Second Language Learning and the Clash of Civilizations

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Abstract
This researchinvestigates the relationship amongsecond language learning, identity, culture, and motivation in Saudi Arabia (SA). SA's education system concentrates on teaching, while identity and social aspects have only been given little attention. The researcher seeks to redress this balance by exploring the impact of pupils' negative views toward the linguistic communities and of themselves as Muslim pupils. It aims to investigate how negative views toward the English language speaking communities could affect or demotivate Arab Muslim female learners to learn the language. The researcher supports the arguments using a qualitative approach and data drawn from pupils' focus group interviews and one-to-one teachers' interviews. The current study involves 132 second-year pupils from a secondary public school in Taif city, in SA and three Saudi English language teachers.The findings indicate the impact of various social factors relevant to the Saudi identity and culture on pupils' English as a second language (ESL) learning in the Saudi context. Participants' beliefs and practices of ESL appear to be influenced by certain negative views towardthe English- speaking communities.Finally, the study recommends extending the setting of the sample for future study to include more than one city in order to compare cultural and social attributes that impact ESL, ascultures and identities vary from one area to another in SA.
Keywords: Beliefs; culture; identity; motivation; second language learning

Background

English has been the only foreign language taught in Saudi Arabia's (SA) public schools for more than 50 years, starting from year seven to year eleven in secondary school (Al-Mutawa&Kailani, 1989); recently, it has been taught during year six, and from an age as early as kindergarten in most private schools. Furthermore, English is the language of instruction in all science university courses. As a result of SA's leading economic role at the international level, the Saudi Arabian government has realized the great demand to learn English as a means of communication with the outside world. In addition, beside Arabic, English is the only language used in hospitals, shops, and other public places; therefore, English could be regarded as a second language in SA. However, learning English in the Saudi context might clash with the mother tongue and the local cultures. This clash could result from certain social images created toward the target language culture and speakers, which as a result could affect or even demotivate language learners and discourage them to use English.

The proposed study intends to enrich the research of English learning and teaching in SA and fill this gap between cultural differences by interviewing a number of pupils and teachers in order to explore howdemotivating factors can affect pupils' learning process. It also investigates teachers' and learners' attitudes toward English and explores what could discourage pupils from learning English.

Basic objectives of the study

The main aim of this paper is to discover factors that may impact ESL pupils' attitudes toward the speakers of English on motivating their learning in the Saudi context.The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To explore pupils' attitudes toward English language and culture.
- To explore pupils' assumptions about English language and culture.
- To describe how learning English is related to pupils' identity construction.
- To explore the influence of negative images toward the English-speaking communities on ESL that could affect or demotivate female learners in the Saudi context.

Literature review

This section attempts to review the relative literature to the proposed paper. It briefly examines language in relation to identity, culture and motivation. It subsequently explores the relationship between motivation and ESL. It also discusses how culture and identity can affect ESL, especially in the context of Islamic countries such as SA.

Motivation in ESL

Given the complicated nature of motivation,which varies according to the dynamic changes in a person's psychology, it is not an easy task to define this phenomenon. Harmer (1991) describes motivation as the internal drive that pushes somebody to do something. If we think that our goal is worth doing and attractive for us, then we try to reach that goal; this is called the action driven by motivation.Learning and motivation are two fundamental components necessary to reach a goal; learning enables us to obtain knowledge, while motivation attracts us to become involved in the learning process (Parsons, Hinson, & Brown, 2001).Teachers also argue that pupils interested in language learning perform better than those who are not motivated.

Much debate has surrounded the importance of motivation in language learning, and it has been agreed that motivation is one of the influential factors in ESL. Ellis (1994) states that "SLA research... views motivation as a key factor in L2 learning" (p. 508). McDonough (1986) supports this argument, pointing out that the "motivation of the students is one of the most important factors influencing their success or failure in learning the language" (p. 142). Moreover, Karahan(2007) explains that "positive language attitudes let learners have positive orientation toward learning English" (p. 84). Researchers have also defined motivation as a complex task that could be explained through two aspects: the pupils' need to communicate during class and their attitudes about the language speakers (Lightbown, Spada, Ranta, & Rand, 2006). An exploratory study conducted by Dornyei and Ushioda(2011) found that negative attitudes toward language learning and negative views toward the communities in which the language is spokencould also decrease learners' enthusiasm.

