

STUDY ABROAD IN EGYPT:
IDENTITY, ACCESS, AND ARABIC LANGUAGE LEARNING

By

Emma Gale Trentman

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Second Language Studies

2012

ABSTRACT

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Study abroad is often viewed as an ideal setting to improve target language proficiency due to opportunities for extensive contact with locals in the target language. However, research on study abroad demonstrates that this local contact and target language use can be quite limited, and that there is considerable variation in the linguistic outcomes of study abroad (Freed 1998; Kinginger, 2009). This study uses mixed methods to examine target language use and access to locals during study abroad in two different locations in Egypt: the Middlebury program at the University of Alexandria, and the study abroad and intensive Arabic programs at the American University in Cairo (AUC). Questionnaire, interview, and observation data were gathered from 54 Arabic learners, 10 Arabic teachers, and 13 Egyptian associates of the learners.

The quantitative data demonstrate that while students in the Middlebury program used more Arabic on average than students studying at AUC, there is a great deal of individual variation within each program. Drawing upon identity theory (Norton & McKinney, 2011) and the qualitative data, I demonstrate how students' *investment* in Arabic related to their desired participation in an *imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East*. However, the reality of the communicative contexts they encountered abroad at times resulted in a mismatch with this imagined community, particularly regarding access to Egyptians and Arabic language use. Examining the ways in which students responded to this mismatch, particularly through the use of *individual agency*, sheds lights on the extensive variation in their access to locals and Arabic

language use. Identity theory also provides crucial insights into the roles played by western foreigner, gender, and religious identities abroad. This study finds that particular identity categories (i.e. westerner, female) can both help and hinder access to locals in the target language depending on how they are negotiated within the socio-historical context. Finally, the experiences of six case study students highlight the variety of experiences abroad as well as how these students were able (or unable) to negotiate their identities abroad in order to gain access to Egyptians and use Arabic. The results of this study have important implications for research on study abroad, identity theory, and study abroad program design.

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DEDICATION

إلى الشعب المصري ومصر الحرة

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people without whom this dissertation would not have been possible. I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Debra Friedman, for her support throughout the dissertation process. From my initial research plan, through the many modifications it underwent during fieldwork, to the analysis and writing of this dissertation, Debra provided the guidance and insights necessary to develop and complete this dissertation. I am especially grateful to her for allowing me to pursue a project that at times seemed unmanageable, for pushing me to be theoretically rigorous, and for helping me through. I would also like to thank the rest of my committee, Drs. Brahim Chakrani, Susan Gass, Senta Goertler, and Xiaoshi Li for their valuable comments and advice. My colleagues in the Second Language Studies program also provided a tremendous amount of guidance and support. In particular, I would like to thank Sara Hillman for always being there for me in person or on chat.

In Alexandria, I would like to thank Dr. Nehad Heliel, Paul Wulfsburg, Shurouq Swaitti, and Elizabeth Huntley for facilitating my research with the Middlebury Program. In Cairo, I would like to thank Drs. Zeinab Taha, Jehan Allam, and Mahmoud Sami Mousa for supporting my research at AUC and Mariam Hamdy and Sameh Elmoghazy for conducting pilot Arabic interviews. This project would not have been possible without all of the participants in Cairo and Alexandria, and in particular the case study students (Meron, Mita, Jennifer, Thea, Isabelle, and Holly). I am truly grateful for their time and assistance. Alf Shokr!

I would also like to acknowledge the financial assistance I received from the following sources to help me undertake this research: an MSU pre-dissertation fellowship, an MSU University Distinguished Fellowship, a CASA II fellowship, and a Fulbright-Hays DDRA grant.

My parents, Ann and Henry Trentman, are the best there are, and I would like to thank them for always supporting me in following my dreams. Finally, I would like to thank my wonderful husband, Rashad Mahmood. His calming influence, love, and tasty meals were essential throughout the data collection and dissertation writing process.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

American Views of Study Abroad

For language learners, study abroad is often promoted as a necessary and quick step to advanced language proficiency, as it provides the opportunity for extensive “immersion” in the target language. Kinginger (2009) defines study abroad as: "a temporary sojourn of pre-defined duration, undertaken for educational purposes" (p. 11), noticing that it lies on a continuum between migration and tourism, and can blend with both. Spending a few weeks to a year in another country is becoming increasingly popular as a part of the undergraduate career, with support at the individual, university, and policy level (Gore, 2005; Kinginger, 2009). The year 2006 was named “The Year of Study Abroad” by a unanimous Senate resolution, and the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program (2005) stated a goal of sending one million undergraduates abroad annually (Kinger, 2008). Scholarships for overseas study are receiving more applicants, and there are calls at both university and policy levels for increasing expenditures on study abroad programs (Gore, 2005). Within the university, study abroad is seen as a way to encourage students to major and minor in foreign languages, their reward for years of classroom study, and a way to dramatically improve their communicative skills (Gray, Murdock, & Stebbins, 2002; Kinginger, 2008). Gore (2005) reports that both students and their parents value international education, and that almost 50% of college-bound students stated that they intended to study abroad at some point in college. Yet study abroad for language learning is still a marginalized pursuit in American education, and internationalization on American campuses often means the presence of foreign students rather than study abroad (Kinger, 2009).

The Changing Nature of Study Abroad

The nature of study abroad is also changing, particularly in terms of program duration, student major, and study abroad location. Drawing upon data from the 2007 Open Doors report, Kinginger (2008) explains that the “Junior Year Abroad” model of language majors spending a year abroad is no longer the standard model; students are primarily social sciences or business majors who study abroad for increasingly shorter time frames and do not necessarily prioritize language learning. The most common destinations are anglophone ones, followed by Europe and Latin America, and the majority of students are third-year, Caucasian, and female. Gray et al. (2002) also emphasize the shorter duration of study abroad programs, and Vande Berg, Balkcum, Scheid, and Whalen (2004) also found that students in non-traditional study abroad disciplines, such as business and the sciences, are also opting to go abroad.

The data from the 2011 Open Doors report (Institute of International Education, 2011) confirm these trends. For the 2009-10 academic year, the most popular country was the United Kingdom (12.1%), while Australia ranked 6th (3.7%), and Ireland 9th (2.5%). Europe hosted 53.5% of the students, followed by 15% in Latin America, and 12% in Asia. In contrast, the Middle East hosted only 1.8% of American students studying abroad (mostly to Israel), and only 1.2% studied in North Africa (including 1923 students in Egypt). Across all destinations in 2009-2010, the majority of students studied abroad for a summer (37.8%) or a semester (35.8%), with only 3.8% studying abroad for an academic year. In terms of their majors, the majority majored in social sciences (22.3%), followed by business and management (20.8%). Foreign languages ranked 6th, at 5.8%. The majority of students were in their third year (35.8%), female (63.5%) and white (78.7%).

Non-traditional Destinations and Critical Languages

Despite these overall trends, the Open Doors data also demonstrate that students are increasingly pursuing study abroad in nontraditional locations, including the Middle East and North Africa. In 2010, 41% of campuses reported an increase in study abroad to the Middle East and North Africa (Institute of International Education, 2010). According to the 2011 Open Doors data, in 2009-10, the number of students studying in the Middle East increased 35% and the number of students studying in North Africa rose by 19.7% (Institute of International Education, 2011). Conlin (2010) also highlights this trend, stating that study abroad to Arabic-speaking countries increased sixfold from 2002-2007. This increase is also likely a result of increased Arabic enrollments, which grew by 126% between 2002 and 2006 (Furman, Goldberg, & Lusin, 2007).

Gore (2005) focuses on the role of September 11, 2001 as a “wake-up call” to promote international education in general, and in nontraditional locations in particular, with increased interest on the part of students and their parents in international issues. She states: "Especially since September 11, 2001, student discourse has emerged describing international education as a means to contribute to world peace and security" (p. 136). This interest is supported at the policy level by increased funding for “critical” languages. From a research standpoint, Freed (2008) emphasizes the need for an expansion of research on study abroad that takes these changes into account. She calls for a focus on languages other than the Romance languages, Japanese, and Russian as well as greater learner diversity. Kinginger (2009) notes that there is a disproportionate focus in research on the experiences of American students going abroad, followed by European and Japanese students, but that this is partially a result of larger educational trends: it is students from these countries who are more likely to pursue short term

study abroad opportunities, while students from the rest of the world may be more likely to pursue degrees abroad as a result of the perceived future benefits of these degrees.

Arabic is probably the defining example of a “critical” language, and enrollments in the United States have swelled dramatically since 9/11. However, there is little research on Arabic study abroad (but see (Dewey, Belnap, & Hillstrom, Forthcoming; Kuntz & Belnap, 2001; Palmer, 2009)).

Furthermore, research on the linguistic outcomes of study abroad has challenged the idea that study abroad will necessarily result in dramatic linguistic improvement and unlimited interactions with the local population in the target language and demonstrated instead that the study abroad experience and its outcomes are the result of a complex interplay of factors (Churchill & DuFon, 2006; Freed, 2008; Freed, 1995a). Given this variation, researchers have emphasized the need for research focusing on the “process” of study abroad, typically via qualitative analysis, in addition to the “product” (Freed, 2008; Kinginger, 2008; Wilkinson, 1998).

Research on study abroad in traditional destinations, as well as the lack of research on study abroad in the Arab world, poses a number of issues that merit further examination. Students studying less commonly taught languages may not have as high proficiency levels as learners of more commonly taught ones, or may encounter different varieties abroad than in the classroom. Greater cultural differences, particularly regarding gender roles, as well as assumptions about target language proficiency may also pose challenges to students' interactions with locals and use of the target language. Without understanding the process and diversity of study abroad, it is difficult to understand how this experience can be improved in terms of language learning.

In this study, I use quantitative and qualitative analyses of questionnaires, interviews, and observations of 54 students studying in Egypt, as well as interviews with 10 of their teachers and 13 of their associates to examine the process of study abroad in Egypt. Taking an identity approach (Norton & McKinney, 2011) to examine this process, I argue that access to Egyptians and Arabic language use are necessary for students to participate in an imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East. I also examine the role played western foreigner, gender, and religious identities in gaining access to Egyptians and using Arabic.

My results demonstrate that study abroad in Egypt raises many of the same issues as study abroad in other locations, such as varying amounts of access to locals and target language use. At the same time, using identity theory to analyze data on study abroad in Egypt also leads to new insights. These include those gained from analyzing the extent to which the reality of students' experiences matches that of their *imagined community* of study abroad to the Middle East, and the fact that individual identity categories can both help and hinder access and language use, depending how they are negotiated between the individual and the socio-historical context. If study abroad programs want to encourage use of the target language by their participants, they must understand the students' experiences abroad and the identity negotiations they undertake, and work to provide ways for students to negotiate their identities as a help rather than a hindrance.

The organization of this dissertation is as follows: the remainder of this chapter contains the literature review, and Chapter 2 contains a discussion of the theoretical framework and an overview of the socio-historical context. Chapter 3 explains the methodology of this study, and Chapters 4-7 present the results. Chapter 4 examines the quantitative results for Arabic and English use. Chapter 5 draws upon the qualitative data and the theoretical concepts of

investment and *imagined communities* to analyze the communicative contexts students experienced and their language use within these contexts. Using identity theory as an analytical tool, Chapter 6 focuses on the roles played by various identity categories in facilitating and constraining access to Egyptians and Arabic use. Chapter 7 traces the experiences of the six case study students. Finally, Chapter 8 reports the implications of this study for research on study abroad, identity theory, and study abroad program design.

Literature Review

Linguistic Gains of Study Abroad

Much of the research on study abroad focuses on linguistic gains, comparing students' scores in a particular language area before and after their study abroad experience or in comparison to students who have remained at home. In addition to overall proficiency, or proficiency in a particular language skill, this type of research has also focused on various components of proficiency, such as fluency. This research has consistently demonstrated that while study abroad can lead to linguistic gains, these are not guaranteed to be dramatic, nor even occur at all. Furthermore, they may be more noticeable in certain language areas than others, and some students may improve more than others (Collentine & Freed, 2004; Freed, 1998; Kinginger, 2008).

Research thus far has tended to focus primarily on oral skills, although there is also research examining grammar, listening proficiency, reading proficiency, sociolinguistic variation, and pragmatics. The emphasis on measuring oral skills in much study abroad research likely reflects one of the primary assumptions of study abroad: that students are interacting with and using the target language in natural settings. Researchers have focused on both general oral proficiency as well as specific measures of oral skills, including fluency, pronunciation, lexical

development, and narrative structure.

The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview has frequently been used to measure speaking proficiency before and after study abroad. Davidson (2010) found that students studying abroad in Russia entered at the Intermediate Mid level on average, increasing to Intermediate High after a semester of study and Advanced Mid after a year. Brecht, Davidson, and Ginsberg (1995) stated that while only 10% of students who study Russian at home reach the advanced level of the OPI, 40% of those who spend at least a semester abroad do. Similarly, Segalowitz and Freed (2004) showed that study abroad students demonstrated greater gains on a Spanish OPI than their at home counterparts. In France, Magnan and Back (2007) noted that 12 (60%) of the students in their study improved from the Intermediate level. However, only six crossed into Advanced, and eight students remained at their starting level. Using a different French oral proficiency test, Allen and Herron (2003) measured students' oral skills generally as well as in four specific areas: amount of communication, comprehensibility, fluency, and quality of communication. They found that after a summer study abroad in France, students improved in their overall proficiency as well as in each specific area, with the largest gains in comprehensibility.

Other studies have looked specifically at fluency measures during study abroad, with the purpose of examining why students who study abroad “sound better” (Freed, 1998; Segalowitz et al., 2004). Segalowitz and Freed (2004) found that study abroad students in Spain made gains in several measures of oral fluency compared to their at home counterparts, particularly in terms of the absence of filled and silent pauses, turn length, and rate of speech. Looking at similar measures of fluency in French, and comparing domestic immersion, study abroad, and at home groups, Freed, Segalowitz, and Dewey (2004) found that the domestic immersion group made the most gains, followed by the SA (study abroad) group, whereas the AH (at home) group made

no gains. Towell (1996) found increased fluency after study abroad in France, which was mostly accounted for by longer turn lengths.

While study abroad may result in gains in overall oral proficiency and fluency, Diaz-Campos (2004) found no advantage for the study abroad context in terms of gains in Spanish pronunciation. Similarly, study abroad does not seem improve oral grammatical accuracy. Collentine (2004) compared SA and AH learners of Spanish over the course of a semester on a total of 17 different measures of grammar. He found that while the AH students did slightly better at the end, the SA students' accuracy actually decreased, despite their higher narrative ability and production of more semantically dense passages. Similarly, Allen and Herron (2003) found that students studying in France improved the least in grammatical accuracy. Dekeyser (2010) explained that while there was some improvement on global grammatical accuracy ratings following a summer study abroad in Argentina, it was not particularly notable. Isabelli (2004) stated that students studying for nine months in Spain improved in some aspects of grammar, but not in others.

In addition to oral skills, research has also examined gains in reading and listening during study abroad. Davidson (2010) found that students studying in Russia on average entered at the Intermediate Mid level and exited at Intermediate High after a summer or semester and Advanced High after an academic year. Allen and Harron (2003) found that students improved their listening skills after a summer study abroad in France, although not as much as their oral skills.

In terms of reading proficiency, Davidson (2010) reported that students typically entered the study abroad program in Russia at Intermediate High and exited at Advanced Low after a summer, Advanced after a semester, and Advanced Plus after an academic year. Students in

Huebner's (1995) study also showed improved reading proficiency during study abroad in Japan. Fraser (2002) measured reading ability via a cloze test and reading passage over a semester in German. She found that while most students gained from the pre to post test, the extent of this gain varied considerably. Dewey (2004) found that the only advantage students studying abroad in Japan gained in reading skills was increased confidence.

Appropriate use of sociolinguistic variables is another language skill that has been examined in the study abroad context. Howard, Lemée, and Regan (2006) found that the /l/ deletion rates in French were much higher for students who had studied abroad than their at home counterparts. Nevertheless, they deleted much less than native speakers and were also unable use this variant to distinguish between formal and informal styles. Regan (1995, 1998) and Regan, Howard, and Lemée (2009) focused on the acquisition of a number of sociolinguistic variables during study abroad in France. Their results demonstrate that while students generally improved, there was considerable individual variation, and they still did not approximate NS (native speaker) norms of variable use.

Pragmatic abilities have also been the focus of much study abroad research. Cohen and Shively (2007) examined the pragmatic development of students studying abroad in a French or Spanish speaking country for a semester, and found significant differences between pretest and posttest scores. A close examination of the Spanish data only demonstrated that while students improved in terms of using semantic formulas similar to NS, they also diverged from them, thus not completely approximating NS norms.

Similarly, Bataller (2010) found that NNS (non-native speakers) of Spanish changed the request strategies they used over the course of their study abroad and that some aspects of their requests moved closer to NS norms. However, other aspects remained unchanged, and they still

differed statistically from NS norms. Félix-Brasdefer (2004) examined differences in strategy use between Spanish NS and L2 learners, finding significant differences in refusal strategies, particularly in formal and informal situations. Comparing SA and AH groups, Lafford (2004) found that the SA group used significantly less communication strategies in Spanish following the semester abroad than the AH group. In Russian, Owens (2001) found that learners who had studied abroad better approximated NS preferences for directness. However, even at advanced and superior levels of proficiency, learners still failed to make use of some strategies that NS employed. Marriott (1995) stated that in some areas of pragmatics, students showed little improvement or none at all during their study in Japan.

While most studies of pragmatics focus on spoken tasks, Taguchi (2008) used a test of implied meaning to measure students' abilities to comprehend English pragmatics over a four month study in the United States. She found that learners improved significantly and steadily in their speed of comprehension, but showed significant differences in accuracy of comprehension between the beginning and end only, rather than over shorter periods. These differences were also limited to certain types of questions, with significant gains for indirect refusals, but not for indirect opinions).

Language Contact

In an attempt to explain these mixed results regarding language proficiency gain, a number of studies have focused on language contact, or the extent to which study abroad students interact with locals in the target language. Much recent research has contested the idea that study abroad is an "immersion environment," demonstrating instead that students often spend much of their time interacting with other study abroad students in their native or dominant language (Freed, 1998). This pattern has been documented across a variety of study abroad

locations and languages. In Argentina, Dekeyser (2010) found that while students tried to speak Spanish as much as possible at the beginning of their study abroad, this quickly changed to English by the end of the program. Isabelli-Garcia (2006) examined the social networks of students studying abroad in Argentina, and found that while some students' networks included many Argentines, others included hardly any at all. In Spain, Bataller (2008, 2010) reported that the majority of study abroad students stated that they had a hard time making friends with NSs and as a result spent most of their time with other international students speaking English or Spanish. Some students found this frustrating, but others acknowledged that they had not felt the need to make an effort to get to know other Spanish NS their age. Students in Mendelson's (2004) study also expressed disappointment in their lack of contact with NS while abroad in Spain in either Salamanca (four weeks) or Granada (14 weeks). Only two of 14 students studying in Granada, and three of 31 students in Salamanca mentioned interacting with Spanish friends. Less than 25% of students studying in Salamanca, and less than 50% of students studying in Grenada could claim more than four hours of Spanish only contact a day. Most of their contact hours were spent speaking a mix of Spanish and English with other students in their program and in service encounters with locals, and they stated that they found interacting to be more difficult than they had expected. Similarly, Segalowitz and Freed (2004) found that students studying in Spain had about 18 contact hours per week in Spanish. Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart (2002) reported that host families in Spain and Mexico stated that students often spoke to their fellow US students in English during their study abroad. In Germany, Fraser (2002) found that while some students were able to successfully make German friends during the semester, others hung out primarily with other Americans. Badstübner and Ecke (2009) noted that there was great variation in students' out of class German use during a one month study

abroad. In France, Magnan and Back (2007) and Wilkinson (1998) found that some students had few French friends, and Allen and Herron (2003) noted that while participants listed contact with the French as an important motivation for their study abroad experience, they did not spend a great deal of their out of class time getting to know French people. A fourth expressed disappointment over not meeting young people. Kinginger (2008) reported that students studying in France had easy access to English language media, and that the amount of time they spent with the French language, including French peers, varied widely. Freed et. al. (2004) demonstrated that students in domestic immersion actually spoke and wrote more French than their study abroad counterparts, who reported using significantly more English than the immersion participants in out-of-class activities. In the Arab world, Kuntz and Belnap (2001) found that students studying abroad in Morocco and Yemen reported little use of Arabic outside of class with either locals or their peers. Dewey, Belnap, and Hillstrom (*in press*) found that students studying in Morocco and Jordan spent more time speaking, listening, and writing in English than in Arabic, although the differences were not significant. However, they spent more time reading in Arabic than in English. Their social networks varied in size and in the languages used (English or Arabic). While they tended to use English at least initially with their Arab friends, many of them felt that their knowledge of English (and their Arab friends' interest in it) could help them gain access to Arabic-speaking social networks. In the United States, Taguchi (2008) showed that out-of-class English use among Japanese study abroad students declined over time, and not all students had the same opportunities to practice outside of the classroom.

While it seems as though there should be a positive correlation between language contact and linguistic gain, Freed (1995a) cautions that the relationship between out-of-class contact and language acquisition is complex and little understood. There are not always clear relationships,

and the quality of the contact may be as important as its quantity. For example, Segalowitz and Freed (2004) found that there was no relationship between hours of out-of-class contact and gains in oral performance for students studying abroad in Spain. Similarly, Mendelson (2004) reported that there was no relationship between hours of language contact (interactive or non-interactive) and oral proficiency gains for students studying abroad in Spain. Other studies have found relationships between language contact and linguistic gains, but typically in limited ways. Regan et al (2009) explained that language contact did play a role in the acquisition of sociolinguistic variables. Taguchi (2008) demonstrated that the amount of language contact students reported outside of class significantly correlated with gains in the speed of understanding pragmatic information, but not with gains in the accuracy of understanding this information. Freed et al.(2004) found that hours per week spent writing outside of class was significantly associated with oral fluidity gains. Badstübner and Ecke (2009) reported a relationship between perceived linguistic improvement and out of class contact for listening only. Yager (1998) noted that relationships between linguistic gain and language contact during study abroad in Mexico depended on both proficiency level as well as the type of contact. In Magnan and Back's (2007) study, they noted the surprising result that students who spent more time conversing with their American classmates in French had fewer linguistic gains than those who spent less time conversing with their classmates in French. Freed (1995a) emphasizes that there is little research on how students actually spend their time during study abroad, and that the type and quality of language contact, as well as the quantity of it, are important considerations. Kinginger (2008) explains the need to consider that language contact is negotiated between both students and their interlocutors, stating that:

The qualities of this interaction, and indeed the extent to which it is available, desired,

and pursued by individuals, are a matter of the interplay between students' dispositions and those of their interlocutors. Students are variously received in the host contexts they frequent (p. 12).

Factors Affecting the Study Abroad Experience

Given the mixed results for linguistic gain, language contact, and the relationship between them, researchers have tried to gain a greater understanding of what exactly students do and experience during study abroad and how this affects their language acquisition. Research into the nature of study abroad has taken two primary paths. Predictor studies have tried to ascertain the relationships between features of the study abroad experience (such as living situation) or the individual students (such as gender) and linguistic gains, in particular looking for what features of the experience or the students best predict linguistic gain. Other studies have sought to provide more detail into the day-to-day lives of students studying abroad. These studies tend to be qualitative in nature, and while they do not make predictions as to which variables affect linguistic gain, the insights they provide are important to understanding the varied nature of study abroad, even for students within a single program. Both types of studies have demonstrated that there are a number of factors that affect both linguistic gain and language contact during the study abroad experience. These include cognitive processing skills, program duration, language variation, proficiency, the classroom, internet/travel, living situation, agency, and identity categories such as nationality, race, and gender. While I will discuss research on each of these variables separately, it is important to remember that the study abroad experience results from a complex interplay of variables concerning student, program, and context. This complexity is one reason why some researchers have eschewed making predictions about linguistic gains or language contact during the study abroad experience: there is simply too much

to control.

Cognitive processing.

Advances in psycholinguistics have resulted in the examination of psycholinguistic measures of interest in the study abroad context. Taguchi (2008) reported that the lexical access speed of learners studying English abroad developed over the course of their sojourn, albeit more quickly in the initial stages. Standard deviations also decreased, indicating that the learners' speeds became more uniform. Segalowitz and Freed (2004) found that gains in oral performance were affected not only by the context of learning, but also by the speed and efficiency of L2 cognitive processing, explaining that there is likely an initial threshold of basic word recognition processing abilities that is required for the development of oral skills. They also reported that learners with greater efficiency in shifting attention also had slower speech rates, and that this may be slightly more pronounced in the study abroad context due to the greater demands placed on learners in this environment. In addition to gains in oral performance, they also found that cognitive processing and oral abilities predicted out-of-class language contact to some degree, with the ability to control long utterances at pretest predicting out-of-class listening activities, and the ability to speak fluently predicting out-of-class reading. Furthermore, they demonstrated that lexical access, lexical efficiency, and attention control abilities in the L2 changed over time and were not fixed aptitudes. As a result of these findings, they emphasize the importance of considering a learner's cognitive readiness for a particular learning context such as study abroad.

Program duration.

Although the overall trend is for study abroad programs to become shorter and shorter, research continues to demonstrate that longer programs have greater benefits in terms of linguistic gain and language contact. Davidson (2007, 2010) explained that program duration

was a clear predictor of linguistic gain, with the year abroad students progressing more than the summer or semester abroad ones. He stated that while short-term study abroad may be good for motivating students, it does not result in the same proficiency gains. Felix-Brasdefer (2004) found that learners who had spent nine months or more abroad had greater pragmatic abilities than those who had spent less than five months abroad. The host families interviewed in Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart (2002) gave “the longer, the better” as a general recommendation for the homestay experience. On the other hand, Fraser (2002) explains that impressive gains can still be made over a five month time period. Gray et al. (2002) point out that long-term study abroad is simply not an option for many low income, part time or nontraditional age students.

In terms of language contact, Talburt and Stewart (1999) note that short periods of study abroad give students little opportunity to gain an inside perspective on the host culture, and they seem to quickly form strong bonds with their study abroad peers. Similarly, Ogden (2007) states that the shortened length of most study abroad programs leaves little opportunity for unstructured and continued engagement with the local population. Kinginger (2004) describes the sojourn of Alice, a student who successfully made local contacts during study abroad in France. However, Kinginger explains that this took her several months, time that is not available in short term or even semester study abroad programs.

Language variety.

Language variety has also been explored in the study abroad context, and is particularly relevant in the case of Arabic, a diglossic language. Studies focusing on learners of Japanese (Huebner, 1995; Iino, 2006) and Russian (Brecht & Robinson, 1993; Polyani, 1995) indicate that students found difficulties in adapting to colloquial versus classroom language, and were unsure of what register to use when. During study abroad in Morocco and Yemen, Kuntz and Belnap

(2001) stated that students were unable to function in daily life without colloquial Arabic. The students also expressed a preference for the colloquial due to their interest in developing their conversational ability, the main reason most of them were studying Arabic. Female students in particular claimed that they were unable to communicate with local women in the formal Arabic they were learning in class. This is consistent with the evidence reported by Haeri (2000) who states that women use Classical forms significantly less often than men do. Palmer (2008) found that students felt that they were able to integrate into Arabic society more easily and gain the trust of locals when using colloquial Arabic. As a result, they supported studying it before studying abroad.

Proficiency.

Learner proficiency can also play a large role in the study abroad experience. Davidson (2010) found that pre-program control of language structure as well as initial level of proficiency were important predictors of language gain for both the semester and the academic year programs in Russia. Some studies have reported greater linguistic gains for advanced learners (Brecht et al., 1995; Magnan & Back, 2007; Regan et al., 2009; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004), while other studies indicate that lower level learners may benefit as much as, or even more than, advanced ones (Freed, 1995b; Huebner, 1995; Lapkin, Hart, & Swain, 1995). Yager (1998) reported that greater informal interactive contact corresponded to greater linguistic gains for beginner students studying abroad in Mexico. Non-interactive contact, on the other hand, was associated with less improvement for beginner and advanced students, and there were no relationships between language contact and linguistic gain for intermediate students. In addition to linguistic gains, proficiency can also affect language contact. Dekeyser (2010) demonstrated that students' poor declarative knowledge of Spanish grammar hindered their ability to practice

Spanish and thus develop automatic, proceduralized knowledge of the grammar. Furthermore, when their progress did not meet their expectations, they lost their motivation to continue using Spanish and began using more English. Segalowitz and Freed (2004) found that learners' oral abilities at the beginning of their study abroad experience helped determine the amount and kind of L2 activities they participated in outside of class. Siegal (1996) and Pellegrino Aveni (2005) note that language learners, like anyone involved in social interaction, wish to negotiate a standing for themselves with their interlocutors, and that this may be difficult with limited linguistic abilities. Learners in Mendelson (2004) attributed their lack of contact with native speakers in part to their own hesitance and poor linguistic skills. Students in Allen and Herron (2003) stated that their limited abilities in French as well as cultural differences were their primary source of anxiety abroad, although this anxiety did decrease over the course of the summer abroad. On the other hand, the home stay families in Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart (2002) did not think that students' linguistic abilities were a significant factor in their ability to adjust to the study abroad experience.

The classroom.

Research has also examined the role of the classroom in the study abroad experience in terms of both linguistic gain and language contact. Segalowitz and Freed (2004) found that there was no significant relationship between classroom-based language contact and gains in oral proficiency. In terms of language contact, students in Bataller's (2008, 2010) and Mendelson's (2004) studies stated that one of the reasons they had little contact with Spanish peers was that they had classes with other Americans and got used to hanging out together. Rivers (1998) notes that faced with frustrating experiences in the local environment, students may choose to focus on excelling in the familiar classroom situation rather than improving their overall Russian

proficiency. Wilkinson (2002) demonstrates that both students and their local hosts may mimic classroom interactions outside of the classroom rather than using local norms, as this is the language learning model they are familiar with. When local hosts took on the teacher role, students accepted this, but they became confused when their hosts did not play the role of teacher and tried to introduce classroom norms themselves, a generally limiting and inappropriate practice. Pellegrino (1998) also states that the classroom framework students bring with them may persist in their evaluation of their language learning abroad, despite their desire to break free of the classroom and interact with native speakers. The students in her study complained that classes were ineffective abroad, as the "real learning" happened outside of class. They also felt confused and frustrated by inconsistencies in the information taught in the class and provided by locals outside of class.

Internet and travel.

Kinginger (2008) found that ease of travel and access to communications technology often took students studying in France away from their local communities. Some of the students in her study remained in close contact with their friends and family at home, spending up to several hours each day interacting through the internet. The internet also made access to English language media easy.

Ease of travel affects students in two main ways—they may travel more in the local geographic area, and they may also receive visits from friends and family to tour around their host locations. These connections and visits tend to promote English use and limit the time available to try to meet or interact with locals. Ailis, a student in Kinginger's (2008) study, spent most of her time traveling around Europe with other Anglophones rather than hanging out in her local environment, a "modern-day Grand Tour" that left little time for actual interactions with

French people. Fraser (2002) also describes a student who spent the majority of her weekends traveling with other Americans. Students in Mendelson's (2004) study stated that part of the reason for their lack of contact with locals was the fact that they spent the weekends traveling with other students in their language school. Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart (2002) found that homestay families and program directors felt that students were often over-scheduled due to their social lives, homework, and weekend touring, leaving little time to spend with the family. In describing their French practicum, which has cultural integration as its goal, Engle and Engle (1999) note that there is no organized group travel to take students away from pursuing local opportunities, and they emphasize the relative lack of weekend traveling as a measure of the success of their program.

On the other hand, Dolby (2005) explains that study abroad is one of the few opportunities American students have to travel. Furthermore, students may perceive travel as a significant part of out-of-class learning (Allen & Herron, 2003). Badstübner and Ecke (2009) found that in addition to studying German and meeting Germans, one of the main priorities for students studying in Germany was travel. Travel is also one of the ways in which study abroad is sold to American undergraduates, by promising the "experience of a lifetime" (Dolby, 2004). Indeed, one of the complaints leveled by American study abroad students against Costa Rican women in Twombly's (1995) study of the role of gender during study abroad in Costa Rica was the fact that they did not like to travel, unlike the American women.

Pursuing study abroad from a tourism angle may also effect the ways that students act and are perceived by locals. Anderson (2003) found that men studying abroad in Costa Rica reported increasing their exploratory behavior. She also notes that the presence of heavy tourism in Costa Rica means that female students' behavior may be interpreted based on the liberal

expectations of the tourist industry and at the same time criticized according to more conservative local norms.

Living situation.

Students' living situations during study abroad are generally assumed to play an important role in both linguistic gain and language contact, particularly if students are in a homestay situation. However, recent research has problematized this assumption. Segalowitz and Freed (2004) found that the more contact students studying in Spain had with their host families, the fewer gains they made in extending their turn length during the OPI. Rivers (1998) compared the proficiency gains of homestay and dormstay students in Russia, and found that home stay students did better than dorm stay students in reading, about the same in listening, and worse in speaking. Magnan and Back (2007) found no significant differences in OPI gain based on living with a family or in the dorm, and mixed responses for all types of living situations.

Research focusing on the homestay experience has found that this experience can vary widely. Studies by Allen (2010) and Wilkinson (1998) demonstrate that there are considerable differences in the extent to which students integrated into their French host families. Frank (1997, cited in Rivers, 1998) performed an ethnographic study of home stay in Russia, and found that students' interactions with their home stay families were often limited to simple dialogues and television watching, and that students spent a considerable amount of time alone doing homework. Both study abroad students and their hosts expressed frustration at the inability of participants to communicate in Russian. Students in Twombly's (1995) study compared their life style in Costa Rica to high school because everyone lived with their families, whereas in the U.S students' lives were centered around the college campus. They were also surprised that as guests to Costa Rica, their hosts and hostesses did not make the effort to befriend them. Instead,

they felt they needed to make friends on their own, but found it difficult to break into established cliques. Jackson (2008) found that students from Hong Kong studying in England had varying experiences with their host families. Some felt isolated by cultural differences, whereas others were able to establish a warm relationship.

On the other hand, Mendelson (2004) reported that some students blamed their lack of interaction with Spanish NS on living in the dorms rather than with a host family that would have “forced” them to use Spanish rather than English. Indeed, the average contact hours of the students who lived with host families in Salamanca was 40% greater than those who lived in the dorms. Gutel (2007) explained that that students who felt that their home stay was successful stated that this experience was essential for language and cultural learning. Students who had unsatisfactory homestay experiences felt that they were not as integrated into the family as they could have been, and thus prevented from gaining linguistic and cultural immersion. At the same time, students also highly valued their freedom, independence, and privacy, and this category was crucial to a good homestay experience for males and females.

In addition to homestays and dormitory experiences, Kinginger (2008) examined the experience of a student who lived alone in an apartment, which isolated her from other people. She used French only in service encounters and her French language courses for foreign students.

Agency.

Given the limited language contact it is possible to have during study abroad, researchers have also focused on the efforts students undertake to meet target language speakers and interact with them in the target language. Gaining interaction in the target language can be particularly difficult for English speakers abroad. For example, Kinginger (2008) notes that even when

students were able to meet French speakers, the global role of English, including the French speakers' desire to improve their English proficiency, could make it difficult for them to interact in French. Those students who were successful in meeting French speakers and communicating in French actively pursued French social networks, continuing even when they were rejected and seeking to distance themselves from other Americans to avoid English-speaking networks. Allen (2010) notes that students who tried to regulate their learning generally had more successful experiences than those who took less responsibility for their learning, set time-related rather than language-specific goals and blamed others for their limited interactions with French NSs. Mendelson's (2004) students blamed their lack of language contact in part on their lack of effort. On the other hand, exerting this effort could result in harsh judgements from the students' peers. For example, students who used Arabic outside of class in Yemen and Morocco were criticized by their classmates for "showing off" (Kuntz & Belnap, 2001).

According to Pellegrino (1998), students who do not exert this individual agency are often portrayed by researchers as unmotivated or lacking discipline. However, she cautions against this interpretation, noting that "there are numerous social, cultural, and psychological factors that may cause learners to avoid using the target language and reject opportunities to speak" (p. 96). Kinginger (2008) notes that the ability to exert this agency in order to gain local contacts may be closely tied to the gender, national, or class-related identities students reject or desire to claim for themselves.

Identity.

Indeed, examining the role of identity in the study abroad experience has led to important insights into the nature of language contact. Recently, researchers have turned to poststructural approaches to look at identity construction while studying abroad, and how this influences

language learning, particularly when the identities the students wish to assume may differ from those constructed for them in a particular language learning context. Nationality, race, and gender are among the identity categories that can play a role in the study abroad experience.

Nationality.

For Americans studying abroad, local disapproval of American foreign policy can affect interactions with locals. Falk and Kanach (2000) note the salience of being American in a charged political climate:

It follows that U.S. students abroad, carrying their symbolic baggage of citizenship of a country widely regarded with both awe and hostility, but rarely, if ever, indifference, will encounter a wide range of attitudes, including misapprehensions and envious derision (p. 163).

Dolby (2004, 2005, 2007) did a series of studies focusing on the role of national identity during study abroad. During her first (2004) study, with data from 2001, she notes that the American students studying in Australia were often unaware of how American identity was constructed abroad, and through study abroad “they became cognizant that others, outside the United States, are also authors—people who actively construct, form, and influence—of America” (p. 152). Unused to being the “other,” the students were forced to examine their American identity. They tended to feel frustrated by their inability to author their own identity, particularly when it was constructed by Australians on the basis of American politics and foreign policies about which they had little awareness. Some students retreated into a defense of both state and nation, stating that they became more “patriotic” abroad and even defended negative aspects of America, such as the amount of violence. Other students embraced a more contradictory national identity, separating critiques of American political and economic policies

from their idea of America as a nation. These students became more comfortable analyzing these contradictions and their roles as Americans in Australia. In her 2005 study, Dolby compares the experiences of these Americans studying in Australia with Australians studying in the United States. In contrast to the frustration the Americans experienced at how their American identity was constructed by others, the Australians “rarely found that their national identity was controversial, or even a factor, in their interactions with Americans. Most commonly, Americans desired to ‘listen to our accents’ and hear about the mythic land of sun, sea, and kangaroos” (p. 108). They were rarely forced to address Australia’s politics. Thus, although both Americans and Australians are members of the economic elite in global terms, their national and global identities were constructed differently abroad. As a result, their nationalities impacted their study abroad sojourns in disparate ways.

In the 2007 study, using data from 2004, Dolby reports a marked change in the attitudes of the American students studying abroad after 9/11. The American students in this study were considerably more aware of their national identity before departing for study abroad, and of the negative perceptions of Americans abroad, particularly related to the war on Iraq. With particular relevance to the current study, Dolby explains that:

Almost all of the students faced difficult questions about their support or opposition to the war. For many, the questioning seemed constant. For example, Dan, who studied abroad in Cairo, Egypt, commented, ‘You step into a taxi cab, and that was the first question. As soon as they knew you’re American, it was like, ‘What do you think about Bush, about the war?’”(p. 150).

As a result, many of the American students tried to disassociate themselves from “bad

American" behaviors that might be considered boorish and insensitive, and were pleased when locals told them that they were "atypical Americans." Some of them also tried to distance themselves from the actions of the U.S. government. Dolby notes that they did not reject their American identity, but rather distinguished between "good" and "bad" Americans:

They found a way to hold on to their sense of a national identity and an affinity for people and place but at the same time to make room for others' opinions and perspectives. Students actively constructed and strove to personify this good American, who is respectful of other cultures and people, openminded, and willing to be critical of the United States' role in the world (p. 151).

Studies in other parts of the world have also focused on the role of national identity. In Talburt and Stewart's (1999) study, Misheila, an American study abroad student, blamed the "rudeness" of Spaniards on their dislike of Americans. Similarly, a less successful student in Fraser's (2002) study, who had a strong American accent, claimed that she was discriminated against as an American. Kinginger (2008) explained that for American students studying in France in 2003, their identity as Americans was particularly salient as a result of the Iraq war, although many of the students had given little thought to this:

Many of the participants in the study claimed that, prior to their sojourn in France, they had given little thought or effort to the achievement of informed personal views on current political events. As a result, when asked to articulate their perspective, they reported feeling doubly challenged: to develop such a perspective in the first place and then to give expression to their views in French (p. 64)

They were also encouraged to stick together as a result of anti-American sentiment, and

this combination of close American compatriots and challenges to their politics caused some students to retreat into ideals of national superiority. Indeed, Block (2007) explains that the politicized nature of the American study abroad experience may make it difficult to draw generalizable conclusions about language learning from the experiences of American students abroad: "the kinds of issues arising in the US-based studies might well be more about the cultural baggage that American university students carry with them than about SA as the potential site of TL-mediated subject positions" (p. 149).

Race and ethnicity.

Previous studies on race and language learning have typically focused on the racialization of non-native speakers of English (Ibrahim, 1999; Shuck, 2006). However, there are a few studies that have focused on the role of race during study abroad. Talburt and Stewart (1999) examined the racialized experience of Misheila, an African-American student studying in Spain. As a result of her race, Misheila was subject to more sexual comments and advances than her European-American peers, and was frustrated with the racism she encountered in Spain, particularly as she had expected it to be less racist than the United States. While some European-American students, such as Steve, who was 6'4", light-complexioned, and blue-eyed, also wished they could "blend in" more, or were pleased when they were taken for other European nationalities rather than American, they did not experience the "hypervisibility" that Misheila did. Van Der Meid (2003) examined the racialized experiences of Asian-American students abroad. He found that Asian-American students studying in Asia were often expected to have better linguistic and cultural skills based on their racial appearance, and were sometimes discriminated against in English teaching jobs. In contrast, Asian-American students studying in Europe expressed frustration at the assumption that all Asians looked alike (for example a

Chinese-American student being taken for Japanese) or at the denial of their American identity because they looked Asian.

While these studies focus on students who are racial minorities in their home countries, there are also studies focusing on students who become racial minorities in the countries they studied in. Siegal (1994, 1995, 1996) focuses on the experiences of white western women in Japan. She notes that non-Asians are typically addressed in English in Japan, even if they begin the conversation in Japanese. Furthermore, there are historically low expectations for the Japanese proficiency of Western foreigners, and this could limit their access to authentic language. The women in her study also experienced a significant amount of “othering.” For example, one participant, Mary, described an experience on the subway where Japanese riders avoided sitting next to her. Iino (2006) also found that American students studying in Japan faced confusion over what identities they should, or were expected to perform, explaining:

Students who had lived in Japan for several years mentioned that the most difficult challenge they faced while in Japan was how to identify themselves and how to select a role to play in Japanese society. This confusion directly questions if and how far non-Japanese in Japan are expected or allowed to assimilate with native Japanese. Speaking fluent Japanese may not always be sufficient nor even appropriate in some situations (p. 160).

Jackson (2008, 2010) focuses on the experiences of students from Hong Kong studying in England, where they were no longer part of the ethnic majority. Some students were uncomfortable with “sticking out” and complained that they faced discrimination in England. When locals further misconstrued these students as mainland Chinese or Japanese, the Hong Kong students withdrew from interactions with them, limiting their abilities to practice English.

Gender.

Research on study abroad in a number of countries has focused on gender. In terms of linguistic gain, Howard et al. (2006) found that gender did not play a role in the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation by learners studying in France. However, Brecht et al (1995) found that men studying in Russia were more likely to improve their linguistic skills than women. Polyani (1995) examined the diary entries of learners participating in the same study, and reported that the female students experienced: “unpleasant gender-related incidents—in which they feel acutely distressed by the behavior of Russian men seeking, expecting, or demanding sexual “favors” often as a precondition of continuing the relationship” (p. 272). She concludes that this discomfort, in addition to testing materials that focused on male-dominated experiences, at least partially explains the female students' lower scores on the proficiency tests. Over a decade later, Davidson (2010) found that gender was no longer a predictor of linguistic gains during study abroad in Russia. While this study does not examine the gendered experiences of learners, he explains that changes in Russian society may have made it easier for women. In addition, there was also extensive pre-program preparation focusing on strategies for female participants to negotiate Russian society.

Block (2007) and Kinginger (2009) explain that the majority of research on gendered experiences during study abroad focuses on American women, and their frustrations with experiences of sexual harassment across the world, which in turn limit their contact with locals. For example, Twombly (1995) examined the experience of female students studying in Costa Rica, focusing on two complaints in particular: *piripos* [catcalls] and the difficulty of making female friends. As a result of these experiences, she states that: “for many of the students we interviewed and observed, at least the first four months of the sojourn in the foreign country were

not an immersion experience, but an alienating experience in which gender played a major role” (p. 1). Although the women knew that they would receive *piripos*, they were unprepared for the experience, and unable to ignore them. They felt that these were constant reminders of their sex as well as their status as outsiders, and made them feel vulnerable. The students knew that many Costa Rican females received and enjoyed *piripos* but were unable to accept that they would like them, or that they were harmless and flattering, or even that they were part of the culture. At the same time, many of the females refused to change their dress (such as not wearing shorts) to avoid *piripos*. Anderson (2003) states that these refusals stemmed from conflicts between what female students felt were their “rights” and the local culture. These feelings are similar to those described by a female study abroad student in Bacon (2008) who experienced a conflict between her gender values and how she perceived Mexican values, describing Mexican men as using a combination of old-fashioned chivalry and a lack of respect for women. In France, Kinginger (2008) reports that American women were concerned about sexual harassment, and felt less independent and more concerned with safety. Catcalling and other gendered incidents were also frustrating experiences for American females studying in Spain (Talburt & Stewart, 1999), Argentina (Isabelli-García, 2006), Russia (Pellegrino Aveni, 2005; Polyani, 1995) and France (Kinger, 2008; Kinginger & Farrell Whitworth, 2005)

In the Arab world, Kuntz and Belnap (2001) found that females studying in Yemen and Morocco often felt uncomfortable initiating conversations with Arab men, and did not have as many social opportunities as the male students. Ishmael (2010) reported that females studying in Arabic-speaking countries thought their opportunities for interaction were limited compared to their male counterparts. On the other hand, Hillman (2008) explains that being female was seen as an advantage among superior level learners of Arabic, as it gave them more access to

domestic situations. However, she notes that it did seem to be easier for men to engage in more superficial street encounters. In Japan, Siegal (1996) found that gender also played a role in the experience of western women learning Japanese. They felt cast as the foreign female other, yet at the same time wanted to resist a social positioning as a traditional Japanese woman. For example, some learners rejected language forms used by Japanese women that they found “too humble” or “too silly.”

In addition to feeling uncomfortable in interactions with men, another frustration reported by female students in a variety of contexts is the difficulty of making female friends. Bacon (2008) found that although Lily, the student in her case study, developed a few female friendships later in the semester in Mexico, she initially did not have many female friends, which she attributed to living off campus. In Spain, female students in Bataller’s (2008) study stated that it was easy to meet men at bars, but difficult to meet women. According to Twombly (1995), female students studying in Costa Rica reported difficulties making female friends, stating that it was much easier to meet males, whom they could also date. In explaining why it was difficult to make friends, some students focused on the competition for Costa Rican men. Others focused on the differences between women’s lives in Costa Rica and in the United States. For example, they stated that the Costa Rican women had to stay in the house and generally had less freedom than the American women. As a result of these differences, the students felt that their lives were so different from those of the Costa Rican women that they had nothing to talk about. Instead, they solidified their friendships with other North American women.

Research on sexual harassment during study abroad has been critiqued for taking the students’ (typically) American perspective of gender roles as more important than gender roles in the local context (Kinging, 2008). Rodriguez (2006) comments that catcalls are not always a

new experience for study abroad students, but depend on where they are from in class, ethnic, and regional terms. Anderson (2003) reports that Costa Rican host families and program staff stated that study abroad students, especially females, repeatedly ignored signals and warnings about what they considered dangerous situations and bad people. Kinginger (2009) explains that sexual harassment is defined differently across cultures. In particular, she cites the research of Patron (2007, cited in Kinginger, 2009) on French women studying in Australia, who felt alienated and unable to interact with locals as a result of the lack of the catcalls they received. Kinginger explains that what American women might consider harassment, French women could perceive as flirtation.

While most studies focus on the difficulties of women abroad, there are two studies that examine the gendered experiences of men abroad, both of which report this as an advantage. Churchill (2009) looks at the sojourn of Hiro, a Japanese student studying in the United States. He found that while being male was a disadvantage for Hiro in Japan, as he had less peer support in a predominantly female setting, his gender worked to his advantage abroad. Being isolated from his female peers and using his athletic prowess to join the track team allowed him to integrate more quickly into his American high school setting. Kinginger (2008) explains that Bill, an American male studying in France, was able to use the catcalls and gendered incidents experienced by his female colleagues:

. . . to construct for himself a narrative of heroism and valor: As a heterosexual American male raised on discourses of gender equity, his presence in social settings represents value added to situations in which women are routinely subjected to sexual harassment. In his accounts of these situations, Bill is both an admiring consumer of feminine wiles and a defender of these same women's honor. On the dance floor, for example, Bill

routinely rescued French girls from importunate French men (p. 91)

Research questions

Research focusing on the role of identity categories during the study abroad experience demonstrates the clear impact of identity on shaping the process of study abroad, as well as the language learning (or lack thereof) to which it leads. Nevertheless, research on identity in the study abroad context remains scarce. In this study, I focus on the role of identity during study abroad in a non-traditional destination, Egypt, thus expanding both the geographical and theoretical scope of study abroad research. Study abroad in Egypt is an under-researched location where the sociohistorical (and especially political) contexts result in salient identity assumptions for both learners and locals. In this study I address the following questions: first, what does the process of study abroad in Egypt look like in terms of access to locals and target language use? Second, how do issues of identity examined in study abroad in other parts of the world (i.e. nationality and gender) affect access and language use in Arabic-speaking countries? Third, are there other types of identities that affect students' access and use (i.e., religion) that are less commonly examined during study abroad? Fourth, how do students and programs negotiate these identities, and what can be done to maximize access to locals and target language use? To answer these questions, I use identity theory as an analytical tool. The next chapter provides an overview of this theory as well as relevant aspects of the socio-historical context of primarily American students studying in Egypt.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CONTEXT

Theoretical Framework

Identity approaches to second language learning have been used primarily in the context of English language learning. However, this theoretical framework provides a powerful tool for understanding the behavior and language use of language learners, particularly when these seem to be in conflict with their language learning goals (such as dropping out of or not participating in a language class). Therefore, using this theory as an analytical tool to examine the study abroad context, where previous research has demonstrated that identity plays salient roles, seems promising.

According to Norton and McKinney (2011):

The central argument of the identity approach to second language acquisition (SLA) is twofold: First, SLA theorists need a comprehensive theory of identity that integrates the individual language learner and the larger social world; second, SLA theorists need to address how relations of power in the social world affect learners' access to the target language community. In relation to the former, a fully developed theory of identity highlights the multiple positions from which language learners can speak, and how sometimes marginalized learners can appropriate more desirable identities with respect to the target language community. In relation to the latter, identity theorists are concerned about the ways in which opportunities to practice speaking, reading, and writing, acknowledged as central to the SLA process (cf. Spolsky, 1989), are socially structured in both formal and informal sites of language learning. Identity theorists thus question the view that learners can be defined in binary terms as motivated or unmotivated, introverted or extroverted, inhibited or uninhibited, without considering that such

affective factors are frequently socially constructed in inequitable relations of power, changing over time and space, and possibly coexisting in contradictory ways within a single individual. (p. 73)

There are several key concepts to identity theory, which has its origins in poststructural and critical social theories.

Identity

Drawing from poststructuralist theories, learners are seen to have multiple identities, or subjectivities, which are dynamic and change over time and in different communities. These identities are performed (often via language) against the socio-historical context produced by social and cultural organizations. In social theory, poststructuralism resists the idea of essentialized identities that are determined and set by either biological characteristics or social structure, and thus identities such as gender, race, or ethnicity are not predetermined, but constructed via performance in a particular context (Block, 2007; Norton, 2000; Norton & McKinney, 2011; Pavlenko, 2001; Pennycook, 2001; Swain & Deters, 2007). An essentialized approach to identity is not always questioned in the SLA literature, where variables such as gender may be considered a stable predictor of language learning. Learners play a role in performing their multiple identities, and thus can draw upon multiple roles in their attempts to use and interact in the target language. For example, a learner who has difficulty gaining access to target language speakers while performing one identity can draw upon other ones to facilitate this interaction (Norton, 2000; Norton & McKinney, 2011). Norton and Toohey (2001) give the examples of Eva and Julie, two language learners who succeeded in repositioning themselves:

Eva, initially constructed as an *ESL immigrant*, sought to reposition herself as a *multilingual resource* with a desirable partner; Julie, initially constructed as an *ESL*

learner, came to be seen as a *nice little girl* with allies. Their success in claiming more powerful identities seems important to their success as good language learners (p. 318).

At the same time, identity construction does not occur under the learners' agency alone, but is co-constructed with those around them, often based on the power dynamics of a particular context as well as social structure and biology. In some cases, identities learners wish to construct may be rejected by those around them, and alternatives imposed instead, creating tension between the learners and their environment. Learners can accept this positioning or attempt to resist or negotiate it with their interlocutors (Block, 2007; Pavlenko, 2001). Understanding the various identities available to, desired by, imposed upon, and resisted by language learners in a particular learning context provides important insights into learner behavior and motivations by analyzing the connection between the learner and the social world (Jackson, 2008; Kinginger, 2008; Norton, 2000; Norton & McKinney, 2011; Pavlenko, 2001; Pennycook, 2001; Swain & Deters, 2007).

Imagined Communities

While real-life communities are typically organized around a particular set of concrete activities, the imagination forms another important source of community, as it allows learners to create new understandings of the world and themselves that transcend time and space (Wenger, 1998). Research that focuses on identity and language learning has used the concept of *imagined communities* to understand the language learning process, by seeing identity as not only in the present, but along a continuum from past to future (Block, 2007). First proposed by Anderson (1983) as metaphor to explain nationalism, this concept has been adapted by Norton (2001, 2011), Kanno and Norton (2003), and Pavlenko and Norton (2007) to help explain the journeys of language learners. For learners, imagined communities are those that they desire to belong to,

in either the present or the future, and that may extend beyond their geographical location. These communities are just as important as concrete local communities. If a particular learning context does not allow learners to participate in their imagined communities, they may withdraw from this context. For example, Kanno and Norton (2003) give the example of Katerina, a Polish immigrant to Canada whose imagined community was a community of professionals, similar to the one she had belonged to in Poland:

When her ESL teacher discouraged her from taking a computer course, Katarina felt that she was positioned as a "mere" immigrant and that she was being denied an important opportunity to gain greater access to her imagined community of professionals. In short, her nonparticipation in the ESL class resulted from a disjuncture between her imagined community and the teacher's educational vision (p. 243).

Learners can also persevere in language learning if they perceive this as necessary for participation in their imagined communities. Kanno and Norton also give the example of Rui, a Japanese student who had lived for most of his life in English speaking countries, but maintained his Japanese language proficiency as a result of his strong identification with a Japanese imagined community:

When he finally discovered that the "real" Japan was far removed from his idealized Japan, his disappointment was acute and led him to declare that he did not want to be Japanese anymore. But while it lasted, Rui's private, imagined community created a powerful vision, giving him an important sense of direction (p. 243).

The individual imagination can be constrained by the socio-historical context and the power relations within it, where certain realities may be beyond imagination (Kanno & Norton, 2003). However, imagined communities are not fantasy or representative of a withdrawal from

reality: they have rules, or requirements for participation, such as a particular language or outlook on life (Kanno and Norton, 2003; Norton, 2011). As such, the access learners have to these communities varies, and may be none at all. Learners can find it most difficult to use their L2 with those interlocutors who are members of, or gatekeepers to, their imagined communities, as these are the people in whom they have symbolic or material investments (Norton, 2001).

Investment

Depending on their identities and imagined communities, learners may have varying degrees of investment in a particular language learning situation. Norton and Toohey (2001) define the concept of *investment* as “the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it.” (p. 312). When learners use the target language, they are not participating in a simple exchange of information with target language speakers, but also developing their identities in relation to the social context. When there is a mismatch between learners' desired identities and a particular learning context, highly motivated learners may resist participation in this context, even if it is detrimental to their language learning. Learners also hope to gain a return on their investment in terms of symbolic and material resources.

Investment differs from traditional constructs of instrumental motivation. According to Norton and McKinney (2011)

The concept of instrumental motivation often presupposes a unitary, fixed, and ahistorical language learner who desires access to material resources that are the privilege of target language speakers. The notion of investment, on the other hand, conceives of the language learner as having a complex identity and multiple desires. The notion presupposes that, when language learners speak, they are not only exchanging

information with target language speakers, but they are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. Thus an investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner's own identity, an identity that is constantly changing across time and space (p. 75-76).

In particular, investment is always tied to context, while motivation is assumed to be a characteristic of the learner. Thus, a motivated learner may not be invested in every learning context, and not pursue language learning in particular contexts. This concept has typically been used to explain the non-participation of English language learners in the classroom and other contexts. However, it is also possible that the concept of investment could help explain the often lamented contradiction between American students who state that they want to learn the local language and then spend the majority of their study abroad experience speaking English with other American study abroad students.

Power, Access, Agency, and Resistance

A central tenet of identity theory is that power relations in the social context are an essential influence on learners' identities and language learning. This focus on power has its roots in critical inquiry, which emphasizes that the unequal power relations of the larger socio-historical context both govern and are produced by everyday interaction (Carspecken, 1996; Madison, 2005). Language and language learning are implicit in the reproduction of these power relations (Bourdieu, 1977, 1991), which occur not only at the macro levels of society but are also reproduced in everyday interaction (Norton, 2000). For example, opportunities to practice the target language with target language speakers may be constrained by power relations of power if learners are not regarded as worthy of speaking (Norton, 2000). However, these power relations are not deterministic; they can be to some degree resisted as well as reproduced

via human agency (Canagarajah, 1993; Norton, 2000).

Previous studies taking an identity approach to second language acquisition have focused primarily on immigrants to English-speaking countries or on English language learners in other contexts. Looking at immigrants learning English in Canada, Norton (2000) and Norton and Toohey (2001) demonstrate how the power relations governing the social context constrain learners' opportunities to practice English, and how the "good language learner" is the one who is able to use individual agency to resist these constraints. Ibrahim (1999) describes how the African students he studied "became Black" in the racialized society of Canada, and the impact this had on the type of English they learned to identify with. Canagarajah (1993) looked at how students in Sri Lanka subverted his authority as a teacher to attempt to learn English a way that would allow them to resist cultural alienation while still gaining the socio-economic advantage of being able to pass their English exam. In doing so, they were at times complicit in their own domination on a larger scale.

Applying identity approaches to research on study abroad, and in particular the context of primarily American students studying in Egypt, has the potential to offer crucial insights into students' language use and interactions during their sojourn. Furthermore, there may also be important implications for the theory itself. While immigrants to North America with limited English skills may find themselves in positions of reduced power, this is simply not the case for many Americans studying abroad. The students in this study were predominantly white, middle class, college-educated Americans studying temporarily in a country where there is considerable cultural capital given to Western foreigners and the English language. By focusing on those with global power, this study can help expand identity theory beyond a focus on language learners in positions of reduced power.

Socio-historical Context

Identity theory maintains that language learning, and the experiences of learners, cannot be separated from the socio-historical context. This context plays a central role in determining how their identities (as well as those of their interlocutors) are received and negotiated. In this section, I provide a brief overview of the political history of modern Egypt, and then give background on Egyptian views of America, language use in Egypt, and Arabic learning in the United States.

Modern Egypt

In the early 16th century, Egypt was annexed to the Ottoman Empire, which ruled Egypt for the next two hundred years. Napoleon's conquest of Egypt interrupted this rule from 1798-1801, although the Ottomans, with British assistance, regained control. Under the rule of Muhammad Ali, Egypt became increasingly independent from Ottoman rule and expanded its empire. Ali's successors grew progressively more indebted to European powers, particularly Great Britain and France, and European control over Egypt increased in the latter half of the 19th century. The Urabi Revolution from 1881-1882 tried to resist European influence in Egypt, but its failure led to the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 as a British protectorate. The 1919 revolution demonstrated Egyptian resistance to British rule, and led to the establishment of Egypt as an independent state rather than a British protectorate in 1922. From 1922-1952 Egypt was ruled by King Fuad and his son Farouq. The Free Officers took control of Egypt in the 1952 revolution, sending King Farouq into exile and forming the Arab Republic of Egypt. As president of the new republic starting in 1954, Gamal Abdel Nasser led a nationalization and agrarian reform project which included the nationalization of the Suez Canal and the end of British influence in Egypt in 1956. He was also president for Egypt's defeat in the 1967 war with

Israel. Following Nasser's death in 1970, Anwar Sadat became president. He pursued an economic liberalization policy and following Egypt's 1973 victory over Israel, negotiated an unpopular peace with Israel. Following his assassination in 1981, Hosni Mubarak began his nearly thirty-year reign as president of Egypt (Daly, 1998). On January 25, 2011, a protest against police brutality sparked the beginning of the 2011 Egyptian revolution, culminating in the resignation of President Mubarak on February 11th.

While a complete history of modern Egypt is beyond the scope of this dissertation, there are a number of socio-historical trends relevant to the experience of primarily American sojourners in Egypt. These include Egyptian views of America, language use in Egypt, and Arabic education in the United States.

Egyptian Views of America¹

According to Sherbiny (2005) the Egyptian view of America was initially favorable, viewing America as a former colony that became a major world superpower. However, the fall of cotton prices during the American Great Depression, which negatively affected Egypt's economy, as well as the United States' support of Israel, led to less favorable impressions.

Regarding American support for Israel, Sherbiny explains:

The US embrace of Israel, whether right or wrong, has steadily alienated 1 billion Arabs and Muslims around the world. Both America and Israel have grown in the minds of Arabs and Muslims as a twin evil - arrogant, greedy, and brutal (p. 842)

1. All but three of the students in this study were American. Welat, from Turkey, attended an American university and had studied Arabic in the United States. Gunnar, from Denmark, had also studied Arabic in Denmark. Bruce, from Canada, had studied Arabic only in Egypt, complaining about the lack of availability of Arabic courses in western Canada.

Similarly, Furia and Lucas (2008) found that among Arab Muslims, support for Palestine was a significant predictor of a negative attitude towards the United States, and that American politics were the primary reason for negative attitudes towards the United States. In addition to the issue of Israel, the American wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have also generated considerable negative sentiment in Egypt. Mohamed (2010) notes that this is a common theme in post September 11 Arab cinema:

Many Arab films came in answer to the American question “Why do they hate us?” attempting to provide an answer from a historical perspective. The answer in Arab films comes clear, “we do not hate you but we hate your policy in our region” (p. 9)

Yet despite these negative views of American politics, America still remains a fascinating place for many Egyptians. Despite unfavorable portrayals of America, and particularly American politics in film, Mohamed (2010) notes that Egyptians “still have '*Khawaga* complex' which refers to the way Arabs overvalue everything and everybody Western, European, or White—regardless of real or true value” (p. 2).

Many Egyptian encounters with foreigners, including Americans, are a result of tourism, which plays a large role in Egypt’s economy. While tourism in general is on the rise worldwide, it is growing even more quickly in Egypt, where tourism increased by 76% between 1998 and 2008 (compared to 50% worldwide). In 2008, 12.8 million tourists visited Egypt, most of them from Europe (50%), followed by the Middle East (14%), and Russia (11%), with tourists from the Americas forming 4% of the total (Vignal, 2010).

At the same time, elements of American pop culture are widely exported to Egypt. American movies are regularly featured in movie theaters and on television, and American musicians give concerts in Egypt and are featured on music video channels. Many foreign

companies have their Middle East headquarters in Egypt, and there are strong ties between the Egyptian and American militaries. Pop culture and tourism in particular contribute to a perception of America as sexually permissive, particularly compared to the Arab world.

Finally, despite potentially negative political and moral impressions, the United States is still seen as a land of opportunity, and there is considerable interest in visiting or emigrating there. Since this is neither financially nor legally possible for many Egyptians, interactions with Americans in Egypt may be as close as they can come. Thus for some Egyptians, interactions with foreigners are a desirable activity, and having foreign friends may provide them with social capital in some Egyptian circles.

Thus, American students studying in Egypt enter a context in which their identities are to some degree already conceived, even if in contradictory ways. Furthermore, while the politics of the Arab world are typically not a matter of everyday discussion in the United States, American students of Arabic tend to be interested in these political conflicts, and may also arrive in Egypt with their own ideas about Egypt and the Arab world. The expectation that Egypt, as part of the “East” is fundamentally different from the United States, as part of the “West” is part of the East-West discourse in the United States as well, and this can at times lead students to overlook the diversity of views, lifestyles, and opinions within both “East” and “West”. The popularity of Ancient Egypt in the United States is also relevant. While Ancient Egyptian monuments are the source of much tourism revenue, many modern Egyptians do not identify with the legacy of Ancient Egypt or are not as familiar with it as American students may expect.

Language Use in Egypt

Arabic, a diglossic language, is the official language of Egypt. Ferguson (1959) defines diglossia as the use of High and Low varieties of a language under different social conditions. In the case of Egypt, the High variety is Classical or Modern Standard Arabic, and the Low variety is a variety of Egyptian Arabic. Since Ferguson's time, a number of scholars have problematized his distinction between High and Low varieties, noting that speakers most often use a mix of these, and vary the mix towards High or Low according to variables such as context, ability, and interlocutor (Hary, 1996; Holes, 2004). One of the earliest examples of a study providing evidence for multiple, continuous levels of MSA and colloquial Arabic is El-Badawi's (1973) study of the Egyptian media. In this study, El-Badawi classifies language use in Egypt according to five levels ranging from the colloquial of the illiterate to the Classical Arabic of literary and historical tradition. Ferguson's written/spoken distinction is also problematic, particularly in the case of Egyptian Arabic, which enjoys an extensive folk poetry tradition and was developed to some extent as a literary language in the early 20th century. With the advent of the internet, which includes a great deal of informal writing such as blogs, social networking sites, email, and chatting, there is evidence that Egyptian Arabic is expanding even more into traditionally written domains. Belnap and Bishop (2003) found that colloquial Arabic is frequently used in personal correspondence, sometimes mixed in with MSA. Warschauer et al. (2002) found that the most commonly used linguistic variety online by Egyptian was a mix of romanized Egyptian Arabic and English, with MSA in Arabic script being the least likely choice. At the same time, the availability of satellite channels such as Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiyya increases exposure to MSA as well as to other Arabic dialects. Throughout the Arab world, Egyptian Arabic (along with Levantine dialects) enjoys prestige and familiarity in comparison to other Arabic dialects. This

is in part due to the Egyptian film industry and the fact that schools and workplaces in other Arab countries (particularly the Gulf) often have Egyptian teachers on their staff (S'hiri, 2002).

The differences between MSA and Egyptian dialect are lexical, phonological, and morpho-syntactic. Table 1 gives a few examples of these differences.

Table 1

Linguistic Differences Between MSA and Egyptian Arabic

	MSA	Egyptian	English
Phonology	qalaq	ʔalaʔ	worry
Morpho-syntax	kaθi:r	kati:r	a lot
	adrus	b-adris	I study
Lexical	la: uhibb	mif b-aħibb/ mabahibbiʃ	I don't like
	ðahaba	ra:h	he went
	raʔa:	ʃa:f	he saw

In addition to varieties of Arabic, foreign languages, and in particular English, play a prominent role in Egypt. English is a required subject in Egyptian public schools, and has been introduced at increasingly lower grades over the last few decades. Instruction currently starts in first grade, although the quality of instruction is often such that students have little proficiency in the language upon graduation. As a result, graduates from *mada:ris al-luḡa:t* [language schools], which teach entirely or predominantly in English or another foreign language are among the most employable, and parents are eager for their children to attend these types of schools if economically possible, despite varying quality of instruction. As a result, English

knowledge is also class-based, as De Koning (2006) explains:

In present-day Cairo, the ‘possession’ of foreign languages, particularly English, has come to denote a major split within society. It divides the educated middle class between those ‘with’ and those ‘without’ language. Those who have attended *madaris lughat* (language schools) and speak their languages fluently are generally born and bred in the ‘better’ families and can look forward to working in the upper segments of the labour market (p. 228).

At the university level, there are English medium universities (such as the American University in Cairo), and at public universities (including Alexandria University), certain subjects such as medicine, veterinary science, and engineering are taught in English. Other disciplines (such as Commerce or Political Science) have both English and Arabic branches, with admission to the English branch being more competitive and expensive and the resulting degree more prestigious (Schaub, 2000). English is also common in for professional communications, including conferences, email, and discussions, particularly in fields where university studies are completed in English (Warschauer et al., 2002).

English is also an important factor in the job market in Egypt. Schaub (2000) explains that graduates of language schools and English medium universities get better jobs, and English remains the number one criteria of many multi-national recruiters. At the other end of the socio-economic scale, he explains how basic English skills can allow the poor to benefit from tourism: “Even the poorest of street merchants or juice sellers stand to greatly increase profits, and sometimes prices, if they are able to communicate with the affluent visitors who themselves primarily use English for all transactions in Egypt” (p. 229).

The upshot of this language situation with respect to this study is that many Egyptians

speaking English to some degree, particularly young people or those in areas frequented by tourists. Many Egyptians are also eager to improve their English proficiency in order to take advantage of the opportunities it offers.

