

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS AND UPPER  
ELEMENTARY COUNSELEES ON BILINGUAL  
COUNSELING IN LEBANESE PRIVATE SCHOOLS

by  
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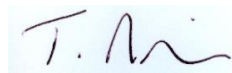


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In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Another life chapter has fruitfully done Praise be to the Lord of all worlds. I would like to thank my family, my parents Jinane and Khaled, and my sister Nour for their profound belief in my work and my abilities. My family whom I have been blessed to be loved, encouraged, and guided by every step of the way ever since I was born.

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May this thesis be of benefit and help to whoever is seeking knowledge and guidance.

# ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Dounia Khaled El Masri

for

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Title: Perceptions of School Counselors and Upper Elementary Counselors on Bilingual Counseling in Lebanese Private Schools

Language in counseling plays a crucial role in affecting the counseling relationship and the sessions' objectives. By nature, people come from different backgrounds which is evident in counseling when communicating in one language or another. This has necessitated that counselors emphasize the language used during the sessions as it might carry emotional value. The literature reveals a lack of empirical data in the field of Bilingual Counseling, especially in Lebanon. The purpose of this research study was to explore: (a) the perceptions of school counselors on using bilingual counseling with upper-elementary student counselees; (b) the factors affecting the use of bilingual counseling according to the school counselors; (c) the perceptions of upper-elementary student counselees towards their verbal and non-verbal self-expression; and (d) the factors affecting the use of bilingual counseling with upper-elementary students. Four research questions guide the current study: (a) How do school counselors perceive using bilingual counseling with upper-elementary students' verbal and non-verbal self-expression?; (b) What are the factors affecting the use of bilingual counseling according to school counselors? (c) How do upper-elementary students perceive the effect on their verbal and non-verbal self-expression while attending bilingual counseling sessions?; and (d) What are the factors affecting the use of bilingual counseling according to upper-elementary students?

The data were examined using a combination of methods such as thematic analysis, microanalysis, and descriptive statistics. The results of the interviews and integrated vignettes were used to develop several main themes. The study's main findings revealed that counselors and counselees had differing perceptions of the use of language in counseling sessions. One significant finding was that the Arabic language is highly regarded and plays a significant part in some of the participants' lives. However, it was also found that counselors and counselees relied heavily on using the English language in their daily communication expressing their emotions and thoughts in and outside counseling sessions. Another significant finding was the reliance and the translation of body language into the participants' understanding. Both counselors and counselees agreed on the usefulness of bodily responses and reactions in communicating one's thoughts, ideas, and emotions but also understanding others. The implications would provide researchers and practicing counselors with some exploratory data about students' perceptions of language choice and its efficacy in enhancing the counseling encounter. Future research recommendations and implications for practice were presented.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the background of the research problem, as well as the research aims and questions guiding it, supporting them with the rationale.

### **Background of the Research Problem**

One of the key features of a competent counselor is their ability to work with diverse and varied backgrounds (Corey, 2016). These backgrounds can differ in social, psychological, cultural, economic, and cognitive aspects. Gerald Corey, a pioneer in school counseling, mentioned: “it is an ethical obligation for counselors to develop sensitivity to cultural differences if they hope to make interventions that are consistent with the values of their clients” (p. 25). This research refers to the “counselees” as the school students in Lebanon who live in a multicultural and multilingual country. Many use foreign languages (e.g., English/ French) more often than their native language when communicating with their peers, friends, teachers, and parents. There could be different factors to explain such a phenomenon. These factors greatly impact students' abilities and tendencies to express themselves in a specific language. In addition, they are “affecting students’ language use and learning” (Bahous et al., 2014, p. 1). Some factors can be stated below, such as the media, langue of instruction, code-switching, lingua franca, globalization, and the openness of countries’ borders which contributed to the propagation of the English language to all countries (Jeon, 2009), the identity crisis phenomenon, and more.

The blooming of the media, the fourth estate/power, is the first and major factor affecting the student’s abilities to express themselves in another language rather than their

native one. The media plays an enormous role in shaping the generations' thoughts and behavior. It affects the social foundations (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2017) since it is considered part of technology. A feature of this power is social media (YouTube, Instagram, Ted Talks, sitcoms, TikTok, Netflix, WhatsApp, and more). This generation is bombarded and surrounded by the huge role that social media plays in affecting one's thinking and lifestyle (Martin et al., 2013).

Another factor could be the language of instruction (Shaaban & Ghaith, 2002). In Lebanon, private schools and most public schools have two streams: English and French. Reasons for such a phenomenon can be traced back to the French mandate in 1923 and later to the British mandate over the rest of the Arab countries (Vlaardingerbroek et al., 2017). For instance, from 1923 until now, French is still considered the second official language in Lebanon. Still, in addition to being also a language of instruction, and due to this, several students are labeled as "French-educated". There are different historical reasons for the dependence on foreign languages in the educational systems. This is also linked to the "prestige" and the need to prepare students for a globalized workplace dominated by international languages such as English and French (Shaaban & Ghaith, 2002). Evidently, in some cases, the native language can be considered a second language, and it can reach the extent of being perceived as L3.

Third, the school culture has a big manifest on the language used in the classrooms, during recess, and among students and teachers. In our context, private schools are divided into two. In Lebanon, for example, there are French schools (e.g., College Protestant Francais [CPF], Lycee Verdun, Besancon...) and American schools (e.g., International College [IC], American Community School [ACS], SABIS,

Eastwood, Wellspring, and more). Each school has its own culture to advocate for. Consequently, advocating for the usage of their “own” language.

Language plays a crucial role in the therapeutic process, especially when therapy takes place in the client’s second language with a bilingual therapist (Oliva, 2019). Previous research suggests that when counselors and clients face linguistic and cultural barriers while communicating in sessions, the client is much more likely to leave feeling unfulfilled. This may lead clients to forfeit sessions altogether (Guilman, 2015). Similarly, Bowker and Richards (2010) have found after interviewing ten therapists talking about their experience of working in English with a counselee who used English, proficiently, as a second language, that in sessions where the use of a specific language remains a barrier, counselors also experience “varying degrees of separation and distance from bilingual clients” (p. 468). It remains clear that fluctuating demographics in multicultural environments demand that counselors improve their multicultural acuity to ensure better sessions (Ahmed et al., 2011). This is especially true regarding counselor and student relationships in a school setting. Hatunoğlu, (2017)’ study highlighted that twenty-three school and university counselors continue to express and face challenges when dealing with students of different backgrounds. Yet, they were interviewed and surveyed to express their perceptions about multicultural counseling (MCC). Some consider MCC effective in treating culturally diverse students. Others believe that MCC is an approach that advocates love, respect, tolerance, and unbiased. As such, it is essential to develop more attention to it and competence in multicultural and multi-linguistic counseling in school settings.

The literature in the USA context has shown that counselors pay extra attention to their clients’ communications on all levels to make a productive connection, considering

bilingualism as a variable and a “societal necessity” (Bowker & Richards, 2010). Nonetheless, the experiences of multilingual counselors trained in English, who then go on to counsel clients that speak no or limited English, have been largely unacknowledged even in the US (Johal, 2017). Most of the research conducted on multicultural counseling (MCC) has centered on immigrant communities in the USA (Worthington et al., 2007). Nonetheless, there has recently been an increasing focus on multicultural policies in counseling worldwide growing (Barro & Lee, 2013).

In Lebanon, the research and practice of multicultural awareness in school counseling sessions remain in their infancy. Yet, Lebanon is an extremely multicultural and multilingual country: we have an “ethnological and linguistic” plurality (Vlaardingerbroe et al., 2017), which one can trace to Byzantine times; our spoken languages include Arabic, French, and English, and in some minority communities, Armenian and Kurdish (Esseili, 2017). According to Esseilie (2017), our multicultural and multilingual diversity is the product of “the presence of different ethnic groups; the advent of Western missionaries and the establishment of foreign schools and colleges in the 1800s; the French mandate on Lebanon that lasted for about 25 years; [and] the multiple immigration waves that occurred in Lebanon’s history” (p. 2-3). Therefore, our multiculturalism, which exists in our education, history, demography, society, and economy, has led to the practice of many languages alongside our native Arabic language. It remains unclear how Lebanon’s multiculturalism and multilingualism impact Lebanese school counseling sessions. While some counselors in Lebanon perceive counselees as adhering to the use of foreign languages when trying to express themselves during counseling sessions, this remains uncertain and should be studied. Understanding the perceptions of both counselors and students on multicultural and multilingual counseling

in Lebanese schools remains a disparagingly understudied area of research. It requires our critical attention as school counselors if we are to improve our sessions with our students in Lebanon.

### **Research Aims and Questions**

The purpose of this research study was to explore: (a) the perceptions of school counselors on using bilingual counseling with upper-elementary student counselees; (b) the factors affecting the use of bilingual counseling according to the school counselors; (c) the perceptions of upper-elementary student counselees towards their verbal and non-verbal self-expression; and (d) the factors affecting the use of bilingual counseling with upper-elementary students. Four research questions guide the current study:

1. How do school counselors perceive using bilingual counseling with upper-elementary students' verbal and non-verbal self-expression?
2. What are the factors affecting the use of bilingual counseling according to school counselors?
3. How do upper-elementary students perceive the effect on their verbal and non-verbal self-expression while attending bilingual counseling sessions?
4. What are the factors affecting the use of bilingual counseling according to upper-elementary students?

### **Rationale**

Although the number of people who speak more than one language is increasing, bilingual counseling and its efficacy are underrepresented in the current literature (Ali, 2004; Ivers & Villalba, 2015; Santiago-Rivera & Altarriba, 2002; Softas-Nall et al., 2015). The importance of bilingualism in counseling practices, such as the Latinx population, has been discussed by many academics in counseling and mental health. First,

a Latinx person's daily life and interactions with the public and their ethnic community depend on their ability to speak English and Spanish (Cofresi & Gorman, 2004). Second communicating in another language is essential for counseling and for gaining access to mental health services (Delgado-Romero et al., 2018). Clients who speak very little English are less likely to seek counseling services requiring language comprehension. Third, counselors are encouraged to consider their clients' linguistic backgrounds when creating treatment plans (Santiago-Rivera & Altarriba, 2002). A lack of bilingual counseling mental health professionals may deter people from seeking professional assistance due to potential language barriers and cultural mismatches (Delgado Romero et al., 2018).

In Lebanon, languages are perceived differently, affecting the practices of the three main languages. Shaaban and Ghaith's (2002) study indicated that Arabic was vibrant in social communication, especially with family and national identity. French for entertainment and elementary education, English for higher studies, technology, and commerce. But also, the practices of these three languages were affected by many social, religious, and economic aspects.

Nonetheless, we can find a lack of literature and empirical data about this topic relevant to bilingual and multilingual communities such as the Lebanese and, on a larger scale, the Arab society (Al-Hroub et al., 2019). In specific, in the last 40 years, there have been calls for the development of school counseling services in Lebanon (Ayyash-Abdo et al., 2010), but also in Arab countries like the UAE, the practice of counseling is slowly gaining momentum as a profession (Brinson & Al-Amri, 2006). Thus, further research should be done to fill that gap by extending research and improving practice for counselors. Furthermore, it is imperative to discover how counselors and students



perceive the role of bilingual counseling in counseling and the factors affecting students' ability to self-express.

### **Significance**

Studying counselors' perceptions of bilingual counseling can help provide data regarding their practices in Lebanese private schools. Fuertes (2004) found and emphasized the need for more research in this area as well as bilingual supervision (p. 84). Hence, such findings can provide further information for the preparation and training necessary for effective services to be provided by the counselors to students/counselees. But also, exploring the counselees' perceptions towards their self-expression both verbal and non-verbal can help practitioners and school counselors in reflecting on their practices while conducting bilingual counseling sessions. As well as, exploring the contextual factors that affect the use of such counseling approaches in Lebanese society, which is the core of Bilingual Counseling.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews international literature relevant to the research questions raised in the absence of national literature. The review is divided into different sections and is thematically organized. First, the theoretical framework for both bilingual and multicultural counseling was presented while focusing on their definitions and conceptions. In addition to presenting counseling theories and practices that advocate for a bilingual and multicultural approach to counseling. Second, the bilingual counseling approach was discussed while emphasizing the role played by languages in therapy, and their effects on the therapeutic relationship as well as the counseling sessions' dynamics. Moreover, the researcher emphasized its subthemes covering the types of emotions faced when communicating in the L1 or L2, verbal and non-verbal experiences, self-disclosure, and more. Third, the sociolinguistic context in Lebanon was discussed while shedding light on the history of languages in this society, the role of education, and the effects of schools in advocating for one culture over another. Last, a summary of the literature review was offered; followed by a paragraph supporting the adoption of the qualitative approach to research that will be navigating this study.

This review is significant because different causes are affecting students' language use and learning negatively (Bahous et al., 2014) such as globalization, hence the openness of countries' borders contributing to the propagation of the English language universally, lingua franca, code-switching, media, the teaching of Arabic, and the identity crisis phenomenon, and as Lebanese, we use different languages to communicate. In addition, the diversity in languages while communicating can be perceived not only in schools but also in our daily lives and especially during

counseling sessions. Thus, we will discover what international literature portrays about the perceptions of counselors and students regarding the use of bilingual counseling and foreign languages in counseling sessions, taking into consideration previous studies and theories regarding the role languages play in therapy. It also highlights counselors' and therapists' practices to explore the effect of languages on the success of the therapeutic relationship according to the counselees' perceptions.

The Internet and living in the twenty-first century have made it possible to be open to all cultures. Thus, we have become more knowledgeable about other cultures, and we have learned their languages. However, our native language is no longer spoken as frequently as decades ago among the rising generation. Being Lebanese represents Arabic as our mother language whether we reference the colloquial Arabic used in communication or formal Arabic used in formal, administrative, religious, political, and educational contexts.

Students are inclined to speak a foreign language rather than learn the Arabic/Lebanese language for many reasons. Robertson (2015) and Pennington (2015) claimed that Arabic is in danger of becoming a foreign language in the UAE and the Arab World due to several environmental and educational factors. This phenomenon is affecting the learners' identity as Lebanese/Arab, as well as their perception but also the richness of vocabulary required to gain to study, express themselves, and communicate using the Arabic language. This vocabulary is crucial because some students sit for the Lebanese Baccalaureate examinations in Grades 9 and 12. Furthermore, standard Arabic is a requirement for the national curriculum. Indeed, multilingual education as well as schools' visions to cater to all students' needs have created the necessity for multicultural counseling at schools. However, school counselors are faced with a

complex challenge given the individuality of every student. Thus, the researcher aims to ground this problem by considering multilingual and multicultural counseling.

This section highlights the theoretical framework employed through a bilingual and multicultural lens to address the research questions. The first section seeks to explain the overarching theory of bilingual and multicultural counseling; the second section examines the empirical research on the effectiveness of bilingual and multicultural counseling; and the final section demonstrates valuable evidence of the effectiveness of bilingual and multicultural counseling, advocated by the multiple counseling theories.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### ***Bilingual Counseling: Conception and Definition***

Bilingual counseling, according to Gallardo-Cooper (2008), is a "therapeutic discourse that caters to the client's linguistic characteristics and incorporates bilingual or multilingual factors as vital components of psychological and contextual functioning" (p. 1022). Fuertes (2004) published a review of the existing literature on the subject and defined bilingual counseling as "a unique form of counseling" (p. 85). "There has been a lack of conceptual and empirical literature on the topic of bilingual counseling and virtually no conceptual or empirical research on the topic of bilingual supervision", Fuertes wrote in his review, emphasizing the need for more research in this area (p. 84).

Johal's study (2017) made an important point; bilingual counselors should not be assumed to know how to provide counseling in more than one language simply because they speak it. To serve linguistically diverse client populations, developing training programs that prepare students to work with bilingual clients (Costa & Dewaele, 2014; Santiago-Rivera & Altarriba, 2002) as well as increasing the number of bilingual counselors (Ivers & Villalba, 2015) are critical steps. The application of bilingual

counseling in schools with diverse cultures facilitates counselors to connect effectively with many counsees in an advantageously engaging manner. In a study by Rosenblum (2011) to address the roles of language in therapy, a survey was performed to determine the respondents' self-experiences and the integration of its dynamics in counseling. The study interviewed 12 linguistically diverse bilingual therapists. The researcher found substantial evidence to support the claim that language-related dynamics were important in counseling for offering countertransference experiences that included closeness, which comes as an advantage. The bonding between the counselor and the counsees, while using bilingual methods promotes verbal and non-verbal expressions that inform the progress of a session. It encourages the release of expanded information to solve various problems that need therapeutic intervention. In perspective, such details may not be availed with freeness and openness in the conversation during a counseling session. Another study showing the advantage of bilingual counseling was authored by Ivers and Villalba (2015). They showed that it helped students improve their self-rating on multicultural counseling competence after surveying self-perceived multicultural counseling competence on 199 master's counseling students. The capacity of counselors to draw the maximum information from a counsee allows them to have a background of therapeutic problems that should be intervened. Ramos-Sanchez (2007) has also appreciated the relevance of emotional connections after engaging sixty-five Mexican American college students taking part in a counseling session. The counselor's cultural competence is critical for interacting with the subjects being counseled. For instance, counselors with sufficient understanding of various cultural limitations, reasoning, or even philosophies manage to contextualize prospects satisfactorily and offer competent interventions. However, bilingual counseling encourages students and counselors to

retain social differences that affect equality and marginalization. A counselor must be aware of the culture and language of the counselee before attempting to use bilingual counseling since it may appear biased to use a language not spoken by the client. Counselors must understand the vitality of bilingual interactions, which allow students to have open conversations or even better ways to express their issues. The structured training system has majorly trained people in the main language, where they later counsel people using a different one. These instances in which counselors fail to receive training using a foreign language hinder them from properly counseling their subjects. A study performed by Johal (2017) interviewed eleven counselors trained in diverse modalities and established that English-trained counselors counseled people without English proficiency using their native language. This attribute creates a difference in reasoning and understanding between the client and counselor, which would affect their communication rapport. After perceiving the possible differences, such a display of bias should be prevented to avoid inconveniences or hinder a client from sharing information.

This study explores the respondents' perceptions using verbal and non-verbal cues as measurement tools to determine the impact of bilingual counseling. The study, therefore, lays down specific definitions of these variables with literal support. In essence, bilingual counseling facilitates a connection between the cultural setup of the society that the client subscribes to identify established and educated methods to counsel them (Seto, & Forth, 2020). In this study, bilingual counseling refers to this informed meaning in which two languages facilitate the communication between the student and counselor for a comprehensive understanding of issues and experiences. The counselee's verbal and non-verbal self-expression refers to the spoken and

unspoken communications in which a student presents an opinion about using foreign languages in counseling. The verbal self-expressions entail spoken sounds, intonations, and words that the counsees would use to give direct or implied meaning. On the other hand, non-verbal expressions entail actions that indicate various purposes and include sign language, facial expressions, and gestures, among others that portray meaning through actions. These expressions, as counsees depict them to counselors, would be the center of focus fitting the data collection.

The verbal and non-verbal expressions relay the information that would be necessary to understand the perceptions sought in this research. The therapeutic bonding reported by Vaquero and Williams (2019) and Costa and Dewaele (2014) during bilingual counseling is a perceived benefit where rapport is created. The counselors were more attentive to the non-verbal cues of the counsees than to purely English conversations. Non-verbal expressions usually unveil the counsees' feelings even when their words communicate the opposite. In essence, it becomes possible to differentiate when a client is sad or happy regarding a piece of advice to determine whether a proposed action would help them cope. On the other hand, verbal expressions directly tell whether the counselee has become communicative using bilingual counseling tactics. Researchers have argued that most information expressed in non-verbal expressions relays the true nature of a problem during counseling (Vaquero & Williams, 2019). In some cases, counselors must rely on non-verbal cues to understand the extent of a problem or even unmask a hidden problem since students may hide some information for fear of exposure. It is usually within the understanding of a counselor to know these issues and devise a strategy to explore the issues. These expressions depict respondents' perceptions from the counselors' point of view since they use them during

counseling. They would be applicable in exploring the ideas or responses from the respondents.

