people are leaving their home country to other foreign countries for whatever reason. Language is one way to make them feel connected to where they are from.

Next Steps

Moving forward, I am hoping to build a partnership with the following:

- Arab-American association - New York
- Arab American Institute Washington DC
- Arab American Family Support Center - New York
- Arab American Community Cultural Center - New York

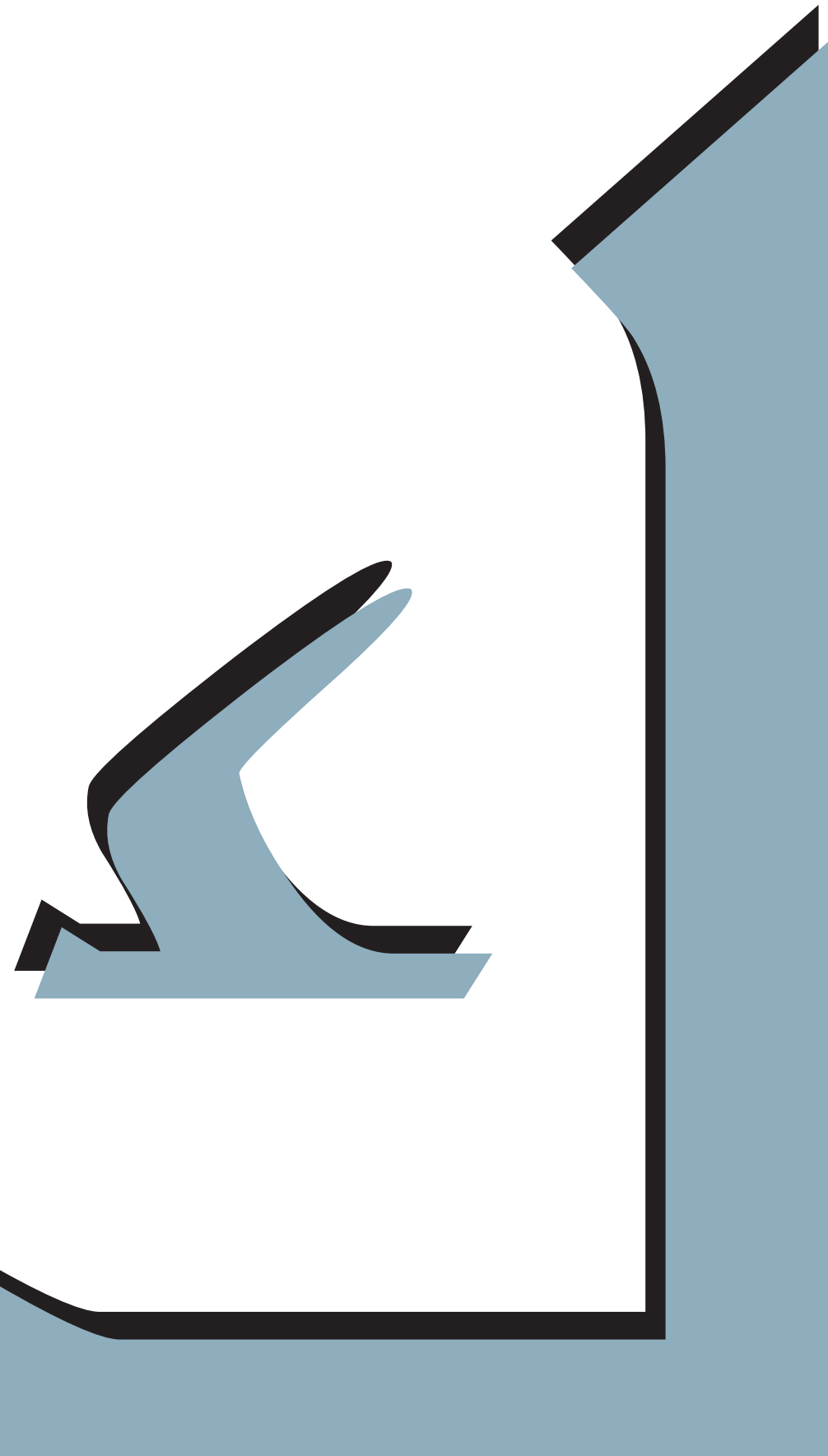
to get access to a bigger community and expand the program further. I am hoping to test and iterate my program, improve the methods and approaches, expand it into advanced levels and refine them. I am hoping to develop an online platform where Lugaty can be available for the families to subscribe, get the material by delivering or downloading, use it and benefit the whole family.

This past year working on my thesis, I have learned so much about my topic but also the process of social design, innovation, human-centered design and building relationship with the community and people designing and working with them and not for them.