Moreover, numerous studies have stressed the importance of parental encouragement in enhancing learners' motivation (Gardner, 1985; Kormos & Csizer, 2008; Ryan, 2009; Williams & Burden, 1997).Indeed, certain social and cultural variables,such as parents, society and teachers,could be vital factors affecting ESL by influencing pupils' motivation.

Language and culture
Language is one of the most significant elements in identifying a society or a social group in which it transfers its cultures, customs, values, beliefs, and social attributes. "Knowing a second language allows one to transcend the cultural borders of one's own language group and access the views and ideas of another culture" (Kim, 2003, p. 150). According to this view, some people might think that English can serve as a tool for transferring values, ideas, and beliefs that threaten Islamic beliefs and the preservation of Saudi cultural values, thereby demotivating pupils to learn English. Other people believe that language learning might positively impact people by transferring positive and useful ideologies from other cultures, such as modernity and respect, without any clashing with local cultures.

Due to the strong relationship between language and culture, it is difficult to analyse them independently (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; Hinkel, 2005; Peterson & Coltrane, 2003). In this regard, Lafayette (1988) argues that:

> Language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture. The acquisition of a second language … is also the acquisition of a second culture (p. 19).

Kramsch and Widdowson(2001) refer to language and culture as two inseparable components. Language is the tool of communication, whereas culture reflects the content of our communication. They argue that:

> The words people utter refer to common experience. They express facts, ideas, or events that are communicable because they refer to a stock of knowledge about the world that other people share. Words also reflect their authors' attitudes and beliefs, their point of

view that are also those of others. In both cases, language expresses cultural reality (Kramsch & Widdowson, 2001, p. 3).

Morgan (2001) also describes language as a means of understanding beliefs, values, attitudes, and all other attributes that shape our lives. Cognitive developmentalists such as Lev Vygotskyhave explained the relationship between language and culture as "the overlapping parts, thought and speech coincide to produce verbal thought" (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 42).

In some societies, language is dramatically empowered by culture for various reasons. For example, in the Islamic Arabic context, the Arabic language has cultural significance (Chejne, 1969) as the greatest language in the world in addition to English, French, Russian, Latin, and Greek. This designation stems not only from the number of people who use it, but also from its cultural and religious position in Islamic Arabic societies. The Arabic language is also a tool for identifying the Arabic national identity (Suleiman, 2003). Suleiman's(1999)study explores the relationship between language and society in the Middle East and North Africa. He argues that, as the Arabic language plays a vital role in the construction of the Arabic and Islamic identities, both language and culture must be considered in the creation of language policy. Thus, some people feel threatened by the act of learning English because they think that speaking other languages such as English will lead to the disappearance of the Arabic language and its culture.. Moreover, some Muslims in the Islamic world, such as Saudi Arabia, consider language and religion to be two crucial powers for cultural colonization (Al Ahmed, 2011). In some Muslim countries, people feel they risk westernization if they communicate with Western people, who will impact their Islamic identity. Therefore, some researchers and journalists have recommended imposing penalties for those people who use English without any need such as using certain English words, especially in Arabic newspapers and magazines (Donya, 2010). These reactions illustrate the status of the English language for many people in SA,such a status is consistent across almost all Arab nations.In light of the empowered position of the Arabic language, any other language might conflict with Arabic within the Islamic Arabic context. Harris and New (1991) describe learning the English as a challenge for Muslims and a cultural battle between Islam and Christianity, two important elements of the culture embodied by the English and Arabic languages. Shafi(1983) suggests that the spread of language and religion is the clearest indicator of colonialism. Therefore, the English language is regarded to some extent as a threat to Islamic societies.

Examining the status of the English language in the Arab world, we notice the collision some people experience between the native and target languages and their cultures and ideologies.Indeed, "it is through language that a person negotiates a sense of self within and across different sites at different points in time" (Norton, 2000, p. 5). The relationship among language, culture and identity can help people understand and perceive themselves and others, while also giving them a sense of belonging to a specific group or groups with which they want to identify by using specific language markers (Falout & Maruyama, 2004). According to this view, people might think that English can serve as a tool of westernization that threatens Islamic beliefs and the preservation of Saudi cultural values, thereby demotivating pupils to learn English. Gray (2000) argues that forcing learners in the target culture to learn English might lead to the complete rejection of language learning. Within the Saudi context, some people feel that

the English language inputs do not match the Arabic and the Islamic society and culture (Al Ahmed, 2011).