### ***Multicultural Counseling: Conception and Definition***

Multicultural Counseling Competence (MCC) is a general theory of counseling common to all counseling and, thus, can be applied to all counseling sessions and relationships. Pedersen (1991) considers this approach as inclusive and complements the different psychodynamic, behavioral, and humanistic scientific theories that explain and identify human behavior. Complementary to these theories, many researchers consider this approach as “the Fourth Force” that focuses on culturally diverse populations (Ibrahim, 1991; Ivey et al., 1993). Culture is defined in various ways, including traditions, attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, values, and norms connecting different groups and individuals. Multicultural counseling can be used as a lens that sheds light on culturally appropriate strategies, skills, attitudes, and knowledge. It studies how individuals are affected by their culture and the impact played by the interrelationships among systems: microsystems and micro-cultures. These systems adhere, at any moment, to political, economic, social, and legal forces (Sue, 1991). Thus, it is a perspective that combines universalism and relativism and explains behavior in terms of culturally learned perspectives unique to a particular culture. As highlighted by Sue (2001), counselors should obtain the awareness, knowledge, and skills to practice their professions with clients of many diverse backgrounds. Effectively. Cornish et al. (2010) refer to MCC as “the extent to which a psychotherapist is actively engaged in the process of self-awareness, obtaining knowledge, and implementing skills in working with diverse individuals” (p. 7). Similarly, Owen et al. (2011) define MCC as the counselor’s “way of doing” their practice and applying their multicultural acumen (p. 274). Farook (2018)



mentioned that definitions and models of MCC applied are constantly re-examined and developed by practitioners.

As previously mentioned, Sue et al. (1992) and Arredondo et al. (1996) developed a conceptual framework for competencies and standards in multicultural counseling. They suggested that: (a) counselors address their own set of beliefs, attitudes, values, and worldviews which may influence their practice with their clients; counselors are especially aware of the influence of ethnocentrism on their practice with diverse groups; (b) counselors are knowledgeable on the beliefs, attitudes, values, and worldview's of the specific groups they are working with; counselors put in the work to understand their patients' worldviews and lifestyles as valid ways of living; and (c) counselors are equipped with the necessary skills to work with diverse populations and are applying these skills in their practice (Sue et al., 1982; 1998).

Sue and Sue (2013) delivered an in-depth treatment of multicultural counseling and therapy competence, by shedding light on their differences. They noted that therapy competence is based on "White Euro-American norms that exclude three-quarters of the world's population" (p. 36). In addition, they claimed that therapy competence could be problematic as it traditionally arose from ethnocentric norms and monocultures that excluded other cultural groups. Thus, for this thesis, we can adopt Sue et al. (1998)'s tripartite model of MCC to conceptualize MCC, as well as Sue and Torino's (2005) multicultural counseling definition as being:

A helping role and process that uses modalities and defines goals consistent with the life experiences and cultural values of clients, recognizes client identities to include individual, group, and universal dimensions; advocates the use of universal and culture-specific strategies and roles in the healing process and

balance the importance of individualism and collectivism in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of client and client systems (p. 42).

### ***Counseling the Culturally Diverse***

Several researchers and theorists believe that counseling theories would be more practical and enriched if theorizing started from the host culture's point of view instead of adapting approaches based on White and Euro-North Americans (Ruiz et al., 2018). Seto and Forth (2020) believed that if two important qualities were found in the therapeutic encounter, then a solid foundation was built between the therapist and the client. These two qualities are the therapist's credibility and the client's perception and belief that they received something from the therapeutic encounter. These qualities are effective in therapy with culturally diverse clients. According to Worthington et al. (2007), while MCC has been widely accepted across psychological associations and training programs, there remains little empirical research that examines the effectiveness of MCC applications in practice settings and the validity of Dogan, Dollarhide, and Julian (2021)'s MCC model. The employability of MCC has exponentially grown over the last couple of decades as a practical model, and a substantial number of studies positively correlated the model with psychotherapeutic outcomes. Overall, research does suggest that MCC training and applications may predict psychotherapy processes and products. Yet, the literature remains predominantly in its infancy as studies are flawed with methodological faults (Ridley & Shaw-Ridley, 2011), poorly validated measures, and overreliance on self-reporting, college student populations, and indirect measures (Kitaoka, 2005; Worthington & Dillon, 2007, 2011).

For instance, Dogan et al. (2021) found that counselors who have undergone training in MCC received higher grading from their patients on trustworthiness,

expertness, empathy, and unconditional regard, compared with their colleagues who did not receive MCC training. Patients of counselors who joined cultural sensitivity training reported more follow-up sessions and higher satisfaction with their sessions than patients of counselors who did not attend cultural sensitivity training. Similarly, a study by Tao et al. (2015) found strong and positive effects of patients' perceptions of counselors' MMC on significant therapy progressions (e.g., allegiance) and a moderate relationship between MCCs and outcomes. Across the empirical studies, similar findings are found – these describe an association between counselor MCC and psychotherapy processes such as “working alliance, empathy, and genuineness” (Elliott et al., 2011, p. 380).

The strong correlations across the literature suggest that both MC competency and psychotherapy processes could manifest simultaneously. When a patient views their counselor as cultural competence, they are more likely to have strong alliances that improve the psychotherapeutic process with the counselor (Tao et al., 2015). Nonetheless, it should be noted that, as Farook (2018) mentioned, the existing empirical research lacks “studies examining MCCs using strong measures and research design, real clients, and participants who are representative of the population at large” (p.3-4). As such, while research does support the claim that MCC training could improve counseling processes and outcomes, this claim is yet to be investigated with more robust measures and validity.

However, there is a gap in the literature. For instance, Burck (2004) noted that bilingualism and multiculturalism had been neglected, if not almost completely ignored, in psychotherapy. In addition, most of the literature on bilingual therapy lacks the perspective of bilingual therapists (Kokaliari et al., 2013). Studies were carried out to

examine the perceptions of Arab Americans living in the US (Goforth, 2011) or Hispanics/Latinos living in the US (Smith-Adcock et al., 2006).

### ***Relevant Theories/Therapies to Multicultural Counseling***

The Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD) defines multicultural counseling as any professional counselor's ability to approach counseling in the context of the client's world. In short, the counselor's cultural values or bias must not precede the clients'. This is an integral part of professional counseling ethics. Many counseling theories and practices advocate for the multicultural approach to counseling. The researcher reviews below the major assumptions of multiple counseling theories that can be used in multicultural contexts, such as narrative, Gestalt, and person-centered therapies.

**Narrative Therapy.** This therapy's theoretical assumptions are based on a comprehensive understanding of the importance of culture in the individual's identity development (Howard, 1991). Parry and Doan (1994) view the underlying assumptions of narrative therapy as bringing therapy into the postmodern world and completely revolutionizing the role of the counselor and the process of assessment and treatment. According to Morris (2006), the narrative theory tends to include a culturally responsive context for counselors to create a practice of therapy that takes culture into account. Morris (2006, p.1-2) stated the significant assumptions of the narrative theory as the following:

- “There is no *truth*, only different interpretations of reality. Meaning, therefore, becomes what is most essential, and meaning is constructed in social, cultural, and political contexts.

- All people create meaning through narratives (stories). We live our lives according to the stories we tell ourselves and the stories that others talk about us.
- Culture is peoples' collected stories. Culture, therefore, is the most influential determinant in peoples' lives.
- There is no one knowable self, but there are many selves. This idea can also be drawn from language systems and object relations. In other words, each language has its code and is associated with object relations (Valencia-Garcia, & Montoya, 2018). As such, people may perceive themselves as two different persons according to their language.
- The person is never the problem. The problem is the problem – a problem story.”

These assumptions allow the counselor to take on the role of a ‘cultural anthropologist’ intrigued by students’ stories and discoveries (Morris, 2006). According to Vega et al. (2019), the narrative approach allows the student to reveal their stories without undermining their cultural background. Thus, it reduces the dangers of cultural misinterpretations. The narrative approach inherently favors MCC – school counselors in research and practice have therefore advocated for this approach. For researchers looking into MCC in school contexts, narrative therapy and analysis mellow the counselor to deepen one's understanding of the challenges and problems a child can face. As Morris (2006) explained, there is less risk of dominating the learner with one's cultural prejudices by co-creating the revised narrative. Narrative theory is, therefore, an empowering tool that pays attention to students’ self-descriptions – it allows students to share stories without undermining their cultural backgrounds. The counselor supports the student in voicing their stories and helps the students notice areas where the story is growing.

For research investigating multicultural/linguistic diversity in school counseling sessions with students from different cultural backgrounds, the narrative approach seems appropriate and relevant to the study.

**Gestalt Therapy.** Gestalt therapy, developed by Fritz Perls in the 1940s, is one branch of psychotherapy derived from the Gestalt school of thought. Gestalt means “whole” and focuses on the relational theory principle entailing that every human being is a whole composed of mind, body, and soul (Corey, 2016). Gestalt therapists focus on the present, not on the interpretations of the past, as this can be seen in many techniques used in counseling where the clients are asked to re-enact previous memories or incidents, but by bringing these experiences into the present and how the client feels about them to come up with the solutions to these problems. This client-centered approach raises one’s awareness of emotions, thoughts, values, beliefs, norms, and perceptions of experiences re-lived here and now. The counselors are expected to understand the client’s perspective and content conveyed on its terms regardless of whether it is right or wrong. This practice helps counselors to let go of “bracketing off” their judgments about truth and falsehood and thus avoid imposing one’s values. This was evident in the MCC standards and competencies. For example, the “bracketing off” of subjective judgments was focused on the meaning and understanding that clients gave to their narratives and the events in their lives. According to Gestalt therapists, their purpose was also focused on understanding clients’ stories, narratives, and the meaning attributed to them (Reck, 2009).

Gestalt therapy is known for its “empty chair” technique that entails the client conducting an emotional dialogue with either a person, an aspect of themselves, or a significant other who is imagined to be sitting in an empty chair during the session. This aims to connect past issues with present feelings, and the “empty chair” application can

help clients discover their ability to disclose previously unexpressed interpersonal needs (Cheung, & Nguyen, 2012). This technique was used with counselees from collective culture. A study conducted by Cheung and Nguyen (2012) used this Gestalt technique with 100 Asian clients. This study aimed to help Asian clients to confront parent-child relationship issues, express feelings toward personal losses, and deal with bereavement issues. The challenge is that clients might be considered non-expressive, but on the other hand, the authors mentioned that this process helps practitioners build culturally sensitive skills. The therapists started by creating a rapport with these clients as the sessions began, so they could reach the stage where they would use the empty chair technique. During that time, the therapists noticed that due to cultural norms, many of the clients avoided confronting or talking directly with or about the involved family members, but instead used alternative methods to resolve psychological distress. It was reported using empty chairs was culturally sensitive, for it emphasizes the importance of expression (emotional, verbal, and bodily) and does not necessitate clients to carry out direct communication or the act of confronting the individual with whom they experience problems. After describing the many steps, the therapists went through with the clients, they resulted and insisted on the client's readiness and willingness. Thus, the authors emphasized that the therapist must follow the counselee's clues, verbal and non-verbal, and choose the appropriate and culturally sensitive techniques to facilitate the expression of thoughts and feelings given that expression is the objective of the sessions. Indeed, this is another feature of MCC that can be considered in the present study.

**Person-Centered Therapy.** Another theory tackled from a multicultural approach is Carl Rogers's theory of person-centered therapy. This theory considers empathy as a fundamental treatment state that expresses a sense of concern and

understanding (Corey, 2016). Like the Narrative and Gestalt therapies, the counseling sessions, according to Rogers, should center on the clients. Rogers believes therapists should show empathy and leave it to the counsees to explain and interpret their stories, memories, and thoughts. Accordingly, the counselee should be the one leading the session. Thus, it is essential to ensure that the communication during the counseling sessions is clear, reflective, and authentic.

Recent MC research in the United States and other countries considers Roger's Person-Centered Therapy (PCT) effective when dealing with different racial and cultural identities (Quinn, 2012). Several studies were conducted with multicultural clients in Brazil, Iran, Malaysia, and the United States. For example, in a study done in Malaysia by Mohamad et al. (2011) with four PCT clients, the findings were that PCT practice increased openness to exploring moral, spiritual, and religious cultural issues in their lives. Another example, taken from the Brazilian context, Freire et al. (2005) reported that PCT helped counsees, children, and adolescents, to become more open in discussing their feelings and experiences with their peers and family members. This positive change was supported by the findings of Teusch and Bohme's (1999) study, which reported that "client-centered treatment influences the reduction of anxiety symptoms" (p. 119).

### **Bilingual Counseling**

This section presents relevant literature and practices to the bilingual counseling approach while focusing on subthemes, such as the role played by multiple languages in counseling, the native tongue versus English, language/code-switching, and more.



### *Language and Therapy*

This section examines the role of language in therapy, its function, and its importance in everyday life experiences and counseling settings. Language is used to communicate, verbally or nonverbally (symbols, body language, facial expressions), whether in everyday life, at school, or during counseling sessions. This is relevant to counseling, as Shi and Watkinson (2019) express the benefits of using language to create shared meanings with diverse student populations, which is one aspect of multicultural counseling. Seto and Forth (2020) determined that a bilingual individual is exceptionally complex. Hence, a successful session requires “a transforming dialogue or retrospective construction of the past in the present with a perspective toward the future in the context of their linguistic realities” (p. 436). What was mentioned is developed in the roots of Psychoanalysis, and specifically Freud’s coping mechanisms. Thus, for both people to move freely between different language-related selves, the therapist must reflect on repression and linguistic accessibility. Dogan et al. (2021) valued the significance of understanding language’s role in a person’s psychic processes and development. The author also highlighted the need to provide recommendations for clinical/therapeutic practice to enable therapists to think about and work with different languages during the sessions.

As it is understood by different counseling theories and specifically psychoanalysis, Freud, as well as the rest of the psychoanalytic community, expressed their awareness about the complexities of living with two languages, as it is believed to be the “talking cure” (Breuer & Freud, 1955). However, it is surprising how little attention the language issue has received (Oliva, 2019). Language choice can make counseling sessions more fruitful and productive for counselors and students or more

complex and less helpful. Canestri and Reppen (2000) discuss clinical vignettes presented by four panelists at the 41st congress of the International Psychoanalytic Association. They discuss the calming effects of the mother's voice on the baby while in the womb. Canestri and Reppen note the dominant association between the relationship between language acquisition and mother-child by stating "When the mother's relationship with the child is disturbed, the mother tongue is disturbed, and this makes it particularly difficult for the child in a bilingual or multilingual home to become fluent in the mother's language" (p. 153-154). The researchers reported that learning a new language could aid in repairing inner relationships by proposing new tools and techniques to process painful memories and experiences. Dogan et al. (2021) sustain Krapf's argument that "linguistic detachment" (p.556) can offer the patient a safe linguistic space to discuss intense material, but while being protected by their second language. Indeed, this adds more challenges to the counselors in choosing the preferred language during counseling sessions.

### ***Language Switching in Counseling***

When the therapist and the client are both bilingual, language switching has been demonstrated to be an effective therapeutic tool. Switching to a client's second language, for example, may create distance from emotionally charged topics, allowing these topics to be discussed in a more detached and relaxed way (Javier, 1989; Kokaliari et al., 2013; Pitta, et al., 1978). It has also been demonstrated that language switching during therapy strengthens the bond between the therapist and client and encourages clients to engage in higher levels of self-disclosure (Kapasi & Melliush, 2015). However, a study by Oganian et al. (2016) claimed that language switching itself is to blame for the emotional distance created, regardless of whether the switch is made from first to the second language or

from second to first. According to Dewaele's research (2008), bilinguals prefer using their first language to express their anger, and the emotional significance of words like "I love you" varies between their two languages, suggesting that bilinguals may have a stronger emotional bond with their first language.

Researchers have examined how well counselors comprehend clients' motivations for changing the language used during counseling sessions. These included the clients' attempts and desires to (a) express their emotions more clearly and accurately; (b) better communicate with a counselor; (c) recall memories, such as dreams and traumatic events, or (d) highlight their perspective to a counselor (Kokaliari et al., 2013; Verdinelli & Biever, 2009). These strongly correlate with the clients' opinions of the functions of language in counseling (Rolland et al., 2017). In the Vaquero and Williams' (2019) study, bilingual families—young children and their parents/caregivers—attended multiple sessions with the counselors. These counselors observed that while English was frequently used to correct children, caregivers spoke to their children in Spanish to express their affection.

Kapasi and Melliush (2015) stated how language switching would strengthen the therapeutic alliance and enhance client self-disclosure. Thus, culture plays a role in affecting the social constructions of students. Kapasi and Melliush's study interviewed ten therapists practicing in at least two languages in North America. The therapists were diverse in terms of gender, educational background, and race. Also, participants included speakers of English and Spanish therapists: one Southern European, one East Asian, one Middle Eastern, Latin American, one Eastern European, one African American, one Caribbean Islander, two South Asians, and two White Americans. All participants noted that bilingual clients tend to utilize their mother tongue to express something particularly

dear to them or emphasize their narrative by using specific words in their first language. Yet, this was not the case when revisiting old traumas; some counselees were encouraged to speak in a different language from their native one as a coping mechanism to dissociate from the severity/intensity of the incident. As was mentioned by one therapist, “speaking in one’s native language may be very triggering of sadness, helplessness, grief, and terror, so using a language learned later, in which you don’t have that emotional connection, would be safer” (Kapasi & Melliush, 2015, p. 105). In addition, language is also part of the culture, and based on the previous definition mentioned in the rationale, language is a means for self-expression. An exploration of the research findings alongside contemporary literature highlights the possibility that further training and support may be needed for multilingual counselors (Johal, 2017).

### ***Language Style in Counseling and Self-Expression***

This section presents a relevant literature review and studies that emphasize the role language played during counseling sessions, which also affects the therapeutic relationship between the counselor and counselee.

The following can offer assistance and guidance to therapists to understand the meaning and usage behind language exchanging/switching in sessions with the clients. Ramos-Sánchez (2007) looked at the effectiveness and adequacy of language/code-switching in therapy concerning emotional expression and self-disclosure. The study centered on two groups of therapists, Mexican Americans, and European Americans, who were all bilingual Spanish and English speakers. Ramos-Sanchez reported a greater emotional expression on behalf of the clients upon hearing the European American therapists talking in Spanish. However, it was reported that their language switching during the sessions did not impress the counselees. The therapists would switch to their

first language when they were angry or needed to communicate something with profound or deep meaning (Sprowls, 2002). The therapist is invited to encourage a switch in the language to make the client feel less stuck and to feel freer when communicating. In her review, she aimed to assess the role of language and culture in the mental health treatment of Hispanic Americans and of its role in treating mental health issues (Santiago-Rivera, 1995).

Santiago-Rivera et al. (2009) performed a qualitative investigation that regarded the therapists' use of language switching with their bilingual clients. The authors pointed out the significance of being careful on behalf of the therapists of their client's choice of native or non-native/ foreign language. The literature identified similar reactions towards the same language countertransference in Garcia and Montoya (2018), most participants described feelings of safety, connection, intimacy, sameness, and commonality with their clients/couselees. The sense of security and intimacy that is found can be a powerful ground for both the therapist and the counselee to build upon their counseling relationship. However, the counselor/therapist is confronted with the task of puzzling out how to navigate the feelings of intimacy and connection created because of the shared language to the counseling relationship's benefit. The awareness of these language-related countertransference experiences is vital to better support bilingual/multilingual counselees.

Rosenblum's study (2011) interviewed twelve bilingual/ multilingual mental health providers. All the participants found it significant to encourage their clients to use their other language in the therapeutic environment. The participants were able to highlight the importance of the native language and establish openness and flexibility to a language, not their own. As Dogan et al. (2021) found, many participants (therapists)

described a sense of excitement while hearing a different language. In addition, Vega et al. (2019) reported that clients felt empowered when they introduced their native tongue, which is not shared with their therapist. Some counselors claimed that affected them deeply. Counselees felt in control and empowered when a shared or different language was used. This dynamic can build a stronger rapport and growth between the counselor and counselee.