I have experienced challenges with getting in contact with the families, but it is a process of communicating, contacting, and connecting by building trust and interest between me and the families I have been working with. I have come across trying to contact Arab centers to get into the community but I have learned that I need to be persistence towards achieving my goals.

I believed in what I was doing, I knew it is a social problem and there are people who would benefit from my project. I made mistake along my process but I also learned from them. Looking back, there are ways where I could've done things differently but now I can move forward with all the things I have learned and apply in future projects.

I am hoping to make an impact in learning and maintaining the Arabic language learning within Arab families daily life and hoping to develop Arab children native language and will not experience any communicational challenges in the future.



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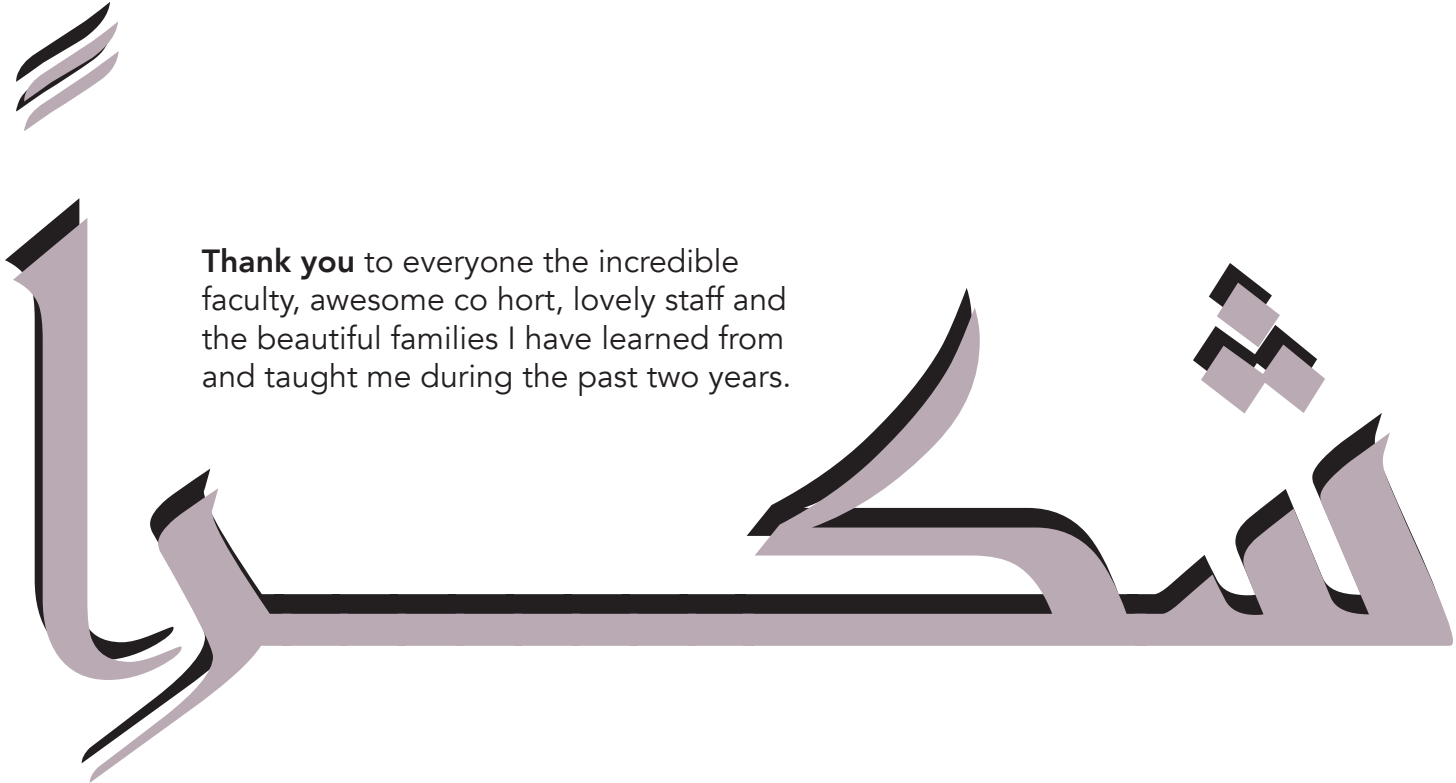
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United States Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/>

Ethnologue, <https://www.ethnologue.com>

Georgetown University, <https://sfs.georgetown.edu/forced-migration-and-internal-displacement-in-the-arab-world-and-beyond/>

Arab American Community Cultural Center, <http://www.arabamerica.com/new-york/>



Thank you to everyone the incredible faculty, awesome co hort, lovely staff and the beautiful families I have learned from and taught me during the past two years.