Based on the arguments discussed thus far, we can conclude that the environment could be a motivating or a demotivating factor for language learning. In addition, social and cultural surroundings and their relevance to language learning could influence learners' identities and attitudes to use English interactively as well as affect the process of language learning.Previous research has also shown the impact of culture on ESL learning. Such influence of culture in ESL learning could be shaped by several local and global variables, including values, religion, and tradition. The current study findings further indicate that ESL learning in the Saudi context is also affected by certain local and global social variables that sometimes clash and at other times agree.

In the next section, the author introduces an overview of the nature of these multiple identities and how they are employed in multilingual settings in an attempt to understand the situation of females learning English in SA.

Bilingual speakers
When a speaker chooses certain linguistic forms, he or she is conscious of the social meaning they present. Garret (2007) assertsthat when bilinguals "use particular linguistic resources in a particular context or at particular moment of interaction" (p. 234), they purposely want to show their identity. For female Saudi bilinguals, this interrelationship between languages and the social meaning they present is obvious and complex; it is affected by local religious and cultural variables. The goal of being an ideal Muslim woman influences females' choice of certain linguistic forms. They attempt to reflect a preserved image of themselves as an ideal Muslim woman within the religious and sociocultural borders.(Baker, 2008; Holmes & Meyerhoff, 2008; Kobayashi, 2002; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2004).Such negotiation between the two languages' ideologies may result in a hybrid culture and environment, which occurs with identity negotiation and modification between the native and the target languages. Therefore, some have argued that to understand a second language, a speaker of another language should adapt to the new culture. However, learning another language in a non-native setting may lead to culture shock resulting from the contradictions between the native and the target language cultures; therefore, learners may become confused regarding how to use the new linguistic forms and how to adapt them within the native culture and identities.

The status of the English language in the Saudi context is complicated as it is influenced by different social factors. Saudi Muslim females sometimes feel confused when adapting both the Arabic and the English codes, as the ideologies and cultures held by these codes may differ or even clash with the individuals' perceptions of themselves as ideal Muslim Arabic females.

Methodology
This section discussesthe research design, methodology, and methods used in the current study. It also it explains the rationale for using a case study approach, with some brief information about the research participants and the research ethics.

Case study approach
In order to fulfillthe current study's objectives, a case study method was adopted that included one secondary school with ESL pupils and teachers. A case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2003, p. 13). The choice of a case study approach for the current study is significant and appropriate for answeringthe why and how questions proposed in this study. Moreover, this approach is suitable for studying complex settings involving social aspects such as identity, culture and religion.

Research participants
The current study sample involved 132 second-year pupils from a secondary public school in Taif city and three Saudi English language teachers. The researcher interviewed 30 pupils, divided into five groups of five to six pupils. The study sample groups met at least half an hour three to seven times over a period of four months.

In addition, the researcher interviewed three English teachers individually once or twice at the end of the study according to their availability. The researcher was the only person who had access to these data. Only females were involved. It would be difficult to include male students due to cultural reasons that do not allow direct contact between males and females.

Methods of data collection
According to Silverman (2013), methodology encompasses the process of studying a certain phenomenon and selecting a case study, tools and methods used for data gathering and analysis. Meanwhile, „methods refers to the procedures, tools and techniques utilized to collectthe data (Kaplan, 1973), including quantitative and qualitative techniques such as questionnaires, interviews, surveys and case studies. This research has used focus groups and individual interviews, classroom observations and multimodal materials.

Interviews
Thecurrent study relied on interviews because "interviews can reach the parts which other methods cannot reach … allowing a researcher to investigate and prompt things that we cannot observe like interviewee's thoughts, values, prejudices, perceptions, views, feelings and perspectives" (Wellington, 2000, p. 71). Pupil group interviews are preferred in order to "discover how interpretations were collectively constructed through talk and the interchange between respondents in the group situation" (Morley, 1980, p. 33). This method is also useful for reflecting the social realities of a cultural group and is relevant for identifying pupils' implicit beliefs and thoughts about their English learning and how it might be affected by certain cultural practices, whether inside the school or in everyday life (Hughes &DuMont, 2002). Teachers' one-to-one interviews were friendly conversations informally arranged according to the availability of the teachers.