A challenge that counselors or therapists face is self-disclosure. Garcia and Montoya (2018) believed the therapist/counselor must explore their perception and relationship to language. Clauss (1998) noted that different types of boundaries were established and respected when the therapist and the client used native languages such as French, Spanish, or Portuguese instead of English. Self-disclosure and boundary issues are discussed in the literature. They are seen as an essential aspect of bilingual/multilingual practice that needs to be considered in educational and counseling contexts (Rosenblum, 2011). To add, Morrison and Lent (2018) explored language's role as an experienced organizer linked to relationships, memories, emotions, and senses. These relationships can be expressed and felt on different levels as there are multiple languages, hence various roles associated. Studies were carried out to explore the effects of students' native language usage in counseling sessions. Other studies examine, the role of language in therapy highlighting the counselors' perception of it. Recognizing the different perceptions associated with language is important to dynamic therapy in encouraging an association between languages to access and uncover varied experiences. It can enhance the counseling encounter and foster a dynamic therapy relationship. Griffin et al. (2018) reintroduced language concerns and psychotherapy by using their case material to draw conclusions about language and therapy. Buxbaum (1949) discussed her

psychoanalytic work with patients who spoke German (L1) and English (L2) specifically focusing on the ego and the superego with language use and language acquisition. Buxbaum suggested that her clients choose to speak in the language that would grant them a bigger distance from the emotional content/burden. She saw this as a link between the languages in which the therapeutic work took place, and the repression of memories, which can be due to the control of the superego. In other terms, the language can carry emotional baggage to the sessions. It can be either a reminder of a painful past or a means to communicate more freely.

### ***Native Language versus English in Counseling***

Studies were carried out to explore the effects of students' native language usage in counseling sessions, compared to English. The result of the studies tackled self-expression. Kheizadeh and Hajiabed's (2014) study interviewed groups of 90 (15 males and 75 females), dominantly female undergraduate and graduate university students in Art and Psychology with ages ranging from 20 to 34. It was found that bilingual Persian-English students expressed more negative emotions in their L2. It was claimed that the second language is the preferred language for expressing sad emotions since it is the "language of emotional detachment and distance" (Kheirzadeh & Hajiabed, 2014, p. 1). Other studies examine the role of language in therapy, highlighting the counselors' perception of it. Rosenblum (2011) sheds light on Greenson's (1950) theory of language-related self-experience, describing those bilingual/multilingual individuals have different representations of self that are organized by language. She reported that one of the participants (a counselor) claimed, "English was her adult language and German was her childhood language" (p.70). Recognizing different perceptions associated with language is vital to dynamic therapy in encouraging an association

between languages to access and uncover varied experiences. Thus, it can enhance the counseling encounter. However, Kokaliari et al. (2013) noticed that bilingual clients tend to return to their mother tongues when expressing strong effects. Still, also they might use their first language as a defense mechanism against painful material, which might result in and influence the therapeutic alliance. As encoded in language, were issues of trust, hostility, and idealization toward the psychotherapist.

As for counseling bilingual/multilingual individuals, couples and families come to counseling expressing their distress in the English language, which is usually their secondary language, and possibly removed from the inner experience of their past and daily lives (Perez Foster, 1998). Given these circumstances, Softas-Nall et al. (2014) ask whether therapy in a secondary language can accurately access the emotional experience of the client's world that occurred in their primary language. According to Pérez Foster (1998), many clinicians and therapists have reported an increase in the emotional control (or the ability of counselees to avoid their emotional experience) for clients who use their second language; and clients have expressed similar reports of emotional disconnect in the counseling process. This implies a distance between the subjective experience of the client's life and their second language (Pérez Foster, 1998). This also raises the question related to the counselors' practices and preparations, when usually most counselors are trained in a second language and some in their native tongue (Softas- Nall et al., 2014); which is not the case in Lebanon or the Arab world. In addition, Ali (2004) states that monolingual English-speaking clinicians working with multilingual counselees may create a power imbalance in the therapeutic relationship and thus inadvertently limit their course of action with their clients.



The following is another example of how languages affect the counseling relationship and the counseling outcomes. Hill (2008) provides an example of language and countertransference and the impact of language choice on the counselee. Corey (2016) considers transference crucial to the counseling relationship, as he perceives it as a means that provides clients with opportunities to re-experience various feelings. As for countertransference, he defines it as the following “any of our projections that influence the way we perceive and react to a client” (p. 31). Hill (2008) addressed his counseling experience with a young bilingual French woman being counseled in English, her second language. After several interviews, they acknowledged that counseling in English felt dissociated, whereas speaking in French, the client’s first language, the sessions were more engaged and effectively related.

Offering counseling services in a client’s native or preferred language has been highlighted in the literature as an important and ethical mandate (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2009). However, the native language is not always the client’s preferred language. There is a gap in the literature surrounding the experiences of bilingual/multilingual therapists and their work with linguistically diverse populations. The focus has remained more on the client and the therapeutic reasons for switching languages in sessions (Rosenblum, 2011) and not on how this might affect the counseling encounter. Today, the goal of many modern psychological therapies, including counseling in school settings, is to support students in “understanding, identifying, and constructively expressing their emotions to others.” (Jacobson et al., 2015, p. 359). Kahn et al. (2012) and Kahn and Hessling (2001) believe there is a common consensus across most of the literature that the ability of a student to express their emotions better is linked to better

overall mental and physical health, regardless of whether the feelings expressed are negative or positive

### ***Differences in Verbal and Non-Verbal Expressions among Different Cultures***

Body language, vocal expressions, and facial reactions can provide valuable information and input to the counseling sessions. Anolli et al. (2008) and Sauter et al. (2010) suggested in their studies how vocal input could do so about subjective linguistic and cultural variability. Morton et al.'s (2018) study examined Chinese and Italian speakers, claiming that people from different cultures express emotions differently audibly. As a result, cultural disparities in vocal emotion perception seem reasonable. The study by Hicks et al. (2018) used two groups of volunteers (Himba and English speakers) who had no prior knowledge of each other's language or culture. The study was based on participants who were asked to listen to an emotional story and then ed to identify the emotions in it. Thus, Hicks et al. found mutual recognition of emotional vocalizations when presented with vocalizations such as screams and laughter. However, the other “positive” emotions. Only the Himba participants more reliably recognized the feelings expressed by Himba speakers were more reliably recognized by only the Himba participants. The emotions expressed by English speakers were more reliably recognized only by the English participants. This can be translated and generate a claim that each language carries its own linguistic and emotional baggage. In another study, Bak (2016) focused on one group of 42 Polish participants speaking two languages. She investigated the emotional perception of Polish speakers (L1) and learners of English (L2) with no or minimal exposure to English. In the first task, participants (English Language major students at university) had to identify the emotion conveyed in English recordings. In the second task, participants had to categorize the

emotion conveyed in each recording as ‘happiness,’ ‘sadness’, or other. Bak found a surprising effect on English language proficiency, with the low proficient outperforming the high-proficient participants. The author explained that the high-proficient second or foreign language (L2) users, who were more exposed to English for a more extended period, had a better knowledge of the language; and they were trying to integrate more information into their emotional processing to make “desirable” prediction/inference.

However, as for the Polish speakers’ participants, Bak claimed they were not trained or exposed to English in informal contexts. He claimed that these “[participants] have mastered the formal code of the English language but not the full cultural competence which shadows that code in every aspect of its structure” (p. 182). Indeed, Bak’s (2016) findings differ from previous research, such as Havlik et al. (2019) study among L1 English users and LX English learners with Arabic, Chinese or Spanish backgrounds.

Also, concerning appropriate behavior in a particular context, they experienced different language- and culture-specific norms and models. These findings are important as they portray multilingual learners as more prone to identify emotions in languages. But, in the case of emotional communication, being confronted with ‘emotional scripts’ – as Wierzbicka (1999) calls them – from different languages and cultures might create some confusion for bi/multilingual raised individuals regarding the way emotions are communicated in a particular language and culture. Heredia and Altarriba (2001) stated that after a certain level of fluency and frequency of use is attained in a second language. A shift in language occurs when the second language behaves as if it were the bilingual’s first language. In other words, the second language

becomes more readily accessible than the first language, and the bilingual relies more on it. With that being said, we can assume the challenge added to the counselors concerning emotional identification of vocalizations since verbal communication doesn't only rely on words but also on sounds and intonations. Emotional words are stored and processed differently than other concrete or abstract words. Words such as love, and hate have distinctly different associations depending on the language they are uttered in. When individuals learn emotional words in their first language, they are stored at a deeper level of representation than their second language counterparts (Morton et al., 2018). This makes the emotional associations related to the context and environment uttered in a different language. This can also serve as a counterargument to the study previously mentioned.

Little has been written about the influence of language and communication on group dynamics and group processes when working with ethnic minorities. It is an important factor that can no longer be ignored in-group work (Supriyanto et al., 2020). In only a few group therapy textbooks, language gaps, communication patterns, and the consequences of language are discussed. It does not discuss the issue of counseling and therapy groups conducted in languages other than English (Supriyanto et al., 2020). The language in which culture interacts determines the process of thought and information processing patterns (Boroditsky, 2001). For example, most English-speaking individuals are linear thinkers. Most people who speak Semitic languages are more complex and far from linear. The languages of Asia are indirect, and the languages of romance are curvilinear (Hicks et al., 2018).

The effects of miscommunication based on language variation are therefore more nuanced than mere misunderstandings, with findings such as misdiagnosis and

misapplication of therapy. The indirect approach of two separate ethnic groups is demonstrated by the following examples. First, Havlik et al. (2019) identified an encounter between himself and his father in which he conveyed his concern to his father about an upcoming test. His father answered him, “Derald, just don't think about it” (p.5). Second, one of the writers of this chapter expressed anger at the racism and discrimination she was witnessing in her graduate program in a conversation with a Native American acquaintance. The response from the Native American friend was, “So what can you really do about it?” (p.5). While the responses seemed to be invalidating in both cases, the message of both responses involves dealing with issues in a non-direct manner rather than using a direct approach. While the difficulty of bilingualism can seem overwhelming in-group work, the ability to apply this awareness and understanding is feasible. Some bilingual experts claim that to provide quality treatment, group leader practitioners must be fluent in the client's language. The relationship between the client and the non-bilingual group leader specialist suffers a great deal, as symptoms may be misinterpreted.

Morton et al., (2018) emphasized the importance of communicating respect and acceptance for racial differences in counselors. Maxie et al. (2006) indicated that most psychologists do not acknowledge nor discuss racial differences with their clients. Li et al. (2007) examined in their study the effects of cultural values on the counseling process for 160 both men and women Asian college students. They looked at the effects of “(a) a counselor expressing cultural values that are either consistent with or inconsistent with Asian culture and (b) a counselor either acknowledging racial differences or not with their clients, both on observer participants’ ratings of counseling process” (p. 91). This was done using the audiovisual analogue method based on written

scripts. These scripts were based on questions asking the counselees counseling-related questions that either elicited her cultural values or did not. These values were presented as the following: collectivism, filial piety, emotional self-control, humility, conformity to norms, and family recognition through achievement (Kim & Atkinson, 2002). As for the other part of the script, the counselees watched a clip of a counseling session where the counselors acknowledged the cultural difference between the counselor and the counselee or did not. Statements of acknowledging cultural differences are the following statements: "I am a European American, and you are an Asian American. Sometimes having different backgrounds makes it difficult to work together as a client and a counselor. Maybe we can discuss any concerns you might have about our racial difference and us working together" (p.93). The study highlighted the counselees' perceptions claiming that the counselors, who acknowledged the cultural difference, even when presented with non-confirming values, were considered more culturally competent than those who did not express this difference.

Research indicates that therapeutic alliance is significant in predicting psychotherapy outcomes. However, little is known about the creation of this alliance or the moment-to-moment constituents of the relationship and how they interact to establish a union. Moreover, this may be considered a serious limitation of current measurement methods (Borelli et al., 2019). This alliance can be created using Language Style Matching or LSM, which is "the degree, to which unconscious aspects of an interactional partner's language mimic that of the other partner, is a promising, unobtrusive measure of interaction quality that could provide novel insight into the therapist-client alliance" (p. 10). Borelli et al. aimed to examine LSM's effect on the therapeutic relationship with a small sample size of substance-dependent mothers. It

was noted that client and therapist factors predict the quality of the therapeutic alliance. LSM can therefore be both indicated by previous relationship experiences, and predictive of the quality of future interpersonal processes occurring between therapist and client as a measure of conversational attunement or connection. They concluded that there should be more studies done for deeper examinations of LSM as a measure of the therapist-client alliance, as these preliminary results provided an intriguing rationale.

### ***Body Language in Counseling***

As is well recognized, culture is the total of all the things that make up human society. Culture is made up of language, which has a significant impact on it. Language can be considered a pillar of culture. However, culture would not be possible without language. On the other hand, language reflects culture and is shaped by it. Each culture is distinct and varies from the other. Learning a language entail becoming familiar with the culture and customs as well as the pronunciation and grammar. But language is not the only means we have of expressing our thoughts and emotions. Messages can also be conveyed through body language, eye contact, gesture, and facial expression (Zhi-peng, 2014)

This nonverbal communication is referred to as body language. Our culture is made up of both verbal and nonverbal communication. Even though we don't realize it, when we have a conversation, we communicate in a lot more ways than just words. We communicate with those around us through our body language, gestures, and facial expressions. Different people use different gestures to convey their emotions, and different cultures have different ways of using nonverbal communication. In addition, the counseling session or process includes gestures. From the start to the end of a

counseling session, both the counselor and the client use gestures or nonverbal cues to convey important messages; this may or may not be done on purpose. However, the counselor uses it in their therapeutic relationship (Zhi-peng, 2014).

According to Njama-Abang (2002), communication also involves posture, gesture, voice inflection, and facial expressions in addition to words and their meaning. This suggests that both verbal and nonverbal components are present. She added, that without body language, which frequently communicates more effectively than voice, words alone can't make a good counselor.

According to Nwachukwu (2008), most people are good at understanding the verbal content of a language but find it challenging to focus on and comprehend the non-verbal component of communication. The author added the message's nonverbal component is more crucial. In a counseling setting, non-verbal cues can be used to convey meaning, get through challenging situations, and improve the relationship between the counselor and client. In agreement with this, the Department of Work and Organizational Psychology (2007) concluded that non-verbal behaviors are crucial to the relationship between doctors and patients. The satisfaction of a patient is increased by a doctor, counselor, or conscientious person who employs effective nonverbal communication techniques (Mast, 2007).

### **Sociolinguistic Context in Lebanon**

This section reviews the sociolinguistic context of Lebanon emphasizing both national and international literature. This section also discovers the social and linguistic factors found in the Lebanese daily lives affecting their social experiences and, later the counseling settings such as language attribution and practices, code-switching, the role of the mother tongue, and more.



### ***Languages' Status and Profile in Lebanon***

All three languages are essential in Lebanon's educational system, although French and Arabic are the most spoken languages in the social and business spheres. Recently, English has come to be seen as another alternative for students seeking to pursue a path of study and as one that carries a high level of reputation. The prevailing culture is inherently conservative and has high respect for traditions, drawing on various Arab practices in the process. Customs such as Islamic and Christian traditions that have existed for centuries are still firmly established in social standards and expectations. On the other hand, many rituals and ways of life are affected by European influences.

A study by Banat (2021) aimed to show the status and functions of English in contemporary Lebanon. This study sheds light on the sociohistorical overview of the Lebanese situation. In addition, it compared findings to the uses of English, the function of educational institutions in compelling language foundations, and users' interactions with language policy and organization. The profile of English in Lebanon is considered unique due to various reasons, such as the troubled history of Lebanon, its multifaceted affiliations, and its challenging economy. The sociolinguistic profiles of English follow a framework inserted by Morton et al. (2018) which checks the creation, interpersonal, instrumental, and institutional uses of English when examining varieties in outer and expanding circles situations. This study stated that the Lebanese had faced various cultural influences related to interaction across geographical, social, and linguistic borders through travel, immigration, education, and work abroad. Foreign languages are being tutored at educational institutions in Lebanon, but some Lebanese suffering from low socioeconomic status do not have access to this type of education. They depend on daily interactions with media, technology, and the widespread use of English in different

domains to learn these languages. This situation is not unique to Lebanon, as it has become a common technique in various geographic contexts in the MENA region. Indeed, Berns (2019) confirmed how “domains of use are expanding in number, and learners of English are broadening further into society behind the educated elites” (p. 14). The Lebanese have gotten rhetoric and pride in their achievements due to the relationship between the power of foreign language use and success in educational and professional contexts (Banat, 2021).

Another study conducted by Esseile (2017) studying the sociolinguistic profile of the English language in Lebanon gave an outline of the historical existence of foreign languages in Lebanon, concentrating on language contact from the eighteenth century to date. Through sociolinguistic profiling, the paper shows the learners and users of English and Lebanese behavior and perceptions towards English. Two dialects of Arabic are primarily used in Lebanon, where “Fuss-ha”- the standardized and formal Arabic is used and taught in schools. While in day-to-day social life, “ammiya “-informal and colloquial Arabic is used to communicate. In addition to Arabic, Armenian and Kurdish are found and used in Lebanon due to the immigration of the correspondent population from Kurdistan and Armenia to Lebanon following geopolitical factors such as the Armenian Genocide and the war in Syria, Iraq, and Turkey. This study concluded that although Arabic is the native and dominant language in the country, English is being used for various reasons.

Esseile (2017) stated that foreign languages play an essential role in shaping Lebanese knowledge regarding social and cultural identity. On the other hand, foreign languages are working against many Lebanese students who attend under-resourced schools and come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Those factors relatively influence

these students as they are failing due to their inability to understand the scientific material and content in foreign languages and due to the teachers' lack of proficiency (Abdulla & Skaf, 2015; Esseile, 2011, 2014). The author aimed to provide a thorough description of the type of users of the English language as well its different uses in the daily life of the Lebanese people. Esseili explained that the Lebanese had nativized several English words and sentences into their daily communication, so code-switching has become a regular occurrence. The author then discusses how the English language is used primarily in private and public educational institutions. Still, it is not considered one of the official languages in the country. However, with the rise of English as the language of social media, language learning in Lebanon is inclining toward the English language. However, Esseili (2011) found out that teaching language intensively in schools does not necessarily mean students will be fluent in each language. This was deduced from a poll published in 2007 that showed 87.7% of passing students getting low marks in their English and Arabic examinations during the official Brevet exams. Esseili (201), after research, found that according to public school teachers, students are not trained well to undergo language examinations due to the lack of expertise in foreign language teaching. Another way to test proficiency in the English language is through the TOEFL and IELTS scores. The 2015 TOEFL test scores showed high grades in all sections of the exam, and 45% of test-takers achieved a 7 and above score in the same year's IELTS exam, proving seven is an acceptable level of foreign language literacy present among students. Esseili then suggests several functions of the English language in Lebanon, instrumental, interpersonal, regulative, and innovative.

**Instrumental.** There are 32 universities in Lebanon, and 28 of these universities use at least one foreign language as the language of instruction in the university. Esseili

suggests that to understand better the issue of using foreign languages as a medium of instruction in schools, two things should be considered: the percentage of schools that teach in Arabic-English versus Arabic-French languages and the number of students willing to enroll in each medium. A table shows the change in percentages of available schools that teach in either a foreign language or both at the same time with the progression of time from 2004 until 2015. The schools with English as a language of instruction showed a relatively constant progression, but the schools with a French curriculum witnessed a 17% decrease in their numbers, while the universities that use both foreign languages as a medium of instruction increased by 16%. This only shows that French schools realized the increase in demand for English as a second language and added an Arabic-English curriculum to cater to the diversity of learners and to what valuable assets this new addition might bring to the schools (Esseili, 2017).

As for the percentages of students learning English and French as first foreign languages, a graph presented shows the increase of English as a first foreign language to 46% from 2004 till 2015, where French students decreased in numbers concerning the rise in English. Besides that, Lebanon relies mainly on its tourism and services sectors, but gaining a second language is encouraged. In addition, educational institutions in Lebanon emphasize the need for a second language education which aids in running international businesses.

