**Transcripts**

This document includes the transcripts for all the interviews. Only aliases are used to identify the participants. Please note the following:

* Original interviews were in Arabic and then translated into English.
* Headings and highlighted notes are added to indicate interviewer interaction.
* All personal information has been redacted.

# Participant 1: Inaya

## Bio

Sri Lanka, she speaks two native languages.

[from table: Age 22, was born and grew up in KSA (says 22 years in KSA), speaks Sinhala, Tamil, English, and Arabic.]

## Reason for learning Arabic/ experience/ When using Arabic

1 Inaya: First, in order to understand the Qur’an, and this was the main goal, then because I live in Riyadh, so when we go abroad and go to markets in other places, we want the language. To connect with people.

Experience: Positive

1 Inaya: My experience, God willing, was beautiful, because I first studied in an academy abroad, but after a while I forgot the grammar and the language. I didn't mean to communicate with the Arabic language, so I forgot.

1 Inaya: Then I entered the institute, and God willing, the experience was very beautiful. I felt that the experience here was very different. Because when I studied at the academy, it was the school days, so the pressure, I mean, with the school and the academy, which was on the weekend.

1 Inaya: [Name of previous institution where she studied in her home country], and it was my attendance, so it was difficult with the study I knew... But here we studied the Arabic language on its own and intensively.

1 Inaya: Yes, praise be to God, and here it is not only the study, we had activities and other things, so praise be to God we enjoyed a lot.

When using Arabic:

1 Inaya: [I use Arabic] in my daily life, and also in the external environment, sometimes at home, because my brothers all studied Arabic and we speak Arabic.

## Motivation

Her father speaks Arabic and uses it sometimes at home. When she listened to Arabic videos, She got amazed at the Arabic language.

1 Inaya: I think the first thing, my father may have been motivated because he studied the Arabic language and studied at the Islamic University in Medina, so he knows the language and so on. Sometimes he used to speak Arabic at home.

1 Inaya: Also, when I used to hear videos or things in Arabic, I was amazed at the language, so I loved to study.

1 Inaya: [My father] is a preacher in the preaching office in the kindergarten.

## Useful Techniques to learn Arabic

Activities have a role in language education?

1 Inaya: Yes, because if it was just studying [without activities], it would be boring.

Qura’an classes from primary to High-school

1 Inaya: [In my previous school] when I went to memorization at the time of the afternoon. I used to go to memorization, and I was the only foreign girl in the class, I mean, the Saudi and Arab students from Syria and others, so this means, you know girls talk and I hear I hear. We went every day, five days a week and I heard the language.

Well, did your presence in an Arabic-speaking country contribute to your rapid acquisition of the language?

1 Inaya: Yes, of course, [being in an Arabic-speaking country] had a major role, because since we live in Saudi Arabia, we go abroad, and of course if we go abroad, we must talk to people. Also, I mean, for example, sometimes in Tarawih when we go to Tarawih prayer, our neighbors are all Arabs, so we talk to them and greet them, and I mean we ask about conditions, and so on, all in Arabic

## Challenges/ Mixing with Saudi People and Perception of the Saudi Culture

1 Inaya: I think the thing that I mean I remember until now is that, beginning with the first time when I learned the Arabic language, I learned Al-Fusha, and my language was fragmented and so on, so when I went to memorization and spoke. I mean it was normal for girls, they used to laugh at me because of the language and I was ashamed for this reason and I did not speak because I know if I spoke then my words chopped and others.

And how did you overcome it?

1 Inaya: After the passage of time, I mean, because even girls when we were young, girls were like this. After that, I mean, they began to know that I wanted to study the language, so they helped me, so with the passage of time this thing disappeared.

Did your learning of the Arabic language help you mix with the Saudi people and understand their customs?