Discussion
This section analyzes and discusses how English language learners who desire to be members of the global linguistic cultures negotiate their identities as Muslim, Arab, and Saudi. It discusses the origins of negative views toward English and how they develop within the cultural and social ideologies. It discusses how negative views about English could affect or even restrict language

learning in the Saudi context, where culture and social principles play significant roles in everyday life.

During data collection, it was noted that pupils refer to the terms "West, Westernization and Western" when expressing their feelings toward English and its cultures; drawingthe attention to the concept of "Westernization" and its impact on language learning. The outcomes suggested that some pupils perceive English as a threat to their own ideologies, which affects their learning. Furthermore, just as positive and idealistic views toward English and its users can motivate language learners, a negative image can be a demotivating factor and might lead to resistance, confusion or the complete rejection of English.

El-Sayed(1993) observed Arabs as foreign language learners and noted a relationship between pupils' low proficiency and negative perception of English cultures. He proposed that:

> …The hostility and suspicion one notices in the Arab students' attitudes toward western language and cultures is natural since it stems from the fact that the west colonized the Arab World and English is viewed by Arab students as a product of imperialism. … They feel that they are compelled to acquire English and they resign to a status of subordination as a result of the cultural and ideological dominance of the native speakers of English in Britain and America. Our students move through the stressful episodes of western acculturation and, as a result, it becomes difficult for truly successful EFL learning situations to occur in Arab classes (pp. 63-64).

This theme sheds light on how some people perceive English as a danger that threatens their identity as Arabs and Muslims. This fear of Westernization seems to affect pupils' attitudes towardEnglish learning along three trajectories:

1. Some pupils overcome their fear through a balance between what they believe about English and its cultures on the one hand and their need for and interest in English on the other. Although these pupils can find their path in language learning, they still might struggle to construct their second language identities within their local beliefs.
2. As a result of negative social views toward English, the second group hesitates and stands confused between being for and against English.
3. The third group includes those pupils who reject English learning due to dissonance between what they believe in themselves and the external belief that English language use is part of Westernization.

Pupil interviews
Quotations from pupil and teacher interviews, collected at different time periods, reflect these trajectories. Typical examples of these three groups are presented below, starting with those who can balance between their fear and their desire to learn English.

> **Muna**: I think that people in our age and the new generation accept English, however, some of them still feel that English might harm their identity, and all parents, old parents, feel that English is dangerous.

…They are not aware that we need English, English is important and everything depends on English, in using the computer and the internet, in hospitals in schools and universities. I remembered when I want to buy a bag, this was in Saudi, and the bag's name was in English, which I could not buy because I did not know its name in English. We should benefit from English but without changing our Islamic beliefs.

…We will never lose our identity, our English teachers are examples. They are still Muslims and Arabs (ps laughing). It depends on the person's personality. Some people may change since they want to change, but if they are convinced with their identity, as a Muslim or as an Arab, it is not easy to be influenced.

…If you use English to facilitate your life, this is fine, but if you like non-Muslim ideas, it is different. Why do you learn English? to understand or just to imitate Westerners? (2-1 L: pupil interview, May 2012).

Muna was aware of the notion that English might be dangerous and might harm Islamic ideologies. She divided people's perceptions toward English into two groups: old and new generations. She thinks that most old-generation people, such as parents and grandparents, reject English because they might not trust new schools and might perceive English to be a threat to their own way of life. Yet, Munaargued that the new generation might accept English and might reject the negative views toward its speakers. Thus, her need to learn English encouraged her to create a balance that allowed her to benefit from English in facilitating her life without affecting her own Islamic identity. Muna's life experiences were motivating factors motivating her to invest in English. Her need for English pushed her to accept it within this unenthusiastic environment that perceives English as a danger, as exemplified in her shopping story about buying a bag whose name she did not know in English. Her experience serves as an example of how some people in SA struggle to learn English and communicate with its speakers. She said that English is essential in our education and healthcare, as well as technology use, but its use should remain within the borders of our own lives and ideological beliefs. She justified her desire to learn English without any fear about creating a balance between what she believes about herself and what she believes about English speakers; for example, she believes that Saudi English-speaking teachers can benefit from English without harming their own identities as Muslims and Arabs. However, she knows that beliefs are not easy to change if people are convinced of their truth.

Maram: …Travelling to a Western country will help me learning English and knowing about other cultures. I will not be worried about my religion because there are a lot of Muslims studying abroad without being influenced by the Western culture. Of course, I might face culture shock and extremely different beliefs, but I know how to deal with this. This will not change me. It will help me to communicate with people there and introduce myself as a Muslim to those people.