**Interpersonal.** Esseili then discusses the everyday use of foreign languages, and how the English language emerged as a popular language with the advancement of English as the language of social media. English is not usually used outside of schools and classes since the people using it might be considered flashy and seeking attention by others who consider the native tongue superior. However, it is commonly used around

American-influenced schools and universities since the views on the English language changed to a more positive aspect (Esseili, 2011). English has become popular, and it can be used in interpersonal communications, street advertisements, and storefronts. Even the Arabic language has been Latinized to make it easier to use on social media platforms; hence more people are using Latinized Arabic (Arabizi), English, Arabic, or a combination of these languages either out of typing habit or laziness (Esseili, 2011).

**Regulative.** The Arabic language is primarily used in public and governmental institutions, with some exceptions. In specific cases, foreign languages can be used. After the French mandate, the Arabic language was decided to be used as the only language in all matters related to the government. With the growing popularity of using foreign languages, some ministries and public institutes include an additional language besides Arabic on their online platforms. Foreign languages can also be seen as the language of instruction in some universities, and in American universities, English is used in their legal contracts and documents.

**Innovative.** English has been used in many literary works in Lebanon dating back to the 20th century from Adab Al-Mahjar (Immigrant Literature) writers such as Gibran Khalil Gibran and Mikhail Naimy. Up till today, several Lebanese writers have published literature in the English language. Other than that, some words in the English language have already been borrowed, nativized, and even transliterated into Lebanese Arabic. English words related to technology, food, sports, and clothes have been borrowed by the Lebanese Arabic, such as the internet, ketchup, penalty, jeans, and many others. In addition, English words have been nativized into Lebanese Arabic such as using the word depressed but morphing it to fit Lebanese Arabic pronunciation, which makes it “dapprasit”.

The Lebanese teaching/learning educational system in which more than two other languages are obligatory within the school frameworks is challenging even for language-gifted Lebanese learners (Al-Hroub, 2022; El-Khoury & Al-Hroub, 2018; Frayha, 1999). English is progressively taking a more significant part of our daily communication and, thus a broader vitality. At schools and universities, the effort is being applied to learning languages and instructing. All three languages (Arabic, English, and French) are vital in Lebanon's instruction. However, since the turn of the century, French and Arabic have been utilized within the social and commerce world (Shaaban & Ghaith, 2002). In 2020, in Lebanon, to be specific, we can claim that the English language might have replaced the role of French in the business sector. Shaaban and Ghaith added after the 1970s with the third stage, after the independence of Lebanon in 1943 from the French administration that, schools expanded their willingness to adopt English as a language of instruction (Atiyeh 1970). Amin (2009) believes that English is being seen to install prestige and distinction and is no longer perceived as another option to take a course. English is also increasingly viewed by many Lebanese as a vital tool to further one's studies abroad in the US, UK, Australia, and Canada. This, of course, is related to the fact that many have immigrated during the civil war period (1975-1990) and still do so to this date in great numbers to seek a better future, and due to the instability of the political situation.

### ***Attitude towards Foreign Languages***

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Lebanese Christians believed that upholding the use of the French language next to Arabic would lead to better international relations with the West and create a dual identity for the Lebanese through bilingualism (Esseili, 2017). Lebanese Muslims, on the other hand, appreciated the Arabic identity more, embraced

the language and traditions, and did not want to include colonialist heritage (Esseili, 2017). However, Esseili added that English and French have become more acceptable and even popular amongst Lebanese, after the curriculum reforms at the start of the 21st century. People used a foreign language in their daily communications, even if it was broken. Using imperfect English or French received backlash and criticism from comedians, celebrities, and TV personnel.

At some point, there was a common understanding for some that the use of foreign languages can elevate a person's status. Some scholars who said that using foreign languages promotes tolerance and liberation also discussed this matter. Esseili (2017) argues that the suggestion that "one can only be tolerant of differences or liberal when they learn foreign languages, particularly English, or when they live in foreign countries, is self-deprecating" (p. 701). This idea neglects the rich and authentic Arab history that involved Christian and Muslim writers, poets, and artists stating that Arabic history shows that monolingual Arabs can be as tolerant and liberal as other cultures.

Esseili concludes that English is used in several means in Lebanon. It is used either by itself or by code-switching between English and Arabic since multilingualism is viewed as "a unique cultural and social trait that distinguishes them from non-Lebanese" (2017, p. 701). However, the impression of English as a better language to be used in schools negatively affects the underprivileged areas in Lebanon since some students are incapable of passing their official exams. This goes back to the student's disability to understand the material in a foreign language and the teacher's inability to deliver the material in a foreign language or their use of code-switching while teaching (Abdulla & Skaf, 2015; Esseili, 2011, 2014). English words have been borrowed and nativized in Lebanese Arabic; several words are used in daily communication. Esseili

then states that further research in ‘linguistic discrimination’ and perceptions toward the ethnolinguistic vitality of languages is needed for Lebanon.

### ***First Language (Known as Mother Tongue)***

In the study of Mother Tongue an Effective Medium of Education, Khan (2016) argues that mother-tongue instruction is the optimal mean for students to learn since it bridges the gap between the home language and the language of instruction. Ross (2004) defined ‘Mother Tongue’ –in a variety of ways: i.e., the language learned from the family; the language used at home; the first language a child speaks; the language used in the community; the language most competent in; and the ‘preferred’ language. The author believes that the ‘Mother Tongue’ can also form a person’s identity and central quality. Moreover, Khan stressed that spoken language is the most intimate expression of people’s personalities and identities. He adds that language is also the clearest expression of people’s knowledge, wisdom, freedom, and culture. Kadel (2010) argues that it is important for students to begin acquiring their mother tongue at an early stage to learn other languages given that the native language helps in the development of a “strong educational foundation” (p.1). Investigations by Ball (2010) revealed that children learn best in their primary/native language as a foundation for bilingual and multilingual instruction. Children's capacity to get accustomed to an additional language is not jeopardized when their primary language is also considered the essential language of instruction at school throughout all grade levels. Consequently, the local language is the foundation for learning different and additional languages, which consequently allows communication via these foreign languages.

While it was proven in various studies that students learn best in their mother tongue. However, in Lebanon, schools use English or French as languages of



instruction, and this can be traced back to several historical and social events shaping our society. The reliance on Arabic is mostly used yet restricted in the teaching of Arabic literature in classes, as well as History, Geography, and Civics only if the learners will sit for the Lebanese national examinations. In contrast, the learners enrolled in International Baccalaureate [IB], College Preparatory [CP], or French Baccalaureate Programs in Lebanon, have the option to choose from a varied list of courses taught in foreign languages and are not presented with Arabic-driven subjects. It is known that Lebanon is considered a multilingual country with three dominant languages: Arabic- the native language-, French -due to French Colonialism-, and English -a universal language. We must shed light that there are two “types” of Arabic, formal Arabic implemented to teach social studies but is also adopted in religious and political settings, and colloquial Arabic for communication. The use and practice of each language depend on several factors. For instance, Bahous, et al. (2014) claim that Lebanese citizens use French for arts and literature, while English is used for business purposes. Indeed, we can mention that this cultural diversity is also apparent in our socio-political setting. Moreover, these three languages go hand in hand in our society, as code-switching is one feature of this diversity. Lebanese tend to code-switch a lot since we learn different languages. Even a notable portion of the Lebanese population tends to learn four or five languages (e.g., Spanish, Armenian...).

Multilingualism and bilingualism in Education are vast and spread over the globe. Indeed, Lebanon is a country with three official languages: Arabic (the native language), French, and English. As rich and diverse as this would look like, Switzerland could be considered one of the leading countries in maintaining this richness by having four official languages Swiss German, French, Italian, and Romanche, but also

preserving minorities' languages without having languages overlapping or one degrading the other or "not giving any of the national languages priority over the others" (Rogers, 2014, p. 6). With that being stated, the opposite can be perceived in Lebanon and other Arab countries, where foreign languages are considered more prestigious and of value than their mother tongue (Amin, 2009). This is evident, in the choice of languages of instruction in Lebanese schools and universities as previously discussed. Consequently, this phenomenon affects the students' practice of a certain language or the other.

### ***Code/Language Switching in Lebanon***

A study conducted by Bahous et al. (2013) explored the views of the university faculty and students on code-switching in higher education classes in an American-style institution in Lebanon. The findings showed that code-switching (CS) between languages in spoken conversation is diffused in multilingual contexts and is used for many reasons (Bahous et al., 2014). In Lebanon, multilingualism and multiculturalism are widespread. Children learn two or three languages at school, namely Arabic, English, and French (Bahous et al., 2011). Most schools and universities use English to teach all subjects. However, Arabic is used for teaching social studies. Some schools teach a fourth language, such as Armenian –German – or Spanish. Formal Arabic is supposed to be the first language, but it is diglossic. Thus, it is not used in conversations in and outside class. This multilingual phenomenon leads to code-switching (CS), which is immersed in Lebanese culture (Joseph, 2004).

The article focused on the causes (when, why, and how) of code-switching between students and faculty members in an American-influenced higher education institute. In an informal observation done outside the academic medium by the authors, they found that

Arabic is spoken predominantly in lower socioeconomic status communities, whereas code-switching from Arabic to either English or French is practiced in higher socioeconomic status communities. A case study followed the “common sense” approach for collecting data through interviews and questionnaires. This study showed that teachers use code-switching when they want to emphasize or re-instate terms or subjects that are hard for students to understand in a foreign language. Hence, instructors resort back to using Arabic, and once the idea is explained thoroughly, they go back to using English. As for students, they admitted that they code-switch when they do not understand a particular idea, so they prefer it be explained in Arabic-Lebanese Arabic. In addition, code-switching is sometimes used unintentionally by teachers. Although English is the language of instruction, professors sometimes interject Arabic or French terms into their lectures. Thus, the authors differentiate between the two forms of code-switching. The first form occurs between sentences, which is called code-switching. The second form takes place within sentences, and this is referred to as code-mixing. However, the two terms are often interchangeable (Bista, 2010). Yao (2009) declared that code-switching is a common phenomenon in language contact, which exists in a bilingual and multilingual society. It refers to cases in which users use two or more languages.

Bahous et al. consider code-switching as a “complex” language phenomenon (2014, p. 362), which affected the context of this study socially and academically. The authors concluded that there should be more awareness of code-switching for the teachers to realize its positive aspects where code-switching can elevate the learning experience and enrich the interactions in the Lebanese classroom. Most importantly, code-switching does not necessarily disturb students’ acquisition and use of the target language but on the contrary, adds to it.

## **Concluding Summary of the Literature Review**

The international literature review helped the researcher gain more insight into the theories and practices of multicultural counseling, the theories that advocate for such an approach, and the issues that might arise from it. It was evident how language impacts the flow and the type of counseling relationship between the counselor and counselee, given its effect on self-expression and disclosure, verbal and emotional abilities to communicate, past- traumas, identity perception, and more. However, contradictory evidence was found about clients' perceptions of L1 versus L2 languages.

Rosenblum (2011) and Oliva (2017) stated that a few current studies explored language choice and language dynamics in the therapeutic frame. However, there was a lack of evidence given to the importance and effect of language when used with multilingual non- minorities groups. This is evident since most studies examined minorities in multilingual contexts, which is irrelevant to Lebanon's context given the complex circumstances and factors mentioned (the language of instruction, the country's official language, politics, religion, prestige, and more). Indeed, there has not been much focus on how the therapist's language-related self is understood and played out with clients who are similarly moving between linguistic worlds. This is applicable, as many Lebanese graduate students do not receive their school counseling training in Arabic and do not get the chance to properly explore the language-related experiences, as well as the lack of emphasis given by counseling theories regarding this area.

In addition, Burck (2004) noted that bilingualism and multiculturalism had been neglected, if not almost wholly ignored, in psychotherapy. Most of the literature on bilingual therapy lacks the perspective of bilingual therapists (Kokaliari, 2014). Furthermore, we can find a lack of literature and data about this topic relevant to bilingual

and multilingual communities such as the Lebanese and, on a larger scale, the Arab society. Studies were carried out to examine the perceptions of Arab Americans living in the US (Goforth, 2011) or Hispanics/Latinos living in the US (Smith-Adcock et al., 2006). However, the Arabs' perceptions studied are usually of immigrants and refugees living in the US (Nassar-McMillan, & Hakim-Larson, 2003) and not of Arabs living in their homelands.

Therefore, having empirical research done in our part of the world is crucial as we take part in multicultural and multilingual environments. For example, based on the literature review, students in Lebanon are learning three languages: Arabic (their native language), and two foreign languages, English and French. Foreign languages play an important role in shaping Lebanese knowledge regarding social and cultural identity. This language has expanded and plays a vital role in Lebanese society. It has a solid interpersonal and instrumental presence, especially among the youths of Lebanon. English functions as a link language and an identity marker among many Lebanese who are proud of being multilingual and view multilingualism as a national trademark. Such presence can be found in the act of code-switching. This research topic focuses on the counselors' perceptions, and counselees' ability to verbally express themselves; thus, choosing the appropriate methods is crucial in attaining reliable results.

Given that claim, the qualitative approach will be used to both collect and analyze data. This data will answer the research questions, given their nature, presenting a group of people's beliefs about the usage of languages in therapy sessions. Such an approach will provide a detailed understanding of the phenomenon that aims to be studied (Crowe et al., 2011).

Further research should be done to fill the literature gap by extending research and improving practice for counselors. In specific, in the last 40 years, there have been calls for the development of school counseling services in Lebanon (Ayyash-Abdo et al., 2010), but there have also been calls in other Arab nations like the UAE for the profession of counseling to gain more popularity. Nevertheless, counseling is still regarded as taboo in most Arab countries. (Brinson & Al-Amri, 2006).

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the study's methodology, including a description of the instruments used, sample selection, and the procedures that were followed for data collection and analysis.

#### **Research Aims and Questions**

The purpose of this research study is to explore: (a) the perceptions of school counselors on the effect of using bilingual counseling on upper-elementary student counselees; (b) the factors affecting the use of bilingual counseling according to the school counselors; (c) the perceptions of upper-elementary student counselees on towards their verbal and non-verbal self-expression; and (d) the factors affecting the use of bilingual counseling with upper-elementary students. Four research questions guide the current study:

1. How do school counselors perceive the effect of using bilingual counseling in counseling sessions on upper-elementary students' verbal and non-verbal self-expression during counseling?
2. How do upper-elementary students perceive the effect on their verbal and non-verbal self-expression while attending bilingual counseling sessions?
3. How do upper-elementary students perceive the effect on their verbal and non-verbal self-expression while attending bilingual counseling sessions?
4. What are the factors affecting the use of bilingual counseling according to upper-elementary students?

There are many possible research topics, but the decision to concentrate on perceptions was influenced by previously acquired knowledge. Given (2008) stated that

perceptions are crucial in determining human behavior; consequently, since people act based on their perceptions, it is possible to predict their behaviors. People's perceptions are influenced by their needs, so learning about students' perceptions can reveal their needs and improve counseling in the right ways.

### **Operational Definitions of Study Variables**

This study aims to acquire a better understanding of upper-elementary students and counselors' perceptions of the impact of utilizing the bilingual counseling approach, the students' self-expression in school counseling settings in Lebanon, and the factors affecting both variables which will be presented. Regarding the operational definitions of the study variables, this research follows Jacobson et al.'s (2015) definition of emotional expression which is "the extent to which people outwardly display their emotions" (p. 359); in the case of this study, verbally and non-verbally. By self-expression, we operationally imply the self-perceived verbal and non-verbal expression of emotions. Jacobson continues to add; that across the world, the ability of one to express how one feels has been linked to health and strength (Sue & Sue, 2008). To assess "self-expression," different research applies various instruments. According to Facciani et al. (2020), the Emotional Expressivity Scale is a 17-item self-report questionnaire that assesses how people believe themselves to express emotions verbally and nonverbally through body language and facial expressions while feeling sad or happy. The guiding variables in this study were the two operational definitions of bilingual counseling and self-expression in both verbal and non-verbal forms. A qualitative approach is taken in practice since the themes explored relating to bilingual counseling include perceptions concerning language usage and counseling practices. As for the factors affecting these variables, the operational definition used to measure factors/influence is qualitative. As



Kousha and Thelwall (2017) mentioned, the impact could be measured by analyzing patent citations (i.e., intellectual property). Therefore, this technique was used to analyze the quotes of counselors and counsees participating in the interviews and vignettes.

### **Research Design**

To answer the research questions in this thesis, the researcher used a qualitative approach that included various studies to gather information. The qualitative study method is effective for "gaining a comprehensive understanding of a topic of interest, an event that has occurred, or a phenomenon that has occurred in its natural, real-life setting" (Crowe et al., 2011, p. 1). The design of a qualitative study was employed to understand better the phenomenon of search (i.e., bilingual counseling) as experienced by the participants in the study (Al-Hroub, 2011a, 2014, 2015; Gustafsson, 2017). To investigate how the employment of a certain approach to counseling will affect the counsees' verbal and non-verbal self-expression, as well as the counselors' perceptions towards it. Thus, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with counselors and counsees and incorporated vignettes with the counsees. To gather rich and informative data on a research topic, semi-structured interviews were a crucial tool to engage the participating counselors in a debate. Open-ended questions were included in the interviews to allow participants to express themselves and share their perceptions. As well as integrated vignettes with the counsees during the interviews. Vignettes or EVM were used to enable the counsees in a school-age range to relate to the research purpose and better understand the interview questions by using short stories/scenarios. In addition, vignettes were used to acquire access to rich and detailed accounts more quickly and effectively.

## **Methods**

This section presents the participants' information, the sampling selection procedure, the instruments, as well as the procedure of data collection.

### ***Participants***

Interviews and incorporated vignettes were conducted for this research. The researcher reached out by sending invitations to school counselors and students based on a specific eligibility criterion. The sampling was based on the convenience sampling method as the sample was taken from a group of school counselors and counselees that were easy to contact.

**Participant Counselors.** Four counselors and ten students in total were recruited for the study. The students were selected based on a first-come-first-served. The counselors have multicultural counseling experience and have dealt with students in multiple languages (Arabic, French, and English). Two counselors work in private schools where the prevailing culture and language is Arabic. The other two counselors work in private schools where the prevailing culture and language is English. However, all four schools are present in Beirut, Lebanon. All counselors are Lebanese women with different levels of counseling experience. Three counselors had 3-5 years of experience, and one had around ten years of experience in that field. In addition, all counselors completed their university degrees in American universities in Lebanon. Three of the counselors have lived in Lebanon since childhood, and one came from Sierra Leone to complete her university studies and is still working in Lebanon. All counselors are either bilingual or multilingual. The following table represents informational data about the participating counselors.

**Table 3.1***Demographics of Participant Counselors*

Counselors	Age	Gender	University Degree	Languages Spoken	Years of Experience
A1	28	Female	B. A	Arabic, English	4
A2	24	Female	B. A	Arabic, English	3
A3	40	Female	M. A	Arabic, English	10
A4	30	Female	M. A	Arabic, English, French	5

**Participant Counselors.** The sample also consisted of 10 counselees. Five counselees are children from an Arab school, whereas the remainder is from an American-dominant school culture. Their schools are also present in Beirut, Lebanon. The students interviewed are in elementary grade levels, such as grades 4, 5, and 6. The students aged 9 to 11 have participated in counseling sessions in either Arabic or English. There are five boys and five girls among the counselees. Three students from grade 4, three from grade 5, and four from grade 6. This age group was chosen because upper-elementary kids (cycle 2) are often more expressive than lower-elementary pupils (cycle 1), who are still learning to utilize foreign languages. All counselees are Lebanese, have lived in Lebanon since infancy, and are either bilingual or multilingual. Table 3.2 presents demographic data about the participating counselees.