Arabic in the United States

Arabic study in the United States has its origins in the study of the Bible and Semitics, and was traditionally taught like the Classical languages in a grammar and translation intensive manner (Allen, 2004; Ryding, 2006). However, from the second half of the 20th century onwards, funding for Arabic study has been motivated by largely political reasons. In 1958, Arabic was among the languages designated “critical languages” by the National Defense and Education Act. Political events, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the oil crises of the 70’s, the September 11 terrorist attacks, the Iraq wars, and most recently the revolutions in the Arab world, have served to generate considerable interest in the study of Arabic from a political standpoint. The events of September 11, 2001 in particular have resulted in a major increase in Arabic enrollments as well as funding for Arabic programs, including study abroad. Arabic enrollments in the United States increased 126.5% between 2002 and 2006 (Furman et al., 2007), and there is considerable demand for Arabic language teachers. As Arabic continues to be designated a “critical” language by the U.S. Government, there is increased funding for Arabic study through government-sponsored programs such as the Critical Language Scholarships and the National Flagship Language Initiative. Given the increased interest in Arabic, there are also numerous new study abroad programs (including the Middlebury program in this study) in a wider variety of Arab countries.

Outside of the Arab world, the language of the classroom tends to be Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Teaching dialect does not occur in the majority of Arabic programs in the United

States, and is a subject of endless debate at academic conferences. Nevertheless, the general trend seems to be moving from asking “should dialect be taught?” to “how should it be taught?” This trend began with the introduction of communicative methods in the 1980’s-90’s, and there has been a strong push in recent years to introduce a dialect (usually Egyptian or Levantine) in addition to MSA (Palmer, 2007, 2008; Wahba, 2006; Wilmsen, 2006; Younes, 2006). Belnap (2006) states that 87% of Arabic students are studying Arabic to interact with those who speak Arabic, an activity that is simply not possible in a sociolinguistically appropriate manner without knowledge of colloquial Arabic. If a dialect is taught, Egyptian (followed by Levantine) is a popular option for a number of reasons. There are numerous materials for teaching Egyptian Arabic, including the inclusion of this dialect (as well as Levantine) in the most recent editions of the most popular textbook set in the United States, the *al-Kitaab* series. Furthermore, Egypt is a popular study abroad destination, and many Arabic teachers in the United States are Egyptian or Egyptian-trained. Finally, the fact that Egyptian dialect is widely understood throughout the Arab world means that it will be of use outside of Egypt as well. For these same reasons, Levantine dialects are also frequently taught if dialect instruction is included, and al-Batal and Belnap (2006) note that of students wishing to study a dialect, 86% want to study one of these two dialects. Trentman (2011) provides evidence that there is considerable language transfer between these dialects, making knowledge of one of these dialects more useful than MSA in understanding the other.

However, language attitudes towards different varieties of Arabic may also be a relevant factor. Learners acquire language attitudes along with linguistic proficiency (Eisenstein 1982, 1986; Eisenstein & Verdi, 1985), and there is a correlation between student attitudes and those of their teachers towards Arabic dialect learning (Belnap, 2006). Thus, student preference for

Egyptian and Levantine varieties may reflect their relative prestige in the Arab world, something towards which the Arabic teaching profession should take a critical view.

This brief overview of the socio-historical context demonstrates that there are multiple views of America in Egypt, roles for Arabic and English in Egypt, and traditions of Arabic teaching in the United States. Taking an identity theory approach recognizes that this context is crucial to determining the ways foreign students are received in Egypt as well as how they seek to construct their identities as Arabic learners in this context. In the next chapter, I describe the methodology used to examine students' use of Arabic while abroad, their access to Arabic speakers, and the role of identity in constructing this access and use.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

This study uses mixed methods, and involves data collected over a period of twenty months from August 2009 to April 2011 at the American University in Cairo with the study abroad and intensive Arabic programs and at the University of Alexandria with the Middlebury program. In Fall 2009, I recruited student and teacher participants in the study abroad program at AUC to participate in a pilot study. This study used primarily interview and survey data to gather information about study abroad, as well as technological and participant observations from a subset of students who agreed to this. I had planned to pilot pre and post Arabic interviews; however my data collection started late due to the university unexpectedly closing for three weeks after the first week of the semester following fears of a swine flu epidemic. By the time I was able to recruit student participants, it was mid semester, too late for pre and post interviews, although I was able to pilot the questions to get an idea of the students' Arabic abilities at this point in time. In Spring 2010, I began research with the Middlebury and intensive Arabic programs in addition to the study abroad program. This phase also used primarily interview and survey data, with technological and participant observations from a subset of students. Thus, the data from the 2009-2010 academic year provide an overview of the study abroad experience in Egypt, focusing in particular on the students' perceptions of their experiences.

In 2010-2011, I recruited participants from the Middlebury and intensive Arabic programs for a multiple case study, in order to examine the experience of a smaller group of students more in depth, and relate it to the macrolevel data gathered the year before. Although I had intended to collect data for the entire academic year, the Egyptian Revolution in January 2011 resulted in the evacuation of the Middlebury program as well as the exit of many students

studying at AUC. As I was funded by the Fulbright-Hays fellowship this year, I was also told I had to leave Egypt, and did so on February 8th. I returned in April 2011 to conduct several interviews with Egyptian participants in the program.

Settings

This study focuses on primarily American students studying abroad at two universities in Egypt, the American University in Cairo (AUC) and Alexandria University. AUC is a prestigious private university with approximately 4,760 undergraduate and 1,220 graduate students. The student population is 85% Egyptian (90% for degree seeking students) (Office of Institutional Research, 2010). AUC is also English-medium, and students are required to submit evidence of English proficiency via standardized tests (such as the TOEFL), completion of advanced work at the secondary school level (such as AP exams), or completion of a non-remedial university level English course ("Undergraduate Admissions Requirements", *n.d.*). Schaub (1999) describes the English proficiency of the AUC community as follows:

For the AUC undergraduate student community, English is an additional or associate language, a language in which students have achieved relatively high levels of competence in speaking, reading, and writing. As the data in this chapter have shown, English is the language in which many freshman students write best, in spite of the fact that for the vast majority, English is not a native language (p. 80).

There is an Arabic language requirement for graduation, which can be filled by taking two semesters of elementary Arabic or passing an exam ("Undergraduate Arabic Requirements", *n.d.*). Undergraduate tuition at AUC is 2830 Egyptian pounds per credit (\$470) ("Tuition Fees", *n.d.*). In contrast, per capita GDP in Egypt is \$2265 ("Egypt", 2010). While AUC does offer scholarships and financial aid, it is primarily for the Egyptian elite, many of whom attend the

same primary and secondary English language schools before coming to AUC. Degree-seeking students of other nationalities are often from other Arab countries.

AUC has longstanding study abroad agreements with a number of American universities facilitating the transfer of financial aid and academic credit. My research focuses on two programs at this university, the study abroad program and the intensive Arabic program. Students in the study abroad program are typically undergraduates and enroll directly in AUC classes (which are taught in English). They also have the option of taking 1-2 Arabic classes in either Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) or Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA). There are typically 300-400 study abroad students enrolled at AUC each semester, making it likely the largest program in the Middle East (Conlin, 2010; Office of Institutional Research, 2010). In the intensive program, students study only Arabic and have a minimum of 20 hours of class a week, typically in both MSA and ECA, although there are sometimes tracks for students interested in only MSA or only ECA. There are typically 75-100 students enrolled in this program each semester (Office of Institutional Research, 2010). Students in this program are often undergraduates, but also include recent graduates, graduate students, and non-academic professionals. Outside of class, these programs play little role in students' lives. Students are responsible for arranging their own housing, either in the university dorms or in a private apartment. The intensive Arabic program arranges weekly trips to tourist attractions in Cairo with a tour guide in English, as well as a few overnight trips to Alexandria or Luxor and Aswan. The AUC dorms also organize activities, some of which, such as trips to the pyramids, are primarily for international students.

In 2008, AUC moved to its New Cairo campus, which is approximately one hour from its old location in downtown Cairo, a journey that is longer in traffic. Cairo is Egypt's largest city,

and New Cairo is a rapidly developing area of villas and apartments for the higher socio-economic classes of Cairo. The campus itself is isolated in the sense that unlike many areas of Cairo, one cannot walk to shops, restaurants and stores.

Alexandria University is one of Egypt's leading public universities, with approximately 175,500 undergraduate students and 19,500 graduate students. The majority of students are Egyptian. There were 1261 international undergraduate students enrolled in 2009-2010, most of whom were from Asia (1002) or Africa (247) ("International Students", *n.d.*). It is an Arabic-language university; however, as in many Arab countries, the sciences are taught in English. There are also special English sections in some departments such as commerce. Students have to pay fees of approximately \$40-50 per year, more for the special English sections (N. Heliel, personal communication, April 2, 2012).

The Center for Teaching Arabic to Foreigners was founded in 1985. It initially catered to students from British universities, and then expanded to include students from a variety of countries (Nahla, 2006). In recent years, the center has become the location of a number of American programs, including those sponsored by the National Flagship Language Initiative and the American Councils for International Education. My research focuses on students enrolled in the Middlebury program, which is for undergraduates studying abroad, typically for a semester, but sometimes for a year. Although Middlebury College has a long history of excellence in language learning, including summer domestic immersion and study abroad programs, the program in Alexandria is a recent development. It began in the 2007-2008 academic year, and typically enrolls 20-40 students, many of whom do not attend Middlebury College in Vermont. Like the intensive Arabic program, this program has language learning as a primary focus. Students have approximately 16 hours of classes a week of both MSA and ECA. I chose to

focus on this program because of the large role the program plays in students' lives outside of the classroom with the express goal of providing opportunities for interactions with Egyptians and language development. Students live with Egyptian families or in the Alexandria dorm with an Egyptian student. Students in the dorms have a language partner in addition to their roommate. The entire program is under a language pledge, such that the students, teachers, language partners, and families can only use Arabic². The program organizes cultural activities as well as trips on which the Egyptians who work on the program can come for free.

Sampling

I chose to focus on these two settings as a result of my interest in the program role in out-of-class activities, which is very large in Middlebury program, and less so in the AUC programs. Furthermore, personal connections (discussed further under the section on the role of the researcher) facilitated my work with these programs as well as my prior knowledge of the extent to which they were involved in students' lives outside of class. In choosing the students to participate, I wanted to focus on students formally taking ECA because I was interested in students who had both a linguistic and interactional goal during their study abroad. In the Middlebury program, ECA study is required, so I recruited from among all participants at the Middlebury orientation. At AUC, it is possible for students in the study abroad program to not enroll in Arabic classes at all (indicating that Arabic is not a priority), or to take only MSA classes (indicating that they may be more interested in Arabic for non-interactional purposes). Therefore, at AUC I recruited students from their Egyptian dialect classes. Following the initial

2. Given the prominence of English in Egypt, refraining from code-switching between English and Arabic or from watching English movies when the students were around was something unusual for many of the Egyptians involved with the program.

recruitment, I followed up with students who volunteered to participate outside of class. Students chose one of three levels of participation (described below under instruments). Teachers in both programs were recruited via email and personal contacts. Egyptian associates in both programs were recruited directly (if I met them) or via the students (a much less successful technique).

For the case studies, I chose to focus on female participants for practical and analytic reasons. Practically, the gender norms of Egyptian society made it impossible for me to observe male students in the dorms or in traditional coffeeshops, two of the main sources of their interactions with Egyptians according to my macrolevel data. From an analytic standpoint, the interview data revealed that gender was a contentious point for both males and females, but particularly for females, who felt that Egyptian gender norms could limit their ability to practice their Arabic on the street.

I was unsure of getting enough females to participate in this level, so I recruited from all students in Fall 2010. Three participants agreed to participate from the intensive Arabic program, and nine from the Middlebury program. In the intensive Arabic program, I chose the two females. In the Middlebury program, I chose four females: the two who lived with families, and the two in the dorms who kept blogs. The remaining students in both programs participated at level two.

Role of the Researcher

As in other socio-cultural approaches, critical poststructuralist approaches take into account the positionality of the researcher, rejecting the idea that research can be completely objective and viewing all research as situated, in which the researcher is a part of the situation (Norton, 2011). I am a non-native speaker of Arabic, who began studying Arabic in 1999. I

studied abroad at the American University in Cairo in both the study abroad program (Fall 2001), and the intensive Arabic program (Summer 2003), as well as spending a year (Summer 2006-Spring 2007) and a semester (Fall 2009) studying at the Center for Advanced Study of Arabic (CASA) at AUC. The contacts I developed during these periods of study helped facilitate my research with the programs at AUC. I am also an Arabic teacher, and taught at the Middlebury Arabic Summer School prior to and during this research. This experience, as well as the fact that the Assistant Director of the Middlebury program in Alexandria was a former graduate school colleague of mine and that I had worked with the Middlebury extracurricular coordinator at a summer program (not Middlebury), facilitated my ability to conduct research at the Middlebury program.

The participants in this program viewed me as an advanced language learner (asking about my language learning and study abroad experiences, as well as for advice in these areas), as a teacher (asking for linguistic help in the case of the students), and as a researcher (participating in my research and asking how it was going). Prior to their participation in my study, I had met some of the participants as students at the Middlebury Arabic Summer School while I was teaching there (although I was not their teacher). While I cannot say for sure how the participants in this study viewed me at all times, or how this might influence their responses, I know that to some degree my language skills helped me recruit students, as they were curious about a non-native speaker who had reached a high level in Arabic. In terms of power relations, it is possible that some of the students felt that I was in a position of power as an Arabic teacher, while they were the students. At the same time, I often felt that they were in the position of power, as my data collection (and thus my dissertation and academic career) was dependent on their cooperation and assistance.

My interest in the role of identity in language learning also stems from my own study abroad experiences, and the fact that when I began reading studies focusing on identity and language learning as a graduate student, I felt that this was something that could actually explain my own experience. Each of the identities discussed later in this dissertation influenced my own experience or that of those very close to me. I first went abroad to Egypt in August 2001, as a learner of a less-commonly taught language that drew little interest. A few weeks later, the events of September 11, 2001 occurred, and when I returned to the United States in December, my choice of Arabic was now seen as valuable, for reasons I felt I neither had control over nor agreed with. I am also American, and my second study abroad in Egypt occurred shortly after the start of the Iraq war. As a blue-eyed, pale-skinned strawberry blonde, my physical appearance stands out in Egypt, particularly in contrast to my brown-haired, brown-eyed, brown-skinned husband, who was with me in 2006-2007 as well as during my dissertation research. As a female who spent my first two study abroad experiences with a close friend who is gay, I have always been acutely aware of the role of gender in my experience. My other close friend and roommate during my first study abroad was Jewish, as were nearly a third of my CASA classmates in 2006-2007, and my husband is of mixed Muslim and Jewish heritage. As a Quaker, I say I am Christian in Arabic, but feel uncomfortable identifying as such in English. Thus religion, too, has always been central to my experience.

While my identities no doubt influence my analysis as well as my experience, and to some extent match those of some participants, I have tried to represent the experiences of the participants in this study based on my data, rather than my personal experiences or those of my friends and family. Indeed, some of the participants' experiences are very different from my own, and I have represented these as well.

Instruments

The instruments and methods used in this study were designed to provide both a general overview of the study abroad experience in Cairo and Alexandria as well as focus on the experiences of a small group of students. Thus, there were three levels of data collection for student participants. The first level involved survey and interview data focusing on the study abroad experience as well as Arabic speaking ability. The second level added technological observations to the survey and interview data. The third level added participant observation of the case study students. In addition to using multiple data sources to provide the students' perspective, I also triangulate these perspectives with my perspective via participant observation, and the perspectives of the Arabic teachers and Egyptian associates of the students through interviews. This allows for triangulation between multiple data sources and perspectives in order to provide a rich analysis of the study abroad experience.

Level 1: Survey and Interview

Study abroad questionnaire.

The first part of the questionnaire is adapted from the Language Contact Profile (Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz, & Halter, 2004) and asks students to report on their use of Arabic and English in different contexts. I adapted it by making the sections on English use more directly match the sections on Arabic use so I could draw direct comparisons and by adding a question on religious use of language as well as the variety of Arabic used in each situation (from ECA only to MSA only). The second part is a series of Likert scale responses to statements related to Arabic use and access. In this study, I use primarily the LCP data and comments the students wrote on the Likert Scale data. Students completed it once, approximately mid-way through their study abroad experience. This instrument provides quantitative data of student perceptions

of study abroad, and answers my research question on access to locals and the amounts of Arabic and English used. This instrument is in the Appendix.

Background questionnaire.

This covers students' prior study of Arabic and other languages as well as prior study abroad. Students filled it out once at the beginning of the semester. It provides demographic information. This instrument is in the Appendix.

Study abroad interview.

This semi-structured interview covered the study abroad experience from the student perspective, focusing in particular on issues of language use and access. Participants had the option of using Arabic or English. I interviewed the participants midway to three quarters of the way through the semester, with the exception of participants from the Middlebury program in Spring 2010, who were interviewed once at the beginning of the semester and once at the end of the semester as a slightly longer program length permitted this. These interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes. These interviews provided qualitative data on language use, access to locals, and the role of identity.

Arabic interview.

This semi-structured interview covered a variety of informal topics, including several related to students' out of class activities, in Arabic. Students participated in this interview at the beginning and end of the semester. I conducted the majority of the interviews; however a few students in Fall 2009 were interviewed by Egyptian research assistants. All of us asked the questions in Egyptian dialect, switching to MSA only if the students did not understand the question. These interviews lasted approximately half an hour. The same interview was conducted with four Egyptian Arabic teachers capable of speaking both MSA and ECA

extemporaneously, and all of these teachers used primarily Egyptian dialect in their responses, establishing that this interview is sociolinguistically appropriate in Egyptian dialect. These interviews provide students' perspectives on their out of class activities, relationships with locals, and language use at the beginning and end of the semester, as well as an independent measure of their Arabic speaking ability, including their proficiency in Egyptian dialect. The role of various identity categories also surfaced in these interviews.

Level 2: Technological Observations

In addition to completing the instruments in Level 1, students in Level 2 participated in technological observations. These data were collected from student participants who consented to let me read their blogs and/or follow them on Facebook throughout the semester. These data provide student perspectives on their experience throughout the semester, as well as how they present this experience for their families, peers, and internet users reading about it. It addresses the research questions on language use, local contacts, and the role of identity.

Level 3: Participant Observation

In addition to completing the instruments in Levels 1 and 2, students participated in participant observations. In order to triangulate the student perspectives garnered from interviews and technological observations, I made appointments with these students to hang out with them outside of class for a few hours every two weeks. This allowed me to directly observe student activities and interactions and triangulate their perspectives with mine. In addition to my appointments with students, I also observed public locations frequented by study abroad students. These locations were selected based on my experience in Egypt as a study abroad student as well as what the students told me in interviews. I also conducted observations in public spots on the AUC and Alexandria University campuses. Field notes written from these

observations also include informal chats with people in these locations. These public observations allowed me to triangulate my observations of interactional patterns and language use in these contexts with the students' reports. They provided data on language use, access to locals, and the role of identity.

Participants

Participants in this study included 54 students, 10 teachers and administrators at these programs, and 13 Egyptian associates of the students. There were eight teachers from AUC, and three from Alexandria University. All of these teachers had some experience teaching Egyptian dialect. With the exception of one teacher originally from North America, all of the teachers were from Egypt. There were two associates from AUC and eleven from the Middlebury program (and one AUC teacher was also a graduate student). Like the students, these associates were university students or recent graduates, with the exception of one who was a home stay mother.

Tables 2-3 list basic demographic information for the students, the research level in which they participated, and their language background. All names in these tables and throughout this dissertation are pseudonyms. The majority of students were American and in their early twenties, with English as their native language. There were 32 females and 22 males. Most students had studied one to two years of Arabic, and four were of Arab descent. The students in all three programs came from a variety of universities. The names of the case study students are in bold, and additional details of their backgrounds are reported in Chapter 7.

Table 2

Participant Demographic Information, AUC

Name	Age	Gender	Home Country	Time abroad	Program	Level of Participation	L1	Previous Arabic Study	Arab Descent
Anna	23	F	US	AY 09-10	Intensive Arabic	2	English	2 years and 1 summer	No
Anne	21	F	US	Spring 10	Study Abroad	2	English	1.5 years	No
Ariana	21	F	US	Fall 09	Study Abroad	2 ^a	English	2 years	No
Billy	20	M	US	Spring 10	Study Abroad	2	English	1.5 years	No
Bruce	26	M	Canada	AY 10-11	Intensive Arabic	2	English	1 summer and 1 semester	No
Carson	20s	M	US	Spring 10	Study Abroad	2	English	1 summer	No
Gunnar	24	M	Denmark	Fall 09	Study Abroad	2	Danish	2 years and 1 summer	No

Table 2 (cont'd)

Jacob	21	M	US	Spring 10	Study	2	English	2.5 years	No
					Abroad				
Jamie	23	F	US	Spring 10	Intensive	2	English	None	No
					Arabic				
Jane	19	F	US	Spring 10	Study	2	English	1.5 years	No
					Abroad				
Justin	21	M	US	AY 09-10	Study	2	English	1.5 years	No
					Abroad				
Kala	20	F	US	Spring 10	Intensive	2	English	2 years	No
					Arabic				
Kareem	20	M	US	Fall 09	Study	2	English	None	Yes
					Abroad				
Karley	20	F	US	Fall 09	Study	2 ^a	English	2 years	No
					Abroad				
Lamees	20s	F	US	Spring 10	Intensive	2	English	None	Yes
					Arabic				
Lucy	20	F	US	Fall 09	Study	2	English	1 year	No
					Abroad				

Table 2 (cont'd)

Mandy	20	F	US	AY 09-10	Study Abroad	2	English	1 year	Yes
Mariam	23	F	US	AY 09-10	Intensive Arabic	2	English	1 semester	No
Meron	27	F	US	AY 10-11 ^b	Intensive Arabic	3	Amharic	1 summer	No
Mita	21,22	F	US	Fall 09, Fall 10	Study Abroad, Intensive Arabic	2, 3	Thai	1 year	No
Nathalie	20	F	US	AY 09-10	Study Abroad	2	English	1 year	No
Nina	20	F	US	Fall 09	Study Abroad	2 ^a	English	2 years	No
Pearl	20	F	US	Spring 10	Study Abroad	2	English	1.5 years	No
Rashid	21	M	US	AY 09-10	Intensive Arabic	2	English	1.5 years	No

Table 2 (cont'd)

Rob	20	M	US	Fall 09	Study	2	English	1.5 years	No
					Abroad				
Ryan	20	M	US	Spring 10	Intensive	2	English	2.5 years	No
					Arabic				
Shadi	20	M	US	Fall 09	Study	2	English	1 semester	Yes
					Abroad				
Shelly	20	F	US	Spring 10	Study	2	English	1.5 years	No
					Abroad				
Stephanie	20	F	US	Fall 09	Study	1	English,	2 years	No
					Abroad		Ukrainian		
Steve	20	M	US	Spring 10	Study	2	English	1.5 years	No
					Abroad				
Tasha	20	F	US	AY 09-10	Study	1	English	2 years	No
					Abroad				

^aParticipated in pilot participant observations

^bForced to leave in January due to revolution

Table 3

Participant Demographic Information, Middlebury

Name	Age	Gender	Home Country	Time abroad	Level of Participation	L1	Previous Arabic Study	Arab Descent
Alex	21	M	US	Spring 10	1	English	2.5	No
Anders	21	M	US	Spring 10	2 ^a	English	2.5 years	No
Aurora	20	F	US	Spring 10	2	English	2.5 years	No
Carl	20	M	US	AY 09-10	2	English	2.5 years and 1 summer	No
Carol	20	F	US	AY 09-10	2	English	2.5 years	No
Erin	21	F	US	Spring 10	2	English	2.5 years	No
Francis	20	M	US	AY 09-10	2 ^a	English	2.5 years	No
Holly	20	F	US	Fall 10	3	English	1 year and 1 summer	No
Isabelle	19	F	US	AY 10-11 ^b	3	English	1 year and 2 summers	No
James	20	M	US	Fall 10	2	English	1 year	No
Jennifer	20	F	US	Fall 10	3	English	3 years	No
Jordan	20	M	US	Spring 10	2	English	2.5 years	No
Keith	21	M	US	Fall 10	2	English	2 years and 1 summer	No
Lydia	20	F	US	Fall 10	2	English	1 year and 1 summer	No
Lynda	20	F	US	Spring 10	2	English	2.5 years	No

Table 3 (cont'd)

Mallory	21	F	US	Spring 10	2	English	1.5 years and 1 summer	No
Paige	20	F	US	Spring 10	2	English	2.5	No
Rose	20	F	US	Spring 10	2	English	2 years and 1 summer	No
Sam	20	M	US	Spring 10	2	English	2.5 years	No
Thea	20	F	US	Fall 10	3	English	2 years and 1 summer	No
Tina	22	F	US	AY 10-11 ^b	2	English	2 years	No
Tom	20	M	US	Fall 10	2	English	2 years and 1 summer	No
Welat	21	M	Turkey	Spring 10	2	Kurdish	2.5 years	No

(university

in US)

^aParticipated in pilot participant observations^bForced to leave in January due to revolution

Data Analysis

To analyze the quantitative Language Contact Profile data, I used SPSS to conduct Mann Whitney U tests comparing the means for hours of Arabic and English use per week between students at the two universities in terms of different language skills and activities. To analyze the qualitative data, I entered my interview, technological observation, and participant observation data into the MAXQDA Qualitative Data Analysis software. I then coded the data for information related to access to locals, language use, and identity. Using a recursive process, I was able to organize the data into themes and subthemes related to contexts of language use as well as the role of identity. I was also able to triangulate between the three interviews and the observations for each participant (if the participant participated in the latter) as well as between participants (when they discussed the same experience or gave information about their peers). These macrolevel data gathered primarily in 2009-2010 provide information about the greater context in which the focal students are located and allow me to compare and contrast themes resulting from this study with those resulting from the case studies. To analyze the case study data, I organized the data for each participant chronologically in MAXQDA, and through a recursive analysis traced these themes from the macrolevel data through the individual experiences of the focal participants. This type of research is a useful complement to study abroad research that focuses on linguistic outcomes, as such research is typically unable to capture the language learning experiences of students in their day to day lives (Freed, 1998; Kinginger, 2008)

The next three chapters present the results of this analysis. In Chapter 4, I present the quantitative results, which focus on the hours per week of English and Arabic use while abroad.

In Chapter 5, I draw from the qualitative data to focus on students' *investment* in Arabic, their *imagined community* of study abroad to the Middle East, the communicative contexts they encountered while abroad, and how these impacted their access and language use. In Chapter 6, I use the qualitative data to examine the role of various identity categories in constructing access and language use. Finally, in Chapter 7, I focus on the experiences of the case study students across these contexts and identities.

CHAPTER 4: QUANTITATIVE RESULTS REGARDING LANGUAGE USE

The data gathered from the modified version of the Language Contact Profile (Freed et al., 2004) (LCP) give an overall sense of Arabic and English use in the four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Due to clear differences between the Middlebury program and the programs at the American University of Cairo, the following data are split by university. Preliminary analysis demonstrated that there were not significant differences between the language use of the students in the intensive Arabic program and the study abroad program, so these data were combined.³

Table 4 shows the mean hours per week speaking, reading, listening, and writing Arabic outside of class. In general, students in the Middlebury program spent more time speaking and listening to Arabic than reading or writing, while the AUC students spent more time listening to Arabic compared to the other skills. The Middlebury students used more Arabic than the AUC students in all skills, and the Mann-Whitney U test revealed significant differences between students at the two universities for the hours per week listening in Arabic ($p < .001$), speaking in Arabic ($p < .001$), and writing in Arabic ($p = .049$). The differences in reading were not significant.

In both programs, the large standard deviations and ranges indicate considerable individual variation between the students, and this is a trend that continues across all of the LCP

3. Since these programs are structured differently, this result must be interpreted with caution—it does not mean the programs are the same. Since participation in this project was voluntary, I likely got the most motivated students from each program. Furthermore, the number of students from the intensive Arabic program was small (10) compared to 20 in the Middlebury and study abroad programs. Although I intended to collect more data from the intensive Arabic program in Spring 2011 to remedy this, I was unable to as a result of being required by the Fulbright program to leave Egypt.

data. While some of this variation is no doubt due to the fact that these are self-reported data, the interview and observation data support the finding that individual students' Arabic use varied widely within each program.

Table 4

Hours per Week Speaking, Reading, Listening, and Writing Arabic

	Program	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Range	N
Speaking	AUC	6.7	5.6	1.5	21.0	19.5	30
	Midd	32.4	6.9	10.5	35	24.5	20
Reading	AUC	6.3	6.4	0	24.5	24.5	30
	Midd	7.9	6.7	0	24.5	24.5	20
Listening	AUC	9.9	7.1	0.5	35	34.5	20
	Midd	27.8	11.0	1.5	35	33.5	20
Writing	AUC	5.8	7.2	0	30	30	30
	Midd	10.5	8.2	0	24.5	24.5	20

Table 5 shows the mean hours per week speaking to particular interlocutors in Arabic. With the exception of family (none of the Middlebury students' families spoke Arabic, although some members knew a few phrases), tutor, and other, the means for the students in the Middlebury program are again much larger, particularly for speaking to NS friends, classmates, and host families, roommates, or dormmates. The Middlebury students spoke most often to NS friends and classmates, while the AUC students spoke most often to strangers they thought could speak Arabic and NS friends. Again, the standard deviations and ranges are large, indicating considerable individual variation.

Table 5

Hours per Week Speaking Arabic: Interlocutors

	Program	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Range	N
Instructor	AUC	1.4	1.7	0	7.5	7.5	30
	Midd	13.7	14.0	0	35	35	20
NS friends	AUC	3.9	4.0	0	17.5	17.5	30
	Midd	18.9	10.8	4.5	35	30.5	20
Classmates	AUC	2.3	2.7	0	12.5	12.5	30
	Midd	24.1	9.9	6	35	29	20
Strangers I think can speak Arabic	AUC	3.7	3.8	0	17.5	17.5	30
	Midd	9.3	11.1	0	35	35	19
Host Family, roommates, or dormmates	AUC	1.2	2.2	0	10.5	10.5	30
	Midd	17	12.3	0	35	35	20
Service Personnel	AUC	2.4	2.3	0	10.5	10.5	30
	Midd	5.9	8.5	0	35	35	20
Family	AUC	.67	3.1	0	17.5	17.5	30
	Midd	0	0	0	0	0	20
Tutor	AUC	.63	2.25	0	10.5	10.5	30
	Midd	.35	.78	0	3	3.0	20
Other	AUC	.37	1.9	0	10.5	10.5	30
	Midd	.08	.33	0	1.5	1.5	20

Table 6 shows the mean hours per week speaking Arabic for particular purposes. In this table, it is again evident that the Middlebury students used more Arabic in these situations, particularly for both superficial and extended conversations with NSs and NNSs of Arabic. They also spent more time having extended conversations with both NSs and NNSs in Arabic than

superficial ones. In contrast, the AUC students used Arabic more in superficial exchanges than in extended conversations and almost never engaged in extended conversations with NNSs in Arabic.

Table 6

Hours per Week Speaking Arabic: Purpose

	Program	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Range	N
To clarify classroom related work	AUC	2.0	2.7	0	10.5	10.5	30
	Midd	6.9	8.8	0	35	35	20
To obtain directions and information	AUC	3.9	3.0	0	10.5	10.5	30
	Midd	5.7	8.3	0	35	35	20
For superficial or brief exchanges with NS	AUC	4.4	3.2	1.5	10.5	9	30
	Midd	9.8	9.2	0	35	35	0
For superficial or brief exchanges with NNS	AUC	3.1	3.2	0	10.5	10.5	30
	Midd	10.7	9.4	0	35	35	20
For extended conversations with NS	AUC	2.6	3.9	0	17.5	17.5	30
	Midd	10.5	9.4	0	35	35	20
For extended conversations with NNS	AUC	.4	.7	0	3	3	30
	Midd	13.1	10.2	0	35	35	20

Table 7 compares the mean hours per week speaking Arabic and English. This table

demonstrates that while the Middlebury students generally used Arabic to speak to both NSs and NNSs of Arabic, the AUC students tended to use English with both NSs and NNSs of Arabic. Mann-Whitney U tests revealed significant differences between the two programs in each of these categories ($p < .001$ for each comparison). In both programs, the students spent more hours speaking to NNS of Arabic in than to NS of Arabic in both Arabic or English, although this difference is larger at AUC. The large standard deviations again indicate considerable individual variation.

Table 7

Hours per Week Speaking Arabic and English

	Program	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Range	N
Arabic to NS of	AUC	5.7	5.4	0	17.5	17.5	29
Arabic							
	Midd	20.1	10.1	7.5	35	27.5	20
Arabic to NNS of	AUC	3.6	4.6	0	24.5	24.5	30
Arabic							
	Midd	22.2	10.2	0	35	35	20
English to NS of	AUC	12.7	10.2	.5	35	34.5	30
Arabic							
	Midd	.90	2.4	0	10.5	10.5	20
English to NNS of	AUC	23.6	12.4	0	35	35	30
Arabic							
	Midd	3.2	4.4	0	17.5	17.5	20

Table 8 shows the mean hours per week students spent on a variety of reading activities in Arabic. In this skill, the averages for the Middlebury and AUC students are similar, and both

groups spent considerably less time reading than speaking outside of class. Students in both programs primarily read schedules, announcements and the like, followed by email or internet web pages.

Table 8

Hours per Week Reading Arabic

	Program	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Range	N
Newspapers	AUC	2.0	3.8	0	17.5	17.5	30
	Midd	1.2	2.4	0	7.5	7.5	20
Novels	AUC	.32	1.4	0	7.5	7.5	30
	Midd	1.9	3.1	0	12.5	12.5	20
Magazines	AUC	.1	.2	0	1	1	30
	Midd	.4	.7	0	3	3	20
Schedules, announcements, and the like	AUC	5.1	4.4	0	17.5	17.5	30
	Midd	6.8	8.5	0	35	35	20
Email or internet web pages	AUC	1.5	1.9	0	7.5	7.5	30
	Midd	3.1	4.3	0	17.5	17.5	20
Religious texts ^a	AUC	.1	.2	0	.5	.5	20
	Midd	.3	.8	0	3.5	3.5	20
Other reading	AUC	.6	1.6	0	7.5	7.5	30
	Midd	.8	1.6	0	4.5	4.5	20

^a Not on Fall 2009 questionnaire

Table 9 compares the amount of time students spent on these reading activities in Arabic

and in English. From this chart, it is clear that students in both programs did more reading in English than in Arabic, particularly in terms of reading newspapers, magazines and novels, and email and internet web pages.

Table 9

Hours per Week Reading in Arabic and English

	Program	Language	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Range	N
Newspapers, magazines, or novels ^a	AUC	English	8.3	7.9	0	24.5	24.5	20
		Arabic	2.4	4.0	0	17.5	17.5	30
	Midd	English	6.4	7.4	0	24.5	24.5	20
Email or internet web pages	AUC	Arabic	3.5	4.0	0	13.5	13.5	20
		English	13.4	10.0	0	35	35	30
	Midd	English	10.0	5.1	1.0	17.5	16.5	20
Other reading ^a	AUC	Arabic	3.1	4.3	0	17.5	17.5	20
		English	8.1	9.9	0	35	35	20
	Midd	Arabic	.6	1.6	0	7.5	7.5	30
		English	1.7	2.6	0	7.5	7.5	20
		Arabic	.8	1.6	0	4.5	4.5	20

^a Not on Fall 2009 questionnaire

Table 10 shows the mean hours per week students spent on a variety of listening activities in Arabic. The means for the Middlebury program are again generally larger, although

in both programs the most common activity was listening to other people's conversations.

Following this, the Middlebury students primarily listened to other types of listening and TV and Radio, while the AUC students primarily listened to songs and TV and radio.

Table 10

Hours per Week Listening to Arabic

	Program	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Range	N
TV and Radio	AUC	2.1	2.8	0	10.5	10.5	29
	Midd	4.9	8.1	0	35	35	20
Movies or Videos	AUC	.9	1.5	0	6	6	30
	Midd	2.2	1.9	0	7.5	7.5	20
Songs	AUC	3.6	3.6	0	10.5	10.5	30
	Midd	9.5	9.9	0	35	35	20
Other people's conversations	AUC	10.5	9.0	1.0	35	34	29
	Midd	12.3	11.0	0	35	35	20
Other Listening	AUC	.7	2.3	0	10.5	10.5	20
	Midd	8.1	12.0	0	35	35	20

Table 11 compares listening in Arabic to listening in English. In general, the Middlebury students did more listening in Arabic than in English, while this trend was reversed for the AUC students. The language of conversation can account for some of this difference--if the AUC students spent more time speaking English, they were also more likely to hear English in these situations. In terms of movies and TV, while the AUC students watched more in English than in Arabic, the Middlebury students also watched TV and movies in English (although not as much as in Arabic).

Table 11

Hours per Week Listening in English and Arabic

	Program	Language	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Range	N
Movies, TV, or videos ^a	AUC	English	5.8	6.3	0	24.5	24.5	20
		Arabic	3.0	3.8	0	16.5	16.5	29
Conversations ^a	Midd	English	3.6	3.6	0	10.5	10.5	20
		Arabic	7.1	9.7	0	42.5	42.5	20
	AUC	English	20.1	11.8	2.5	35	31.5	20
		Arabic	10.5	9.0	1.0	35	34	29
Other listening ^a	Midd	English	2.2	4.4	0	17.5	17.5	20
		Arabic	12.3	11.0	0	35	35	20
	AUC	English	8.5	13.2	0	35	35	20
		Arabic	.7	2.3	0	10.5	10.5	20
	Midd	English	1.4	4.2	0	17.5	17.5	20
		Arabic	8.1	12.0	0	35	35	20

^a Not on Fall 2009 questionnaire

Table 12 shows the mean hours per week students spent on a variety of writing activities in Arabic. Students in both programs spent the least amount of hours per week writing compared to the other language skills. The hours they did spend writing were primarily writing their homework assignments.

Table 12

Hours per Week Writing Arabic

	Program	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Range	N
Homework	AUC	9.1	8.7	0	35	35	30
assignments	Midd	16.5	9.6	4.5	35	30.5	20
Personal notes or	AUC	.4	.7	0	10.5	10.5	30
letters	Midd	1.2	1.7	0	6	6	20
Email	AUC	.6	1.9	0	10.5	10.5	30
	Midd	1.2	1.0	0	3.5	3.5	20
Text messages	AUC	.90	2.7	0	10.5	10.5	30
	Midd	3.6	4.5	0	17.5	17.5	20
Filling in forms or	AUC	.1	.3	0	1.0	1.0	30
questionnaires	Midd	.1	.3	0	1.5	1.5	20
Other writing ^a	AUC	.2	.5	0	2	2	20
	Midd	.7	2.1	0	7.5	7.5	20

^a Not on Fall 2009 questionnaire

Finally, Table 13 compares the amount of time students spent on writing activities in English compared to Arabic. The AUC students used English more for every activity. The Middlebury students (with the exception of writing email) used Arabic more, but not much more.

Table 13

Hours per Week Writing in English and Arabic

	Program	Language	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Range	N
Personal notes, letters, and texts	AUC	English	10.4	10.5	0	35	35	30
		Arabic	1.3	3.0	0	13.5	13.5	30
	Midd	English	3.7	3.7	0	19.5	19.5	20
Writing email	AUC	Arabic	4.8	5.3	0	18	18	20
		English	10.0	8.8	.5	35	35	30
	Midd	Arabic	.6	1.9	0	10.5	10.5	30
		English	5.2	4.2	.5	17.5	17.5	20
		Arabic	1.2	1.0	0	3.5	3.5	20
Other writing ^a	AUC	English	4.6	8.8	0	35	35	20
		Arabic	.2	.5	0	2	2	20
	Midd	English	.3	1.0	0	4.5	4.5	20
		Arabic	.7	2.1	0	7.5	7.5	20

^a Not on Fall 2009 questionnaire

There are several clear overall trends in the language contact profile data. First is the greater use of Arabic by the Middlebury students compared to the AUC students. In my observations of the AUC and Middlebury campuses, I also noticed that the Middlebury students almost always spoke Arabic among themselves (with an occasional English word thrown in) while the AUC students almost always spoke English among themselves (with an occasional Arabic word thrown in). These differences were also apparent in the interview data. For example, in the following exchange, Francis (Middlebury) emphasizes that he always uses

Arabic⁴:

Emma: امتى تتكلم بالعربي [When do you speak Arabic]?

Francis: على طول يعني [Like all the time]

Emma: بس في أيه بالضبط [But in what exactly?]

Francis: دا يعني أنا بأعمل إيه في حياتي [That means what do I do in my life]

In contrast, Mita (AUC) responded to a question about what a typical day was like for her with : "I'm not speaking as much Arabic as I'd like to here."

The Middlebury students also tended to speak more with Arabic NSs than the AUC students, something I witnessed in the dorms as well as during program events. In contrast, many of the AUC students reported in their interviews that it was hard to meet Egyptian friends, a theme that will be further explored in the next chapter, and on campus I observed them primarily hanging out with other study abroad students. The use of English while abroad and the difficulty of making local friends also echo the findings of research on study abroad in other locations such as Argentina (DeKeyser, 2010), Spain (Bataller, 2010; Mendelson, 2004; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004), France (Freed et al., 2004; Kinginger, 2008), and the Arab world (Dewey et al., in press; Kuntz & Belnap, 2001).

The second noticeable trend is the extensive individual variation within each program on all of the LCP measures. This was also supported by the interview and observation data. As I will demonstrate in the next chapter, some of the AUC students spoke Arabic frequently, looking

4. Quotes throughout this dissertation are displayed first in the original language. Linguistic errors remain in the original, but were not translated into English.

to extend street encounters or take advantage of one on one time with NS friends. For example, Rob emphasized that when he was alone with NS friends he did try to use Arabic, but that in groups this could be difficult:

If I'm speaking with an Arabic speaker and I am alone with that Arabic speaker then I will speak in Arabic more, like with friends even but, my Egyptian friends, yeah, but if we're in a group, then everyone else is speaking English, and I'm just not going to be that guy that's, you know the lone speaker of Arabic.

In contrast, Anne said that her Arabic use was limited to short everyday interactions, explaining that she used Arabic: "Definitely cab rides almost always use Arabic, I guess every day things like going to the store, just walking around giving people directions occasionally in Arabic, just like small everyday, not long extended conversations, but just little interactions."

Like Francis above, many of the Middlebury students stated that they only used Arabic. Keith explained:

أبوة أنا دائما في عربي مش في إنجليزي خالص

[Yes, I'm always in Arabic, not in English at all]

On the other hand, several of the students explained that they sometimes used English with other study abroad friends, or that they did not use Arabic extensively with NS. For example, Tina explained that she did not speak with the Egyptian girls in the dorms with the exception of her roommate and her sister:

أتكلم مع زميلة أوضتي وأختها ولكن ما أتكلمش مع معظم البنات أحيانا السلام عليكم أو أهلا كويس ازيك مثلا دي
ولكن مش conversation

[I speak with my roommate and her sister, but I don't speak with most of the girls, sometimes hello, or hi, good, how are you, like that, but not a conversation]

When I asked her why, she explained that her low proficiency in Arabic made her avoid speaking with Egyptians:

لأن أنا ما بأحبش ام أتكلم لأن مش كويس وأنا فاهم ليك لازم لي أتكلم لأصبح أحسن ولكن أنا أنا مش عايزة . . . وأنا
مش فاهم كثير حاجة وصعب

[Because I don't like, um, to talk because it's not good, and I understand like it's
necessary for me to speak to be better but I, I don't want . . . and I don't understand a lot
of things and it's hard]

This extensive individual variation in the use of the target language is also consistent with research on study abroad in other settings, including Argentina (Isabelli-García, 2006), Germany (Badstübner & Ecke, 2009), and France (Kinginger, 2008).

Finally, it is interesting that students in both programs spent more time reading in English than in Arabic, especially as this contrasts with the results from Dewey et al. (*in press*) where students spent more time reading in Arabic than in English, despite using English more in the other four skills.

In the comments to this section of the questionnaire, some of the Middlebury students indicated that despite the language pledge, they read English language news to keep up with current events, although to a lesser degree than they did at home. I also observed them reading English online news sources in the TAFL center and the Middlebury apartment. In interviews, they mentioned the same activities. For example, Anders said:

يوم الخميس قضيت الصباح في بيت الطلاب أعتقد قرأت الأخبار الأمريكية عشان ما قرأتش في الأسبوع

[Thursday, I spent the morning in the dorms, I think I read the American news because I
didn't read it all week]

Despite these general trends, the quantitative data raise a number of questions for further exploration, including the lack of Arabic use among many of the students as well as the wide variation in students' use of Arabic and English in both programs. In the next chapter, I begin to address the data through the theoretical lens of identity theory, focusing on the students' investment in Arabic and their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East, and the extent to which they were able to perform the identities necessary to gain access to this imagined community in the communicative contexts they encountered abroad.

CHAPTER 5: INVESTMENT, IMAGINED COMMUNITIES, AND COMMUNICATIVE CONTEXTS

As described in Chapter 2, the concept of investment first introduced by Norton Pierce (1995) focuses on "the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it" (Norton & McKinney, 2011, p. 74). In particular, Norton and McKinney (2011) draw upon Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977, cited in Norton and McKinney, 2011) notion of cultural capital to state that learners can view language learning as an investment in their future, the return on which will provide them with material and symbolic resources. It is with this vision of the future that the concept of investment interacts with that of imagined communities: in order to remain invested in a particular real life learning context, learners must feel that it will help them gain access to their imagined communities.

Learners' imagined communities are those that their imagined future selves participate in, often as a result of the return on their investment in the L2. As in Anderson's (1983) original conception of nations as imagined communities, the imagined communities of language learners also include relationships that extend beyond geographic and temporal boundaries. While learners' imagined communities are created in their imaginations, this does not mean that they automatically have access to these communities. Participation in an imagined community, like that of a real-life community, requires a specific set of practices and outlook on life, and can "include future relationships that exist only in the learner's imagination as well as affiliations—such as nationhood or even transnational communities—that extend beyond local sets of relationships." (Norton & McKinney, 2011, p. 76). When an actual language learning context does not allow learners to progress towards the practices, outlooks, and relationships necessary

to gain access to their imagined community (and their imagined future selves), they can become less invested in this context. As a result, they may withdraw from this context and engage in practices that appear detrimental to their language learning or seek to change their learning context through the use of individual agency. Alternatively, if learners feel that a particular learning context will help them gain access to their imagined communities, they may become more invested in their language learning experiences in this context (Norton, 2001, 2011).

For the learners in this study, a major factor in their investment in Arabic was the career opportunities it could bring them, in part as a result of its designation as a critical language. In order to gain a return on this investment, the students desired participation in an imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East, which they viewed a necessary step towards their imagined future selves and careers. Participation in this imagined community required specific practices, notably engaging with cultural and political differences to perform the identity of *cross-cultural mediator* and interacting with Egyptians in Arabic to perform the identity of *dedicated language learner*. It also involved connections with other students across geographic and temporal boundaries, or with students studying in other locations in the Middle East in different semester. Furthermore, it did not include students studying abroad in more traditional destinations, notably Europe, and also required avoiding practices the students associated with more traditional study abroad, such a heavy drinking, partying, and being a tourist. However, the reality of the students' experiences and behaviors in Egypt did not always match their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East, particularly concerning access to Egyptians and the use of Arabic. The ways in which students responded to this mismatch (by becoming less invested or using individual agency to seek to change it) can account for a great deal of the individual variation in language use described in the last chapter.

In this chapter, I first describe the students' investment in Arabic, and then focus on their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East. I then examine the reality of their study abroad experience by focusing on the communicative contexts students engaged in abroad. Some of these contexts are program specific, while others were shared across the two university settings.

Investment in Arabic

As described in Chapter 1, Arabic enrollments in the United States swelled following the events of September 11, 2001. Not surprisingly, several of the students cited these events as playing a crucial role in their decision to study Arabic, echoing Gore's (2005) description of September 11 as a "wake-up" call for the importance of international education. For example, Ryan (AUC) explained that the events of September 11, 2001 caused him to develop an interest in the Middle East, particularly Arabic-speaking countries:

Honestly, I think part of it had to do with 9/11 when I was in Junior High, and I really didn't know anything about the Middle East at the time, I was just really confused when they came out with the information and they were all from countries that were predominantly Arabic speaking, predominantly Saudi, Yemen, and Egypt, so that had a pretty big effect on it, and given the fact that we had been involved in the Middle East for some time, and a lot of the conflicts the United States seemed to have been involved in have stemmed from the Middle East

Nina (AUC) focused on the career options knowing Arabic offered her as a result of these events:

After 9/11 happened I saw that the FBI and the CIA only had like, what was it, some minuscule number of Arabic translators out of the thousands of workers that they have so

I thought because the country needs Arabic really badly, I'll just start Arabic, so I did that and I fell in love with it.

Whether related to 9/11 or not, many of the students reported studying Arabic as a result of the future material and symbolic resources this "critical" language could provide them with. The material resources they cited were typically jobs such as translators, NGO workers, or Arabic teachers. The symbolic resources they cited were the cultural capital of knowledge of another culture and language, and particularly a culture that they viewed as involved in conflicts or misunderstandings with their own, as seen in Ryan's quote above and related to the idea of Arabic as a "critical" language. As I relate below, resolving and understanding these conflicts was important to many of the participants in this study.

Study Abroad to the Middle East as an Imagined Community

Studying abroad in Egypt for many of these students was a step towards imagined future selves participating in careers requiring competency in Arabic and an understanding of the Middle East. I argue that while abroad, these students sought participation in an imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East that would in turn help them realize these visions of their future selves. As such, the concept of study abroad as an imagined community may be useful for understanding the study abroad experience of learners in locations as well.

While the students in this study were only studying in one Middle Eastern location (Egypt), their imagined community extended across geographical boundaries (i.e. to Middle Eastern countries other than Egypt) as well as temporal ones (i.e. to students studying abroad in other semesters). In particular, they sought to define themselves as serious learners dealing with globally important issues, in contrast to the frivolous partying engaged in by their peers studying in more traditional destinations (particularly Europe). In addition to the students' own accounts,

there is public discourse supporting this distinction, and in turn an imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East. In an article in the *New York Times* on study abroad in the Middle East, Conlin (2010) opens with this contrast between partying study abroad students in Europe and those dealing with complex cultural, social, and religious matters in the Middle East:

At first glance, they seem like typical American college students on their junior year abroad, swapping stories of language mishaps and cultural clashes, sharing sightseeing tips and travel deals. But these students are not studying at Oxford, the Sorbonne or an art institute in Florence. Instead, they are attending the American University in Cairo, studying Arabic, not French, and dealing with cultural, social and religious matters far more complex than those in Spain or Italy. And while their European counterparts might head to Heidelberg, Germany, for a weekend of beer drinking, these students visit places most Americans know only through news reports — the West Bank, Ethiopia and even northern Iraq. No “Sex and the City” jaunts to Abu Dhabi for this group (p. 1)

Later, Conlin emphasizes the differences between not only the activities of the study abroad students but the students themselves, quoting Lisa Anderson, the AUC president, as saying:

But you have to understand, these are not the same kids who go bike touring in France Many are contemplating careers in the Middle East, perhaps with the Foreign Service or an N.G.O. They are very serious about this region of the world (p. 1)

The students in this study also sought to distinguish their experiences from those of study abroad students in more traditional destinations. Francis (Middlebury) emphasized the greater cultural differences he encountered in Egypt, minimizing differences between France and the United States:

أنا مش عايز أروح باريس عشان دا بس امريكا بس غالي فأنا عايز أكون في مكان مختلف عشان كده أنا في مصر

[I don't want to go to Paris, because that's just America but expensive, so I want to be in a different place, because of that I'm in Egypt]

Carol (Middlebury) felt that these greater cultural differences made her experience deeper than that of her friends studying in Europe:

أنا أفكر يعني كل أصحابي في فرنسا وجنيف ويعني سكوتلاندا يعني تقريبا امريكا فأنا هأرجع الجامعة وأنا هأكون
حكايات كثير وتجربة جديدة كثير أكيد يعني حياة في أوروبا مش امريكا بالظبط بس أعتقد التجربة بتاعي يمكن أكثر
عميق

[I think about like all my friends in France and Geneva and like Scotland, like it's almost America so I'll go back to my university and I'll have a lot of stories and new experiences, of course like life in Europe isn't America exactly, but I think my experience is maybe more deep]

Pearl (AUC) reduced study abroad in Europe to drinking, whereas she perceived her experience as more culturally focused:

It's also different from their experiences in that it's Cairo, and like Cairo's just like, the issues we deal with, like their issues are like how often are we partying, and who's buying the liquor, and who's doing, and we're like let's go on a cultural trip to Istanbul and Beirut and like yeah, we'll go to a bar, but our primary concern is not how often and how much we're drinking.

Characteristics of American Study Abroad Students

In addition to defining themselves against their peers studying in more traditional destinations, there were two ways in which the American (51/54) students in this study formed a striking contrast to two of the assumptions about American study abroad students made in prior research; namely their lack of experience abroad and their lack of interest in and knowledge

about politics. In terms of their experience abroad, Dolby (2004) notes that prior to their study in Australia, the international experiences of the American study abroad students in her study was limited to short trips to Canada, Mexico, and Europe. Block (2007) states that study abroad is often “their first and last lengthy sojourn” (p. 185) for American study abroad students, particularly in comparison to European students, and Kinginger (2009) describes American students as coming from “a population with little experience of foreign travel” (p. 17). Yet in this study, of the 51 American participants, only 13 had never been abroad. In contrast, 22 had been abroad studying, volunteering, or traveling for a few weeks to a summer, 8 had been abroad for longer than a summer, and 8 had lived abroad for several years in their childhood. The countries in which they spent time included those within Europe and North America, but also covered a number of other countries, including Ghana, Japan, Jordan, Oman, and India.

In terms of their interest in politics and their political opinions, this student population also differed from that of previous studies. Of the 51 American students, 26 were majoring in Politics or International Relations, and three had a related focus: Development Studies, Globalization Studies, and Social Studies. Four were Middle Eastern studies majors. Only three were majoring in Arabic, and all were double majors (with Middle Eastern studies, American studies, and Linguistics). There was one French and one Spanish major, and the remaining 17 were a mixture of other fields in humanities, social science, and business. While their political opinions were not always fully developed, and they could be frustrated with the assumption that they wholeheartedly agreed with American policies in the Middle East, these students were generally ready and eager to discuss politics. In fact, in contrast to the American students in Dolby (2004, 2005, 2007) and Kinginger (2008), they were sometimes more upset with the lack of a desire to critically discuss politics they found in their Egyptian interlocutors than with the

expectation that they should have political opinions. For example, Tasha (AUC) complained:

It's been an interesting experience to like hear people's opinions about like the government here and politics, I mean a lot of them don't care, and that apathy is new to me, because back home, the campus I went to, like the school I go to is very politically active, it was a big shock, but it's still interesting to hear their opinions or lack of opinions I guess.

The Egyptian participants also felt that the study abroad students could be more politically engaged than Egyptians. Alaa (AUC teacher) drew a contrast between Egyptian and American youth, blaming the "narrow horizons" of Egyptian youth on the Egyptian educational system:

التفكير الأمريكي مختلف الحقيقة عن التفكير المصري المصريين ممكن يعني الأفق ضيق شوية يعني دي مش ننكرها فيعني اعتقد المصري الشاب المصري في العشرين والكلام دا مثلا الشاب عارف ايه ال global warming ايه العلوم ومشاكلها مش هيبقى عارف عن اقتصاديات العالم والمشاكل هي ال global issues فبرضه ممكن يكون فيه فجوة ما بين طريقة التفكير هنا وطريقة التفكير هنا ويعني دي هنقول أسبابها نظام التعليم عندنا إنه سطحي شوية

[American thinking is different, really, from Egyptian thinking, Egyptians, maybe like their horizons are a little narrow, you know, we don't deny it, so like I think the Egyptians, the Egyptian youth in his twenties and so on for example, the youth knows what global warming is, globalization and its problems, he won't know about the economies of the world, and the problems that are the global issues, so also maybe there's a gap between the way of thinking here and the way of thinking here, and you know, we'll say the reasons for it are that our educational system is a little superficial]

Osman (Middlebury roommate) actually credited the American students with developing his political awareness, and explained that they were also knowledgeable of Egyptian politics:

موضوع الديموقراطيين والجمهوريين حاجات كده senators برضه حاجات في الانتخابات كانوا بيحبهم زي جواب
اللي هو ال senators وكده بيتقروا كزا ومش عارف مين كزا في كاليفورنيا ومين كسب في ايه فتعلمت الوعي
السياسي دا برضه حلوة بيهتموا مين ال senator بتاعهم اللي يفهموا كمان ال structure السياسي في مصر برضه
البرلمان والإخوان المسلمين وكانت الحزب الوطني والوفد ومين اللي هيكون موجود

[The issue of Democrats and Republicans, things like that, senators also, things in the elections, they would bring them like the letter [absentee ballot] that's the senators and so on, they watch them like that, and I don't know who's that in California, and who won in what, so I learned this political awareness is also good, they are interested in who their senator is, they also understand the political structure in Egypt too, the Parliament, and the Muslim Brotherhood, and what was the National Democratic Party, and the Wafd, and who will be present]

Since these participants were not randomly selected, it is hard to draw conclusions about this increased experience abroad and interest in politics for students studying in Egypt versus more traditional study abroad destinations. However, this interest in politics and discussing political conflict does fit in with the students' imagined community of serious study abroad to the Middle East, and distinguishes them from American students in previous studies focusing on more traditional study abroad destinations.

In addition to defining the imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East against that of less serious study abroad in more traditional destinations, participation in this community also required performing the identity of *cross-cultural mediator*. The students drew upon their interest in politics as well as discourses of conflict between East and West (and especially the United States and the Arab world) to emphasize the importance of this identity in achieving a higher goal of promoting peace and harmony in the world. Performing this identity

required the practice of gaining access to Egyptians and having conversations with them about serious issues. To the extent that Arabic competence was associated with the ability to perform this identity as *cross-cultural mediator*, the students also sought to perform the identity of *dedicated language learner*. To perform this identity, students had to engage in the practice of using Arabic inside and outside of the classroom. Thus, in order to gain access to their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East, students had to engage in the practices of gaining access to Egyptians and using Arabic.

Cross-cultural Mediators

Given their interest in politics and investment in Arabic for future careers, many of the students drew upon discourses of conflict and misunderstandings between East and West and their desire to understand and resolve these problems as reasons for studying Arabic and studying abroad in Egypt. Although they did little to problematize these discourses of conflict and misunderstanding, many of the students felt that gaining Arab perspectives on these events was essential, and they imagined themselves as cross-cultural mediators from the West (especially the U.S) gaining perspectives on the East (particularly Egypt). On her blog, Shelly drew a direct connection across geographic and temporal boundaries between herself and other students studying abroad in the Middle East (in potentially different semesters and countries), writing "In many ways, I'm following the general trend of young students from the United States coming to the Middle East and gaining a new perspective on Arab-American relations and the role of the United States in the region." Jacob (AUC) also emphasized that gaining Arab perspectives was an important aspect of his experience:

Another thing aside from the language aspect is the cultural um, kind of like the I don't know this might sound orientalist, but like the mindset of an Arab, kind of get what

collectively people think about over here, what they think is important, how they feel about world affairs things like that, how they go about everyday life, just kind of get that perspective of what life is like over here instead of reading you know, the newspapers, so that's been helpful

Carl (Middlebury) focused on the need to understand these perspectives and bring them back to the U.S. in order to prevent the perpetuation of incorrect stereotypes:

أنا بأحب يعني بس بالدراسة في مصر فعلا الفرصة كويسة خالص للتحسن بالعربي وكمان أتعرف على المصريين والثقافة عشان فيه صور نمطية في امريكا مش مضبوطة مش صح عن يعني مصر والشرق الأوسط ومفروض يعني الناس اللي بيفهموا العربي بيروحوا وبيغيروا الصور بتاعتها وبعدين يرجعوا

[I like, you know, just studying in Egypt, it's really a very good opportunity to improve in Arabic and also get to know Egyptians and the culture because there are stereotypes in America that aren't correct, they're not right about like Egypt and the Middle East, and it's necessary like for the people that understand Arabic to go and change their stereotypes and then go back]

Viewing interactions between study abroad students and Egyptians as opportunities to engage in cross-cultural mediation was not a view limited to the study abroad students. Many of the Egyptian teachers and students also cited cultural conflicts and misunderstandings between the Arab world and the West as reasons why they were interested in working with study abroad students, which in turn validated the students' identities as cross-cultural mediators. Rana (AUC teacher) explained that she wanted to teach Arabic to NNS because:

أنا أبقى سفير لبلدي حابة إن الناس تفهم العرب كويس انت عارفة ساعات الناس بتفتكر إن العرب دول مش كويسين عندهم بيحبوا القتل الحاجات دي كلها مش صح خالص يا أيما فأنا حسيت إن أنا ممكن أستعمل الـ English بتاعي ممكن أستخدم قدرات اصلا أنا بأحب التدريس قوي بأحب الممارسة يعني إن أنا أعمل حاجات positive أعمل

[I can be an ambassador for my country, it's something that people understand Arabs well, you know sometimes people think that those Arabs aren't good, they love killing, all those things, it's not true at all Emma, so I felt that I could maybe use my English, maybe use my abilities because in the first place I really love teaching, I like the practice like that I do positive things, I do positive things]

Hala (Middlebury roommate) had similar concerns about perceptions of Arabs in Europe and America:

طبعاً شايعة إنها حاجة مفيدة جداً يعني كل الفكرة العامة إن فيه مثلاً امريكان بيدرسوا اللغة العربية دي حاجة أنا شايعة إنها حاجة كويسة جداً يعني إن هم مثلاً في امريكا ام أو مش في امريكا بس في الدول في ممكن في أوروبا وفي امريكا ممكن دول فاكدة إن العرب يعني ناس غريبة شوية وارهاب وكده ويعني ممكن فكرة وحشة عن العرب يعني بس هم طبعاً لما بيدرسوا عربي بيدرسوا دراسات دولية ومن دي فيبيعروا أكثر طبعاً لما جم هنا بيلاقوا احنا مش أراهبيين ولا حاجة الحمد لله بس ودي يعني بجد يعني حاجة كويسة

[Of course I see it as very beneficial, like the general idea that there are for example Americans studying Arabic, this is something I see as very good, you know that they for example in America or not in America, but in the countries, in maybe, in Europe, and in America, maybe they think that the Arabs are like a little strange, and terrorism, and so on, like maybe a bad idea about the Arabs, like but they of course, when they study Arabic, when they study international studies, and from this they change more of course, when they come here, they find we're not terrorists or anything, thank goodness, but and this is like really like something good]

In order to learn these perspectives, and perform this desired identity of *cross-cultural mediator*, the study abroad students had to gain access to Egyptians and discuss these serious

issues with them. Yet as the final part of this chapter will demonstrate, students were not always able to gain access to Egyptians, which in turn limited their ability to perform the identity of *cross-cultural mediator*, and participate in their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East. As such, Egyptians with whom they could discuss serious topics can be viewed as among the gatekeepers to this imagined community: without these Egyptians, they could not perform the identity of *cross-cultural mediator*, and thus they could not enter their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East. Since entrance to this community was crucial to their imagined future selves, this lack of access could cause them to become less invested in their study abroad sojourn as a language learning experience.

Dedicated Language Learners

Seeking the identity of *cross-cultural mediator* in a socio-historical context that emphasized conflict and misunderstandings between East and West was not only a reason to start learning Arabic (as Steve and Nina explained above), but also a reason to perform an identity as a *dedicated language learner*, at least initially. Many of the students emphasized the importance of Arabic language skills to their goals of promoting mutual understanding, resulting in a greater investment in learning Arabic. For example, Shelly (AUC) felt that Arabic was crucial for understanding historical tensions between the United States and the Arab world:

[I saw] a video made by al-Jazeera but it was about basically just anti-US sentiment and it really made me wonder why there was this historical tensions, and just like people in Iraq, and all these political and I guess cultural reasons that I wanted to learn the language because I think that language is really important to understanding like the perspective of a different group of people, communication is key, so that's why I started learning Arabic

Mita (AUC) explained that by learning Arabic (and then teaching it) she could help promote peace in the world:

دالوقتني عشان فيه مشكلات كثيرة وأنا عايزة help أفعل الpeace في العالم وافتكر اللغة مهم جدا عشان لو أنا عارفة العربية ولو أنا بأدرّس العربية الامريكيين والمصريين ممكن بيتكلموا وممكن understand وعشان ممكن فيه السلام

[Now because there are many problems and I want to help make peace in the world and I think the language is very important because if I know Arabic and I teach Arabic, Americans and Egyptians can talk and maybe understand, and because, maybe there's peace]

Students in the Middlebury program were especially determined to perform the identity of *dedicated language learner*, citing Middlebury's reputation for language excellence and the existence of the language pledge as important reasons for choosing the program. For example, Lynda (Middlebury) explained that she chose Middlebury:

علشان كنت عايزة الpledge . . . في الدراسة خارج الولايات المتحدة أولا أنا كنت عايزة أدرس اللغة يعني بشكل شديد ودا كان أولا

[Because of the pledge . . . In studying outside of the United States, first, I wanted to study the language, like in a strong way, and that was first]

Anders (Middlebury) explained that gaining linguistic knowledge was more important to him than the content he would learn in a class in English, again emphasizing the connection between language skills and cultural understanding:

ممكن فيه برنامج ثاني أنا هأفهم أكثر يعني السياسية الامريكية مثلا في الشرق الأوسط عشان يعني فيه صف العلوم السياسية بالإنجليزي يعني علشان هيكون فيه قراءة بالإنجليزي وكل حاجة بس فيه نفس الوقت يعني هنا فرصة التركيز على اللغة بالنسبة لي يعني تفتح أبواب كثيرة لفهم الثقافة يعني أكثر من أي مقالة سياسية يعني أكثر من أي

[Maybe in another program I would understand more like American politics for example in the Middle East because there's like a political science class in English, like because there is reading in English and everything, but at the same time, like here, there is the opportunity to focus on the language, for me, like it opens many doors to understanding the culture, like more than any political article, like more than any article in a journal, so because of that I'm happy]

In order to perform the identity of *dedicated language learner*, the students had to use Arabic. In turn, this meant that they had to be able to perform the identity of *Arabic speaker* or at the very least *Arabic learner*. As described in the final section of this chapter, the students were not always able to claim these identities and use Arabic. When they were unable or unwilling use Arabic, they could not claim the identity of *dedicated language learner*, and this in turn made it more difficult for them to participate in their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East.

However, it is crucial to note that for the majority of the students, performing the identity of *dedicated language learner* was secondary to that of *cross-cultural mediator* as a defining practice of their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East. While the students initially felt that performing the identity of *cross-cultural mediator* entailed performing that of *dedicated language learner*, they found that particularly with the Egyptian elite (as will be discussed more in depth later in this chapter) this was not necessarily the case. That is, they could gain access to Egyptians and perform the identity of *cross-cultural mediator* in English, at times better than they could in Arabic, which could lead to a decrease in their investment in Arabic. For example, Ryan (AUC) explained that he had conversations in English because:

I really like meeting new people and just getting their perspective on a lot of issues actually, especially I really like you know international relations and world politics so I like hearing different perspectives and different viewpoints and Egypt is a country that stands in pretty contrast to the United States, especially in it's form of government, you know we all know the differences there, so like understanding that, understanding how things operate in that kind of system was kind of nice, what else, just being outside the United States to me is something that a lot of Americans should do, but don't do because America's like a bubble, and just like being outside the United States for you know just four months to me has been like eye-opening and a good thing.

Steve (AUC) agreed, prioritizing conversations with Egyptians over using Arabic:

I really like hanging out with Egyptians and hearing their opinions on stuff, even if it's just like speaking in English with them about things, just to get like a better understanding of their actual opinion on things, like political and religious feelings.

Thus, while students may have initially viewed the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* as complementary, this was not always the case in reality. For example, Sam (Middlebury) explained that he now thought his view of Arabic as key to communication between West and Middle East was faulty:

ولو عايز أتصل مع الناس أستطيع أن أفعل ذلك بالإنجليزية أو بالعربية مع مش مختلف بالنسبة من قبل كنت أعتقد أن المفتاح للاتصالات بين الغرب والشرق الأوسط هي اللغة مش صحيح اه معظم المصريين يتكلمون بالإنجليزية بشكل كويس قوي

[If I want to communicate with people I can do that in English or in Arabic, with, it's not different in terms of, before I thought that the key to communications between the West and the Middle East was the language, it's not true, ah, most Egyptians use English very

well.]

Thus, performing the identity of *cross-cultural mediator* was crucial to participation in the imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East, and this required the practice of gaining access to Egyptians. Performing the identity of *dedicated language learner* was necessary to the extent to which it facilitated the performance of the *cross-cultural mediator* identity. Performing the identity of *dedicated language learner* required the practice of using Arabic; however, students' investment in Arabic could increase or decrease depending on the extent to which they felt it helped them perform the identity of *cross-cultural mediator*.

While the students defined their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East against that of study abroad to more traditional destinations, they were not entirely successful in realizing this separation. Despite their disparagement of less serious study abroad in traditional destinations, they also performed identities associated with this "Grand Tour" image of study abroad (Gore, 2005; Kinginger 2008, 2009), notably those of *vacationer* and *party animal*. Performing these identities interacted with their access to Egyptians and use of Arabic in various ways, and as such influenced their ability to perform the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* necessary to gain entrance into their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East.

Vacationers

For many of the students, travel was an important benefit of their study abroad experience. They traveled on their own as well as on trips organized by their programs, dorms, home universities, or scholarship programs. These trips included local sight-seeing, as well as weekend trips to various destinations within Egypt, such as the Western Oases of Siwa and Bahariyya, the Red Sea resorts of Sharm El-Sheikh and Dahab, Upper Egypt (Luxor, Aswan, and

Abu Simbel) as well as Cairo or Alexandria, depending on which of the two they were living in. In addition to travel within Egypt, students also took advantage of the opportunity to travel to nearby countries, such as Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Israel/Palestine, and Ethiopia, as well as places farther afield, such as Tanzania or Turkey. Visiting friends studying in Europe was also common, and students traveled to countries including Great Britain, Belgium, Italy, and Spain for this reason. Their friends and family members also traveled to Egypt to visit them, and this typically resulted in students taking yet another tour of the tourist sites in Egypt, as well as potentially traveling to another country such as Israel or Lebanon.