… It's impossible to be isolated from the whole world. We need to be aware of other cultures. I don't think that the English culture might influence our Arabic language, religion or culture. This might influence those people who spent the whole of their life in Western countries. We learn English because we need it in everyday life, not because we

want to convert to the Western culture. English language is not something that deals with our beliefs. Even our religion Islam encourages us to learn other languages (2-2 S: pupil interview, May 2012).

The data also contain other examples of pupils' creation of a balance in constructing a second language identity that suits their Islamic ideologies. This balance enabled them to benefit from English and its cultures in the context of their own identities as Muslims and Arabs. Maram's opinion was similar to Muna's as she believes that English is important, but considers local social and religious rules and beliefs to be significant as well.

Maram was aware of the tension between Islamic and cultural ideologies and English language cultures; however, she thinks that ideologies are not easily changed. She thinks that English can only influence those people who are not convinced of their own ideologies or those who spend their entire lives in a Western country, admiring its culture with no consideration of their own identity. This balance allowed Maram to make steady steps in English learning while feeling that she was keeping her own Islamic identity safe.

Moreover, she also employed Islamic ideologies that advocate language learning as a motivating factor to learn English. Applying these Islamic ideologies reduced Muna's worries about losing her identity and facilitated her English learning within her Islamic environment. Furthermore, she considered English to be as a tool for accessing other cultures and introducing herself to the world as a Muslim. This investment in English encouraged Maram to learn English without fear.

Teacher interviews

Teachers also suggested that some pupils' views of English and its users might be influenced by their parents' and relatives' views, thereby providing an implication for language teachers to select their teaching materials with their pupils' ideologies and perceptions in mind.

> **Teacher 'N'**: I think that starting English at an early age is better. I started English when I was five-years-old in America because my father was studying there. I have chosen to be an English teacher because I have a good background in English. I think that our society still has some fear of learning English at an early age because they think that this might influence our religion, our language and our identity as Muslims. However, I think that this is not always the case, I started English when I was five years old and I am still an Arabic person and I speak Arabic fluently. I hope to see my kids fluent in English (Teacher interview, June 2012).

Teacher 'N' explained how language teachers can help their pupils build a balance between their need for English and their fear of losing local ideologies. She recommended that teachers be careful in selecting suitable teaching materials and strategies to ensure that they are consistent with pupils' ideologies and cultures. Teacher 'N's' own experience when she was young served as an example of the balance her parents created to reduce their daughter's fear toward English. She spent part of her childhood in an extremely Western culture without being affected by its ideologies that contradicted her Islamic beliefs. This experience encouraged teacher 'N' to

support the idea of teaching English at an early age and to have her three children learn English in an international school without worrying about their identity as Muslims. However, she does worry about parents who still prefer not to teach their children English because they are anxious about the impact of the language on their children's identity and beliefs. This anxiety stems from their belief of the conflict between local ideologies and linguistic cultures.

> **Teacher 'W'**: I always integrate useful things from the English culture things that are suitable for pupils as Arabic persons and for Muslim society. Language is not only a tool of communicating with people; it is values, beliefs, and ideas. However there are good things from the English culture that do not impact our beliefs or values, such as organization and respect (Teacher interview, May 2012).

Teacher 'W' also confirmed that language is not only a tool of communication, but also a holder of values, beliefs and thoughts. Therefore, the selection of teaching materials should take into account learners' identity and culture as Muslims so as in order to create a balanced atmosphere that enables learners to enjoy learning without fear. She mentioned that choosing suitable ideas that reflect pupils' beliefs, such as respect for time, and that do not contradict local ideologies is a priority in her teaching approach. This strategy allows language teachers to integrate the linguistic culture without threatening pupils' own beliefs and might motivate learners and facilitate the process of language learning.

The following quotations are examples of pupils' confusion between Islamic and cultural ideologies on one hand and linguistic cultures on the other. The sense of tension conveyed might force learners to acquire English with hesitation and confusion.

> **Sarah**: I feel that those people who speak English are special and more communicative. Here in the Arabian countries our chance to speak English is very limited and restricted, we are forced to speak Arabic everywhere. We are not against English learning. We want to learn it and to keep our Arabic language, I know that English learning might influence our Arabic language and weaken it, but Arabic is our first language. No way to lose it. I don't like those people who speak English everywhere and lose their Arabic language. And I noticed that their Arabic language is weak. I would like to keep my Arabic language and benefit from the English(2-2 S: pupil interview, May 2012).