**Table 3.2***Demographics of Participant Counselors*

<b>Counselors</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Languages Spoken</b>
B1	9	Female	4	Arabic, English
B2	10	Male	5	Arabic, English
B3	11	Female	6	Arabic, English
B4	10	Female	5	Arabic, English, French
B5	11	Male	6	Arabic, English, French, Greek
B6	12	Male	6	Arabic, English
B7	10	Female	4	Arabic, English, Turkish
B8	11	Female	5	Arabic, English
B9	10	Male	5	Arabic, English
B10	11	Female	6	Arabic, English

*Interviews and Vignettes*

The following section presents both semi-structured interviews and integrated vignettes used to gather data. Due to the nature of the investigation, the current circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, and its ramifications on the Lebanese Education sector, which left schools, teachers, counselors, and students in unstable conditions between hybrid teaching and fully online classes.

**Semi-Structured Interviews with Counselors and Counselors.** Integrating qualitative and experimental approaches still needs to be improved, despite growing interest in hybrid methods that combine quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Both qualitative approaches: semi-structured interviews and vignettes possess many advantages. Teijlingen (2014) believes that semi-structured interviews are particularly

well-suited when exploring sensitive areas such as attitudes, values, beliefs, and motives. Because non-verbal indicators are present, they can aid in evaluating validity and urgency. Thus, provide information regarding students' non-verbal type of self-expression.

According to McLeod (2014), the advantages of using semi-structured interviews include their flexibility, which allows new questions to be asked impromptu during the interview because a strict schedule does not bind the interviewer. The interviews were conducted using the virtual platform Zoom, and each interview lasted around 50-60 minutes with the counselors. As for the counselees, they also sat for virtual interviews divided into two 30-minute sessions.

**Semi- Structured Interviews with Counselors.** Four counselors were interviewed; two of them work in two different American schools, and two others in two different Arab schools. These four private schools are found in the Lebanese capital: Beirut. The counselors were asked around 15 open-ended interview questions (see Appendix A) to gain more on their insights and delve into their perceptions of using the bilingual counseling approach in their sessions with elementary-aged students. The questions varied in terms of themes, as they tackled body language, cultural understanding, language perception, personal experience, and more. Examples of questions used were the following: (1) What have been your experiences with bilingual/multilingual counseling?,(2) What is your understanding of clients' language and culture?, (3) Does code-switching occur with the counselees?; and (4) How do you think the language chosen in a session with your students plays a role in the success of the session?

These questions tackled the approach to bilingual counseling, which entails also mixing and switching between languages during the counseling sessions. But also, some of the questions focused on the counselees' understanding of the culture they are dealing with and working with. As the literature focused on the importance of the languages chosen to conduct the sessions to improve the success of the sessions.

### ***Semi-Structured Interviews with Counselees***

Interviews were conducted with ten upper-elementary school counselees. Five counselees were students at American schools and the other five were students at Arab schools in Beirut, Lebanon. Around 10 open-ended questions (see Appendix A) were asked and discussed with elementary-aged students who happen to have undergone counseling sessions. The questions covered different themes ranging from the language used at home, the language used with friends and classmates, language switching, preferred language used in counseling, emotions, and language, and more. Examples of questions were the following: (1) During counseling sessions, which language do you choose to communicate with? Why? (2) Do you feel at ease when communicating your ideas and emotions in Arabic? Or do you prefer English or French? Explain... give examples, (3) How do you think communicating in (X) language in a session helps you express your emotions?; and (4) Do you feel obliged to speak in a foreign language during counseling sessions?

**Vignettes with Students.** The qualitative vignette experiment, defined as the use of vignettes aimed to introduce objectively regulated variance in material inside qualitative semi-structured interviews, is described here (Banat, 2021; Krayem & Al-Hroub, 2019). In contemporary social research, the use of incorporated vignettes that are based on fictionalized tales is well-established and widely employed. It has been

demonstrated that vignettes can be used in various ways to contribute to quantitative and qualitative studies (Berri & Al-Hroub, 2016; Krayem & Al-Hroub, 2019).

Some vignettes are read like stories, and they are inspired by narrative therapy, which focuses on the impact of culture on a person's life. These vignettes can also be derived from the multicultural approach to counseling. In this study, the researcher drew on common experiences of employing vignettes from "real-life" situations in two different pieces of research. In both cases, vignettes were used to acquire access to rich and detailed accounts more quickly and effectively than would have been achievable through semi-structured interviews on their own. Each scenario comprises two parts, the first of which depicts a young girl participating in a counseling session with an American counselor who does not speak Arabic (Vignette-Girl 1), and a boy (Vignette-Boy 2) conversing with a counselor who speaks the same language as him would be depicted in the second scenario, according to the artist (see Appendix B).

### **Data Collection Procedures**

As previously mentioned, the researcher collected qualitative data using semi-structured interviews and integrated vignettes to investigate how counselors and counsees perceived a certain use of language influences their sessions. Given the participants' consent and willingness to be part of this study. Counsees provided a rating in response to each question (see Appendix B) on a Likert-type scale from 1 to 3, with 1 representing "not at all," 2 representing "moderately," and 3 meaning "extremely." Berri and Al-Hroub's original study (2016) influenced such questions. Then, using the method of Descriptive Statistics (APA 7<sup>th</sup> Generation) the data were reported. The participants were assured that there were no right or wrong answers when responding to vignettes and interview questions. This explanation was particularly

essential to examine whether their perceptions were consistent or not with the premise presented in the vignettes (Krayem & Al- Hroub, 2019). In addition, the researcher used both thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and microanalysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2014) to conduct this investigation. Analysis of qualitative data using both thematic analysis and microanalysis are methods of doing so. As in the researcher's example, it is typically used with a collection of texts, such as an interview or transcripts. For this reason, below are some sample questions that were asked during the semi-structured interviews:

- To counselors: How do you think the language chosen in a session with your students plays a role in the session's success?
- To counselees: How do you think communicating in (X) language helps you express your emotions in a session?

Online interviews were performed as we were in a pandemic and under lockdown. Interviews with participant counselors lasted 40 to 60 minutes on average, whereas interviews with students lasted 30 minutes. The Zoom platform was used to record the interviews. Rosenblum's (2011) interview questions with bilingual and multilingual therapists and students inspired the interview questions (See Appendix A). The vignettes were also presented to the participant students during these interviews, which lasted between 20 and 25 minutes. The themes of the interview questions included: body language, multilingualism and counseling in everyday life, types of emotions, languages used in social contexts, the effect of language on the session's success, code-switching in daily life and counseling, and more. Online interviews have several advantages and disadvantages. In the current study, online interviews were important to avoid high-risk scenarios due to COVID-19, overcome geographical



barriers, and chat comfortably from home. On the other hand, online interviews are subject to technical difficulties and impersonal conversations.

### **Ethical Considerations**

When conducting semi-structured interviews, the researcher ensured that critical data is collected while also allowing the counselors' and counsees' specific difficulties and aspirations to come to the fore. At the end of the interviews, the researcher noticed how the counselors and counsees responded to various questions nonverbally. In addition, attention was paid to the moments where counselors and counsees code-switched and investigated the reasons behind such incidents. Another example was how students avoided answering specific questions. Furthermore, the researcher was particularly interested in observing how students' body language differed.

### **Data Analysis**

To analyze the information gathered from the interviews and integrated vignettes, the researcher employed thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), microanalysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2014), and descriptive statistics (APA Style 7<sup>th</sup> generation). Regarding the qualitative data analysis, the technique outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) was followed. These two researchers provided a clear guideline for conducting thematic analysis that entails 6 main steps: getting familiarized with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing the themes, defining, and naming the themes, and finally producing the report.

Since the beginning of data collection, the researcher has been interpreting and analyzing data; data interpretation and analysis is an ongoing, changing, unpredictable, and unfinished activity (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Then, an in-depth examination of the data was conducted, with emergent codes and categories/themes (Corbin & Strauss,

2014). Data analysis began with the creation of codes, then concepts, and eventually categories/themes (see Table 3.3). According to Corbin and Strauss (2014), coding entails searching for deeper meanings in participants' words and developing concepts by questioning and comparing different sets of data. Furthermore, concepts were derived from the data collected, and they reflected an "analyst's impressionistic understandings of what is being described in the experiences, spoken words, actions, interactions, problems, and issues expressed by participants" (Corbin & Strauss, 2014, p. 50). Concepts derived from the literature and tested against field data assisted in the organization of data and the generation of codes into various groups. Going up the conceptual ladder, as described by Corbin and Strauss (2014), from data, which holds the power of description and detail, through codes, and finally to categories or themes, which is the highest level of abstraction, was illustrated when moving from codes to themes in the analysis.

**Table 3.3.**

*Illustration of Data Analysis Procedure*

<b>Example Quotes</b>	<b>Concepts</b>	<b>Themes</b>
“I speak English with my parents” (B2)	Languages Spoken at Home	Home Environment
“People can understand I am angry because of my frown” (B7)	Facial Expressions Translate Emotions	Body Language

The qualitative study's data analysis methods allowed for a better understanding of the complexity, details, and depth (Al-Hroub, 2011a; Mason, 2002). Microanalysis was one of the strategies used to begin the data analysis. Microanalysis, according to Corbin and Strauss (2014), is a type of open coding that closely examines every piece of

data, and it is recommended at the start of analysis; it is as if the researcher is using a lens to describe the data and analyze each piece separately. Microanalysis also aids in the generation of various possibilities by initially generating various codes and then selectively maintaining or discarding the codes based on the new set of data obtained (Corbin & Strauss, 2014).

As a result, the data analysis steps were as follows: (a) coding the data, (b) comparing the different incidents and codes to come up with categories by identifying similarities and differences, (c) identifying common themes, (d) organizing the data codes under the relevant themes; and (e) comparing the emerging themes from data analysis to the literature. The constant comparisons that were used when analyzing the data are part of this process.

In regard to generating the codes, comparisons were made by comparing the similarities and differences between the various codes (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). This code comparison was crucial because it helped organize codes into categories and themes, distinguish between themes, and understand the properties and dimensions of the themes (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). To answer the research questions, data were organized into themes and interpreted and compared to what the literature says about the role of bilingual counseling and self-expression in school counseling settings. Each participant was given a code to protect their privacy and keep them anonymous.

The data were shared with the Principal Investigator via a Google Drive connection. The information was kept anonymous and confidential. The study's methods and results assisted in answering the research questions and provided codes based on these recurrent patterns were used. In addition, the researcher has considered and added themes that emerged from the interviews such as the home environment,

emotions and language, and the perceptions towards Arabic and English. These themes were deduced based on the methods used to retrieve data, such as semi-structured interviews and vignettes. This mixed approach helped guide and answer the research questions as the nature of these questions looks for perceptions and insights.

As for the quantitative part of the Vignettes, descriptive statistics were employed to report the counselees' mean responses on two vignettes. Descriptive statistics were used to compare and describe the data gathered. As outlined by APA 7th generation, the strategy served in gathering and presenting the data. After presenting the vignettes to the counselees, the researcher chose three questions and compared the data answered for each of the two vignettes. The counselees' answers were inserted in a table that shows the frequencies of their responses "not at all", "moderately, and "extremely". In addition, descriptive statics were used to report the infographics of the participants. These infographics were reported in two tables. One table presents the counselors' data about their gender, age, degree, years of experience, and languages are spoken. The same counselees' data was reported in a table showing their age, gender, grade level, and languages are spoken.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of the interviews and vignettes. The answers to the four research questions were presented through common themes derived from the interviewees' responses; the themes are supported with excerpts from the participants' answers. This chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section provides the counselors' perceptions regarding the use of the bilingual counseling approach with elementary students while focusing on the counsees' verbal and non-verbal self-expression in counseling sessions. The second section contains the factors, according to the counselors, affecting the use of the bilingual approach in counseling. The third section provides the counsees' perceptions of their verbal and non-verbal self-expression in bilingual counseling sessions. Finally, the fourth section conveys the factors, according to upper-elementary students, affecting the use of bilingual counseling. The findings and themes emerged and were pre-determined from the data gathered during the semi-structured interviews and vignettes. The findings are subdivided into themes related to verbal and non-verbal expressions to answer the research questions.

#### **Counselors' Perceptions toward Verbal and Non-Verbal Self-Expression in Bilingual Counseling**

Counselors in this study exhibited strong perceptions related to counsees' comfort. The four counselors placed students' comfort as their number one priority, and accordingly, they would navigate the counseling session/relationship. They also expressed that their job lies in creating a safe environment where counsees can express themselves freely without feeling judged. In addition, the counselors believed

that they should adapt their counseling approach and techniques to fit the students' well-being. They also stated that they were faced with obstacles given the current circumstances as COVID-19 imposed many restrictions. These counselors opted for virtual methods to conduct their sessions; some even mentioned "texting" as one means to reach out to their students. Two of the counselors work in American schools (counselors A1 and A3), and the other two in Arab schools (counselors A2 and A4). This section explains the counselors' perceptions regarding using the approach of bilingual counseling with the counsees' self-expression. As we move forward, some themes translate the counselors' perceptions of using the bilingual counseling approach and its effect on both their verbal and non-verbal self-expression.

### ***The Utility and Challenges of the Bilingual Counseling Approach***

This theme discusses the counselors' perceptions regarding the vitality of applying the bilingual counseling approach while also mentioning the challenges faced by applying it during the counseling sessions.

Counselors believe that adopting bilingual counseling is important given the nature and culture of the students they work with in schools. These students are normally bilingual (Arabic and English speakers), while others are multilingual. All counselors agreed that this approach to counseling focuses a lot on understanding the counsees' backgrounds. They all emphasized their language abilities to counsel.

The counselors shared the challenges faced during monolingual sessions in comparison to bilingual ones. Two counselors (A2 and A4) expressed their inability to understand the counsees' choice of language fully and properly even when the counseling language was Arabic. Counselors A1 and A3 emphasized their experience with international students whose native tongues are Portuguese, Spanish, German,

Italian, and more. They focused on the role played by the English language as means to close the linguistic barrier gap. Thus, being able to communicate more efficiently.

According to counselors A1 and A3, the language barrier (i.e., not understanding the other party's language) is considered highly challenging as it reflects on the counseling relationship and affects the counseling environment. These two counselors experienced counseling with students whose native tongue is not Arabic or English. They also expressed their frustration in not being able to comprehend the counselees' expression of needs. Therefore, being unable to reach the therapeutic goals set, due to the confusion created by the lack of linguistic understanding. In addition, one counselor (A2) stressed the students' experiences encountered. She witnessed that counselees would recall and express an incident based on the language used while experiencing it. Counselor A2 stated,

Understanding the student and their background is critical, but it is equally vital to comprehend what they are saying. Example: Once, while working with an Egyptian student, I could not understand some Arabic words, so I had to stop him and ask him about them every time he said something unfamiliar to me. When the two of us are having difficulty comprehending what we are saying or if we are speaking in another language that they nor I can understand, this creates a barrier to understanding one another.

Another counselor also pointed out that the language used in the counseling session is crucial; counselor A1 mentioned, "I am working in an IB school, so I have worked with international students (Italian, Romanian, Spanish...), not only Lebanese. Sometimes it upsets me not to understand them because I want to help them out".

### *The Native Tongue versus English in the Counseling Sessions*

This theme discusses the specific use of Arabic and English in counseling sessions among counselors. All counselors reflected on their experiences and perceptions of using these two languages during the counseling sessions.

Counselor A2 mentioned a strong attachment and usage of the Arabic language as it is her mother tongue and linked it to her identity. On the other hand, the other three counselors (A1, A2, and A4) mentioned their reliance on English more due to different factors related to their living, workplace, university studies, and more. Moreover, counselor A2 mentioned that she uses English more as she delivers her content in English due to her university courses, where she learned the theories, practices, and approaches to counseling in English. However, counselor A1 mentioned that even though she relies more on the English language, she also uses Arabic words to express strong feelings such as anger and irritation. “I would say “عصبت” [I got angry] or “زعجني” [he irritates me] instead of saying I am so angry’ (counselor A2)

In addition, all four counselors emphasized the students’ self-expression using either or both languages. For example, counselor A4 expressed the effect of social experiences on the counsees’ approach to using English and Arabic, mentioning social experiences with the community. She believes that what the counsees express during the counseling sessions depends on the language used during the situation encountered by the counsees. Counselor A2 focused on age differences, mentioning that as students grew up, they became more exposed to the English language due to social media, which consequently affected their English language practice. In addition, counselors A3 and A1 mentioned that there is a difference in the languages spoken in



the counseling sessions, due to personal choice, language competency, and accessibility to TV shows. Counselor A1 stated,

I was born and raised outside of Lebanon, so my first language is English, and I am more comfortable using it. But as for the students who are born and raised here, some prefer Arabic, and even some of them are “Americanized” due to the media even if they are fluent in Arabic, they still talk in English during sessions.

Counselor A4 mentioned,

When it comes to emotions and thoughts, Arabic is much easier for them [counselees] to find their words since they are used to their mother language- their full experience of the community, or while watching videos or TV, walking in the street you would hear Arabic *الدكنجي* [the grocery owner]- if there is an emergency, the red cross “ما حيي يـحكي بالإنكليزي” [won't speak in English]- Thus this built up experience will allow them to express themselves in Arabic.

### ***Verbal Expression***

This subsection presents the effect of the usage of the bilingual counseling approach on the counselees' verbal self-expression.

**Code-Switching and its Manifestations.** This study focuses on Lebanese schools and given that their population is diverse. Thus, the researcher encountered counselees and counselors who are bilingual and multilingual. The interviewees are fluent in at least two if not three, languages: Arabic, English, and French. When asked does code-switching occurs during counseling sessions, Counselor A1 stated, “More than 50% of the students' code-switch”. Code-switching is a “natural and cultural phenomenon that both counselors and counselees express” (counselor A1).

All counselors agreed that students' who code-switch easily are more comfortable and confident in their linguistic abilities. Two counselors (A1 and A3)

highly stressed the role of culture on the counselees' reliance on language code-switching. In addition, these two counselors talked about the counselees' language competency and how it is translated into code-switching. They claimed that code-switching made the students feel comfortable in both the Arabic and English languages. Thus, the more they used them interchangeably. Counselor A1 believes "code-switching shows their [counselees] comfort zone, which is easier to express". On the other hand, counselor A2 raised a challenge that counselees might face which is linguistic incompetency. She admits that some counselees who highly rely on switching between languages might suffer from linguistic barriers and challenges as they aren't able to express themselves verbally in either Arabic or English. Again, as mentioned in the previous subsection, counselors A2 and A4 emphasized the role played by social media and the students' exposure to it and to "Tik-Tok". These two counselors emphasized the nature of the content watched. Nowadays, lots of students are watching Netflix and are highly exposed to English/ American content. Thus, being more exposed to the English language and consequently using it more. Even counselor A2 related this phenomenon to learning the English language as she said, "One might say that social media is helping students in advancing their English language skills".

In addition, the age difference among students was also mentioned regarding language competency explaining that grade 4 students might still be acquiring language in contrast to grade 6 students who became more fluent in the English language. Thus, grade 6 students had a higher tendency to code-switch than grade 4 students.

Counselor A2 said:

Code-switching might show language competency and how one must be competent in one language to be able to communicate with it or even more than

one. But sometimes this might indicate that students aren't able to find their words so they can't come up with one clear and complete sentence to express their thoughts during counseling.

All counselors linked code-switching to a cultural practice, and counselor A2 mentioned the role of social media in witnessing Lebanese counselees relying more and more on the English language because of Tik- Tok, Instagram, fads, and popular trends.

In addition, when the counselor was asked whether they code-switch, they all admitted that they do so. Three counselors (A1, A2, and A3) mentioned they always code-switch, but counselor A4 said she code-switches most of the time. In addition, the three counselors expressed their confidence with code-switching in the counseling sessions since they perceive it to communicate better, understand the counselees, and reach therapeutic goals.

Counselor A2 added, "I also code-switch with the students... I feel like they understand me better when I switch between the languages; I refer to Arabic to explain and then to English". Counselor A3 admittedly said, "I code-switch all the time...[but] what is important for me is to reach the child, and whatever makes him/her comfortable during the conversation".

### ***Non-Verbal Expression: Use of Body Language***

This subsection presents the findings related to the counselors' perceptions regarding the counselees' non-verbal expressions while attending bilingual counseling sessions.