Most of the students felt that travel was essential to their experience, and some traveled as frequently as every weekend, both inside and outside of Egypt. Ryan (AUC) explained:

I've tried to do a trip almost every weekend since I've been here, so we've done Alexandria, Dahab, Sinai, Luxor, Aswan, I've traveled outside of Egypt twice now to Spain and Kenya, Tanzania and Zanzibar, so yeah, I try to travel and see things almost every weekend because I feel like in Egypt, there's so much to do and see I want to see everything while I can.

Jacob (AUC) also felt that this was an opportunity not to be missed:

I've never done any traveling my whole life, and when I was, studying abroad in Egypt like you can any, like you can see the whole Middle East, you know what I mean, you can go to North Africa if you want, you can go to the Levant if you want, even if you want to go to like Southern Africa, you could, I'm not going to do that, um, so the traveling's been great, like my big spring break travels, like this weekend I'm going to go to Luxor and Aswan and Abu Simbel, and that's just really cool, I mean that's definitely a

positive about being in Egypt, that's one of the big reasons why I wanted to come out here too was just to travel, so that's definitely good.

Similar to the findings of research on study abroad in Europe (Fraser, 2002; Kinginger, 2008; Mendelson, 2004), performing the identity of *vacationer* could take students out of their local environment, limiting their abilities to gain access to Egyptians and use Arabic, and thus their ability to perform the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* crucial to participating in their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East. Indeed, their performance of this *vacationer* identity could make it difficult to distinguish them from their peers in more traditional destinations, despite their vision of their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East as a more serious one than its European counterpart.

Yet at the same time, travel could help the students perform their preferred identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner*, depending on where and with whom they traveled. In terms of performing the identity of *cross-cultural mediator*, the students valued travel to other Middle Eastern countries (including non-Arabic speaking ones such as Turkey) in order to gain access to locals and their perspectives in these areas. If they traveled within Egypt with Egyptian friends, this travel could increase their access to and discussions with these Egyptians. However, traveling with Egyptians within or outside of Egypt could be difficult for a number of reasons. Their Egyptian friends might not have the same financial resources as the study abroad students, or would be unable to get a visa to the countries they wished to visit. The families of unmarried Egyptian females often do not allow them to travel overnight or out of the country unchaperoned. The Middlebury program pursued travel with Egyptians as a deliberate strategy, inviting the teachers and roommates on organized trips within Egypt. While the study abroad students appreciated the increased access this gave them, the Egyptian students were not

always able to attend if these trips occurred during their exam periods, or for female students if their families would not let them travel overnight.

In terms of performing the identity of *dedicated language learner*, travel could increase the students' transactional interactions, such as asking directions, or buying tickets, or asking for information on a particular site. If they were traveling in an Arabic-speaking area, they could engage in these interactions in Arabic, and thus perform the identity of *dedicated language learner*. For example, Rob (AUC) explained that travel was crucial to his development as an Arabic speaker:

I went to Dahab, and with a group that didn't speak Arabic very well and did a lot of organization of scuba diving, of riding camels, of going to Mt. Sinai, all of these things I did in Arabic, and I realized when I was coming back from Dahab I just operated in Arabic, and I did all of these things in Arabic for the last week, and it was really, when it first hit me that I'm actually getting better.

Rose (Middlebury) felt that being in a different place led to more discussions, which helped her gain a greater variety of interactions:

لما سافرنا تكلمنا أكثر مع أشخاص عشان احنا في مكان مختلف واحنا نفعل حاجة مختلف من بس يوم عادي بس
يعني نتكلم معهم يعني مناقشة كويسة

[When we traveled we talked more with people because we were in a different place and we do different things from just a normal day, but like we talk with them, like a good discussion]

Party Animals

A potentially more problematic identity that the students in this study associated with less serious study abroad in more traditional destinations but nevertheless performed themselves as well was that of *party animal*. Like their peers in Europe, many of the students in this study wanted to enjoy themselves abroad as they did at home. For many of them, this meant engaging in drinking activities reminiscent of American college life, such as spending weekend nights (and sometimes weeknights) going out to bars, organizing house parties, and taking self-described "booze cruises" aboard feluccas on the Nile. Since they recognized that these activities were often culturally inappropriate in Egypt, they were at times surprised to discover the extent to which they could engage in them. For example, Steve (AUC) explained: "there's a lot more like opportunities to have like traditional western fun like go out and drink and stuff than I thought there would be". Billy (AUC) wrote the following description of a party he attended on his blog:

While the relative conservatism of Egyptian social life may cramp some American students' style, for the guys from the service academies (there's another guy from Annapolis), Cairo is the closest thing to heaven on earth. With comparatively no rules and no supervision, these guys go off. In fact, the guys last night did such an impressive job, that it was almost impossible to distinguish the events of the night from a typical American party. Everything that would be there back in the States was there in Maadi: beats provided by Miley Cyrus, Flo-Rida, and the like, a beer-pong table, and a fridge full of American beverages (which, upon reflection, are infinitely better than the "European" variety produced locally in Egypt). And best of all, drinks were free. For that, I offer a hearty HOOAH to the West Point kids.

Opportunities for this type of fun were less common in Alexandria, but the Middlebury

students did go to bars and attend house parties (usually at the apartments of international students in other programs at the TAFL center). Sometimes the students were frustrated by the lack of these types of opportunities, as Thea (Middlebury) lamented: "It's kind of hard when you see like your friends like having tons of fun in Europe, and like drinking every night."

In the quotes from Steve, Billy, and Thea, the identity of *party animal* is associated with the West, America, and Europe. While alcohol is available in Egypt and there are Egyptians who drink it, the majority of Egyptians do not go out drinking and may frown upon those who do. As such, performing the identity of *party animal* could limit students' access to Egyptians and thus impede their ability to perform the identity of *cross-cultural mediator*, particularly as they were engaging in behavior many Egyptians would consider culturally inappropriate. For example, Mohammed (AUC student) stated that he was not that interested in being friends with study abroad students because:

The topic which is going around between Americans especially and it's not very appealing to me is basically getting drunk or going somewhere to drink, well I am a Muslim, I am relatively a religious person, I don't like drinking, I don't drink, and actually it's also in Islam, I won't say it's forbidden, but it's not good to be in a company of drunk people.

Furthermore, spending a lot of time partying with other international students could limit their opportunities to use Arabic, as even the Middlebury students reported breaking the pledge to converse with other foreigners they met in bars. In turn, this prevented them from performing the identity of *dedicated language learner*.

Indeed, the strong presence of this party animal identity of study abroad was something

that several students felt they had to work hard to distinguish themselves from in order to perform their desired identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner*.

Mariam (AUC) explained that she chose not to live in the dorms because:

I really didn't want to live with a bunch of Americans, especially not Americans on study abroad. . . I just don't like that atmosphere at all, I find they spend a very lot of time drinking, and I don't understand, if you want to party, and drink, and smoke up, stay in America, like what, I mean if you're going to be here, be here, and like respect where you are

Jamie (AUC) drew a contrast between "study abroad program" and "language acquisition program", explaining that she was invested in the latter:

This isn't a study abroad program for me, this is a language acquisition program, and I'm placed in a class with girls who are here for just a study abroad experience, and want that fun study abroad experience, which is not what I want

Similarly, Rob (AUC) emphasized how he actively used Arabic to distinguish himself from students performing the *party animal* identity: "it's part of me establishing with them that I'm really trying and really trying to learn and really want them to know that I'm not just here to speak English, I'm not just here to party."

While performing the identity of *party animal* was often detrimental to performing the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner*, it was sometimes possible for the students to reconcile these identities. In terms of gaining access to Egyptians, there are Egyptians who go out drinking that the students were able to meet, and some of the Egyptian Middlebury students reported that although they did not drink, they sometimes went out with the

study abroad students for a cultural experience of their own. As far as using Arabic, Jacob reported that he and his international friends were more likely to use Arabic when they were drinking:

If we go out to the pub or the bar, then you'll here, everybody starts speaking Arabic, everybody does, because everybody's in there loosed up, and then like everybody tries their hand at Arabic, and um, it's really entertaining because it's bad, but it's good practice

In this section, I have used the concept of *imagined communities* to argue that the students in this study desired participation in an imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East. This imagined community extended across geographic and temporal boundaries to include student studying in other Middle Eastern countries and other semesters. Furthermore, the students sought to distinguish this imagined community from a larger imagined community of study abroad to more traditional destinations, particularly Europe. They (and the *New York Times*) emphasized the more serious nature of their study abroad compared to the relatively frivolous experiences of students studying in Europe, and indeed the American study abroad students in this study were more interested in politics and had more travel experience than American participants in previous research on study abroad to more traditional destinations. In order to participate in this more serious imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East, the students needed to perform the identity of *cross-cultural mediators* and to a lesser extent that of *dedicated language learner*. Performing the identity of *cross-cultural mediator* required access to Egyptians with whom they could discuss serious topics, including those the students felt related to the conflicts and misunderstandings between East and West that were a source of their investment in Arabic. Performing the identity of *dedicated language learner* required the students to use Arabic. While the students often expected that performing the identities of *cross-*

cultural mediator and *dedicated language learner* were complementary, this was not always the case, and sometimes they chose to perform the identity of *cross-cultural mediator* over that of *dedicated language learner* by gaining access to Egyptians in English.

Despite their desire to distinguish themselves from less serious study abroad experiences in more traditional destinations, I have also demonstrated that the students performed identities associated with this less serious version of study abroad, notably those of *vacationer* and *party animal*. The performance of these identities interacted with the performance of the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* in complicated and contradictory ways. While performing the identity of *vacationer* could take students out of their local context, limiting their ability to gain access to Egyptians and use Arabic, it could also help them pursue these practices if they traveled with Egyptians or in Arabic-speaking countries. Performing the identity of *party animal* was likely to limit students ability to interact with Egyptians and use Arabic, given the fact that this behavior was culturally inappropriate for many Egyptians. However, it was not inappropriate for all Egyptians, and drinking could encourage the students to try Arabic, and so students were occasionally able to reconcile this identity with the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* necessary to participate in their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East.

Thus, using the concept of *imagined communities* to understand the behavior of students study abroad in Egypt can provide crucial insights into their behavior abroad, particularly when activities they participate in (such as partying and traveling) seem to run counter to their stated goals of cross-cultural understanding and language learning. In the next section, I connect the imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East with to the reality of these students experiences in Egypt by focusing on the communicative contexts the students encountered while

abroad.

Communicative Contexts of Language Use

Kinging (2009) states that research on how students gain access to locals has looked at three main settings: educational institutions and classrooms, living situation (especially the homestay), and service encounters and other informal contacts. She adds that some studies have found participation in extracurricular activities to result in successful access. Given the imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East described above, the ideal communicative contexts for the study abroad students in this study would provide ample access to Egyptians with whom they could discuss cultural and political differences, preferably in Arabic. However, these were not the communicative contexts they necessarily encountered in reality. In this section, I examine the communicative contexts of this study and their impact on students' performances of the identities described in the previous section, focusing in particular on the variety of access to locals and language use that occurred within each context. Three contexts were program specific: educational setting, living situation, and program-organized extracurricular activities. For these contexts, I will discuss the AUC and Middlebury programs separately. Interactions gained through non-program specific extracurricular activities, prior connections, and informal encounters were not program dependent and I will discuss the programs together.

AUC

Educational Setting.

In the study abroad program, students typically took four to five classes. All of the students in this study took ECA and or MSA, and most took both. They also took classes in their majors and other fields, including Art History, Psychology, History, Political Science,

Philosophy, Political Islam, Women, Islam, and the State, Muslim Political Thought, Anthropology, Theater, Film, Business, Journalism and Egyptology. Many of them had classes from early morning to evening. With the exception of their Arabic classes, which were mostly in Arabic with some explanations in English, their classes were in English. Similarly, of their several hours of homework each night, their Arabic homework was typically in Arabic (and some translations to and from English), and the rest was in English. Their Arabic classes were composed of international students. Their other classes were typically a mix of Egyptian and international students, with some classes (such as Islam and Egyptology) consisting primarily of international students while others (such as business) consisted mostly of Egyptian students.

Although students stated that they sometimes interacted with Egyptians in English in class (especially in the business classes, where there were fewer study abroad students to interact with), these interactions rarely extended outside of class. Shelly said: “like in most of my classes, I only have one class that is even 50% Egyptian, most of them are other foreigners, and so it's just like I didn't really feel like I had the opportunities.” Furthermore, the study abroad students felt that the majority of Egyptian students were not serious about their studies. In support of this belief, the students cited behavior they felt indicated a lack of seriousness on the part of the Egyptian students, including texting in class, showing up twenty minutes late, not doing their homework, and bargaining with the teacher for changing the dates of tests and papers.

In the ALI program, students typically took four to five classes for a total of approximately twenty hours per week. This consisted of classes in MSA and colloquial Arabic (including ones focused on skills such as writing, reading, listening and speaking) as well as topic-based classes such as Media, Grammar, Qur'an, and Morphology. Their classes consisted

of foreign students and a (usually) Egyptian teacher, and were mostly in Arabic, with some explanations in English. The four to five hours of homework students at night were also in Arabic, although they sometimes translated to and from English. They tended to prefer the classes that they felt were challenging, or where they discussed interesting issues such as politics and women's rights. Students mentioned becoming close friends with the other foreign students in their classes, and felt isolated from the rest of the university, as they did not even have class with Egyptians. Occasionally they would do things with their teachers outside of class, such as take a felucca ride or go to a movie, and sometimes their teachers gave them assignments, such as asking an Egyptian about celebrating a particular holiday or making a particular type of food. Like the students in the study abroad program, they felt that it was difficult to meet Egyptians on campus. Anna stated:

أنا جزء من الجامعة بس أن جزء من برنامج منفصل من بقية الجامعة واحنا يعني معظم وقتنا في نفس المكان ونفس الطلاب الأجانب

[I'm part of the university, but I'm part of a program separated from the rest of the university, and we, like most of our time is in the same place with the same foreign students]

In general, the students felt that there was a separation between the international students (especially Americans) and the Egyptian students on campus. Kareem used us-them terminology to describe this split: “at AUC there's definitely a division and you can definitely see it with the Americans and the Egyptians because they like staying in their own end and we're in our own end.” Similarly, Nina explained that she only interacted with American outsiders on campus: “when I'm on campus I feel like I am the outsider, like I'm just kind of co-existing with

everybody else here and I speak with my American friends or my international student friends and not really with any Egyptians.” Students offered a number of explanations for this situation. One was that the Egyptian students already had their cliques formed, and the study abroad students were just a large number of primarily American students who rotated through each semester and made friends quickly with each other, as Shelly explained: “so many international students come and go every semester and a lot of people who go to AUC a lot, they've already got their group of friends”.

While some of the students recognized that they should use individual agency to break into these already-formed groups of Egyptians, they felt that it was difficult. Mita stated: “I feel like they could be a little bit friendlier you know, um, yeah, just like, they're just kind of cliquey, and it's hard to break into the clique and hang out with them”. Bruce felt similarly: “out at school it's like the circles are already formed and it's really hard to break into one of those circles.” Other students were hesitant or unsure of how to even try to break into these established friendship groups. Billy explained: “like I don't walk up to someone and say like hey, you're Egyptian, you can speak Arabic, I want to be your friend”. Anne stated that she had hoped that Egyptians would approach her:

Um, I think it's difficult and I think I feel like a lot of study abroad students feel like, at least I feel that I'm a visitor here so I kind of, I hope for them to approach me first, like I don't want to, I don't want to like insert myself into their social group and then they have to like make concessions like they have to speak English when I'm there and just things like that that it's really hard, I feel like it would be easier to break through that barrier if I was approached first, but I mean that's, yeah, that's just how it is

Other students felt outclassed by the elite Egyptians, and explained that this made it more difficult for them to fit in. For example, Billy (AUC) wrote on his blog how the fashions at AUC made him "out of place":

The kids that go to this school are filthy rich. The fashions and styles they wear here make kids at [home university] look like hillbillies. Kids from [home university] who came here last year told us campus was like Beverly Hills, but I wasn't exactly expecting this. If I felt like a scrub at [home university], imagine how out of place I look here amongst all the Lacoste and Gucci.

Some students thought that at least a portion of the Egyptian student body actively disliked them. Kala stated “[they] have a very set idea of what life is like for them, and they kind of just think we're like not, I don't know, they think we're weird or whatever” Nina and Tasha cited articles they had read in campus publications indicating that the Egyptian students disliked American culture, and while they were interested in American products, such as clothing or education, they wanted little to do with actual Americans.

In terms of their language use, students generally felt that hanging out with other international students encouraged their English use, since they spoke primarily in English to them. Meron stated:

It's interesting because we are in an intensive Arabic program, but it's predominantly international students, most of us from the US, and so we, I find that we speak English more together, which is kind of semi-defeating the purpose of it, but ah, it's the truth, is we use English quite a bit, um sometimes even with our professors.

Lamees explained: “there's this one girl that almost only wants to speak in Arabic, um, but then

there's my other group of friends where we only speak in English.”

Since English proficiency is linked to class in Egypt, the majority of AUC students speak English very well, and the students felt that this made it difficult for them to use Arabic. Nina explained that she wanted to use Arabic, but “all the Egyptians I meet in my classes will speak English to me, they won't speak Arabic to me, so it's really difficult on campus”. Ariana felt unable to even bring herself to use Arabic since her Arabic proficiency was so far below the AUCians English abilities:

I know when you're studying abroad, you're supposed to like put yourself out there and like just say it even though it sounds strange, but it's just hard. With AUC, because the AUCians speak English so well, so it's just so much easier just to have a conversation in English and like end the conversation than to try to communicate with them in *Ṣa:mmijja* [Egyptian Arabic] and then try to understand what they said back, and then try to respond, it's like you have to think so much so more.

In describing the group of friends she hung out with, Jane explained that she only used Arabic when her Egyptian friends were tired of talking in English due to her low proficiency level:

Like most of them go to AUC so their English is so much better than my Arabic, they've taught me some Arabic, it's mostly like swear words and like stuff I can't really use in class, but um, it's sometimes though, I've actually like tried to speak to them in Arabic, just because I want to practice, but they usually like, I'm really not very good at Arabic, so um, they usually just, it's easier just to talk in English, but a lot a times though, or what happens is at that night, usually when they're starting to get tired, they like make me talk in Arabic just because they're tired of talking in English, so, but it's mostly English.

As a result of this gap in proficiency levels, some students felt that they often had to choose between performing their desired identities as *cross-cultural mediators* and as *dedicated language learners*. In particular, they felt that the friendships they could gain in English would not be possible in Arabic, and that insisting on Arabic would actually limit their access. For example, Lucy (AUC) explained: “she [her roommate] can, I think fairly completely represent herself in English, and I cannot give you a full picture of myself in Arabic.” Rob (AUC) explained that the language he used depended on how well he knew that person: “If I’m really close with them, I generally speak English, but if I don’t know them that well, I speak Arabic”

Nora (AUC teacher and student) felt that this was also a problem for students, emphasizing their desire to fit in and express their opinions as intelligent people:

هو ساكن في ال dorms اتعرف بقى على الناس اللي هم ال AUCians الثانئين الطلبة المصريين بيكلموا كلهم إنجليزي فهو طبعاً هو عايز يبين إنه عنده فكرة وعنده رأي وعنده كل دا ومش هيقعد يعبر عن نفسه بالعربي بكلام مش منظم بأخطاء ب whatever فيكلم الإنجليزي إن هو يبقى fitting in مع الناس دي

[He lives in the dorms, he met like the people that are the other AUCians, the Egyptian students all speak English, so he, of course he wants to show that he has an idea, he has an opinion, and he has all of that, and he’s not going to sit and express himself in Arabic with speech that’s not organized, that has errors, that has whatever, so he speaks English, it’s so he will fit in with those people]

Norton (2001) explains that learners often have the most difficulty using the target language with those they view as gatekeepers to their imagined communities. She found that for the English learners in her study: “the very people to whom the learners were most uncomfortable speaking English were the very people who were members of--or gatekeepers to--the learners' imagined communities” (p. 166). This can also help explain the difficulty students

had using Arabic with their Egyptian friends--in order to perform their desired identities as cross-cultural mediators and gain entrance into their imagined community of study abroad students in the Middle East, it was necessary for them to gain access to a real community of Egyptian interlocutors, for whom their Egyptian friends served as gatekeepers. When they felt that these friendships could be developed in English, but not in Arabic, it made it particularly hard for them to use Arabic with these potential friends. Thus, while the students' original view of their imagined community of study abroad students in the Middle East may have required an identity as dedicated language learners, the reality they encountered, particularly among English-proficient Egyptians, did not necessarily match the community of their imagination. This contrast could cause them to become less invested in their own language learning.

While it is true that the majority of AUCians have a very high level of proficiency in English, the majority also speak Arabic. Among themselves, they (and the rest of the upper classes) are known for using Arabic-English code-switching. Khaled (an Egyptian AUC student) described this variety as:

I speak a mixture of Arabic and English, they're very complicated, like you wouldn't get it if you didn't speak Arabic very well, and also English very well, like you wouldn't understand what we're saying, and it's fun, when we speak both languages together.

On campus, nearly all of the conversations I overheard between Egyptian students used this mix of English and Arabic. This could also cause the international students to feel left out when they did not understand due to their limited Arabic. Anne said:

Like other students, like maybe we're in class, and we're talking about something and then the rest of the group starts talking in Arabic, because they just do it subconsciously

and then I just feel awkward because I'm sitting there and I can't participate in the conversation because I just don't know what they're saying.

While Anne felt that this was not a deliberate snub on the part of the Egyptians, Shadi thought that Egyptians on campus: “pretend they don't know English just because they want you to feel out of place.”

During my on-campus observations, the large groups of international students did stick out, confirming the students' impression of a split, although there were also smaller mixed groups of international students and Egyptians, indicating that this separation was by no means complete. The Egyptians I interviewed also felt that there was something of a separation, and gave a number of reasons for this, some of which matched student opinions, and some of which did not. In terms of having already formed cliques, they cited the fact that the economic elite (from which the AUCians generally come) grow up attending language schools together, and have friends from childhood. Furthermore, Egyptian students typically live at home during college, so their life is not centered around their university friends as it is for many Americans. In terms of cultural differences, Khaled stated that he had some friends who would probably not want to be friends with international students because their viewpoints were too different:

I have a friend called Rami, who like, I would never in my life, ever ask him to go out with my foreign friends, simply because his belief system is so different, and so like set in stone, that he would just like not have a good time, it's the same like for some of my foreign friends, would never like, especially some of the women would never want, like I would just not introduce them to some of the like the Egyptian girls that I know because their belief systems would be totally different, and they clash.

Nora added that some AUCians were very concerned about their “cool” appearance in front of their friends, and that there were some (although certainly not all) Egyptian girls who would prefer to be in Egyptian groups out of concern for their reputations:

هي تبقى في group مصري بنات وولاد ويحصل مثلا لو فيه قصص مثلا ارتباط أو حاجة هتبقى الفرصة أحسن إن
هي تبقى في الgroup المصري اللي فاهمة في نفس المستوى في نفس الlevel.

[She will be in an Egyptian group, boys and girls, and it happens, for example, if there are stories like relationships or something, the opportunity will be better that she's in the Egyptian group that understands at the same level, at the same level]

Khaled also felt that there was a linguistic barrier for some of his friends, and Mohammed confirmed this, saying that there were AUCians whose spoken English was not that fluent, particularly scholarship students (who are likely not to be from the economic elite and may not have gone to English-medium schools). He stated that while he had gone to a language school growing up, and English was his professional, formal language, “when people are saying jokes, I won't understand anything, I don't know why, I'm sitting there looking like an idiot.”

While these cultural and linguistic barriers could be problematic, the Egyptians at AUC also felt that the largest problem was not a dislike of international students, but a lack of opportunity. While Khaled stated that he made friends with international students by just going up and talking to them, he added that most of his friends were intimidated by large groups of foreigners. Nora, an Arabic teacher who made friends with foreign students as an undergraduate by just walking up and talking to them, explained:

بأقولك في ناس كثير عايزة تصحب الناس اللي بيتكلموا عربي بي هو التوجيه يعني أنا كنت ماباكسفش لكن فيه جاية
بيتكسف

[I'm telling you, there's lots of people who want to be friends with those that speak Arabic, but it's the direction, I wasn't shy, but there's ones who are shy]

As an example of this, Mohammed told me that as an engineering student, he did not have foreigners in his classes, and “I won't really go and start conversations with people because usually I don't like to bother them.” Hanan, an Arabic teacher who was working to arrange opportunities for students in the intensive Arabic program to meet graduate students who needed practice with their English noted that the timing of the classes was problematic for arranging these opportunities:

دول طلبة الماجستير وأغلبهم بيشتغلوا في الصباح وبيجي الجامعة الساعة ثلاثة أو بعد ثلاثة الظهر بيروحوا يحضروا محاضرات فعشان تلاقي window كده وقت إن هم يجيوا ويكون طلابنا خلصوا فصولهم يعرفوا يتقابلوا مع بعض فيها عملية مش سهلة قوي

[Those are Masters students, and most of them work in the morning and come to the university at 3:00 or after 3:00 in the afternoon and go attend classes, so for you to find a window like that, time that they are coming and our students have finished their classes, so they know how to meet together, this isn't a very easy process]

Living Situation.

Dormitories.

Many of the students lived in one of the two dormitories associated with AUC: the Zamalek dormitory, in the middle of Cairo, and the New Cairo dormitory, where the New Campus is located. Since Egyptians typically live with their families until marriage, most AUC students do not live in the dorms. The dorms are populated by study abroad students, international degree seeking students (usually from other Arab countries) and Egyptians whose

families live abroad or outside of Cairo. Both dorms are gender-segregated, with separate wings for males and females and shared common rooms. Students who lived in the AUC dorms felt that the separation between the international and Egyptian students carried over there and that the concentration of American students in the dorms made it even more likely for these students to group together. Carson, who lived in the New Cairo dorms, explained how the international students came together in a large group:

When I first got here, I made a quick group of a bunch of the Americans here which is mostly Americans, surprisingly, I found one British person I think, a few, maybe one or two Germans I think, so mostly Americans, here in the dorms, and that's expanded to just about most of the Americans in Zamalek, there seems to me that I see a few here and there that I haven't even met before which means they've kind of pocketed themselves off, because the main group kind of sticks together, we all know each other, which is interesting, there's about 70/80 of us.

In addition to finding it easy to befriend international students, some students thought, as on the AUC campus, it was difficult to make friends with the Egyptian students. Jacob explained that when he did not feel that he was warmly received, he felt less dedicated to using agency to pursuing friendships:

I get the same vibe, just not interested, like I say hi, I say hi to an Egyptian in the elevator, nothing, you know, say hi to him in the lobby, just, no, or like, I just feel like a lot of them haven't been really interested in like making friendships, and as a study abroad student, like I'm out of my element here, it's hard to like go the extra mile to make those friendships unless I'm really dedicated to it.

Stephanie felt similarly, saying: “ I try to be nice, like I'll smile, and then they just kind of look at me like okay, why are you looking at me, and they just keep going, like okay, guess not”

Despite the continued separation between study abroad and Egyptian students, many of the students in the dorms gained some access to Arabic speakers via Egyptian or Arab roommates, or roommates of friends. While most of them still felt they were closer friends with international students, they were able to exert individual agency to extend these relationships to certain degrees. For example, Leah would ask to tag along with her roommate and her friends, and Billy mentioned that his friend's roommate would come out with a group of international students. Jane was able to meet a core group of Egyptian friends through her American friend's roommate, and ended up becoming close friends with them, hanging out on and off campus and traveling with them on the weekends. She felt that this was unusual, but that she had "lucked into" her friends rather than engaged in any sort of unusual effort:

I feel like the majority of the American friends I have here, don't, aren't, they have some Egyptian friends, but they aren't like quite as close with them as I am with my friends, because it'll be more like they're friends in class, or they'll like get lunch together every now and then, but they won't, like they won't go on vacations with them, and they won't like hang out after school, whereas I don't know, I just sort of like lucked into my friends, because it was just by, it really was just luck that I became friends with them.

While Jane said that there were some study abroad students who she felt were not interested in making Egyptian friends, she explained that “I think the majority of people are open to like having friends, I just don't think they've had necessarily had the opportunity to like meet them.” After all, sometimes the students' attempts to exert agency to gain access to Egyptians via

roommates did not work. Billy said that he had an Egyptian roommate, but he moved out, and Bruce stated that when he had lived in the dorms previously, he requested an Egyptian roommate in hopes of practicing his Arabic, and was placed with an Egyptian-American who had grown up in the United States and did not speak Arabic (but had Egyptian nationality due to his parents).

Both residences organized trips and events for the students, such as excursions to the pyramids, a Bedouin night, a Halloween Party, and cooking classes. While these events were open to anyone who lived in the dorms, the students reported that primarily international students went on them, although they were also able to socialize with Arabic speakers sometimes.

In general, they reported using English with these friends. Stephanie felt that she was expected to use English:

When someone speaks to me in a language, I respond in the same language, so if they start speaking to me in English, I respond to them in English, but then if they try to say something, or if they said something to me in Arabic, I'd probably try and respond back likewise.

Rob explained that he felt surrounded by English, and that this made it difficult to use Arabic, especially if he ran into words he did not know:

It's difficult because I'm also surrounded by people who want to speak English, whether it's Americans who don't speak Arabic well, or Arabs, or Egyptians who speak English well and want to keep practicing, everybody wants to speak English, and so, you know the other thing is if I run into a word I don't know and break into English, then it's hard to break back into Arabic, you know once you break out of it

Just as they did on campus, many of the students felt that the large gap between the English proficiency of the Egyptians students and the Arabic proficiency of the study abroad students led to a default practice of using English, particularly if they were better able to perform the identity of *cross-cultural mediator* in English rather than Arabic. Despite the prevalence of English, students did find opportunities for Arabic assistance and small conversations in the dorms. The students also asked friends and acquaintances questions about Arabic and Egyptian culture, such as how to say a particular word or phrase or how to get to a certain place. Anne stated that she often went to her roommate with cultural questions, to try to make sure she was not being judgmental: “if I see something and I don't know what to think about it, I do feel like I can ask her and she gives me a different perspective.”

Shelly was originally placed in a single room, and asked to be moved to a room with an Egyptian roommate. Like Jessie and Leah, Shelly stated that while she did not spend a lot of time hanging out with her roommate and mostly spoke to her in English, they would practice basic conversation for a few minutes each day. While repetitive, Shelly felt it was “better than nothing”:

It’s basically the same conversation whenever we do it, hi, how are you, how was your day, how was school, what classes did you have today, what time are you going to school tomorrow, so it's usually the same conversation over and over, but it's better than nothing.

Students also reported using Arabic with the cleaning staff in the dorms, who were of a lower class than the AUC students and thus did not have as high English proficiency, and with the resident assistants, who the students felt were willing to speak to them in Arabic. Billy said: “the floor supervisors at the dorms are actually really cool guys, and they will speak Arabic with you,

they're they're a good person to talk to”

With their international friends, most of the students reported incorporating common Arabic words, such as *mumkin* [maybe], *xala:sʔ* [that's it, it's over], and *inʃallah* [God willing (used when talking about future events)] into their conversations. This was also a common practice on Facebook, where the students incorporated Arabic words into their status updates and correspondence with Egyptians and other study abroad students.

Apartments.

Some students who were frustrated with their inability to meet Egyptians and use Arabic in the dorms felt that it would be more advantageous to live in an apartment as they would be closer to Egyptians. Jacob explained:

Like they're living next door to actual Egyptian people who don't speak English, or they're, or like that's a place where like Egyptians would want to go and hang out, or they're getting to know other Egyptian students at AUC or other universities, who have their own apartments, maybe in the same apartment building, like I'm in the apartment building.

The students who lived in apartments lived with other international students, primarily in middle and upper class neighborhoods in Zamalek, Dokki, and Maadi, although Anna lived downtown in a lower class neighborhood. Egyptians typically live with their families until marriage, so living with an Egyptian would be unusual, although it does occur. In terms of access to Egyptians, students living in apartments met their landlords, doormen, cleaning ladies, bill collectors, and repairmen. While Karley reported that her interactions with her doorman were limited to greetings, Tasha and Ariana (who lived together) and Mariam said they had more

extensive interactions due to the fact that things were constantly breaking in their apartment and they had to get them repaired. They also typically became good friends with their international roommates and sometimes knew them before arriving.

In contrast to Jacob's expectation, the students living in apartments did not seem to make friends with Egyptians via their living situation. For example, Anna, who had lived in the dorms previously as a study abroad student, said that she missed the connections with Arabic speakers this had afforded:

المرّة اللي فات كنت ساكنة مع واحدة أردنية في بيت الطلاب وكنت عايز استكشف المدينة أكثر فاخترت سكن في شقة بس طبعا أسهل السكن مع أمريكيات فساكنة مع بنتين أمريكيتين فيعني مافيش التجربة اللي يعني بتألم عن ثقافة مختلفة أو ثقافة عربية في شقتي أو في بيتي.

[The last time, I was living with a Jordanian in the dorms and I wanted to explore the city more, so I chose to live in an apartment, but of course it's easier to live with Americans, so I'm living with two American girls, so like there's not the experience that like I learn about a different culture or Arab culture in my apartment or house]

Students who lived in apartments could also feel separated from the other study abroad students, and thus find it difficult to make friends at all. Justin moved from the dorms to an apartment for his second semester in Cairo, and felt isolated without the dorms to make friends in, since the majority of his friends had left after one semester. He explained that social interactions were more work as a result of the greater distances and time it took to go everywhere in Cairo:

There's like a big social distance connect sometimes, which like I'm not used to, I go to a school where like everyone's like two minutes away from each other and like the same

with the restaurants and like the beach is like around the corner so, I don't know, I'm just, I'm used to like quick like social interactions, here it's like you have to plan it out like a lot . . . I've never had so much trouble making friends, since I came here, just because like I'm always so exhausted and like everything takes so much more time than it used to.

Pearl primarily hung out with her international apartment mates. She stated that she was not interested in focusing on drinking like many of the study abroad students, and as a result she also felt that it was difficult to find friends: “at first, the first month or so, I was like wow, we only have a couple of friends, like that's so weird, like I'm a pretty social person, like I've never really been this short on friends, it's so weird.”

To make friends, some students who lived in apartments, such as Karim and Steve, spent a lot of time hanging out in the Zamalek dorms in order to meet both other international students as well as Egyptians. Other students met their neighbors, although they tended to meet primarily international neighbors—only Gunnar mentioned befriending an Egyptian neighbor, who he met when he invited him to a party they were hosting.

In terms of their language use, the students reported using primarily English with their international roommates, although they would again throw in common Arabic words they knew. Pearl explained: “stuff like *wallahi* [really] and like *fazi*:ʕ [awesome, literally horrible] and stuff like that gets thrown around all the time but like the most of the construction of the sentences is in English.” Rashid reported having simple conversations with his roommates in Arabic, but switching to English when it got more difficult:

Like my friends in my apartment and my roommates, it's just like where are you going today and how was school, where I'm going next trip, where are we eating tonight, how's

your paper, simple things like that, and when it gets any higher than that, we usually switch into English just because it's frustrating.

Families.

A final living option for the students was with their families. While living with a host family is unusual in Egypt for cultural reasons, Mandy and Shadi, whose fathers were from Egypt, lived with their own families, in particular an aunt, uncle, and cousin. While they both spent from early morning to late evening on campus and commuting to and from it, they usually spent one weekend day with their family and one with their international friends. With their families, they visited relatives and family friends, a common weekend custom in Egypt.

Shadi stated that his aunt, uncle, and cousin spoke English, and this was what he usually used with them. He used Arabic with the doorman, cleaner, and driver, and said his family would make him answer the door to practice Arabic. His exposure to Arabic through his family came on visits to the extended family, where he overheard a considerable amount of Arabic. In terms of communicating in Arabic, he got considerable help from his younger cousins, reporting that they would whisper the words he did not know to him when he was trying to communicate in Arabic.

In contrast, Mandy's aunt did not speak English, her cousin was a newborn, and she reported that her uncle was "convinced that by the time I leave, I'm going to speak Arabic, no matter what." Although he spoke some English, he refused to speak it with Mandy, using French and Arabic instead to get her to practice these languages. When he felt that she was not progressing sufficiently in Arabic, he banned French, although Mandy did not feel that her Arabic level was high enough to do only Arabic. To get her to use Arabic, he would call out

“*bil-Ṣarabi* [in Arabic]” when he heard her use English with other family members, and pass her the phone to talk to them, telling her not to use English.

However, Mandy’s uncle often traveled for and returned late from work, so she spent most of her time at home with her aunt. Mandy communicated with her aunt in Arabic, but using a mutually developed system that did not work with other family members:

We have like very much at this point developed a system where like she can figure out what it is I'm trying to say, so like we're both, or there's something that she says to me that I don't understand and I tell her I don't know what this word means, then she'll explain it to me like the best that she can and so we have like that system worked out, but she's kind of the only one who can do that, I even, I went back to the States for about three weeks like over winter break, and I tried to do that with my dad even, and just because I'd never tried to speak with my dad before in Arabic, like it was just very, I think it was like frustrating for both of us, because I expected him to like be able to figure out what I was saying because he a lot of times if I'm trying to say something and I don't know how to say it in Arabic, I'm trying to do direct translation from like this is what I would say in English, so I'll translate it as best I can to Arabic, and because he speaks English like really fluently, I kind of expected him to be able to like get what it is I'm saying and I wasn't, that wasn't the case at all.

Mandy reported that it was much more difficult to use Arabic with the other family members, and as a result she usually used English, especially with younger family members and family friends who were fluent in it. In describing an interaction with a young family friend, she said: “he is very, very fluent in English, so we usually use English, though he tries to get me to

speak in Arabic, and usually I refuse." She also noted that she discussed higher level topics such as politics and education with her cousins. Conversations with her aunt and uncle were usually limited to basic topics as a result of her Arabic proficiency and their lack of interest in the topics she discussed with her cousins. Unlike some of the other study abroad students who felt they lacked opportunities to practice Arabic due to their limited contact with Egyptians, Mandy felt that she had plenty of opportunities, but that she simply could not always bring herself to use Arabic.

Lamees, whose mother was Egyptian, did not live with her family, but typically spent one day a weekend with them. Like Shadi, she reported overhearing a lot of Arabic, but using primarily English with her family. Pearl, who lived with a friend from her home university whose father was Egyptian also gained opportunities to meet Egyptians via her friend's family, and reported using only Arabic with older family members that did not speak English.

The Location.

Because the New campus is located an hour or more from most parts of Cairo, students had the choice of living on the new campus and commuting into Cairo for social opportunities or living in Cairo and commuting to school. Students who lived in the dorms on the new campus found that it was too far away for them to make regular trips into the city, and there was nowhere that they could walk to from the campus to have informal interactions with Egyptians. To take a taxi into the city cost around 40 LE one way (about \$7), which they found expensive. Thus, between the amount of homework they had and the expense and ordeal of going into the city, they typically ventured into the city on one day of the weekend only. Many of them were frustrated with the impact this had on their opportunities to interact with Egyptians and use Arabic. Stephanie said:

We're in the middle of nowhere, and I didn't realize that there was nothing around the campus, I thought like there were still things here, so it's just a pain to you know like go into the city and like I feel like the people who live downtown know the city better and like they know all the sections and where to go for what, and I don't know any of that, so like living on campus, I really don't feel like I'm getting the Cairo experience because we're in an American bubble.

Nina felt that this limited her opportunities to use Arabic: "I've definitely gone a couple of weeks and then realized I haven't been off campus, I haven't spoken to anyone in Arabic yet, I haven't you know been in the city, and it's definitely a problem I think." Lamees exercised her agency to change this situation, by moving from the new campus dorms to the Zamalek dorms in order to gain more informal interaction.

The students who lived in the Zamalek dorms and in other parts of the city had easier access to informal encounters. However, they felt that the hour or longer bus ride to and from campus each day, and the fact that they spent most of their time on campus in this "American Bubble" limited their interactional opportunities. Kala explained: "if it was in Tahrir, I think you could go out during the day when you do have breaks and use what you're learning, and you have no option for that here." Steve explained that by the time he got home, he did not feel like going out again:

I definitely think I could do more, but I'd probably say that no matter what, so, I just wish that because my day is kind of long, so it's just like by the time, so I don't get back to 7:00, so it's just like 7:00 to 7:00 is like I don't really feel like going out and talking to people at this point, it's just like pack it in and call it a night.

While the students did engage in service transactions such as making copies and buying food on campus, they felt that it was difficult to use Arabic for this as everyone on campus spoke English. Personally, I did not find it difficult to use Arabic on the new campus, and always used Arabic in service transactions, albeit sometimes with the code-switching described by Khaled above. While it was common for people to reply in English for very short transactions, in longer ones they usually switched to Arabic. Thus, while the students may have indeed found it difficult to use Arabic, it is not by any means impossible to use Arabic at AUC.

Extracurriculars.

Extracurricular activities were a way for study abroad and Egyptian AUC students to meet each other. Since these activities were not required, they required the exertion of agency on the part of the study abroad students. Shadi participated in a play put on entirely in Arabic by foreign students. The director and assistant directors for this play were Egyptian, and included Nora. Shadi stated that he became close friends with these graduate assistants. Nora confirmed this, explaining that this activity led to getting to know the other:

المسرحية اللي كنا فيها أنا سمعت ال crew اللي كان معي البنت اللي كانت تساعدني كذا بنت اللي كانوا يساعدوني مصريين فلما يحصل احتكاك بقى على ال stage واحنا بتتدرب واحد بيتكلم بتلاقي إن هم بدأوا يبنوا صداقات فالصداقات دي بقت فيها الكلام بالعربي كثير فيبقى فهم معرفة بالأخر قوي أو معرفة بالطالب اللي جاي من بلد مختلفة فاهمة ازي؟

[The play that we were in, I heard the crew that was with me, the girl that was helping me, several girls that were helping me, Egyptians, so when there is interaction like on the stage, and we are training, one speaks, you find that they started making friends, and in these friendships they started speaking Arabic a lot, so there was understanding, a lot of

getting to know the other, or getting to know the student that came from a different country, you see?]

Mariam and Rob participated in the rugby team, and reported developing friendships with Egyptian members of the team. Mariam in particular explained that her two closest friends were Egyptian girls from the rugby team, as well as a team member who lived around the corner from her. She spent time with these friends at school and also visited their families, noting that she enjoyed discussing a variety of interesting subjects:

احنا بنتكلم على كل الحاجات المختلفين بين الثقافة هنا وفي امريكا وانت بتفكر ايه على البنات وانت بتفكر هتزوج
امنى وكل الحاجات يعني كل الحاجات العلاقات بين البنات والأولاد ومن بين البنات وأسرتهم وكل الحاجات كده ودا
مهم لي ودا قشطة يعني interesting

[We speak about a lot of different things in the culture here and in America, and what do you think about girls, and when do you think you'll get married, and all these things, like everything, relationships between boys and girls, and between girls and their families, all of these things and this is important to me, and it's cool, you know interesting]

Wendy, a teacher at AUC, also explained that some of her students had had success meeting Egyptians on campus through clubs and sports teams:

They're also clubs at the university and a number of my students have in fact joined clubs here and had really really nice friendships develop out of it, last year I had two guys join the sports teams and get taken into some teammate's family and treated just wonderfully, so yeah, there are opportunities on campus.

Anne felt that her friends who had been more successful at making friends had done it through

sports teams. In contrast to the perceived unfriendliness of Egyptians on campus, Karley described the scuba divers she met as: "they've, they've just been like really friendly and welcoming to me since like I've gotten here, so they're really great people."

At the same time, Shelly, who had tried to sign up for some service clubs at the beginning of the semester, described joining clubs as rare and not necessarily helpful:

Rarely do international students who are only here for a semester even get involved with like clubs or anything, or sometimes the clubs here don't even really want you to get involved, like you can't take a leadership position if you're just going to be here for one semester.

Nina, Billy, Jacob, and Carson reported playing pick-up basketball with a mix of international and Egyptian students, but explained that this did not lead to friendships outside of these games. Indeed, for students who did gain access to Egyptian friends through clubs, this represented a considerable time commitment, and they typically had more success when they brought something to the club. Just as Norton and Toohey (2001) found that good language learners were able to use intellectual and social resources to gain access to local networks, students who possessed skills of value to the club were more successful in gaining access to Egyptians this way. For example, Shadi was a theater major in the United States and had the lead role in the play. He felt his experience memorizing the Qur'an in his childhood and his Egyptian background helped him memorize the lines and produce them without an accent despite his low proficiency in Arabic, something that the other students struggled with. He also met with the play group for two hours a night for rehearsals, and they took a trip to Alexandria together. Mariam and Rob both played rugby in the United States, allowing them to contribute to the team.

Mariam mentioned that she acted as a coach for the women's team, as it was new and she had extensive experience in the States. They also practiced for two hours a week, twice a week, and played games together on the weekends. Mariam also explained that she hung out more with the rugby team in her second semester in Cairo, once her friendships had developed, an opportunity she would not have had if she had left after a semester.

Some students also mentioned meeting Egyptians and developing friendships with them during orientation. Shadi and Karim said that they became friends with their tour guides. Khaled, who worked as one of these tour guides, said that he met a lot of his international friends through this activity.

There is also a language exchange program that pairs students in the English Language Institute at AUC with students studying Arabic. Anna, Lucy, and Jessie reported participating in this, with little success. Lucy explained that she found it difficult to schedule a time to meet with her partner, as their schedules did not match, the same problem mentioned by Hanan (AUC teacher) earlier. Anna and Jessie met with their partners, but reported that the imbalance between their Arabic skills and their partner's English skills led to the exchange occurring mostly in English, even during the Arabic time. Anna, whom I once observed struggling to get her partner to use more Arabic, said:

المشكلة دا كان الطالبة كان متقدمة جدا فهي دائما كان عايز تتكلم إنجليزي حتى لو الوقت للعربي.

[The problem was the student was very advanced, so she always wanted to speak English, even during the Arabic time].

In contrast, Bruce participated in a language exchange with an Egyptian he had met through his teacher. His language partner taught him Qur'anic Arabic in exchange for English. Bruce

explained that this activity primarily took place in Arabic, since his partner was still learning the letters in English.

In general, the students at AUC felt that it was difficult for them to gain access to Egyptians and use Arabic, practices necessary for performing the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* needed to gain entrance into their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East. The reasons for these difficulties related to contextual factors (such as the commute, the lack of opportunities to meet Egyptians, and the widespread use of English) as well as their performance of the *party animal* identity. The difficulties the AUC students describe in gaining access to Egyptians and using Arabic and their subsequent tendency to hang out with other international students in English are consistent with the quantitative results demonstrating that they used more English than Arabic, and that they spent more time speaking to NNSs of Arabic than NSs. Although there are some noticeable differences between the students in this study and those participating in research in study abroad in other locations, these findings also echo student complaints raised by previous studies concerning a lack of local interest in developing friendships with them and the subsequent difficulty this caused them in gaining access to locals and using the target language. Students have complained of these difficulties in a number of areas of the world, including Argentina (Isabelli-García, 2006), France (Allen & Herron, 2003; Kinginger, 2008), the United States (Amuzie and Winke, 2009), and Costa Rica (Twombly, 1995).

Thus, for the students at AUC, there was often a mismatch between the reality of their study abroad experience and their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East as a result of the difficulties they encountered in gaining access to Egyptians and using Arabic and thus performing the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner*

necessary to gain access to their imagined community. Faced with this mismatch, some students became less invested in their sojourn abroad as a language learning context, and engaged in behavior detrimental to their language learning such as pursuing friendships in English, stopping Arabic classes, or changing their majors from Arabic. Other students sought to use individual agency to make their real community more like their imagined one, by avoiding performing the *party animal* identity, requesting Egyptian roommates, insisting on using Arabic, and participating in extracurricular activities. These students succeeded to varying degrees in using this individual agency to gain access to Egyptians and use Arabic. For example, students who participated in extracurricular activities to which they brought valuable resources (such as their athletic or English skills) were often more successful. However, a striking feature of this account of study abroad at AUC is the extent to which students had not expected to need to exert this agency, but had rather assumed that gaining access to Egyptians and using Arabic would automatically follow from their presence in Egypt. For example, Ryan explained that he was not "forced" to use Arabic as he imagined he would be:

I thought my Arabic would get better simply because I thought I would be forced to use it more, but because so many people speak English, I don't have to use it as much as I thought I would have to

Thus, the students studying at AUC found that the communicative contexts they encountered in reality often did not match the ideal of their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East, making it difficult for them to claim their desired identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner*. This mismatch was due to program-specific factors (such as not having Egyptian roommates or classmates and the location of the university) as well as aspects of the socio-historical context (such as anti-Western sentiment, cliques, and class

differences). While some students were able to exert their individual agency to gain access to Egyptians and use Arabic by participating in extracurricular activities or changing their living situation, others simply became less invested in their study abroad as a language learning context due to this mismatch.

Middlebury

As noted in Chapter 3, one of the reasons I chose to do research with the Middlebury program was that it actively sought to overcome some of the limitations on access to Egyptians and Arabic use faced by study abroad students in Egypt. In particular, living with Egyptian roommates or a host family was mandatory, and these Egyptians were also encouraged to travel on program trips within Egypt. The Middlebury program also enforced a language pledge for both study abroad and Egyptian participants, and provided opportunities to participate in a number of extracurricular activities. In focusing on the communicative contexts of the Middlebury program, I also describe the extent to which these measures were able to make the reality of the study abroad experience match that of students' imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East.

Educational Setting.

In the Middlebury program, students typically took four classes for a total of approximately sixteen hours per week: MSA, Egyptian Arabic, an elective (topics included translation, media, literature, Political Islam, and modern or ancient history of Egypt), and an independent study (topics included literature, religious life in Egypt, women's studies, Islamic Law, Arab-Israeli Relations, Modern and Ancient History, Comparative Religion, Political Islam, Egyptology, Gender Studies, Political Geography, and Classical Poetry. With the exception of the independent study, which was one on one, their classes were composed of other

students in the Middlebury program and a (usually) Egyptian teacher. All of the classes were conducted entirely in Arabic (in contrast to the study abroad program at AUC), and the four to five hours of homework they did each night was also in Arabic, although sometimes they translated to or from English. In these classes, particularly the independent study, students gained interactions with these teachers in Arabic. Sometimes this extended to activities outside of class, such as watching a movie together or visiting a teacher's house, also in Arabic.

Some students mentioned difficulties dealing with the teaching styles or viewpoints of their teachers, particularly concerning religion. For example, Aurora mentioned that in the U.S, she was taught to respect all religions and she did not feel that her independent study professor did. She also thought that some of his information was incorrect. Nevertheless, she found it interesting as a "شباك على العقل الديني" [window into the religious mind]. In fact, a number of students mentioned that even when they did not agree with their teachers, particularly concerning religious and cultural practices, they still found the classes interesting as exposure to a different way of thinking and an opportunity to perform the identity of *cross-cultural mediator*. Erin explained this, fitting her ideas into the framework of "East v. West":

أنا بأحب وجهة نظر مختلف تماما لكن أنا يعني بجد أنا تعلمت كثير في الكورسات بتاعتي من امريكا لكن بجد انا
باحب الوجهة نظر مختلفة وعكس من الغرب ويعني مش موافقة لكل المعلومات ولكن كويس قوي أنا يعني عندي
يعني فكرة حقيقية عن الموضوع من يعني وجهة نظرين

[I like a completely different view, but I like really I learned a lot in my courses in America, but really, I like a different point of view, and the opposite of the West, and like I don't agree with all of the information but it's very good I you know, have the real idea about a topic from like two points of view]

However, their performance of this identity could be limited in the sense that most of the students felt that they could not directly argue with their professor as it would not be respectful. As a result they sometimes felt frustrated at their inability to oppose the information they did not agree with. After listening to a lecture she described as focusing on "the perks of female circumcision" Jennifer vented on Facebook, where her classmates expressed frustration with similar lectures, and Thea advised her to tell her professor to read some Nawal Al-Saadawi (an Egyptian writer known, among other things, for her stance against female circumcision).

The Middlebury classes took place in the Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL) Center, which is a building on the Humanities Campus of the University of Alexandria, as well as on the floor of a building next to the Center, which provided classrooms and offices for the Middlebury and Arabic Flagship programs. In addition to their teachers, students met and interacted with students in the other Arabic programs in the Center, as well as the janitorial staff. However, like the students at AUC, they mentioned that they typically did not meet students at the University of Alexandria, since they were in a program separated administratively and physically from the rest of the university. Carl explained:

يعني صعب شوية أن أتعرف على يعني باقي الناس مثل في الكلية علشان هم بيسكن في بيوتهم وببروحوا
المحاضرات وبعدين بيرجعوا البيت ويعني كمان أنا مش في المحاضرات معهم ودا صعب

[It's like a little hard to meet like other people, like at the college, because they live in their homes, and go to classes, and afterwards return home, and like also I'm not in classes with them, and that's hard]

During the day, the students primarily spent time with the other students in the program. Unlike the students at AUC however, they reported that due to the language pledge, they used

primarily Arabic while hanging out with each other at the university, which facilitated their performance of the identity of *dedicated language learner*. This also limited their interaction with other foreign students who were more likely to use English among each other, as Rose explained:

(نتكلم مع) طلاب شوية في فلاجشيب بس هم بيتكلموا بالإنجليزي على طول مع بعض واحنا مش ممكن نكلم معهم
يعني شوية في المركز

[[We speak with] students in the Flagship a little but they always speak in English together and we aren't able to talk with them, like a little in the Center]

Living Situation.

Unlike the AUC students, the Middlebury students generally did not feel limited by their educational setting, primarily because the Middlebury program arranged their living situation to facilitate contact with Egyptians. Students in this study either lived in the University of Alexandria dorms or with host families (living in an apartment was an option, but was not recommended by the program, and none of the students participating in this study lived in apartments).

Dormitories.

As in Cairo, students attending the University of Alexandria who live in Alexandria live at home. Therefore, the dorms house students from the countryside or those whose parents live overseas (often in the Gulf). In the male dormitory, students had single rooms, with each foreign student assigned a "roommate" who lived close by as well as a language partner. In the female dormitory, students had double rooms, and each foreign student shared the room with an Egyptian roommate in addition to having a language partner. In both dormitories, the floors

housing the foreigners were nicer than the rest of the floors. Breakfast and dinner were served in the dorms for the foreign students and the Egyptians participating in the program to encourage them to eat together. Program fees paid by the study abroad students (or their parents, or scholarships, or financial aid, etc.) covered the room and board for the Egyptians working with the program. In addition to their roommates, the students also met the workers in the dorms.

The students, teachers, and Egyptian students in the Middlebury program all agreed that this experience in the dorms was essential for providing opportunities for the students to interact with Egyptians, in Arabic, and thus perform their desired identities as *cross-cultural mediators* and *dedicated language learners*. Carl stated كل صحابي من المدينة [all of my friends are from the dorms]. Saeeda, one of the teachers at Middlebury, explained that the dorms were crucial for gaining access to Egyptian peers:

قبل وجود الطلاب بتوع المدينة ماكانش احتكاك مع الطلاب المصريين فدي كانت بالنسبة لهم أزمة بعد وجود الطلاب
من المدينة هو شيء إيجابي جدا

[Before the students from the dorms there was no interaction with Egyptian students, and this was a crisis for them, after the students in the dorms, this was a very, very positive thing]

In the male dormitories, students reported discussing a variety of issues, from basic conversations about everyday activities or their vacation plans to deep discussions about religion, politics, and cultural differences between Egypt and the United States. Tom described their discussions as:

مع الطلبة في المدينة الجامعية المناقشة يعني الشعبية هي المناقشة عن جنس وعن بنات في امريكا على طول تقريبا
أبوة هم عندهم أسئلة كثيرة عن يعني الثقافة الامريكية وخاصة بالنسبة للبنات فدا كثير معهم وطبعا عندنا يعني عندي

أسئلة كثيرة عن الثقافة المصرية وفيه مناقشات كثيرة عن الثقافة هنا بس يعني مناقشات مختلفة فيه يعني مثلاً أنا بأحترم يعني أنا عندي أسئلة كثيرة عن نظام التعليم هنا وفندي يعني مناقشات كثيرة عن يعني نظام التعليم مختلف تماماً من أمريكا

[With the students in the dorms, the you know popular discussion, is the discussion about sex and about girls in American almost all the time, yes, they have a lot of questions about like American culture, and especially as far as girls, so that's a lot with them, and of course we have like, I have a lot of questions about Egyptian culture and there are lots of discussions about the culture here, but you know, different discussions, there's like, for example, I respect, like I have a lot of questions about the educational system here, and so I have like lots of discussions about like the educational system, which is completely different from America]

Sam also emphasized the variety of discussions he had in the dorms, saying:

نتكلم عن كل حاجة البنات والمزوز نقول وفيه المناقشات الطويلة يعني أتكلم بكثير مع أشرف هو يسكن في الغرفة على جنب غرفتي ونتكلم عن الإسلام السياسية والديموقراطية والحرية وممكن الحجاب والنظرية عن الحرية في الشرق ونظرية عن الحرية عن في الغرب

[We talk about everything, girls and hotties, we say, and there are long discussions, like I talk a lot with Ashraf, he lives in the room next to my room and we talk about Political Islam and democracy and freedom, and maybe the headscarf, and the theory of freedom in the East and the theory of freedom in the West]

Some students enjoyed these discussions, explaining that although they often disagreed in the end, it was interesting for both the Egyptians and the study abroad students to hear the different viewpoints. Sam stated:

مش لازم أوافق يعني أنا كنت عندي مناقشات شديدة جدا يعني عن حاجات كثيرة بس نحترم بعض قوي وبنحب بعض احنا قريب جدا

[We don't have to agree, like I had very strong discussions you know, about a lot of things, but we respect each other a lot, and we like each other, we are very close]

Others students felt that these disagreements could make these discussions difficult, and thus they were not always successful in pursuing the identity of *cross-cultural mediator*. Alex explained:

أعتقد هم يعرفون أن الموضوع صعب مش مناسب دائما يعني احنا ساكنيين مع بعض وهيكون صعب شوية لو فيه مناقشة وحشة مثلا أو بشكل عام احنا نتكلم عن الثقافة المصرية ثقافة المنطقة الشرق الأوسط وأحيانا السياسة بس بشكل عام السياسة الأمريكية وحشة

[I think they know that the issue is hard, it's not appropriate always, like we are living together and it will be a little difficult if there is a bad discussion for example, or generally, we talk about Egyptian culture, the culture of the Middle East region, and sometimes politics but in general American politics is bad]

Tom explained that he could only talk with certain Egyptians about certain topics:

أنا عايز أنا لسه عايز ام أتعلم أكثر عن الدين في مصر بس يعني عندي صاحب واحد أنا أتكلم معه عن الدين ولكن باين علي يعني الدين شخصية شوية وأعتقد دالوقتي عندي أصحاب أكثر بس في بداية الترم أنا ما شعرش براحة أتكلم معهم عن يعني أرائهم عن يعني حاجات زي كده عن الدين أو يعني أنا امتخصص في العلوم السياسية وام فعندي طبعا أسئلة كثيرة عن السياسة المصرية بس أنا كمان مع مصري واحد أنا تكلمت كثير معه عن السياسية وأراء المصريين عن السياسة والإنسان والحكومة بس دا كان تقريبا مع شخص واحد مش مع الكل علشان كمان يعني مش عارف بالظبط لو الموضوع مناسب جدا رأيك ايه عن مبارك وحاجة زي كده

[I want, I still want, um, to learn more about religion in Egypt but like I have one friend I

talk with about religion, but it's clear to me, you know, religion is a little personal, and I think now I have more friends but in the beginning of the term, I didn't feel comfortable talking with them on like their opinions on like things like that, on religion, and you know, I'm majoring in Political Science, and um, I have of course, lots of questions about Egyptian politics but I also with one Egyptian I talked a lot with him about politics and the opinions of Egyptians on politics, and the individual and the government, but that was almost always with only one person, not everyone because also like, I don't know exactly if the topic is very appropriate, what is your opinion on Mubarak and something like that]

The students also used the Egyptians in the program as linguistic and cultural resources, asking them for help with their homework, or words and expressions that came up in conversation or on TV. Jordan explained:

ممكن العبارات أو الثقافة المصرية أو يعني أي حاجة عايز أعرف عايز أعلم أكثر من دا اليوم مختلف بعض الوقت سمعت حاجة أو شفت حاجة أو ناقشنا حاجة في المحاضرات وعايز أعلم أكثر عن دا في الثقافة المصري

[Maybe expressions or Egyptian culture or like anything I want to know, I want to learn more about it, each day is different, sometimes I heard something or saw something or we discussed something in class and I want to learn more about it in Egyptian culture]

The study abroad and Egyptian students also watched television together, and went out to cafes, to exercise, or to explore the city, usually in groups that were mixed Egyptian and study abroad students. For example, Anders described a typical weekend as:

تفرجنا على الماتش في القهوة وبعد كده احتفلنا بالشوارع ويوم الجمعة لعبنا كرة القدم في الصباح وبعد كده قضينا وقت شوية في بيت عمر (مدير البرنامج) وعصير مكه وممكن اه مش قهوة ممكن مطعم وبعد كده كان عندي تمرين أو ماتش رغبى . . . بعد كده أعتقد رحنا إلى قهوة في محطة رملة شوية وبعد كده رجعنا إلى بيت الطلاب وبعض

الطلاب رحنا إلى قهوة هناك وأخيرا يوم السبت وأنا وشريكتي اللغوي سامي مشينا في المدينة لساعتين ورحت إلى
فرن آخر للحواوشي وسوق آخر سوق في الابراهيمية ومشينا قريب من السبورتينج في سموحة وناقشنا يعني

موضوعات مختلفة

[We watched the game in a coffeeshop and after that celebrated in the streets and Friday, we played soccer in the morning and after that spend a little time at Omar [the program director]'s house and Mecca Juice and maybe ah, not an coffeeshop, maybe a restaurant, and after that I had a rugby drill or game . . . After that I think we went to a coffeeshop in Ramla Square for a bit and after that returned to the dorms and some of us went to a coffeeshop there and finally, Saturday, my language partner Sami and I walked in the city for two hours and we went to another hawawshi oven, and another market, a market in Ibrahimiyya, and we walked close to Sporting in Smooaha, and discussed like different subjects]

In the female dorms, the students also spent time with their roommates and the other Egyptian students in the program. They too had a variety of discussions, although, like the male students, they tended to only have more serious discussions with those Egyptians that they were closer to. Erin said she talked about:

ام يعني عن عادة بس الجدول اليومية والحياة اليومية وام أنا تعبانة دالوقتي اه أيوة أنا كمان ازي ازي كان يومك . . .
حاجة زي كده ولكن أحيانا أنا تكلمت مع هالة زميلتي في الأوضة عن يعني موضوع سياسية أو يعني مع بين العرب
وأسرائيل وكمان يعني الدور البنات ويعني كثير حاجات كثير من الحاجات سياسية

[Um, you know, about, usually just the daily routine and daily life and um, I'm tired now, oh yes, me too, how, how was your day . . . Things like that but sometimes I talked with Hala, my roommate about a political topic or you know, with, between the Arabs and

Israel, and also you know, the role of women and like lots of things, lots of political things]

On the other hand, some female students felt that the majority of the female Egyptian students were not interested in discussing political issues. Since the study abroad students were often interested in discussing these issues in order to perform the identity of *cross-cultural mediator*, they could find this frustrating. Rose explained:

البنات لا يتكلمون كثير عن السياسية ام أنا لا أعرف إذا جزء للثقافة أو إذا هم ام لا اهتمام به او ما عرفش بس نتكلم عن حياتهم وام واجباتهم وكل حاجة التي البنات يتكلم عن إلا الرجال ما يتكلمون عن الرجال كثير

[The girls don't talk a lot about politics, um, I don't know if it's part of the culture or they, um, they're not interested in it, or I don't know but we talk about their lives and um, their homework, and everything that the girls talk about, except men, they don't talk about men a lot].

Similar to the female students in Twombly's (1995) study in Costa Rica, Thea complained that she did not have a lot in common with the Egyptian girls:

يعني كل البنات كويسين قوي قوي قوي بس مش عندنا حاجات كثير بيننا يعني احنا نتكلم في حياتنا بس ما فيش يعني اي حاجة زي سياسة أو الأخبار السياسية زي كده

[You know, all of the girls are really really really great but we don't have a lot of things in common, like we talk about our life, but there's not anything like politics or political news, like that]

The Egyptian female roommates agreed that they did not often talk about politics. For example, Amina said: احنا بنات مالناش دعوة بالسياسة [We're girls, we don't have anything to do with politics]

Like the male students, the female students sometimes felt there were things they wanted to ask their roommates but were not sure if it would be appropriate. Lydia explained:

صعب لو عايز أن أتكلم مع المصريين عن حاجة مهم بالنسبة لي يعني الحجاب أو يعني العلاقات بين الرجال والبنات والعلاقات بين الأسرة مصريين والبنات الابن في الأسرة لكن صعب لي لأن ام أنا ماعرفش لو هذه السؤال مناسب قوي ولذلك معظم الوقت أنا أتكلم مع المصريين بس على موضوع شعبي أو موضوع يعني اه ازيك وكيف ازي يومك وأو يعني ازي أسرتك مش مهم لأن أنا ماعرفش ازي تتكلم معهم عن الحاجات مهم ام وأنا أتمنى أن أنا ممكن سأتكلم معهم لأن هناك حاجات كثير أنا عايزة أن عارفة لكن مش مناسب لسؤالهم يعني أنا عايزة أنا أعرف عن FGM بجد بس مش ممكن أنا أسأل زميل أوضتي عن دا صعب شوية

[It's hard if I want to talk with the Egyptians about something important to me, like the headscarf or like the relationships between men and girls and the relationships between the Egyptian families and the girls, the boy in the family, but it's hard for me because um, I don't know if this is a very appropriate question, and for this reason, most of the time I just talk with Egyptians on a popular topic or a a topic like, oh, how are you, and how was your day, and or you know, how is your family, it's not important because I don't know how to talk with them about important things and I hope that I will be able to talk with them because there are lots of things I want to know but it's not appropriate to ask them, like I really want to know about FGM, but I can't ask my roommate about that, it's a little difficult]

Mallory explained that she could talk about anything with her roommate, but was more cautious with the other Egyptians in the dorms:

ممكن أنا أتكلم عن أي موضوع مع أي أمريكيين علشان احنا ندرس نفس الحاجة ويعني عندنا تقريبا نفس التجربة بس أنا عارفة في مواضيع أنا ممكن مش أتكلم مع المصريين عنها . . . زي أحيانا ليك مثلا الدين . . . زي ممكن أنا أتكلم عن الموضوع بس ممكن مش زي لو أنا كنت أتكلم مع ليك امريكيين أو حاجة ممكن زي أي رأيك عن هذه الفكرة وانت تفكري ايه ودائما مختلفة ومفيد بالنسبة لبحثي وبالنسبة لي بس عايزة أعرف حاجات بس أنا شوية خالي بالي أحيانا بالنسبة مش مع زميلتي في الأوضة أنا أتكلم معها عن كل حاجة ودا كويس قوي

[Maybe I speak about any topic with Americans because we study the same thing and you know, we have almost the same experience but I know there are topics maybe I don't talk about with the Egyptians . . . Like sometimes like for example religion . . . like maybe I'll talk about the topic but maybe not like if I were talking with like Americans or something, maybe like what's your opinion on this idea, and what do you think, and it's always different and beneficial for my research and for me but I want to know things but I'm a little careful sometimes in terms of, not with my roommate, I talk with her about anything, and that's good]

In addition to engaging in discussions in the dorms, the students also watched television and movies together and went shopping. Sometimes the study abroad students would go the countryside to visit the Egyptian students' families.