This quotation reveals the second type of pupil, who views English as a danger and cannot adjust to learning it. These pupils might struggle and feel loss as a result of the strong pressure exerted by this belief. Sarah is an example of this confusion that results from social restrictions. She clearly stated her admiration for those people who speak English, describing them as special and more communicative people. However, her social belief that English is harmful to the Arabic identity has forced her to avoid using English and to hate its speakers. She worries about losing her identity as an Arabic person and dissolving into the English language cultures; she provided examples of English users who had lost some of their Arabic language and identity. She could not imagine herself following the same trajectory. This confusion between what she feels and what she sees in real life caused to hesitate in her English learning. Such a confusing situation could demotivate learners or even lead to loss stemming from their wish to speak English versus negative real-life models and the fear of becoming like them.

Amal: Some parents are scared of English and its effects on their kids as Muslims, so they want them to pass rather than to learn. when I say some words in English like (yes, no) my mum asks me to speak properly, she does not want me to speak English at home, one day I asked her to give me money and I said 'money' in English, but she refused to give me money because I said it in English (laughing).

… My grandmother, uncles and aunts do not prefer us to speak English as they think that it is something associated with non-Muslims. My grandmother, God blesses her, died long time ago, asked us not to speak this language.

…They feel that Western people are wrong; they look at the bad side of the Western culture that contradicts with our culture and religion. They just see the negative side of the European culture

…Sometimes I feel that English might impact us, but at the same time I feel that we are a conservative society. Our religion and culture have priority over other thing. If we change our beliefs and ideas, our society won't accept this, and we won't accept this as well. And Quran will protect Arabic language and our identity as Muslims.

…Even children are well raised to be good Muslims. They won't forget their identity since they live in an Islamic environment, and those people who change their identities are exceptions (2-1 L: pupil interview, May 2012).

Various extracts from Amal's interviews as part of the pupil focus group were collected at different points in time. Initially, Amal's perception of the impact of English and its cultures on learners' identities appeared positiveas she described her desire to speak English. However, she indicated that she struggled to find opportunities to use English among parents and relatives, who perceive English as a threat. She relayed how her mother considers speaking English to be an improper behaviour. Amal's mother's refusal to give her money because she asked in English is evidence of some parents' fear and anxiety toward using English. This experience affected the way Ama's perceptions of English. Her grandmother's advice to avoid English was still vivid in Amal's memory and influenced her view of English as associated with non-Muslims. These negative views stem from focusing on the contradictions between Western and Muslim ideologies. Amal's uncomplicated and monocultural view of her society and of English speakersreassured her that her conservative society and protection of the Quran could protect her identity from the dangers of English and its cultures. Moreover, she explained how changing Muslim ideologies could be rejected by society and the people themselves as a way to reduce her fear of English. However, all these factors appeared useless in eliminating Amal's hesitation and confusion because she mentioned that she still sometimes felt that English might affect her identity as a Muslim. This confusion and loss might demotivate Amal in particular and language learners in general and might lead to resistance to language learning.

Eiman: My grandma likes me to speak English, because she lives in America, while my mother is the opposite. She doesn't want me to speak English. She allows me to speak English with my friends but not at home with my family. She says that you should speak Arabic and protect your language.

Eiman: English is cool … but the language of arrogant people.

> …We need English everywhere. Everything now is in English, in supermarkets, in hospitals, with our maids, everywhere. It's very cool to speak English. It's the language for high-class people. However, if I speak English, people will think that I am arrogant. This is because some people speak English just to show off. It's still unacceptable to speak English with some relatives. I mean my older my relatives except my grandmother. They become upset if I speak English in front of them, to my cousin, or my nephew for example (1-G F: pupil interview, April 2012).

Eiman also discussed her confusion and contradictory beliefs toward English, which are a result of her mother's fear of English and her grandmother's influence.Her grandmother, who lives in America, loves English. Having reduced her fear of English through positive experiences with Americans, she recommended that Eiman learn it. This encouraged Eiman to learn English, which she perceives to be necessary in everyday life, such as in hospitals and supermarkets and with maids. This positive view also influenced Eiman's view of English as the language of high-class people. However, her mother's perception of English as a threat to the Arabic language has restricted Eiman's use of English and provoked her fear and anxiety. These contradictory views toward English causedEimanto experience loss, hesitation and confusion. Her belief in the necessity of English and her fear of being criticized for speaking it created a sense of confusion. This mixture of feelings might influence language learners in similar contexts and could affect their motivation and proficiency.