1 Inaya: Yes, that is true, and now I mean, when we go by bus from the university, I do not know how, but I became the bus driver and the girls I think most of them do not know that I am a foreigner because we speak Arabic and so on, even the driver I think does not know that I am a foreigner. I mean I used to arrange the girls and tell them that your house Here and your house is here because I knew the neighborhood, so I know if this house is closer than the second house, then it is the first one, the second, and so on. In this way, I mean by communicating, and I mean I talk a lot more with Saudi girls now that I have learned the language.

Did you experience any difficulty in dealing with people?

1 Inaya: Not really, really, because I think from a young age I wanted to be like them. And I, I mean, I started digging before I became an adult, I started digging because I was, I mean, when I went to the markets and looked, so I started digging because I saw girls who were digging. So I started for that reason, I mean, from a time when I was young.

What do you think of Saudi culture?

1 Inaya: The culture is really very beautiful. Because we are our culture in Sri Lanka, I think that most of it is against our religion, you know, I mean, we are very accustomed to our culture here. I mean, when we go to Sri Lanka, we find it difficult, because the culture is very different and we are accustomed to the Saudi culture because we have lived here since childhood. When we go, things are different and strange.

In your view of Saudi women, is their role important?

1 Inaya: That is, yes, I mean, God willing, you see now the markets, and if we go to any place, God willing, you will find that there is a mirror in it, and we as women, if we go to the market and see women, we can ask them questions about things, so this is easier for us

1 Inaya: because it is easier for you to ask the woman than to you ask men, sometimes with some things that you are ashamed to ask men and others.

# Participant 2: Khadija

## Bio

[No written bio. Per table: 26 years old, from the Philippines, knows Tagalog, English and Arabic. Has been in Saudi 2 years.]

## Reason for learning Arabic/ experience/ When using Arabic

2 Khadija: I love the Arabic language very much.

2 Khadija: When I was young, my mother wanted me to learn Arabic so that I could read the Qur’an well and be a memorizer of the Book of God. And this is a great reason why I learned Arabic.

Experience: Positive

2 Khadija: In the beginning, I found difficulties in teaching the Arabic language, because of course I am not an Arab, especially when pronouncing Arabic letters. and Arabic grammar.

When using Arabic:

2 Khadija: I use the Arabic language mostly in education and also communicate with family and friends.

## Motivation

2 Khadija: My beloved mother, she is the one who encouraged and inspired me to learn Arabic.

## Useful Techniques to learn Arabic

2 Khadija: Watching clips or videos on YouTube or the Internet, and also teachers in my country, they help me more in teaching Arabic.

Did being in an Arabic-speaking country contribute to your rapid acquisition of the language? Do you think it has a big role for language learning? Explain to us more about that?

2 Khadija: Yes, exactly, because I found some friends and colleagues who speak Arabic fluently, and I felt like them. This increased my desire to learn Arabic more.

## Challenges/ Mixing with Saudi People and Perception of the Saudi Culture

What challenges did you face while learning the language? And how did you overcome it?

2 Khadija: I found it difficult to speak, and if I had a lot of information, I could not talk to others because of the lack of self-confidence. But I thought about how to learn when I don't talk to others, so I tried to talk to them even if I made a lot of mistakes. Thank God, I was able to talk to them and overcame these challenges.

Did learning the Arabic language help you to mix with the Saudi people?And understand his habits?

2 Khadija: Yes. Frankly, I did not find difficulties in dealing with the Saudi people, because they are nice, especially to us foreign women.

What do you think of Saudi culture?

2 Khadija: [Saudi culture is] very beautiful. And I liked their dignity and their treatment of us [foreign women].

What role do Saudi women play in society?

2 Khadija: I believe that Saudi women have a great role in society because they know more about the Qur’an and matters of religion, especially teaching Arabic to non-native speakers.

# Participant 3: Yasmin

## Bio

[nothing written, per table: 26 years old, from Philippines, speaks Filipino and Arabic, has been KSA 2 years.]

## Motivation

3 Yasmin: One of the motives that motivated me to learn the Arabic language was the encouragement of my parents when I was young, and when my understanding of religion deepened, I realized the importance of learning religion and my desire for it increased and motivated me to know the Arabic language, which is a means of understanding the legal books, especially the Qur’an, which is the basis of religion.