The female study abroad students also had a curfew of 10 pm, which was several hours later than the 7pm curfew for the Egyptian students. It is standard for unmarried Egyptian females to have a curfew, whether set by the dorm or their families. Many of the study abroad students wanted to go to cafes to study after 7pm, and this meant that they had to go without the female Egyptian students (although sometimes the Egyptian girls could get permission to go out). Even when the curfew was not in effect, some of the students complained that the Egyptians girls never left the dorms, which made it difficult to spend time with them since they did not want to spend all of their time in the dorms. For example, Carol explained:

والبنات المصريين مش بيخرجوا من المدينة كثير يعني بعضهم بس مش عايزين وبعضهم ممكن شوية ممكن مش مناسب عشان هم مخطوبين ويعني ماعرفش بالظبط بس هم بس مش بيخرجوا كثير

[And the Egyptian girls don't go out of the dorm a lot, like some of them just don't want to, and some of them maybe, it's maybe a little inappropriate because they are engaged,

and like I don't know exactly but they just don't go out a lot]

Although living in the dorms gave students considerable access to the Egyptians they lived with, the students stated that they did not usually meet Egyptians who lived in the dorms who were not part of the Middlebury program. They also felt that the gender segregation of the dorms made it difficult for them to meet Egyptians of the opposite gender as well as to spend time with study abroad students of the opposite gender outside of classes. Spur-of-the moment activities such as going to a cafe or a particular place tended to occur with whomever was around in the dorms, and thus these tended to be more gender segregated than the students were used to. Anders explained:

لسه فيه انقسام شوية بين يعني الرجالة والبنات عشان بيت الطلاب وبيت الطالبات فيعني لازم نبذل جهود يعني للاجتماع مع بعض فيعني غالبا لما أنا في المدينة الجامعية أنا يعني أعمل حاجة مع الرجالة بس أحيانا في الويك أبدأ أو يعني ممكن بعد الصفوف هنروح مع بعض لمحطة رملة أو عصير مكه يعني أو لو فيه يعني نشاط لكل البرنامج زي حفلة موسيقية وسط البلد أو أي حاجة هنعمل حاجات مع بعض

[There is still a separation between like the men and the girls because of the male dorm and the female dorm, so you know, we have to make an effort to like meet together, so like most of the time when I'm in the dorm, I like do something with the men, but sometimes on the weekend or like maybe after classes, we go together to Ramla Square or Mecca Juice, you know, or if there's like an activity for the whole program, like a Wust el-Balad concert or anything, we'll do things together]

Carl felt similarly, saying:

الانفصال بين الرجالة والنساء في أول مرة دا ممكن عشان احنا متعودين على احتكاك مع صديقتنا ودائما بنروح مع بعض أو بنتعشى أو بنعمل حاجات مع بعض وكده يعني لو احنا فعلا عاوزين كده لسه ممكن بس لازم نخطط كل حاجة مش ممكن أشوف يعني صديقتي في الجناح في الصلاة وأقول اه اه انت عاوزة تروحي قهوة أو حاجة زي كده

لازم أقول حاجة في اليوم انت فاضية في ليل انت عاوز تعملي كده ويعني عندك مثلا انت قلت تخطط حاجات

[The separation between the men and the women, this is the first time that's possible, because we're used to being integrated with our female friends and we always go together and eat dinner or do things together and this is like if we really want that, it's still possible, but we have to plan everything, it's not possible to see my female friend in the suite, in the hall and say oh, oh, you want to go to a coffeeshop or something like that, it's necessary to say something during the day, are you free at night, do you want to do this, and like, do you have for example, you said you are planning something]

In terms of their language use, the students tended to use only Arabic with the Egyptians, and primarily Arabic among themselves, although this varied from person to person. Many of the students felt that living in the dorms was essential to their language development, particularly of Egyptian Arabic and youth slang. According to Ayman, one of the roommates:

معظم الطلبة قالوا إن المدينة الجامعية هي أكثر مكان هم بيستفيدوا باللغة العربية خصوصا العامية

[Most of the students said that the dorms are the place they benefit most in terms of Arabic, especially Egyptian Arabic]

They reported using a mixture of MSA and Egyptian dialect, and noted that while the students they lived with understood this, they did not necessarily correct these mistakes, which the students felt at times hindered their ability to pursue the identity of *dedicated language learner*. Rose explained:

احنا بنتكلم معظن الوقت في فصحي و عامية مع بعض ولي مشكلة مع فصحي و عامية مع بعض عشان معظم البنات في المدينة هم فاهمنا وهم مش هيقول ولا حاجة لو أنا أستخدم كلمات فصحي قوي مع في عامية وهم مش هيقول ولا حاجة ونفس الحاجة مع معظم أساتذتنا هم فاهمنا ودا كفاية وهم مش هيقول يعني لا دا كلمة فصحي بس نقول دي

[We speak most of the time in MSA and Egyptian Arabic together and I have a problem with MSA and Egyptian Arabic together because most of the girls in the dorms, they understand us, and they won't say anything if I use words that are very MSA with, in Egyptian Arabic, and they won't say anything, and the same with with most of our teachers, they understand us and that's enough, and they won't say like no, that's an MSA word, but we say this in Egyptian Arabic]

Some students did use English with each other, although not with their Egyptian roommates, and this practice separated them from these roommates. Jordan said:

(احنا) أكثر مش مع بعض (أمريكان ومصريين) زي يعني معظم الوقت علشان ممكن يعني بالليل مع الامريكان
ممكن نتكلم مش بالعربي ممكن وعشان دا حاجة صعبة مع المصريين أنا عايز مجموعة هيكون موجودون بس عشان
دا مش عادل علشان احنا نتكلم بالإنجليزي

[[We're] more not together (Americans and Egyptians), like you know most of the time because maybe like at night, with the Americans, maybe we don't speak Arabic, maybe and because of that, it's something hard with the Egyptians, I want a group to be present but because of this it's not fair, because we speak English]

Families.

Three of the Alexandria students (Aurora, Holly, and Isabelle) lived with Egyptian families, an opportunity that was available only to female students. Egyptian families are less likely to welcome a strange male into the home, particularly if female members of the household wear the headscarf. Women who wear headscarfs do not normally wear them in front of their immediate family, but if they hosted a foreign male they would need to wear their scarves all the time. Students in host families did not have a language partner, but interacted with their

families.

Aurora lived with a single female host mother, rather than the multiple member household, and was frustrated with the set-up as well as the cleanliness standard of her host mother. She explained:

الشقة مش نظيفة خالص وأنا عارفة كده أنا بأسكن في الشقة وأنا بأشوف المطبخ وحاجة زي كده وبس صعب يعني
يعني اللحم على طول زي ليك في المطبخ ومش في الثفاجة وحاجة زي كده ودا بس صعب عشان أنا مش عايز أكل
كده

[The apartment isn't clean at all, and I know that, I live in the apartment and I see the kitchen and something like that, but it's hard like, like the meat is always like in the kitchen and not in the refrigerator and something like that, and that's hard because I don't want to eat it like that.]

Holly lived with a host mother and father who had one son at home and four others outside of the home, and she spent a lot of time watching television with the family. Isabelle lived with a host mother and father with a son and daughter. All three students appreciated the insights they gained from living with the families, although they sometimes felt that they lacked Egyptian peers without the dorm experience. For example, Holly told me:

أحيانا أنا بأشعر أو أنا واحدة خالص كل البنات مع بعض بس أنا هنا وأنا حزينة عن دا شوية فكل البنات في المدينة
الجامعية عندهم زميلة في الأوضة وكلهم برضه عندهم شريكة لغوية لسه ما بيتكلموش مع البنات
المصريين كثيرا ويمكن لو فيه فرص أكثر أحسن

[Sometimes I feel, or I am very alone, all of the girls are together but I'm here and I'm sad about that a little, all of the girls in the dorm have, have a roommate and all of them also have a language partner . . . I still don't speak a lot with the Egyptian girls and

maybe if there were more opportunities it would be better.]

Isabelle felt similarly, explaining:

صعب شوية عشان أنا مش أنا عارفة الطالبات في يعني الطالبات المصرية في البيت الطلاب بس مش عارفة هم
يعني كويس قوي قوي فيعني لو أنا ممكن مع أليس واه هي بتروح مكان مع زميلة أوضتها يعني أنا أروح معهم وأنا
بأحب أن أتكلم معهم بس أنا مش عندي مشروعات معهم عادة يعني معهم يعني بدون أي شخص آخر من البرنامج
وذلك صعب عشان أنا عايزة أتعرفهم يعني أكثر بس صعب

[It's a little difficult because I don't, I know the students in like the Egyptian students in the dorm, but I don't know them like very very well, so like if I maybe am with Alice and ah, she's going to a place with her roommate, like I will go with them and I like to speak with them, but I don't have plans with them usually, like with them, like without another person from the program and that's hard because I want to get to know them more, but it's hard]

The students did gain access to Egyptians other than their immediate families through their living situation. Generally, they gained access to the extended family and family friends, by going on and receiving family visits, a common activity in Egypt. They also discussed a variety of topics with their families, such as holidays, the importance of money, education in Egypt, and differences between Arab countries. They reported always using Arabic with their families, and that their families helped them with their linguistic development. At the same time, they also encountered linguistic difficulties. Isabelle stated that her lack of knowledge of Egyptian Arabic made communication difficult at first:

في البداية كانت صعب قوي يعني مع الأسرة أنا ما عرفتش أيه حاجة هم كانوا يقولها ويعني بعد وقت شوية أنا بدأت
أن أفهم حاجات بس أنا ما كنتش بأستطيع أنا أقول حاجات فكنت يعني عارفة أو هم يقول دا بس أنا مش عارفة ازي

أرد بالعامية وعندي ذلك شوية دالوقتي بس أحسن بكثير

[In the beginning it was very hard, like with the family, I didn't know anything they were saying and you know, after a little time, I started to understand things but I wasn't able to say things so like I knew, or they that, but I didn't know how to respond in Egyptian Arabic and I have that a little now, but it's a lot better]

Aurora reported that although her host mother understood her, her mother's friends often did not:

مثلا زي صاحب ماماتي هم مش هيفهموا أو زي اه دا أمور قوي انت بتحاولي ولسه بس يعني ام معظم الوقت دالوقتي هم بس بيردوا بالعربي

[For example like my mother's friends they won't understand or like oh, that's very cute, you are trying and still, but like um, most of the time now they just respond in Arabic]

Extracurriculars.

The Middlebury program organized a number of activities for the foreign and Egyptian students in the program. There were soccer games every Friday, as well as concerts by popular bands like Wust al-Balad and Black Theama, theater and cooking clubs, and local and overnight sightseeing trips. These types of activities were particularly important for cross-gender interaction, given the gender segregation in the dorms, as Sam explained:

نعمل خطة شوية لو عايز نعمل اية حاجة مع البنات عشان فيه الطول بين المدينتين بس كان فيه عيد ميلاد لبننت اسمها سامية ورحت ورحت يعني سلسلة لعيد الميلاد مع بعض المصريين والأمريكيين من المدينة إلى سلسلة وكان فيه حفلة وبعد كده قعدت بس معظم الوقت مع الرجالة المصريين أو مع الرجالة أو مع البنات من البرنامج والرجالة من البرنامج بس مش مع البنات المصريين

[We sort of make a plan if we want to do anything with the girls because of the distance between the two dorms, but it was the birthday of a girl named Samiya, and I went, I

went like to Silsila for her birthday with some of the Egyptians and Americans from the dorms, to Silsila and there was a party and after that I stayed, but most of the time, with the Egyptian men or with the men or the girls in the program and the men in the program but not with the Egyptian girls]

These program organized activities could also lead to subsequent activities, as Mallory describes in the following example:

مع البرنامج بس كمان مع المصريين من البرنامج علشان هم كمان في كل الحاجات هم بيروحوا إلى نادي السينما
كمان هم يلعبوا كرة معا أحيانا هم عندهم حاجة زي معانا مثلا رحنا إلى السينما مع المصريين وتفرجنا على فيلم وبعد
كده واحد منهم كان عارف كان فيه فرح ورحنا إلى الفرح معه وحاجة زي كده علشان دائما عندهم حاجة خاصة واو
كي واحنا بس tag along

[With the program, but also with the Egyptians from the program because they are also in everything, they go to the Movie Club, they also play soccer together, sometimes they have something like with us, for example we went to the cinema with the Egyptians and saw a movie, and after that one of them knew there was a wedding and we went to the wedding with him, and something like this, because they always have something special and okay, we just tag along]

In contrast to the students at AUC, the students in the Middlebury program felt that their context (including the deliberate strategies pursued at the program level) to a large degree facilitated their access to Egyptians and use of Arabic, and thus made it easier for them to perform the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* necessary to participate in their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East. Thus, the reality of their sojourn in Egypt was a close match to their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East, and this could cause them to become more invested in their study abroad as a

language learning experience. For example, many of the Middlebury students carried around notebooks to write down every new word they encountered, something I rarely saw the AUC students do. As a result of the language pledge, these students also did not have the opportunity the students studying at AUC did to perform the identity of *cross-cultural mediator* in English, separating it from the performance of the identity of *dedicated language learner*. Their desire to perform the identity of *cross-cultural mediator* by have serious conversations with their Egyptian peers about politics, religion, and culture could result in an increased investment in language learning in order to be able to have these conversations. While the choice of the Middlebury program and its language pledge in the first place is another indication of these students' greater investment in their sojourn as a language learning context, it should not be assumed that all of the students in this program necessarily had a greater initial investment in Arabic than students who chose the AUC program. In particular, many of the students at AUC were unaware of the existence of other programs, as they had simply chosen one of the ones their school study abroad office offered. While a few of the Middlebury students found this program searching on their own, the vast majority had connections through their schools, prior study experience at the Middlebury Summer School, or friends. Whether a result of their program choice, program facilitation of access to Egyptian and language use, or a combination of the two, the Middlebury students' greater investment in their sojourn as a language learning context can help explain the quantitative results demonstrating that they used more Arabic overall.

However, being generally more invested in their sojourn as a language learning context does not mean that these students did not face problems regarding access to Egyptians and the use of Arabic. Some of the female students' complaints about their inability to relate to the Egyptian female students in the dorms are similar to those complaints expressed by students

studying in Costa Rica in Twombly's (1995) study. Despite their desire to engage with cultural and political differences to perform the identity of *cross-cultural mediator*, these students did not necessarily have the tools to engage with these differences in ways that allowed them to perform this mediation, and as a result could end up avoiding the discussion of certain topics with certain interlocutors, instead venting their frustrations with the differences they encountered to their study abroad peers. The Middlebury students, like those at AUC, also faced difficulties gaining access to Egyptians and using Arabic outside of the program context, particularly in informal encounters, a topic that will be further explored in the following section.

Shared Communicative Contexts

In addition to communicative contexts related directly to the setting, students' interactions were also affected by factors unrelated to the specific program. These included non-program organized extracurriculars, prior connections, and informal encounters.

Non-program Extracurriculars

Students also participated in activities unrelated to their study abroad program, which often required a great deal of agency on their part to arrange and follow through on. These included the Alexandria Rotaract Club, lectures at the American cultural center in Alexandria, calligraphy lessons, salsa dancing, and ultimate frisbee.

Several students pursued internships in Egypt. Lydia (Middlebury) interned at the Alexandria Library with the group organizing World Peace Day, and Carl (Middlebury) interned with the translation unit at Alexandria University. Nathalie (AUC), who was a belly dancer with her own costume design business in the United States, did an unpaid internship with an American costume designer while in Cairo, and met the Egyptians who worked there. Pearl (AUC), who was a film major, did an internship with a satellite distribution company, editing

scripts. In all of these internships, they used a mixture of English and Arabic for speaking with their co-workers, translating, or other activities.

Students also participated in religious activities. Karley (AUC) attended a Bible Study group that included some Egyptians. The Bible Study and her conversations with these Egyptians were in English. Lucy and Billy (AUC) attended church, usually in English, but occasionally in Arabic. Carl (Middlebury) attended church most Sundays in Arabic, and Paige and Rose (Middlebury) also attended church on occasion.

Teaching English was also a popular activity, particularly for students at AUC. Justin, Tasha, and Rashid (AUC) taught English in the trash-collectors' district of Cairo, and developed friendships there. Mariam, Jane, and Mandy (AUC) taught English once a week for two hours to refugees through the Cairo STAR club at AUC. Since the refugees were primarily from non-Arabic speaking countries, they used English in class. Lucy (AUC) taught English at a school in Maadi, and Mita (AUC, 2009) taught English through the Better World NGO. Shelly and Karley (AUC) also taught refugees through two different church organizations. Although they felt this experience was beneficial, they noted that it took the programs several months to get organized, and by this time they were over halfway through their semester abroad. Teaching English was a less common activity for students in the Middlebury program due to the language pledge, but Francis and Anders (Middlebury) taught English at a training center in Alexandria twice a week for a month of the term.

Through these activities, students were often able to gain access to Egyptian social networks. For example, Rashid, Justin, and Mita reported pursuing friendships with their students and the program organizers in the organizations where they taught English. In Fall

2010, some of the Middlebury students organized a discussion group with young Egyptians on various topics of interest at the American Cultural Center, which allowed them to meet Egyptians not associated with the Middlebury program, as Holly explained:

وكلهم طلبة في جامعة إسكندرية بس هم إسكندرانيين وعشان كده مختلفين من الطالبة في المدينة الجامعية

[And all of them are students at Alexandria University but they are Alexandrians and so they're different from the students in the dorms].

Over the course of the semester, some of the Middlebury students, including James, Holly, and Isabelle developed friendships with these students outside of the discussions. They took a trip to an amusement park together, and hung out with them in the city.

The language used in these extracurriculars varied greatly. For example, Anna (AUC) noted that many of the activities she pursued involved mixed groups of international students and Egyptians, which made English likely to be the common language:

يعني بأقضي وقت مع مصريين احنا في مجموعة اللي فيها أمريكيان ومصريين سوا فبعض الامريكان ما بيتكلموش العربي خالص فصعب بتكلم بالعربي في مجموعة اللي فيها ناس ما بيتكلموش عربي فمعظم الوقت بتكلم إنجليزي

[Like I spend time with Egyptians, we're in a group that has Americans and Egyptians together, so sometimes the Americans don't speak Arabic at all, so it's hard for us to speak Arabic in a group that has people who don't speak Arabic, so most of the time we speak English]

Nathalie (AUC) also reported a mix of language at her internship, and explained that she had to learn specialized sewing terminology:

We have a range of English spoken there, like the head assistant, she's completely bilingual, the second assistant she speaks some English, mostly Arabic, and then

everybody else speaks just Arabic, so, it's like, that's it, some of them I have to speak completely Arabic with, like our sewing guy, I have to tell him everything in Arabic, so I have to learn a lot of random kind of words, like sewing related, like I didn't know the word for needle or cloth or anything when I came here so I had to learn that.

Many of the students teaching English reported using a mix of English and Arabic with friends they met via this activity in order to help each other learn. While students teaching non-Arabic speakers reported using primarily English in class, other students felt that even though they were teaching English they were still able to use their Arabic. Rashid (AUC) explained:

The weekends are the times I teach the most, which is actually more useful to me than my homework in Arabic because I'm teaching all the time and the teachers and the students don't speak English and they say it's, and so it's very elementary, I'm teaching letters and sounds of letters and basic sentence structures in ammiyya, so that's what I do most of my free time.

Francis (Middlebury) had a similar experience teaching in Alexandria:

كنت بأدرس إنجليزي في شهر مارس ودا كان تسعين وثمانين خمسة وثمانين في المية بالعربي عشان المستوى
بتاعتهم يعني ما كانش عالية فكان لازم أتكلم بالعربي

[I was teaching English in March, and that was 90, 80, 85% in Arabic because of the level, their level you know, wasn't high, so it was necessary to speak in Arabic.]

Prior Connections

A number of the students in both programs were able to use their individual agency to gain access to Egyptians by drawing upon prior connections, such as meeting online, being connected through a previous study abroad student or a mutual friend elsewhere. For example, Tasha (AUC) developed a close friendship with an Egyptian who had attended the same school

as her in Switzerland, although not at the same time, when they were introduced by a mutual friend via Facebook. Gunnar (AUC) met an Egyptian friend through MySpace and then Facebook, and this friend introduced him to his group of friends. Gunnar also had a good Egyptian friend whom he met in a cafe while on a short visit to Egypt with his father, and then kept up with online before returning. Ariana (AUC) had an Egyptian friend from the peace camp she had attended in Egypt in high school. Anne (AUC) had a family friend on campus that she chatted with from time to time. Mariam's (AUC) father had an Egyptian contact through his work, and Mariam spent her first week in Egypt staying with this family. Some of Nathalie's (AUC) closest Egyptian friends were contacts she had made before coming abroad, and these friends introduced her to their friends, one of whom she ended up dating for a few months. Pearl (AUC) developed a close group of friends that she met via an outgoing study abroad student, and Meron (AUC) also met an Egyptian friend this way. Keith (Middlebury) mentioned going to a house party hosted by an Egyptian friend of a friend in program, and Sam (Middlebury) met a group of Egyptians who were friends of an Egyptian friend of his in the United States. Aurora (Middlebury) had met some Egyptians through a conference at her home university.

Several of the Egyptians interviewed also felt that this was a good way to meet friends. Khaled (AUC) explained that he met incoming international students on the recommendation of outgoing ones and online. For example, a friend from the Fall semester told him that Ryan was coming in the Spring semester, and Khaled met Ryan via Facebook chat before he arrived in Egypt. Nora (AUC teacher/student) felt that meeting friends before coming to Egypt was particularly important for having friendships with Egyptians:

طبعاً فيه شوية منهم بيبقوا lucky يعني هم مثلاً قبلما يجوا مصر عاملين صداقات already online ومثلاً أنا مثلاً
 اه حد يقولي مثلاً طب عرفيني على حد

[Of course, there are some of them that are lucky, like they, for example, before coming to Egypt formed friendships online already and for example I, for example, ah someone tells me for example, okay introduce me to someone]

Hala (Middlebury roommate) felt that the opportunity to meet future roommates via communications technology was important, as it allowed them to develop their friendship prior to the actual study abroad experience. She explained:

أنا كنت أعرف البنات كنت أعرف مجموعة من البنات من البرنامج اللي فات عشان هم أصحابهم فأنا أعرفتهم على
النت قبلما يجوا فهم جايين احنا كنا عارفين بعض البرنامج اللي فات قعدنا فترة شهر مثلا لسه مش متعودين على
بعض قوي بس الgroup دا عشان احنا كنا نعرفهم قبلما يجوا يعني بقينا أصحاب بسرعة بسرعة قوي

[I knew the girls, I knew a group of the girls from the last program because they are their friends, so I met them on the internet before they came, so when they came we knew each other, the last program, we spent some time, a month for example, we still weren't very used to each other, but this group, because we knew them before they came, like we became friends quickly, very quickly]

The language students used with these friends varied. As many of them were upper class (particularly if met abroad or through mutual friends abroad), the students tended to use English with them. However, the students mentioned that if these contacts were less proficient in English they were more likely to use Arabic.

Informal Encounters

In addition to more structured activities, the students also engaged in informal contact with Egyptians, through activities such as shopping, going to the pharmacy, ordering food, exploring the city, asking for directions, taking public transportation and taxis, and traveling in Egypt or other Arabic-speaking countries. Billy (AUC) stated that he used Arabic: "basically

anytime where you're in like a typical everyday situation interacting with someone who speaks Arabic, when you're not at AUC necessarily.” While these interactions were often limited to the transaction at hand, such as buying a bottle of water or a sandwich, students could also exert agency to extend these encounters, particularly if students had repeated interaction with the same merchants. For example, Rob (AUC) made a habit of talking to the shop owners in his neighborhood on a regular basis, explaining:

I'm pretty good friends with the owners of a lot of the local stores because I always make a point to try to talk to them freely, for five minutes about my homework or about whatever I'm doing in class, they're very interested in what we're doing and I'm very interested in practicing and in what they're doing and in what they're life is like, and so like even something as simple as like walking into a coffeeshop and having the person already know what I want, even like being considered a regular.

Billy (AUC) gave an example of a similar situation:

There's this one place I eat called Alex Top in Zamalek I have kosher there probably five nights a week, and now I mean I think there's a guy who owns it or who the main waiter who runs it and I feel like our conversations now are more substantial than just I'd like kosher, I'd like kosher, ooh, Um Ali, I love Um Ali, how much does this cost?

Taxis were a favorite conversation opportunity many of the students, particularly as longer rides often provided ample opportunities to perform the identity of *cross-cultural mediator*. According to Ryan (AUC):

I would say the main thing is taxi drivers, I like to talk with them, especially because I feel like they're like you know, like one of the most common average people you'll meet

in Egypt, I like to get their opinion on things, so I'll ask them about like the elections or like you know, the politics or where they've been to, where they want to go, I like talking to taxi drivers the most, so that's my favorite.

Anders (Middlebury) felt similarly:

عشان معظم المحادثات الذي عندي مع المصريين في الشارع مع سواق في التاكس معظم السواق سعيدين ومبسوط
وممكن يدهشون في البداية بس يعني بعد كده نناقش ممكن السياسة الحرب في العراق يعني الحياة في امريكا الحياة
في مصر

[Because most of the conversations that I have with Egyptians in the street are with a taxi driver, most of the drivers are happy and pleased and maybe surprised in the beginning but you know, after that we discuss maybe politics, the war in Iraq, like life in America, life in Egypt]

For short taxi rides, the students stated that their conversations were generally limited to the same questions, as described by Jane (AUC):

It's just like the directions, and then they'll ask like where I'm from and stuff, and so then I'll tell them I'm from America, I'm studying at AUC, I'll tell like what I'm studying, sometimes they ask, they'll ask me about Obama, so that's always fun, because I'm like oh, yeah, *raʔi:s* [President] Obama, like *kwajjis* [good], but um, that's it.

However, longer journeys could extend into new conversations. Anna (AUC) explained:

أحيانا لو الرحلة قصيرة المناقشة نفس المواضيع كل المرة اه انت متجوزه؟ انت من اين؟ يعني كم عمرك؟ كده بس لو
يعني عشان الزحمة أحيانا الرحلة طويلة جدا ولما بأكون عندي مزاج في الكلام كلمنا مثلا عن حالة التعليم في مصر
مشكلة البطالة أو حياتهم مثلا

[Sometimes if the trip is short, the discussion is the same topics every time, oh, are you

married? where are you from? how old are you? and so on, but if like, because of the traffic sometimes the trip is very long, and when I'm in the mood to talk, we talked for example about the state of education in Egypt, the problem of unemployment, or their lives, for example]

Nina (AUC) had a regular cab driver that she called to take her and her friends places and she explained that this regular contact also led to more topics:

Lately, because we've been driving with him for so often, it's usually about like his family, and like what we want to do in the future and things like that, and, um, it ranges from little things like what street do you want to be on, or how far away is it, to like how is the weather in the States, what are things like in the States, things like that.

Wandering, exploring, and talking to anyone they met in the street was also a way students found to gain interactions in Arabic. Gunnar (Middlebury) explained: “you need to buy new sandals, and you kind of head out and you end up like only getting back three hours later and you've like experienced all these things and talked to all these people, so it's always a good adventure to just go on some random errand”. Billy (AUC) wrote on his blog:

Personally, meandering around all by my lonesome is one of my favorite things to do, for a few reasons: I don't get slowed down by others, I can go where I want to go, and I get a chance to interact with my surroundings and use my Arabic. Today, I headed west, off Zamalek, across the Nile, and into Mohandessin. I really didn't have any objective in mind. If I saw something interesting, I headed towards it.

Several of the students commented on the relative ease of talking to strangers. Erin (Middlebury) explained:

أنا أقابل حد في الترام أو حاجة أو ممكن في مشروع أو حاجة زي كده هنكون أصحاب بعد خمس دقيقة ودا غريب بالنسبة لي علشان أنا من امريكا ودا مش صحيح في امريكا خالص لكن ممتعة ويعني دا كويس قوي ويعني أنا عايزة حاجة زي كده في امريكا بس غريب خالص في امريكا

[I meet someone in the tram or something or maybe in the microbus or something like that, we'll be friends after five minutes and that's strange for me because I'm from America and that's not true in America at all, but it's enjoyable, and like that's very good, and like I want something like this in America, but it's very strange in America]

For male students, chatting in coffeeshops was a popular activity, as Alex (Middlebury) explained:

فيه القهوة دائما فيه كل المصريين في القهوة يفتكروا عن الامريكيين ظريف جدا وهم عايزين يعرفون ليه احنا هنا

[In the coffeeshop always, there are all the Egyptians in the coffeeshop that think the Americans are very funny and they want to know why we are here]

Ryan (AUC) also commented that this was one of his favorite activities:

I just like go to like usually I go smoke sheisha and like get surrounded by people who are Egyptian, not like, doesn't mean like you know smoke sheisha in Zamalek surrounded by Americans it means you know, get out, like I really like, like I've gone to Medinat az-zabaleen [trash collector's district] quite a few times just because I really like it there, and, or Tahrir, or somewhere.

Sometimes coffeeshop friendships could extend outside the coffeeshop. For example, Gunnar (AUC) continued a friendship with someone he met in a coffeeshop during vacation over Facebook, and then in person when he returned to Egypt. Justin (AUC), who was of French descent, overheard a group of Egyptians practicing French in a coffeeshop, and befriended them to practice French and Arabic. Meeting people in traditional coffeeshops, as well as on the

streets was an activity limited largely to the male students.

Limitations on informal encounters.

Indeed, while the students valued the opportunities these informal encounters presented, they also felt that there were limits to their ability to use individual agency to extend informal encounters. As Lucy (AUC) said, “there's not that many things you walk up to random strangers and talk about on the street anywhere in the world.” Sam (Middlebury) expressed similar views:

أنا ممكن مش أشوف حد في الشارع وتكلم معه عن يعني أي (حاجة)

[I maybe won't see someone in the street and talk with him about like any[thing]]

The students also felt that they often had the same conversations with strangers. Carol described this conversation as:

دائما نفس الأسئلة انت من اين انت يعني درستي عربي من اين ويعني انت بتعملي ايه في مصر يعني زيارة انت

طالبة وليه انت عايزة تسكني في مصر؟

[Always the same questions, where are you from, like where did you study Arabic, and like what are you doing in Egypt, like a visit, you're a student, and why do you want to live in Egypt?].

Justin (AUC) explained: "I always kind of end up saying the same thing to strangers because it's kind of limited in what you can say, and then ah, so I'm like really good at like meeting people up front in Arabic, but kind of like beyond that is, I feel like there's like a big limit."

In addition to the nature of the encounter, there were a number of factors that students felt limited their opportunities to pursue these encounters, including their proficiency in Arabic in general and Egyptian dialect in particular, their interlocutor's proficiency in English, and the

various identities categories discussed in the next chapter.

Proficiency.

Some students felt that it was difficult for them to extend conversations in informal encounters due to their limited proficiency in Arabic. Although they had all taken at least one year of Arabic, and sometimes more, this was not enough. Lucy (AUC), who had taken three semesters of Arabic, said: "I don't have the Arabic for more than superficial interactions." Carol (Middlebury), who had taken two years of Arabic, felt that it was sometimes harder to understand people in informal encounters:

بعض البنات في الشارع بيكلم بسرعة قوي وبلهجة شوية صعبة فدايما أنا مش فاهمة على طول.

[Some of the girls in the street speak quickly and in an accent that's a little hard, so always, I don't understand right away].

Jordan (Middlebury) described how his limited proficiency could lead him to avoid extending interactions:

في التاكس أنا مش عايز أقول يعني أنا أتكلم عربي بس أنا مش فاهمك يعني دا حاجة صعبة اه أبوة أنا ما فهمتكش ولكن أنا مش عايز أقول دا وممكن أنا هأمشي إلى يعني شخص ثاني وأسأله مرة ثانية عشان أنا مش عايز يعني انت تعتقد أنا مش فاهم عربي

[In the taxi, I don't want to say like I speak Arabic, but I don't understand you, like that's something hard, ah, yes, I didn't understand you, but I don't want to say that and maybe I'll go to like another person and ask him again, because I don't want like you to think that I don't understand Arabic]

Students with lower proficiency could also rely on their international friends with higher proficiencies, rather than speaking themselves. Kala (AUC) stated that: "for like the first two weeks, I didn't really speak, I kind of just let him [her boyfriend] like deal with everything."

While Kala's boyfriend eventually pushed her to do the speaking, this was not always the case. On the other hand, this situation could allow students who had the highest proficiency levels among their friends to have more interactions, as they did the talking for their friends as well as themselves. For example, Nina (AUC) mentioned arranging trips from the new campus to a main part of Cairo for her friends, Rob (AUC) arranged a trip to Dahab, a resort town on the Red Sea for a group of his friends, and Ryan (AUC) negotiated taxis and prices for his friends.

Unfamiliarity with Arabic diglossia.

Most students had not studied any sort of colloquial Arabic before studying abroad in Egypt, and for many the initial shock at the differences between MSA and Egyptian Arabic was difficult, making them feel, as Rashid (AUC) said, "like I hadn't taken any Arabic at all". Many of them felt that they had not fully understood the diglossic situation before coming to Egypt. For example, Nina (AUC) wrote on her blog:

I was pretty confident with my Arabic abilities. I mean, I was top of my language class and I had a wide repertoire - like basic greetings, vocabulary to discuss the current nuclear situation in Iran, and I could tell you all about famous Arabs in history. That should have been a good start at least, right? Wrong. I was horrified when I couldn't communicate with the cleaning ladies to tell them that Wednesday mornings worked best for them to change my sheets.

James (Middlebury) explained:

بس أعتقد المشكلة كانت يعني مافهمتش كنت أفكر يعني الفرق كان زي هم بيقول جيم (ʒi:m) instead of جيم (gi:m)
ممکن دا بس ومافهمتش فيه لغة ثانية اسمها العامية المصرية

[But I think the problem was you know, I didn't understand, I thought that like the difference

was like they say *gi:m* instead of *ʒi:m* maybe that, but I didn't understand there was another language called Egyptian Arabic]

Several of the Egyptians confirmed that the students sounded strange at first, coming with MSA, although they picked up Egyptian Arabic quickly. Alia (Middlebury roommate) explained:

لما بييجوا يقولوا أي كلمة بالفصحى احنا بنستغرب بس مجرد يوم أو يومين هم بيتكلموا العامية كويس

[When they come and say any word in MSA, we are surprised, but it's just a day or two, they speak Egyptian Arabic well]

Although most students felt overwhelmed at first, some students felt that they were able to catch onto the differences rather quickly, although they were frustrated at losing a few weeks or a month of their experience to figuring out these differences. Steve (AUC) explained:

I just felt like it put me behind in terms of speaking to people and like because I had nothing, so it was very difficult to get started, whereas if I would have had something, I feel like I would have started picking up more language, more quickly, like it set me back, there were a few weeks that were wasted that I could easily have picked up phrases and things like that in the States that like I didn't need to be immersed in the culture to figure those out and then I would have been expanding my vocabulary beyond like basic you know, basic hello how are you the first couple of weeks.

Others felt that this loss of confidence colored their entire semester abroad. Anne (AUC) lamented:

When I first got here, and I tried to use Modern Standard to speak to people, you kind of get odd reactions, like they don't really know what you're saying and part of that's

because my Modern Standard's not very good but just it, they don't respond in a way that encourages you to use it, so it made me feel really uncomfortable when I realized I really wasn't able to communicate very well, just because I started speaking with something they aren't used to hearing on a daily basis, so I guess if I had known more colloquial and had gotten better responses from native speakers when I first got here, I would have felt more comfortable trying to use Arabic.

Tom (Middlebury) explained that three quarters of the way through the semester, he still struggled to understand people he met in the street:

لسه عندي مشاكل كثيرة لفهم أشخاص في الشوارع يعني أحسن في المدينة الجامعية أعتقد علشان هم يعني فاهمين دا إلى حد ما وهم يعني بيستخدموا مفردات شوية بسيطة وخاصة عامية ممكن بشويش شوية بس في الشوارع أنا لسه عندي مشاكل بأفهمهم وكمان بعض الأحيان هم مش يعني فاهميني ودا يعني أكبر مشكلة لي كثير هنا

[I still have a lot of problems with understanding people in the streets, like it's better in the dorms I think because they like understand that to some degree and they like use vocabulary that's a little simpler and especially Egyptian Arabic, is maybe a little slower, but in the streets, I still have problems understanding them and also sometimes, they like don't understand me and that's like the biggest problem for me, a lot here]

Students who had studied some colloquial Arabic, even if it was a different colloquial, generally appreciated the perspective this gave them on the linguistic situation. Karley (AUC), who had spend the summer in Jordan before coming to Egypt said:

Like I knew like some stuff with the verbs, and like that basic stuff, it's just, it's very different than Jordanian, so but learning the Jordanian I think helped me and I wasn't so, because when I went to Jordan I was completely shocked that like, I knew it was different

how people spoke and like, but I never realized like how very different it was, so I think it prepared me well for that, I guess, so and well, like when I came here I wasn't trying to speak *fusha* [MSA] to people, like even you know if I was speaking Jordanian *ʕa:mmi:ja* [Colloquial] I feel like that's better than speaking *fusha* [MSA]

Alex (Middlebury), who had studied Syrian and Iraqi dialects, also felt that this helped him, explaining:

هم مختلفة جدا من عامية مصرية بس سوريا خصوصا فيه كثير من الخصائص اه وهم من نفس الحاجة تقريبا
وعراقي كمان يعني كل اللهجات العربية الحديثة عندهم حاجة أو حاجتين اه in common

[They are very different from Egyptian Arabic, but Syrian especially, there's a lot of characteristics, ah, and they are from almost the same thing, and Iraqi too, you know, all of the modern Arabic dialects have a thing or two ah, in common].

Responses in English.

The students also stated that they were sometimes responded to or addressed in English, something that also occurred in my participant observations, even if we were speaking Arabic together. The students felt that their limited proficiency in Egyptian Arabic in particular often led to responses in English, as Mallory (Middlebury) explained:

مثلا في بداية البرنامج ما كنتش أتلكم بالعامية أية كلمة بالعامية وما كنتش فاهمة فمعظم الأشخاص يعني في المطعم
أو في الشارع أو في أية مكان يعني يحاول أولا لو كنت أقول أية حاجة هم يعني يقول بالعربي بس في البداية ما كنتش
عارفة الكلمة وهم يعني قالوا حاجة وأنا ما فهمتش وأنا ممكن مرة ثانية وهم يحاول بالإنجليزي فدا كان مشكلة

[For example in the beginning of the program, I didn't speak Egyptian Arabic, not a word in Egyptian Arabic, and I didn't understand, so most of the people like in the restaurant or in the street or in any place, like try first, if I said anything they like say in Arabic but in

the beginning I didn't know the word, and they like said something and I didn't understand and I'm maybe another time, and they try in English, so that was a problem]

Stephanie (AUC) complained that she was automatically responded to in English:

Some of the cab drivers even if we try to speak to them in Arabic they'll just respond automatically in English which makes it a bit frustrating because I'm like okay, my Arabic's not that bad, like I can at least tell you where I'm going.

When responded to in English, some students would switch to English as well, particularly if they thought their interlocutor's English was better than their Arabic, a common occurrence. Tasha (AUC) explained:

It's very difficult because just usually when I'm talking to someone in the street their English is better than my Arabic, and so once they figure that out they switch to English, and usually it happens quickly, so . . . I appreciate it but at the same time it's frustrating because I do want to practice my Arabic, but I do understand that we can communicate better in English and so I think that's often how it works out.

Other students would exert individual agency to continue in Arabic, explaining that if they persisted long enough, their interlocutor's would often switch to Arabic. Nathalie (AUC) explained: "once I speak to them in Arabic like a little bit, they'll kind of be like okay, she wants to speak in Arabic, all right, yeah, they get the idea." Anders (Middlebury) described a similar situation:

بشكل عام في الشوارع لما أمشي في المدينة لما عايز أناقش أو لما عايز أتكلم بالعربي الشخص آخر الذي أناقش معه عايز يتكلم عربي كمان ممكن بالإنجليزي بس أنا دائما أتكلم بالعربي معه وعادة يغير من الإنجليزي إلى العربي

[In general, in the streets, when I walk in the city, when I want to discuss or when I want to talk in Arabic the other person that I'm speaking with wants to speak Arabic also,

maybe in English, but I always speak in Arabic with him, and usually he changes from English to Arabic]

At other times, the students interacted with Egyptians who insisted on English, and would have a two language conversation as described by Francis (Middlebury):

لو هم عارفين إنجليزي بيحاول بالإنجليزي بس غالبا المستوى مش عالي يعني كفاية فما بيحاولوش أحيانا فيه واحد أو اثنين اللي بيستمروا في المحاولة التواصل بالإنجليزي وأنا مش هأرد بالإنجليزي يعني فيس في الوقت دا أنا مش لاحظ إن هم بيتكلموا بلغة وأنا في لغة ثانية أنا بس غريب قوي يعني أنا بالعربي وهم بالإنجليزي بس بالنسبة لي كلنا نتكلم فممتع

[If they know English they try in English but usually the level isn't like high enough, so they don't try, sometimes there's one or two that continue trying to communicate in English, and I don't reply in English like, so but in this case, I don't notice that they are speaking in one language and I'm in another language, I'm, but its very strange like I'm in Arabic and they're in English, but for me, we all speak, so it's enjoyable]

Other students found this type of conversation frustrating. Karley (AUC) explained: "sometimes I get really frustrated because I'll try and use my Arabic and they'll just insist on using their English."

The Egyptian roommates also confirmed that the students were spoken to in English. Hala gave the following example:

أنا وأيرن مرة برة كنا في مطعم فهي هي كانت بتتكلم الجارسون كانت بتتكلم بالعربي وهو كان بيرد عليها بالإنجليزي وهي كلمته بالعربي الرد بالإنجليزي فأنا قلت له هي بتتكلم بالعربي لازم تتكلمها بالعربي رد عليها بالعربي قال لي أنا تعودت إن أنا أجنب أكلهم بالإنجليزي مش متعود على الفكرة إن أجنب بيتكلموا بالعربي دي مش واردة يعني فأنا لما بأشوفك مثلا وانت امريكية أنا بأحضر نفسي أنا هأكل معك إنجليزي حتى لو انت كلمتي عربي أول مثلا انت عارفة بعض الكلمات مش هتفهميني لو أنت كلمت معك بسرعة فهم الناس عندهم كده يعني

[Erin and I were out on time, we were in a restaurant, and she was speaking to the waiter, she was speaking to him in Arabic and he was replying to her in English, and she spoke to him in Arabic, the reply in English, so I said to him, she's speaking Arabic, you need to speak to her in Arabic, reply to her in Arabic, he told me I'm used to foreigners, I speak to them in English, I'm not used to the idea that foreigners speak Arabic, this isn't possible, you know, so when I see you, for example, that you are American, I prepare myself, I will speak English with you even if you speak Arabic first, for example, you know some words, you won't understand me if I spoke with you quickly, so people are like that, you know, that's it, foreigners, maybe I can speak English, that's it, there's no Arabic]

The fact that Egyptians were able to use English with the study abroad students relates directly to the socio-historical context, where English medium education is common among the upper classes in Egypt, and valued at all levels of society for the economic and educational opportunities it can provide. This is in sharp contrast to the role of Arabic education in the United States, which is typically only offered at the university level, has only recently started to adopt proficiency-based teaching methods, and often does not provide instruction in the Arabic dialects students need to use while abroad. As a result, students' lack of Arabic proficiency compared to their interlocutors' English proficiency often limited their opportunities to pursue Arabic interactions provided by the communicative contexts they participate in. However, as Hala's quote demonstrates, the varying proficiency levels were not the only factor at play. As the next chapter will examine in more detail, responses in English were also tied to the students' identification as foreigners.

Thus, in the shared communicative contexts of non-program extracurriculars, prior connections, and informal encounters, students also faced challenges in gaining access to Egyptians and using Arabic, and thus performing the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* necessary for participation in their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East. As such, they sometimes found that the reality of their sojourn did not match this imagined community, and became less invested in their study abroad experience as a language learning context. In this case, they often resorted to behavior that they recognized did not help their language learning, including the use of English. Other students exerted individual agency to try to remedy this mismatch by insisting upon the use of Arabic or drawing on resources such as prior connections or skills of local value that could help facilitate access or use. The extent to which students became less invested in their learning context or exerted individual agency varied considerably, and can help explain the extensive individual variation within and between the two programs reported in the quantitative results.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that the students' investment in Arabic was tied to their vision of future imagined selves who would be able to gain valuable material and symbolic resources as a result of their Arabic skills and understanding of the Middle East. This investment was often directly related to the construction of Arabic as a critical language in the current socio-historical context. The study abroad sojourn was an intermediary step towards these future selves, and while abroad, they envisioned themselves as part of an imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East. This imagined community extended beyond the geographical boundaries of Egypt (to students studying in other Middle Eastern countries) as well as the temporal boundaries of their time abroad (to students studying abroad in other semesters). The

study abroad students also defined this imagined community against that of study abroad to more traditional destinations, which they discounted as less serious. In order to participate in this imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East, the students had to perform the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* (by gaining access to Egyptians) and to a lesser extent *dedicated language learner* (but using Arabic). However, examining the communicative contexts the students engaged in abroad demonstrates that contextual factors as well as the students' performance of the *vacationer* and *party animal* identities could limit their ability to gain access to Egyptians and use Arabic, resulting in a mismatch between their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East and the reality of their experience in Egypt.

Faced with this mismatch, students could become less invested in their sojourn as a language learning context, or use individual agency to try to remedy this mismatch. Differences in the amount of program facilitation of access and language use can help explain the general differences between the two programs in terms of language use. Variations in individual agency within each program, such as participation in extracurricular activities, the ability to choose a particular living situation, ending up with an Egyptian roommate who became a good friend, or insisting on the use of Arabic can help explain the large amounts of individual variation found in the quantitative results within each program.

The variety and diversity of these experiences within each program also indicate that a focus on the communicative contexts of language use, or what students are actually doing abroad, is not enough to explain their access to Egyptians or language use. As Norton and Toohey (2001) explain, “A focus on the learning context, however, needs to be complemented with a focus on the identity and human agency of the language learner” (p. 312)

Indeed, the limitations the students faced in informal encounters, as well as in the other

communicative contexts often related to their identities, and how these were received in the local context. For example, the students could be indexed as English speakers as a result of their foreign appearance and American nationality, limiting their ability to use Arabic, or be prevented from extending informal encounters as a result of being indexed as female, and thus an inappropriate conversation partner. The qualitative data also demonstrate that the ways in which students' identities were co-constructed between themselves and their interlocutors impacted their experience in many diverse ways, and this is the topic of the following chapter.

CHAPTER 6: THE ROLE OF IDENTITY

Using qualitative data to examine the communicative contexts of the students studying at AUC and Middlebury demonstrates the salience of identity categories such as gender and nationality in their communicative encounters (or lack thereof) with Egyptians. A trend in previous socio-psychological research on study abroad (and indeed language learning in general) has been to look at these types of characteristics as stable and unchanging, or “neatly packaged causal variables” (Kinging, 2009, p. 155). In contrast, poststructural approaches view these identities as multiple, contradictory, and changing. While the sociohistorical context plays a large role in shaping these identities and to some degree restricts the types of identities learners can take up, social actors also have individual agency, and can draw upon multiple identities as they see fit. Yet at the same time, their choice of certain positions may be contested by others, resulting in what Blackledge and Pavlenko (2001) describe as “a perpetual tension between self-chosen identities and others’ attempts to position them differently” (p. 249.) Similarly, Kinginger (2009) emphasizes that in a study abroad situation: “Their [the learners’] potential depends, on the one hand, upon how students are received in the contexts they frequent, and, on the other, upon how these same students opt to interpret their surroundings and host communities” (p. 211).

In this chapter, I focus on three identity categories that were particularly salient in my data: western foreigner, gender, and religion. Assigned identities within these categories (such as American, female or Muslim) were often non-negotiable, and in general the students did not wish to negotiate these identities. However, these assigned identities indexed multiple and sometimes contradictory identities and expected behaviors in the local socio-historical context. It was these indexed identities, and the ways in which the study abroad students negotiated (or

were unable or unwilling to negotiate) them with their interlocutors that affected their access to Egyptians and language use, and thus their ability to perform the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* crucial to matching their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East with the reality of their experience. The essential finding is that *what* identity within these categories the students were assigned (i.e. foreigner, male, Jew) was not as important as *how* they negotiated the identities indexed by this identity category. That is, the *same* identity within the larger category (i.e. Muslim or female) could both help and hinder their access to Egyptians and use of Arabic.

"Western" Foreigners in "the East"

In line with their desired identities as *cross-cultural mediators* in political and cultural conflicts between East and West, the Egyptian and study abroad student participants in this study typically used the terminology of East and West to place the study abroad students in the West, and Egyptians with the East, rarely problematizing this dichotomy. For example, Sam (Middlebury) described himself as:

أنا أمريكي جدا أنا أقول كل وجهة نظري يعني من الغرب

[I'm very American, I say all of my viewpoint is like from the West]

Similarly, Hanan (AUC teacher) explained that students encountered cultural differences:

بحكم إننا مجتمع شرقي وبحكم إن المجتمع الشرقي محافظ

[Because we're an Eastern society, and because the Eastern society is conservative]

Being identified as westerners in the East was crucial for students' desired identity as *cross-cultural mediators* as this gave them two cultures to mediate between. Yet being identified as westerners also impacted their ability gain the access to Egyptians in Arabic necessary to perform this identity. In this section, I first discuss the role of physical appearance in

identifying students as western foreigners or allowing them to pass as Egyptian, and how this impacted their access to Egyptians and Arabic language use. I then delve deeper into other identities associated with western foreigners in Egypt, specifically those of *morally loose westerners, representatives of American politics, fascinating westerners, tourists, wealthy foreigners, foreign guests, and English speakers*. I demonstrate how each of these identities impacted students' reception in Egypt, the various ways in which they negotiated this reception, and how this in turn affected their access to Egyptians and use of Arabic.

Physical Appearance

Based on their coloring and physical features⁵ as well as their dress, the majority of students were immediately identified as western foreigners and stood out on the streets of Egypt. However, there were other students whose appearance allowed them to pass as Egyptian. In this section, I demonstrate how students' physical appearance impacted their access to Egyptians and language use. In particular, I show how this is not simply a matter of being indexed as foreign or passing as Egyptian--students from both categories were able to use their reception to gain access and use Arabic, and students from both categories felt that these assumptions about their foreignness based on their physical appearance could be a disadvantage to gaining access and using Arabic.

5. While other research on language learning typically refers to race and ethnicity, these terms are problematic in this particular study, as racial and ethnic categories in Europe, North America, and Egypt do not match exactly. Furthermore, many of these students were of mixed ethnicities (although their physical features might index only one in the Egyptian context, i.e. a student of mixed Egyptian and European heritage who is assumed to be Egyptian). For this reason, I generally use the terms coloring and physical features (which indexed Egyptian or non-Egyptian identities).

Indexed as foreigners.

The majority of the students in this study were Americans of white European descent, and were identified by themselves as well as Egyptians they encountered as western foreigners, based on physical features such as light skin, hair, and eyes. Unused to having their appearance be marked, they complained of “sticking out” and the staring and attention they received in Egypt. Jane (AUC) said:

As soon as I do anything on my own, or like just walk through Tahrir, then all of the sudden, it's like you get all this attention, and it's all, like I lived here for two months, and I still get all this, welcome to Cairo, like welcome to Egypt, so at that point, it's just like, I'm not at all um, like I'm totally like conspicuous like walking around and everything.

Carl (Middlebury) wrote on his blog:

While I have accepted that I stick out like a sore thumb, it has been difficult to get used to, and as such I have grown tired of constantly being singled out by Egyptians when walking in the street. The hissing and broken English of Hi, How are you? Welcome in Egypt has really gotten on my nerves.

In addition to their coloring and physical features, students also noted that their dress made them stand out. While all the students modified their dress to some degree (not wearing shorts, and for females avoiding showing their shoulders as well) they did not necessarily dress like the majority of Egyptians (although there is a wide range of Egyptian dress). Erin (Middlebury) explained:

Mostly because I well, part of it is just my physical features red hair, pale skin, blue eyes, that sort of thing, and also because despite wanting to fit in, I can't seem to as far as my clothing, it's like I feel comfortable enough walking around in like a t-shirt and pants, so

I'm not going to like sacrifice my comfort for fitting, just for, not for fitting in, but you know, I haven't quite made the transition to like wearing long sleeves absolutely all the time, that sort of thing, so I think my I stand out as far as my clothing choices and the way I dress and I also have, I get that, mean New York walker thing going on when I'm walking to class in the morning.

Mandy (AUC), who was half Egyptian, noted that her dress could make her stick out despite the fact that her physical features caused her to look more Egyptian:

Like the way I dress, like, the fact that like my hair is not covered and like um, a lot of times I wake up in the morning and I leave the house and I don't put on any make up at all, that's not something that I think really happens here very often and like you know, I have this sort of, like I'm an American college student and like I'm used to going to class in like sweatpants and a sweatshirt and you know, sitting in a big lecture hall and like sort of blending in, like that sort of thing, and so I kind of come here with this mentality, well if I do that, and I'm dressed like whatever, you know, I'll just blend in, but obviously it doesn't work that way, I'm not dressing the same way as everyone else.

Rana (AUC teacher) explained it was natural for Egyptians who were unused to foreigners stare at them in public places like the metro, and felt that this behavior was class-based:

عشان المترو بيأخذ ناس كثير ومختلف الطبقات هي مثلا مصر فيها ناس rich وفيها ناس وسط وفيه ناس poor
خالص فالمترو دا بيلم الناس دي كلها يعني طريقة مثلا شايقة ناس very very poor فقراء جدا وفيه ناس نص
ونص فطبيعة إن لما يشوفوا واحد أجنبية لازم يقعد يبصلها كثير يعني حاجة ماشفتهاش في الطبيعة something هي
مش حاجة natural بالنسبة لي

[Because the metro has a lot of people from different classes, for example Egypt has

rich people and middle-class people and very poor people, so the metro gathers all of these people, like it's a way for example, to see very very poor people, very poor and people in the middle, so naturally, when they see a foreigner, they have to sit and stare at her a lot, like it's something I didn't see in nature, something, it's not something natural for me]

In terms of gaining access to Egyptians, some students found this attention annoying and avoided Egyptians as a result of it. Alex (Middlebury) explained:

فيه أشخاص كثير في مكان واحد ودائما عايزين يتكلموا معي ولكن هم ماعندهم ش صبر وهم دائما بيبصوا علينا في الشارع ودا مز عجة

[There are lots of people in one place and they always want to talk to me but they aren't patient and they always stare at us in the street, and that's annoying]

Carl (Middlebury), who was tall, blond, and blue-eyed, explained that he realized that this was simply something he had to deal with, but found actually doing this to be difficult:

فيه امريكا أنا بأحب أن يعني أعيش وأسكن في الخلفية شوية أنا مش عايز يعني وسط الانتباه خالص بس في مصر يعني أنا أجنبي والمشكلة وسط الانتباه أنا في مكان كل الناس بيبصوا عليه وممكن يتكلم عني بس كان صعب شوية أن أعود على كده ويعني في البداية غصبت شوية عشان أنا بأكره كده بس بعدين أدركت دا مش هيتغير لازم أنا أتغير أتغير تفكيري والعملية دي خد وقت طويل بس يعني دالوقتي أنا بأحس إنني متعود أكثر على مصر

[In America I like to you know, be and live in the background a little, I don't like you know, the center of attention at all, but in Egypt, like I'm foreign, and the problem is the center of attention, I'm in a place and everyone stares at me and maybe talks about me, it was just a little hard for me to get used to that, and like in the beginning, I got a little angry, because I hate that, but afterwards I realized that's not going to change, I have to change, change my thinking, and this process took a long time, but like, now, I feel that

I'm more used to Egypt]

Stevens (1994) notes that Americans are often frustrated with the attention they receive on the street as it violates a number of American pragmatic norms, such as asking overly personal questions, addressing someone who would rather be left alone, or addressing potential customers before they have asked for help. Several of the Egyptian participants also emphasized this cultural difference. Haydar (Middlebury staff) said:

welcome يعني أهلا بس دي مش حاجة وحشة ودا طبعا ممكن يكون بعض الطلبة تفتكر إن هو نوع من أنواع harassmentl تمام هيكون هو التأكيد ودا بيكون مختلف شوية على الثقافة بتاعتهم لازم الشخص يكون يقدم شخص ثاني يتم التعرف في أيطار معين موقف معين مش في الشارع كده

[“Welcome” means welcome but this isn’t a bad thing, and that’s of course, maybe some students think it’s a type of harassment okay, that’s certainly a little different from their culture, someone needs to meet someone else, the meeting should be in a specific context, a specific situation, not on the street like that]

While some students felt that being indexed as foreign was frustrating as a result of the attention they received, other students felt that this could be turned to their advantage, and used their strange appearance as a way of gaining interactions. Anders (Middlebury), whose physical appearance was similar to Carl, wrote on his blog:

Alexandria is truly the gift that keeps on giving. Not too big and not too small, I always find something new to surprise me when I go out exploring in the city. The best part, though, is the interactions that I have with people in places like the mosque courtyard / soccer field, the bakery, or the tram. Luckily for me, everyone's interest in chatting with the tall, undoubtedly foreign, blonde-haired guy who speaks Arabic never wanes.

Francis (Middlebury) also felt that his foreign appearance sometimes helped him gain

interactions (again contrasting this with Europe):

عشان الattention منهم عندي فرص أكثر للتعامل معهم من لو مثلاً كنت في باريس وأنا بس عادي وما حدش يتكلم
معي لغية ما تكلمت معه

[Because of the attention from them, I have more opportunities to work with them than if for example, I was in Paris and I was just normal and no one talked with me until I talked with him]

In terms of their linguistic choices in these interactions, the students felt that being indexed as western foreigners as a result of their physical appearance made it more likely for their interlocutors to use English with them, or want to speak to them in English, or be surprised that they spoke Arabic. In turn, this could affect their ability to pursue informal encounters in Arabic rather than English. Carol (Middlebury) drew a direct parallel between her physical appearance and her ability in Arabic, saying:

فأكيد أنا أبيض أنا لو تبوصيني أنا مش مصرية خالص وعشان كده فيه شخص كثير يتكلموا معي بالإنجليزية

[Of course I'm white, if you see me, I'm not Egyptian at all, and because of that there are many people who speak with me in English].

Ariana (AUC) explained that this occurred even on campus, where she thought the expectation would be that she was studying Arabic:

Like one time I tried to speak in Arabic and they were like please use English, which was really sad, but usually they're like very shocked, like they don't expect me to know any Arabic, like even, like I've made some Egyptian friends at AUC and I like went to class one day and I asked a girl, I was like *izzajik* [how are you?] and she was like so shocked, she was like where did you learn Arabic? I was like, I thought that like AUCians would know that like most Americans come here to study Arabic but she had no idea.

Many of the Egyptian participants also emphasized the connection between foreign appearance and using English. Marwan (Middlebury staff) explained:

المصريين automatic عندما يرى إن هذا أجنبي فهو سوف يتكلم الإنجليزية

[Egyptians automatically when he sees that this is a foreigner, he will speak English]

Haydar (Middlebury staff) emphasized the role of light hair and eyes in making this determination, switching to a heavily accented English to mock Egyptians making this assumption (and also giving an indication of the class of the people making these assumptions):

الناس عندها فكرة أولا إن واحد بشعر أصفر و عيون خضراء أجنبي بتتكلم بالإنجليزي فيه معظم الناس عندهم

الفكرة دي إن هو لو حب يتكلم معها هيتكلم معها بالإنجليزي اه do you speak English English is very

good

[The people have an idea first, that someone with blond hair and green eyes is a foreigner, a foreigner speaks English, most people have this idea, if he wanted to speak with her, he will speak with her in English, oh, “do you speak English, English is very good”]

They also explained that being indexed as a foreigner based on physical appearance was not something limited to actual foreigners. Osman (Middlebury roommate), who had light skin, blond hair, and freckles, told me during a participant observation that many of the shop owners near the dorms addressed him in English, even after several years of living in the dorms. Mohammed (AUC student), who also had light skin and wore shorts, explained that he was subject to verbal greetings in English normally addressed to foreigners:

Like once some guy you know, usually they tell me welcome to Egypt, hi, what's your name? and one guy he kept hey Captain Captain, haw haw because I didn't know what to tell him, and this was really a weird guy, he came to me, told me, hey baby, I love you, I

didn't really have anything to tell him back so I just left but it gives you an idea, and actually sometimes Egyptians tell me so where did you learn Arabic?

Being initially addressed in English caused some students to switch to English and validate their identification as English rather than Arabic speakers. Anne (AUC) explained: "it's frustrating because I do want to practice my Arabic, but I do understand that we can communicate better in English and so I think that's often how it works out." Other students would persist in Arabic, particularly as they felt that the contradiction between their physical appearance and their language skills made even more people want to talk to them, as described by Anders and Francis above. Thus, they were able to use the seemingly contradictory identity of *foreign Arabic speaker* to their advantage and pursue conversations in Arabic. Rob (AUC) took a particular delight in interacting with Egyptians who were "so confused as to why this big white guy speaks Arabic" and breaking what he assumed were their stereotypes of him:

My appearance, and my mannerisms, tend to fit a Midwestern, American, football-playing stereotype and that stereotype is portrayed in the movies that these kids have seen is he's the big dumb jock who joins the military so he can go bomb some A-rabs and so you know, when you get this big kid and they find out you know he took a semester off of college and worked on the Obama campaign and now he speaks two other languages, they really don't know what to make of it, they're really confused, and it's kind of like freaks them out, and you know a lot of times, I get really big smiles, just like wow, you speak really well.

As a result of their frustrations with issues of access and language use, many of the students focused on the heterogeneity of the United States compared to Egypt. They upheld America as a society accepting of racial and linguistic differences, a picture that is rather more

ideal than accurate, given the literature on the racialization of English language learners in the United States (Schmidt, 2002; Shuck, 2006). Carl (Middlebury) wrote in his blog:

Within these conversations, they [the Egyptian students] raised an extremely important point, which I had been taking for granite [sic]: America is a very heterogeneous society while Egypt is not. Thus, we Americans are used to seeing and interacting with peoples of different racial, ethnical and religious backgrounds on a daily basis – peoples who more often than not reside in the United States. Egyptians, on the other hand, do not have this privilege (I have come to realize that this is definitely is a privilege) and as such my hair color, skin color, and accursed height mark me as a nonresident and as thus Egyptian hospitality demands that they welcome me to their country. The result is the endless stream of calls of Hi, How are you, Welcome in Egypt that I had been able to ignore until my last post when they had finally succeeded in getting under my skin. In short, I have come to realize that is extremely important that I not only accept the fact that I stick out a lot but more importantly not resent this fact (however hard this may be).

Similarly, Ariana (AUC) emphasized a view of America that included speakers of accented English:

I just feel that just because of the way I look that I would never, at least initially, be like considered as part of Egyptian society which is very different from America, because like if you, like America's like everything, so like even if you have an accent, you're like, ok you're from here but oh, you're American, like but in Egypt I don't feel like they have the same kind of mentality.

Thus, for the students whose physical appearance indexed them as western foreigners, the initial local reception of their identity was as foreigners and English speakers, which could make

it difficult for them to gain the type of access to Egyptians necessary to fulfill their desired identity of *cross-cultural mediator* or the Arabic conversations necessary to fulfill their desired identity of *dedicated language learner*. Other students were able to renegotiate this identification as foreigners and English speakers, and use the fact that their physical appearance indexed them as foreign to gain interactions where they impressed their interlocutors with their unexpected Arabic knowledge.

Passing as Egyptian.

Students who had brown skin (who in this study were of South Asian, African, Arab and Mexican descents) or who were light-skinned but of Arab descent reported that they were often mistaken for Egyptian at first, until their interlocutors realized that they did not speak Arabic fluently. Sometimes, this was beneficial as unlike the students in the previous section, they were not immediately indexed as foreigners. Mita (AUC) explained that she liked the fact that she did not stick out in Egypt:

ممكن أحسن عشان أنا مش زي خواجه كل الساعة كل يوم وممكن أحسن stick out أنا مش

[Maybe it's better because I don't stick out like a foreigner every hour, every day, maybe it's better]

Rashid (AUC) felt that the combination of his Arabic and Muslim name and his skin color helped people feel more comfortable with him, and this was an advantage in terms of gaining access to Egyptians, particularly in contrast to his Irish-American friend:

Well my first name is Ahmed, and I go by Rashid back home and here as well, I go by Rashid, and when that comes up, if it comes up, even if it's like I lose my ID here, and I'm getting a new ID here, everything becomes so much easier once they see my name is Ahmed, and I mean, I'm a bit darker-skinned complexion, I think that helps, I've never

seen, once I had a bad experience when somebody asked me what I was, and I said I'm mixed race, and he wasn't happy about that, he said that's not preferable, but that's the only bad experience I've had to be honest, like I think it does help and like one of my other close friends is American, he's Irish, and I actually think that my skin has changed my experience here, I mean, I'm not going to say like 360, but it's a bit easier. . . it's about like an access thing, it's easier to jump into conversations, I don't know, there's like not a familiar, like it's not familiarity, but it's a comfortable, I don't know, I've never vocalized it, but I feel like, I think I am treated differently with Egyptians because of my skin color, and I don't know how exactly, I think it just makes things easier, I'd say, I know like getting things in terms of like things has always been easier for me than my friend for who's American and Irish, and I don't know if it's because of my name, my skin color, in terms of my long hair, sometimes that is harder, sometimes that is harder, but with my name and my skin color, I feel like there has been only positive things.

Linguistically, students who could pass as Egyptian also had the advantage of being initially indexed as Arabic speakers, as Nina (AUC) related on her blog:

So I ventured out to buy a sim card for the cell phone I brought from India in order to use it here instead of buying a new phone. The guys at Vodafone all thought I was Egyptian so they started speaking to me in swift colloquial Arabic and I just stared blankly at them for a few seconds.

Mita (AUC) reported a similar experience: "they kind of expect me to speak Arabic because I look Arab, so most of the time people come up to me and speak Arabic to me and then I'm like what, *mumkin ta:ni* [maybe again]"

While this initially allowed the students to claim their desired identity of Arabic speakers,

not having the linguistic abilities to meet the expectations of their interlocutors could cause these interlocutors to switch to English, when it was established that the students did not understand, or weren't Egyptian. Nina (AUC) explained how despite her desire to continue to claim an identity as an Arabic speaker, her interlocutors would not always validate this identity:

Usually they're surprised when I say that I'm actually from the States, and when I'm from the, when I say that, they automatically switch into English, even though I'll be speaking to them in Arabic, and I'll want to continue speaking to them in Arabic, so I will say things in Arabic, but they'll just remain speaking in English, just because I'm from the States I guess.

Welat (Middlebury) said that because of his physical appearance, he was sometimes taken for Egyptian and addressed in Arabic. However, he was unable to continue to claim this identity as an Arabic speaker when his language skills revealed that he was not Arab, even if he drew upon the language pledge to explain "English is forbidden." After all, Egyptians outside of the Middlebury program were subject to nor even aware of the language pledge:

عندما هم يلاحظ أنا مش مصري أنا مش عرب هم يحاولون كثير أن يتكلموا إنجليزي ولكن يعني أنا كمان أحاول أن أتكلم عربي وأحياناً يعني ممكن احنا نقول اوكي احنا نتكلم عربي وممنوع إنجليزي أو حاجة زي كده وممكن يعني يتكلموا عربي بس أنا معظم الوقت هم بس يعني يستمروا أن يتكلم إنجليزي معنا عشان احنا مش عربي قوي

[When they realize I'm not Egyptian, I'm not Arab, they try a lot to speak English but you know, I also try to speak Arabic and sometimes, like maybe we say, okay, we speak Arabic, and English is forbidden or something like that but sometimes they speak Arabic but most of the time they just continue to speak English with us because we're not very Arab]

Furthermore, the discovery that these students were not Egyptian led to questions on

where they were from, and if they said America, where they were really from. Meron (AUC) reported that if she responded that she was from America, she was usually asked about her origins, although unlike her African-American friends she was actually able to respond with them:

For the most part they're like, and what else, yeah, like and I had an interesting experience with that, with my African-American friends, who they say the same things to, they say and then what else? so where's your family from, and they're like America, and then they have to go on and explain you know that it's been a very long time since their family you know has lived in or has had family in Africa, and an African country, or they don't know exactly where in Africa they're from, so it seems like a new concept per se

Pearl (AUC) expressed her frustration with the fact that she was not considered American based on her skin color:

[They say] oh, you're not Egyptian and I say no, I'm not, I'm American, and they say, but no you're not, like you're coloring is not American, and I'm like nope, I'm American, through and through, I'm American, and they're like no, but really, what are you, and I'm like okay, well, my dad's family is Mexican, and they're like oh, so you're Mexican, and I'm like no, I'm American, I promise I'm not lying, and that's like kind of frustrating because everyone has this mentality that like Americans are all white, and that's just like not true.

Students of Egyptian descent were able to gain access to Egyptians through family connections. However, they felt that sometimes the expectations for their ability to adapt to Egypt were much higher, including from themselves. Lamees (AUC), who was half-Egyptian,

explained:

I didn't think coming in it would be I think as challenging as it has been to sort of integrate myself into Egyptian life, I kind of think I had too great of an expectation coming in like, well you know, your family is Egyptian, it will be easy for you to catch on and do things that way, and I don't know if it's like sheer stubbornness, like well, that's not me, that's not what I do, I'm not going to do that, or if it's more like, it's just not as easy to jump into a culture as you, as I might have expected because you know, half of my family is you know, deeply immersed in that culture, and it is their culture, so, overall, it has been what I've expected, it's just been a little tougher, like the integration aspect has been tougher than I thought it would be, I think.

Mandy (AUC), who was also half Egyptian, felt frustrated with the expectation that she should be more Egyptian than American, contrasting this with the experience of "complete foreigners" who were identified as "westerners":

If someone is coming in and they're a complete foreigner it's sort of like you know, it becomes this very admirable feat, you know to come to Egypt to try to learn Arabic, like something completely out of what might be considered their normal bounds, or like it's different, it's cool, it's like great, westerners are taking an interest in trying to learn Arabic and trying to get to know our culture and that type of thing whereas you know if someone is assuming that I'm Egyptian or that I speak Arabic or that my father's Egyptian, there are certain expectation that go along with it, like your father's Egyptian, yes, your father's Muslim, yes, *elhamdulillah* [thanks be to God], you know, like it's like, it's very much a different experience, I'm expected to sort of like fit, I feel like I'm expected to fit a pre-conceived notion of like what Egyptian girls my age should be like because my father is

Egyptian so I should have been raised that way, and I'm like if I have this American side of me, or I do things in an American way, that's, it shouldn't be emphasized as much you know, because my father should be the head of the household and if he's the Egyptian one, then I should be a certain way, and you know I'm half my mother's child, but no, not really, mostly your just your father's child, I feel like that's the way it comes across all the time.

For Mandy, these heightened expectations of her linguistic and cultural knowledge could cause her to retreat to English, where she felt more comfortable:

People assume that I'm Egyptian, so they assume that I can speak the language well, and then like as soon as like it comes out of my mouth, and they like realize that I can't speak this language very well, or I don't know it fluently, by any means, then there's just this sort of like, either like, oh, I'll help you, or the, oh, I'll take advantage of you now, you know, and that's frustrating, so if they're going to realize that straight away when I start speaking Arabic, then why not speak a language that I'm really comfortable with and you know, I know I can express myself exactly as I want to.