The following quotations are examples of those pupils who rejected English as a result of their negative views of English and its speakers.
Pupil interviews

> **Salma**: There is no need to speak English with them, even just words. We should avoid using English. It is useless. We really do not need it…English might influence our Arabic language. I do not use it at home at all…My family members do not like English as well (1-G F: pupil interview, April 2012).

Salma is typical of those in the study sample who held negative views of English and its communities; such views might negatively affect language learning and lead to the complete rejection of English. Even with the high status English has gained in SA, Salma feels that using English is a form of Westernization that leads to a loss of identity. She perceives English as a threat to her identity as a Muslim and Arabic person and has refused to integrate even a few words. Salma's use of the pronoun 'we' when saying 'we always avoid using English' indicates the strong impact of her family's and relatives' negative perception of English on the way she views English. This shows how parents and relatives play a significant role in influencing their children and creating positive and negative attitudes toward English that might facilitate or restrict its use.

Teacher interviews
> **Teacher 'N'**: Speaking English in all the Arabian Gulf countries is better than in Saudi, I don't know why it is better in Kuwait, in Emirate, in Qatar, and in Egypt. This is even the case if they are uneducated. Maybe this is because people in SA have more fear about

losing their religion than in other countries. Rejecting the teaching of English from primary school is good evidence of this. Many people refuse to allow their kids to speak English and criticize parents who do allow their kids to speak in English (Teacher interview, May 2012).

Teacher 'N' explained that some pupils can create a balance between their fear of English and their desire to learn it. She clarified that negative views in some families can be passed on to their children and resulting in a rejection of English. She noted from her experience as an English teacher in the Saudi context that some parents refuse the integration of English in primary school as they fear losing their identity as Muslims who perceive Islam as a priority in everyday life. She mentioned that some families do not allow their children to use English because of their perception of English as a threat to their ideologies. This feeling of danger could affect language learners negatively and might lead to language rejection; therefore, ideological perspectives should be addressed in language learning.

Conclusion
In the current study, the findings highlighted some pupils' negative beliefs about English. Pupils' narrations during their interviews appeared to indicate that perceiving English culture as a danger to their own culture could negatively affect their feelings toward the English language. Pupils seemed confused, uneasy, or even unable to learn English within this frustrating setting. These findings are similar to those fromGray's(2000) study, which revealed that forcing English language learners in the target culture might lead to the complete rejection of language learning. Some pupils justified their fear of the English language and culture with the contradictions they experienced between their local Islamic cultures and the cultures represented by the English language. Others seemed to justify their resistance to language learning with their family's desire to protect their Islamic Arabic identity and preventing it from disseminating in the non-Islamic cultures; consequently, they do not allow their children to speak English at home and to perceive speaking English as improper. These negative beliefs about English appeared to impact some pupils' attitudes and increasing their anxiety and resistance to learn English, which could sometimes lead to a complete rejection of English. These findings are similar to those of other research (Al Ahmed, 2011; Harris & New, 1991; Shafi, 1983)emphasizing the perception of English language learning among some Muslims as a threat to Islamic identity and culture.
However, the findings also appeared to indicate that some pupils were able to challenge their fear and use English even within these demotivating settings. In other words, some negative views toward the English language and culture do not necessarily lead to resistance to language learning. This point needs further investigation regarding ESL in Islamic countries, taking into account the context and social surroundings and the different cultures within the Saudi context. This should be researched using bigger samples from different areas to be observed for longer time.

To conclude, some pupils struggle to learn English notwithstanding their socially acquired negative views toward English and its communities. This research explained the impact of negative beliefs on pupils' use and perception of English. The outcomes indicate that perceiving English as a threat to identity and culture can affect pupils' learning. Moreover, negative images of the English language and its users can demotivate pupils and might lead to resistance or even to the complete rejection of English. Pupils' resistance seems to be influenced by various perspectives, such as local ideologies and social surroundings. Some pupils' interest

in English and need to use it can reduce their fear toward the English language and culture. In contrast, other pupils feel confused or even reject English learning due to dissonance and the clash between their own beliefs and the incompatible ideologies they think might be inherent in the English language.

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