## Useful Techniques to learn Arabic

3 Yasmin: Among the things that helped me in acquiring the language, applying it, mixing in another nationality, as well as increasing the desire for it.

Did being in an Arabic-speaking country contribute to your rapid acquisition of the language?

3 Yasmin: Yes, being in an Arabic-speaking country contributed to me acquiring the language quickly, as the environment that surrounds me speaks the Arabic language, and I am also not ashamed to apply it,

3 Yasmin: and for me [speaking Arabic] has a great role since I acquire the language with its dialect and speak more so that my mistakes in the language are corrected.

## Challenges/ Mixing with Saudi People and Perception of the Saudi Culture

3 Yasmin One of the challenges that faced me in learning the Arabic language was not applying it, and I did not understand at the beginning of the grammatical rules how to use them in speaking the Arabic language, as well as listening skills. I felt difficult because we did not study them in my country.

Did learning the Arabic language help you to mix with the Saudi people? And understand his habits?

3 Yasmin: Yes, mixing with [the Saudi people] helped me until it motivated me to increase my knowledge of their habits and I wished to be like them in the dialect of their speaking in Arabic.

3 Yasmin: I do not have the most experience in dealing with them, but I feel difficult if I speak with them in colloquial because I do not understand at the beginning, and now, if I do not master the colloquial language, I can understand and enjoy.

What do you think of Saudi culture?

3 Yasmin: By living here in a kingdom whose culture is very beautiful, I benefit and learn as well, especially their treatment of others, and we can apply it in my country. For example, if there is a good deed for the other or not, he praises and praises her a lot, and if he meets a person, they greet the supplication until they part.

What role do Saudi women play in society?

3 Yasmin: The role of Saudi women in society is very great from a theoretical point of view, especially in this era of development, as the women employees and foreign students need someone who will guide them or teach them about their customs and culture.

# Participant 4: Nadia

## Bio

[Nothing written. From table: Age 25 from Philippines, speaks Tagalog and Arabic, in KSA 2 years.]

## Motivation

4 Nadia: I must learn the Arabic language in order to understand the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, because a person cannot understand the Qur’an or understand their religion correctly except by learning the Arabic language with its grammar.

4 Nadia: This is what I always say to myself! I also encourage myself if I do not learn the language, how can I teach people [about Islam], young and old, if I do not learn the Arabic language?!

## Useful Techniques to learn Arabic

4 Nadia: Reading my book before and after going to the institute, so that I don't forget what I learned that day.

4 Nadia: And reading what I like to read from books such as stories, and this I will remember the words that I learned from the institute and acquire new words.

4 Nadia: And also speak Arabic to others [as a technique to learn Arabic].

Did being in an Arabic-speaking country contribute to your rapid acquisition of the language?

4 Nadia: Yes, I acquired the language quickly from being in Saudi, because speaking the language with others we become not forgetting the words, and the language will become our mother tongue.

4 Nadia: We do not hesitate if we always use the language in communicating with people. This is the importance of learning the language to speak it.

## Challenges/ Mixing with Saudi People and Perception of the Saudi Culture

4 Nadia: Difficulty understanding grammar and grammar, which I overcame by studying, reading books, watching videos in Arabic, and speaking to friends.

Did learning the Arabic language help you to mix with the Saudi people? And understand his habits?

4 Nadia: Yes, because I speak Arabic with [Saudi people] as well, and we understand each other.

Did you face any difficulty in dealing with the Saudi people? Mention an example?

4 Nadia: Yes [I faced difficulty in dealing with Saudi people] because some Saudi girls are not dependent on talking to foreigners, and foreigners are ashamed of Saudi women.

What do you think of Saudi culture?

4 Nadia: Saudi culture is the best and most beautiful culture in the world, and I am proud to have lived here in Saudi Arabia for many years! And people in Saudi Arabia are generous and merciful. I love Saudi!

What role do Saudi women play in society?