The findings showed that counselors view counselees as individuals who translate their emotions vocally and non-verbally in different ways. All four counselors emphasized the importance of body language and facial expressions and how they add

more understanding and insight into the counselor-counselee relationship. All of them said that body language helps better understand the counsees' emotions and feelings. They translate the counsees' body language into their understanding to assess how comfortable or uncomfortable the counselee is feeling during the counseling sessions. For instance, counselors A2 and A3 indicated that body language could be helpful in cases where students are unable to express themselves verbally. They can infer from their bodily gestures, such as "locking fingers or crossing arms" (counselor A3), that they are not feeling comfortable or at ease.

Counselor A1 described many incidents where counsees came into her office and how she translated them into her understanding. She emphasized that the way students entered and interacted was an indication of how comfortable or uncomfortable they were. Some sat on the chair with their backpacks on, some knocked on the door lightly. Others fidgeted and didn't show eye contact. On the contrary, some students decided to sit close to her and speak using their hands and bodily gestures.

In addition, they emphasized this understanding to better approach the counsees. Therefore, to "create a safer environment" for them when they witness the counsees either fidgeting in place or constantly looking at the door (counselor A3). Counselor A1 emphasized as well on translating the counsees' body language and facial reactions when she used to rely heavily on using the English language during the sessions. She claimed that some students used to retrieve back explaining this act as feeling uncomfortable with the language and therefore she used to switch back to Arabic to create a safer environment. Another counselor (A4) claimed that body language can unmask what spoken words truly mean. Counselor A1 mentioned,

since we are talking about language, for instance, English is easier for me and I speak fast but on the students' end, if I mention a lot of things in English, I see them “بيرجعو”/ [retrieve back], then I switch to Arabic, so they feel more comfortable.

Counselor A2 stated:

Body language can be used to reinforce the spoken word and can also be used to gain an understanding of how people truly feel. In some cases, even when a student claims to be healthy, their body language may imply otherwise. For example, a student may sit in a posture that signals pain or discomfort when they claim to be okay.

### ***Verbal and Non-Verbal Interaction: Emotions and Language***

This subsection talks about the counselors' perceptions of the words articulated among the counsees in accordance with the emotions felt and expressed during the counseling sessions. As words are a verbal means to communicate and convey abstract and non-verbal emotions felt. This subsection presents the counselors' perceptions regarding the verbal and non-verbal side of the interactions occurring during the counseling sessions. However, many reasons can explain the dissonance in the variety of languages and emotions as counselor A4 explained, “It can go either way depending on the person, environment, and intensity of the emotion”.

Counselor A1 mentioned an eye-opening statement “different languages are used for different emotions”. The dilemma regarding the relationship between the counsees' verbal and nonverbal self-expression was portrayed among the counselors. Two counselors (A1 and A3) witnessed a detachment, among the counsees, from the mother tongue when expressing different emotions like happiness. For example, words

and phrases like “Oh my God/ I am so excited/ we won the game” were expressed in English as these phrases translate emotions of joy and excitement. Counselor A4 mentioned that some counselees use English when they are happy as they have more access to it through social media- naming it the “happy language”.

However, according to all four counselors, the opposite was expressed when in a state of anger. In other words, the Arabic language was relied on to show emotions of anger and irritation among the counselees. For instance, counselor A1 mentioned that some counselees used to curse in Arabic when feeling angry. Other words were used such as “زعجني – معصب” [I am angry/ he irritates me]” to also express feelings of distress (counselor A1). This phenomenon was related to social experiences and the home environment as counselors A2 and A4 emphasized. Counselor A2 mentioned the feeling of anger is expressed more in Arabic, due to the daily communication at home with family members. In addition, counselor A4 expressed learned behaviors due to cultural experiences and norms such as cursing when one is angry.

Different views were translated into this theme. One of the questions asked during the interviews was when counselees change their languages while they communicate different emotions. Three counselors (A1, A2, and A4) witnessed a reliance on the Arabic language for the counselees when they express and experience emotions of anger. They claimed that counselees express themselves in their mother tongue focusing on the intensity of the emotion.

In addition, two counselors (A2 and A4) related this phenomenon to learned experiences that took place in Arabic during the counselees’ daily lives. They mentioned that students at this young age are replicas of their parents’ practices. Thus,

they are more prone to repeat/ indulge again in what takes place at home. Counselor A4 expressed:

مثلاً [for example] , this depends on the behavior learning so if this situation happened with their caregivers they might go through this again, and also due to culture (the extended family) if they are going to use these terms in certain situations they might use them when they are angry (i.e. Curse words) so once “معصب حيسب” [once he/she is angry they will curse] -a cultural behavior and a norm learned when one is angry

There were diverse views expressed towards the Arabic language and whether it contains more emotional baggage in comparison to other languages. Two of the counselors (A1 and A4) agreed that Arabic contains more emotional baggage, one counselor (A2) was neutral to this idea, and the other disagreed (counselor A3). The two counselors (A1 and A4) who agreed supported their claim about the nature of the Arabic language. They believe that Arabic is a rich language, containing tons of synonyms. Also, focused on the phonological awareness of Arabic letters that seem more intense when expressing strong feelings such as anger. Counselor A1 pointed out:

I think each language has that [emotional baggage], but also since I communicate more in English. But when it comes to emotions, I might express them in Arabic depending on the emotional context (e.g., what I heard) because Arabic letters might have more intensity like “ز عجني” [he irritates me].

Counselor A4 said, “Big time since I studied German and it is hard, and I found big commonality with the Arabic “في كثير تنوع، خيارات، ومرادفات” [there is a lot of richness, choices, and synonyms]” but English has fewer synonyms- terms were more limited”.

Counselor A1, who works in an American school, also shared her work experiences and

what she witnessed in the environment where she works in. She claimed that the international students referred to their mother tongues when they expressed themselves. However, she expressed her frustration because of her inability to understand them linguistically. Counselor A1 mentioned, “I have worked with Italian, Brazilian, Spanish, and Romanian students. The international students referred to their mother tongues when they expressed anger. I couldn’t understand them, but I could see that in their facial reactions”.

### **Counselors’ Perceptions towards the Factors Affecting the Use of Bilingual Counseling**

This section explains the factors affecting the counselors’ perceptions regarding using the approach of bilingual counseling in relation to the counselees’ self-expression.

#### ***Language Preference in Counseling***

The counselees’ well-being and comfort during the counseling sessions are set in high regard for the bilingual and multilingual approaches to counseling. All four counselors consider the counselee as the center of the counseling relationship, as was evident in their answers about the language chosen to start their sessions. In addition, they tailored their practices to create a safe space where the counselee feels at ease.

All four counselors stressed the importance of having a language that both counselors and counselees can communicate with to facilitate the counseling relationship and eventually reach the counseling goals set by both parties. Three of the counselors claimed that they would typically start their sessions using the English language and rely on it more in their sessions; however, one counselor that works in the Arab schools mentioned she relies more on the use of Arabic because it helps focus and relating more to the student's background and experiences (counselor A2). However,



counselor A4 expressed the opposite and mentioned, “I use English more if they are relaxed and responding in a good way”. Regardless of the language chosen, the counselors have agreed on the vitality of placing the counselees’ comfort and ability to express themselves freely as the center of their attention. Thus, adopting their approach and techniques to create a safe environment for the counselees.

All four counselors emphasized their flexibility in switching between Arabic and English to create a safer environment for the counselees to be able to open- up and feel more comfortable in expressing themselves. Counselors A1 and A2 mentioned they start their counseling sessions in English, but if they noticed the client is not responding well, they switch to Arabic to ease the communication. The same thing applies to counselors A3 and A4 regarding choosing a language the counselee feels comfortable using based on the evidence gathered in that session. Counselor A1, for example, stated, “I normally begin in English, but I tailor my sessions to the needs of each student. Some people may prefer Arabic; if that is the case, I will change the language to Arabic to ensure that everyone is involved and that their well-being is properly addressed”.

Counselor A2 also seconded, “I interactively start the session in English, and if I feel the students are not interacting, I explain in colloquial Arabic”. Counselor A2 also explained, “If I am talking with students in grade 1 who don’t understand English, I talk in Arabic. Students who are uncomfortable talking in English lose interest in participation in [the counseling session]”.

### ***Home Environment***

All counselors emphasized the role played by nuclear families in affecting and developing children. They mentioned that according to the developmental stages, children at the elementary level are highly prone to be influenced by their parents’

ideologies, home norms and virtues, languages are spoken at home, and more.

Counselor A3 mentioned that the home environment cultivates language readiness and acquisition.

According to the counselors, most counselees communicate in Arabic, English, or both, which is highly due to what their parents spoke with them at home (counselor A2). Counselor A4 emphasized that you can usually infer about the child's home environment due to their behavior, thoughts, perceptions, and words.

In addition, it was evident, according to counselors A1 and A3, that some counselees are communicating in English more than in Arabic due to the presence of nannies and helpers at home who are usually non-Lebanese/non-Arab speakers. The two counselors discussed further and, in more depth, the time the children spend at home after school and with whom they are spending that time. Counselors A2 and A4 have not witnessed such observation but claimed that the children's parents communicate mainly in Arabic and refrain from using English in their daily encounters with their kids. However, all counselors shed light on the effect of having working parents. This phenomenon has led the children to be alone watching TV or being in the presence of their grandparents or the nannies as the working parents are not there by the time the students reach home after school. Thus, it affects the children's language acquisition, readiness as well as "identification with the Arabic, English, or any other language" (counselor A3).

Counselor A2 reported, "Many counselees come to the counseling sessions being fluent in either language or both [Arabic and English] because of how their parents speak to them at home and in which language they allow the kids to answer and communicate". Counselor A1 added, "If the parents speak only or mostly Arabic,

usually the kids will find themselves more at ease with that language as they are more used to it. The same thing applies to English, French, and Armenian”.

### ***The Population in Therapy***

Another factor affecting the use of the bilingual counseling approach is the nature of the population in counseling, as most Lebanese students are bilingual or multilingual. These students either know Arabic and English, or Arabic, English, and French. Thus, the need to counsel Lebanese students in different languages is evident to understand the counsees’ background, norms, culture, and other factors affecting the clients’ experiences and micro and macro systems (counselor A2). For example, counselor A1 emphasized that she must be linguistically equipped to understand what is being expressed during the counseling sessions. Like the other counselors, she also added that they are counseling students from different backgrounds. They emphasized that counsees are linguistically different and come from different countries, and many are non-Arabs.

Moreover, even for Arabic speakers, it was evident among the four counselors that many students do not consider the Arabic mother tongue as their first language. Furthermore, counselors A1 and A3 noted this as they counseled international students from different nationalities. Thus, these students referred to their mother tongues, as counselor A1 stated.

In addition, Lebanese students consider English their first language and use it more often in their daily encounters than Arabic. As for counselor A2, she discussed her experiences counseling native Arab speakers of different nationalities, such as Palestinians, Syrians, and Egyptians. She mentioned that although both parties are

Arabic speakers, she dealt with some challenges relating to the differences in dialects affecting the general communication between the counselor and counselee.

Counselor A3 said:

As a counselor, I cannot speak only one language. Some kids come to the sessions and speak three languages interchangeably, while others stick to 2. But rarely have I had a counselee who speaks only and purely Arabic or English.

International students use English and their native tongue to express themselves more freely.

### **Counselees' Perceptions towards their Verbal and Non-Verbal Self-Expression in Bilingual Counseling**

This section presents the findings of the upper-elementary counselees' answers based on both the interview questions and vignettes regarding their verbal and non-verbal self-expression while attending bilingual counseling sessions. The ten counselees (five boys and five girls) are Lebanese, born and raised in Lebanon. Some of them are bilingual, and others are multilingual. The sample was retrieved from different school environments: An American school environment and an Arab one. B1-B5 counselees come from an American school environment and B6-B10 from an Arabic school-based background.

First, the researcher presented the themes affecting the students' perceptions of verbal expression followed by non-verbal expression, and lastly, both verbal and non-verbal expression while attending bilingual counseling sessions. Hence, the direct themes derived from this variable are related to the interaction between counselors and counselees in bilingual counseling settings. The second section presents the counselees'

perceptions of the factors affecting the usage of the bilingual counseling approach regarding their verbal and nonverbal self-expression.

### ***Verbal Expression***

As manifested previously, counselors expressed different perceptions of the effect of the bilingual counseling approach on the counsees' verbal and nonverbal self-expression. This subsection presents the counsees' perceptions of their verbal self-expression while attending bilingual counseling sessions. Different themes are presented, such as language choice and code-switching, in the bilingual counseling sessions.

**Language Choice in Counseling.** The counsees communicated their perceptions of both the Arabic and English language and their reasoning behind using each or both languages in bilingual counseling contexts. Findings differed as some counsees chose English and others Arabic for identity, vocabulary, language competence, and fluency.

Six counsees claimed they prefer communicating in English, which is easier than Arabic. They believe communicating in the English language allows them to find their words easily compared to doing so in Arabic. Two counsees (B2 and B6) even claimed that they consider the Arabic language challenging because they are still acquiring it at school. B6 counselee is a student at one of the dominant Arab schools and regards Arabic as a complicated language and English easy since it is easier to learn. The same was also expressed by counselee B7, a student at one of the dominant Arabic schools. She believes, "In English, I feel freer, and I can find more words to express myself".

On the other hand, four counselees expressed the total opposite regarding the Arabic language. These four expressed their competency and ability to use Arabic more fluently to find their words rapidly and in an easier way. While two of them linked this preference to the value of the Arabic language, they place it in, emphasizing the importance of both the mother tongue and one's identity. For example, both counselees B1 and B4 (American school students) enjoy communicating in Arabic more than in French or English. This discrepancy in views was portrayed by both groups of students belonging to the American or the Arab schools.

When asked which language they choose to communicate with during counseling sessions? And why? Counselee B1 pointed out:

I like speaking in Arabic more than in English, and there are more words in Arabic. And since we live in an Arab country, I talk in Arabic. The first thing that comes to my mind is that I say it in Arabic. But in Arabic, we have some phrases we use like “يلا وبعدين” [and then what] from the tone we can tell and understand.

Counselee B2 also stated, “In English, I know the language more than Arabic. I am more fluent in English than in Arabic. As for Arabic, I do like the language, but English is easier for me, as I am still learning new words in Arabic”.

**Code-Switching in Counseling.** Code-switching is a cultural practice, and this phenomenon is also portrayed by the counselees while talking about code-switching during counseling sessions or even while answering interview questions.

Two of the counselees, belonging to the Arab dominant schools, claimed they rather stick to one language while communicating as mixing between the languages can create confusion. For instance, B6 said, “It doesn't help me with my ideas; I prefer to

stick to one language”. Other counselees from both environments expressed their openness toward this practice. Also, they indulge in code-switching to better find their words and better express themselves. They believe using Arabic and English interchangeably unlocks whatever they feel stuck on, completing their train of thought and, subsequently their sentences. In addition, B1 and B4 counselees consider code-switching as a national practice that many are used to “it is a Lebanese tradition to mix languages” (counselee B4). B2, B5, and B9 said they love expressing themselves in many languages. B9 believes code-switching allows him to reach more people as he knows and uses more languages.

When asked about code-switching and whether the counselees feel this practice helps them or limits their thoughts’ flow, the answers varied. B1 stated, “We are used to mixing words in Arabic, and English, we know them very well, so we mix them. And everyone does that, and we understand each other without noticing”. B8 pointed out, “It helps me in my flow of thoughts if there are words I don’t know in English, and I can say them in Arabic and vice-versa”. On the other hand, B6 said, “It doesn’t help me with my ideas; I prefer to stick to one language”.

### ***Non-Verbal Expression***

In therapy, body language is considered a means to understand the client’s emotions and feelings as Anolli et al. (2008) claimed members of different cultures translate emotions in different ways. This was also evident among the counselees as all of them agreed on their reliance on it in conceiving their messages. The following subsection presents the counselees’ perceptions of their nonverbal self-expression while attending bilingual counseling sessions.

**The Use of Body Language in Communication.** The counselees presented different perceptions regarding their nonverbal self-expression while focusing on their body language: hand gestures and facial expressions. Nine of the counselees communicated a high reliance on body language and facial reactions to express themselves. For example, B2 claimed using body language, “helps people picture and understand better what happened. They also expressed, that through body language they can better understand others while focusing on what facial reactions might unveil in terms of emotions. Four counselees focused on the use of hand gestures while communicating. They considered these means to help them better explain their thoughts and feelings to others. Or in some cases, as counselee, B4 mentioned she feels that she doesn’t have to speak that much, but instead can use hand gestures to communicate her ideas and emotions.

However, only one counselee did not agree with the idea that body language helps in better communicating as he claimed he does not rely on it and instead he uses his words more. When asked whether body language and facial expressions help you in communicating your ideas, B7 said, “Yes sometimes, if someone is talking and his eyebrows move down, I can say he is angry. I use my whole body to communicate”. B1 stated, “When we move our hands it’s like we are acting out what we are saying. So, they might understand me more based on my hand gestures”. B4 said, “Body language and hand gestures help me a lot since I am a very shy person, and this helps me in not talking that much”.

***Verbal and Non-Verbal Expression: Types of Emotions and Language.***

This subsection talks about the counselees’ perceptions in relation to the words articulated following the emotions felt and expressed during the counseling sessions. As



words are a verbal means to communicate and convey abstract and non-verbal emotions felt. This subsection presents the counselees' perceptions regarding their verbal and non-verbal side of the interactions occurring during the counseling sessions.

The counselees were asked how communicating in a specific language helps them express their emotions. Therefore, do they use different languages when expressing different emotions such as happiness, anger, and sadness? Counselees justified their use of the Arabic language when happy claiming various reasons. One counselee linked this practice back to its roots and identity. For example, counselee B1 believes, "since we live in an Arab country, I talk in Arabic". He also added that he enjoys communicating more in Arabic and uses this language to express happiness. Counselees B1, B6, B7, and B8 counselees mentioned they use Arabic in a state of joy because there are more words and synonyms in the Arabic language. Thus, it is easier for them to communicate and express happiness in Arabic. In addition, counselee B8 added that she uses Arabic for all emotional states, considering the native tongue as "more expressive".

On the other hand, two counselees mentioned they speak in English in a state of joy. For instance, B2 and B7 claimed they find more words in the English language to express their happy emotions, such as "Oh my God!" (Counselee B2) and "I am very excited!" (Counselee B7). In addition, two counselees would speak in English when feeling sad. The other eight claimed they don't communicate with others when they experience such emotions (sadness). As counselee B2 mentioned, "I stay quiet when feeling sad, I am not able to talk".

When in a state of anger, all counselees agreed to switch to Arabic. One counselee justified his act by focusing on Arabic letters and sounds; another counselee focused on the accessibility to curse words in the native language. To add, counselee B2 justified

using Arabic when angry to “get the strong words out”, and B3 claimed the words in Arabic “are more intense than in English”. B3 said, “It’s just the tone that the Arabic language gives in. When I am angry, I might use Arabic because the words are more intense and stronger than in English”. B10 mentioned:

When I am angry, the words come out easily in Arabic, it is more intense, and you can find stronger words especially when I fight with my brother. When I am sad, words come out slowly and I become cold emotionally. However, when I am happy, words come out fast using English, like oh my God, I won the game!

### **Counselees’ Perceptions towards the Factors Affecting the Use of Bilingual Counseling**

This section presents the counselees’ perceptions of the factors affecting the use of bilingual counseling.

#### ***Home Environment***

The interview started by asking the counselees about their mother tongue and which language they use at home. The ten counselees consider Arabic as their mother tongue but not all of them speak it at home with their family members. Three counselees claimed they use Arabic and English equally. On the other hand, two counselees claimed they rely more on English than Arabic. For example, counselees B1 and B2 mentioned that their parents use English most of the time, but rarely communicate in Arabic at home. As for counselees B6, B7, B8, B9, and B10, all of them speak Arabic at home. The students at Arab-dominant schools claimed they might use a bit of English in their conversations, but mostly speak Arabic with their parents and siblings. Counselee B3 stated:

I mostly speak in Arabic, and usually, I speak a mix between English and Arabic. With my nanny, I speak French, and with my brother English. So, the more I speak a certain language at home, usually, I would tend to use it even if it was in counseling.