Shadi (AUC), who was also half Egyptian, reported being mocked for not having fluent Arabic skills, and felt that it was more advantageous to look foreign, as foreign-looking speakers of Arabic “are praised for at least trying, but if they are just half, and half Egyptian, it's like they they don't want to even see you try”.

Thus, for the students whose physical appearance allowed them to pass as Egyptian, their initial local reception identified them as Egyptians and Arabic speakers. This positioning was advantageous for the access they needed to perform their desired identity of *cross-cultural mediator* and for the Arabic conversations they needed to perform their desired identity of

dedicated language learners. Yet when their Arabic skills called this identification into question, some of these students were not able to reclaim these identities, and retreated from pursuing access to Egyptians in Arabic. Furthermore, the students who self-identified as American could be frustrated if their physical appearance caused their interlocutors to deny or question this identity.

Once the students were identified as western foreigners, this in turn indexed a number of other identities and expected behaviors in the local context. In the remainder of this section, I discuss the impact of the following identities on the students' abilities to gain access to Egyptians and use Arabic: *morally loose westerners, representatives of American politics, fascinating Westerners, tourists, wealthy foreigners, foreign guests, and English speakers*.

Morally Loose Westerners

As explained in Chapter 2 under Egyptian views of America, westerners are typically viewed as morally loose, particularly with regards to gender relations and alcohol, and the students encountered these views abroad. For example, Paige (Middlebury) explained that American movies led to incorrect assumptions about the role of sex in relationships in the United States, and this resulted in an informative cultural discussion for herself as well as her roommate (which in this case also allowed her to perform the identity of *cross-cultural mediator*):

زميلتي في الأوضة كنا عندنا حوار مضحك شوية علشان احنا كنا نتكلم عن العلاقة بين البنات والرجال وهي وأنا كنت عندي أسئلة عن العلاقة هنا في مصر وهي كمان كان عندها أسئلة عن العلاقة في امريكا وهي كانت تفكر أن كل العلاقات زي في الأفلام زي فيه جنس كثير وأنا لا لا لا دا مش صح فيه حاجات ثانية ودا مش كل العلاقات ودا كان فرصة لها علشان هي مافهمتش العلاقات وكمات أنا كنت عندي أسئلة زي لو أنا مخطوبة ممكن أنا مش عايزة الولد وأنا ممكن أقول دا وفيه فرصة في المستقبل لأكون مرة ثانية وهي قالت اه اه فيه بس ممكن أصعب بس لسه فيه ودا كان حوار كويس قوي وأنا تعلمت كثير عن العلاقات وكمات هي تعلمت كثير عن العلاقات في امريكا

[My roommate, we had a slightly funny discussion because we were talking about the relationship between girls and men and she and I had lots of questions about the relationship here in Egypt and she also had questions about the relationship in America and she thought all the relationships were like in the movies, like there's lots of sex and I'm no, no, no, that's not true, there are other things and that's not all the relationships, and that was an opportunity for her because she didn't understand the relationships and I also had questions, like if I'm engaged, maybe I don't want the boy, and can I say that, and there is an opportunity in the future to be again, and she said, yes, yes, there is but maybe it's harder, but there's still, and that was a very good discussion and I learned a lot about relationships and also she learned a lot about the relationships in America]

Jacob (AUC) described the expectations he encountered from cab drivers:

Sometimes like the taxi cab drivers just expect that I want to like if it's like 9:00 or 10:00 on a Friday night, and I'm in cab, they'll be like, oh you want to go to the disco, they automatically like assume that I want to go do something crazy, which is fine, it's just funny, like no, I'm just going you know to a restaurant or something, so that's fine, I mean that's just amusing I guess.

While Paige and Jacob describe situations in which the assumptions about their morals are not entirely accurate, the study abroad students could also live up to these assumptions, particularly when performing the *party animal* identity of the study abroad student in bars and booze cruises.

Whether deserved or not, the students felt that this reception could limit their access to Egyptians, who would be wary of associating with *morally loose westerners*. Anna (AUC) cited reading a newspaper article about a family that was upset because their son was marrying an

American woman and explained:

أعتقد عشان السياسة وخصوصا أفكار الناس عن الأمريكان وخصوصا بنات امريكيات مش سهل قوي عشان اعتقد فيه ناس كثير اللي بيفكروا إن شخص ام صاحب أو مش صاحب بشكل عاطفي شخص بيقضي وقت مع أجنبى ربما أخلاقه مش كويس ودا عيب في بعض الأماكن اعتقد خصوصا أماكن شعبية جدا

[I think because of politics and especially people's thoughts about Americans, and especially American girls it's not very easy, because, I think there are a lot of people that think that a person, um, a friend, or not a friend in a romantic way, a person who spends time with foreigners probably his morals aren't good, and that's shameful in some places, I think especially very traditional places.]

Several of the Egyptians also confirmed that this could be a problem, especially for Egyptian women. Alia (Middlebury roommate) described the reaction of her Egyptian female friends to the fact that she was living with an American:

فطبعاً هم بيقولوا مترددين جداً لما بنت أي بنت مصرية برة البرنامج عارفة إن أنا قاعدة مع أمريكيان ازي وبتعملوا ايه؟ وطبعاً تكون مستغربة جداً وتسال أسئلة كثيرة وبيكونوا خايفين

[Of course, they are very hesitant, when a girl, any Egyptian girl outside of the program knows that I'm staying with Americans, how and what do you do? And of course she is very surprised and asks a lot of questions, and they are afraid]

Yet at the same time, students could also draw upon this difference, and their desired identity as *cross-cultural mediators* to gain access to Egyptians by using their human agency to discuss these topics and counter incorrect assumptions as Paige did above. Carl described the difference between these discussions with his friends in the dorms and people he met traveling in the Western desert:

نناقش زي ممكن الإرهابية أو دين الإسلام أو الجنس في المجتمع الأمريكي أو علاقة بين الرجال والستات كل حاجة

يعني فيه مواضيع مختلفة وفيه يعني نتائج المناقشات دي أو ممكن جدل شوية حسب الشخص يعني مثلا مع المصريين في المدينة فيه نتائج معينة أنا تكلمت كثير وهم اتعلموا كثير عندنا نوع من التفاهم ويعني لما كنت في وادي الجديد تكلمت كثيرا عن الإسلام والمجتمع الأمريكية وماكانش ولا تفاهم كان انت غلطان انت غلطان انت غلطان ويس يعني إن شاء الله أنا قلت حاجات مهمة لهم وفهموا كده وممكن عندهم شك دالوقتي إن امريكا مش زي الأفلام وأفكارهم

[We discuss like maybe terrorism, or the Islamic religion, or sex in American society or the relationship between the men and women, everything, like there are different topics and there are like results of these discussions or . . . Maybe it's a little bit of an argument depending on the person, like for example, the Egyptians in the dorms there are specific results, I spoke a lot, and they learned a lot, we have a degree of mutual understanding, and like when I was in Wadi Jadid, I spoke a lot about Islam and American society, and there was no mutual understanding, it was you're wrong, you're wrong, you're wrong, but you know, hopefully I said some important things to them, and they understood that, and maybe they have doubt now, that America isn't like the movies and their ideas]

Representative of American Politics

As Anna alludes to in her earlier quote, American politics were also a source of contention. The majority of students in this study (51 out of 54) were American, and as described in Chapter 2, American politics, particularly the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and support of Israel, are not popular in Egypt. When the students were identified as American, this often indexed the expectation that they agreed with American policies in the region. As a result of this expectation, political topics often came up for discussion in random encounters between study abroad students and Egyptians. Rob (AUC) explained: “all cab drivers ramble on about Israel when I say I'm American”. James (Middlebury) wrote on his blog:

American Politics and Society are always up for discussion, except when people whip out the subject right at the end of the matter as if to prevent a decent response - although I've gotten decent enough at compressing the entire

“Well, all Americans don't really hate all Muslims and any society has its extremists but because of the Media some people attract more attention than others, anyway that's why I'm learning hereto go back and talk to people, just as I'm talking to you now, no I didn't completely agree with the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, but America didn't go into them just to kill Muslims, etc. etc.” thought into a pretty rapid soundbite. Admittedly, this does get a bit tiring when I'm feeling the sandwich [sic] I just ordered grow cold while I attempt to explain Muslim-American relations to the cashier – but all pretty much expected.

The students also discussed these topics with their friends and roommates. Ayman (Middlebury roommate) reported discussions politics and religion over dinner, emphasizing that while they did not always agree, they tried to respect each other's opinions:

طبعاً كل الأمريكيان بيتكلموا في السياسة السياسة والدين يعني المشاكل السياسية المحيطة دي حاجة أساسية الناس كلها تتكلم فيها فلسطين مشاكل في مصر مشاكل في أمريكا أوباما وبيقول ايه هنا وبيقول ايه هنا والشرق الأوسط والشرق الأوسط دا بيقى موضوع مناقشات يعني الحرب على كذا والحرب في كذا والحرب في كذا دا كلها حاجات ممكن تتكلم فيها في العشاء الناس كلها تكون موجودة إن الناس اللي عنده رأي بيقول أنا عندي هناك وشف كذا وكذا وكذا واحد ثاني بيقول لا دا ما حصلش كده فهو بيكون موضوع مناقشة كويس وفيه الآخر الناس كلها بتقبل وجهات نظر الثانية والناس يعني مافيش حد حتى لو أنا متعارض معك فكرة أحسن حاجة إن ما حد يزعل من حد في الموضوع دا

[Of course all the Americans talk about politics, politics and religion, like the regional political problems, this is a basic thing everyone talks about, Palestine, problems in Egypt, problems in America, Obama, and what he says here, and what he says here, and

the Middle East, and the Middle East that has become a topic of discussions, like the war on this, and the war in this, and the war in this, that, all of these are things maybe you talk about at dinner and everyone is there, the person who has an opinion says I've been there, and I saw this and this and this, another one says, no that didn't happen like that, so it's a good topic of discussion, and in the end, everyone accepts the other points of view, and people, like there's no one, even if I disagree with you on an idea, the best thing is that now one gets upset with another about this topic]

Like the American students in Australia (Dolby 2004, 2007) and France (Kingingier, 2008), the study abroad students were sometimes frustrated with the assumptions placed on them as a result of their American identity. Rose (Middlebury) explained:

في نفس الوقت احنا cursed في كل مكان عشان احنا يجب أن عندنا رد لليه امريكا في عراق؟ ليه امريكا تشجع إسرائيل في فلسطين ضد الفلسطينيين؟ ليه امريكا كانت بتحب بوش؟ ليه احنا responsible لكل حاجة في السياسة الأمريكية وأنا كنت 12 سنة لما بوش كان elected بس احنا لسه responsible لها عشان جلدنا وجواز سفرنا

[At the same time, we're cursed everywhere because we have to have a response to why is America in Iraq? Why does America encourage Israel in Palestine against the Palestinians? Why did America like Bush? Why are we responsible for everything in American politics when I was 12 years old when Bush was elected but we're still responsible for it because of our skin and our passports]

Ryan (AUC) explained that he felt being American made people immediately think of the American government and gave his interlocutors a pre-determined outlook of him:

I know it affects like the way they view me, because they automatically think of our government, which usually leads to Bush because everyone knows about Bush, when I

was in Jordan last summer, everyone who saw us, they didn't even ask if we were American on the street, they would just look at us and be like, Bush bad, Obama, good you know, I think that does affect your experience, I don't know if it's necessarily positive or negative, but in my opinion you instantly get a stigma for being American and that's, to me that's pretty unique, you know America is pretty dominant in the world and you know, our culture's pretty dominant, a lot of people know America, they know our movie stars and our athletic teams and players and stuff, and I think that stands out as very unique because a lot of people wouldn't know that about other countries you know, I've met people here from the Southeast Asian countries, or like I said, Norwegian or Swedish, and a lot of people don't, a lot of people wouldn't know a lot about those countries but a lot of Egyptians know a lot about the United States, or want to travel to United States, or they know about our politics and how our government works, or they think they know, and so I think that definitely does affect your experience, like I said, I don't, I've never really thought I guess if it's positive or negative but it does definitely give you like a, it gives them like a predetermined outlook of you.

Just as Anna (AUC) gave "ʕaʕa:n es-siya:sa [because of politics]" as a reason along with a lack of morals for Egyptians to avoid foreigners, several of the Egyptians felt that politics could also be problematic for relationships between Egyptians and American study abroad students. Walid (AUC teacher) explained that being American would automatically lead to questions about one's view on prominent political issues in the region:

في المجتمع العربي هناك نوع من الحساسية sensitivity هناك نوع من الحساسية نحو بعض القضايا مثلا القضية العربية الاسرائيلية مثل قضية امريكا والعراق امريكا وأفغانستان هذه من القضايا الكبرى هي مهمة بالنسبة للرجل البسيط لأي شخص يعني عندما تقول أنا أمريكي فهناك تفكير انت أمريكي او كي ما علاقاتهم بإسرائيل أنا أمريكي

هل توافق على دخول امريكا إلى العراق هذه الأشياء

[In the Arab society there is sort of a sensitivity, there's sort of a sensitivity towards some issues, like the Arab-Israeli issue, like the issue of America and Iraq and America and Afghanistan, these are among the big issues, they are important for the simple man, for any person, when you say I'm American, there are thoughts, you're American, okay, what is their relationship with Israel, I'm American, do you agree with America entering Iraq, these are the things]

Aisha (Middlebury host mother) reported that when she decided to host an American student in her home, she had to defend herself against her neighbors' concern that this would result in her name being listed with State Security:

فيه ناس من سكان العمارة حبوا يضيقوني شوية فقالولي ايه انت ازي تقعدى امريكية عندك في البيت؟ قلت لهم أنا حرة دا بيتي ملكي وأنا حرة فبدأوا يخوفوني وقالوا ممكن في أمن الدولة يبقى اسمك موجود في أمن الدولة قلت لهم ايه أنا ماعنديش مشكلة يكتبوا اسمي في أمن الدولة يسجلوا تليفوني في أمن الدولة مافيش مشكلة أنا ماعنديش مشكلة

[There were people living in the building that liked to annoy me a little bit, they said to me, what, how can you have an American girl staying with you? So I told them, I'm free, I own this house, and I'm free, so they started to scare me and said, maybe in State Security, maybe your name will be [listed] in State Security, I said to them, what? I don't have a problem if they write my name in State Security, if they record my telephone in State Security, it's not a problem, I don't have a problem]

Fascinating Westerners

While Egyptian views of western morals and American politics were generally negative, there are also positive views of the West, including a fascination with anything western related to the *khawaga* complex described by Mohamed (2010) that overvalues anything and anyone

western. For example, Amina (Middlebury roommate) focused on America's scientific prowess and cultural diversity, explaining that she was initially in awe of these Americans and worried about living with one:

أنا يعني الأمريكان يتوقعوا عندهم فكرة عالية جدا اختراعات مش عارفة ايه مجموعة من الثقافات فاهمة يعني واحدة هتيجي واحدة جامدة يعني مش واحدة سهلة

[I like, Americans, they expect from them very high thoughts, inventions, I don't know what, a group of cultures, you understand, like someone will come who is very strong, you know, not an easy one]

Rana (AUC teacher) cited an Egyptian interest in foreigners as a result of their good looks and organizational skills:

المصريين بيحبوا الأجانب مش متضايقين منهم بيحبوا الأجانب بيحبوهم قوي بالنسبة لهم حاجة حلوة . . . أولا شكلهم معروف إن شكلهم حلو جميل ممكن منظمين أكثر يعني حاجات كثير بتشد العرب للأجانب

[Egyptians love foreigners, they're not annoyed with them, they love foreigners, they love them a lot, for them it's a good thing . . . First , their appearance, it's known their appearance is good, beautiful, maybe they're more organized, like lots of things push Arabs towards foreigners]

Some of the study abroad students were able to leverage this positive interest in themselves as *fascinating Westerners* to gain access to Egyptians. In describing her interactions with Egyptians, Lamees (AUC) reported: “they like the fact that I'm learning Arabic, and they like America, they like the fact that I'm American because you know they love America.” Sam (Middlebury) described his enthusiastic welcome as an American cheering on the Egyptian soccer team in the African Cup:

امبارح مثلا بعد الماتش احنا كنت في الكورنيش في الاحتفالات بعد الماتش وكل الناس تجمعوا في الشوارع وكنت

عندي كاميرا في أيدي الشمال وعالم مصر في أيدي اليمين ودخلت المجموعة من الناس ام وأول حاجة كان من اين انت؟ أنا أمريكي اههههه وكلهم ليك كان رائع وواحد مهم أخذني . . . وحملني فوق المجموعة بسبب أنا أجنبي وأمريكي ووفيه نفس الوقت أنا بأحب مصر وبعد الماتس وأنا عايز أحتفل معهم

[Yesterday for example, after the match, we were on the Corniche in the celebrations after the match and everyone gathered in the streets and I had a camera in my left hand and an Egyptian flag in my right hand, and I entered the group of people, um, and the first thing was where are you from? I'm American, aaaahhh, and all of them, like it was amazing, and one of them took me . . . and carried me above the crowd because I'm foreign and American and at the same time I like Egypt and after the match I want to celebrate with them]

Indeed, for individual Egyptians, feeling towards the West and America were generally a mix of these positive and negative discourses. For example, James (Middlebury) paraphrased one of his teachers on his blog who mixed an interest in American culture with a hatred of American politics:

“... to be honest, I want to move to America. I'm in love with the, the personal freedom that you all have in America. Even more than that, I love the sense of privacy – here, any time I walk out of the apartment, there are five or six people saying “Oh, where are you going? What are you doing today? Where have you been?” and I really can't stand it. At the same time, I hate American politics. Absolutely hate all of it. And I think that's the opinion of a lot of people here – you know what the average person thinks about September 11? Hmm? [person form [sic] the class volunteers: "That the U.S. government carried it out, or Israel"] Yes, that's pretty much the general opinion here. Me?... I don't know. I'd just say it was a terrible tragedy and leave it at that...”

Thus, when students were indexed as western, and particularly American, foreigners as a result of their physical appearance or national origin, they were in turn received in multiple and conflicting ways by their interlocutors as a result of local discourses of morally loose westerners, negative perceptions of American politics, and a positive fascination with the West. The extent to which they could manage to gain access to Egyptians in spite of or because of this reception, and their ability to engage in conversations about these topics, affected their ability to perform their desired identities of *cross-cultural mediators* and *dedicated language learners*.

Tourists

As a result of the large numbers of tourists that visit Egypt each year, the students reported that being indexed as foreign often initially meant being taken for a tourist. When they were traveling frequently or visiting tourist sites, performing the *vacationer* identity associated with less serious study abroad students, they actively participated in this construction of their identity. Walid (AUC teacher) explained that some study abroad students were essentially tourists:

يأتي بعض الطلاب الذين ينشغلون مثلاً بالسياحة يعني بالنسبة إليهم زيارة مصر هي سياحة في الأساس وبجانب هذا لغة

[Some students come who are preoccupied with for example, tourism, like for them,

visiting Egypt is essentially tourism, and language is next to that]

Hanan (AUC teacher) explained that Egyptians expected foreigners to be either tourists or foreign workers, and thus did not expect foreigners to speak Arabic:

بأكلم على الأغلبية من الشعب يعني احنا ثمانين مليون يعني بالنسبة للأجنبي دا إما سائح إما بيشغل جاي بيشغل ففيه الحالتين مش محتاج يتعلم عربي فيه يتعلم عربي؟

[I'm talking about the majority of the people, you know, we're 80 million, like in terms

of the foreigner, he's either a tourist or he works, he came to work, and in those two cases, he doesn't need to learn Arabic, why would he learn Arabic?]

As a result of the low expectations for foreigners' Arabic proficiency, she reported that despite the fact that she had been teaching Arabic to non-native speakers for over 15 years, Egyptians were often surprised to hear her occupation:

لسه بيستغربوا لأن احنا هنا في مصر برضه برغم من دالوتي في مراكز مختلفة وحاجات كده هو مش شيء شائع إنه فيه تخصص واخدة بالك إن فيه تخصص وفيه دراسة وفيه مؤتمرات وفيه أبحاث يعني فلسه

[They are still surprised because here in Egypt, also, in spite of the fact that there are different centers, and things like that, it's not a widespread thing, that there is a speciality, you understand, that there is a speciality and there is study and there are conferences and research, so still]

Being positioned as a *tourist* was often contrary to the students' desired positionings as *cross-cultural mediators* and *dedicated language learners*, as being a *tourist* indexed an inability to speak Arabic and a lack of interest in both Arabic and Egyptian culture.

However, many of the students reported using their Arabic skills to resist this positioning, and instead claim their desired identities of *cross-cultural mediators* and *dedicated language learners*. For example, Anders (Middlebury) explained that his language skills enabled him to perform an identity as a *foreign guest*, rather than *tourist*, a category that will be discussed further below:

شكلنا اجنبي ويعني في البداية هم بيفكروا اه احنا سياحين بس بعد يعني ثلاث دقائق من الكلام من الواضح إن احنا مش سياحيين فيعني عندنا بالنسبة لي أنا أعتقد إن احنا أكثر زي يعني ضيوف فعلشان كده عندنا يعني مكانة حاصة في المجتمع

[Our appearance is foreign, and like in the beginning, they think we are tourists, but after

like three minutes of talking it's clear that we're not tourists, so like we, for me, I think that we're more like guests and because of that we have a special place in the society]

Francis (Middlebury) also emphasized how he used his Arabic skills to distinguish himself from tourists, and how this resulted in a warmer reception as well as extended conversations:

لما شايفين أجنب بيقول بالإنجليزي أول حاجة Welcome in Egypt أو حاجة زي كده وبعدين وأنا أرد بالعربي هم ضحكوا عشان ممكن أنا سايح اللي عارف مع السلامة وشكرا والحمد الله بس ماعرفش اللغة بس لما أنا أتكلم معهم وأتعامل معهم أكثر عميقا يعني هم هيشوفون أنا مش موطن بس ساكن هنا يعني مس سايح مش خواجه اجنبي بس مش خواجه فبس هم بعدما يشوفوا إن أنا أعرف اللغة هم متهمس قوي ومندهشين ومبسوطين وعايز يتكلموا معي عن أي حاجة عن أوباما أو عن مبارك أو عن اه الافلام والمغنيين

[When they see foreigners they say in English, the first thing “welcome in Egypt” or something like that and afterwards I respond in Arabic, they laugh because maybe I’m a tourist that only knows good-bye and thank you and thanks be to God but I don’t know the language but when I speak with them and interact with them more deeply like, they see that I’m not a citizen but I live here like I’m not a tourist, I’m not a (dumb) foreigner, a foreigner but not a (dumb) foreigner, so just, they after they see that I know the language, they are very excited and surprised and happy and want to talk with me about anything, about Obama, or about Mubarak, or about oh, films and singers]

When the students were indexed as *tourists* by either themselves or their interlocutors, this conflicted with the performance of their roles as *cross-cultural mediators* and *dedicated language learners*, as the linguistic and cultural expectations for tourists are low. If the students were successfully able to use their developing language skills and cultural knowledge to contest their positioning as *tourists* and reposition themselves as *cross-cultural mediators* and *dedicated language learners*, they could sometimes gain the access to Egyptians in Arabic needed to

develop their performances of these desired identities.

Wealthy Foreigners

Yet the students were not always able to resist being positioned as *tourists*, and many of them felt that this positioning caused some Egyptians to view them as *wealthy foreigners* to “rip off.” Rob (AUC) explained:

لأنني أمريكي أنا أمريكي ودائما يقول اه أمريكي اه جاي هنا جاي هنا جاي هنا إلى دكاني ولا بأحب أكون
أمريكاني هناك لأن أحيانا الناس يفتكر إني عندي فلوس كثير وأنا طالب أنا فقير

[Because I'm American, I'm American and always he says, oh American, oh, come here, come here, come here to my shop and I don't like to be American there because sometimes people think that I have a lot of money and I'm a student, I'm poor]

Billy (AUC) included “the rip-offs” under “Bad” in an entry entitled “the good, the bad and the ugly” on his blog, writing:

When an Egyptian salesman sees a group of Americans coming, there's only one thing on his mind: “How much can I swindle from these khwagas?”. Maybe it's a bit of a blanket statement, but most of my experiences thus far reinforce it.

Several of the Egyptians also mentioned this difficulty for the students. Khaled (AUC student) explained that this was not a problem unique to Egypt:

I understand a lot of complaints, I understand, like oh, a lot of people try and rip us off, and I'm like oh, yeah, it's understandable, you look for, and you like a tourist who just got here, and they want to make an easy buck, happens everywhere.

Mona (AUC teacher) felt that this sometimes led the students to overgeneralize:

لو اتسرق يفتكر إن كل الناس هيسرقوا لو موقف وحش هيحصله مرة بيتنقل إن كل الناس مش بتحبه هكذا

[If he's robbed, he thinks that everyone will rob him, if something bad happens once, he

changes it to everyone doesn't like him, like that]

To prevent these difficulties, the Egyptians reported that they would go with their friends, or tell them the appropriate price. Khaled (AUC student) explained that the students were less likely to be hassled if they were with Egyptians:

You have a million Egyptians with you, to go with you, and it usually helps because they can find and haggle foreigners, and if they see like a good ten Egyptians there they won't try and haggle them so much, or they won't try and haggle the Egyptians, it just wouldn't make sense.

Alia (Middlebury roommate) also noted that the price was likely to be lower if she was with the students:

أولما البياح بيعرف إنهم أجنب أو في التاكسي إذا احنا ماكناش معهم عشان نعرفهم الساعة الحقيقي كذا طبعا لازم
أكون معهم عشان لما بنكون في التاكسي إذا احنا بنكون شخص مصري مع أجنبي طبعا هو السواق مش بيغلي السعر
قوي وكمان في المحلات طبعا بنعرفهم الفصال

[First, the seller knows that they are foreigners or in the taxi, if we're not with them to tell them the real price and so on, of course, I have to be with them because when we're in the taxi, if we're an Egyptian person with a foreigner of course the driver won't raise the price a lot and also in the shops of course, we teach them bargaining]

A fear of real or perceived rip-offs could make students avoid encounters with Egyptians, including legitimate offers of help, because they were afraid of being exploited, limiting their access to Egyptians and opportunities to use Arabic. However, if the students did choose to interact in these situations, they could be pushed to use Arabic in order to demonstrate that they were not tourists to be exploited. For example, Anne (AUC), who said that she rarely used Arabic in informal encounters due to her low proficiency did insist sometimes with cab drivers:

I do do that [insist on using Arabic] with cab drivers because I've run into a couple of problems where they deliberately use bad English when you're arguing about fares, they'll say fifteen and then later try to convince you they meant 50, so if I think there's going to be a problem like that, I will try to really use Arabic to make it really clear.

Furthermore, since being indexed as a *tourist* was also dependent on the students' physical appearance, as students who could pass as Arab or Egyptian reported that they were less likely to be ripped off. Kareem (AUC), who was of Arab descent, said:

على امريكيين يقولوا التاكس بدهم يأخذوا كثير مصاري كثير منهم بس عشان أنا عربي أحسن شوية أسهل

[For the Americans, they say the taxi wants to take a lot of money from them but because I'm Arab, it's a little better, it's easier]

Being positioned as a *wealthy foreigner* was frustrating for the students on one level because being students, they did not view themselves as wealthy (although they were indeed wealthier on a global scale). Furthermore, being positioned as clueless about Egyptian prices made it more difficult for them to perform the identity of *cross-cultural mediator*, causing a mismatch between their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East and the reality of their experience in Egypt.

Foreign Guests

As Anders mentioned above, a contrasting theme to the rip-offs was the culture of hospitality the students found in Egypt when they were indexed as *foreign guests* to be assisted and welcomed. Jennifer (Middlebury) wrote on her blog about an instance of this hospitality, directly contrasting it with her experience in New York:

Six of us rode the tram back to the girls' dorm. We sat in the women's car near a woman taking on the phone. When she got off she heard us speaking in Arabic, and began to talk

with us. She was warm and welcoming, and continued to commend us on our bravery and our Arabic. When the ticket man came around she asked for seven tickets, and paid for us. Random acts of kindness (RAKs!) like this are all over Egypt. You don't find many New Yorkers willing to give you a swipe off their Metrocard, even if you are desperate.

Isabelle (Middlebury) mentioned a similar unexpected welcome on the street:

لما كنت في القاهرة أنا تعرفت على راجل في الشارع أنا بس أسأله يعني فين مكان وهو كان يعني كنت عايزة هو
كان مبسوط قوي كنت بأدرس عربية وهو يعني أنا لازم اشتري حلويات لك أنا لازم أعمل حاجة لك هو كان عايز
يعني يساعدني

[When I was in Cairo I met a man in the street, I'm just asking him you know, where is the place, and he was you know, I wanted, he was very happy that I was studying Arabic and he was you know, I need to buy sweets for you, I need to do something for you, he wanted to help me]

The Egyptian participants also emphasized that helping foreigners was an important part of Egyptian culture. Walid (AUC teacher) explained:

والمصريين بشكل عام لطفاء ومساعدون صحيح هناك بعض الناس المزعجين يعني لكن معظم الناس أظن أنهم
يحبون الأجانب ويساعدوهم

[Egyptians in general are nice and helpful, it's true there are some annoying people you know, but most people I think that they like foreigners and help them]

Sometimes the students felt that their hosts were overly hospitable. Mariam (AUC) said:

There's definitely like a way in which like Egyptians are like extremely hospitable and will offer things that maybe they don't necessarily want to offer and they expect you to say no, and you don't, it's really hard as a foreigner to like gauge when they're doing that and when they really mean it, and that's like tricky for me, because I really hate the idea

that I would be overstepping a boundary or like intruding on someone, so that's always been a little a frustrating

At times, the line between exploiting and helping was not clear, and students could experience both in the same interaction as described by Anne (AUC):

I think just little things in the street, like if I'm lost and I ask someone they will go out of their way to help me, and they might not be giving me the right directions, or if they offer to take me there, they might take me to their perfume shop first, but after that they will like go out of their way to make sure you get what you're trying to get and just every day things, like if you need help, people are still willing to help.

Similarly, assumptions that the students were wealthy combined with Egyptian hospitality could result in their being granted special status, and they reported being upgraded to better seats at soccer matches or the train, or getting better rooms in the student dorms. Carson (AUC) explained that being indexed as a foreigner gave him a higher social status than he was accustomed to:

So I suppose that being viewed as a foreigner means that maybe I get treated better, of course I pay more expensive, higher prices, but I'm generally treated better, generally I speak on I can, I guess I can do almost anything I want, I can do things here, I guess I have a social status here that does not translate to back home, so I can do things like get into the clubs and whatnot if I want to, if I want to just go and say hey, and I mean that sort of social status if that's what you want to call it, doesn't occur in the States, there's a different hierarchy, so I suppose, I suppose being a foreigner puts me on a level above, in their, it seems practically speaking it puts me on a level above locals, that's just how it seems to be, maybe it's just I have money, who knows why

The students also noted that they could get away with things that Egyptians could not, due to their special foreigner status. In contrast to working class Egyptian youths, who are often harassed by the police (Ghannam, 2011), Keith (Middlebury) explained:

عشان يعني ممكن أنا أعمل كل حاجة يعني واحد أنا امريكي وعشان كلهم زي لو انت عايز تضرب الشرطة مش
مشكلة يعني انت اجانب يعني افعل اية حاجة ومش مشكلة

[Because like maybe I can do everything like, one I'm American, and because all of them are like you want to hit the police, no problem, like you're foreign, like do anything and it's not a problem]

Rob (AUC) wrote on his blog how he used the “dumb foreigner card” to explore the unrest following an Egypt-Algeria soccer game:

As we navigated the road blocks, trying to explore more of the unrest, I realized that English was going to get me a lot farther than Arabic (a first here in Egypt). I played the dumb foreigner card as I walked up to sealed off streets, saying "Hello, do you speak English? I speak no Arabic and I am trying to get to my apartment. Can I pass?" Although I felt bad for lying to simply get closer to the heart of the action, it was worth it.

While this desire to help foreign guests could help the students gain access to Egyptians, it was also another reason why Egyptians might use English with them. Wendy (AUC teacher) explained: “for many people it's clear that you're struggling and you're limited, so there's a possibility to be helpful, to be nice, to be helpful.” Alaa (AUC teacher) explained that Egyptians used English:

المصري أساسا المصريين معتقدين إن اللغة العربية صعبة جدا والأمريكان أو الأجانب عموما أو الغير مصريين
صعبة قوي إنهم يتعلموا اللغة العربية فأحنا بنبص إهم نظرة يعني اشفاق يعني فيحاول ايه إنه يسهلهم كده

[The Egyptian basically, the Egyptians think that Arabic is very hard, and the Americans,

or the foreigners generally, or the non-Egyptians, it's very hard for them to learn Arabic, so we look at them with like pity, like he tries what, to make it easier for them like that]

Another way in which this desire to help could make it harder for the students to use Arabic was when their Egyptian friends spoke for them, relieving the students of the need to use Arabic. Jacob (AUC) complained:

Like especially the beginning when we were going to the cafe with Egyptians, like they would take over and speak Arabic, what do you want, I want a tea, okay, *huwwa ʕa:jiz ʕa:i* [he wants tea], you know, like instead of me just saying it, but I mean, I think we we're getting over that now, I can order my own tea, thanks

On the other hand, Carson (AUC) felt this was beneficial for performing the *party animal* identity over that of a *dedicated language learner*: "I have a couple of other friends, two other Egyptian friends who often facilitate my debauchery in the clubs, by getting the reservations and tables and doing all the talking for me"

At other times, the students were able to use this desire to help to turn the conversation into Arabic, saying that when Egyptians realized they wanted help with Arabic, they would agree to help them by using Arabic. Nathalie (AUC) stated that when she continued to use Arabic after a response in English, Egyptians would use Arabic with her because: "they kind of figure I'm a student, because I look about student age, like oh, she must be studying Arabic, and they want to help, they want to be helpful."

Sometimes, getting this type of assistance could take a bit of persistence on the part of the students or explicitly insisting on Arabic. For example, Karley (AUC) explained:

One day I was like walking around and I was like exploring Cairo by myself and I, this tourist police guy wanted to help me, and I insisted on talking to him in Arabic and he

kept trying to talk to me in English, so finally he was like I see you want to speak in Arabic, and I was yeah, I do, like, so then he talked to me in Arabic

Explicitly requesting Arabic, as Karley eventually did, was something that several of the teachers felt was something important for the students to do, given the expectation that English was a way to help foreigners due to their low proficiency. Hanan (AUC teacher) explained that students should:

من البداية خالص ممكن أتكلم معك عربي عشان أنا بأتعلم عربي وعاليز يعني العربي بتاعي يتحسم من البداية كده
المصري هيبتدي يتكلم عربي وهبيقى فرحان قوي إنه شايف واحد أجنبي امريكي يتكلم عربي فهيتدي يساعده لما هم
مايقولوش المصري هيفضل يتكلم إنجليزي

[From the very beginning, can I speak Arabic with you because I'm learning Arabic and like I want my Arabic to be better, from the beginning like that the Egyptian will start speaking Arabic and he will be very happy that he sees a foreigner, an American, speaking Arabic, so he will start to help him, when they don't say that, they Egyptian will continue speaking English]

While they generally welcomed this assistance, some students felt that Egyptians were not patient enough with their attempts to speak Arabic. Tasha (AUC) said: "sometimes you can say a word over and over again and they still won't understand you which is really really annoying." Carson (AUC) complained:

When I use Arabic, even if I'm close, it seems like they have no idea what I'm talking about, you know and I make this, I try to think in my head, how I might have just mispronounced something, so I mispronounce English words in my head and I realize that I would still understand what people are saying you know, if they pronounced it like where is lee-brary, I would know where's the library, but it seems if I make a small

change, or a small mistake, they have no idea what I'm talking about, so that makes it difficult, and I've noticed this across the board, even with my teachers, it's so funny, it's actually hilarious, so when I do try to speak Arabic, oftentimes the response will be in English, though not always.

Thus, when being identified as foreigners resulted in positioning the students' as *foreign guests* to welcome and help, this could lead to increased opportunities for access, which was crucial to the students' performance of the *cross-cultural mediator* identity. Yet this desire to help could also result in Egyptians using English with the students, denying them an identity as *Arabic speakers*. At the same time, some students were able to use individual agency to renegotiate this offer of help and insist on the use of Arabic, performing the identity of *dedicated language learners*.

English Speakers

As noted in the previous chapter, in addition to low expectations for their Arabic proficiency, and related to the idea that using English would help foreigners, the participants felt that being indexed as foreign, and particularly American, was associated with English. Ryan (AUC) explained: “they automatically have that predetermined notion, oh, he's American, I can speak English with him”

Amina (Middlebury roommate) described similar assumptions:

هي عندها فكرة هي أجنبية أكيد ممكن أكلّمها إنجليزي على طول لأن هي فاهمة إن دي لغتها خلاص

[She has the idea that she's foreign, of course I can speak English with her right away, because she understands that this is her language, that's it]

To prevent the use of English, sometimes students would claim other nationalities to say they did not speak English. For example, Billy (AUC) told me:

Sometimes I say I'm Swedish, so, but you know, as you and I both know all people in Sweden actually speak English, but they don't know that, and I also know enough German to get by too, so I ah, sometimes I just say I'm German, but, so that helps out a lot

Tom (Middlebury) reported a similar ruse:

بعض الأحيان أنا هأقول إن أنا من مثلاً المكسيك أو الأرجنتين علشان في بداية البرنامج يعني انت من امريكا كويس يعني إنجليزية كثير وأنا مش عايز إنجليزية أنا يعني فمعظم الوقت لو بس في التاكسي أنا عادة من بلاد غير إنجليزية وأنا مش فاهم أنا ما بأفهمش يعني أنا يعني عربية لو سمحت كثير وأنا ما بأتلكمش بالإنجليزية خالص وأيوه ويعني أنا رددت ويعني الأمر وبعدين يعني كويس عربي

[Sometimes I will say that I'm from for example Mexico or Argentina because in the beginning of the program, like you're from America, good, like lots of English, and I don't want English, I like, so most of the time if I'm just in a taxi I'm usually from non-English countries, and I don't understand, I don't understand, you know, I like Arabic please, a lot, and I don't speak English at all, and yes, like, I responded, and like the order, and afterwards like okay, Arabic]

Nora (AUC teacher and student) said she advised her students to do this as well:

أنا بالصراحة بأقولهم أول حاجة تقول للراجل دا أنا روسي أنا ألماني أنا أي حاجة غير أمريكي إنجليزي أي حاجة إن انت تتكلم إنجليزي . . . دا معرفش روسي فلو أنا مش بالكلم إنجليزي أنا روسي أنا من روسيا أنا من ألمانيا

[I honestly tell them first thing, tell that man, I'm Russian, I'm German, I'm anything other than American, English . . . he doesn't know German, he doesn't know Russian, so if I don't speak English I'm Russian, I'm from Russia, I'm from Germany]

Given the importance of English in Egypt as described in Chapter 2, there were also Egyptians who saw encounters with English speakers as a good opportunity to practice their language.

Alaa (AUC teacher) explained:

لأن المصريين برضه بيبقوا عايزين يتعلموا إنجليزي فهو بيقى فرصة إنه يمارس الإنجليزي بتاعه مع حد بيتكلم
إنجليزي بيقى عايز ليك يعني يختبر اللغة بتاعته هل الإنجليزي بتاعته هل هي الإنجليزي بتاعه ينفع يعني يستعمله
يعني ولا ايه

[Because the Egyptians also want to learn English, so it's an opportunity for him to practice his English with someone who speaks English, he wants to like test his language, is my English, like does my English work to like use it or what?]

During a participant observation with Holly (Middlebury) and a friend, a woman approached us to ask (in English, although we were speaking Arabic) if we would teach her son English.

Isabelle (Middlebury) described a similar experience:

كان عندي تجربة صعبة ممكن منذ يومين عشان كانت فيه ست مع ابنها في محطة الترام وكنت مع أسرتي وهي
رأتني وهي كانت عارفة أنا يعني أنا مش من هنا وهي اه جيت او يعني هي مشت إليني وهي بتسألني اه عندك
مصرية ويعني لا وعندما هي كانت بتعرف أنا مش من مصر هي يعني اه أنا عايزة أن أنت هتعلم ابني إنجليزية يعني
من فضلك من فضلك من فضلك وكان صعب

[I had a difficult experience around two days ago, because there was a woman with her son in the tram station and I was with my family, and she saw me and she knew that I like wasn't from here and she ah, came or like she walked to me and asked me ah, if I was Egyptian and like no, when she knew I wasn't from Egypt she was like ah, I want you to teach my son English, like please, please, please, and it was hard]

Being identified as English speakers could help the students gain access to Egyptians who wished to talk with English speakers or practice their English, something that worked to the students' advantage in terms of participating in teaching English as an extracurricular activity. In gaining this access, students were sometimes able to perform their desired identities of *cross-*

cultural mediator, depending on the topics they discussed in English. However, this interest in their English could also deny them the identity of *Arabic speaker*, which in turn limited their ability to perform the identity of *dedicated language learner*.

Using identity theory to understand the multiple ways in which students were received when their physical appearance or national identity indexed them as western foreigners in Egypt demonstrates that this reception, and the ways in which students negotiated this reception, is far more complex than the dichotomy of "Westerners" in "the East" that titles this section. In order to perform their desired identities of *cross-cultural mediator*, students needed to gain access to Egyptians. The students' reception as *fascinating westerners* or *foreign guests* could promote this access, while being perceived as *morally loose westerners*, *representative of American politics*, *tourists*, and *wealthy foreigners* could limit this access. In some cases, students were able to renegotiate these latter identities, drawing upon their desired identity of *cross-cultural mediator* to discuss cultural differences and politics, or that of *dedicated language learner* to engage in these discussions in Arabic. At other times, the students were unable or unwilling to renegotiate these identities, particularly when they performed the identities of *party animal* and *vacationer* associated with morally lax behavior and tourism.

In order to perform their desired identity of *dedicated language learner*, the students had to be received as *Arabic speakers*. As a result of the low expectations for foreigners' Arabic abilities and the high expectation for their English abilities, when students were identified as western, and particularly American, they were typically received as *English speakers*, rather than as *Arabic speakers* or even *Arabic learners*. Some students were unable to renegotiate this reception, particularly if they felt that using Arabic would hinder their ability to perform the identity of *cross-cultural mediator*, and the interesting discussions that ensued from this

performance. Other students used their identity as *English speakers* to gain access to Egyptians via teaching English as an extracurricular activity or helping Egyptians practice their English, even though these practices could impede their ability to claim the identity of *dedicated language learner*. On the other hand, some students were able to negotiate identities as *Arabic speakers*, or at least *dedicated language learners*, and used these identities to resist being indexed as a *tourist*, or to draw upon their positioning as *foreign guests* to ask for help with Arabic. Finding a way to negotiate their identification as foreign or Egyptian in a way that would allow them to perform their desired identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* was crucial to making their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East match the reality of the sojourn in Egypt. When this negotiation did not occur, students could become less invested in their experience abroad as a language learning context.

Gender

In addition to the role of their physical appearance in indexing them as foreigners or allowing them to pass as Egyptian, their physical appearance also marked the students as male or female. All of the participants agreed that gender affected their study abroad experience, and the role of gender came up over and over in the interviews, blog and Facebook posts, and observations that I conducted, with the general feeling that as in other areas of the world, it was difficult to be a female study abroad student in Egypt. In this section, I will examine how the students' gendered identities indexed a variety of gender roles in the local context, and how the students negotiated (or were unable to negotiate) these roles to gain the access to Egyptians and use of Arabic necessary to perform their desired identities of *cross-cultural mediators* and *dedicated language learners*. In particular, following a brief overview of gender roles in Egypt, I discuss how the female participants were variously expected to fill roles as *traditional good*

girls, loose foreign women, targets of sexual harassment, female interlocutors, guests of the family, and romantic partners.

Gender Roles in Egypt

While traditional gender roles in the Arab world (and elsewhere) can place women in subservient positions and restrict their movement in society, the extent to which this situation is acceptable varies situationally in the Arab world (Barakat, 1993). Mensch (2003) found that while attitudes towards the role of the husband and wife in marriage remained traditional among Egyptian adolescents, women were less likely to support educational inequality between spouses and were more likely to support less traditional gender roles. While their study did not find significant differences in attitude according to socioeconomic classes or educational background, Moaddel and Azadarmaki (2002) found that younger generations and those with more education in Egypt were less likely to accept men as better political leaders, support male over female candidates in a tight job market, and give more authority to the husband in marriage.

As noted earlier, the relationships between men and women were a topic of frequent discussion among the study abroad students and their Egyptian peers. Halima (Middlebury roommate) explained that the study abroad students often misunderstood relationships between men and women in Egypt:

عامّة بنتكلم عن كل حاجة مثلا العلاقة بين البنات والصبيان في مصر برضه هم كانوا متخيلين إن مافيش حاجة زي كده أبدا وكل البنات ممنوع البنات مثلا يعاملوا أو يكون مثلا مع الصبيان أو على البحر وهم لما جم شافوا كل بنت مع ولد على البحر وفيه كلية هم كانوا مستغربين جدا يعني ازي ازي دا ازي كلهم يتقابل مع بعض كده

[Generally we talk about everything, for example the relationship between girls and boys in Egypt, also they thought that there was nothing like that, never, and all the girls, it was forbidden for example for girls to interact, or to be for example, with boys or by the

seaside and when they came and saw every girl with a boy by the seaside and in the university, they were very surprised, like how, how is that, how are all of them meeting together like that]

Alia (Middlebury roommate) also explained that the study abroad students tended to think these relationships were more conservative than they actually were:

الطلاب الأمريكيين كانوا فاكرين إن ماينفعش عندنا نتكلم ولاد خالص وزى كده وطبعاً أنا لما بنتكلم في موضوع زي دي بنقول إن لا هو عادي بس بتكون فيه حدود كده فهم بيغيروا الأفكار دي

[The American students thought that it wasn't okay for us to speak to boys at all, and like that, and of course when we talk about a topic like this we say that no, that's normal, but there are some limits like that, so they change these ideas]

Despite the fact that relations between the sexes were not as restrictive as the study abroad students might have thought pre-sojourn, existing limitations on relationships between men and women were a source of confusions and frustration for many of the students. Sam (Middlebury) explained how he was able to be friends with women in the program, but his Egyptian male friends were less likely to have female friends:

نتكلم عن الحياة وفيه كثير أصدقاء الذي هم بنات لا لازم أن تكون سبب لأكون صديق مع البنات وأحياناً لو هي جزء من البرنامج ونروح إلى نفس . . نفس الأماكن أو الحفلة الموسيقية مع واحد منهم من بيت الطالبات وواحد منهم من بيت الطلاب ولازم تكون سبب لو هي ممكن في المستقبل هتكون الجوزة الخطيبة ممكن نبدأ علاقة بالنسبة لي أنا أنا صديق كل البنات في البرنامج ما عنديش أي مشكلة وأنا حبييتي في الولايات المتحدة وهي ما مش عندها أي مشكلة مع دا

[We talk about life and a lot, do you have friends that are girls, no, there has to be a reason to be friends with girls, and sometimes, if she's part of the program and we go to the same . . . the same places or the concert with one of them in the girls dorms and one

of them in the boys dorms, there has to be a reason, if she'll be the wife, the fiancée in the future, maybe we can start a relationship, for me I, I'm friends with all the girls in the program, and I don't have any problem, and my girlfriend is in the United States, and she doesn't have any problem with that]

Traditional Good Girls

In particular, the female students tended to feel that being identified as female placed unwelcome restrictions on them if they were to perform the identity of a *traditional good girl* (as opposed to that of a *loose foreign woman* described in the next section). They felt that performing this identity was crucial to demonstrating the respect for Egyptian culture necessary to be successful in performing an identity as a *cross-cultural mediator*. Yet at the same time, taking on this identity resulted in limited freedom of movement as a result of curfews and gender-segregated places (such as traditional coffeeshops). This limited freedom of movement meant that they had fewer opportunities to engage with Egyptian men in informal encounters and use Arabic compared to their male peers, which in turn made it more difficult for them to perform their desired identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner*.

As described in Chapter 5, the curfew was a major frustration for female students in the Middlebury dorms, despite the fact that it was several hours later than the 7:00 pm curfew of the female Egyptian students. In Egypt, most unmarried females live with their families and have a curfew, although the time of the curfew varies according to family. De Koning (2006) explains:

Familial supervision is an important feature in the lives of single upper-middle-class women who, almost without exception, live with their families. Familial responsibility and accountability for a single woman's behavior does not cease when she becomes adult or financially independent. Many young women told me that nighttime deadlines are

enforced in order to protect the reputation of the family in front of the neighbors (p. 230). Marwan (Middlebury staff) also explained that this was standard practice in Egyptian society, although it was starting to change in more liberal circles:

من الأشياء التي أسمعها كثيرا بين عدد الطلاب الأمريكيين أو الطلاب الغربيين أن لا يكون هناك قيود خصوصا في فترة الجامعة فمثلا هنا في مصر خصوصا البنات يكون لهم زي حماية أو curfew كما نقول لازم يأتو في وقت معين فلأن هذا غير مناسب بالنسبة للمجتمع المصري و هو مع أن هذا الآن أصبح مختلف . . . ولكن أصبحت الآن موضوع مختلف جدا فالمجتمع المصري نعم هناك قاعدة من الثقافة والمحافظة ولكن المنفتح جدا المجتمع المصري فما زالت هناك بنات إلى الآن مثلا أو بدأ منذ أربعة سنوات فيه انفتاح يخرجوا ويقعدوا متأخرا ليس هناك نفس السمعة أو نفس الفكرة عن هذا البنت بنت سيء

[Some of the things I hear a lot among a number of American students or Western students is that there's not restrictions, especially at college, so for example, here in Egypt, especially the girls have a curfew as we say, they have to return at a specific time because that's not appropriate for Egyptian society, and so on, despite the fact that now, this is changing, . . . but it's now becoming a very different matter, the Egyptian society, yes, there is a rule from the culture and the conservatism, but the very open one, the Egyptian society, there are still girls until now, or it started four years ago, there's an openness, they go out and stay late, there's not the same reputation or the same idea about this girl, she's a bad girl]

However, the female study abroad students were not accustomed to having a curfew, and found this restriction on their movement frustrating. Carol (Middlebury) explained that she often got in trouble for breaking the curfew, whether she was studying or going out with friends, and commented on the chilly reception she got from the guard as well as his use of English to make sure she understood how late it was:

الcurfew في المدينة بجد صعب قوي يعني أنا رحت كلاي كافيه أو قهوة ثاني لأعمل واجب ممكن ثلاثة أو أربعة مرات كل ممكن أكثر حسب عندي بحث أو أي حاجة ويعني بعدين في نهاية الأسبوع أنا أخرج مع مجموعة ويعني نروح قهوة أونمشي أي حاجة أنا أرجع متأخر كثير متأخر يعني بعد ساعة سبعة بليل يعني أنا أرجع اثنا عشر بليل في نهاية الأسبوع واحد واحد ونص أحيانا اثنين وفيه جامعة في امريكا دا عادي خالص ممكن دا بدري بس هنا في المدينة الباب مقفول لازم استنمع مع حارس الباب وهو دائما بيفكر أنا عارفة هو بيفكر ايه وأحيانا الأسبوع اللي فات أنا رجعت في بعد الشعر اثنا عشر ونص وهو كان بالإنجليزي what time is it يعني بصوت مش لطيف خالص وأنا بس كنت اه ما عرفش اه يعني تقريبا اثنا عشر ونص أنا لعبت غبي يعني فيعني دا صعب والستات في المكتب في المدينة هو مش مبسوطين مني خالص اه كارول الحمد لله على السلامة انت مرة ثاني فدا صعب عشان الرجال ممكن يروحوا أي وقت أي مكان من غير سؤال ودا عادي

[The curfew in the dorm is really very hard, like I went to Clay Cafe or another coffeeshop to do homework, maybe three or four times every, maybe more, depending on if I have a paper or anything, and like afterwards on the weekend, I go out with a group, and like we go to a coffeeshop, or walk, anything, I return very late, late being after 7:00 at night, like I return at 12:00 at night on the weekend, 1:00, 1:30 sometimes 2:00 and in the university in America that's totally normal, maybe that's early, but here in the dorm, the door is closed, I have to wait with the guard, and he always thinks, I know what he's thinking, and sometimes, last week I returned, heaven forbid, at 12:30 and he was in English: what time is it? like in a voice that wasn't nice at all, and I was just ah, I don't know, ah like 12:30, I played dumb, you know, so that's hard and the women in the office at the dorms aren't happy at all with me, oh Carol, welcome back, you again, so that's hard because the men can go anytime, any place, without any questions and that's normal]

Although the AUC students did not have a curfew, even if they lived in the dorms, they

commented that Egyptian girls usually did, and they found this unusual and a little bit frustrating as it limited their ability to hang out late with Egyptian female friends. Mariam (AUC) explained:

I was very interested to learn a lot about relationships between girls and boys and what's allowed and what's not allowed and relationship with the family as far as like the girl, and curfews, and all these kinds of elements were very interesting, and I mean oftentimes they're frustrating because I have you know these two really close friends who are my age, 23, and can't, have to be home by midnight, and I'm like, what, I haven't been told that since I was 16, you know

In addition to the curfew, the female students felt that if they wished to be identified as *traditional good girls*, they could not engage in the informal interactions with Egyptian men in the streets, markets, and traditional coffeeshops that the male students enjoyed, and this limited their opportunities to use Arabic. Rose (Middlebury) emphasized the greater variety of encounters the male students had, noting that it would not be a "*fikra kwajjisa* [good idea]" for her to have similar encounters:

أحيانا كثير من الرجال عندهم مش أصحاب بس أكثر زي acquaintances يعني اه اهلا يا أحمد ازيك يعني أي
اخبارك بس يعني رجال في المطعم سخص بيبيع جريدة في أي مكان في الخارج هو عنده وسطى في كل مكان كل
مكان ممكن أتكلم مع كل أشخاص بس ممكن دا مش فكرة كويسة

[Sometimes many of the men have not friends, but more like acquaintances you know, oh, hi Ahmed, how are you, like what's up, but like men in the restaurant, a person selling a newspaper in any place outside, he has a connection in every place, every place, maybe I'll speak with all the people but maybe that's not a good idea]

Tasha (AUC) expressed a similar concern with being "taken the wrong way" if she engaged in

informal encounters:

I feel like I can't have a conversation, like I can't just like shoot the breeze with an Egyptian man that I meet or talk to because it might come across as something, even if it doesn't, it's just like everything, I've been warned so many times, like oh, you can't just like strike up conversations with men, because they're going to take it the wrong way, um, whereas, the guys I know, the American guys I know, especially, they're a few of them that do have very good language skills, like Arabic language skills, they can, and they've had just like, random conversations with people on the street corners and stuff, so they've had more of an opportunity, or it's more acceptable for them to like go up to a random Egyptian man and like talk to them

In contrast, the male students explained that they were not affected by these restrictions, and that this was advantageous to their abilities to gain access to Egyptians and use Arabic. Tom (Middlebury) emphasized the differences between the male and female students in terms of their "freedom", explaining the fact that as a male, he did not need to change his dress as much, could stay out late, and did not worry about sexual harassment:

كل صباح أنا سعيد أن أنا راجل وكمان فيه العشرينات هنا علشان أكيد يعني أنا مش فاهم نصف المشاكل بتاع البنات
هنا بس أكيد فيه مشاكل كثيرة ويعني الحياة مختلفة وصعبة للأعتقد لأي أجنبي ولكن أكيد بالنسبة للحرية يعني أنا
يعني سعيد جدا أعتقد تقريبا يعني فيه قواعد للرجال طبعا ممكن أنا كويس لو أنا بألبس بانطلون ومش شورتات حاجة
زي كده بس لو أنا أرجع المدينة الجامعية في ساعة اثنين أو ثلاثة يعني تقريبا مافيش مشكلة ولو أنا عايز أمشي بنفسي
وأنا عايز أمشي بنفسي أحيانا بعض الساعات في المدينة يعني مش مشكلة خالص ومش لازم أنا أفكر على طول عن
يعني الأمن وعن المعاكسات يعني أكيد الحاجات دي جزء كبير من حياة النساء هنا ويعني مش جزء من حياتي ودا
يعني مختلف جدا

[Every morning I'm happy, that I'm a man, and also in my 20's here because of course I

don't understand half of the girls' problems here, but of course, there are lots of problems, and like life is different and hard, I think for any foreigner, but definitely in terms of freedom, like I'm like very happy, I think that almost, you know, there are rules for men of course, maybe I'm good if I wear pants, and not shorts, something like that, but if I return to the dorms at 2:00 or 3:00, like there's almost no problem, and if I want to walk alone, and I want to walk alone sometimes, in the city, like it's not a problem at all, and I don't have to always think about like, safety, and about harassment, like, of course, these things are a big part of the women's life here, and you know not part of my life, and that's like very different]

Alex agreed, focusing again on his freedom to go anywhere and talk to anyone:

أنا ممكن أمشي في أي مكان وأنا ممكن أتكلم مع أي شخص ومافيش معاكسات ضد الأولاد ومافيش يعني يعني فيه حرية وهذا مناسب لثقافة ام والبنات لازم اه تمشي لازم تمشوا مع أولاد لو هم عايزين يروحوا أماكن آخر وبشكل عام مش ممكن يتكلموا مع أشخاص في الشارع ووأعتقد أصعب جدا للبنات

[I can walk in any place, and I can speak with any person, and there's no harassment against the boys, and there's no, like, like there's freedom, and that's appropriate for the culture, um, and the girls have to um walk with boys if they want to go other places and in general they can't talk with people in the street, and I think it's a lot harder for the girls]

In addition to feeling that performing an identity as a *traditional good girl* limited the types of interlocutors with whom they could engage, the women also felt that this identity limited the types of conversations they could have. In particular, as discussed in the previous chapter, they felt that they were not expected to discuss politics, a topic in which many of them were interested and felt was essential to performing the identity of *cross-cultural mediator*. Kala

(AUC) said that if she were male:

I think just the length and like the subjects maybe of the conversation would be different, because I found that they, like cab drivers ask a lot of my male friends about like the economics in America, and politics, and um, were they to know that I also know about it, I'm a poli sci major, like you know what I mean, so it's just kind of a different subject, they kind of filter based on me being a girl.

Shelly (AUC) reported a similar experience in a cab, where:

Then they [the driver and an Egyptian in the passenger seat] asked my guy friend who was sitting next to me, they were asking him all of these questions and then I just jumped in and answered one, I think it was about Obama or something and they like completely ignored the fact that I had even said anything in Arabic and just kept talking to him.

Thus, if they wished to perform the identity of a *traditional good girl* that would allow them to demonstrate respect for traditional Egyptian gender roles, the female students could feel limited in terms of their access to informal encounters and political conversations, particularly compared to their male peers. In turn, they could feel that this lack of access limited their ability to use Arabic, thus thwarting their performance of the *dedicated language learner* identity.

Loose Foreign Women

Frustrated by these restrictions, the female students sometimes chose to ignore them, as in Carol's description of breaking the curfew above. In doing so, they generally drew upon their positioning as *western women* to gain more freedom of movement, and engage in activities that *traditional good girls* would not do, including returning home late at night, traveling overnight unchaperoned and away from their families, and having male friends. For example, Isabelle explained that because she was not Egyptian, she could return late, travel, and go to traditionally

male settings:

أنا عشان أنا مش مصرية حقيقية أنا بأستطيع أن أعمل حاجات وأشوف بعض حاجات في الحياة هنا التي ممكن ما ينفعش لمصريين ستات مصريين ففيه حاجات كويسة كده بس دائما فيه حاجات مثل يعني معاكسات حاجات كده أصعب عشان شكلي مختلفة . . . يعني أنا بأستطيع أن يعني أنا في الحقيقة عندي حرية في بيتي مع أسرتي يعني أنا مش بأحب أن أعود متأخر وذلك عشان أنا عارفة يعني محمد الابن عنده كلية عنده مدرسة بدري فذلك يعني قراري ومش الوعي في الشقة وأنا بأستطيع أن أسافر إلى أي مكان أنا عايزة ويعني لو عايزة أخرج مع الرجالة في البرنامج أنا بأستطيع أن أعمل ذلك وما فيش أية ام يعني ما فيش أي حاجة سيئة عشان كده وحاجة ثانية أيوة ويعني أنا بأستطيع أن أعمل حاجات يعني بالوحداني لو عايزة وأعتقد عشان أنا مش من هنا أنا أستطيع أن أحيانا أو أنا مش عارفة دا بس أيوة يعني أعتقد خاصة أنا أستطيع أن أعمل حاجات مع الرجالة ام وأخرج معهم وممكن بأروح مكان التي يعني معظم الوقت للرجاللة ولكن عشان أنا يعني مش من مصر أنا أستطيع ممكن أن أروح ذلك المكان

[I, because I'm not a real Egyptian, I can do things, and see some things in life here that aren't appropriate for Egyptians, Egyptian women, so there are good things, but there are also things like catcalls and so on, which is harder because I look different . . . like I can, like I really have freedom in my house with my family, you know, I don't like to return late and so on because I know that Mohamed the son has college, has school early, so that's like my decision and not the awareness in the apartment, I can travel to any place I want, and you know if I want to go out with guys in the program I can do that, and there's no, um, like there's nothing bad because of that, and another thing, yes, and like I can do things like by myself if I want, and I think because I'm not from here, I can sometimes or I don't know, but yes, like I think especially I can do things with men, um, I can go out with them, I can go to a place that like most of the time is for men, but because like I'm not from Egypt, I can maybe go to that place]

Similarly, Jane (AUC) noted that she was able to hang out late with her Egyptian male friends

because she was American:

The girls aren't really like allowed to hang out like super late with the guys once they leave [campus], but then I'm American, Hazel and I are American, so it doesn't really matter, so when we hang out outside of AUC, it's usually just Hazel and I and then the guys

Yet claiming this positioning as a western woman could also index them as sexually liberal, as a result of expectations that foreign women were interested only in sex. Haydar (Middlebury staff) blamed this assumption on the movies:

الناس هنا بيتفرجوا على الأفلام الأجنبية واللي أنا اكتشفت بعد كده إن دي هزيمة الأفلام بالنسبة للسينما الأمريكي اللي هي تتعمل عندنا يعني الأفلام مش كويسة فمعظم الأفلام دي بتدي صورة نمطية عن البنات الأمريكية أو البنات الغربية إنها بتفكر في حاجة واحدة الجنس

[People here watch foreign films and what I learned later is that this is the pit of films in terms of the American cinema, what plays here you know, is like films that aren't good, so most of these films give stereotypes about the American girl or the Western girl, that she thinks about one thing, sex]

Like Alia in the previous section, Halima (Middlebury roommate) described the reactions she got from Egyptian girls who found out she was living with Americans, particularly their concerns that she would be influenced by their immoral behavior:

حتى أي بنات ثانيين مصريات ممكن تقولك ازي أقعد مع بنات أمريكية ازي؟ انت هتكوني بعد كده مش كويسة و هتكوني مع أولاد دائما و هتكوني و هتكوني و هتكوني وحاجات كثير يعني ازي انت تقعدي مع بنت أمريكية ازي وهم بيعتقدوا إن بنت أمريكية دي يعني هتخليكي يعني بجد هتخليكي يعني مش كويسة أو حاجة زي كده

[Even any other Egyptian girls they might tell you how can I stay with American girls how? You won't be good after this, you'll be with boys all the time, and you will be, you

will be, you will be, and many things like, how are you living with an American girl, how, and they think that this American girl, like she will make you, like really, she will make you like not good, or something like that]

Thus, while the female students sometimes wanted to behave in ways that that could cause them to be indexed as *loose foreign woman*, they were also reluctant to be associated with this identity as a result of the subsequent assumptions about their morals and the types of behavior they might engage in. Their desire to be rid of these assumptions could result in their avoiding interactions with strangers, especially men. While this allowed them to claim the *traditional good girl* identity described above, it could also restrict their access to Egyptians and use of Arabic. Holly (Middlebury) explained how her knowledge of stereotypes of foreign women, as well as the catcalls she received, caused her to avoid interactions with Egyptian men and thus use Arabic less than the male students, making it more difficult for her to perform her desired identity of *dedicated language learner*:

أنا مش مراح بشكل عام بالكلام مع شخص مش معروف لي فأنا مش مراح خالص فأنا على طول بأفكر عن صورة الست الأجنبية في الثقافة المصرية وهي مش كويس وهي مش كويسة وأنا بأفكر عن دا لو أنا أتكلم مع بعض المصريين أو لو فيه راجل مصري في الشارع ام يقول معاكسات يعني وعشان كده أنا معظم الوقت أنا مش مراحة باتكلم مع المصريين يعني رجالة مصريين أنا مش عارفهم بس يعني اولاد مش عندهم نفس المشكلة وعشان كده أعتقد هم بيستخدموا عربية أكثر

[I'm generally not comfortable speaking with someone I don't know, so I'm not comfortable at all because I'm always thinking about the picture of the foreign woman in Egyptian culture, and it's not good, and it's not good, and I think about that if I'm talking with some of the Egyptians, or if there's an Egyptian man in the street, um, he says catcalls, like and because of that most of the time I'm not comfortable talking with

Egyptians, like Egyptian men that I don't know but like the boys don't have the same problem and because of this I think they use Arabic more]

Lynda (Middlebury) felt similarly, explaining that while she was not Egyptian, she did not necessarily want to be seen as "not from Egypt":

أكيد فيه تأثير كبير لفرص لأستخدام لتعلم اللغة علشان مش ممكن كأجنبية أن أتكلم مع أي شخص يعني وأنا دائما
وعية عن يعني فيه أشخاص وهم هينظروني زي زي أنا مش من مصر وأنا مش من مصر بس ام أيوة يعني كينت دا
صعب

[Of course there's a big effect on the opportunities to use, to learn the language because it's not possible for me as a foreign woman to speak with any person, you know, and I'm always aware that like there are people who will see me like like I'm not from Egypt, and I'm not from Egypt, but um, yes, as a girl that's hard]

Other students chose to negotiate an identity as a *loose foreign woman (but not that loose)* if they felt it provided them with the opportunity to use Arabic and thus perform the identity of *dedicated language learner*. Anna (AUC) described how she chose to pursue language learning opportunities even if she was identified as a *loose foreign woman*, emphasizing at the end how she was able to resist this positioning to a degree and turn the conversation to more appropriate topics:

زمان لما كنت في التاكسي والسواق كان بيقول شيء وحش أو شيء مش مناسب خلاص أنا ماتكلمش معه بس
دالوقتي افكر حتى لو هو شخص وحش هأتكلم معه عشان يعني إذا بأحس إنه فعلا خطير أو فعلا غير مؤدب
ممكن أخرج التاكسي أو أسكت بس حتى لو عنده أفكار غريب أتكلم معه مثلا كان عندي مناقشة مع واحد سواق
تاكسي وهو قالي من الأول كنت أعمل في السياحة ويعني البنات والشربة كانت كويس قوي ويعني اه هو سألني انت
لديك صاحب مصري بمعنى صاحب عاطفي وماكنتش فاكرة ما كنتش فاهمة إن السؤال كان يعني صاحب صاحب
فكنت فاكرا اه وهو كان طبعا انت عندي وزى المصريين يعني زي العلاقات مع المصريين ويعني هو فعلا سألني

يعني basically هل هو جيد بالسريير في إنجليزي فكنت يا راجل يا سلام وقلت يعني دا سؤال مش مناسب بعدين
كلمنا عن التعليم ورأيه عن أشياء مختلفة وكان ظريف بس كان لازم بأقول يعني خلاص

[In the past when I was in a taxi and the driver was saying something bad or something inappropriate, that's it, I didn't talk with him, but now I think even if he's a bad person I'll speak with him because like if I feel that it's really dangerous or really, really not appropriate I can get out of the taxi or be quiet, but even if he has strange ideas I speak with him, for example, I had a discussion with a taxi driver and he said to me from the beginning I used to work in tourism and the girls and the drinking were very good, ah, he asked me if I had an Egyptian friend, meaning romantic friend, and I didn't remember, I didn't understand that the questions was like a friend friend so I thought yes, and he was, of course you have one, and how are the Egyptians, like how are the relations with Egyptians, and like he really asked me like basically, is he good in bed in English, so I was like, hey man, wow, and I said like that's an inappropriate question and afterwards we talked about education and his opinion on different things, and it was fun, but I had to say enough]

In general, the students reported a great deal of difficulty negotiating between the *traditional good girl* and *loose foreign women* identities. Thea (Middlebury) complained that she was never sure which identity she was expected to perform:

We're expected to live like Egyptian girls and then we're also looked at differently because we're American girls, so they expect these things of us, but they also look at us as if we're like completely just like wild and carefree and American girls like it's so its like you're not sure, like whose expectations, like which one of their expectations to meet at the same time and which one to live up to

Mariam (AUC) also felt uneasy negotiating this balance, explaining that while she did not want to give up the friendships with males she was able to pursue as a result of her foreign identity, she also did not want special treatment as a foreigner:

It's a little bit frustrating to be a girl at points, um, I wouldn't say, like a lot of people like really get upset about it, and I mean, in theory, like I guess it's hard, it's hard for me to like tie myself, for example, on the rugby team, when I interact with the boys on the team, it's hard to me to find like my quite correct place, because I feel like sometimes they think, like, okay, I'm a girl, and sometimes they think of me as like one of the guys, and like it's kind of hard, like Egyptian girls don't ever get to be one of the guys and that's like a normal feeling for me at home because I've been kind of like had a lot of guy friends and the idea that like here, a girl can't really have guy friends is like frustrating to me, and it's like I find myself caught in this place where it's like I want to be able to do things like that I want to do, like have guy friends, but I also, like it frustrates me that they would treat me in a way specially because I'm foreign, so I get stuck in a little like bind, where it's like obviously I'll never be Egyptian, so I shouldn't try to like put the same restrictions on myself as an Egyptian girl would have, but at the same time, I don't like it that like they, there's double standards about what they can do, like with me and with them, you know what I mean kind of, and like I find that to be tricky, that's like to negotiate those boundaries as well is a little bit, can be difficult.