4 Nadia: Women have the main factor in society, and they have an important role, as they are the mother, sister, wife and daughter, and they bear many pressures and life conditions.

# Participant 5: Maryam

## Bio

22 years. I am from India and have lived in Riyadh since childhood. I live with my mother, father and brothers.

[from table: 22 from India, knowns Malayalam, English and Arabic, and has lived in KSA more than 15 years]

## Reason for learning Arabic/ experience/ When using Arabic

5 Maryam: I learned the Arabic language to understand the Qur’an and the Sunnah, and as we know that the fundamentals method for learning about religion is to learn the Arabic language.

Experience: Positive

5 Maryam: As for my experience in learning the Arabic language at the age of 15, I decided to study in a city, and I enrolled in a summer study for Arabic language lessons within two months, and after that I joined the Qur’an memorization center, and this center is interested in the Arabic language, and from its system, whoever speaks the mother tongue immediately will be punished with cleanliness and Sometimes with cash. So I forced myself to speak Arabic.

When using Arabic:

5 Maryam: I use the Arabic language mostly in my daily life, since I live in Saudi Arabia, and sometimes it is better than the illiterate language. They are for God's religion, or lift the shame on myself and others.

Experience: Positive

5 Maryam: In the beginning, I learned the language from the institute, and I had self-confidence in learning through reading, writing, listening and speaking. It is not easy but as a student I have to do all these in order to learn.

When using Arabic:

5 Maryam: I use [Arabic] for studying, teaching, and communicating with family, friends, and others.

5 Maryam: I learned the Arabic language because I am a Muslim first and then because I love the Arabic language and I have lived in Saudi Arabia since childhood. I memorized the Holy Quran from Saudi Arabia and I want to understand the Holy Quran.

Experience: Positive

5 Maryam: My experience... I was ranked first in all classes because I loved the Arabic language a lot and with my friends I loved the Arabic language more so my journey in learning the Arabic language was frankly easy.

When using Arabic:

5 Maryam: When I go to the markets or when I want to register for courses here and seminars, I use the Arabic language. Even for my sisters, I am the one who records them in the episodes and my mother tells me.

5 Maryam: My mother does not know Arabic. My father knows Arabic a little because he works with Saudis in the company. My sisters study Arabic in the [private second-language Arabic] program every weekend.

## Motivation

5 Maryam: First, the people in Saudi Arabia. When I go to the mosque in Ramadan and see Saudi women speaking Arabic, this is one reason [to learn Arabic].

## Useful Techniques to learn Arabic

5 Maryam: [to learn Arabic] I memorized the Qur’an, so I listen to the interpretation and also lessons about the Holy Qur’an. I hear from the sheikhs.

Did being in an Arabic-speaking country contribute to your rapid acquisition of the language?

5 Maryam: Yes, I know many female students in India who study the language, but here it is easier to understand the language. In India they love the Arabic language, but it is difficult for them even in college. They only study the language. They do not study how to speak the language. It is easier, here [in Saudi Arabia] it is easier. In college, you will also be at the same level as the institute, with a bachelor’s degree and a master’s degree. Not in talking though. They have no speaking experience. Also the Saudi neighbours, we talk to them and they talk to us.

## Challenges/ Mixing with Saudi People and Perception of the Saudi Culture

5 Maryam: Honestly, I didn't find many challenges [mixing with Saudi people]. I think one of the challenges is that I don't know slang much. This was a challenge. Now I try even in the mosque, I know Arabic but sometimes they speak slang quickly.

Did learning the Arabic language help you to mix with the Saudi people? And understand his habits?

5 Maryam: Yes, before, I do not speak like I speak now. Saudi women always use “May God make you happy” and many supplications. I used to not know their customs and now I can. In speech before, I do not use these supplications in speech, even in our language we do not use many supplications only, God willing, may God bless you. I also started using this habit.

Did you face any difficulty in dealing with the Saudi people? Mention an example?

Note: I wasn’t sure about this part so I double-checked the original transcript from Alya – but this is it.