As counselee B3 mentioned, “The more the language is spoken and practiced at home, the higher chances would be to have this language used during the counseling sessions”. Counselee B2 added, “At home, we speak English all the time, but we barely speak Arabic. It’s not that I don’t like the language but since my parents speak English with me so it’s easier for me to use it at school, with my friends, and with the counselor”.

### ***Language in Social Context***

Most counselees mentioned that the language used at school or with friends is different from the one at home. It was found that the English language was used more than Arabic when asked in which language they choose to communicate with friends or peers. Seven of the counselees mentioned they mainly speak English with their friends. Two of the counselees expressed their flexibility and adaptability to the person they were communicating with. However, only one counselee mentioned they communicate mainly in Arabic in social contexts with friends and peers but still include the English language in his communications.

Counselee B8 pointed out, “Arabic and sometimes English to express ourselves more with the words”. Counselee B9 mentioned, “It depends; some of my friends talk in Arabic, and others talk in English. It depends on their main language”. Counselee B6 also stated, “English, but I talk with some in Arabic. Some are from other countries like

Nigeria they don't know Arabic". Counselors B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, and B7 use mostly English in their communication with their peers and friends.

### **Vignettes**

The Experimental Vignette Methodology (EVM) was used to explore Lebanese counselees' perceptions regarding bilingual counseling and instances/scenarios that could be relatable to them. These vignettes were integrated into the semi-structured interviews conducted with the counselees.

Students were provided with two vignettes: the first one was about a girl in grade 4 whose parents divorced and who was trying to communicate her frustration to an American counselor who does not speak Arabic. As for the second vignette, a boy in grade 6 met with a multilingual counselor that speaks Arabic, English, and French. Methods of thematic analysis, microanalysis, and descriptive statistics were used to show the data collected. The vignettes had qualitative and quantitative parts. Tables 4.3 and 4.4. are provided to display this data.

Table 4.4 shows the answers of the ten counselees for Vignette 1 (Sample Vignette- Girl 1). All participants agreed that the counselee had problems communicating because of the language chosen in the counseling session. The questions were the following: (Q1) how frustrating/challenging is it to talk and not have the other person understand you? (Q2) how would you rate the success of this session? And (Q3) how effectively was Sarah able to communicate her emotions?

In Q1, around 80% (8 counselees) of them stated that it is "extremely" frustrating/challenging to talk and not have the other person understand you based on this scenario, as for 10% (1 counselee) answered "moderately", and 10% (1 counselee) said, "not at all". In fact, in Q2, 50% (5 counselees) rated the success of the session as

“moderately” successful, and the other 50% (5 counselees) said “not at all” successful. In Q3, 20 % (2 counselees) answered with “not at all” when asked how effectively Sarah was able to communicate her emotions, while 80% (8 counselees) answered with “moderately”.

**Table 4.4**

*Frequencies of Counselees' Responses to the First Vignette (Girl 1)*

<b>Vignette 1 Questions (Sample Vignette- Girl 1)</b>	Not at all	Moderately	Extremely	Total Frequency
Q1: How frustrating/challenging is it to talk and not have the other person understand you?	1	1	8	10
Q2: How would you rate the success of this session?	5	5	0	10
Q3: How effectively was Sarah able to communicate her emotions?	2	8	0	10

Table 4.5 shows the answers of the ten counselees for Vignette 2 (Sample Vignette- Boy 2), where all participants agreed that the counselee did not have problems communicating because of the language chosen in the counseling session. The questions were the following: (Q1) How frustrating/challenging is it to talk and not have the other person understand you?; (Q2) How would you rate the success of this session?; and (Q3) How effectively was Karim able to communicate his emotions?

In Q1, around 70% (7 counselees) of them stated that it is “not at all” frustrating/challenging to talk and not have the other person understand you based on this scenario, as 30% (3 counselees) answered “moderately”. In fact, in Q2, 80% (8 counselees) rated the success of the session as “extremely” successful, and 20% (2 counselees) said “moderately” successful. In Q3, 90 % (9 counselees) answered with “extremely” when asked how effectively Karim was able to communicate their emotions, while 10% (1 counselee) replied with “moderately”.

**Table 4.5**

*Frequencies of Counselees' Responses to the Second Vignette (Boy 2)*

<b>Vignette 2 Questions (Sample Vignette- Boy 2)</b>	Not at all	Moderately	Extremely	Total Frequency
Q1: How frustrating/challenging is it to talk and not have the other person understand you?	7	3	0	10
Q2: How would you rate the success of this session?	0	2	8	10
Q3: How effectively was Karim able to communicate his emotions?	0	1	9	10

In the first vignette (Girl 1), more answers were reported, and different perceptions were articulated to answer them. One of the questions asked to the counselees was the following: If the counselor speaks Arabic, do you think this problem will be solved? All counselees answered “Yes”, and B1 explained, “Yes, that would be way easier, and she [the counselor] would understand what Sarah is saying, and if the

counselor knew how to speak Arabic, she would understand her because since she initially started saying what she is suffering from in Arabic”.

Another question presented to the counselees was the following: why do you think Sarah insists on using Arabic, even though the counselor asked her to speak in English? Seven counselees expressed that they believe Sarah is more relaxed in using Arabic than English and can communicate easier in Arabic as she can express herself better. Three counselees focused on language competency, claiming that maybe Sarah isn't highly competent in English and therefore insists on using Arabic as she knows more vocabulary words. B7 mentioned, “Maybe it is hard for her to explain it [her problem] in English”. B8 said, “Probably in Arabic, she can let things out more “ فيا أكثر تفوض أكثر”[let things off her chest]”. B2 articulated, “I think she needed time to come up with the words in English and to think and how to put into together. It happens to many people, and they ask themselves, like how can I say this?”. B3 reported,

Maybe Arabic is the language she is most comfortable with, and she has the words ready in Arabic, and she can't bring them out in English, or maybe she isn't paying attention because she's too angry. Also, this happens to me when I don't know what to say I switch from English to Arabic, and Arabic to English.

Last, the counselees' perceptions were brought up when asked how they would feel if the counselor does not speak the same language. Six counselees expressed frustration about this situation, and the other four considered the situation as something normal and therefore tried to find a middle ground to keep the conversation going between the counselor and counselee. B1 mentioned:

I would feel confused as if I don't know which language to use. But if she understands French then I would use French to balance things. I would feel mixed up because I need her help regarding my problems.

B3 said, "I would feel uncomfortable and mad because I want to talk to her about what I am going through, but she doesn't understand me". B10 mentioned, "I would feel stuck and not know what to tell her. I can try to learn her language and practice so I can communicate with her, or maybe speak with my hands, using symbols, or use internet language like translating".

In the second vignette (Boy 2), different answers were reported, and different views were articulated to answer them. One of the questions asked to the counselees was to compare the scenarios in vignettes. All ten counselees claimed that the communication in the second vignette was smoother than the first one since both parties knew and understood each other's languages. Counselees showed high levels of analysis in trying to make sense of this comparison/difference between the two vignettes. Counselees B3 and B5 analyzed this difference while emphasizing the languages spoken during the counseling sessions. In addition to both parties' (counselor and counselee) language identification and competency in both vignettes. For instance, B3 mentioned, "Regarding Sarah's situation, even though they [counselor and counselee] had a common language, Sarah was more comfortable using Arabic than English". B5 added,

The first scenario was not as good as the second one. In Karim's scenario, they [counselor and counselee] understood each other and communicated fluently.

The first scenario was more complicated, maybe Sarah knew those languages,



but she wasn't fluent in English, and the second one was smoother since both are fluent in the languages spoken.

Another question was asked to the participant counselees since the counselor was speaking the same language as Karim do you think this helped them better communicate? All counselees answered "yes", and B3 claimed, "Yes, I think because they are understanding each other, and it seems the counselor and student are comfortable in those languages". B7 added, "Both understand the languages and understand what they are saying then yes".

Counselees shared more perceptions regarding the following: If you were in Karim's place, would you choose to speak only in one language or to switch between languages? Eight counselees voted they would switch between languages, and two would stick to one language. The two counselees claimed they feel less confused if they use one language only. B7, for example, stressed, "I would choose only English because of my familiarity with such practice". B3 stated, "Whatever language I might feel comfortable with, sometimes I would speak in English if the other person were okay with it". B8 highlighted, "I would instead switch between languages because it helps me in expressing better my emotions by finding more words in more than one language".

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this final chapter, the major findings of this study were discussed, considering previous research. In addition, the limitations, recommendations for further research, and implications for practice are provided.

The following section discusses the answers to the four research questions that guided the current study:

1. How do school counselors perceive using bilingual counseling with upper-elementary students' verbal and non-verbal self-expression?
2. What are the factors affecting the use of bilingual counseling according to school counselors?
3. How do upper-elementary students perceive the effect on their verbal and non-verbal self-expression while attending bilingual counseling sessions?
4. What are the factors affecting the use of bilingual counseling according to upper-elementary students?

#### **Key Findings and Discussion**

In this study, counselors and counsees stated various perceptions regarding the use of language in counseling sessions. Some significant themes were derived from the findings of the interviews and vignettes, and these themes were found across both school environments. Some answers were unique to one school environment, while others were common among counsees and counselors of both school environments.

First and foremost, the finding of this study shows the counselors' perceptions of what counsees faced while communicating different emotions. Both the Arabic and English language were at play. However, linking the mother tongue to the feeling of

anger was most evident among the counselees. According to the counselors, almost all counselees expressed their habit of using Arabic when angry, as the counselees believe words come out quickly in Arabic. To add, counselees believe that they learn and use curse words in Arabic, as they are more expressive than in other languages. In addition, they expressed that Arabic is easier for children when dealing with anger due to many factors, such as the home environment, social contexts, and experiences. Kokaliari et al. (2013) claimed that bilingual clients tend to return to their mother tongues when expressing strong effects. But also, counselors explained that Arabic letters might have more intensity in tone. For instance, Anolli et al. (2008) claimed that members of different cultures translate emotions vocally differently. This was expressed by both counselors and counselees while emphasizing body language, vocal intonations, specific jargon, social contexts, and more. Even though Arabic holds an emotional status for speakers of this language. However, most counselees communicated their happy feelings using English, claiming there were more “happy words” in English (e.g., Oh my God). One counselor described the English language as “the happy language,” which counselees refer to when in a state of joy and rely on because of their social experiences and what they engage with social media websites.

The previous finding elicited the factors affecting the use of the bilingual counseling approach. The counselors mentioned many factors in play, such as the home environment, the population in therapy, and the choice of language in counseling. The home environment was portrayed as an elicitor for the languages spoken among the counselees. Lau and Richards (2021) expressed a clear correlation between children's language and the home literacy environment. Therefore, depending on what the parents engage in with the children, they are more likely to use this language in counseling. In

addition, the counselees attending counseling come from different countries and speak different languages. Even when the counselors dealt with Arab speakers, the dialects and words differed. In addition, international students attend bilingual counseling sessions. These students possess different native tongues, such as Italian, Russian, German, and Spanish. However, English was considered and used as an intermediate means of communication. Thus, affecting the choice of languages spoken among the counselees.

Regarding the counselees' perceptions of the effect on their verbal and nonverbal self-expression while attending bilingual counseling sessions. Counselees showed various perceptions regarding communicating via the Arabic and English languages. Some counselees have demonstrated high interest in and practice the Arabic language even though they belong to American schools. The same applies to other counselees from Arabic schools who can be considered products of Globalization. As Edwards (2012) claimed languages other than English compete unequally with English given that it is a global language. Additionally, both counselors' and counselees' perceptions showed phenomena of code-switching taking place in bilingual counseling sessions. This cultural practice was portrayed by most of the sample interviewed to better communicate and find words easier. Whether this behavior was manifesting as a good or bad language acquisition of Arabic and English indeed, it is highly relied on in the counseling sessions.

The importance of body language in understanding nonverbal communication was highly communicated from both sides: counselors and counselees. Both have highly relied on facial expressions, hand gestures, and body movements to communicate non-verbally. The nonverbal aspect of the counseling sessions was highly

emphasized as it is unrevealed the unspoken and added more meaning to the words communicated. As Anake and Asor (2012) claimed, a counselor cannot be considered adequate simply through their words. They added that body language frequently conveys more meaning than words.

All counselors agreed that the students are most often helped by consulting with the teacher or parent. Also, they claimed that counseling is more popular among students in the upper grades. However, their professors or parents suggest seeking help. Finally, further research should be done on a larger sample in different areas all over Lebanon to have more generalizable results. In addition, all counselors agreed that Lebanese society still lacks the proper understanding of what counseling is and therefore the importance of mental health.

Counselor A1 explicitly stated, “Counseling should be improved in Lebanon... however, it has become better since we are more focused on mental health globally, but in this region, there is this fear of opening up and sharing”.

## **Conclusion**

This section performs several different tasks. Initially and most importantly, it attempts to assess the acquired data, draw conclusions based on the respondents' perceptions in conjunction with the literature, and present organized recommendations for public policy, public action, and research initiatives. The research conclusions were presented in this section, which included implications for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers, as well as recommendations for future research. The themes drawn from the study provide light on the perceptions of counselors and counselees toward bilingual counseling.

In general, the outcomes of this study reveal that both parties interviewed expressed their perceptions about Bilingual Counseling. Still, some counselors needed to be made aware of the theoretical framework or the practical labor involved in this field. Considering this, it is essential to have clear regulations and laws in place, both at the school and at the national level, that outline this approach to counseling and the role of counselors in it. As an additional measure, greater engagement between the school counselor and the school should be established to improve awareness of mental health among the larger community, including parents and caregivers (Ayyash-Abdo et al., 2010).

Many essential fragments were discovered that entail the counselor's role in educational settings. A school counselor's responsibilities are recognizable to most educators, even if their school does not employ a certified school counselor or if they have never worked in a setting where there was a counselor on staff. They based their determination of the counseling position mainly on the counselor's job in their schools. According to the students, it would be the most significant role if the counselor's primary responsibility were to aid them in dealing with psychological concerns. Thus, this can be done by speaking their language and being culturally aware and competent of the clients' verbal and non-verbal expressions and interactions in counseling sessions.

### **Implications for Practice and Research**

This study is expected to have implications for both fields of research and practice related to Bilingual Counseling.

### ***Implications for Research***

There are several implications for research based on the present study findings. First, it is possible to qualitatively evaluate the experiences in Lebanon's multicultural setting by examining counselors' and counselees' perceptions of language choice during bilingual counseling sessions in Lebanese schools. From an empirical standpoint, this research serves as a qualitative study that fills a significant and wide-ranging vacuum in the literature review and serves as a catalyst for a broader academic debate about the use of Bilingual Counseling in Lebanese school counseling sessions. Furthermore, the findings of this study have wider significance for the research of counseling since they enable counselors and psychological practitioners to reflect on their language use and cultural awareness of the counselees to enhance their practices. School counselors' input can help identify counseling-related policies and practices translated into bilingual contexts. Choosing the preferred language for the counselee in a multilingual culture is a significant exploratory research problem because it may assist counselors in lowering the counselee's resistance and strengthening the counseling experience in schools, which is an essential goal as highlighted by Williams and Butler (2003). To summarize, school counselors still need to work more closely with bilingual counselors to understand counselors' roles and responsibilities better to improve school counseling.

Future research could examine the perceptions of schools, policymakers, educators, counselors, and counselees towards the Arabic language because it is claimed that its role and usage nowadays in professional institutions have died out even with attempts to revive it from several competent authorities. Moreover, further research could be expanded from this study to examine the roles of students and counselees. For instance, are the students choosing to refer to their native tongue because of emotional

comfort or lack of competency? But also, there are almost no studies that examined counselors' and counsees' perceptions of the mother tongue and foreign languages in counseling in Lebanon, and in general, those conducted in other countries are examined in Western contexts and that of literature originating from the USA (Bowker & Richards, 2010); hence, more studies should be conducted to know the status of the native language given by the youth in counseling sessions. These higher education institutions should acknowledge and conduct the same careful, critical research on bilingual school counseling as they do on all the other pertinent subjects. Counseling in Lebanon has witnessed significant improvements but is still lacking, and more awareness is needed to be set.

To add, it is evident that one cannot dissociate language from culture. However, in the context of the present study the researcher was unable to focus on the different cultures in the Lebanese private schools. Thus, future studies could focus on the role of different cultures and environments affecting bilingual counseling as well as both counselors' and counsees' perceptions of this topic. For instance, an interpretive idea of the findings can show that each school's environment possesses a role in shaping the counselor's and counsees' practices and perceptions. Starting with the counselors' perceptions towards the use of the bilingual counseling approach and its effect on the counsees' self-expression. Counselors working in American schools have shown an inclination to the usage of the English language while communicating and providing their answers to the interview questions. The same can also be found and applied to the sample interviewed from the dominant Arab schools. However, counselors from both environments have agreed to prioritize the counsees' comfort. They expressed their abilities to mix among the languages to adapt their practices to fit and cater to the



counselees' well-being. Bowker and Richards (2010) shed light on clients' communications on all levels to make a productive connection, taking into consideration bilingualism as a variable and as a societal necessity. This lies at the core of Bilingual Counseling, which aims to serve the needs of culturally diverse populations.

In addition, researchers can focus on the dynamics taking place in the counseling relationship between the counselors and counselees. It was found among the counselors that girls are more expressive than boys. This observation could be studied in terms of its effect on the success of bilingual counseling sessions. But also, researchers can study the effect of societal and gender norms in shaping students' thoughts and means of expression.

### ***Implications for Practice***

As for the practical implications, they would set more efficient language choices for the counselors during counseling sessions to minimize the counselee's reluctance and inability to express themselves freely. This will help counselors in having more of a multicultural approach to counseling to be able to reach students of different backgrounds and cultures. Furthermore, it is important to have more workshops and seminars planned by counselors and policymakers to help teachers and educate the students' parents. Aside from that, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) needs to develop a strategy for integrating school counseling into the curriculum of all public and private schools. The objectives and procedures of school counselor guidelines, applications, and authorization must be clearly stated by the Ministry of Education. On the other hand, colleges and universities are responsible for strengthening school counseling by expanding the number of courses and seminars

available to students pursuing counseling degrees. Thus, the counseling program should be elevated to the level of a major rather than a minor, as is currently the case. Lastly, school counseling should be provided as a free service, which will encourage parents to seek the assistance of a counselor when their child is experiencing difficulties. Furthermore, more awareness programs should be implemented about mental health. The need for mental health services that promote social/emotional wellbeing and development in all children is recognized by school counselors, who respond to this need promptly.

### **Limitations**

This study is limited to numerous features. Since it is a descriptive study, the data gathered provides only counselors' and students' perceptions about the role of Bilingual Counseling, self-expression, and languages during counseling sessions. The sampling for this study was ultimately focused on convenience, despite all efforts being made to collect a wide variety of experiences within the restricted reach. A limitation can be the small sample size when gathering data and conducting the interviews. This phenomenon can be due to the low number of counselors. This is because most schools in Lebanon usually have one school counselor for each school level or even one counselor for the whole school. An additional limitation is that all participating counselors are females. We acknowledge that most elementary private Lebanese schools prefer to hire female counselors, yet this may have influenced the study findings.

Another limitation is the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus, along with its repercussions on the data collection process. Thus, this made us shift from face-to-face interactions to online interviews. The country went on a total lockdown which made it harder to receive replies from schools about their willingness to participate in this study.

It is important to note that several counselors declined to participate due to time and work pressure. But also, some schools refused to grant permission to students to participate in the research due to privacy reasons. Furthermore, there were no opportunities to observe school counselors in action or interact with participants face-to-face because the data was gathered through virtual interviews. Without the typical in-person interaction, the researcher might have missed important details and experiences that would have enhanced the data. Another repercussion is being restricted to only four schools in Beirut. Consequently, few were the interviews conducted, which subsequently limits the generalizability of the findings.