Sometimes, the students felt that the behavioral changes they would have to make to reject the identity of a *loose foreign woman* conflicted too strongly with their own sense of their identity, and they rejected these changes. Defending her choice to break the curfew, Carol (Middlebury), said:

أنا عايزة أكون في الثقافة المصرية وأنا بأحب مصر وأنا بأحوال أكون زي البنات المصريين يعني أنا مش على طول
بس أنا أحاول أحترم الثقافة على طول بس لسه أنا عايزة أكون في الثقافة الرجال أكثر من ثقافة البنات بس دا مش
اختيار بتاعتي عشان أنا مش راجل

[I want to be in Egyptian culture, and I like Egypt, and I try to be like Egyptian girls, like
I'm not always, but I try to always respect the culture, but I still want to be in the male
culture more than the girl culture but that's not a choice for me because I'm not a man]
Holly (Middlebury), like some of the Japanese learners in Siegal's (1996) study said that she
simply did not want to do some things she might be expected to as an Egyptian woman:

لو أنا عايزة أعمل حاجات زي ست مصرية ممكن أنا ما بأخرج في الليل واحدة . . . بس أنا عايزة أنا بأفضل
بأتصرف زي ست امريكية في حال زي دا فيعني أنا عارفة ممكن أنا أكثر في الثقافة المصرية لو أنا بأعمل حاجات
زي دا بس أنا مش عايزة وأنا عارفة دا وأنا أفهم دا رأيي

[If I wanted to do things like an Egyptian woman, maybe I wouldn't go out at night alone
. . . But I want, I prefer to act like an American women in a situation like that, so like I
know maybe I'm more in Egyptian culture if I do things like that but I don't want that,
and I know that and I understand that's my opinion]

Thus, a common theme running throughout the data was the tension for the female
students between their desire to show respect for the local culture by performing the *traditional
good girl* identity (and accepting traditional gender roles) and their desire to participate in
activities such as travel, staying out late, and having male friendships that they could only do by
exploiting their identity as *foreign women* to gain special privileges not available to all Egyptian
women. Yet when they performed this latter identity, they could be perceived as morally loose.
In terms of performing their desired identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language
learner*, claiming a *traditional good girl* identity could help them perform the identity of *cross-*

cultural mediator because they became more acceptable interlocutors. However, it could also entail restrictions on access, language use, and topics of conversation (such as politics) which in turn limited their abilities to perform this identity. Being assigned the identity of a *loose foreign woman* could provide greater access and language learning opportunities, yet could demonstrate a lack of respect for local culture that limited their ability to perform the identity of *cross-cultural mediator*. Finding a way to balance their performances between these two (stereotypical) extremes was often a challenge for the female students.

Targets of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment was a dominant issue in the data, as evidenced by the feelings of discomfort and even danger the female students experienced as a result of sexual harassment, the male students' happiness that they did not have to deal with sexual harassment, and the participants' general impression that the female study abroad students received more sexual harassment as a result of their foreign appearance, less conservative dress, and perceptions of foreign women as sexually liberal.

A 2008 study prepared by the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights (Hassan, Shoukry, & Abul Komsan, 2009) reported that sexual harassment was a major problem in Egypt, with 83% of Egyptian women and 98% of foreign women reporting exposure to sexual harassment, and 46.1% of Egyptian women and 52.3% of foreign women reporting harassment on a daily basis. Of the Egyptian men surveyed, 62.4% admitted harassing women, and 88% said they had seen women harassed. The types of harassment reported included: "touching, noises (including whistling, hissing noises, kissing sounds etc.), ogling of women's bodies, verbal harassment of a sexually explicit nature, stalking or following, phone harassment, and indecent exposure" (p. 15).

Many of the students felt that being foreign increased the amount of sexual harassment

they received. Isabelle (Middlebury) explained:

المعاكسات أنا هاغير وش نظر بعض معظم الرجالة عن ستات أجنبية أعتقد دا مشكلة كبيرة هنا عشان هم يعني عندهم وجه نظر اعتقد غير صحيح عن ازي الست الأجنبية فيعني طبعاً المعاكسات لسه موجودة مع الست المصرية كمان كثير واعتقد نفس الحاجة أو أسوأ للأجنبية عشان مافيش أي حاجة هنا يعني احنا مش عندنا أسرة هنا أو يعني أخونا هنا يضربهم فمعظم الوقت احنا واحدتين ممكن في الشارع وللازم بس أسمع وأمشي على طول ومافيش حاجات هنعمل عنه ودا صعب

[The harassment, I would change the viewpoint of some, most of the men, about foreign women, I think that this is a big problem here, because they like have a viewpoint, I think that's not true about how foreign women are, and like of course there is still harassment of Egyptian women too, a lot, I think the same thing or worse for the foreign woman because there's nothing here, like we don't have family here, or like our brother here to hit them, so most of the time we are alone maybe in the street and it's necessary to just hear and walk straight ahead, and there's nothing we can do about it, and that's hard]

In general, the female students found the harassment extremely frustrating to deal with and felt that it was something they always had to worry about in public places. Aurora (Middlebury) commented:

لسه فيه اختلاف لسه أنا لازم أكون ذاكية لما أنا أمشي في أي مكان حاجة زي كده ومثلاً أنا بس كنت في سيدي جابر لاجتمع مع مجموعة وأنا كنت زي بعيد منهم وكان فيه راجل هو زي سسسسسسس وكنت زي خلاص ففيه حاجة زي مش ممكن أنا أروح كل الأماكن زي الرجالة بس كمان في حاجة زي يعني عندي زي حاجة مزعج يعني على طول ودا ممكن حاجة هم ما عندهم

[There's still a difference, I have to be smart when I walk in any place, something like that, for example, I was in Sidi Gaber to meet a group, and I was far away from them, and there was a man like sssssssssss and I was like that's it, so there is something like, I

can't go to all the places like the men but also, there's something like you know, I have like something annoying like all the time and that's something maybe they don't have]

Jane (AUC) explained that it was still difficult to deal with catcalls even after several months in Egypt:

The thing that annoys me the most honestly is just the street harassment, like, I've, it was one thing, like when I first got here, it was just like this is so, this is such a novelty, like this is a novelty, this is so new, I've never encountered this before, and now it's getting to the point where it's just, it just kind of annoys me, because especially, it's like when I'm like walking around Tahrir, I'm like okay, I'm just trying to go to this class, because it's like on Monday, so I'm trying to teach and everything, so it's like, I just want to go to class, I want to like go back, I don't want to have to like deal with, getting like hissed at and stuff like that

While verbal remarks on the street were the most frequent type of harassment the students reported, they also complained of being grabbed, followed, and exposed to public masturbation. Tina (Middlebury) explained that she was sometimes followed:

أنا ما بأحبش الشارع لأن الرجل كل يوم وأحياناً ليك عربية slows down ل follows me like two blocks
ليك مش كويس ومشكلة مع حاجة مثل دي

[I don't like the street because the man every day, and sometimes, like a car slows down and follows me like for two blocks, like it's not good, and a problem with something like that]

Thea (Middlebury) felt that she was able to deal with catcalls, but reported that she was also grabbed:

المعكاسات في الشارع مش مشكلة بس لو هم يعني touch دا صعب قوي

[The catcalls in the street aren't a problem, but if they you know, touch, that's very hard]

Depending on where they were from, some students were more used to the catcalls, but still found it somewhat annoying. Pearl (AUC) explained that she had had similar experiences in her home state:

There's the harassment from like young boys, but really it's like pretty much everywhere, and I mean I live in South Florida, and the boys do that there too, only in Spanish, it's the same thing though so like I don't know, I wasn't as shocked, I'd heard lots of stories about guys harassing you and like trying to like touch you and do this and that but I haven't had any real problems, I've just had really annoying little pubescent boys like saying things and I just ignore them and then nothing happens

Mariam (AUC) explained that she was aware of the increased catcalls in Egypt, but less concerned about it:

[You] get a lot more attention from people on the street, which like I don't really care that much about, I feel like that shit's mostly true wherever you are, like on the streets of New York and Chicago, do and say obnoxious stuff, men are men after all

In contrast to the female students' discomfort with the catcalls and harassment they received, the male students generally felt they were lucky to not have to deal with these problems. Justin (AUC) explained:

I don't get harassed at all, like the way girls do, like I can go running around in Maadi and girls can't, um, like, I can like walk, I don't know, is, ah, I don't know, I just, like all my friends that are like study abroad Americans they complain about like all these things that I've never had to go through, like getting harassed, like every time they walk down the street they get like whistled at, or like guys look at them, like I'm really like fortunate not

to have that, it's, it's kind of like the same stuff, but like every day, I have to do it, I mean like people still look at me I guess, but they don't like stare, no they stare, but like, they don't like whistle at me and stuff, or like disrespect, you know like if I go into a taxi, like, I feel like, ever since the beginning I've felt secure that like I want to get like, they wouldn't like try to like hurt me, like my friend, like she got, ah, like taken in a taxi, and they like tried to like rough her up and stuff, and like she screamed and like ran away, and like, so, but she was by herself in a taxi, and they were just like bad men you know, so I don't have to worry about that

The Egyptian students also felt this was a major challenge for the students. Alia (Middlebury roommate) explained:

البنات الأمريكان يخافوا من المعاكسات هنا في الشارع

[American girls are afraid of the catcalls in the street].

Ayman (Middlebury roommate) noted that this was a major culture shock for them:

فدائما يتعرضوا على المعاكسات كثير قوي في الشارع فدا أول صدمة

[They always get a whole lot of catcalls in the street and that's the first shock].

On the other hand, Khaled (AUC student) felt that his female friends were over-exaggerating the frequency of the complaints: "Like some girls are like every single day [they get catcalled], and I'm like that's impossible, I live in this country, I know that doesn't happen." Alaa (AUC teacher) felt that female students could prevent harassment by dressing more conservatively:

أنا عندي نصائح للبنات الحقيقة إذا كانت هي مابتحبش يعني التحرش في الشارع يعني أنا مالبس بقى لبس مخالف للثقافة هنا في الشارع وأجي أبقي ماحدش هتحرش بي أنا يعني أنا مش في امريكا ماجيش ألبس مثلا حاجة قصيرة ماجيش ألبس لبس مثلا يعني هنقول غير محتشم يعني والله إذا أنا مالبست اللبس دا خالص بيقى أنا ماجيش اشتكي احنا الواقع هنا بيقول احنا عندنا طبعة معينة في اللبس والعادات

[I have advice for the girls, really, if she doesn't like you know, the harassment in the streets, like I don't wear like clothing that's against the culture here in the street, and I'll come, and no one will harass me, I like, I'm not in America, I won't come and wear for example something short, I won't come and wear for example like we say isn't modest, like really, if I don't wear that clothing, that's it, I won't complain, we the reality here says we have a certain way of dressing and customs]

The ECWR survey (Hassan et al., 2009) notes that it was a common belief among Egyptian women and men (although not foreign women) that women who dressed less modestly were more subject to sexual harassment. In contrast to these beliefs, 72.5% of the women who reported being harassed on the survey were veiled. While the female students in this study did not dress as conservatively as most Egyptian women (although perhaps more conservatively than some women at AUC), they did modify their dress to make sure that at least their legs and shoulders were always covered, and did not wear the "short" clothing described by Alaa above. Modifying their dress was another restriction that many of the female students found frustrating in the Egyptian heat, although unlike the students in Anderson's (2003) study in Costa Rica they were willing to make modifications.

Although the ECWR report considers catcalls sexual harassment, many Egyptians do not, distinguishing between *al-muṣa:kasa:t* (catcalls) and *at-taḥarruṣ al-ʒinsi* (sexual harassment), where the former could sometimes be considered closer to flirtation. For example, Mona (AUC teacher) complained to me once that the students would come to class saying they'd been harassed when it was really *muṣa:kasa:t suḡajjara* [little catcalls]. Inas (Middlebury roommate) told me that these catcalls were fine so long as they came from a *zʿa:bit ʔamar* (hot officer). At the same time, as Kinginger (2009) calls for attention to, the line between flirtation and

harassment is not always clear, particularly for verbal remarks. Leila (Middlebury teacher) explained:

لو مثلا قلنا إنه طالبة مصرية سافرت امريكا وفيه شخص في الشارع قالها كلمتين شكلك حلو أو شكلك وحش هي مش هتعتبر إن دا تحرش هي هتعتبر إن دا معاكسة وهي عندها فرق في ثقافتها بين التحرش والمعاكسة

[If for example we said an Egyptian student traveled to America and there was someone in the street who said two words, you looked good or you look bad, she wouldn't consider it *at-taḥarruṣ* [harassment], she would consider it *muṣa:kasa* [catcalls], and she has a difference in her culture between *at-taḥarruṣ* and *al-muṣa:kasa*]

Alaa (AUC teacher) said that catcalls were a way of approaching women:

لازم نعرف إن هو حتى لو بيعاكسوا البنات زي hissing مثلا أو بأي وسيلة مش معناه إن هو قليل الأدب ولا حاجة هو بس مش عارف يعني مش عارف ازي to approach البنات الأمريكية

[We have to realize that even if they catcall girls, like hissing, for example, or in any way, it doesn't mean he's impolite or anything, he just doesn't know, like he doesn't know how to approach the American girl]

This idea of catcall as approach was confirmed by Francis's (Middlebury) experience teaching English. He wrote on his blog:

Today's lesson, in response to popular request, is "love." One of my students asked me how to get a girl's number in the street, so I had to start from the beginning because contrary to popular Egyptian-young-man belief, American girls don't generally respond well to "Hallo! What is your phone number?!" I wrote up a vocab list for last week's lesson, "travel," with the words in English, MSA and ECA. Turns out it's WAY harder to translate words in the "love" lesson to Arabic – there's no word for "dating," for example. Just "engaged" or "married." On the bright side (I think) it'll be a lesson in

culture as much as in language, so I should be able to fill two hours.

The standard advice offered by Egyptian women for dealing with unwanted catcalls was to pretend not to hear. Amina (Middlebury roommate) explained:

لما حد يعاكسك ماترديش عليه ولا هو هيتحرك دمه هو هيغضب ازي ماتردش علي دا ما معاناها إن انت مش
بتتهتمي ودا واحد أصلا مش كويس

[When someone catcalls you, don't respond, and he'll get upset, he'll get mad, how is she not responding to that, that means that you don't care, and that's someone who's not good in the first place]

Alia (Middlebury roommate) had similar advice:

طبعاً أهم حاجة إن انت تعملي نفسك مش سامعة تطنشي أبوة حاجة مهمة إذا انت حسيت إن هو شخص مش كويس
هيحاول إنه يقرب منك طبعاً انت تقولي

[Of course the most important thing is to pretend you didn't hear, ignore it, yes, it's something important, if you feel he's a bad person, he will try to get close to you, of course you say something]

Although the study abroad students knew that this was the standard, culturally appropriate response, particularly if they wished to claim a *traditional good girl* identity, they could find it hard to adapt to if this response conflicted with their own sense of identity. Thea (Middlebury) explained that this type of response prevented her from enacting her desired self-identification as an *empowered woman*:

أنا فيه امريكا أنا في جامعة البنات بس وعندنا like sense of empowerment كل الوقت فلو ليك رجل
بيعاكسني في الشوارع أو في شارع في امريكا يعني مش ممكن أنا miserable
human being بس هنا يعني مش ممكن ليك مش ماينفعش في ثقافة مصرية فيعني صعب لreconcile ثقافتني مع
ثقافة مصرية في الموضوع دا

[I'm, in America I'm in a women's college but we have like a sense of empowerment all the time, so if like a man harasses me in the street or in the street in American you know, it's not possible, I'll like make him feel like a miserable human being, but here, like it's not possible, like it doesn't work in the Egyptian culture so like it's hard to reconcile my culture with Egyptian culture on that subject]

As a result of their inability or unwillingness to ignore these catcalls, the female study abroad students also developed their own techniques, some of which they recognized were culturally inappropriate. Stephanie (AUC) said: "now I'm just like alright, whatever, I'll give them the finger as I walk by, which I know isn't really the best thing to do either, but I think I've gotten to the point where I'm like you know, whatever, there's nothing I can do." Some students, like Jennifer (Middlebury), used headphones to prevent themselves from hearing the catcalls in the first place, although this also limited other types of input they might receive:

There are people who are like I don't like walking a certain way because like the same people yell at me every day, and I'm like put your headphones in, like to me that's the least of my problems, the harassment really doesn't bother me as much as the fact that it is an inhibitor from going places, but I really don't care, except for, if someone touches you, it really bothers me, but otherwise, I don't care.

Another technique was to put on a "street face." Rose (Middlebury) explained that this was an angry, purposeful way of walking in the street that helped prevent catcalls, but might lead to problems when she returned to the United States:

أنا أمشي وأنا وش الشوارع وتشمي زي كده ومش تبتسم أو تضحك في الشوارع وتمسي ب purpose وأنا لا أشوف أشخاص في الشوارع واه أظن ممكن أن أكون مشكلة عندما أعود إلى امريكا عشان كل حاجة أنا خارج البيت أنا مثل جدا وكل أشخاص في مدبري يفكرون أنا pissed off جدا بس وأنا خاصة بشكل عام هأروح إلى مكان بمجموعة

وأحاول أن عندنا راجل معنا وأنا دائما في إلا أنا مش مع مجموعة كبير أنا دائما في المدينة بعد خمسة أو ستة بليل أنا
ما هأروح لقهوة أنا ما هأروح لمكان يعني بوحدة يعني مافيش آخر أشخاص وأنا دائما aware جدا في الشوارع

[I walk and I have my street face, and you walk like that and you don't smile or laugh in the street, and you walk with purpose and I don't see people in the street and oh, I think maybe I'll have a problem when I return to America because everything, I'm out of the house, I'm like very, and all the people in Middlebury will think I'm very pissed off but I especially, generally I go to places in a group and I try to have a man with us, and I'm always, if I'm not in a big group, I'm always in the dorms after 5:00 or 6:00 at night, I don't go to a coffeeshop, I don't go to a place like alone, like where there's not other people, I'm always very aware in the street]

Another solution Rose mentioned was taking along a male companion. In Spring 2010, Middlebury initiated a program the students dubbed the "booty guard", where some of the male students would be on "booty guard" to walk the female students from their classes to the dorm and then wait in the dorm in the afternoon if the female students wanted to go out anywhere. Anne (AUC) also reported using this strategy, but that it was difficult for her to accept this: "it's been a new experience, a hard experience for me to have to rely on other people, specifically other males, to feel safe, so that's something that was very hard for me to get used to"

A few of the female students also tried to appreciate the verbal comments, as they might if they were Egyptian. Mallory (Middlebury) explained:

كان هناك راجل وهو beautiful beautiful وعندي طريقين أولا ممكن اه والله ليك مرة ثانية او اه اه هو يفكر أنا
beautiful او كي شكرا

[There was a man and he was "beautiful, beautiful" and I have two ways, first maybe, oh, really, like, again? or oh, oh, he thinks I'm beautiful, okay, thanks]

Regardless of their techniques for dealing with it, the participants in this study felt that the fear and frustration with the catcalls and sexual harassment the female students experienced limited their opportunities for informal interactions and Arabic language use. For example, Lydia (Middlebury) explained that she avoided talking with taxi drivers and men in the street as a result of sexual harassment:

في التاكس أنا مش أستخدم اللغة العربية اه أنا مش أستخدم إنجليزي كمان يعني بس يعني للرجل هم دائما يتكلمون مع التاكس الرجل التاكس بس عندما أنا كنت في التاكس مافيش أي كلمة لأن أنا كنت عندي مشاكل في التاكس من قبل في سوريا ليك يعني مشاكل كثير كبير في التاكس وام كمان أنا مش تتكلم ما تتكلمش كثيرا مع الرجال في الشارع وأعتقد دا مش مشكلة فيه القرار هنا ولكن نعم هناك أكثر فرصة ليستخدم اللغة العربية للرجال من البنات

[In the taxi, I don't use Arabic, ah, I don't use English either, like but like, the men they always talk with the taxi man but when I was in the taxi, there's not a word because I had problems in the taxi before in Syria, like, like very big problems in the taxi, and um also I don't speak, don't speak a lot with the man in the street, and I think that's not a problem, there's a decision here, but yes, there are more opportunities to use Arabic for men than girls]

In the Middlebury program, several of the female students felt that using English was necessary to express their frustration with sexual harassment and other gendered interactions, even if it was breaking the language pledge. Rose (Middlebury) explained:

عندنا مقابلات مع كل البرنامج كل أسبوعين ويمكننا أن نتكلم بالإنجليزي فيها ودا جزء مهم قوي أعتقد خاصة بالنسبة للبنات عشان يمكننا أن نتكلم عن المعاكسات وتجربتنا في الأسبوعين الأخيرين إلى البرنامج بشكل عام وإلى الرجال كمان بإنجليزي عشان فيه اختلاف كبير بين كان فيه معاكسات وحش قوي وhe grabbed my boob ممكن نقول دا بالعربي ودا مهم أعتقد للبنات ليقول دا وكمان للرجال لاستمع دا عشان لو احنا نقول أيوة كان فيه معاكسات النهار دا وهم اه كان زي يا مزة يا جميلة ولا معاكسات مع capital M capital م ام وأعتقد ما كانش في مقابلات

زي كده في الفصل الدراسي اللي فات وأعتقد دي حاجة جديد ومهم قوي

[We have meetings with the whole program every two weeks and we can talk in English at them and that's a very important part, I think especially for the girls because we can talk about the harassment and our experiences in the last two weeks to the program in general and to the men too in English because there's a big difference between there was very bad harassment and he grabbed my boob and we can't say that in Arabic and that's important for the girls to say that and also for the men to hear that because if we say yes, there was harassment today and they are oh, it was like hey hottie, hey pretty, and no, harassment with a capital H capital H, um, I think there weren't meetings like that the last semester and I think this is something new and very important.

The discomfort with catcalls and sexual harassment reported by American females in this study, and their feelings that these experiences limit their abilities to gain local interactions and use the target languages echoes the findings of other studies looking at American females studying in Russia (Pellegrino Aveni 2005; Polyani, 1995), Argentina (Isabelli Garcia, 2006), Costa Rica (Anderson, 2003, Twombly, 1995), Spain (Talburt and Stewart, 1999), France (Kinging, 2008; Kinginger and Farrell Whitworth, 2005), and Morocco and Jordan (Kuntz and Belnap, 2001). Similarly, the reservations expressed by the Egyptian participants over some of the catcalls the American females considered harassment echo the concerns of Kinginger (2009) and Block (2007) that research on sexual harassment during study abroad promotes American perspectives. While it is important to realize that definitions of sexual harassment vary, it is also crucial to note that the discomfort these American women experienced abroad did cause many of them to avoid interactions with locals.

Regardless of whether the female study abroad students negotiated the identities of

traditional good girls, loose foreign women, or targets of sexual harassment (and these are certainly not mutually exclusive categories), they often felt that these identities negatively impacted their abilities to gain access to Egyptians and use Arabic in the ways that their male colleagues did. In turn, this made it more difficult for them to perform the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* necessary for participation in their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East. Yet while the identities described so far could make it more difficult for female students, there were also identities they could negotiate that increased their access to Egyptians and Arabic language use, namely those of *female interlocutor, guest of the family, and romantic partner*.

Female Interlocutors

While the Egyptians students encountered in the street, shops, and coffeeshops were more likely to be male, there were also opportunities for the female students to meet women, particularly in the female only cars on the tram and metro. For example, Thea (Middlebury) explained that while she was not able to talk with taxi drivers, she could talk with women in the tram:

مش في تاكس عشان بالنسبة للبنات يعني زي sketch شوية ليتكلم مع الرجال في يعني حاجة زي كده بس لو احنا مع الرجال من البرنامج مافيش مشكلة بس يعني ام بأحب أنا أتكلم مع شخص يعني مع بنات في الترام في عربية نسائية بس دا كانت فرصة كويسة

[Not in a taxi because for girls that's like a little sketch to speak with men in you know, something like that, but if we're with men in the program, it's not a problem, but like um, I like to speak with people, like with girls in the tram, um, in the women's car, but that was a good opportunity]

The female students in the Middlebury program who lived in the dorms also had

opportunities to interact with women there, and many of them felt that this was crucial to their abilities to practice the language and claim their desired identity of *dedicated language learner* given their limited opportunities in the street.

Rose (Middlebury) explained:

أستطيع أن أتكلم مع البنات في المدينة وفعلا دا بس ويعني البنات في الترام أحيانا بس يعني ما عندي كل الفرصة زي
الولاد لأروح لقهوة كل ليل وأتكلم مع أي شخص في مجموعة صغيرة التي يمكنني أن أتكلم معه بس أظن هذا مش
مشكلة بالنسبة للغة علشان يمكنني ما زال نتكلم نفس الساعة مع العرب مع المصريين بس مش مع أشخاص مختلف
تماما

[I can speak with the girls in the dorms and really, that's all, and like the girls in the tram sometimes, but like I don't have all the opportunities like the boys to go to a coffeeshop every night and speak with anyone in a small group that I can speak with, but I think this isn't a problem in terms of the language because I can still speak the same hours with the Arabs, with the Egyptians, but not with completely different people]

Furthermore, while the female students could risk feeling uncomfortable to engage in interactions with men, the male students complained that it was extremely difficult for them to talk to women. Bruce (AUC) said: "it's obviously a lot easier for females to talk to males in this culture, because males are looking for any attention they can get, and then as a male I can't just go and talk with any females because it's ah, a cultural rift". Anders (Middlebury) felt that this inability to talk to women hindered his ability to perform his desired identity of *cross-cultural mediator* because he did not know their opinions:

أنا عايز أعرف أو أنا عايز أسمع يعني أو أتكلم مع الستات في المجتمع بس أعتقد علشان أنا راجل ما عنديش نفس
الإذن البنات عندهم أكثر فرص الكلام مع البنات في المجتمع وأعتقد بالنسبة لي أنا مهتم بالعلاقات بين الجنسين في
المجتمع وعلشان أنا مش عارف قوي وجهة نظر البنات في المجتمع أنا مش عارف الحال الحقيقي بين الجنسين

فعلشان أنا عارف وجهة نظر الرجال بس أنا عايز أعرف الجانب الثاني كمان وما ينفعش أحيانا

[I want to know or I want to hear you know, or to speak with women in the society but I think because I'm a man I don't have the same permission the girls have more opportunities to speak with girls in the society and I think for me I'm interested in the relationships between the sexes in the society and because I don't really know the point of view of the girls in the society I don't know the true situation between the sexes so because I only know the viewpoint of the men I want to know the other side too and it doesn't work sometimes]

In contrast, Isabelle (Middlebury) explained that the ability to speak to women was an advantage to being female, and allowed her to better perform her desired identity as *cross-cultural mediator*:

أعتقد فيه حاجة كويسة إن أنا بأستطيع أنا أبدأ كلام مع ستات وأعتقد فيه ناس كثير التي مش بيّفهموا الستات المصريين ام فذلك دائما كويس عشان أنا بأستطيع أن أشوف حاجات من وجهة نظرهم التي أعتقد الرجالة مش بيستطيعوا أن يروا

[I think that a good thing is that I can, I start talking with women and I think there are a lot of people that don't understand Egyptian women, um, so that's always good because I can see things from their point of view that I think the men can't see]

Guests of the Family

In addition to being able to talk to women, it was also easier for the female students to enter Egyptian family life. For example, the Middlebury program offered homestays, but only to female students. Wendy (AUC teacher) also felt that this was an advantage of being female:

You can meet, go to families, especially for women, you can get almost adopted into

families left right and center and I know so many women who have done this and who have acquired another family or almost and what's impossible to say what kind of things you discover when you eat with a family and I don't know sit around and talk, and there's so much that you can't do unless, that you cannot do unless your in a setting that allows for it, and yeah, Cairenes are, as I said before, really sociable, and really welcoming, and often you have access, if you really pursue it you have access to family life that is not going to happen elsewhere.

The female students in the Middlebury program who lived in the dorms often visited their roommates' families on weekends, or attended engagement parties and other family events that the male students felt they missed out on. Sam (Middlebury) explained:

والبنات أكثر قريب مع البنات في المدينة وعلشان كده هم عندهم فرص ليعملوا حاجات زي حفلة الخطوبة وأنا مش

مسموح أنا أدخل التجربة زي دي

[The girls are closer to the girls in the dorms and because of that they have opportunities to do things like engagement parties and I'm not allowed to have an opportunity like that]

Francis (Middlebury) agreed:

عندهم علاقات مع أساتذتهم ام ممكن معزوم للبيت أو يتعرفوا على أولادهم مثلاً أو معزوم لأسر أو فيه بيت

المصريات اللي ساكنين معهم

[They have relationships with their professors, um maybe they're invited to the house, or they meet the children for example, or they're invited to families in the house of the Egyptians that they live with]

When the female students were able to gain entry into families, this increased their access to Egyptians, and at times also allowed them to better perform the role of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner*. While the families of the AUC students generally spoke

English, the families of the Middlebury roommates in the countryside often did not. Inas (Middlebury roommate) described her family's delight with the Arabic-speaking study abroad students and the contrast with their previous ideas about Americans:

لما بيشفوا وشهم إنهم (الطلاب) مبسوطين وبينكلموا عربي دا أحسن حاجة بالنسبة لهم (الأسرة) هم مبسوطين قوي قوي قوي وأسرتي كل الوقت تتصل لازم تجيبي البنات مرة ثانية لازم تجيبي البنات هم وحشونا وبتتكلم معهم ازيك يا حبيبتي وحشتيني هم أصدقاء دالوقتي مش نفس الحاجة من خمس سنين لما كنا بنشوف الإعلانات في التلفزيون وبنشوف الأخبار مش نفس الحاجة خالص دالوقتي هم عندهم أصدقاء امريكيين بيحبوهم جدا جدا

[When they see in their faces that they [the students] are happy and speak Arabic, that is the best thing for them [the family], they are very, very, very happy, and my family always calls and says you need to bring the girls again, you need to bring the girls, we miss them, and they talk with them, how are you sweetie, I miss you, they're friends now, it wasn't the same five years ago when we saw the announcements on TV, and we see the news, it's not the same thing at all, now they have American friends they like a whole lot]

Romantic Partners

It was also possible for female study abroad students to date Egyptian males, while the reverse was highly unlikely. Justin (AUC) explained:

I feel like for a girl to get an Egyptian boyfriend, to be able speak Arabic, and like get into his group of friends, is a lot easier for like a guy to like get an Egyptian girlfriend because of like the parents will be upset, and like the girl of course is always protected by her family, so getting into like the culture in that sense is a lot harder, um, but I know, I know so many like girls who are Americans who have Egyptian boyfriends

Nathalie (AUC), who dated an Egyptian, emphasized the cultural insights she gained through this experience:

It gave me really good insight into the culture because he would invite me to do things that you wouldn't just like invite your normal friends to do like I would go to his house quite often and like meet his parents and talk to his parents and like I got to go to weddings with him and stuff and like engagement parties and all that type of thing so it was a very nice experience, and we're still really good friends because we didn't really break up

While her access to this cultural information helped Nathalie perform her desired identity of *cross-cultural mediator*, she also explained that she used mostly English with her boyfriend, only switching to using more Arabic after they broke up:

Actually since we've broken up, we've switched to trying to speak all Arabic, which is funny because there's not as much of an imperative to like communicate effectively, so we can kind of be a little more casual about communication, but when we were dating, it was mostly in English, except when I made a point to practice Arabic with him, which was fairly often, but like just for day to day communications in English

Anna (AUC) also had an Egyptian boyfriend with whom she reported using English. Like the study abroad students who chose friendships over language practice, she also gave up performing the identity of *dedicated language learner* to make it easier to establish the new relationship:

حاولت في البداية أن أتكلم بالعربي ومرة واحدة بس كان صعب جدا علشان كان ممكن المرة الثاني اللي احنا قبلنا فيعني كان صعب من غير مشاكل اللغة أن نتكلم عشان احنا يعني مش عارفة ايه اه هاقول ايه يعني وكمان يعني أقدر اتكلم بس مش بشكل مضبوط ومش بشكل واضح طول الوقت يعني فهو يعني بيقدر بيتكلم كويس قوي فأحيانا فيه كلمات اللي هو مايعرفهاش بس معظم الوقت هو بيعرف وهو بيفهم وفالعكش مش الحقيقة يعني فيه كلمات مش عارفها وصعب علي أن أفهم الكلمات من غير مساعدة ومين فعلا عايز يتكلم ببطئ ببطئ وكل كلمة معناها ايه مش فاهمة ويعني أنا أحسن من دا بس هي مشكلة

[I tried in the beginning to speak in Arabic one time, but it was very hard because it was maybe the second time that we met, and like it was hard without any language problems to speak because we like didn't know, what ah, what will I say and also like I can speak, but not correctly, and not clearly all the time, like he can speak very well, so sometimes there are words he doesn't know, but most of the time he knows and he understands, and the opposite isn't true, like there are words that I don't know and it's hard to understand the words without help and who really wants to speak slowly, slowly and what's the meaning of every word, I don't understand, and like I'm better than that, but it's a problem]

By claiming these last three identities of *female interlocutors*, *guests of the family*, or *romantic partners*, it was possible for female study abroad students to gain the access to Egyptians they needed to perform their desired identity of *cross-cultural mediator*. However, simply gaining access did not necessarily entail negotiating an identity as an *Arabic speaker* in order to perform the identity of *dedicated language learner*. Particularly when their romantic relationships were at stake, the learners tended to choose English if this was an option.

Thus, as a result of being identified as female, there were a number of identities the students negotiated with locals, including those of a *traditional good girl*, *loose foreign woman*, *target of sexual harassment*, *female interlocutor*, *guest of the family*, and *romantic partner*. Like previous studies, this study finds that American females feel limited and frustrated abroad as a result of their gender, particularly when they are not sure which identities to negotiate or feel that this negotiation results in conflicts with their own gendered identities. Yet at the same time, I also demonstrate the ways in which students were able to negotiate identities for themselves as females which helped rather than hindered their ability to pursue the access to Egyptians and

Arabic language use necessary for them to perform their desired identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner*.

However, it is crucial to recognize the role program and other facilitation played with respect to helping female students negotiate gendered identities that helped them gain access to Egyptians. With the exception of meeting women on public transportation, this access was generally facilitated by prior connections, extracurricular activities or their living situation (i.e. visiting their roommates' families). When the female students felt that they could not gain access through these activities, they tended to have very negative perceptions towards the role of their gender in facilitating their performance of the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* necessary to make their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East match the reality of their sojourn in Egypt.

Religion

Religion was also prominent theme in the data. The students' religion was not immediately identifiable from their physical appearance (although the lack of a headscarf for female students or prayer mark for male students, as well as foreign appearance, could index non-Muslim). However, "what is your religion?" is a common question in informal encounters in Egypt, and as a result students were expected to identify their religion more often than they were used to in their home countries.

Moaddel and Azadarmaki (2002), in a survey that included 3000 Egyptians, found that 94% said they were Muslim and 5.6% said they were Christian⁶, in contrast to similar surveys in Western countries where a good percentage of the population identifies as no religious

6. Although not reported in this study, there is a small Bahai minority in Egypt, and a very small Jewish minority

denomination. Furthermore, 97% of Egyptians said that religion was important in their lives, and 79% said that they were Muslim above all, compared to the 10% that said they were Egyptian above all.

In general, the participants reported that they experienced far more religion in daily life in Egypt compared to their lives in the United States. Francis (Middlebury) wrote on his blog:

Almost all of the women in Alexandria are muhagiba (wearing the Hegab [headscarf]).

Every other man I see has a calloused spot on their foreheads from praying so much. This is a Muslim society –there is no separation between the religious sphere and the secular, regular, functional sphere like there is in America. It's a very cool society to witness, and partake in for a year. I won't participate so much but during Ramadan a lot of the participation was involuntary, like getting a bag-breakfast the night before because the Muslims wouldn't eat while the sun was up. Like hearing the call to prayer several times a day, and at 4am. Like being asked my religion from many strangers.

Hanan (AUC teacher) emphasized the importance of religion in Egypt as part of the East:

شيء عن مثلاً الأديانة دي منطقة الشرق الأوسط كلها كويس حتى الشرق بشكل عام منطقة الدين بيلعب دور مهم في حياة الشخص على مستوى الحياة اليومية فلازم يبقى فاهم الكلام دا وفاهم إن أنا مش بأكلم على الدين الإسلامي حتى الدين المسيحي واخدة بالك حتى اليهود في إسرائيل يعني أنا قصدي كل دين المنطقة الدين فيها له دور بصرف النظر مش بأكلم على دين محدد من أي نوع لكن دا جزء دا مش موجود في أمريكا خالص خالص واخدة بالك بس هنا في الشرق لا

[Something about religion, this is the Middle East region, all of it, okay, even the East in general is a region where religion plays an important role in a person's life, on the level of daily life, they need to understand that, and understand that I'm not talking about the Islam, even the Christianity, you understand, even the Jews in Israel, like my point is

every religion,, religion plays a big role in the region it regardless, I'm not talking about a particular religion I'm talking about, of any type, but that part doesn't exist in America at all, at all, you understand, but here in the East, no]

As a result of the increased role of religion in society, the students emphasized that understanding the role of religion and religious practices in Egypt was crucial to developing the cultural understanding they needed perform the identity of *cross-cultural mediator*. Carl (Middlebury) explained:

الفهم لثقافة يعني فيه حاجة مثلا أعرف دالوقتي الزواج حاجة مهمة خالص بالنسبة للثقافة والدين والممارسات اليومية والدينية حاجات مهمة خالص

[Understanding the culture, like, there are things for example I know now that marriage is a very important thing in terms of the culture, and religion, and the daily religious practices are things that are very important]

Indeed, some of the Egyptian students felt that the American students did not understand the seriousness of religion in Egypt. Osman (Middlebury roommate) explained:

الناس عامة مابيجبوش يتكلموا في الدين كثير أو كهزار يعني حاجة زي مقدسة شوية مثلا أنا فاكر مرة كان واحد . . . كان بيقول مش عارف بس دالوقتي هو بيقول دالوقتي ربنا بيعيط ودالوقتي مش عارف ربنا نائم مش عارف فأنا حتى وأنا أعجبتني قوي قلت له طيب يا بيت لازم تخلص دالوقتي أنا عارف إن عندك صورة كأن ربنا وكأن بتخليه كشخص فهو بالنسبة لك كذا كذا بس هو بالنسبة لنا مافيش شخص ما نتخليهش كشخص فكذا كذا فماتقلش كذا قدام حد شعبي

[People generally don't like to talk about religion a lot or like as a joke, like it's something a little sacred, for example, I remember one time someone . . . was saying I don't know, he would say now, God is crying, and now, I don't know, God is sleeping, I don't know, so I, even though I liked it a lot, I told him, okay, Pete, you have to stop now,

I know that you have a picture of God, and you picture him as a person, and he's such and such for you, but for us, he's not a person, we don't picture him as a person, and so on, so don't say that in front of a traditional person]

Like gender relations and politics, religion was a popular topic of discussion among the students and their local interlocutors. For example, James (Middlebury) described an experience discussing religion with strangers on his blog:

I ran into a group of Libyan college students on the tram today who spoke FusHa Arabic [MSA], and the long conversation between us went over everything from the number of Mosques/Muslims in America to my opinion of the Quran. It ended when we reached their tram stop, or so I thought – one of them ran back with a copy of the Quran for me from the tram bookstop

Many of the students felt that their own religious identities also affected their ability to gain the access to Egyptians and Arabic use necessary to claim their desired identities as cross-cultural mediators and language learners. In particular, this related to the identities they negotiated as non-Muslims, Muslims, and Jews.

Non-Muslims

The majority of the students were not Muslim, and as such were religious outsiders in a predominantly Muslim society. Several of these students felt that this made it more difficult for them to gain access to Muslim Egyptians. For example, Carl (Middlebury) related his difficulties blending in to his religion in addition to his ethnicity:

أنا مش مسلم وأنا مش عربي ومش مصري وعلشان كده يعني أنا دائما يعني الفيل في الوضة شوية

[I'm not Muslim, and I'm not Arab, and I'm not Egyptian and because of that like I'm always like the elephant in the room a little bit.]

Approximately 80-90% of women in Cairo are veiled (Armbrust, 2006), although it is worth noting that the headscarf has become very fashionable over the last decade or two, with a variety of shapes, colors, and styles “designed to draw attention to women and to project a feminine, attractive, and cultured self” (Ghannam, 2011). As a result, several of the female students felt that being unveiled, in addition to their foreign appearance and some of the identities discussed in the previous section, made it more difficult for them to integrate into Egyptian society. Ariana (AUC) explained:

I'm not Muslim, like I don't wear a *hi3a:b* [headscarf]. Like I've actually, we've had times where we've gone out in public wearing *hi3a:bs* [headscarfs] and it's actually been so much better for us, like everyone's been so much more welcoming and helpful because they like they realize initially like right off that our Arabic isn't perfect so we're not from Egypt but then they're like, oh, because we're wearing the *hi3a:b* [headscarf] they like think we're Muslim and so they've been much more receptive and like welcoming so, maybe if I was a Muslim it would be easier to integrate into the society, I don't know, maybe.

On the other hand, being received as non-Muslim could open the discussions on comparative religious practices that the students valued in performing the identity of *cross-cultural mediator*. For example, Halima (Middlebury roommate) explained that differences between Islam and Christianity were a common discussion topic:

احنا بنتكلم أكثر عن الدين هم ممكن يسألوا عن ايه الفرق بين المسلم والمسيحي انت ازي بتصلوا ازي بتوضأوا
الكلام دا احنا بنقولهم دي عادية

[We talk more about religion, they maybe ask about the difference between the Muslim and the Christian, how do you pray, how do you perform ablutions, that type of thing, we

tell them that's normal]

Muslims

The six students who were Muslim, or had some Muslim heritage (five at AUC, one at Middlebury) agreed that it was easier for them to gain access to Muslim Egyptians. Rashid (AUC) explained: "I mean like my dad's half Pakistani, it's a Muslim country, so when I'm interacting with other Muslims, then yeah, definitely, actually 100% [I'm] like less foreign." Shadi (AUC) felt that he was able to understand Egypt better than his non-Muslim classmates: "I feel that it doesn't have to be a struggle, because growing up in a Muslim family I can comprehend a lot of things easier."

Yet at the same time, like the students of Arab heritage, these students could be frustrated with the expectations placed on them. For example, Welat (Middlebury) complained that when people knew he was Muslim, this indexed expected shared beliefs and behaviors that did not match his way of performing a Muslim identity:

هم هيفتكر أنا واحد منهم بس أنا مش واحد منهم وأحياناً لو هم عارفين أنا اه او كي أنا واحد منهم وأنا أفكر زيهم
وحاجات زي كده هم ممكن يعني يقولوا حاجة أنا مش comfortable معه زي اه الأسرئيليين أو اليهود

[They think that I'm one of them, but I'm not one of them, and sometimes if they know I, oh, okay, I'm one of them, and I think like them, and things like that, they maybe like say say something I'm not comfortable with, like oh Israelis or Jews]

Thus, as with the other identities discussed thus far in this chapter, whether the students were identified as Muslim or non-Muslim was less important than the ways in which they were able to negotiate the expected behaviors indexed by this identity with their interlocutors. If they were expected to engage in morally loose behavior or to share beliefs they did not, this could limit their access. On the other hand, if they were able to draw upon their non-Muslim identity

to act as cross-cultural mediators, or their Muslim identities to gain insider status, this could help them gain access.

Jews

Religious identity also influenced the experiences of Jewish students as a result of the link between Judaism and Israel. Of the 54 students, nine, or 17% identified as Jewish or of Jewish heritage (seven at Middlebury, two at AUC). Although Egypt once had a substantial Jewish minority, this has diminished greatly, and today being identified as Jewish generally indexes a pro-Israel political stance. As discussed in Chapter 2, Israel is not popular in Egypt, despite the official peace treaty, and the Jewish students were well aware of this. Their religion was primarily brought to the forefront by the fact that in informal encounters, such as taxi rides, asking one's religion is a common introductory question. Francis (Middlebury) explained:

أحيانا هم عابز عارف الدين ديننا على طول وأنا يهودي فأنا أقول أنا يهودي ودا على طول بيداً مناقشة عادة هم
بيقول رائع ما فيش مشاكل بين الأديان ومرحبا بك بس أحيانا عايزين يتكلم عن اسرائيل أو كويس انت يهودي بس
لازم تحول إلى السلام

[Sometimes they want to know the religion, our religion, right away, and I'm Jewish, so I say I'm Jewish and that right away starts a discussion usually, they say great, no problems between religions, and welcome, but sometimes they want to talk about Israel, or okay, you're Jewish but you need to convert to Islam]

Ayman (Middlebury roommate) explained that the Palestinian problem was a common discussion topic in the dorms, and cited disagreements over this issue between Muslim Egyptians and Jewish study abroad students:

مثلا الناس مثلا اللي هم اليهود واللي هم خصوصا اللي مثلا بتاع موقف المشكلة الفلسطينية حتى مع إن هم يهود
ومثلا معظمنا مسلمين وكده وأكد طبعا فيه اختلافات في الرأي فالمشكلة دي بس حتى بعد المناقشة تخلص يعني

مابقاش مشاكل اللي هو احنا تكلمنا عن الموضوع دا اه بس احنا مش هنقدر نعمل حاجة احنا يعني احنا لسه أصحاب
مع بعض واحنا مش هنزعل مع بعض عشان حاجة زي دي

[For example, the people for example, that are Jewish, and that are especially that for example have a stance on the Palestinian problem, even though they're Jewish and for example, most of us are Muslim, and so on, and definitely, of course, there's a difference of opinion, so this problem is only until, after the discussion ends, like it's not a problem that we talked about this issue, ah, but we won't be able to do anything, we're like, we're still friends with each other, and we won't get upset with each other because of something like this]

At times, the lack of a distinction between Jews and Israelis and the negative sentiments towards both alienated the Jewish students. Francis (Middlebury) wrote on his blog about an encounter with one of his dormmates:

When he remarked on my Judaism I was prepped for a potential interesting conversation. Sure enough, he entered with "Well Francis, if all the Jews were like you the world would be a beautiful place!" Talk about back-handed compliment of the century. First of all, if all the Jews were like me there wouldn't be much of a Jewish religion, and I'll be the first to admit that. Second, I wonder how many Jews he's met before me (probably could count them on his hands) and how many of those were so objectionable.

Keith (Middlebury) described the anti-Semitism he encountered during a conversation with an Egyptian student on campus, and how this made him feel "strange":

معظم أصحابي من مصر أحيانا أنا حاسس شوية غريب لما أنا أقول أنا يهود ولو أنا ما قلتش أنا يهود أنا كنت يعني
في مناقشة في الجامعة مع راجل هناك وهو كان زي يعني قبل هو عرفت أنا كان يهود هو المناقشة كانت في عربي
على طول إلى هو قال لي فيه إنجليزي I want to kill the Jews وأنا كنت زي مش مناسب واحد وعلى فكر أنا

يهود وهو كان زي لا لا لا المشكلة مش مع الدين بعد أنا قلت أنا يهود المشكلة مش الدين المشكلة الدولة اسرائيل وأنا
كنت زي ماشي ماشي بس يعني أحياناً أنا حاسس غريب شوية

[Most of my friends in Egypt, sometimes I feel a little strange when I say I'm Jewish and if I didn't say I'm Jewish, I was in like a discussion on campus with a man there, and he was like you know, before he knew I was Jewish, the discussion was all in Arabic until he told me in English "I want to kill the Jews" and I was like that's not appropriate first of all and by the way, I'm Jewish, and he was like no, no, no, the problem isn't with the religion after I said I was Jewish, the problem isn't the religion, the problem is the state of Israel and I was like ok, ok, ok, but like sometimes I feel a little strange.]

As the only Jews many of their Egyptian friends had ever met, the students also felt pressured to be models of "good Jews" for their Egyptian friends. Jane (AUC) explained:

There was like one guy in particular, um, he doesn't actually go here, he's just like friends with some people who go here, but he was telling me like he had, like he had always sort of associated like Judaism with ah, like Israel, and he doesn't like, he's not a fan of Israel like at all, and so he was just like, I like, and so there was a lot of pressure in the fact that I was, not only was I, I was the only Jewish person he's ever known, but he'd had such a negative opinion of Judaism, so there was, I feel like I had all this pressure that I had to like completely change like his view of it, and he's told me, like we had a conversation about it last night, like he's told me that he has, he's realized that he didn't really know that much about like Judaism at all, and that he like regrets the fact that he like sort of like stereotyped like all of the religion into certain, to be like, or made it out to be like one thing, when it wasn't, so I feel like, I don't know, that made me like really happy, that I like sort of like opened his mind to things, but it's also, it also just kind of like, it really

kind of freaked me out that, I felt like there was, that, I don't know, it just, it just, I thought it was like strange that he knew absolutely nothing about, not only did he like know nothing about it, but then he had like such a negative opinion of it, um, and because he's like, like he went to a good school, like he's a really educated guy, like his family's like is a well-off family, and it kind of like disturbed me, I was kind of like, okay this is like the upper echelons of society and even then, like they don't really, they're like not very well educated on like that subject, so um, so yeah, there's that

Keith (Middlebury) explained that changing Egyptian views of Jews was also important to him:

كده غريب شوية بس أحياناً أنا أحاول أن أشرح يعني رأيي في الموضوع وليه أنا افكر دا مش محترم وليه أنا افكر
يعني اسرائيل يعني اسرائيل والفلسطين عندي عندنا حق في الأرض ويعني أنا عارف أنا مش هاغير رأيهم يعني
على طول بس لو فيه يعني شاب في موقفهم ممكن الراجل دا كان كويس وهو كان يهود وهو يعني أنا ممكن هم يعني
فاهمين أكثر

[It's a little strange, but sometimes I try to explain like my opinion on the topic, and why I think that isn't respectful, and why I think like Israel, like Israel and Palestine, I have, we have a right to the land, and like I know I won't change their opinions like right away, but if there is like a young person in their position and maybe that man was good, and he was Jewish, and he like, I maybe, they like understand more]

While the anti-Semitism they encountered could hinder their access, some of the Jewish students felt that being identified as a Jew could also lead to interesting conversations about religion, and these conversations could help them perform their desired identity of *cross-cultural mediator* and if they were in Arabic, of *dedicated language learner*. Keith (Middlebury) explained:

في البداية كنت خايف شوية لما أنا كنت عايز أقول أنا يهود بس دالوقتي يعني ما عنديش مشكلة وأنا أقول أنا يهود

[In the beginning I was a little afraid when I wanted to say I'm Jewish, but now like I don't have a problem, I say I'm Jewish and we talk about religion]

Anders (Middlebury) wrote on his blog:

Throughout the 2+ months I have been in Egypt I have never been reticent to tell people that I am Jewish, and I have never felt any threat to my physical safety as a result of telling people that I am Jewish. On the contrary, almost without exception I have been treated with respect even if the other person does not share my viewpoints. So I decided to seize the opportunity for another interesting conversation by telling these kids that I was Jewish. I think their being teenagers together in a group partially contributed to their initial reactions, which tended to be pretty negative. I had a few insults thrown at me and there was generally a lot of whooping and hollering among them. I kept completely calm, however, and made it completely clear to them from the beginning that I considered all of them friends and had tremendous respect for Islam. In the same way that I respected their religion, I expressed hope that they would respect me and my religion, too.

Furthermore, being identified as Jewish helped the Jewish students gain access to the little that remains of the Egyptian Jewish community by visiting the remaining synagogues, especially during holidays. They reported a number of interesting experiences during these visits. For example, Francis (Middlebury) described on his blog a visit to a synagogue while visiting Cairo:

The next day we split up a little bit, and a handful of us started off by visiting a synagogue not too far away from the hotel. Melissa's congregation in the US has some sort of connection to an Egyptian Jewish woman who was kind enough to meet us there and

wave us past some red tape and tell us stories. She was not muhagiba [veiled], as can be expected, and dressed in these bright colors with a big ol' necklace and dangly earrings—could have been any older woman from B'nai Shalom. But she was an Arabic-speaker. There should have been more of these Jews. In the midst of her story-telling she said “This is my pride!” and pulled out her government-issued personal ID card, which had “يهودية” (“Yehudia”) [Jewish] written next to “Religion.” That was the first card I’ve seen like that, and one of (according to her) about 30 in all of Egypt. Which is to say there are about 30 *registered* Jewish citizens in Egypt.

Just as students' western foreigner and gender identities indexed multiple associated identities in the local socio-historical context that could both help and hinder their access to Egyptians and use of Arabic, there is this same duality in their religious identities. While non-Muslim students, and particularly Jewish students, could feel excluded from society or exposed to active anti-Semitism, their religions could also make for interesting interactions that helped them claim their desired identity of *cross-cultural mediator*. Muslim students might have easier initial access as a result of their insider status, but could be uneasy with the assumptions made about their beliefs due to their religion.

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that taking an identity approach to the study abroad experience can provide valuable insights into the extensive variation in access to Egyptians and Arabic use described in Chapters 5 and 6. In particular, by looking at the western foreigner, gender, and religious identity categories assigned to students (often as a result of their physical appearance) I demonstrate the various tensions between the identities indexed by these identity categories in the local context and the ways in which students were able to use individual agency to negotiate this reception in terms of their access to Egyptians and Arabic use. A major finding

is that successfully gaining access to Egyptians and using Arabic is not so much dependent on *what* identity a student was assigned from these categories but *how* they were able to negotiate the local reception of this identity. Thus, the *same* identity (such as American or Muslim) could be negotiated in multiple ways to both help and hinder access to Egyptians and the use of Arabic. Gaining access to Egyptians and using Arabic was crucial to the students' performance of the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* and thus matching their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East with the reality of their study in Egypt. When their (in)ability to negotiate the reception of their western foreigner, gendered, and religious identities assisted or impeded this access and use, students could become more or less invested in their sojourn as a language learning experience. These results also demonstrate that using identity categories as predictor variable for outcomes of the study abroad experience is highly problematic, as the same identity category can lead to a number of different outcomes depending on its interaction with other identity categories, the program and socio-historical context, and the individual agency of the student.

While this chapter has focused on identity categories, the experiences of individual study abroad students cut across all of these identities. In the next chapter I turn to the case study students to examine their experiences in light of their investment in Arabic, their desired participation in the imagined community of study abroad students to the Middle East, how they negotiated the identities discussed in this chapter during their sojourn, and the impact this had on their investment in their study abroad experience as a language learning context.

CHAPTER 7: CASE STUDIES

While examining the experiences of the study abroad students in terms of identity categories can be enlightening in terms of deconstructing these categories as predictors of language contact, individual students are not simply a category, or a sum of categories. In this next section, I take the approach of focusing on the individual experiences of the six case study students, and in particular how they felt their language use related to their multiple identities. As described in detail in Chapter 3, I selected six female students for case study research in Fall 2010. I chose to focus on female students for practical and theoretical reasons. Practically, I could observe female (but not male) students in gender-segregated locations. Theoretically, the dominance of issues related to American female students abroad in research on study abroad in general as well as my macro level data made this an area of interest. The six students volunteered to participate at this level. In the Middlebury program, where more students volunteered than I could conduct research with, I chose the two homestay students and the two dormstay students who kept blogs. For each student, I provide background information and information on their communicative contexts (educational setting, living situation, prior connections, and extracurricular activities) as well as a discussion of how various identity categories influenced their experience and language use. I trace their initial investment in Arabic through the extent to which the reality of their sojourn in Egypt matched their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East, and how this impacted their investment in the study abroad experience as a language learning context. While these descriptions cannot claim to be fully representative of these women's experiences, they do provide insight into the struggles and successes as language learners that result from the interpretation of their multiple identities in the communicative contexts they frequent.

Meron

Meron was enrolled in the intensive Arabic program at AUC. She was 27 years old, and had just completed her coursework for a Masters degree in International Development, focusing on women's health. She was born in Ethiopia, and immigrated to the United States with her family when she was eight. A native speaker of Amharic, she started learning English in Ethiopia, and reached native speaker proficiency in the United States. She also studied three years of Spanish in high school. In addition to living in Ethiopia in her childhood, Meron had spent Summer 2009 doing an internship in Nigeria. She had also traveled to Jamaica and Mexico.

Meron had received a government scholarship to study in Egypt and chose the intensive Arabic program at AUC because she had heard it was one of the best. Prior to studying at AUC in Fall 2010, she completed Level 1 at the Middlebury Arabic Summer school (where we initially met), a very intensive program. She had also studied Arabic by taking a class one day a week at the US Department of Agriculture in Fall 2009, where she said she primarily learned the alphabet.

Meron's investment in Arabic was based on her desire to work in the field of international development. She stated that she wanted to learn Arabic because:

I'm in a Masters program for international development and I felt that um a lot of the skill set that I was getting wasn't very practical, like a lot of my coursework was theory based and I wanted to work within the field, so I started looking at languages, and Arabic is something I've always wanted to learn and focus in on and so I set a goal of ah, acquiring Arabic, Spanish, and French so that I could be flexible within the areas, the

regions I'm interested in working in, so and it's the closest to my language, to my native language, which is Amharic.

She also referenced the *cross-cultural mediator* identity associated with the imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East by emphasizing the importance of mutual understanding between East and West. In particular, she referenced a the role of young people (like herself, but with whom she did not necessarily have actual contact) in achieving this understanding:

نريد ممكن الطلاب أو الشخص عكس كبير مثلا هم يفهمون الثقافة ام مثل الأشخاص غربي يريد أن يفهم الثقافة
والدين من اشخاص شرقي واتكلم مع بعض المشكلاتهم ممكن ام المشكلة خلاص في المستقبل

[We want maybe students or maybe people that aren't old, for example, they understand the culture, um, like the Western people want to understand the culture and religion of the Eastern people, and talk together about their problems, maybe um, the problem will be over in the future]

Thus for Meron, her investment in Arabic resulted from her interest in the symbolic and material resources she could gain in a future career with a "critical language" as well as in promoting cross-cultural understanding. This investment also connected her to the imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East, making it important for her to perform the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* which in turn required access to Egyptians and the use of Arabic.

While abroad, Meron performed this identity of dedicated language learning by spending much of her time inside and outside of class studying Arabic. She got up at 7:00 to eat breakfast and read or study a bit before taking the bus to the university at 8:00. After the hour-long bus ride, she took described her daily routine as:

I'm in an intensive Arabic program, so ah, my typical day definitely is surrounded by

getting to and from school and then spending a lot of time in the classroom, so what I would do, um, I'm in Zamalek and I commute about an hour to an hour and a half depending on traffic to the new campus, attend classes, typically from 9:30 to about 3:30 and then commute back an hour or so and ah, I usually take a break, like an hour break and either work out at the small gym we have here in the dorms or take a nap, and ah then, get to my homework, and ah, I have a hard time staying in any sort of enclosed space that has my bed in it, so I can't study in my room, so I typically find a coffeeshop nearby and I study there until late and then get back home and start the day all over again.

At AUC, Meron found her courseload very intense. She enrolled in the High Elementary Level, taking MSA for 7.5 hours a week, in addition a Media class for 2.3 hours a week. She had an Egyptian colloquial class for students with a background in MSA for 4.5 hours a week, in addition to a conversation class 2.3 hours a week. Her desired identity as a *dedicated language learner* was also apparent in her complaints that her ECA class was not rigorous enough and that her teacher often skipped. In contrast, she liked the intensity of her MSA classes, especially her Media class, which she stated was the hardest, but in which she learned the most.

Despite Meron's desire to claim the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* in order to participate in the imagined community of study abroad students in the Middle East, she struggled to gain the access and language use necessary to realize these identities. As with many of the other students at AUC, Meron found AUC disconnected and far from the rest of Cairo, as well as Americanized. For example, she wrote on Facebook:

AUC campus is a bit surreal.. one big fashion show and completely another world from the rest of Cairo. To be expected from a giant, very expensive university. Feels like someone took one of the colleges in the US and plopped it in the desert! Frohawks seem

to be a big hit:).

As the semester went on, she told me that she was increasingly concerned about the lack of integration between Egyptian and international students at AUC. She explained that some schools are good at integrating these bodies, but AUC was not, and this limited her access to Egyptians. When I was with her on campus, she was often alone or with other international students. She also felt that being at AUC resulted in her using more English than Arabic, limiting her ability to perform a desired identity as a *dedicated language learner*. She explained:

I wish that the program would move into a much more friendly area in terms of being able to utilize the language, the fact that they are all the way out in New Cairo makes it difficult to use when everybody on campus speaks English and wants to speak English.

In terms of her living situation, Meron lived in the Zamalek dorms with a graduate student roommate who did not speak Arabic, and she became good friends with this roommate as well as some other international students she met in the dorms. Although the dorms were conveniently located and there were Egyptians in them, she again felt that her living situation limited her access to Egyptians and Arabic, explaining that it she found it difficult to meet Egyptian girls in the dorms and: "I don't have much opportunity to speak Arabic as most people in the dorms speak English."

Meron's had one prior connection, an Egyptian that she had met through a friend who had previously studied abroad in Cairo. However, since this acquaintance worked as a tour guide, she explained that he was often busy, although she would occasionally see him on the weekend. As a result, this prior connection did not result in a great deal of increased access to Egyptians.

In her free time, Meron went running, which she described on Facebook as "my primary mode of stress relief." She sometimes went running outside in the early morning, but usually

worked out after class in the gym dorm, where she also met a Saudi friend. She also enjoyed reading novels and watching TV shows and movies. On the weekends she still spent a substantial amount of time doing homework, but would also go to movies, concerts, plays, historical sites, cafes, restaurants, and clubs with her friends. She also found time to travel, visiting her family in Ethiopia early in September and Turkey and Greece with her roommate during the Eid Al-Adha holiday. She also traveled within Egypt, going on tours within Cairo and to Alexandria with the intensive Arabic program, as well as the beaches at Ayn Sukhna and Sharm El Sheikh with international friends.

Meron said that she spent about 75% of her free time by herself, and if she wasn't by herself she was usually with her roommate or other international friends that she met through the dorm, classes, or the summer program at Middlebury, in addition to the Saudi friend she met in the gym, and the Egyptian friend she had met through a previous study abroad student.

Thus, despite her need for access to Egyptians in order to claim her desired identities of serious field worker and cross cultural mediator, Meron had very little access to Egyptian society, resulting in a mismatch between her imagined community and the reality of her study in Egypt. Her lack of local friends was something she became deeply concerned about over the course of the semester. She explained: "I expected to make more local friends than I did than I do foreigner foreign friends and it's been the opposite, like I'm much more into like the international community than I am into the local, which is very disappointing." As with many of the other AUC students, she felt that the amount of time she spent commuting to and on campus limited her ability to integrate into her local community. Furthermore, she felt that living in Zamalek, which she described as "a predominantly foreigner neighborhood", helped promote her access to foreigners and limit her access to Egyptians.

In terms of the identity categories discussed in the last chapter, Meron's dark skin and hair allowed her to sometimes pass for a potential Arabic speaker from Sudan or Somalia. She explained that in this case she could initially use Arabic, but when it was revealed that she was not a proficient Arabic speaker her interlocutors would switch to English:

They might expect me to know more, like they might expect me to be more native of an Arabic speaker so, until they hear me kind of maybe stumble around and then they will try to ask me in English or so on.

Meron had initially hoped that being from Ethiopia would help her gain access to Egyptians as a result of their shared African heritage, and she stated that she did receive a more positive response if she said she was from Ethiopia than America. For example, Egyptians might respond “oh, you’re my sister” as a result of the two countries sharing the Nile. However, she also reported that locals sometimes challenged her on Ethiopian-Egyptian water disputes, and that the cultural similarities between Ethiopia and Egypt were not as great as she had expected, which she felt made it difficult for her to gain access to Egyptians:

It's not as friendly as I thought it would be, other African, and maybe I mean, that's the case with a lot of North African countries, they're very different from the rest of Africa, culturally, um, and so I expected a lot more of like a home feeling, in the sense that I'd be able to easily connect with people and have that kind of bond right away, but I don't, I haven't experienced that yet, the language itself is very close, sometimes I can guess the root of a new word through what I understand from the meaning in Amharic and it's very close actually, it's not a bad way to go about guessing, but it's not, it's not similar enough for me to like really depend on it, to use it.

Meron also identified as American, although like the other students that were not of white

European descent she reported that if she told Egyptians she was American, they usually responded with "and what else?". She felt that differences between American and Egyptian culture also made it difficult for her to gain access to Egyptians, telling me during one observation: "I didn't realize how American I was until I came here!"

Thus, while Meron's physical appearance could allow her at times to pass as an Arabic speaker, her limited proficiency made it difficult for her to perform this identity. Being identified as a non-western foreigner, specifically from Ethiopia, could result in a more positive reception than that given to western foreigners, as a result of Ethiopia's geographic proximity and expectations of cultural similarities. Yet Meron was not able to leverage this reception to gain the access to Egyptians she desired.

Meron also felt that her gender limited her ability to gain access to Egyptians. She was frustrated by being a target of sexual harassment, posting on Facebook "Egyptian men.... hmm I have no words. The constant harassment must be stopped!" This harassment included catcalls, such as the man who yelled out of his window at the two of us "I love you" as well as more serious incidents. For example, she initially enjoyed wandering around Cairo, but after a strange man followed her on one excursion, she became hesitant to venture into unfamiliar neighborhoods. She also reported a few incidents in clubs in which she was harassed after being mistaken for a Somali or Sudanese prostitute.

As a result of her desire to avoid these assumptions and harassment, Meron sought to perform the traditional good girl identity. Yet she felt that the behaviors she had to pursue to claim this identity, such as limited eye contact, made it more difficult for her to gain access to Egyptians. She explained:

There's such extreme differences between men and women and how you socialize here,

it's, it can be very uncomfortable sometimes, in the sense that I guess, honestly I feel that like even the basic kind of connection with somebody like eye contact is very difficult without being like misconstrued for something more here with the males.

In addition to having her attentions misconstrued by Egyptian males, Meron felt it was difficult to meet Egyptian women because: "I feel like most of them are kind of like cut off and they stick to their own small group or whatever network they've already built". In contrast, she felt that it was easier for her male colleagues to connect with Egyptian men, in part because of their increased mobility:

I've seen my male colleagues who have much easier of a time just connecting with the male population here especially and just kind of getting around and having an easy time you know just getting to know the language and to learn more about Cairo, travel places on their own, um, things that I am very cautious about doing, they can do easily, so yeah gender is definitely an important factor I feel.

Linguistically, Meron felt that her Arabic was improving, particularly her MSA, as a result of the amount of time she spent in class and doing her homework, which allowed her to perform to some degree her desired identity as a *dedicated language learner*. However, she explained that when she was identified outside of class as a foreigner (and thus an English speaker) she struggled to continue in Arabic:

Sometimes they just speak back to me in English, because they know it's not my native tongue, and ah, and they also want to practice perhaps you know their English, and so a lot of times, it was kind of, it was harder to like keep up the *ʕa:mmijja* [Egyptian Arabic] while they were responding back to me in English, it was easier to just fall back on your native or closer to native tongue than it is struggling with another when someone else

knows your native tongue.

She also felt that her lack of knowledge of Egyptian Arabic caused her to use more English, explaining:

You know, it was difficult because I would just use my *fusʕha* [MSA] and I thought it would be close enough to where people would understand but nobody understood me, and so that like, that was like the initial kind of movement into English as well because nobody understood, they're like, what is it, what are you trying to say, you know, and then they would move into English and I would move into English because I felt like I didn't have anywhere, I didn't have any other way to communicate what it was I wanted other than *fusʕha* [MSA]

Meron explained that she was trying to work on persisting in Arabic, but she sometimes felt that she was “taking up too much of that person’s time” if she insisted on Arabic when they were fluent in English. As the semester progressed, I did observe her move English to Arabic when greeting the workers and ordering food at one of the cafes we frequented.

Like many of the students at AUC, Meron’s out-of-class Arabic use was limited to informal encounters and service transactions, particularly when her interlocutors did not speak English. She explained that she used Arabic:

For stores, the grocery stores, really like the basic things, anything that I'm interested in getting, grocery store or if I need directions for instance, if I'm going to a new part of the Cairo, and I don't know how to get around, I talk to the *ʕaskari* [soldier] quite a bit and um, so you know for those basic things, you know just getting around, I definitely use my Arabic.

Traveling within Egypt also provided opportunities for Meron to use Arabic. She usually

traveled with her roommate, who did not speak Arabic, explaining that: “usually I’m the only one who knows, so it really puts a lot of pressure on me to communicate.”

Thus, while Meron’s investment in Arabic for a future career and her desire to participate in the imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East required access to Egyptians and the use of Arabic, she struggled to gain this access and use. She felt that her identity as a foreign female impeded this access and use and she was unable to negotiate the identities indexed by her physical appearance and gender in a more advantageous way.

Nevertheless, Meron remained invested in her language learning, and sought to use individual agency to change her situation in order to gain access to Egyptians and use Arabic outside of the classroom. For her second semester abroad, she took a number of steps that she hoped would help her gain access to Egyptians and use Arabic. She planned to move out of the dorms into an apartment in a less wealthy neighborhood of Cairo, “a new area, where like I feel, I feel like I’d be more exposed to the language, um, especially *Ṣa:mmijja* [Egyptian Arabic], so I’ll have more opportunity to learn that way as well”. She did not remain invested in AUC as a learning context, and decided to drop out of the intensive Arabic program to pursue an internship working with refugees, where she hoped to feel more engaged with society and less like a visitor, have more time for a life outside of class and homework, and be able to use Arabic as well as Amharic. She also closed her Facebook account in late November, explaining that she felt she spent too much time on Facebook and email (which were mostly in English), and she was also concerned about future employers looking at her site. Unfortunately, these plans never came to fruition. Following the Egyptian revolution, Meron’s scholarship refused to let her stay in Egypt, and she transferred to a language learning program in Morocco instead.