5 Maryam: Colloquial God.

What do you think of Saudi culture?

5 Maryam: Now my heart is in Saudi Arabia! I don't want to go to India, I love the Saudi people like my family... and I don't want to go to India. But I married a man in India, he works in India, God willing, he is trying to come here. I love the culture of Saudi Arabia very much...hospitality, for example, and we use this hospitality in India now, when guests come, we use hospitality like the Saudis.

What role do Saudi women play in society?

5 Maryam: People outside say the woman here is in prison, but we can't see this. I mean, in the street, they stop cars so that women can walk. There is respect for women. Respect for people here is very wonderful, and people in America say no. They are in prison, and also here in the laws for women they have a lot of women's rights. In the oral exam, the teacher asked me, If you were the president of your country, what would you do for a woman? And I said, "I will follow the laws of Saudi Arabia," and I finished answering.

# Participant 6: Aamirah

## Bio

21. . I am from Sri Lanka Yes, I lived in Saudi Arabia..um now twenty years, twenty years

[from table: Age 22, From Sri Lanka, knows English and Arabic, lived in KSA 21 years]

## Reason for learning Arabic/ experience/ When using Arabic

6 Aamirah: First I started because of the Qur'an, to understand the Qur'an, it means the main reason. So I lived in Saudi Arabia and I want to talk to people and so on. And a problem because when I can read the Qur’an in the mosque and they ask Masha’Allah, I mean a beautiful reading… You know… I mean you ask something and then after that I say I apologize I don’t understand the Arabic language. How does it mean that you read the Qur’an and do not know the Arabic language, so I want.

Experience: Positive

6 Aamirah: Yes, it is beautiful and a golden opportunity. I mean, I learned the Arabic language well at the institute.

When using Arabic:

6 Aamirah: Usually [I use Arabic] only at the institute. At home, he only helps me when I study my brothers. [Her parents don’t know Arabic.]

(All of her parents do not know Arabic)

## Useful Techniques to learn Arabic

6 Aamirah: For me, the oral material and the reading material helped me a lot. Because in oral, that's why I started…. It means talking to people. These things mean, sometimes when I went to the market and so I spoke to them in Arabic and they know that she does not know Arabic, but she helped me a lot... No, no, it is normal to speak in Arabic. So I want.

Did being in an Arabic-speaking country contribute to your rapid acquisition of the language?

6 Aamirah: First... in Saudi Arabia they speak English, but the official language is Arabic. If you want to do something like that, yes, they know English, but... foreigners put, I mean, attention on learning the language in order to mean that they do, and yes... No, not yes, that means they live with the people.

## Challenges/ Mixing with Saudi People and Perception of the Saudi Culture

6 Aamirah: Especially in Saudi Arabia, I mean, the problem is between colloquial and fusha... because learning in the institute means anywhere in fusha, but with people in colloquial. This according to me means a problem however.

Did learning the Arabic language help you to mix with the Saudi people? And understand his habits?

6 Aamirah: Because when I learned Fusha well, it is not difficult to know slang, I mean, we can differentiate between some words.

Did you face any difficulty in dealing with the Saudi people? Mention an example?

6 Aamirah: Yes, sometimes it is possible [to have difficulty dealing with Saudi people]. If there is a problem or outside, or I do not understand something, I can speak so that they understand what I mean. And I understand some mean cultural difference because I learned the language.

(The question is repeated so that you understand the meaning)

6 Aamirah: For me, yes, [as another example] especially because it is possible before that I do not understand why more than once, I mean supplication, supplication, supplication, before I learned the language, I did not understand, I mean, why more than once, I mean, how are you? This is a prayer and this means their culture.

What do you think of Saudi culture?

6 Aamirah: God willing, [Saudi] culture is nice and beautiful, and even I mean when I did not know the Arabic language, but only when I saw I mean I met them, I want to speak this language because between the words in I mean I feel love.

What role do Saudi women play in society? Now how did you help me?

6 Aamirah: [About Saudi women] It helped me a lot especially when you need something.