## APPENDIX A

### Interview Questions to Counselors

1. In which language do you start your sessions?
2. What have been your experiences with bilingual/multilingual counseling?
3. What have been your experiences with language mixing and switching?
4. What is your understanding of clients' language and culture?
5. How do you decide what language the counseling session will be conducted in?
6. Does code-switching occur with the counsees?
- 6a. If so, could you tell me more about that process? Do you accept this switch or insist on using only one language?
7. How do you think the language chosen in a session with your students plays a role in the success of the session?
8. Have you experienced the same or different language countertransference experiences with your counsees?
9. Have you ever worked with a counsee who doesn't share the same language as you do?
- 9a. If so, how did the session go? What kind of challenges you have faced?
10. Based on your practice, do you think counsees are more at ease/comfortable using Arabic or a foreign language while communicating their emotions and thoughts?
11. Based on your practice, do you prefer communicating with the counsees using Arabic or a foreign language?
12. Do counsees change languages when they communicate different emotions?

13. Do you believe counselors should be trained in the native language or a foreign language?
14. Do you think Arabic contains more emotional baggage?
15. How do you translate the counselee's body language into your understanding?

Probing Questions:

1. Can you discuss your self-awareness of language and culture; particularly in the counseling relationship?
2. Do you consider bilingual or multilingual counseling beneficial in improving the counseling encounter? Or consider it a barrier? Give examples.
3. Can you give examples of when code-switching happens and what this reveals? (without mentioning names)
4. Have you identified a difference between girls and boys in verbally expressing their emotions and thoughts?
5. How frequent is code-switching among the counselees?
6. How do counselees perceive counseling? Do they attend the sessions with confidence or with hesitation?

**Interview Questions to Counselees**

1. What is the common/mother language used at home?
2. What is the common/main language used with friends?
3. Were you ever influenced by any teacher or counselor to speak using a specific language? If yes, why? Give examples/incidents. (without mentioning names)
4. During counseling sessions, which language do you choose to communicate with? Why?

5. Do you feel at ease when communicating your ideas and emotions in Arabic? Or do you prefer English or French? Explain... give examples.
6. How do you think communicating in (X) language in a session helps you express your emotions?
7. Do you feel obliged to speak in a foreign language during counseling sessions?
8. Do body language and facial expressions help you in communicating your ideas? If yes, how?
9. Do you think switching between two or more languages helps or limits your flow of thoughts?
10. If I ask you to tell me about an incident that happened when you were younger (e.g. a birthday party), which language would you choose to narrate this event? Why?

Probing Questions:

1. Can you tell me more about an incident where you felt that you ran out of words, so you started switching between languages?
2. When you are feeling extremely angry, sad, or happy, do you feel words come out easily out of your mouth? Or it is challenging for you to express yourself verbally?

## APPENDIX B

### Sample Vignette- Girl 1

Sarah, a girl in grade 4 decided to visit the counselor because she is having a hard time due to her parent's divorce. This is the counselor's first year working in Lebanon as she used to live in the United States. She is American and only speaks English so she doesn't understand or speak Arabic. As for Sarah, she speaks Arabic and English. One day, Sarah enters the counselor's office and the counselor welcomes her with a big smile on her face, and asks Sarah, "so what has brought you here today?". Sarah replies "كثير معصبي من أهلي".

Counselor:" I am sorry Sarah; please can you say that in English I don't speak Arabic."

Sarah" إنو ليه بدون يطلقو يعني ، بطلو يحبوني؟ ما بدون عيش معن Sarah"

Counselor:" Sarah dear I can see you are upset, but I can't quite understand why"

Sarah:" eno how can I say this? Akhh this is frustrating! So, my parents are getting a divorce... why is that? Does this mean they don't love me anymore? هلا أنا بدو يصير عندي بيتين؟

1. After reading this short scenario, can you identify the problem between Sarah and the counselor? Was Sarah able to express and communicate her emotions?
2. If the counselor speaks Arabic, do you think this problem will be solved?
3. Why do you think Sarah insists on using Arabic, even though the counselor asked her to speak in English?
4. What do you recommend to help Sarah and the counselor?
5. How would you feel if the counselor doesn't speak the same language as you do?
6. Have you ever experienced a similar incident? Elaborate more.

1. How frustrating/challenging is it to talk and not have the other person understand you?

1-----2-----3  
not at all                      moderately                      extremely

2. How would you rate the success of this session?

1-----2-----3  
not at all                      moderately                      extremely

3. How effective was Sarah able to communicate her emotions?

1-----2-----3  
not at all                      moderately                      extremely

4. Do you think you need to provide the counselor with more strategies to help her in understanding Sarah?

1-----2-----3  
not at all                      moderately                      extremely

5. If you were in Sarah's place, would you be satisfied with the counseling session?

1-----2-----3  
not at all                      moderately                      extremely



## Sample Vignette- Boy 2

Karim, a boy in grade 6 likes to play sports, read, draw, and learn languages. He is fluent in Arabic, English, and French. However, whenever there is an exam coming up he gets anxious and doesn't have the chance to study properly, because he doesn't manage his time properly. So, one day he decides to visit the counselor in his office to ask him for help with time-management.

Counselor:” Hi Karim كيف, it is good to see you,فضل come on in, have a seat.”

Karim: Hi أنت كيف, أنا منيخ الحمد لله

Counselor “تمام شو بت خبرنا”

Karim:” إذا بزبط وقتي أكثر je sais que honestly I am having troubles while studying, يعني أفني أحسن

Counselor: Okay good so you know what is your outcome, did you try writing your tasks on a piece of paper? Like a daily to do–list هيك فيك تقسيم وقتك كل يوم بيومو

1. After reading this short scenario, can you compare these two situations?
2. In this case, the counselor was speaking the same language as Karim, do you think this helped them in better communicating?
3. If you were in Karim's place, would you choose to speak only one language, or to switch between languages?
4. How do you think communicating in (X) language in a session helps you express your emotions?
5. Have you ever experienced a similar incident? Elaborate more.

1. How frustrating/challenging is it to talk and not have the other person understand you?

1-----2-----3  
not at all                      moderately                      extremely

2. How would you rate the success of this session?

1-----2-----3  
not at all                      moderately                      extremely

3. How effective was Karim able to communicate his emotions?

1-----2-----3  
not at all                      moderately                      extremely

4. Do you think you need to provide the counselor with more strategies to help him in understanding Karim?

1-----2-----3  
not at all                      moderately                      extremely

5. If you were in Karim's place, would you be satisfied with the counseling session?

1-----2-----3  
not at all                      moderately                      extremely

## APPENDIX C



### AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL OF RESEARCH

April 8, 2021

Anies Al-Hroub, PhD  
American University of Beirut  
01-350000 ext.: 3052  
[aa111@aub.edu.lb](mailto:aa111@aub.edu.lb)

Dear Dr. Al-Hroub,

On April 8, 2021, the IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial, Expedited
Project Title:	The Perceptions of School Counselors and Students in Lebanese Private Schools on the Use of Foreign Languages in Counseling Sessions
Investigator:	Anies Al Hroub
IRB ID	SBS-2021-0039
Funding Agency:	None
Documents reviewed:	Received April 8, 2021: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• IRB application</li><li>• Proposal</li><li>• Invitations (English and Arabic versions)</li><li>• Counselor consent form (English and Arabic versions)</li><li>• Parent consent form (English and Arabic versions)</li><li>• School director consent form (English and Arabic versions)</li><li>• Student assent form (English and Arabic versions)</li><li>• Interview questions to counselees (English and Arabic versions)</li><li>• Interview questions to counselors (English and Arabic versions)</li></ul>

The IRB approved the protocol from April 8, 2021 to April 7, 2022 inclusive. Before February 7, 2022 or within 30 days of study close, whichever is earlier, you are to submit a completed "FORM: Continuing Review Progress Report" and required attachments to request continuing approval or study closure.

If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of April 8, 2022 approval of this research expires on that date.

Please find attached the stamped approved documents:

- Proposal (received April 8, 2021),
- Invitations (English and Arabic versions, received April 8, 2021),
- Counselor consent form (English and Arabic versions, received April 8, 2021),
- Parent consent form (English and Arabic versions, received April 8, 2021),
- School director consent form (English and Arabic versions, received April 8, 2021),
- Student assent form (English and Arabic versions, received April 8, 2021),
- Interview questions to counselees (English and Arabic versions, received April 8, 2021),
- Interview questions to counselors (English and Arabic versions, received April 8, 2021).

Only these IRB approved consent forms and documents can be used for this research study.

Thank you.

*The American University of Beirut and its Institutional Review Board, under the Institution's Federal Wide Assurance with OHRP, comply with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Code of Federal Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects ("The Common Rule") 45CFR46, subparts A, B, C, and D, with 21CFR56; and operate in a manner consistent with the Belmont report, FDA guidance, Good Clinical Practices under the ICH guidelines, and applicable national/local regulations.*

Sincerely,



Lina El-Onsi Daouk, MSc, CIM  
SBS IRB administrator

Cc: Michael Clinton, PhD  
Co-Chairperson IRB Social & Behavioral Sciences

Fuad Ziyadeh, MD, FACP, FRCP  
Professor of Medicine and Biochemistry  
Chairperson of the IRB

Ali K. Abu-Alfa, MD, FASN, FAHA  
Professor of Medicine  
Director, Human Research Protection Program  
Director for Research Affairs (AUBMC)



American University of Beirut  
Department of Education  
Semi-Structured Interview Consent Form

**Study Title: The Perceptions of School Counselors and Students in Lebanese Private Schools on the Use of Foreign Languages in Counseling Sessions**

**Consent to participate in an Online Research Study**

**This notice is for an AUB-IRB Approved Research Study for Dr  
Anies Al Hroub at AUB.**

**\*It is not an Official Message from AUB\***

**You are invited to participate in a research study entitled The Perceptions of School Counselors and Students in Lebanese Private Schools on the Use of Foreign Languages in Counseling Sessions conducted by Dr. Anies Al Hroub, Faculty of Education at the American University of Beirut. The conduct of this study will adhere to the IRB approved protocol.**

***The IRB approved method for approaching subjects is direct approaching. The purpose of the study is to identify the perceptions of school counselors on the effect of using foreign languages on upper-elementary student counselees during counseling sessions in Lebanese private schools. Another purpose is to explore the perceptions of upper-elementary student counselees on the effect of using foreign languages on their self-expression during counseling sessions.***

**This message invites you to:**

- 1. Read the consent document and consider whether you want to be involved in the study.**

**And to note:**

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American University of Beirut*

*08 APR 2021*

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- **Participation is completely voluntary.**
- **Completing the survey will take around 2 minutes.**
- **Only the data you provide in the questionnaire will be collected and analyzed.**  
**The research team will not have access to your name or contact details.**
- **The results of the survey will be published in a –research article/thesis/project report available in printed form and electronically from AUB Libraries • The inclusion and exclusion criteria.**

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Anies Al-Hroub  
**Address:** American University of Beirut (AUB)  
Associate Professor of Educational Psychology & Special  
Education  
Phone: (01) 350 000 Ext: 3052  
Email: [aa111@aub.edu.lb](mailto:aa111@aub.edu.lb)

**Co-Investigator:** Dounia El Masri  
**Address:** American University of Beirut (AUB)  
Beirut – Lebanon  
Phone: (81) 729226  
Email: [dke03@mail.aub.edu](mailto:dke03@mail.aub.edu)

Dear Counselor,

We are asking for your participation in a **research study**. Participation is completely voluntary. Please read the information below and feel free to ask any questions that you may have.

#### **A. Project Description**

1. This research identifies the perceptions of counselors the perceptions of school counselors on the effect of using foreign languages on upper-elementary student counselees during counseling sessions in Lebanese private schools. Another purpose is to explore the perceptions of upper-elementary student counselees on the effect of using foreign languages on their self-expression during counseling sessions using vignettes that will be given to them. This study is being conducted for the purpose of a Master's thesis study in Educational Psychology - School Guidance and Counseling at the American University of Beirut. No personal or sensitive questions will be asked as part of this study. The estimated time to complete this study is three months. The expected number of participants is 10 elementary-

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- aged students (5 boys and 5 girls) from grades 4-6 as well as 4 elementary counselors. Semi structured interviews will also be conducted with the students and will be given vignettes. The estimated time for data collection online is one month. The results of the interviews and vignettes will be published in the form of a thesis report and will be available by the AUB Library electronically and in printed form.
2. Counselors that are counseling elementary students will be asked if they accept to participate in a semi structured interview that will also be conducted with other 3 counselors.
  3. Semi-structured interviews will be made virtually yet individually using Zoom. Counselors' responses will be recorded in a notebook as direct quotes, and audio-taped.
  4. The semi-structured interview will take around 40 to 60 minutes.
  5. If you agree to participate you are kindly requested to send back a confirmation email. As you will receive a soft copy of this signed informed consent either in Arabic or in English (according to your preference)
  6. Participants will conduct the interview on **mm/dd/yy**.

#### **B. Participation And Withdrawal**

If you voluntarily consent to take part in this study, you can change your mind and withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from the study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled, and neither will it affect their relationship with their organization and AUB/AUBMC.

Participation in this study is voluntary. There are no monetary rewards for participation in the study. You are free to leave the study at any time without penalty. Your decision not to participate in no way influences your relationship with AUB. A copy of this consent form will be given to you. You may skip any questions that you may wish not to answer. Your decision will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits. If you have any questions regarding your rights, you may call: Institutional Review Board (IRB) on 01- 350000 ext. 5445.

#### **C. Potential Benefits to Subjects and/or To Society**

You will not receive payment for participation in this study.

The results of the study will help counselors in their counseling practices from both a theoretical and practical aspect.

#### **D. Potential Risks to Subjects and/or Society**

Your participation in this study does not involve any physical risk or emotional risk to you beyond



the risks of daily life. You have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time for any reason. Your decision to withdraw will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Discontinuing participation in the study will in no way affect your relationship with the school or with AUB. In addition, refusal to participate in the study will involve no penalties of any kind or affect the counselors' relationship with AUB or the school. You receive no direct benefits from participating in this research; however, the outcome of this study is expected to have theoretical and practical implications. First, the theoretical implication is to provide researchers and practicing counselors with some exploratory data about students' perceptions about language choice and its efficacy in enhancing the counseling encounter. On the other hand, this research is important for practical reasons in setting more efficient language choices for the counselors during counseling sessions to minimize counselees' reluctance and inability to express themselves as freely in the target population.

#### **E. Confidentiality**

The collected data will remain confidential *and anonymous*. Records will be monitored and may be audited by the IRB while assuring confidentiality. If you agree to participate in this research study, the information will be kept confidential. Records will be monitored and may be audited without violating confidentiality. Your name and/or the school's name will never be attached to your answers. Data provided will not be shared neither by another teacher, nor the school principal. The data is only reviewed by the Principal Investigator and the Co-Investigator working on this project. Participants' contact information will be shredded as soon as data analysis is completed. Also, the data will be secured on protected laptop with a password. The data will be shared via creating a Google drive folder that only the PI and Co- Investigator have access to.

#### **F. The Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Counselors should have multicultural counseling experience with multicultural children, but also consider Arabic as their native tongue. Counselors must be bi/multilingual and counseling elementary aged students.

Exclusion Criteria: Counselors who are monolingual, working with grade 7 and above students.

#### **G. Questions About The Study**

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*08 APR 2021*

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- 1) If you have any questions or concerns about the research, you may contact Dr. Anies Al-Hroub at 01-350000 ext. 3052 or by email: [aa111@aub.edu.lb](mailto:aa111@aub.edu.lb) or Ms. Dounia El Masri at 81-729226 or by email: [dke03@mail.aub.edu](mailto:dke03@mail.aub.edu)
- 2) If you feel that your questions have not been answered, or if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a participant in this research, you can contact the following officer at AUB: social & Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board at 01-350000 or 01-374374, Ext: 5445 or by email: [irb@mail.aub.edu](mailto:irb@mail.aub.edu).

**ACCESS TO THE SURVEY**

If after reading the consent document and having you questions answered, you voluntarily agree to take part in the study; you can access the survey by clicking on the following link to fill out demographic information.

<https://demographicinfo.limesurvey.net/128984?newtest=Y&lang=en>

**H. Concerns Or Questions About Your Rights**

If you have concerns about the study or questions about your rights as a participant, you can contact the AUB IRB Office: Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board at 01-350000 or 01-374374, Ext: 5445 or by email: [irb@mail.aub.edu](mailto:irb@mail.aub.edu)

Counselor’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Co-Investigator’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### Interview Questions to Counselors

1. In which language do you start your sessions?
2. What have been your experiences with bilingual/multilingual counseling?
3. What have been your experiences with language mixing and switching?
4. What is your understanding of clients' language and culture?
5. How do you decide what language the counseling session will be conducted in?
6. Does code-switching occur with the counselees?
- 6a. If so, could you tell me more about that process? Do you accept this switch or insist on using only one language?
7. How do you think the language chosen in a session with your students plays a role in the success of the session?
8. Have you experienced the same or different language countertransference experiences with your counselees?
9. Have you ever worked with a counselee who doesn't share the same language as you do?
- 9a. If so, how did the session go? What kind of challenges you have faced?
10. Based on your practice, do you think counselees are more at ease/comfortable using Arabic or a foreign language while communicating their emotions and thoughts?
11. Based on your practice, do you prefer communicating with the counselees using Arabic or a foreign language?
12. Do counselees change languages when they communicate different emotions?
13. Do you believe counselors should be trained in the native language or in a foreign language?
14. Do you think Arabic contains more emotional baggage?

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15. How do you translate the counselee's body language into your understanding?

**Probing Questions:**

1. Can you discuss your self-awareness of language and culture; particularly in the counseling relationship?
2. Do you consider bilingual or multilingual counseling beneficial in improving the counseling encounter? Or consider it as a barrier? Give examples.
3. Can you give examples when code switching happens and what does this reveal?  
(without mentioning any names)
4. Have you identified a difference between girls and boys in verbally expressing their emotions and thoughts?
5. How frequent is code switching among the counselees?
6. How do counselees perceive counseling? Do they attend the sessions with confidence or with hesitation?

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*08 APR 2021*

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**AUB Social & Behavioral Sciences**

**INVITATION SCRIPT**

**Invitation to Participate in a Research Study**

**This notice is for an AUB-IRB Approved Research Study for**

**Dr. Anies Al-Hroub at AUB.**

**(American University of Beirut, Lebanon)**

**\*It is not an Official Message from AUB\***

We are inviting you to participate in a research study about "The Perceptions of School Counselors and Students in Lebanese Private Schools on the Use of Foreign Languages in Counseling Sessions". This study aims to identify the perceptions of school counselors on the effect of using foreign languages on upper-elementary student counselees during counseling sessions in Lebanese private schools. Another purpose is to explore the perceptions of upper-elementary student counselees on the effect of using foreign languages on their self-expression during counseling sessions

You will be asked to complete a short survey with demographic information and, participate in an interview to give your opinion about the usage of languages in counseling sessions and their effects on self-expression.

You are invited because we are targeting counselors, and elementary aged students. You can participate in this study if you are multilingual counselor, or a student in cycle two given their parents and own consent. Only 10 students will be included in this study and they will be chosen on a first come first serve basis to ensure equal opportunities to participate. This study will take almost an hour of both the counselors and students' time.

The estimated time to complete this survey is approximately 2 minutes. The research is conducted online and is hosted on AUB server.

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*08 APR 2021*

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Please read the consent form and consider whether you want to be involved in the study.

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact the investigator/research team

**Principal Investigator**

**Address:**

Dr. Anies Al-Hroub  
American University of Beirut (AUB)  
Associate Professor of Educational Psychology & Special  
Education  
Phone: (01) 350 000 Ext: 3052  
Email: [aa111@aub.edu.lb](mailto:aa111@aub.edu.lb)

**Co-Investigator:**

**Address:**

Dounia El Masri  
American University of Beirut (AUB)  
Beirut – Lebanon  
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Version Date March 21, 2016

Version Number 1.1

1/1

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*08 APR 2021*

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