Mita

Mita was enrolled in the intensive Arabic program at AUC. She was 22, and a Senior majoring in Globalization studies. She was of Indian descent, born in Thailand, and immigrated to the United States when she was ten. Her native language was Thai, and she gained native proficiency in English after moving to the United States. She also used Punjabi and Hindi with her family, although she said her understanding was better than her speaking, and studied Italian in high school. Prior to her Fall 2010 study in Egypt, she had traveled to London and the Netherlands, and visited her family in India every few years. She also participated in the study abroad program at AUC in Fall 2009, which is when we met.

Mita began studying Arabic in Fall 2008, via self-taught courses where she occasionally met with an Arabic teaching assistant, as her college did not have an official Arabic program. After one year, she studied MSA and Egyptian Arabic in the study abroad program at AUC in the Fall of her Junior year, and then returned to a self-study class in the Spring. While abroad in 2009, she learned about the intensive Arabic program at AUC, and chose to return to this program in the Fall of her Senior year (2010). She chose to study in the intensive Arabic program on the recommendations of her friends, because she felt it was the only place her family would approve, and because she believed that Egyptian Arabic was the most useful dialect. In order to study in the intensive Arabic program, she had to convince her home university's study abroad office to accept the intensive Arabic program as well as the regular study abroad program, which allowed her to transfer her financial aid to cover her tuition and housing while abroad. Arranging this demonstrates a considerable amount of individual agency and investment in the Arabic program on Mita's part.

Mita was also invested in Arabic for the symbolic and material resources she could gain in the future, explaining that she wanted to be an Arabic teacher. In particular, she noted the critical nature of Arabic and career opportunities associated with learning it:

I've always loved languages and knew I wanted to do something with them in life, and Arabic happens to be a critically needed language at the moment, so I tried it out, loved the language, and decided to continue, hoping it will open doors of opportunities in terms of careers.

Mita also placed herself in the imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East by emphasizing the importance of study abroad, and in particular access to Egyptians, to learning Arabic and pursuing her future goals. She explained on the survey that she was studying abroad:

To improve my Arabic more quickly, as hanging out with Egyptian friends can teach me so much more and much faster than learning from a class, as I've come to discover. I think the more immersed you are in the culture, the faster and the better you tend to learn a language.

She referenced the *cross-cultural mediator* identity that is a crucial practice of the imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East, explaining that she chose Arabic:

اخترتها عشان أنا عايزة عايزة السلام في العالم اه لو ممكن يعني أنا أتمنى أنها ممكن وام يعني أحاول أو أحاول من
كل جهودي أن يعني أن أعمل السلام في العالم

[I chose it because I want, I want peace in the world, ah, if maybe like, I hope that it's possible, and um like to try, or to try with all my efforts to like make peace in the world]

While Mita referenced the symbolic resources she could gain due to fact that Arabic was a critical language in her decision to study it, she performed her identity as a *dedicated language learner* by expressing disdain towards learners who took Arabic for one to two years “to put it on

their resume,” thus trying to gain the symbolic resources of the critical language without actually investing in learning it. She pointed out that one to two years of Arabic led to little in the way of language skills, and she wondered if these people were actually interested in Arabic, or just opportunists.

Like Meron, Mita mainly performed her identity as a *dedicated language learner* through her intense class and homework schedule. She got up around 6-6:30 every day to catch the 7:00 bus to the university, and described her daily routine as follows:

لما أجي الجامعة كل يوم أنا بأدرس من ساعة تسعة أو ثمانية ونص الصباح إلى ممكن الساعة الأربعة كل يوم وبعد كده أنا يعني ساعات أنا بأدرس الرقص الهندي في الجيم واه استمتع استمتع به جدا وكمان أنا عندي محاضرات كثير وواجبات كثير وعشان كده أنا لما مش بأدرس أنا بأذاكر في وقت الفاضي في الجامعة. . . لما عندي break بين الصفين مثلا أنا بأدرس بأذاكر وبأعمل الواجبات . . . بعد الصفوف أنا يعني عادة أنا أرجع بيتي وبيت الطلاب يعني ممكن بأنام اه ساعة أو ساعتين ساعات وبعد كده أنا أبداً بأبدأ الواجبات والمذاكرات ام عشان عندي واجبات كثير في البرنامج دا واه ساعات أنا أم أخرج مع أصدقائي في لآكل لنأكل ام العشاء وام بعد كده أنا بأرجع ام أوضتي لام مساء استمر الواجبات والشغل وبعد كده أنا بأنام

[When I come to the university every day, I study from 9:00 or 8:30 in the morning to maybe 4:00 every day and after that I like sometimes, I teach Indian dancing in the gym, and ah, I enjoy that a lot, and also I have a lot of classes and a lot of homework and because of that when I'm not in class, I'm studying in my free time at school . . . When I have a break between classes for example, I study and I do homework . . . After classes, I like usually return to my house or the dorms, like maybe I sleep ah, an hour or two sometimes, and after that I start , I start my homework and studying, um, because I have a lot of homework in this program and ah, sometimes I um, go out with my friends to eat um, dinner, and um, after that I return um, to my room for um, the evening and continue

with homework and work and after that I sleep]

In the intensive Arabic program, Mita enrolled at the High Intermediate Level, taking MSA reading for 4.5 hours per week, Media Arabic 5 hours a week, and Grammar for 3 hours a week. As a result of her previous time in Egypt, she placed into Advanced ECA for 4.5 hours per week, and ECA conversation for two hours a week. Her favorite classes were ECA and Media, as she felt these classes were the most useful and she liked her teachers. While Mita generally liked her classes and felt that her reading skills had improved immensely, she complained that they did not spend enough time working on speaking, and that her teachers used too much English:

When we're in class, they were using too much English for my preference, like I would have liked them to not use English at all but they actually like stopped and explained stuff in English and I was like, no this is high intermediate, you need to speak Arabic all the time, but they didn't do that.

In between classes, Mita usually went to the library to do her homework, where I also observed her spending time on email and Facebook. Sometimes she did not finish her homework until very late at night, resulting in a lack of sleep. She was also working on her Senior Thesis, which involved comparing the student and teacher beliefs about learning Arabic, and spent time preparing survey and interview instruments for that as well as interviewing teachers and students at AUC.

When she interacted with staff in the library and food services on campus, I observed her using English without trying to use Arabic, or a mix of English and Arabic. In her Bollywood dance classes, I observed her use English with the students as well as the Egyptian aerobics coordinator, and she told me she conducted her thesis interviews in English, although she

introduced herself to the teachers in Egyptian Arabic.

At times, Mita felt that her dedication to her classroom work caused her to miss out on more experiential learning, explaining that she felt like she missed out on an entire month of the semester where she just went to class, went home and did work, and nothing else, not even talk to her Egyptian friends.

In terms of her living situation, Mita lived in the Zamalek dorms. She thought she might prefer to live in an apartment so she could cook her own food, but it was easiest financially to live in the dorms. Furthermore, she valued the access to Egyptians she gained in the dorms:

أنا بأحب بيت الطلاب عشان فيه ناس كثير هناك ويمكن اه ممكن أخرج من أوضتي ويمكن أشوف الناس كثير هناك
حلوة قوي

[I like the dorms because there are a lot of people there and maybe, ah, maybe I can go out of my room and maybe see a lot of people there, it's very nice]

She also appreciated the fact that the Zamalek dorms were close to shops and nearby restaurants, compared to the New Campus dorms where she explained:

مافيش حاجة مافيش حاجة هنا في الصحراء

[There's nothing, there's nothing here in the desert]

At the same time, she also felt that her access to Egyptians in the dorms remained limited, writing on the questionnaire: "It's easy to make friends, but it's harder to truly get into the 'cliques'." Most of Mita's friends were international students who lived in the dorms, were in her ALI classes, or lived in a nearby apartment.

In terms of prior connections, Mita had a few Egyptian friends that she had met on her

previous study abroad experience that she sometimes hung out with or corresponded with on Facebook. On the weekends, Mita liked to go out with her friends to coffeeshops, restaurants, nightclubs, historical sites, movies, and shopping. She also attended cultural events, such as Indian culture night and an art show. She liked to travel, and felt that Egypt's location was a major benefit. She went to Siwa and Alexandria with a group of international friends as well as Turkey with her roommate over the Eid al-Adha break.

Like Meron, Mita found that the reality of her study abroad experience did not match that of the imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East, particularly in terms of using Arabic and performing her identity as a *dedicated language learner*. While she did find it easier to make international friends than Egyptians ones, Mita felt that her difficulty was not so much gaining access to Egyptians, but forcing herself to use Arabic with them. She was disappointed with the amount of time she spent speaking Arabic, saying that there was "still not enough practice" and she had expected to use it more:

أتوقعت في البداية إن هأستخدم العربية أكثر يعني ام almost كل يوم كل ساعة ولكن دي مش الحقيقة الحقيقة إن هو
إن أنا مش بأستخدم العربية كل يوم ودي مختلفة . . . بس كل الناس بيتكلموا بالإنجليزي وعشان كده

[I expected in the beginning that I would use Arabic more, like um, almost every day, every hour but that's not the reality, the reality is that I don't use Arabic every day and that's different . . . But everyone speaks English and because of that]

In terms of the identity categories discussed in the last chapter, Mita reported (and I witnessed) that she was often mistaken for Egyptian and addressed in Arabic based on her physical appearance, although when it was clear that she did not understand her interlocutors would sometimes switch to English. She liked the fact that she did not stick out, and felt it was useful to be addressed initially in Arabic. She explained:

معظم الوقت أولا ييفكروا إني مصرية وعشان كده بيتكلموا معي بالعربي أولا وأنا يعني أحاول أن أجيب بالعربي لو أفهمه ولكن ساعات أنا مش أفهمه وعشان كده أنا يعني بأقول مش عارفة مش أفهم . . . وبعدين ام ام يعني بيحاولوا الإنجليزي لو عرفوا لو عرف الإنجليزي

[Most of the time, first they think I'm Egyptian and because of that, they speak with me in Arabic first, and I like try to respond in Arabic if I understand him, but sometimes I don't understand him, and because of that, I like say I don't know, I don't understand . . . And afterwards um, um, like they try English if they know, if they know English]

She explained that when Egyptians switched to English with her, she would at first try to continue in Arabic, but then switch, unable to continue to perform her identity as a *dedicated language learner*:

ولكن لو بيستمر بالإنجليزي أنا أجيب بالإنجليزي . . .ليه؟ مش عارفة بس it's like instinct involuntary

[But if he continues in English I respond in English . . . Why? I don't know, but it's like instinct, involuntary]

With the Egyptians she met in the dorms, or a Bahraini friend who lived with other international students, Mita also felt that her problem was not access to Arabic speakers, but actually using Arabic with them. In mixed groups of Egyptian and international students, where some students did not speak Arabic, she noted that she had to use English:

لما كلنا عندنا يعني مناقشة مشتركة مثلا لازم نستخدم الإنجليزي عشان نفهم كلنا بعضنا البعض

[When we are all having like a shared discussion, for example, we have to use English to understand each other]

When she had one on one conversations with Arabic-speaking friends, she was more likely to use Arabic, although she explained it was usually just for “day to day conversations” and then

she would switch to English for higher level language. Although she blamed herself for this switch, she felt unable to continue in Arabic:

لما بأشوفهم يعني أول مرة بعد إجازة أو بعد يوم يعني بنستخدم العربية زي الحمد لله رحتي فين ازي كان الإجازة
يعني انبسطي العطلة الإجازة زي كده ولكن بعد كده يعني لو كنا مستعجلين بنستخدم الإنجليزي وأنا أبدأ الإنجليزي
يعني عيب علي

[When I see them like the first time after the break or after a day, you know, we use Arabic, like I'm fine, where did you go, how was the break, like did you enjoy the vacation, the break, like that, but after that like if we're in a hurry, we use English, and I start the English, like shame on me]

As a result, in terms of extended conversations in Arabic, Mita explained: "I have the opportunities, I just don't necessarily always take them." She compared learning Arabic to learning English when she had first arrived in the United States, and she had been forced to use English. In contrast, she felt that she did not use Arabic because she was not forced to:

فيه فرص ولكن مافيش compulsion عشان ال يعني كلهم كلهم يفهموا الإنجليزي وعشان كده يعني ل to save
time يعني أسهل أستخدم الإنجليزي معظم الوقت لسوء الحظ

[There are opportunities, but there's no compulsion because the, you know all of them, all of them understand English and because of that like to save time, like it's easier to use English most of the time, unfortunately]

In particular, it was much more difficult for her to speak in Arabic than for her Egyptian friends to speak in English because:

لما عايزة أقول حاجة يعني لازم أفكر كثير قبل أن ازي القواعد وحاجة في الفصحى والعامية

[When I want to say something, you know, I need to think a lot before um, like grammar and something in MSA and Egyptian Arabic]

Mita's struggle to use Arabic with her friends, particularly for higher level conversations and despite her desire to perform an identity as a *dedicated language learner*, is reminiscent of the struggles of other students as AUC, who felt that they had to choose between friendships (and gaining access to Egyptians and thus performing the identity of *cross-cultural mediator*) and using Arabic (and thus performing the identity of *dedicated language learner*). Again, these Egyptian friends became gatekeepers to the imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East, where access to Egyptians to engage in cross-cultural mediation were a defining practice of this community. Yet as a result, it was these friends and gatekeepers with whom it was most difficult for students to use Arabic with, limiting their ability to perform identities as *dedicated language learners*.

As a result of her difficulties in using Arabic with her friends and on the AUC campus, Mita's out-of-class Arabic use was primarily in informal encounters off campus. She explained that she used Arabic:

برة الصف مثلا لما أنا عايزة أروح مكان في تاكسي مع السواق التاكسي طبعا أستخدم العامية ولما أشاهد التلفزيون مثلا أنا يعني لما أشاهد الأفلام المسلسلة في تلفزيون بالعامية أو ممكن الأخبار بالعامية أنا أستخدم اللغة ودائما كل أسبوع أنا عندي واجب لصف لفصل الإعلام لأختار أفكار بالعربي ويعني نتكلم عنها في فصلي كل أسبوع بالفصحى

[Outside of class, for example, when I want to go to a place in a taxi, with a taxi driver, of course, I use Egyptian Arabic, and when I watch TV for example, I like when I watch films, TV series on television in Egyptian Arabic, or maybe the news in Egyptian Arabic, I use the language and always, every week I have homework for Media class to choose ideas in Arabic and like we talk about them in my class every week in MSA]

While Mita felt that being able to initially pass as Egyptian in these informal encounters was advantageous, she felt that her gender was a disadvantage. In particular she felt that she was

a target of sexual harassment:

التحرش الجنسي صعب قوي يعني أنا دائما في الشوارع كل يوم فيه واحد أو فيه راجل أو راجلين أو ممكن أكثر اللي

بيقولوا أو ام بيعملوا دوشة a noise or something زي انت جميلة انت جامدة يا مزة أنا مش ما بأحبش (دا)

[The sexual harassment is very hard, like I'm always in the streets, every day, there's someone, there's a man or two men or maybe more that say or um, make a noise, a noise or something, like you're beautiful, you're wonderful, hey hottie, I don't like [that]]

As a result, she felt her movement was more limited than that of her male colleagues:

لراجل أسهل يخرجوا في الشوارع بليل مثلا وممكن هيكون أقل أو طبعا هيكون أقل مش هيكون فيه مافيش تحرش

جنسي للرجالة

[For a man, it's easier to go out in the streets at night, for example, and maybe there'll be less, or of course there will be less, there won't be, there's no sexual harassment for the men]

Due to her inability to pursue out-of-class speaking opportunities in particular, Mita was disappointed with her lack of Arabic progress during the semester, and said that a lot of her friends felt that way too, that they thought they would be fluent and they were not. She lamented:

كنت أتوقع أن أنا يعني دالوقتي هاكون أحسن بالكلام بالفصحى وبالعامية وإن أنا هاكون يعني fluent اه أكثر

fluent

[I expected that I like now I would be better in speaking in MSA and Egyptian Arabic, and that I would be like fluent, more fluent]

This lack of progress, and her inability to perform her desired identity of *dedicated language learner* outside of the classroom made Mita less invested in the study abroad context as an opportunity for language learning. This lack of investment helps explain why she focused primarily on her classwork and engaged in behaviors that appeared detrimental to her language

learning, such as performing nearly all informal encounters on campus in English or using English with her Egyptian friends. She also told me that she felt like she needed a break from Arabic and Egypt, and then she would decide whether or not to continue with it. Yet like Meron, she recognized that she needed to find a way to exert her individual agency in order to be able to match her imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East (and the performance of an identity as a *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner*) to the reality of her study in Egypt, explaining:

بس I need to motivate myself ولازم أفكر كل ساعة كل ليل كل يوم إن يعني لازم أستخدم العربي استنادا لي

ultimately

[But I need to motivate myself, and I need to think every hour, every night, every day, that like I have to use Arabic, it depends on me ultimately]

Jennifer

Jennifer was enrolled in the Middlebury program. She was 20, and a Junior majoring in business and international relations, with an interest in International Business. A native speaker of English who grew up in the United States, she had studied French and Spanish in addition to Arabic, and spent a summer in France in high school. She had also traveled to Spain, Croatia, Greece, Mexico, Canada, Italy, Great Britain and Ireland.

Jennifer began studying Arabic in high school, and also took a summer intensive course between high school and college in addition to two years of Arabic in college. In the summer following her junior year of high school, she spent three months studying in Morocco, although she wrote on the questionnaire: “I was sixteen, and i dont feel like i really tried to learn the language, instead i enjoyed more time with the moroccan students that i met from the American school.” Unlike many of the other participants in this study, Jennifer's investment in Arabic for

future symbolic and material resources was not as obvious. She did feel that it could be useful for her future career, but was not entirely sure why she had had started studying Arabic, writing on the survey:

I honestly don't know why....I think that i started and now its too late to stop.

Additionally i am really interested in IB [International Business], and i think that Arabic would be a great tool to have if i am working for a Middle Eastern branch of an American company.

Jennifer chose to study in the Middlebury program on the recommendation of a friend from high school who had participated in it previously. She also drew on an imagined community of study abroad students in the Middle East by expressing disdain for European study abroad programs, writing on the survey: "I want to improve my Arabic but i also wanted to push myself outside my comfort zone (ie not just go to SOAS in London for the semester)" She also told me during a participant observation that she did not see the point of going to AUC, since it would be "just like America." However, unlike many of the other participants who referenced imagined selves as *cross-cultural mediators*, Jennifer's desire to do something different seemed to be more about her own ability to persevere outside of her "comfort zone", an area that caused her considerable difficulty throughout her sojourn.

Jennifer's daily routine began with a run along the corniche with another student in the program, after which she primarily spent time in class and doing homework:

هأروح أفطر وهأروح كل الصفوفي وبشكل عام مش عايزة ما أكلتس غداء عادة ممكن إذا أنا أفضل لأعمل واجبي
في الغداء وعندي وقت فاضي بعد الصفوف أكثر وفي يوم الأحد ويوم الإثنين عندي صفوف من ساعة تسعة إلى
ساعة أربعة وبعد كده أنا تعبانة قوي قوي ولازم بعد كده أنا بأعمل واجبي

[I go to eat breakfast, and I go to all of my classes, and generally I don't want, I don't eat lunch usually, maybe if I prefer to do my homework during lunch and have more free time after classes, and on Sundays and Mondays I have classes from 9:00-4:00 and after that I'm very very very tired and after that I have to do my homework.]

Jennifer had MSA class for six hours a week, Egyptian colloquial for four hours a week, and Modern History of Egypt for three hours a week. Her one-on-one class was for 3 hours a week on Religious Life in Egypt, where she met once a week with a Muslim professor and once a week with a Christian professor. She was not used to the small class size, explaining on her blog: "My classes are interesting, but I am not used to such a small class size! I haven't been an active participant in a class since high school, and I am finding it exhausting especially because of the language component.

Jennifer lived in the University of Alexandria dorms, and like the rest of the Middlebury student in the dorms lived with an Egyptian roommate, as situation about which she commented on the questionnaire: "DISLIKE IMMENSELY." She explained that the dorms were too noisy, particularly as the schedules of the Egyptian girls were very different from hers since they stayed up until 6:00 am. There was often no hot water or internet, and she was frustrated by the curfew. Jennifer also valued time alone by herself, and found this difficult to find in the dorm. Yet because of the amount of homework she had, and the limited opportunities for female students to go out in Alexandria, Jennifer felt that she spent most of her time in the *sign* "prison" of the dorms. To escape, she started going out to coffeeshops and the Middlebury apartment to do her homework at night, where I sometimes met her.

Jennifer's only prior connection in Egypt was the friend who had previously done the Middlebury program and then returned for the following summer, such that the end of her time

in Alexandria overlapped with the beginning of the Fall semester. In terms of extracurricular activities, Jennifer attended some program events, but often opted out of them because she was tired, wanted time to herself, or did not find them beneficial. I did not see her at most of the program events I attended.

In her free time, Jennifer visited historical sites, coffeeshops, restaurants, malls, and bars with her friends. She traveled to Cairo, Luxor, Aswan, Rashid, and Abu Simbel with friends on the program, and on the program trip to Marsa Matruh. She also traveled to Cairo when her parents came to visit (missing the program trip to Siwa) and over the Eid Al-Adha break went to Europe to visit her friends studying there. After the program, she visited Turkey and then returned to the United States, cutting short her plans to do more traveling throughout the Middle East.

Jennifer's sojourn was a struggle for her, and she started counting down the days left in late September (74 days). In addition to suffering from insomnia and feeling imprisoned in the dorms, she explained that although she wanted Egyptian friends, she found it difficult to relate to the Egyptian girls in the dorms beyond basic informational exchanges. Thus, although the amount of time she spent in the dorms gave her ample access to Egyptians, her feelings of discomfort made it difficult for her to take advantage of this access to develop friendships:

I know that's very orientalist but I'm just going to say it in English because there's it's just going to be better that it just feels like I never, I don't have anything in common with them and that's the sentiment that most of the people feel there's only one girl who really feels like she has stuff in common with them and that's because in my opinion and it's not to put anyone down it's that like she lives at home and commutes to school and she goes to [university] but she commutes to school and she's like from a really conservative

Muslim family and you know, if she were in Egypt, she would be one of them, so we just have no common anything to talk about and I mean they're all really lovely people but their lives are so different

Despite saying that many of the study abroad students shared her sentiments, Jennifer also had difficulties making friends with the other students on the program. She explained:

عندي صاحبين احنا قريبين بس هو امريكيين ثيا وأليس بس ام مش ما بأحبش ليك I don't don't like معظم

الأشخاص بس مافيش علاقات قوية بينهم

[I only have two close friends, they're American, Thea and Alice, but um, I don't not like, like I don't don't like most of the people but there's not strong relationships between them.]

Jennifer felt that part of the reason for her difficulty relating to the rest of the program was gender-based, in the sense that it was hard for her to go out alone to do things because she was female, and it was difficult to arrange mixed gender meetings. However, she also struggled with the language pledge, and with her two close friends would often break it, something that other students on the program told me they were unwilling to do and disapproved of.

Her struggle with the pledge was partially due the fact that she felt she could not express herself in Arabic. She wrote on her blog:

What in the world was I thinking signing up for this? I can't even articulately complain because I have the language capacity of a ten year old (if that). Daily life is dismal...and I just want to shout: I PROMISE I AM WITTY AND INTERESTING IN ENGLISH IT JUST DOESN'T TRANSLATE, but that's not allowed...great.

Furthermore, because she was unhappy, she felt she needed support, and this support could only come in English:

It's also hard because this culture is so different and we are supposed to be speaking Arabic 24-7 and it's inevitable that you need support in a culture this different especially as a woman, and you can't get to know someone really well, and I know that sounds stupid, in Arabic, because we're just not there yet like we'll at least I'm not and like I'm not saying I'm better than anyone else by any means but like I think I could call myself middle of the road for the group as far as like abilities to express yourself and speak and understand and there's no way you could form relationships, like the people I'm closest with are the people that I break the pledge with and speak English to sometimes because otherwise there's everything is *kwajjis* [good] or *miš kwajjis* [not good]

Yet she also noted that seeking this support in English could sometimes make it worse:

The thing is it's like sort of a bad circle, like then the only thing you guys talk about in English is how shitty it all is, and like you're like ah, I hate it here, or like this was a terrible experience that I had, and so then not that I, I don't know, I don't know what then just sort of snowballs and then like when they don't have a good time like they would come to you and I of course like if I'm like complaining to someone they have like every right to come complain to me but I think we're kind of like bringing each other down

In terms of the identity categories discussed in the last chapter, Jennifer felt that being identified as a western foreigner was a disadvantage, as people would try to make her buy things and rip her off. For example, she wrote on her blog: “Egypt is full of scams. People are always trying to make you buy something, or rip you off. Everything from cab faairs to kunafah is bargained for, and it’s exhausting.”

In addition to feeling targeted as a wealthy foreigner, she also felt that she was unfairly held to represent American politics, describing the following encounter with a taxi driver:

Like we didn't even speak to a taxi driver, and he was like where are you from, and we're like America, and he's like oh, you Americans, they just help the Jews, and I'm like whatever, and then he's like we're Arabs, and we just want to live, why are you so horrible to us, and I was like what are you talking about, we're 20 year old girls

Jennifer also struggled with the attention she received in the street as a result of her foreign appearance, noting on her trip to London that it was nice not to be stared at. In Egypt, she wrote on her blog:

It's hard not to feel like a tourist attraction because EVERYWHERE we go no matter what we are wearing or how we are walking we get hissed at or harassed in some way. I now know what it feels like to be a character at a theme park and have people constantly wanting photos with you, but I don't have a costume to take off at the end of the day, it's part of my daily life. In the past two weeks alone I have been shouted at in English, Spanish, Arabic and French. Additionally, I have been called “asal” (sugar cane⁷) and “ishtaa” (cream), and asked if I “wanted sex”. It can definitely be trying on one's nerves to say the least, especially with the persistent ones

Jennifer also felt that her gender was a major factor in her unhappiness, explaining that gender affected her experience “200%, I think I would really actually like it here if I were a guy”. One reason was that she felt that being a target for sexual harassment limited her ability to interact with people, and in turn her ability to practice Arabic. She explained:

We can't just go to *ṣizbat sʕaṣd*, which is like the *so:q* [market] in their area, and like shoot the shit with someone . . . so I think that it's just, I don't really foresee myself

7. actually honey

improving a ton in *ʕa:mmijja* [Egyptian Arabic] outside of class, which is sad, and we can't have experiences, we don't have experiences like going to a *so:q* [market] and chatting people up

She also felt that the male study abroad students were quick to desert the female ones when their presence limited opportunities they wanted to pursue, explaining:

A lot of them [the male students] want to experience the most *baladi* [traditional], *masʕri* [Egyptian] culture that they can, and that's really admirable, but like they, if you're with a group of boys and more than one other girl, and they go somewhere, and they're like women aren't allowed because they just don't want the stigma of being with a woman and I think that's just selfish

Furthermore, she was frustrated with interactions that presented gendered information that she did not agree with, such as a teacher who gave her a lecture on “the perks of female circumcision” and explained “that women who engage in sexual relationships that are not sanctioned by Islam WILL get sexually transmitted diseases, like AIDS.”

While the previous chapter demonstrates that being identified as a female or foreigner could both help and hinder access to Egyptians and the use of Arabic, Jennifer felt that these identities only impeded her ability to make friends and use Arabic. She was unable and unwilling to renegotiate this reception in a way that would allow her to develop friendships with the Egyptians in the dorm or use Arabic.

Jennifer was also Jewish, and she missed celebrating Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Hanukkah with her family. However, she wrote on her blog that celebrating Yom Kippur in Egypt “took my personal spirituality to a whole new level,” and gave the following description of her experience attending Yom Kippur services at the Alexandria synagogue:

A group of Jewish students in my program decided to check out the old synagogue of Alexandria because one of them heard there was a make shift service there for Yom Kippur. I had very little faith in this, but was willing to go see. We arrived at the gates, only to be asked several times if we were Jewish. The guards were shocked, and kept asking if we were ALL Jewish or just some of us. When we finally convinced them we were all Jewish they showed us around to a back entrance past armored vehicles and guards. We were then searched and asked for multiple forms of identification. Finally we were admitted into the courtyard. To say it was beautiful would be an understatement. The courtyard was something out of a storybook, with the synagogue facing a once affluent street. The synagogue itself was palatial, and when we went inside we were in awe. There were vaulted ceilings and limestone pillars. I don't really understand why modern synagogues don't mimic this architecturally, and instead favor the strange art deco minimalism. The pews were massive and wooden, and there was an enormous balcony on the periphery where the women formerly sat. I say formerly because there are no regularly functioning services in this synagogue. There were all of fifteen congregants for Yom Kippur (including the six of us) despite the fact that the building seats five hundred.

The other congregants welcomed us warmly. They couldn't believe that we were Jewish students from America studying in Alexandria. They also looked like long lost members of our extended family (the [paternal] side). It was so moving to talk to them about their lives, and the service and Judaism in general. Most of them live in Israel part time and Alexandria for the rest, and make it a habit to be here for Yom Kippur as their families were before the diaspora. However they have not had a minyan (ten Jewish male adults

are required for certain religious obligations) on Yom Kippur for over ten years. They couldn't contain their excitement when we told them we would bring a few other Jewish guys from the group for the services the next day. At some point during the service, maybe it was when they had one of the guys from our group do hagbah (lift the torah for everyone to see) or maybe it was when the ardently thanked us for coming, I felt both saddened about the lack of Jewish presence in Egypt but also proud to be a member of such a long history.

Jennifer also attended a Coptic Christian Mass with her Christian teacher, and was pleased to discover similarities between Coptic Christian and Jewish services, writing on her blog:

A lot of the prayers are extremely similar to those in a Jewish Shabbat service, which was really surprising! My teacher had mentioned that he had the same experience when he went to a synagogue in the States, and that there is a strong bond between Judaism and Coptic Christianity.

While she was frustrated with the anti-Semitism and conflation of Judaism and Israel that she encountered in Egypt, Jennifer also found it pleasant when this was not the case, writing on her blog about a class where:

Additionally, we spoke about 1948, and the beginning of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Little did my teacher know, that he was explaining the differences between Zionism and Judaism to three Jewish students (yes there are only three of us in my class, and yes we are all Jews). It was great to hear him go on for about ten minutes about how Zionism is a movement, and Judaism is a religion, and that educated people in the Middle East distinguish between the two, and how anti-Semitism is frowned upon in most educated circles.

Thus, while Jennifer was unable to renegotiate her reception as a western foreigner and a female, she was able to draw upon her Jewish identity to gain some access to Egyptians and some more positive experiences. However, this was not enough to temper the frustration and discomfort she felt throughout the semester. Less invested in Arabic and in performing the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* associated with the imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East from the beginning, her desire to perform these identities by engaging in the practices of gaining access to Egyptians and using Arabic declined steadily throughout the semester.

Indeed, Jennifer spent much of her sojourn looking for ways to "escape Egypt" rather than engage with it. She went to places that were "like America" such as a nearby mall that had "all of the comforts of home including Zara and Starbucks." Initially disdainful of going to Europe, she explained that while she did not want to go out every day until 4am like her friends in Barcelona, Paris, and Prague, she felt that in Egypt there were no options to go out. In November, instead of going on the program trip to Sinai, she went to Europe to visit friends studying there for ten days, a trip she dubbed on her blog: "The R7lah (Journey) to the West" and that she told me gave her a break that prepared her to finish the last three weeks in Egypt.

Jennifer also used technology to help her escape, downloading American TV shows and movies through the internet and English books for her Kindle. When I observed her she was often simultaneously on Blackberry messenger, Facebook chat, and reading on her Kindle or watching shows on her computer. She explained that she knew this was breaking the language pledge, but she did not think it was a big deal. She felt that it was still "*ro:h al-pledge* [the spirit of the pledge]" because she used headphones and was not imposing her English on anyone else so it did not affect them. At the same time, she realized she was surrounding herself with

English, and that this limited her ability to use Arabic:

I'm like a chronic, not exactly techie, because I'm terrible with technology, but like I'm on Facebook all the time, and I BBM all the time, and I'm on Skype a lot of the time, and I'm in my room and I read a lot, and like I bombard myself with English, so it is my fault but it's my tool to keep myself sane

As a result of “bombarding” herself with English, breaking the language pledge with her American friends, and having no Egyptian friends, Jennifer explained that her interactions in Arabic were limited to: “like I buy things from people and the teachers are Egyptian, but I have no interactions.” At the same time, she did think she was improving in Arabic as a result of having a schedule that focused only on Arabic, as well as the pledge, since she did use Arabic during the day.

By the end of the semester, Jennifer stated أنا متحمسة لأرجع إلى حياتي [I'm excited to return to my life]. Yet she again emphasized her desire to do something "different," concluding her study abroad experience by quoting from Robert Frost on her blog and Facebook:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

The fact that Jennifer's focused on study abroad to the Middle East a personal development challenge for herself rather than as participation in an imagined community of *cross-cultural mediators* and *dedicated language learners* (and as a result was often miserable) demonstrates another benefit that this imagined community may provide for language learners. While Meron and Mita were able to use their vision of the imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East to focus on the ways in which they could or should use their individual

agency to make the reality of their sojourn match that of their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East, Jennifer, who did not have this vision, simply sought to withdraw from the reality of her experience.

Thea

Thea was enrolled in the Middlebury program. She was 20 years old, a Junior, and a religion major at an all-female college in the United States. A native speaker of English, she had studied some French as well. Prior to studying abroad, she had traveled to the Caribbean, Puerto Rico, London, and Japan. She had studied Arabic for two years in college, and spent Summer 2010 in the Middlebury Summer Arabic program (where we met briefly). Thea was invested in Arabic as a means of pursuing her academic interests in the future, and she wrote on the questionnaire that she was studying Arabic because:

I am interested in the Islamic tradition, early Islamic history, and textual exegesis. I am not at all a "language person" in the sense that it is quite difficult for me to "pick up" languages (most of this, I suspect, because I feel pretty useless when I can't articulate myself), but Arabic is my means in which to access my interests.

Thea chose to study at the Middlebury program because her advisor had helped develop it, and it was the only one he would sign off on. However, she too referenced the idea of an imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East and her role as a *cross-cultural mediator* by emphasizing the "stark" cultural differences and the need for mutual understanding between different cultures, writing on the questionnaire that she hoped to gain from study abroad:

A sense of understanding of the interconnectedness of humans regardless of their starkly

different societies and respective cultures. I hope to shake off the idea that things are "good and bad", "black and white" by involving myself in a culture with a totally different sense of morality, social norms, and relationships.

She also explained that the language emphasis in the Middlebury program and being in “constant contact with native speakers” were important to her, referencing the practices that would allow her to perform her desired identities of *dedicated language learner* and *cross-cultural mediator*.

Like the other students, Thea's daily routine consisted largely of classes and homework. She explained:

أولا أنا ممكن أغسل وبعدين ممكن لو عندي وقت أنا أكل شوية وبعدين أنا بأمشي إلى الصف وام أنا بأدرس في صف كل يوم ممكن صف تاريخ صف فصحي صف عامية وعندي إجازة للغداء وممكن أنا بأمشي مع صاحبي إلى الوحيد لأشتري نشتري فلافل أو شورمة لحمه عشان عندي يعني ليك ممكن مشكلة مع الشورمة لحمه عشان بأحب أن أكله كل وقت وام بعدين عندي ممكن صف آخر وفي الليل عندنا curfew في بيت الطالبات ودا مختلف جدا جدا من امريكا بس لو فيه وقت ممكن نروح كلاي كافيه أو زي كده أو عصير مكه أو دار مدليري أو ممكن ام نشوف غروب الشمس في البحر

[First I maybe wash and then maybe if I have time I eat a little and after that I walk to class, and um, I study in class every day, maybe history class, MSA class, Egyptian Arabic class, and I have a break for lunch and maybe I walk with my friends or alone to buy, we buy falafel or beef schwarma because I have you know, like maybe a problem with beef schwarma because I like to eat it all the time and then I have maybe another class and at night we have a curfew in the dorms and that's very very different from America but if there's time maybe we go to Clay Cafe or like that, or Mecca Juice, or the Middlebury apartment or maybe um we watch the sunset by the sea]

Before going to bed, Thea often used Skype to talk to her family or girlfriend.

Thea took MSA for 6 hours a week, Egyptian Arabic for 4 hours a week, History of Modern Egypt, and a one-on-one class on Gender studies. Her favorite class was gender studies:

عشان الأستاذة بتاعتي هي كويسة قوي ام يعني وأنا بأحب التاريخ الحركة النسوية ويعني بشكل عام أنا بأحب يعني
الدراسة النسوية عشان يعني في (كلية انساء) (كلية النساء) يعني فعلا مركز الحركة النسوية في امريكا فيعني أنا
بأحب يعني ام الاختلاف بين الحركة النسوية هنا وحركة نسوية في ام العالم يعني بشكل عام

[Because of my professor, she's very good, um like I like the history of the feminist movement and like in general I like you know, feminist studies because like I'm at [women's college] and [women's college] is like really the center of the feminist movement in America, so you know I like you know, the difference between the feminist movement here and the feminist movement in um, the world like in general]

Thea lived in the dorms with a NS roommate, which she described on the questionnaire as: "Like nothing I've ever experienced before! A really interesting experience." While she enjoyed the contact with native speakers, like Jennifer she felt that she had little in common with her Egyptian dorm mates. She also missed her "alone time," savoring what she could find and writing her blog: "i've come to the conclusion that my mental well-being relies greatly on my personal definition of personal, private space." Furthermore she felt frustrated by the curfew and her inability to go out, as her friends in America and on study abroad in Europe were doing.

Thea's prior connection included friends from the Middlebury summer program in Alexandria and Cairo, as well as a friend from her home university on the same program. She did not have any prior connections with Egyptians.

In her free time, Thea liked to explore the city with her friends, visiting historical sites, coffeeshops, restaurants, nightclubs, shopping malls and juice stands, and going to concerts with the program. She also enjoyed watching Egyptian TV series in the dorms. During the semester

she traveled to Cairo, Luxor and Aswan, Port Said, Siwa, Sinai, and Jordan. After the semester, she traveled to Lebanon with her father and returned to Sinai with her girlfriend.

In terms of the identity categories discussed in the last chapter, Thea was interested in the cultural differences related to gender she encountered in Egypt, but felt that her gender made it difficult for her to gain access to Egyptians and use Arabic. She explained that she was a target of sexual harassment, and that her inability to respond as she could in the United States was particularly difficult:

صعب لأمشي في الشوارع بدون كل الشباب يعني يا عسل أو جميل أو يا قمر وكان ماشي بس إذا الرجال عمل يعني touch كان صعب عشان في امريكا إذا حدث في امريكا أنا ليك لماذا ليك أنت ليك مش تحب المرأة وهنا مش عارفة الكلمات ولازم أن ام مش ام أقول أي شيء

[It's hard to walk in the street without all of the youths like hey honey or hey beautiful or hey gorgeous, and it was okay, but if the men like touch it's hard because in America if it happened in America, I'm like, why, like why don't you like women, and here I don't know the words and I have to um, not, um say anything]

In addition to struggling with the harassment, Thea also felt frustrated with traditional gender roles she encountered in Egypt, such as her roommate showing her an article saying that men were smarter than women and then saying she agreed with it, or a teacher that said women who have pre-marital relations will get STDs. Her frustration was accentuated by the fact that she often felt that she did not have the language skills to engage in high-level discussions on these topics and thus perform the role of *cross-cultural mediator*.

Like Jennifer, Thea felt that she did not have much in common with the Egyptian girls in the dorms, and thus could not befriend or interact with them, limiting her access to Egyptians. When I observed her on a trip to the mall with some study abroad students (including Jennifer)

as well as her roommate, she seemed to be making little effort to interact with her roommate.

In contrast, Thea explained that she preferred talking to the male Egyptian students with whom it was easier for her to discuss politics and cultural differences (and thus better perform her desired identity as *cross-cultural mediator*):

بأحب كل المصريين هم كويسين قوي يعني بالنسبة لي أفضل الرجال عشان عندنا أكثر موضوع لنتكلم علشان يعني
كل بنات كويسين قوي قوي قوي بس مش عندنا حاجات كثير بيننا يعني احنا نتكلم في حياتنا بس ما فيش يعني اي
حاجة زي سياسة أو الأخبار السياسية زي كده

[I like all of the Egyptians, they're very good, you know, for me I prefer the men because we have more subjects to talk about because like all of the girls are very very very good but we don't have a lot of things in common, like we just talk about our lives, but there's nothing, like anything like politics or political news like that]

Yet at the same time, Thea felt that her foreign female identity indexed that of the loose foreign woman and made the Egyptian men act strange around her. This could limit her ability to interact with them, as she explained:

فيه حاجات غريب بين معظم الرجال المصريين والبنات الامريكيتين ومعظم الوقت أشعر ليك sketchy thing بيننا
ودا صعب عشان عايزة أتكلم مع شخص بس يعني فيه like expectations من الرجالة و expectations من us
ومن الصعب أن يعني أكسر ال expectations زي كده

[There are strange things between most of the Egyptian men and the American girls and most of the time I feel like a sketchy thing between us and that's hard because I want to speak with someone but like there are like expectations from the men and expectations from us and it's hard to like break the expectations like that]

She felt that this was mostly a result of stereotypes about American women, explaining that she was frustrated with the positioning she experienced as a western female:

I feel like it's hard for me because I'm trying to respect and conform to a culture that's not mine and I know because of that I'll always be like an *agnabijja* [foreigner] but I'm trying to do it in a way that is really like nonjudgmental and I feel like all the like a lot of the people I talk to come into it with more judgments than I come into the conversation with like, like they come into it thinking that like I am an American and therefore I'm easy and like I will like cheat on my like husband and so forth and so on and it's sometimes hard because I like try to come to it *min ḡayr* [without] judgments and like the first thing I get like in my face is judgment judgment judgment and I know it's just like a lack of like exposure to that type of culture but at the same time it's disheartening to get over and over again

She also felt that the male students had higher levels of Arabic since they were not as limited in their movements, and that the expectation that she should behave like traditional good girl limited her abilities to practice Arabic:

أظن بشكل عام الرجال كلهم في مستوى عالية من البنات دالوقتي عشان هم عندهم الفرصة ليخرجوا بيت الطلاب
ويعني يشربوا شيشة في مقهى كل ليل ومش عندها فرصة زي كده عشان احنا بنات في مصر ودا صعب يعني بس
صعب عشان أنا بنت امريكية بس يعني ممكن مش صعب بالنسبة للبنات في مصر مش عارفة

[I think that in general all of the men are at a higher level than the girls now because they, they have the opportunity to go out of the dorms and you know smoke sheisha in a coffeeshop every night and we don't have the opportunity like that because we're girls in Egypt and that's hard, like but it's hard because I'm an American girl, but like maybe it's not hard for girls in Egypt, I don't know]

Furthermore, Thea explained that like Jennifer, she struggled with the language pledge, particularly when she felt she needed to express her discomfort with the gender roles she

encountered:

لو عندنا مشكلة ليك كبيرة like shaking our world نستخدم انجليزي عشان عايزة عايزين stick to التعهد
الغوية بس لو فيه like nervous breakdown like كل المدربين عايزين أن نستخدم عربية بس بس لو بين
for the sake of mental health والتعهد اللغوية يعني بعض الوقت يعني بالنسبة لي لازم أن نتكلم بالإنجليزي
like talk it out ... our mental health عشان فيه يعني اختلاف بين ثقافتنا كبير ويعني بعض الوقت لازم أن

[If we have like a big problem like shaking our world we use English because I want, we
want to stick to the language pledge but if there's like a nervous breakdown like all of the
directors want us to use Arabic only, but if it's between mental health and the language
pledge, like some of the time like for me, it's necessary for us to speak English for the
sake of our mental health because there is you know, a big difference between our
cultures and like sometimes we have to like talk it out

She also noted that her feelings of inadequacy in Arabic frustrated her when discussing
gender roles with Egyptians because she was not actually able to discuss these topics at the level
she desired:

I think it would because I'm used to feeling like a like a well-composed and eloquent
individual and in Egyptian Arabic I'm just like oh, I have the like linguistic capabilities of
a five-year old, so like *ma:ʃi:* [okay] okay, I don't have the same beliefs as you, but like
that's nice

While Thea felt that being identified as a foreign female often limited her ability to gain
access to Egyptians and use Arabic, she was also able to negotiate a reception as a *female*
interlocutor and *fascinating westerner*. This allowed her to gain access to Egyptians by talking
to women who were curious about her presence in Egypt. She found such opportunities on the
tram, writing on her blog that “there’s a women-only car and i’ve had some awesome

conversations with curious Egyptians.” She also described a trip to Port Said on her blog where she and her friends were “chatting with a sizable crowd of preteen girls (they’re especially cute and interested in ‘ishtaa’[literally cream; figuratively white] girls in port said)”

Similarly, Thea recognized that she was also received as a *foreign guest* to be welcomed and assisted. Her difficulty lay in distinguishing between legitimate offers of help and those that led to sexual harassment such as repeated phone calls, picture taking, following, and grabbing.

She wrote on her blog:

in addition, i’m learning to define where the line of hospitality and curiosity ends and where sketchy behavior and lewdness begins. it can be very taxing, but the less i let it get to me, the more i know i’ll enjoy the warmth of Egyptian culture.

In terms of her language use, Thea explained that while her foreign appearance indexed an identity as a non-Arabic speaker, using Arabic could help her distinguish herself from a tourist and gain access to Egyptians, writing on her blog: “despite the occasional “stop speaking arabic, i can speak english” that we get, people—especially in the areas frequented by flocks of culturally insensitive tourists—tend to respond very warmly when spoken to in their native tongue.”

Thea was also half-Jewish, and often felt frustrated with the anti-Semitism she encountered, such as the conspiracy theory that Israel was behind recent shark attacks in Red Sea resorts in an attempt to control gold in the Red Sea. At the same time, she gained the interesting experience of attending Rosh Hashanah services in Cairo, where she was simultaneously awed by the synagogue and brought home to its security issues:

[We] headed to one of Cairo’s oldest remaining synagogues for what can only loosely be called a Rosh Hashanah service. The experience was surreal as all hell: the synagogue was

one of the most beautiful i'd ever seen (and for a half-breed whose parents raised her without dogma, you can imagine my limitations), but we were greeted by an array of egyptian police and their bomb-sniffing dogs who requested various ids, student information, who had invited us, etc. there were very few available prayer books, and when i finally tracked one down, it was taken away from me by a large man (i've yet to figure out what his role in the synagogue was) who claimed that, since I didn't speak hebrew (and wouldn't follow him to somewhere he called the "bibliotheque"), I didn't need one, anyway. the service itself was no more than thirty minutes and was followed by dinner (and wine!) with various jewish folk (mostly ex-pats and delegates; mostly from ma'adi, a wealthy, generally foreigner's suburb). we met some very interesting people, though I can't say that i felt particularly connected to the community, nor did i feel a sense of belonging or as if i was with "my people" in a place where there are few, as i heard someone unrelated to our group say.

In general, Thea's experience was characterized by a tension between the frustrations and limitations she experienced as a result of the reception of her foreigner, female, and Jewish identities in Egypt and her ability to negotiate these identities to some degree to gain the access to Egyptians and Arabic use she desired. When she was able to negotiate her reception as a foreign female Jew to gain this access and use, she was able to perform her desired identities as *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* and thus make the reality of her study in Egypt match that of her imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East. Yet when her reception as a foreign female Jew limited her ability to gain this access and use, she could become less invested in her sojourn as a language learning context, and engage in behaviors that were detrimental to this goal, such as ignoring her Egyptian dormmates or breaking the language

pledge to use English with her study abroad student friends.

Isabelle

Isabelle was enrolled in the Middlebury program. She was 19, a Junior, and a political science major. A native speaker of English, her prior language study included the Middlebury Summer program in 2009 (where we met briefly), a year of Arabic at her home university, and another summer intensive program in Summer 2010. Prior to studying in Egypt, she had traveled to Ireland, Great Britain, China, Italy, France, and the Czech Republic.

Isabelle's investment in Arabic stemmed from her interest in the culture and politics of the Middle East, and the symbolic and material resources she hoped these skills would bring her in the future. She wrote on the questionnaire that she studied Arabic because:

I have always loved studying languages, and after I started to become more interested in the Middle East, both in terms of culture and politics, studying Arabic seemed like a good new path to take. Then, once I started studying Arabic at the Middlebury summer school, I realized how much I loved it, and the rest is history.

She also referenced the imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East and her desired identity as *cross-cultural mediator* by referring to conflicts between American and the Middle East, explaining that these conflicts were a major problem in the world today:

أظن ام مشكلة كبيرة دالوقتي الجهل الجهل في امريكا وممكن في الشرق الأوسط كمان بس الثقافات في العالم مش تفهم بعضها البعض ويعني شفنا دي يعني في امريكا الصيف دي مع المسجد في نيو يورك يعني كان شيء كبير كبير وكان هناك مناقشات كثيرا وكثير من الناس كان غاضب قوي بس يعني دا اه يعني شيء من الجهل أظن يعني كثير من الناس في امريكا مش يفهم الشرق الأوسط وثقافة الشرق الأوسط والدين والإسلام وهنا كثير اه من الناس في بلد آخر الذي لا يفهمون امريكا والغرب والشرق الأوسط وهناك يعني مشاكل كثيرة

[I think that um, a big problem now is ignorance, ignorance in America and maybe in the

Middle East too, but the cultures in the world don't understand each other and you know, we saw that like in America this summer with the mosque in New York, like it was a big, big thing and there were lots of discussions and lots of people were very mad, but like that, uh, like is something from ignorance, I think like, many people in America don't understand the Middle East and Middle Eastern culture, and religion, and Islam, and here many people ah, are from another country that don't understand America and the West and the Middle East and there's like a lot of problems]

Isabelle also expressed her desired identity as a *dedicated language learner* and her investment in Arabic for the future, explaining that she chose to study at Middlebury for its reputation for language excellence and the language pledge, as well as an interest in Egypt as a "stepping stone" to future work in the Middle East:

First of all, I wanted a full immersion program, and Middlebury's program in Alexandria was the only one I knew of. In addition to that though, Egypt has always fascinated me, and it is such an important country historically, politically, and culturally in not only the Middle East, but in terms of the rest of the world as well. Also, Egypt seemed like a good place to start in the Middle East, before travelling/studying/working in other Middle Eastern countries - in my mind, it is a good stepping stone into the Middle East.

She further distinguished between her imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East and study abroad elsewhere by emphasizing her more difficult experience compared to students who studied in Europe:

عشان كنت بأفكر يعني اه يعني ليه حاجات صعبة هنا وأعتقد فيه يعني كل حاجة هنا يعني عمل كثير وأعتقد ذلك
مفيد بس كمان أنا بأفكر أحيانا زي تجربتي هنا مختلف ممكن من تجربة الناس بيدرسون في يعني أوروبا

[Because I was thinking like, ah, like why are things hard here, and I think there are like everything here is like a lot of work, and I think that's beneficial but also I think sometimes like my experience here is very difference from the experience of people studying in like Europe]

Like the other students, Isabelle's daily routine consisted of many classes and hours of homework:

جدولي للنوم غريب قوي فمعظم الوقت أنا أصحو بدري قوي ممكن ساعة ستة أو قبل ذلك عشان معظم الوقت في نهاية اليوم أنا تعبانة لنفس السبب أنا كنت أستيقظ بدري ام بس أنا بأكل في الشقة معظم الوقت إلا لو أنا يعني متأخر قوي فيعني عيش وجبنة وأعمل نفسي شاي وأنا أنزل من البيت وبأمشي إلى المحطة ترام عشان الترام ممكن خمسة دقيقة ماشيا من شقتي وذلك كويس قوي فأركب الترام و إلى شطبي عشان أنا بأحب أن أمشي شوية في الصبح ومعظم الوقت عندي أيام طويلة في الأسبوع ممكن من صف من ساعة تسعة إلى ساعة أربعة أو لو مش في فيه صف متأخر يعني عايزة بأدرس عايزة أدرس شوية هنا وأحيانا بين فصولي أنا رحت المطعم وأكل مع أصدقائي وأحيانا بعد نهاية الفصول أنا رحت الشقة (لمدلبري) لو عايزة الانترنت أو ممكن لو فيه اجتماع مثلا النهار دا عدي نادي المسرح فهاروح الشقة (لمدلبري) بعد كل حاجة أيوة وأنا بأعود إلى الشقة ممكن من ساعة أي وقت بين ساعة ستة وأحيانا بعد عشرة وأكل دائما أسرتي بتنام فأنا أنا آكل عندما هم بينام وبعدين ممكن أنا أنام شوية بس ليك دائما خطير عشان في امريكا أنا مش بأنام أبدا في اليوم أنا مش عارفة ازي بالظبط ففيه وقت كثير التي أنا أنام أطول من كنت عايزة بس بعدين أنا أبدا كل واجبي

[My sleep schedule is very strange, so most of the time I wake up very early, maybe 6:00 or before that because most of the time at the end of the day I'm tired for the same reason, I woke up early um, but I eat in the apartment most of the time, except if I'm you know, very late, so like bread and cheese, and I make myself tea and I go out of the house and I walk to the tram station because the tram is maybe five minutes walk from my apartment and that's very good, so I ride the tram to Shatby because I like to walk a little

in the morning and most of the time I have long days in the week, maybe from a class from 9:00 to 4:00 if there's not a late class, like I want to study, I want to study a little here and sometimes between my classes, I go to the restaurant and I eat with my friends and sometimes after the end of classes I go to the [Middlebury] apartment if I want internet or maybe if there is a meeting for example today I have Theater Club so I'll go the the [Middlebury] apartment after everything, yes, and I return to the apartment maybe from anytime between 6:00 and sometimes after 10:00 and I eat, my family is always sleeping, so I, I eat while they are sleeping and afterwards maybe I sleep a little bit but like it's always dangerous because in America I don't sleep during the day, I don't know how exactly, so there's a lot of times that I sleep longer than I wanted to, but after that I start all my homework]

Isabelle took MSA for six hours a week, Egyptian colloquial for four hours, Arabic literature for three hours, and a one-on-one class on Islamic Political Movements for three hours, all of which involved a considerable amount of homework. Her favorite class was her one-on-one due to the political knowledge she gained:

عشان يعني ركزنا عن الإخوان المسلمين لمعظم الفصل ممكن لاثنتين ونص شهور من ثلاث شهور فكان يعني أنا
تعلمت كثير كثير كثير

[Because you know, we focused on the Muslim Brotherhood for most of the semester maybe two and a half to three months and it was like, I learned a whole lot]

Isabelle lived with an Egyptian host family that consisted of a mother, father, 3-year old daughter, and 9-year old son. She referenced her desired identity as a *cross-cultural mediator* in explaining this choice, writing on the survey that she chose to live with a host family “to see life in the Middle East from the inside.” She noted that while her host parents and brother spoke

English, they spoke almost entirely Arabic with her, allowing her to pursue the identity of *dedicated language learner*, although they did not correct her mistakes. In general, she enjoyed living with her family, although she sometimes had difficulty understanding her role in the apartment as well as her host mother's regional accent.

Prior to coming abroad, Isabelle knew one student, with whom she had studied in the summers of 2009 and 2010. In her free time, Isabelle often went on family visits with her family, explaining:

أحيانا أنا أعمل حاجات مع أسرتي يعني دائما لو هم بيروحوا يعني شقة عائلتهم أو أصدقائهم يعني أنا أروح معهم
وذلك دائما كويس ام أو يعني امبارح كنت في سبورتنج معهم وأول أمبارح كنت معهم في شقة مختلفة ولو هم يعني
يروحون مكان الثاني أروح معهم

[Sometimes I do things with my family, like always if they go to like their extended family's apartment or their friends, like I go with them, and that's always good, um, or like yesterday I was in Sporting with them and the day before yesterday I was with them at a different apartment, and if they like go to another place I go with them]

Isabelle also hung out with friends in the program, attending cultural events such as plays and art exhibits and going to coffeeshops, restaurants, and historical sites. In terms of extracurricular activities, she participated in the Theater club and the discussions at the American cultural center. She explained that she tried not to stay out too late in order to return to her family on time. During her time in Egypt she also traveled to Cairo, Luxor, Aswan, and Jordan as well as on the program trips to Sinai, Siwa, and Marsa Matrouh.

In order to perform the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* and make her experience in Egypt match that of her imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East, it was important for Isabelle to meet and interact with people. She

felt that her host family was essential to performing these identities, as she had good discussions with them on a variety of topics:

عندنا يعني حوار كويس جدا ام يعني أنا بأتكلم كثير مع أبي في الأسرة عن المجتمع في مصر ويعني بعض المشاكل مع المجتمع ويعني امبارح كنا بنتكلم عن يعني لو فلوس مهمة ولا لا وحاجات كويسة وحاجات يعني وحش مع الفلوس والناس التي عايزين فلوس كثير بس قبل ذلك أحيانا بأتكلم بنتكلم عن الموسيقى أو كنت بأتكلم عن يعني أسلوب العيش أو معيشة في مدن كبيرة في اسكندرية وفي وفي امريكا يعني كان فيه حوار كبير عن أي أحسن بيت برة المدينة أو شقة صغيرة قوي في المدينة فليك دائما ممتعة أن أسمع وجهة نظر أسرتي هنا عشان دائما فيه حاجات مختلفة ومهمة فأعتقد عندي أحسن مناقشات معهم

[We have like a very good conversation, um, like I talk a lot with my father in the family about the society in Egypt and like some of the problems with the society and like yesterday were talking about like if money is important or not, good things, and like bad things with money and people that want a lot of money but before that sometimes I talk, we talk about music or I was talking about like the style of living in big cities in Alexandria and in, and in America and you know, it was a big conversation about what is better a house outside of the city or a very small apartment in the city, so like it's always enjoyable to hear the viewpoint of my family here because there are always different and important things so I think I have the best discussions with them]

However, she noted that while she felt most integrated into Egyptian society when she was with her family, sometimes she still felt that she was a foreign guest and she was not certain of the rules:

فيه فرق بين الأسرة هنا والأسرة في امريكا وفي امريكا أنا دائما يعني كنت برة بيتي يعني كثير من حياتي فعندي حرية كثير كثير وهنا دائما لو أنا أعمل حاجة مختلفة دائما يعني فيه أسئلة كثير كثير أو يعني لو أنا دخل النام في الكنبه يعني في أوضتي دائما أو ليه تنامين دالوقتي بلا بلا بلا اه ويعني كانت فيه مناقشة امبارح عن أكل عشان

ماماتي في الأسرة أدركت أن هي مش عارفة أية أكل أنا أفضل بس كان ليك ما كنت عارفة لو هم كان غاضب ولا لا
عشان الحوار كان شديد شوية وهم يعني تقضلي ايه تحبي ايه يعني كان فيه أكل في التلاجة وما أكلتيهوش وأنا يعني
أنا أسفة كنت بأفكر بعض الأكل كان للابن للمدرسة وذلك كان مش صحيح فأنا أنا ما زلت بأتعلم بعض الحاجات
بالنسبة للأكل بس يعني فيه أنا مش بأشعر بذلك كل الوقت يعني في وقت كثير التي أنا بأجلس معهم وأشعر بالراحة
كاملة وعندما أروح شقة يعني عائلتهم عائلتها أنا أشعر بالراحة وأشعر بأنا يعني جزء من الأسرة فيعني مختلف من
يوم إلى يوم وأحياناً فيه حاجات التي أنا عارفة وأتذكر الفرق بينهم وبينني وأنني يعني مش مش مصرية ومش فرد
حقيقي بس في وقت كثير التي أنا أشعر بأنا فعلاً معهم

[There's a difference between the family here and the family in America and in America
I'm always, like I was outside my house like a lot in my life, so I had a whole lot of
freedom, and here it's always if I do something different always, like there are a whole
lot of questions or like if I start sleeping on the sofa, like in my room, always or why are
you sleeping now blah blah blah or you know there was a discussion yesterday about
food because my mother in the family thought that she didn't know what food I like but it
was like I didn't know if they were angry or not because the conversation was a little
strong and they like what do you prefer, what do you like, like there was food in the
refrigerator and you didn't eat it, and I'm like I'm sorry I thought some of the food was
for the son for the school and that wasn't true, so I'm still learning some things in terms
of food but like there are, I don't feel that way all the time, like lots of times when I sit
with them, and I feel completely comfortable and when I go to like their family's,
family's apartment I feel comfortable, and I feel that I'm like part of the family, so like
it's different from day to day and sometimes there are things that I know and I remember
the difference between them and between me and that I'm like not Egyptian and not a
real individual [in the family] but there are a lot of times that I feel I'm really with them]

While Isabelle felt more and more comfortable with her family as the semester went on, she also wanted access to Egyptians outside of the family. She felt that unlike the female students living in the dorms, she did not have much contact with Egyptians her age:

صعب شوية عشان أنا مش أنا عارفة الطالبات في يعني الطالبات المصرية في البيت الطلاب بس مش عارفة هم
يعني كويس قوي قوي فيعني لو أنا ممكن مع أليس وهي بتروح مكان مع زميلة أوضتها يعني أنا أروح معهم وأنا
بأحب أن نتكلم بأحب أن أتكلم معهم بس أنا مش عندي مشروعات معهم عادة يعني معهم يعني بدون أي شخص آخر
من البرنامج وذلك صعب عشان أنا عايزة أتعرفهم أكثر بس صعب مع الوقت ويعني السفر بين المكان

[It's a little hard because I don't, I know the students in like the Egyptian students in the dorms, but I don't know them like very very well, so like if I'm maybe with Alice and she's going somewhere with her roommate, like I'll go with them, and I like to speak, I like to speak with them, but I don't have plans with them usually, like with them, like without any other person from the program and that's hard because I want to get to know them more, but it's hard with the time, and like the travel between the places]

As she alluded to above, Isabelle felt that it was difficult for her to meet Egyptians outside of the program as a result of the time she spend studying and doing homework.

أنا مش عندي وقت كثير لواجباتي نفسها فمافيش وقت أن يعني أجلس وأدرس كل المفردات دائما التي أنا يعني
المفردات الجديدة من الحياة اليومية أو من الفصول فأحيانا أنا أشعر بأنني مش بتعلم اللغة بسرعة قوي عشان فيه
حاجات كثير يعني برة الدراسة وبس يعني في نفس الوقت عندي مش عندي وقت كثير في الأسبوع أن أخرج الشقة
وأعمل حاجات ام عشام عندي واجب ففيه مشكلة من الوقت ودي وقت مهم ولازم لتعليم أية لغة فذلك صعب

[I don't have a lot of time for my homework itself, so there's not time to like sit and study all the words always that I, like the new words from daily life or from classes, so sometimes I feel like I'm not learning the language very quickly because there's a lot of things like outside of studying and but like at the same time I have, I don't have a lot of

time in the week to go out of the apartment and do things um, because I have homework, and there's the problem of time, and this is an important time, and necessary to learn any language, so that's hard]

In terms of the identity categories examined in the previous chapter, Isabelle felt that her reception as a foreigner affected her experience in a number of ways. She explained that she was sometimes uncomfortable with people staring at her:

يعني شكلي مختلفة فدائما الناس يعني يرايونني وذلك أنا دائما أشعر غريب شوية

[Like my appearance is different, so there are always people like looking at me, and that, I always feel a little strange]

Yet at the same time, she saw her strange appearance as a potential advantage when she was received as a *fascinating westerner*, because people were interested in talking to her, which allowed her to gain access to Egyptians. She explained that women on the tram would talk to her, something that happened several times when I was riding the tram with her as well:

أحيانا أعتقد فيه حاجات كويسة ويعني عشان ال يعني في الترام ممكن فيه شخص التي هيبدأ يتكلم معي يعني عشان شكلي مختلف

[Sometimes I think there are good things, and like because the, like in the tram maybe there's a person that will start talking to me like because my appearance is different]

An interest in Isabelle as a foreigner, and her study of political science and Arabic sometimes led to strong discussions with members of her host family's extended family. Although she was sometimes nervous about these discussions, they did allow her to perform the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* by discussing politics in Arabic:

أحيانا عندي مناقشات شديدة شوية يعني أحيانا مع بعض أفراد في عائلة أسرتي هم عايزة بيعرف ليه بتدرس دا ليه بتدرس علوم السياسة ليه بتدرسي عربية وشديد شوية وذلك دائما صعب عشان أنا مش عارفة لو هم يعني يهتمون

بالموضوع بس ولو هم يعني عندهم أفكار عن الموضوع

[Sometimes I have discussions that are a little strong like sometimes, with some members of my family's extended family, they want to know, why are you studying that, why are you studying political science, why are you studying Arabic, and it's a little strong and that's always hard because I don't know if they like are just interested in the topic or if they like have ideas about the topic]

Isabelle also described how Egyptians sometimes saw her as a foreign guest to help, such as a woman she met on the tram who helped her study for a test:

كنت في الترام امبارح وكان عندي امتحان وكنت بأدرس في دفتر بتاعي وكانت في ست جمبي وهي شوفت أنا كنت بأدرس وعندما انتهت هي سألت أن تشوف دفترتي وهي كنت بتساعدني مع واجب ف أو مع دراسة ذاكرة

[I was on the tram yesterday and I had a test, and I was studying with my notebook and there was a woman next to me and she saw I was studying and when I finished she asked to see my notebook and she helped me with my homework so, or with my studying, reviewing]

However, Isabelle explained that while her identity as a western foreigner could help her gain access to Egyptians, it also indexed her as an *English speaker*, and this meant that she had to use her individual agency to persevere in Arabic in order to try to claim an identity as an Arabic speaker. This occurred several times when I was shopping with her, and she explained in her interview:

أحيانا الناس عايزين يبدأ مناقشة معي بس أحيانا هم مش فاهمة إنني بأتكلم عربية وبأبني أنا عايزة أتكلم بالعربية وأعتقد عشان شكلي مختلفة وهم عارفين أنا مش من مصر يعني دا ليك واضح فأحيانا أنا لازم يعني أحاول كثير أن أجعل المناقشة عربي

[Sometimes people want to start a discussion with me but sometimes they don't

understand that I speak Arabic and I want to speak Arabic, and I think because my appearance is different and they know I'm not from Egypt, like that's like obvious, so sometimes I have to like try a lot to make the discussion Arabic]

Performing an identity as a *dedicated language learner* was also important to Isabelle, and she stuck with the language pledge, explaining: "I use my Arabic in all situations and whenever possible outside of class." She stated that using Arabic all the time was initially difficult, especially with her family since she did not speak Egyptian Arabic. However, using Arabic became easier as the semester went on, and she explained the importance of being able to express her personality in Arabic, writing on the questionnaire: "It is much easier now that at the beginning of the semester, since I feel much more comfortable speaking in Arabic, and so my personality comes through more now when meeting new people."

Isabelle also felt that her gender limited her ability to meet Egyptians outside of her family, commenting on the survey: "This was something very evident this semester - that I was certainly limited in my interactions with certain people, especially men." She also felt that in comparison to her male classmates, her gender affected her ability to practice Egyptian Arabic :

الأصعب حاجة مع جنسي هنا وبالنسبة للغة أن أنا عارفة أنا مش بأستطيع أن أبدأ مناقشة مع أي شخص أنا عايزة يعني أنا مش بأتكلم وأبدأ مناقشة مع راجل في الشارع ممكن أنا أستطيع بس ممكن مش فكرة كويسة وأنا دائما مش عارفة يعني فين الخط يعني عندما حاجة مناسبة وحاجة الثانية مش مناسبة بالنسبة لكلام مع شخص خاصة الرجالة برة البرنامج فذلك صعب يعني عشان يعني ممكن أنا أستطيع في التاكس أستطيع أن أبدأ مناقشة مع السواق بس ممكن أنا هاكون في مشكلة يعني في نفس الوقت فأعتقد بالنسبة لي جنسي وبالنسبة للغة دا الأصعب حاجة فأنا يعني وخاضة في البداية يعني كنت بأشوف كل الطلاب كل الرجالة في البرنامج يتعلمون عامية بسرعة بسرعة بسرعة عشان كلهم كانوا بيتكلمون مع كل الناس وأعتقد كثير من الوقت كمان الساتات المصرية مش يعني ممكن مفتحين كثير فلازم يعني أعمل مع ذلك وأفهم ذلك

[The hardest thing with my gender here, and in terms of the language is that I know I can't start a discussion with any person I want, like I can't talk and start a conversation with a man in the street, maybe I can, but maybe it's not a good idea, and I always don't know like where the line is, like when something is appropriate and something else isn't appropriate in terms of speaking with someone, especially men outside of the program, so that's hard, like because like maybe I can, in a taxi I can start a discussion with the driver but maybe I'll have a problem like at the same time, so I think for me, my gender and in terms of the language that's the hardest thing, so I, like, and especially in the beginning like I saw all the students, all the men in the program learning Egyptian Arabic really really really quickly because all of them were speaking with everyone and I think a lot of times also Egyptian women aren't like maybe very open, so I have to like work with that and understand that]

However, Isabelle also realized that her gender gave her access to women as a *female interlocutor*, writing on the questionnaire: “However, I did have a very unique opportunity to meet and speak to Egyptian women, which was something that many men could not do.”

Like the rest of the women in this study, Isabelle also commented on her reception as a western foreign female. She explained that many Egyptian men

عندهم وجه نظر اعتقد غير صحيح عن ازي الست الأجنبية

[Have a point of view that I don't think is correct about how the foreign woman is]

In her opinion this led to increased catcalls, as well as the fact that more men were interested in talking to her than women: “in terms of being an American I have more opportunities to speak to men than Egyptian women.”

While Isabelle did receive catcalls (such as the man who asked if she wanted sex during

one participant observation), she did not experience more serious forms of harassment. She also explained, as described in Chapter 6, that there were things she could do as a foreign woman that she could not if she were Egyptian, such as travel or return late to her host home or go out with male students. However, she commented that she was uncertain of her place in Egyptian society, or what rules she should or was expected to follow as a result of her gender and foreign status:

أنا مش عارفة أحياناً أنا فين في المجتمع عشان كده يعني أنا اجنبية ولكن أنا ولكن أنا طالبة هنا ففيه يعني فرق شوية
وأعتقد خاصة عشان أنا يعني طالبة وأنا ست هنا يعني فيه قواعد للسيدات هنا وأنا شوية في القواعد دا وشوية مش في
القواعد

[I don't know sometimes where I am in the society because of that, like I'm foreign, but I'm but I'm a student here, so there is like a little difference, and I think especially because I'm like a student and I'm a woman here, like there are rules for women here, and I'm a little in those rules and a little not in the rules]

Thus, while Isabelle felt that being identified as a western foreigner resulted in stares and being identified as an English speaker, she also recognized that an interest in her as a foreigner could help her gain access to Egyptians, and if she persisted in Arabic, or sought help with Arabic, she could gain this access in Arabic. Similarly, while she felt that her gender limited her access to the street encounters her male classmates engaged in, she was able to gain access to Egyptian women in ways they could not.

More so than the other case study students, Isabelle was able to negotiate her reception as a foreign female to her advantage, and exert her individual agency to gain access to Egyptians and use Arabic. This access and language use allowed her to perform the identities as *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* necessary to participate in her imagined

community of study abroad to the Middle East. Furthermore, her success in this regard caused her to become more invested in her sojourn as a language learning experience, and she continually sought more opportunities to use the language. For example, she went over new vocabulary related to cultural topics with her host father, and bought the books she read excerpts from in literature class to read outside of it. To try to gain access to Egyptians beyond her family and those she met in informal interactions, she considered doing an internship her second semester. She also began attending the discussions at the American Cultural Center organized by another student in the program. These discussions consisted of Egyptians from Alexandria as well as study abroad students from the Middlebury and Flagship programs. They discussed a variety of topics, including the environment and American and Egyptian elections. In December, the study abroad and Egyptian students went on a trip to Dream Park, an amusement park outside of Cairo. Isabelle started hanging out with these friends frequently outside of the organized discussions the last few weeks of the semester. As a result of meeting these friends, she was excited to return in the Spring semester, explaining:

دالوقت متحمس أنا أرجع في يعني الفصل الجاي عشان دالوقت في شوية خطط معهم ويعني امبارح واحد من البنات سألتني لو أنا عابزة أروح سيوة معهم لو هم يروحوا ويمكن هنشاهد يعني أفلام مع بعض في بيتهم فدالوقت أنا هأكون معهم كثير الفصل اللي جاي أنا متحمسة ومبسوطة جدا لدا

[Now I'm excited to return in like the next semester because now there's a few plans with them, and like yesterday one of the girls asked me if I wanted to go to Siwa with them if they went, and maybe we will watch like movies together in their homes, so now I'll be with them a lot the next semester and I'm excited and very happy for that]

Isabelle kept in touch with some of these friends on Facebook over the break. However, a week and a half into her second semester in Egypt, the Middlebury program evacuated

following the beginning of the Egyptian revolution, and Isabelle returned to the United States.

Holly

Holly was enrolled in the Middlebury program. She was 19, a Junior, and an International Relations major who hoped to work for the State Department after graduation. Her native language was English, and in addition to Arabic, she had taken Japanese in high school and college. Prior to studying in Egypt, she had traveled to France, Spain, and Japan for several weeks. She had taken an introductory Arabic class the summer between high school and college, two years of Arabic in college, and a summer intensive class in Summer 2010 after she was conditionally admitted to the Middlebury program abroad (and accepted if she took the summer intensive class).

Holly's investment in Arabic stemmed from the future symbolic and material value she could gain as an international relations major who spoke Arabic, as well as her view that Arabic was "totally different" from English. She explained that she chose to study Arabic because:

في المدرسة الثانوية حضرت فصل اللغة العربية في الصيف في برنامج صيف يعني كانت قصيرة قوي بس بعد الفصل دا كنت اهتم بعربي قوي فيعني اللغة العربية مختلف خالص من لغة إنجليزية ودا ممتع ممتع قوي بالنسبة لي وواكيد أنا متخصصة في علاقات دولية وعشان كده عربية اللغة العربية عندها أهميات سياسية ودينية وام وتاريخية وكل حاجة زي كده ودا ممتع قوي بس أعتقد يعني أهم حاجة بالنسبة لي يعني نظام اللغة ممتعة وصعبة يعني صعب قوي بس لسه جميل

[In high school, I attended an Arabic class in the summer, in a Summer program, like it was very short but after that class I was very interested in Arabic, so like Arabic is totally different from English and that's interesting, very interesting for me and of course, I'm majoring in International Relations and because of that Arabic, the Arabic language has political, religious, and um, historical importance, and everything like that, and that's

very interesting but I think like the most important thing for me is like the structure of the language is interesting and hard, like very hard, but still beautiful]

Holly's focus on the differences between Arabic and English and her interest in international relations are consistent with the imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East. She also desired an identity as a *dedicated language learner* (of Japanese as well as Arabic), explaining that she had chosen the Middlebury program for its linguistic reputation:

في كليتي مافيش برامج كثير في الشرق الأوسط وهدفي وهدفي الواحدة لدراسة في الخارج وأنا عابزة أتقدم في اللغة العربية ومافيش برامج كثير في كليتي في المغرب والأردن واسرائيل بس كلها يعني مش مظبوط بالنسبة لي فوعشان كده كنت أدور على البرنامج آخر وأنا من قبل حضرت مدرسة (مدلبري) في الصيف للغة يابانية وام بأعرف البرنامج مدلبري يعني الأحسن وعشان كده أنا طلبت على البرنامج دا

[In my college there's not a lot of programs in the Middle East and my goal, my one goal for study abroad is I want to progress in Arabic, and there's not a lot of programs in my college, in Morocco and Jordan and Israel, but all of them are like not right for me so, and because of that I was looking for other programs, and before I went to the [Middlebury] summer school for Japanese and um, I know the Middlebury program is like the best, and because of that I requested the program]

Holly felt that it was always difficult for her to choose between Japanese and Arabic, but since she had been to Japan before she thought it would be easier for her to go back on her own, while she wanted to experience the Middle East for the first time with a program. Less related to language learning, her college's study abroad program to Japan conflicted with the Spring events for the Glee club, while Middlebury's Arabic program did not.

Like the other students, Holly spend most of her day in class and studying:

لو هو يوم عندي فصل أنا بأقوم بدري شوية عشان بيتي بعيد من الجامعة وام زي قبل أنا بأركب المشورع أو لو أنا

يعني متأخر شوية ممكن بأركب تاكسي إلى الجامعة وأم بأحضر فصولي وبأكل في مطعم قريب من الجامعة مثلاً
طباوي في شارع المكتبة وعندى ممكن فصول مرة ثانية وبعدين أحياناً بأروح شقة مدلبري وبأدرس شوية هناك
عشان يعني هو مكان كويس للدراسة بالنسبة لى وبعدين أروح بيتى وبأكل عشاء مع أسرتى وبأعمل واجب أكثر

[If it's a day where I have a class I get up a little early because my house is far from the university, and um, like before I ride the microbus, or if I'm like a little late maybe I ride a taxi to the university and I attend my classes and eat in a restaurant close to the university like Tibawi on Library Street, and I have maybe classes again and after that sometimes I go to the Middlebury apartment and I study a little there because like it's a good place for studying for me, and afterwards I go to my house and I eat dinner with my family and I do more homework]

For classes, Holly had MSA for six hours a week, Egyptian Arabic for four hours a week, Translation for three hours, and a one-on-one on the History of the Middle East. She explained that she often had difficulties understanding the schedules of her classes and what exactly to do for homework. Her favorite class was translation:

عشان بالنسبة لى موضوع الترجمة ممتعة قوى أعتقد مش عايزة أكون مترجمة فى المستقبل بس فى نفس الوقت
ممتعة قوى وعلمت أكثر عن اللغة العربية يعني مفردات وكل حاجة

[Because for me the subject of translation is very interesting, I think I don't want to be a translator in the future but at the same time, it's very interesting and I learned a lot about Arabic, like vocabulary and everything]

Holly lived with Aisha, an established host with the Middlebury program, as well as an accomplished cook, who encouraged Holly to bring friends over for dinner, which she often did. The youngest of Aisha's five sons and her husband were also at the apartment sometimes. Holly explained "yes, they speak English but not with me" and Aisha assured me that she even kept the

English soap operas she watched off TV when Holly was home out of respect for the language pledge.

In terms of prior connections, Holly explained that she was the first student from her college to do the program, but that she had met a few of the other study abroad students on the program as many of them were in DC the past summer.

In her free time, Holly spent a lot of time with her family, which she thought was one of the best things in Egypt. With them she watched TV and discussed Egyptian culture, something I observed during a visit to her home as well. These practices allowed her to perform the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* necessary to make her sojourn match the imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East. She explained:

لو أنا فيه بيتي مع أسرتي ممكن باتكلم عن الثقافة أو عيد في مصر مثلا تكلمت مع ماماتي عن عيد الحب كان امتي بالظبط . . . حاجة زي دا أو ممكن الاختلاف بين مثلا الدول العربي فأسرتي (عاشت في الكويت) بس بعد بس بعد الحرب بعد هجمت لعراق كويت انتقلت إلى مصر وهي وهي كانت في سعودية لوقت شوية ودا ممتع قوي . . . أو ممكن أيه حاجة عن اسلام أو ثقافة مصرية أو رحت إلى فرح مع أسرتي

[If I'm in my house with my family maybe I speak about the culture, or a holiday in Egypt, for example, I talked with my mother about Valentine's day was when exactly . . . Something like that or maybe the difference between for example the Arab countries because my family [lived in Kuwait] but after, but after the war, after Iraq attacked Kuwait they moved to Egypt and she, and she was in Saudi Arabia for a little bit, and that's very interesting . . . Or maybe anything about Islam or Egyptian culture, or I went to a wedding with my family]

Holly also felt that she was lucky because her host mother had hosted other students previously and understood the cultural differences they encountered. She explained:

أنا محظوظة لذا فهي فاهمة حاجات ممكن حاجات مثلا اختلافات ثقافية أو حاجة زي دا وهي دائما بتسألني انت كويسة عايزة أي حاجة فيه مشكلة حاجة زي دا وأنا محظوظة قوي

[I'm lucky for that, so she understands things maybe things for example, cultural differences or something like that and she always asks me are you, are you okay, do you want anything, is there a problem, something like that, and I'm very lucky]

Holly also went to coffeeshops, juice stands, bars, restaurants, movies and plays with her friends. She attended the Middlebury program events, such as soccer games and concerts, and participated in the Theater club. Like Isabelle, she attended the discussions at the American Cultural Center, and traveled to Dream Park with the group. She traveled to Cyprus and Jerusalem with friends from the program, as well as Siwa, Marsa Matrouh, and Sinai with the program, and Cairo when her mother came to visit.

Holly explained that outside of her family, she primarily spend time with other female study abroad students, since she felt the male study abroad students hung out with their own groups. She also explained that she did not know the Egyptian female students well, despite the fact that she often studied in the dorms between her classes. When I was with her in the dorms, the Egyptians girls often said hi, but the conversations never extended beyond that. Like Isabelle, she missed having this Egyptian peer group.

Related to the identity categories discussed in the previous chapter, Holly felt that her gender made it difficult for her to gain access to Egyptians and use Arabic, explaining:

في الحقيقة دي مشكلة كبيرة فالبنات الأولاد بيتكلموا بالعربي أكثر ومع المصريين أكثر وواحد من الأسباب لذا هم مع الرجالة المصريين وممكن ويمكن بيروح إلى قهوة في الليل حتى متأخرة والبنات مش ممكن بيعملوا دا أو ممكن بيعملوا حاجات كثير خالص مع البنات المصريين ودا من الاختلاف الثقافي ودا صعب قوي والأولاد مش عندهم نفس

المشكلة مع معاكسات في الشارع أو ممكن مش عندهم نفس المشعور فاه أنا خايفة لو أنا في الشارع لوحدي حاجة زي دا أو اه متأخرة وأنا ألبس دا وأنا مش عايزة أروح في مكان دالوقتي أو ممكن أنا مش عايزة أروح إلى قهوة فمجموعتي بنات بس صعب شوية مش صعب بس أنا فاهمة ممكن احنا بنعمل دا بس مش مش عايزين فمين عايزة مين عايزة يروح إلى مكان أو قهوة أو مطعم فحيث كل الناس بيبصك وبيحاول بيتكلمك ودا صعب قوي وأكيد الأولاد مش عندهم نفس المشكلة

[Really this is a big problem, so the girls, the boys speak Arabic more and with more Egyptians and one of the reasons for that is they are with the Egyptian men and maybe, and maybe they go to a coffeeshop at night, until late, and the girls can't do that, or maybe do a lot of things at all with the Egyptian girls, and that's one of the cultural differences and it's very hard, and the boys don't have the same problem with harassment in the street, or maybe they like don't have the same feelings, so I'm scared if I'm in the street by myself, like that, or ah, late, and I'm wearing this, and I don't want to go to a place now, or maybe I don't want to go to a coffeeshop so my group is girls, but it's a little hard, not hard, but I understand that maybe we can do that, but not, we don't want to, so who wants, who wants to go to a place or a coffeeshop or a restaurant where everyone is staring at you and trying to talk to you and that's very hard, and of course the boys don't have the same problem]

Like the other women, Holly mentioned that her reception as a western foreign woman in Egypt meant that she was always aware of her potential identification as a *loose foreign woman*. She explained that while this often made men eager to talk to her, she was not comfortable talking to them as a result of her desire to appear as a *traditional good girl* rather than a *loose foreign woman*:

لو أنا ولد وأنا في الشارع في القهوة وفيه شخص يعني معظم الوقت كل الوقت يعني رجل مصري أو ولد مصري

حاجة زي دا ممكن أتكلم معه وأنا مش خايفة ودي فرصة جميلة لاستخدم اللغة بس بالنسبة للبنات مش نفس الحاجة لو أنا في قهوة أو في المشروع وفيه راجل وهي عايز يتكلم معي أنا فأنا مش عارفة هو عايز ايه وأنا مش عايزة أتكلم معه أكيد ف ومعظم الوقت يعني نفس الحوار هو عايز رقمي أو هو عايز صديقة فوأنا واحنا مش عايزين نتكلم مع شخص زي دا بس دا معظم الناس يحاول يتكلم معنا يعني للبنات

[If I'm a boy, and I'm in the street, in a coffeeshop and there's a person, like most of the time, all the time, like an Egyptian man or an Egyptian boy, something like that, maybe I can talk with him, and I'm not afraid, and this is a good opportunity to use the language but for the girl, it's not the same thing, if I'm in a coffeeshop or in a microbus and there's a man and he wants to talk to me, I, I don't know what he wants, and I don't want to talk with him of course, so, and most of the time, like it's the same discussion, he wants my number, or he wants a friend, so and I, and we don't want to speak with people like that, but that's most of the people that try to talk to us, like to girls]

Holly also felt that being identified as a foreigner resulted in increased catcalls as well as an expectation that she would pay higher prices:

لو أمشي على الشارع كل يوم أمشي إلى نفق أو وأروح بالمشروع إلى المدينة الجامعية دائما أرجع الراجل بيقولوا جميلة قوي اسمك ايه وما بأحبش ودائما ودائما لو أروح بتاكسي أنا أبيض وعشان كده له كل ممكن مرتين فلوس لتاكسي ودائما الأوسطي عايز مرتين فلوس وفيه بعض السوق نفس الحاجة

[If I'm walking in the street, every day I walk to the tunnel or, and I go by microbus to the dorms, always I return, the man says very beautiful, what is your name, and I don't like that, and always, always, if I go by taxi, I'm white and because of that every, maybe, twice the money for the taxi, and always the driver wants twice the money and in some of the markets the same thing]

However, Holly also recognized felt that one of the best things about Egypt was her

reception as a *foreign guest*, and the offers of assistance this resulted in from Egyptians. For example, she related how a stranger let her use her cell phone when she was lost during orientation and did not yet have her own cell phone.

As a result of her discomfort with traditional gender roles in Egypt, Holly explained that sometimes she did not want to be part of Egyptian culture. Like Jennifer and Thea, this discomfort could cause her to become less invested in her sojourn as an opportunity for language and cultural learning. For example, she explained:

في الحقيقة بأشعر أحيانا أنا مش يعني أنا مش عايزة أكون جزء من الثقافة فيه حاجات كثيرة من الثقافة أنا ما بأحبهاش وعشان كده في الحقيقة مش مشكلة وأنا هنا أنا موجودة في مصر لوقت قصير

[In reality, I feel sometimes that I'm not, like I don't want to be part of the culture, there are a lot of things from the culture I don't like, and because of this in reality, it's not a problem, and I'm here, I'm here in Egypt for a very short time]

While a frustration with cultural difference could make Holly less invested in performing an identity as *cross-cultural mediator*, she remained dedicated to performing the identity of *dedicated language learner*. She stated that she always used Arabic outside of class, with the exception of two or three times during the beginning of the semester when she had met other Americans in bars, talking to her family in the United States, or once when she had to email her absentee ballot and wanted to make sure she was doing it correctly. She was also disdainful of students who broke the pledge, saying that she did not understand why students would choose a program with a pledge if they did not want it.

فيه مشاكل مع التعهد اللغوي مشكلة كبيرة بين البنات في البرنامج أنا مش فاهمة ليه بالظبط بس بصراحة فيه بنات كثيرة لسه بيتكلموا انجليزية على طول ومش حاجة الضروري لازم أتكلم بالإنجليزي ممكن حاجة بسيطة قوي بس لسه بيتكلموا عنها بالإنجليزية وأكد الإدارة زحقلانة قوي عن دا وكانت مجتمعات كثير زي دا وههه أنا مش عارفة

في الحقيقة أنا غاضبة شوية عن دا فكنت لدخول برنامج دا لي كنت لازم أحضر صفوف زيادة في الصيف فيعني برنامج اللغة العربي في كليتي لسه مش في مستوى مدبري أكيد بس كنت عايزة أكون في برنامج دا قوي قوي وعملت حاجات كثير لدخول وبس لسه فيه بنات فعشان كده أنا غاضبة شوية فكنت لازم أعمل حاجات كثير بس هم هنا ومش زحقلانة عن دا خالص عن كان بالإنجليزية وأنا مش فاهمة هم هنا ليه

[There are problems with the language pledge, a big problem among the girls in the program, I don't understand why exactly, but frankly there are a lot of girls who are still speaking English all the time, and not for something that it's necessary to speak English for, maybe something really simple but still they talk about it in English, and of course the administration is very upset about that, and there were lots of meetings like that, and hhhh, I don't know really, I'm a little angry about that because in order to enter this program I had to take extra classes in the summer, so like the Arabic program at my college isn't at the level of Middlebury of course, but I really really wanted to be in this program and I did a lot of things to enter it, but there are still girls, so because of that I'm a little angry, so I had to do lots of things, but they're here, and not upset with that at all, that it was in English, and I don't understand why they are here]

To better perform the identity of *dedicated language learner*, Holly avoided people who used English, explaining:

أنا في الحقيقة أنا بأفضل أتكلم بالعربية فدا سبب أنا هنا وعشان كده أنا عارفة مين بيستخدموا إنجليزية على طول أو كثيرا و أنا لا أنا مش أنا ما بأروحش أو بأعمل حاجة معهم معظم الوقت

[I really, I prefer to speak in Arabic, that's the reason I'm here, and because of that I know who uses English all the time or a lot and I'm not, I'm not, I don't go or do things with them most of the time]

She also tried to insist on Arabic when people used English with her, which happened frequently

in her reports and my observations, although she noted that if it was for a minor exchange it did not bother her, and most of her interactions outside of the program were of that nature:

أنا بأستخدم أنا باستمرار عربية لو فيه حاجة وممكن يعني بشكل عام أنا ما باتكلمش مع شخص أنا مش عارفة لوقت طويل يعني وعشان كده مش مشكلة كبيرة لو فيه شخص ممكن أوسطة تاكسي أو حاجة زي دا لو هو لو هم بيتكلموا بالإنجليزية لي لدقيقتين دا مش مشكلة لو كنت في حال ممكن مع شخص لوقت طويل ممكن أنا أقول يعني ممكن أنا بأفضل عربية ممنوعة إنجليزية أو حاجة زي دا بس دا ما بسحصلش كثيرًا وعشان كده مش لازم أقول دا

[I use, I continue to use Arabic, if there is something and maybe like generally, I don't talk with a person, I don't know for a long time, like and because of that, it's not a big problem, if there is a person, maybe the taxi driver or something like that if he, if they speak in English to me for two minutes, that's not a problem, if I was in a situation, maybe with a person for a long time, maybe I'll say like maybe I prefer Arabic, English is forbidden or something like that, but that doesn't happen a lot and because of that I don't have to say that]

Like the other students, Holly found that the reality of her sojourn in Egypt at times did not match her imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East, particularly in regards to gaining access to Egyptians outside of her family. Although being female allowed her a homestay experience, she was unable to find a way to renegotiate her identity as a western female to help her obtain her access to Egyptians outside of the home beyond simple offers of assistance. As a result, she became less invested in performing the *cross-cultural mediator* identity outside of her family setting, focusing instead on performing that of a *dedicated language learner* by spending a significant amount of time on her studies and insisting on her adherence to the language pledge at all times.

Examining the experiences of six women studying in Egypt demonstrates how the

concepts of investment, imagined communities, communicative contexts, and identity negotiation examined in the macrolevel data played out in individual sojourns, and the effects these concepts had on the learners actions abroad. All of these women were initially invested in Arabic as a way to gain future symbolic and material resources, particularly in terms of their careers and the designation of Arabic as a "critical" language. They also all referenced the imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East by distinguishing themselves from students studying in more traditional destinations, and seeking to perform identities as *cross-cultural mediators* and *dedicated language learners*. However, they were not all invested in gaining entrance to this community to the same degree: Jennifer in particular seemed less invested in this vision of study abroad from the beginning, viewing it instead as more of a personal challenge to be overcome. As a result, when her vision of study abroad did not match the reality, she was not able to draw upon this imagined community as the other students were, and instead sought to experience America in Egypt, the very thing she initially insisted that she did not want to do.

While Chapter 6 demonstrates that the identity categories of western foreigner, gender, and religion index identities in the local context that both help and hinder access to Egyptians and the use of Arabic, this chapter shows that individual students were not always able to negotiate the reception of these identity categories in ways that helped them. Mita, and to a lesser degree Meron, were able to initially pass as Egyptian, and be received as *Arabic speakers*. While being Egyptian, or at least not western, could lead to a warmer reception and opportunities to use Arabic, when they were identified as *non-Arabic speakers* they found it difficult to persevere in Arabic. The other four women were identified by their physical appearance as western foreigners, which in turn identified them as *English speakers*, and required them to put

forth considerable individual agency to have the conversation continue in Arabic. Only Isabelle and Thea reported an advantage to their foreign appearance in terms of starting conversations. When identified as foreign, all of the women reported an awareness of being received as a *foreign guest* to help, or a *wealthy foreigner* to rip off, and they were often uncertain as to how a particular interlocutor would view them.

Gender, and in particular the role of gender in limiting and providing opportunities to use Arabic, played a central role in the lives of all of these women. All of them felt that their inability to engage in informal street conversations like their male peers made it more difficult for them to gain access to Egyptians and use Arabic. Furthermore, perceptions of western women as morally loose made them targets of sexual harassment and could cause Egyptian women to avoid speaking to them. Again, only Isabelle and Thea recognized that their gender also gave them opportunities, such as the ability to speak to women. Similar to their uncertainty about their reception as western foreigners, these women were often uncertain about what gender roles they should (or even wished) to follow. In terms of religion, Jennifer and Thea experienced frustration as the anti-Semitism they encountered, but were also able to gain experiences connecting them to the (barely) existent Jewish community in Egypt.

All of the students felt that at times, their identity as western females and/or their program context (i.e. an English medium university or extensive amount of homework) impeded their access to Egyptians and use of Arabic. When their access and language use were limited, this made it difficult to perform the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* necessary to participate in their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East. Since participation in this community was crucial as an intermediary step to gaining the future symbolic and material resources that would result from Arabic competence, feeling that they

could not participate in this community constrained their ability to claim these future resources for themselves. At times, the students used individual agency to bring the reality of their experience in line with that of their imagined community. For example, Isabelle participated in discussions with young people to better perform the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner*, and Meron looked to move out of the dorms and start an internship.

An inability to both gain access and use Arabic, or perform the identities of both *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner*, could lead students to prioritize one over the other. For example, Mita chose that of *cross-cultural mediator* over that of *dedicated language learner* by using English with her Egyptian friends, and Holly chose that of *dedicated language learner* over *cross-cultural mediator* by not pursuing relationships with Egyptians outside of her family but insisting on using Arabic at all times.

Feeling that the reception of their foreign female identity in the socio-historical context, or contextual factors such as the high English proficiency of the AUC students limited their ability to gain access to Egyptians and use Arabic also caused the students to at times become less invested in their sojourn as a language learning experience. Understanding this lack of investment helps explain why students who insisted in their interviews and questionnaires that they were *dedicated language learners* and *cross-cultural mediators* engaged in behavior detrimental to these goals, such as Jennifer and Thea's breaking of the language pledge and unwillingness to hang out with their dormmates or Mita's inability to use Arabic with her friends.

Thus, looking at the sojourns of the case study students is a useful complement to the analysis of the macrolevel data using identity theory. The variety of these six women's experiences is reminiscent of the great variation in access to Egyptians and language use

discussed in previous chapters. Examining their investment in Arabic and the imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East, the ways in which they were and were not able to negotiate their reception as foreign females to gain access to Egyptians and use Arabic, the extent to which this negotiation or inability to negotiate resulted in a mismatch between their imagined community and the reality of their sojourn, and the ways in which they reacted to this mismatch by using individual agency to make reality match their imagined community and/or becoming less invested in study abroad as a language learning experience provide crucial insights into this variation.

Thus, using identity theory to analyze both the macrolevel as well as the case study data provides crucial insights into the study abroad experience, and in particular the variation in access to locals and target language use reported in so many accounts of study abroad. In the next chapter, I discuss the implications of these findings for study abroad programs, research on study abroad, and identity theory itself.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

In the data chapters of this dissertation, I have used quantitative and qualitative data to examine the access to Egyptians and use of Arabic for students studying abroad at two locations in Egypt, AUC and the Middlebury program. On average, the students at Middlebury used more Arabic than the students at AUC, while the students at AUC used more English. However, the results also demonstrate that there is extensive individual variation within each program in terms of access to locals and target language use, a finding similar to research on study abroad in other locations (i.e. Badstübner & Ecke, 2009; Bataller, 2010; DeKeyser, 2010; Fraser, 2002; Isabelli-García, 2006; Kinginger, 2008; Mendelson, 2004)..

Using the qualitative results, I demonstrate that identity theory, which has typically been applied to the learning of English by immigrants or in multilingual settings, can offer crucial insights into this variation in the study abroad environment. Analyzing students' interest in Arabic using the concept of *investment* demonstrates the ways in which they view Arabic as a way to gain future symbolic and material resources, particularly given the designation of Arabic as a critical language. Taking up the concept of *imagined communities*, I argue that the learners in this study viewed themselves as part of an imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East, which extended beyond the geographic boundaries of Egypt and the temporal boundaries of the particular semester they were abroad. In defining this community, the students sought to distinguish themselves from study abroad students in more traditional destinations (especially Europe) whom they viewed as less serious about cultural and language learning. In contrast, the defining practice of the imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East was performing an identity as *cross-cultural mediator*, the importance of which was rooted in discourses of conflict between East and West (and especially the United States and the Arab world).

Performing this identity required access to Egyptians and the discussion of topics such as politics, religion, and cultural differences. Another practice of this imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East was performing the identity of *dedicated language learner*, which required the use of Arabic inside and outside of the classroom.

Yet while the students in this study sought to distinguish their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East from that of study abroad to more traditional destinations, they also performed identities associated with this less serious study abroad community, notably that of *vacationer* and *party animal*. While the *vacationer* identity (and occasionally the *party animal* identity) could in fact promote access to Egyptians and the use of Arabic, performing these identities (especially that of *party animal*) could also remove students from their local context, limiting their ability to gain access to Egyptians and use Arabic.

Examining the communicative contexts of language use demonstrates that there was often a mismatch between students' imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East and the reality of their experience in Egypt. In particular, students often struggled to gain the access to Egyptians and use of Arabic necessary to perform the identities as *cross-cultural mediators* and *dedicated language learners* necessary to gain entrance into this community as a result of limitations in their particular study abroad context as well as their performance of identities such as *the party animal* detrimental to these goals. Program facilitation of access to Egyptians and Arabic language use, such as that provided by the roommates and language pledge in the Middlebury program, or extracurricular activities at AUC, could help students make the reality of their experience in Egypt match that of their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East. The commitment of the Middlebury program to this facilitation helps explain the overall greater access to Egyptians and use of Arabic among students in this program.

The concept of *individual agency*, another crucial piece of identity theory, can help explain the great variation in access to Egyptians and Arabic language use within each program, particularly in combination with the impact of the identity categories of western foreigner, gender, and religion. Using both the macrolevel and the case study data, I demonstrate how identities within these identity categories (such as foreign, female, and Muslim), which were often initially assigned based on physical appearance, indexed a variety of associated identities in the local context (such as *morally loose westerner*, *tourist*, or *fascinating westerner*). The extent to which students were able to negotiate their reception among these associated identities determined whether belonging to a particular identity category (which the students typically did not wish to negotiate) helped or hindered their access to Egyptians and use of Arabic, and as a consequence their ability to perform the identities of *cross-cultural mediator* and *dedicated language learner* necessary to gain entrance into their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East. Crucially, both the macrolevel and case study data demonstrate that the *same* identity within the identity categories of western foreigner, gender, and religion could both help and hinder access and use. However, the case studies demonstrate that particularly for foreign females, students were not always able to negotiate the reception of this identity in ways that would help rather than hinder their goals.

When students were unwilling or unable to use individual agency to gain access to Egyptians and use Arabic (often as a result of factors related to the context of their study abroad program or the reception of their identities in the local context) they dealt with this mismatch between their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East and the reality of their experience in Egypt in a variety of ways, and this to a great extent can account for the individual variation in the study abroad experience reported in the quantitative and qualitative data. Some

students simply became less invested in their sojourn as a language learning experience, and as a result engaged in activities they recognized as detrimental to their language learning, such as performing the *party animal* identity, speaking English with both international and Egyptian friends, or using technology to bring America to Egypt. Other students chose to prioritize the identity of *cross-cultural mediator* over that of *dedicated language learner* by gaining access to Egyptians in English. Still other students focused on their classes and homework to perform the identity of *dedicated language learner*, a decision reminiscent of the students in Rivers (1998) who when faced with a frustrating environment, chose to focus on their classroom studies instead. Finally, some students' high investment in study abroad as a language learning context caused them to use individual agency to seek to change their context (i.e. moving to a new living situation) or finding ways to renegotiate their identities (i.e. as an *Arabic speaking foreigner*). The extent to which they succeeded in these endeavors also helps to explain the variation found in their experiences.

Thus, this study demonstrates the ways in which identity theory can provide a powerful analytical tool to explain the great variation in access to locals and target language use during study abroad when used with an extended, mixed-method research design. In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss the implications of this study for research on study abroad, identity theory, and study abroad program design.

Research on Study Abroad

The findings of this study have three major implications for future research on study abroad: the need to engage with the socio-historical context, the problematic nature of using identity categories as predictor variables, and the value of long-term mixed method data collection. Previous research on study abroad has called for an emphasis on the *process* of study

abroad in addition to the *product* (Freed, 2008; Kinginger, 2008; Wilkinson, 1998). In turn, researchers have argued that this process cannot be understood without a focus on the socio-historical context and the ways in which students' identities are negotiated abroad (Block, 2007; Jackson, 2008, 2010; Kinginger, 2008, 2009). This study answers this call by using primary and secondary sources (and local perspectives as well as those of the study abroad students) to address the role of the socio-historical context and the reception of students within it. The valuable insights gained through this approach (and particularly the inclusion of local perspectives) highlight the need to engage with the socio-historical context in future research. Quite simply, an understanding of what students do abroad and how this impacts their language learning is not possible without knowing how they are received abroad and how they negotiate this reception.

This engagement with the socio-historical context also leads to insight that individual identity categories can both help and hinder access to locals and the use of the target language. This finding results in the the second implication of this study for research on study abroad, that these identity categories cannot be used as predictor variables for language contact and linguistic outcomes. As this study has demonstrated, there are simply too many possible ways in which a given identity category can interact with other identity categories, the socio-historical context, and individual agency (on the part of both the study abroad students and their Egyptian interlocutors) to make them reliable predictors of the study abroad experience.

Finally, this study demonstrates that using identity theory to analyze the study abroad experience can provide crucial insights into the extensive variation in access to locals and target language use reported in research on study abroad. However, this analysis would not have been possible without the extensive mixed-methods data collection used in this study. Using

questionnaire, interview, and observation data gathered with both study abroad and local participants over four semesters provided a rich account of the variety of experiences students encounter abroad as well as opportunities for triangulation between different participants and data types. Tracing the sojourns of the case study students throughout the semester led to important insights regarding their investment in the sojourn as a language learning experience, which in turn helped explain their actions abroad. This type of data collection is not possible without extended time in the field and a great deal of time for analysis. While the trend in research on study abroad is moving towards extended, mixed-method analysis, there are often financial, geographical, and temporal limitations to this type of study. This study helps confirm the value of this type of research over shorter, survey-based research on study abroad by demonstrating that it can provide insights into the process of study abroad, and particularly the extensive variation reported in so many studies, that are not possible to obtain without this type of extensive data collection. Future research should also address a major limitation of this dissertation, the lack of an analysis of the linguistic outcomes of study abroad (although I hope to analyze this data in the future).

Theoretical Implications

Previous research using identity theory has typically focused on the context of English as a second language (i.e. Carroll, Motha, and Price, 2008; Norton Pierce, 1995; Norton, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Skilton-Sylvester, 2002; Talmy, 2008). Identity theory has also been applied to the learning of English in multilingual settings (i.e. Kendrick & Jones, 2008; Norton & Kamal, 2003), and the learning of Japanese (Haneda, 2005; Kanno, 2003) and French (Dagenais, 2003). Given the salience of identity categories in research on study abroad, it seems a natural fit for this context, but there are relatively few studies that have used poststructural theories of

identity to examine the study abroad experience (i.e. Jackson, 2008, 2010; Kinginger, 2008; Siegal 1994, 1995, 1996). As demonstrated in this study, using identity theory to analyze context of primarily American students studying abroad in Egypt can provide crucial insights into this experience. However, applying identity theory in this context also demonstrates two ways in which the theory needs to be expanded, by dealing with low proficiency learners and using a more nuanced view of power relations.

Previous research using identity theory has focused on the extent to which learners (generally at an intermediate level or above) are able to claim reception as target language speakers. However, a number of the learners in this study (despite having taken a year or two of Arabic) were at a very elementary level, unable to answer even basic questions about their daily activities and studies. As a result, claiming an identity as a *target language speaker* was potentially even more unlikely than in studies of more advanced learners. While these students could indeed attempt to claim an identity as a *target language learner*, this meant that their interlocutors had to view themselves as *target language teachers*. As Wilkinson (2002) relates in her description of the "omnipresent classroom" for study abroad students in France, local hosts are not always willing to take on this role of teacher. Furthermore, in contrast to the case of ESL learners, for English-speaking study abroad students in Egypt, a switch to their dominant language (English) was often a viable option. This means that the ability of a low proficiency study abroad student to claim an identity as a *target language learner* is potentially even more limited. Since identity theory has typically focused on more advanced learners of English, a focus on lower proficiency learners of languages other than English represents an area in which this theory could be expanded.

The second way in which this study demonstrates a need for the expansion of identity

theory concerns the role of power. A central contribution of identity theory to language learning is recognizing the role of power relations in constraining learners' opportunities to practice the language, and how learners can resist these power relations in order to gain access to locals and practice the target language. Since this research has tended to focus on English language learners, and in particular immigrants to English-speaking countries, there is often a link between the power of English and the socio-economic status of the learner, where learning English is necessary to gain (or regain) a higher socio-economic status. Thus, English language learners can be constrained by their less powerful positions in the local context.

While English language learners who immigrate to English-speaking countries may find themselves in positions of reduced power, this is simply not the case for the primarily middle-class American students in this study. On a global scale, they remained powerful, and often found that they actually had increased social status and special privileges in Egypt. Furthermore, the importance of English in Egypt meant that their English language skills were highly valued. There were ways in which the students were able to leverage this global economic power to pursue their goals abroad, such as being able to not work for a semester and afford the ticket to go abroad in the first place, or pay program fees that gave them Egyptian roommates and trips. Especially for the students who looked foreign, their reception as *fascinating westerners* could help them gain access to Egyptians, opportunities that might not be as available to students who were not white and/or who were of Arab descent. The students could also use their valuable English skills to work as English teachers or in internships that required English, and gain access to Egyptians this way.

Yet this same global power also worked against them. As potential representatives of a perceived morally loose neocolonial superpower, they could be isolated from Egyptian society,

and find it difficult to gain the access to Egyptians they desired to perform roles as cross-cultural mediators. Their English skills and their reception as English, rather than Arabic, speakers could limit their abilities to use Arabic and perform their desired identities as dedicated language learners. Thus, this study demonstrates that being in a traditionally powerful position does not guarantee the ability to use this power to gain access to locals and target language use. In fact, it may make it more difficult.

Using identity theory to examine the language learning experiences of globally powerful learners represents an important expansion of this theory beyond that of the powerless language learner struggling to gain access to powerful target language speakers. As originally posited in identity theory, understanding the role of power relations in the socio-historical context remains crucial to understanding opportunities to use the language. Yet at this study demonstrates, powerful positions do not necessarily guarantee opportunities to practice the target language, especially when power is associated with the L1 rather than the L2. In order to understand the role of power in language learning, it is necessary to focus on the more powerful as well as the less powerful, and the ways in which these roles shift within the local context.

Study Abroad Program Design

Research on study abroad seeks explanations for what students do abroad and what languages they use, and study abroad programs that value target language use and access to locals can use this research to develop their programs. While it is impossible for a program to change the socio-historical context or individual language learners, study abroad programs can work to facilitate access to locals and target language use. In this section, I first focus on two aspects of the Middlebury program that facilitated this aspect and use: the living situation and

language pledge. These program components help explain the finding in this study that the students in the Middlebury program on average used Arabic more and had more access to Egyptians and expressed less frustration with their inability to gain access to Egyptians and use Arabic (although they certainly expressed frustration about other aspects of their experience and the individual results were highly variable). While the Middlebury students may also have been more invested in their language learning from the beginning (given the fact that they signed up for such a program) this cannot be universally assumed, and it is not a sufficient explanation for the differences in access to Egyptians and language use. Many of the students at AUC (and particularly those who were most frustrated with their lack of access and Arabic use) chose this program simply because it was affiliated with their university and were unaware of other options. Similarly, the Middlebury students often chose that program because it was affiliated with their university, they had attended the Middlebury summer school, or they had friends who had participated in the program.

Living Situation

Rooming with a local student is a common program requirement used to facilitate access to local social networks. In Egypt, where perceptions of foreigners as morally loose could discourage mixing between study abroad students and Egyptians, especially for women, this proved to be a particularly important way of providing access. For example, Lynda explained that as a result of her inability to engage in informal street encounters, the dorms were crucial to her ability to interact with Egyptians:

وفيه ثقافة هنا صعب لتتكلم لأي شخص في الشارع أنا فعلا يعني أنا أشعر يعني بشكر I'm thankful for التجربة
في المدينة علشان كان فيه فرص لسه فيه فرص كثير لأتكلم معهم عن أي حاجة

[And in the culture here, it's hard for you to speak to any person in the street, I really, like

I feel like, with thanks, I'm thankful for the experience in the dorms because there were opportunities, there are still many opportunities for me to talk with them about anything]

While a few of the AUC students also gained access to Egyptians via Egyptian roommates, this was not a strategy systematically pursued by their programs, mainly because their authority was limited to the academic aspects of the experience and the students were in charge of finding their own housing. As a result, many of the AUC students did not have Egyptian roommates, even if they requested them. Furthermore, the Middlebury Egyptian roommates were selected by the program for their interest in working with study abroad students, had their room and board covered by the study abroad students, were able to live in the nicer part of the dorms reserved for foreign students, and were able to attend program excursions. Thus the material and symbolic resources the Egyptian students gained contributed to their investment in the Middlebury program, and in particular interacting with and assisting the study abroad students. This investment may distinguish this dormstay experience from the more variable dormstay experiences of the AUC students as well as the dormstay and homestay experiences reported in France (Kinging, 2008, Wilkinson, 1998) and Russia (Rivers, 1998)

While paying Egyptian students to work with primarily American study abroad students does raise issues of socio-economic power, the Egyptian students did not participate in the program purely for these material resources. Indeed, while the focus of this paper is on the study abroad students, it is also worth noting that when they gained access to Egyptians, these Egyptians also gained access to them. As noted earlier, the study abroad students were not the only ones interested in pursuing identities as cross-cultural mediators; this was a symbolic resource of value to the Egyptian participants in this study as well. Many of the Middlebury Egyptian roommates explained that participating in the program provided them with experiences

they would be unable to gain otherwise, given financial, legal, and cultural limitations on their ability to travel abroad. This was particularly true for female Egyptian students, where the program provided a structure for interaction that could override social considerations about living with American women. For example, Amina (Middlebury roommate) explained:

أنا ما كنتش بأقولك يعني بأحلم إن أنا أقابل واحد أمريكية هنا إنه أمريكا مش عارفة إن واحدة إن بنات أمريكيين يجوا مصر
ونقعد معاهم دا كويس جدا يعني أنا مبسوفة جدا بأحس إن أنا متميزة

[I didn't, I'm telling you, like dream that I would meet an American here, that America, I don't know, that one, that American girls would come to Egypt, and we'd live with them, that's very good, like I'm very happy, I feel that I'm special]

While the structures for providing program-facilitated access will necessarily vary with context, and the access provided by the Middlebury dormitories was not without its problems, sustained, program-facilitated access is a crucial program contribution to the study abroad experience particularly for short-term programs. As the AUC students reported in Chapter 5, there were AUC Egyptian students interested in meeting the study abroad students, but there was no sustained structure to facilitate this. As a result, many of the study abroad students became frustrated with their inability to meet Egyptians, as Anna (AUC) explained:

لو كان فيه مكان فيه ستات اللي بيتكلموا عربي عايزين يتكلموا عربي مع واحدة أمريكية عشان الناس عندهم فضولية
. . . مع الناس اللي باتكلم معاهم اعتقد مش مناسب إذا حاولت أن أتكلم لوقت طويل عن حاجات شخصية مع البقال أو
الفكهاني

[If there was a place where there were women who spoke Arabic who wanted to speak Arabic with an American because people are curious . . . with the people I talk to I think it's not appropriate if I tried to speak for a long time on personal things with the grocer or the fruit seller]

Language Pledge

Participating in a program with a language pledge did not prevent the use of English-- both the quantitative and qualitative results demonstrate that there were students on the Middlebury program who used a considerable amount of English. However, these results also demonstrate that the Middlebury students in general used more Arabic. One reason for this was the power the language pledge gave them to resist the use of English and insist on Arabic, particularly when students' identities or proficiencies constructed them as English, rather than Arabic speakers. For example, Rose explained:

هو يحاول أن يتكلم معي بالإنجليزي بس أنا لا لا لا لا أستطيع أن تتكلم بالإنجليزية دا ممنوع لبرنامجي وهو كويس
قوي تمام هأتكلم معك بعربي

[He tries to speak to me in English but I'm: no, no, no, I can't speak in English, it's forbidden in my program, and he's very good, okay, I'll speak with you in Arabic]

The Egyptian students who worked with the Middlebury Program, many of whom had worked with other programs as well, also felt that the pledge was important. Hala explained:

كل الوقت بيكلموا بالعربي فدا دي أكثر حاجة كانت أعجباني في مدلبري كان الفلاجشيب ماكانش فيه تعهد فكان فيه
إنجليزي كثير كثير قوي

[All the time they speak in Arabic, and that's the thing that I like most in Middlebury, the Flagship didn't have a language pledge and there was a lot of English, a whole lot]

In contrast, some of the AUC students seemed to actually be searching (unsuccessfully) for a way to use Arabic when they felt the default was English. Rashid (who did not know I was doing research with the Middlebury program) explained: "I've heard about the language contract they sign in the Middlebury program . . . I would have liked to do that." Billy told me after an interview that he wanted to use Arabic all the time, but was not sure how to accomplish

this. Jacob later described Billy's attempts to only use Arabic for a day:

I don't really know what people do to like legitimately practice Arabic all the time, my friend Billy says all right, I'm going to have two days this week where I'm not going to speak any English at all, and he just, it never works out for him, it just never works out for him.

Earlier in this dissertation, I outlined reasons why students who sought to perform an identity as *dedicated language learners* might use English rather than Arabic, a practice detrimental to their goal. These reasons included their inability to negotiate a reception as *Arabic speakers* or even *Arabic learners* due to their foreign identity as well as the choice of performing an identity as *cross-cultural mediator* (in English) over that of *dedicated language learner*. Participating in a program with a language pledge, and having this pledge as a defining practice of their local community, helped students resist the push into English they might otherwise encounter as a result of their reception in the local context. Furthermore, the language pledge interacted with their living situation in the sense that by participating in the program, the Egyptians they lived with were also bound by this pledge. Since these Egyptians were also invested in helping the study abroad students due to the material and symbolic resources they gained via participation in the program, this likely made them more willing to accept the identity of *Arabic teacher*, which in turn made it easier for the students to perform the identity of *Arabic learner* or *Arabic speaker* and in fact use Arabic.

In addition to these practices followed by the Middlebury program, there are four other activities that the results of this study indicate may be useful for promoting access to locals and target language use. These are technological access, language and dialect preparation, strategies for identity negotiation, and training in ethnographic field methods.

Technological Access

While time abroad may be getting shorter and shorter for American students, and advances in communications technology may allow them to spend this time connected to home as Jennifer did, there is also considerable potential for using communications technology to expand the time abroad. After all, many of the students who were only abroad for a semester did not have the time the students abroad for a year had to gain entrance into Egyptian social networks, and as a result ended up leaving just as they were starting to gain entrance to these networks. While encouraging students to spend more time abroad, or take multiple trips, is also important, this may not be possible for all students. Thus, using communications technology to extend the study abroad experience is also an approach worth pursuing.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, several of the Egyptians interviewed felt that it was beneficial to meet students online before they arrived in Egypt, and some of the closest friendships students developed in Egypt were with Egyptians they had prior connections to, and had often met online before coming to Egypt. Taking advantage of this to introduce students to potential roommates and peers, and facilitate the development of their relationships before going abroad can help them extend these relationships abroad, rather than starting from scratch. This is again particularly important when students are studying abroad for a semester or less--typically, students who studied abroad for a year reported hanging out most with their Egyptian friends the second semester, an opportunity students studying abroad for only one semester did not have. Developing friendships before study abroad has the potential to allow students to spend more time with these friends abroad, rather than searching for ways to make them. Furthermore, using communications technology to extend these relationships following study abroad can allow students to keep up these relationships as well as their language skills after returning home.

Language and Dialect Preparation

In order to resist being identified as an English speaker or tourist, the students needed to be able to use their Arabic skills to claim an identity as an *Arabic speaker* or *dedicated language learner*. Unfortunately, their limited Arabic skills could make this difficult. While a year or two of Arabic is necessarily limited, improving at home study so that students are able to engage in basic communicative functions abroad is essential. A crucial part of this is including dialect instruction in the curriculum, so that students are able to take advantage of their time abroad from the beginning, rather than losing several weeks to learning the basics of Egyptian dialect or using English rather than Arabic.

Indeed, many of the students felt that they should have studied dialect prior to study abroad. For example, Francis explained:

أعتقد فيه فرص في الجامعة العادية للبداية دي (في العامية) فأنا كنت متضيق عشان أنا وصلت من غير أي وسائل
عشان أتعامل مع الناس هنا

I think there are opportunities in the regular university for this beginning [in dialect], I was annoyed because I arrived without any means to interact with the people here
(Francis, Middlebury)

As noted in Chapter 5, the students who had studied dialect beforehand also felt that this was useful, even if it was not Egyptian dialect. While there were a few students who did not think it was necessary to study dialect prior to study abroad, these students generally felt that this was because Egyptian Arabic could not be learned in a classroom, but needed to be learned in the street. Yet carrying this argument to its logical extension means that learning any language one might use in real life settings cannot be learned in the classroom.

While dialect instruction is a topic of great debate in the Arabic teaching community, this research demonstrates the importance of Egyptian Arabic knowledge in gaining access to Egyptians in Arabic. Sending students abroad unprepared to engage in basic communication in Egyptian Arabic makes gaining access to Egyptians in Arabic more difficult, and may indeed result in increased use of English, or less access overall. While the question of which dialect(s) to teach and how is beyond the scope of this study, the experiences of students who had studied non-Egyptian dialects, as well as previous research (Al-Batal & Belnap, 2006; Trentman, 2011), demonstrate that any dialect instruction is beneficial.

Strategies for Identity Negotiation

In addition to the need for greater linguistic preparation in order to promote access to Egyptians and Arabic language use abroad, students should also be prepared to deal with the identity issues raised in this dissertation. As Chapters 6 and 7 demonstrate, individual identity categories can both help and hinder access to Egyptians and Arabic language use. However, individual language learners were not always able to negotiate the reception of their identities to their advantage. Program facilitated strategy instruction focused on identity negotiation has the potential to help students understand how they can turn their identities to their advantage, rather than feeling that they are hopelessly disadvantaged as a result of their local reception. Looking at the value of strategy instruction for study abroad, Paige, Cohen, and Shively (2004) found that students provided with strategies reported positively about their use in the qualitative data. However, strategy instruction for study abroad typically does not deal with the role of identity. For example, in their book *Maximizing Study Abroad: A Students' Guide to Strategies for Language and Culture Learning and Use*, Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi, and Lassegard et al (2004) detail a number of useful strategies for students abroad. However, the only mention of

identity is related to perceptions of Americans as wealthy and independent. Yet this study demonstrates that these issues of identity are crucial to the students' experiences and affect access and language use in myriad ways. As a consequence, incorporating an awareness of identities and strategies for identity negotiation into the study abroad experience is a promising technique for helping students gain the access to locals and target language use they desire.

Training in Ethnographic Research Methods

Learning to negotiate one's identity also requires an understanding of the local context, and training in ethnographic research methods has the potential to develop this knowledge. This is a method that has been used to facilitate access and language use as well as cultural understanding for sojourners from Hong Kong studying in English (Jackson 2006, 2008, 2010) as well as for British students studying abroad (Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan, & Street, 2001). In these settings, learners have taken an ethnography course and completed a small project prior to going abroad, conducted research for another project abroad, and written up their findings upon their return home. The purpose is not to make students professional ethnographers, but to provide them with tools to understand their new surroundings from an insider perspective. This type of project can increase confidence and problem-solving skills in the local environment, allowing students to feel more in control of their situation. Completing a research project abroad also facilitates their access to locals and target language skills by providing the opportunity to talk in depth in the target language to people they might normally not talk to about subjects that they might not normally talk about. Furthermore, this type of project integrates pre-program preparation (the ethnography course) with the sojourn (the data collection) and the return (analyzing and writing up their project).

Training in ethnographic research methods could be particularly useful for students

studying abroad in Egypt (and elsewhere) as by engaging in these projects (and reading those of their peers) they can gain the type of cultural understanding that comes through reflexive experience. This is particularly important for dealing with the identity issues raised in this dissertation, especially when the local reception of their identities (i.e. as *loose foreign women*) contrasts strongly with the students' perception of their own identities (i.e. *cross-cultural mediator*). Furthermore, a distinct finding of this dissertation, particularly among the Middlebury students, was that gaining access to Egyptians did not always allow the students to perform identities as *cross-cultural mediators* because sometimes they simply did not have the tools to engage in this type of mediation, and as a result avoided certain topics or interlocutors despite their desire to engage with these topics and interlocutors. Training in ethnographic research methods is a promising way to help provide students with the tools they need to engage in cultural analysis and mediation, and thus achieve their goals for study abroad.

The students in this study also tended to value experiential over classroom learning, and at times resented their heavy coursework and homework loads. For example, Mallory (Middlebury) explained:

أنا عايزة أكثر وقت للاستكشاف المدينة وأروح أماكن ومافيش فيه فرصة أكيد بس كمان فيه واجبات كثير وشوية لازم أنا أختار بين الواجبات وبين الاستكشاف وأكيد الاستكشاف دائما أهم حاجة بس في نفس الوقت أنا هنا للدراسة فأنا شوية أحيانا أنا مش عارفة يعني أكيد أنا عارفة السبب أنا هنا لتعليم اللغة بس كمان يعني تعليم اللغة في أماكن خارجية من الدراسة وزى عندي توازن بين الاثنين دي حاجة صعبة معظم الوقت

[I want more time to explore the city and go places, and there's not, there's opportunity definitely but also there's a lot of homework and a little I have to choose between homework and between exploring, and of course exploring is always the most important thing but at the same time, I'm here to study and I'm sometimes, a little, I don't know,

like definitely I know the reason I'm here is to learn the language but also like to learn the language in places outside of studying, and like, having balance between the two is something that's hard most of the time]

Completing an ethnographic research project abroad helps address this issue, by allowing students to gain valuable experiential learning while collecting data and at the same time providing a classroom environment for reflection and assistance.

In imagining themselves as cross-cultural mediators between East and West, the students (and Egyptians) in this study also rarely problematized this dichotomy between East and West, or the placements of the study abroad students in the West, and Egyptians in the East. As a result, they tended to discount "Westernized" Egyptians and places as not "Real Egyptian." Encouraging students to examine their environment ethnographically could help students gain a more nuanced and critical view of this East-West dichotomy.

In conclusion, this dissertation has used mixed methods to examine access to locals and target language use during study abroad in two different locations in Egypt, expanding research on study abroad to a new location. This study also demonstrates the insights that can be gained by using identity theory to analyze the study abroad experience, particularly with regards to the variation often reported in research on study abroad. In turn, applying identity theory to the context of primarily American students studying abroad in Egypt demonstrates areas in which this theory needs to be expanded. Thus, the findings of this study have important implications for research on study abroad, identity theory, and study abroad program design.

APPENDIX

Background Questionnaire

1. Please fill out the following information.

Pseudonym _____

Gender _____

Age _____

University _____

Major _____

Year in University (ex: sophomore, 2nd year Masters) _____

2. Native Language(s)

3. What languages do you speak besides your native language(s) and Arabic?

With 1 a beginner and 7 a native speaker, rate your proficiency in each language and list any comments you may have.

Language	1 (Beginner)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Native Speaker)
----------	--------------	---	---	---	---	---	--------------------

Comments

1	_____	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____
2	_____	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____
3	_____	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____
4	_____	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____
5	_____	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____
6	_____	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____

Arabic Background

4. What Arabic courses have you taken?

Please list all Arabic courses you completed BEFORE studying abroad, the location, date, and any comments you may have

	Course	Location	Date	Comments
1	_____	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	_____	_____
4	_____	_____	_____	_____

5	_____	_____	_____	_____
6	_____	_____	_____	_____
7	_____	_____	_____	_____
8	_____	_____	_____	_____

5. What is your current proficiency in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)?

With 1 a Beginner and 7 a native speaker, rate your proficiency in the skills below and list any comments you may have.

	1 (Beginner)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Native Speaker)
Comments							
Listening	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____
Speaking	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____
Reading		()	()	()	()	()	() _____
Writing		()	()	()	()	()	() _____

6. What do you expect your proficiency in MSA will be at the end of your study abroad?

With 1 a Beginner and 7 a native speaker, rate your proficiency in the skills below and list any comments you may have.

	1 (Beginner)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Native Speaker)
Comments							
Listening	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____
Speaking	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____
Reading		()	()	()	()	()	() _____
Writing		()	()	()	()	()	() _____

7. Have you ever studied or been exposed to Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA) BEFORE studying abroad this year in Egypt (such as via travel or your family)?

() Yes

() No

8. What is your current proficiency in Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA)?

With 1 a Beginner and 7 a native speaker, rate your proficiency in the skills below and list any comments you may have.

	1 (Beginner)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Native Speaker)
Comments							
Listening	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____
Speaking	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____
Reading		()	()	()	()	()	() _____

Writing () () () () () () () _____

9. What do you expect your proficiency in ECA will be at the end of your study abroad?

With 1 a Beginner and 7 a native speaker, rate your proficiency in the skills below and list any comments you may have.

	1 (Beginner)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Native Speaker)	
Comments								
Listening	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____
Speaking	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____
Reading		()	()	()	()	()	()	_____
Writing		()	()	()	()	()	()	_____

10. Have you studied or been exposed to Arabic dialects other than Egyptian Colloquial Arabic?

() Yes

() No

=====

Other Dialects

=====

11. Please list the courses, locations, and dates for your study of dialects other than Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA) or describe how you were exposed to them.

Please rate your proficiency in the dialects other than ECA that you know with 1 a beginner and 7 a native speaker and list any comments you may have.

=====

12. Dialect

13. Listening Proficiency

() 1

() 2

- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7

14. Speaking Proficiency

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7

15. Reading Proficiency

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7

16. Writing Proficiency

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7

17. Comments

=====

Multilingual Experience

=====

18. Have you ever lived in a situation where you were exposed to a language other than your native language(s) (for example by living in a multilingual community, studying or working abroad, or through family members)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

19. If yes, please list the country, language, purpose and dates below. Ex: France, French, study abroad, 2007-2008

	Country	Language	Purpose	Dates	Comments
1	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

20. Have you ever traveled to an Arabic-speaking country? If so, please list the country, year, length of stay, and purpose of stay. Ex: Morocco, Summer 2007, two weeks, vacation

	Country	Year	Length of Stay	Purpose of Stay	Comments
1	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

21. Do you speak Arabic with your family?

☐ Yes

☐ No

22. If yes, where are they from?

23. Do you speak Arabic with friends in your home country? Who?

24. Why are you studying Arabic?

25. Why are you studying in Egypt?

26. What do you hope to gain from studying in Egypt?

=====

Thank You!

=====

Shokran Gazeelan!

Study Abroad Questionnaire

Final Study Abroad Questionnaire

Pseudonym:

Please list the Arabic classes you are currently taking in Egypt and how many hours per week they meet.

	Class	Hours per week
1	_____	_____
2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____
4	_____	_____
5	_____	_____
6	_____	_____

What is your current proficiency in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA/fusha)? With 1 a Beginner and 7 a native speaker, rate your proficiency in the skills below.

	1 (Beg.)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (NS)	Comments
Listening	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____
Speaking	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____
Reading	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____
Writing	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____

What is your current proficiency in Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA/amiyya)? With 1 a Beginner and 7 a native speaker, rate your proficiency in the skills below.

	1 (Beg)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (NS)	Comments
Listening	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____
Speaking	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____
Reading	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____
Writing	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	_____

Which situation best describes your living arrangements in Egypt? If more than one applies, circle all of them and list the dates.

a) I live with my family

i) List the members of the family (ex: mother, father, one 4-year-old daughter)

ii) Do they speak English?

iii) Are there other nonnative speakers of Arabic living with you?

b) I live in the home of a Arabic-speaking family

i) List the members of the family (ex: mother, father, one 4-year-old daughter)

ii) Do they speak English?

iii) Are there other nonnative speakers of Arabic living with your host family?

c) I live in the student dormitory

i) I have a private room

ii) I have a roommate who is a native Arabic speaker

iii) I live with others who are NOT native Arabic speakers

d) I live alone in a room or an apartment

e) I live in a room or an apartment with native Arabic speaker(s)

f) I lived in a room or an apartment with others who are NOT native Arabic speakers

g) Other (Please explain):

Comments on your living situation

For the following items, please circle the appropriate number to specify:

- 1) How many days per week you typically use Arabic in the situation indicated
 - 2) On those days, typically how many hours per day you do so
 - 3) The variety of Arabic you use, on a scale from 1-7, with 1 being ECA only and 7 being MSA only and 4 being a 50/50 mix
- ECA=Egyptian Colloquial Arabic or Amiyya
MSA=Modern Standard Arabic or Fusha

On average, how much time do you spend speaking Arabic outside of class?

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	more than 5		
Arabic:	1	2	3		4	5	6	7
	Only ECA		50/50 ECA/MSA				Only MSA	

Outside of class, I try to speak Arabic to:

My instructor

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	more than 5		
Arabic:	1	2	3		4	5	6	7
	Only ECA		50/50 ECA/MSA				Only MSA	

Friends who are native Arabic speakers

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	more than 5		
Arabic:	1	2	3		4	5	6	7
	Only ECA		50/50 ECA/MSA				Only MSA	

Classmates

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	more than 5		
Arabic:	1	2	3		4	5	6	7
	Only ECA		50/50 ECA/MSA				Only MSA	

Strangers I think can speak Arabic

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	more than 5		
Arabic:	1	2	3		4	5	6	7
	Only ECA		50/50 ECA/MSA				Only MSA	

A host family, Arab roommate, or other Arabic speakers in the dormitory

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	more than 5		
Arabic:	1	2	3		4	5	6	7

	Only ECA		50/50 ECA/MSA		Only MSA				
Service personnel									
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5			
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6	7
	Only ECA		50/50 ECA/MSA					Only MSA	
My family									
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5			
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6	7
	Only ECA		50/50 ECA/MSA					Only MSA	
My tutor									
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5			
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6	7
	Only ECA		50/50 ECA/MSA					Only MSA	
Other: _____									
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5			
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6	7
	Only ECA		50/50 ECA/MSA					Only MSA	

Comments on speaking Arabic outside of class

How often do you use Arabic outside the classroom for each of the following purposes?

To clarify classroom-related work

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5			
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6	7
	Only ECA		50/50 ECA/MSA					Only MSA	

To obtain directions or information (ex: “Where is the post office?”, “What time is the train to _____?”, “How much are stamps?”)

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5			
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6	7
	Only ECA		50/50 ECA/MSA					Only MSA	

For superficial or brief exchanges (ex: greetings, “Please pass the salt,” “I’m leaving,” ordering in a restaurant) with native speakers of Arabic

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5			
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6	7
Only ECA	50/50 ECA/MSA						Only MSA		

For superficial or brief exchanges (ex: greetings, “Please pass the salt,” “I’m leaving,”) with NON-NATIVE speakers of Arabic

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5			
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6	7
Only ECA	50/50 ECA/MSA						Only MSA		

For extended conversations with native speakers of Arabic

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5			
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6	7
Only ECA	50/50 ECA/MSA						Only MSA		

For extended conversations with NON-NATIVE speakers of Arabic

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5			
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6	7
Only ECA	50/50 ECA/MSA						Only MSA		

Comments on for what purposes you use Arabic outside of class:

How often do you try deliberately to use things you were taught in the classroom (grammar, vocabulary, expressions) with native speakers outside the classroom?

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5			
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6	7
Only ECA	50/50 ECA/MSA						Only MSA		

How often do you take things you learned outside of the classroom (grammar, vocabulary, expressions) back to class for question or discussion?

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5			
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6	7
Only ECA	50/50 ECA/MSA						Only MSA		

Comments on the relationship between your in-class and out of class learning:

How much time do you spend doing the following each week?

Speaking a language other than English or Arabic to speakers of that language (ex. Chinese with a Chinese-speaking friend)

Days per week 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Hours per day 0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

Speaking Arabic to native speakers of Arabic

Days per week 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Hours per day 0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

Arabic: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Only ECA 50/50 ECA/MSA Only MSA

Speaking English to native speakers of Arabic

Days per week 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Hours per day 0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

Speaking Arabic to nonnative speakers of Arabic (ex. Classmates)

Days per week 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Hours per day 0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

Arabic: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Only ECA 50/50 ECA/MSA Only MSA

Speaking English to nonnative speakers of Arabic (ex.classmates)

Days per week 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Hours per day 0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

Comments on your use of Arabic, English, and other languages with native and non-native speakers of Arabic outside of class:

How much time do you spend doing each of the following activities outside of class?

Overall, in reading in Arabic outside of class

Days per week 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Hours per day 0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

Arabic: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Only ECA 50/50 ECA/MSA Only MSA

Reading Arabic newspapers outside of class

Days per week 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Hours per day 0–1 1–2 2–3 3–4 4–5 more than 5

Arabic: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Only ECA	50/50 ECA/MSA							Only MSA
Reading novels in Arabic outside of class								
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6
Only ECA	50/50 ECA/MSA							Only MSA
Reading Arabic language magazines outside of class								
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6
Only ECA	50/50 ECA/MSA							Only MSA
Reading schedules, announcements, menus, and the like in Arabic outside of class								
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6
Only ECA	50/50 ECA/MSA							Only MSA
Reading e-mail or Internet web pages in Arabic outside of class								
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6
Only ECA	50/50 ECA/MSA							Only MSA
Reading religious texts in Arabic outside of class								
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6
Only ECA	50/50 ECA/MSA							Only MSA
Other reading in Arabic outside of class								
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6
Only ECA	50/50 ECA/MSA							Only MSA
Comments on your reading in Arabic outside of class:								

Overall, in listening to Arabic outside of class

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6
Only ECA	50/50 ECA/MSA							Only MSA

Listening to Arabic television and radio outside of class

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5			
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6	7
Only ECA					50/50 ECA/MSA				Only MSA

Listening to Arabic movies or videos outside of class

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5			
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6	7
Only ECA					50/50 ECA/MSA				Only MSA

Listening to Arabic songs outside of class

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5			
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6	7
Only ECA					50/50 ECA/MSA				Only MSA

Trying to catch other people's conversations in Arabic outside of class

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5			
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6	7
Only ECA					50/50 ECA/MSA				Only MSA

Other listening in Arabic outside of class

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5			
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6	7
Only ECA					50/50 ECA/MSA				Only MSA

Comments on your listening in Arabic outside of class

Overall, in writing in Arabic outside of class

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5			
Arabic: 1	2		3		4		5	6	7
Only ECA					50/50 ECA/MSA				Only MSA

Writing homework assignments in Arabic outside of class

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
---------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--

Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		
Arabic: 1	2		3		4	5	6	7
Only ECA	50/50 ECA/MSA						Only MSA	
Writing personal notes or letters in Arabic outside of class								
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		
Arabic: 1	2		3		4	5	6	7
Only ECA	50/50 ECA/MSA						Only MSA	
Writing e-mail in Arabic outside of class								
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		
Arabic: 1	2		3		4	5	6	7
Only ECA	50/50 ECA/MSA						Only MSA	
Sending text messages in Arabic outside of class								
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		
Arabic: 1	2		3		4	5	6	7
Only ECA	50/50 ECA/MSA						Only MSA	
Filling in forms or questionnaires in Arabic outside of class								
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		
Arabic: 1	2		3		4	5	6	7
Only ECA	50/50 ECA/MSA						Only MSA	
Other writing in Arabic outside of class								
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		
Arabic: 1	2		3		4	5	6	7
Only ECA	50/50 ECA/MSA						Only MSA	
Comments on your writing in Arabic outside of class								
How often do you do the following activities in English outside of class?								
Reading newspapers, magazines, or novels in English								
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		
Reading email or internet web pages in English								
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		
Other reading in English								

Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		
Watching movies, television, or videos in English								
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		
Listening to conversations in English								
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		
Other listening in English								
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		
Writing personal notes, letters, and texts in English								
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		
Writing email in English								
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		
Other writing in English								
Days per week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hours per day	0–1	1–2	2–3	3–4	4–5	more than 5		

Comments on your use of English outside of class

For the next set of questions, indicate whether you agree or disagree with the statements on a scale from 1-6, where 1 is strongly disagree and 6 is strongly agree.

I feel at ease in Egyptian society

Strongly disagree Strongly Agree

Comments:

My gender hinders my ability to practice Arabic outside of the classroom.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree Strongly Agree

Comments:

My linguistic abilities make it easy for me to speak to Egyptians in Arabic

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree Strongly Agree

Comments:

My use of Arabic outside of class is limited to certain situations.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

It is easy for me to fit into Egyptian society

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

I should make myself practice Arabic more outside of class.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

Egyptians are surprised that I can speak Arabic

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

I have lots of opportunities to speak Arabic outside of class

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

I am confident about my knowledge of Egyptian dialect

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

It is easy for me to make Egyptian friends

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

My Arabic improved a lot while studying in Egypt

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

I take advantage of all the opportunities I have to practice Arabic outside of the classroom

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

Egyptians accept me as part of Egyptian society

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

My gender gives me more opportunities to practice Arabic outside of the classroom

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

I wish I had studied more Modern Standard Arabic before studying abroad in Egypt

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

My Arabic would have improved just as much if I'd stayed at my home university

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

I am confused by the use of Egyptian Colloquial Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

I have many opportunities to use Arabic for extended conversations with Egyptians

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

Egyptians often think I'm Egyptian

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

My linguistic abilities make it difficult for me to practice Arabic outside of the classroom

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

It is difficult for me to integrate into Egyptian society

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

I am happy with the amount of time I use Arabic outside of class

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

When I try to speak in Arabic, Egyptians often use English with me

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

I have lots of Egyptian friends

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

My Arabic didn't improve as much as I expected it to while studying in Egypt

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

It is hard for me to practice speaking Arabic outside of class

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

Egyptians expect me to speak Arabic better than I do

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

I do not have many opportunities to use Arabic in my social life

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

I wish I had studied more Egyptian dialect before studying abroad in Egypt

1 2 3 4 5 6

Strongly disagree

Strongly Agree

Comments:

If you have any further comments on items on this questionnaire or your study abroad experience, please list them here. Alf Shokr!

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