

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

**Cultural Identity and Code-Switching in Arabic Food Blogs**  
**Written in English**

---

Janni Susanna Kaisla, 013868462  
Master's thesis  
English language and literature  
Faculty of arts  
University of Helsinki  
22.04.2019

|  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| Tiedekunta – Fakultet – Faculty<br>Humanistinen tiedekunta   |   | Koulutusohjelma – Utbildningsprogram – Degree Programme<br>Englannin kielen ja kirjallisuuden maisteriohjelma |  |
| Opintosuunta – Studieriktning – Study Track<br>Englannin kieli ja kirjallisuus   |   |   |  |
| Tekijä – Författare – Author<br>Janni Susanna Kaisla   |   |   |  |
| Työn nimi – Arbetets titel – Title<br>Cultural Identity and Code-Switching in Arabic Food Blogs Written in English   |   |   |  |
| Työn laji – Arbetets art – Level<br>Maisterin tutkielma  | Aika – Datum – Month and year<br>22.04.2019 | Sivumäärä– Sidoantal – Number of pages<br>66  |  |
| Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract   |   |   |  |
| <p>Tämän tutkielman tarkoituksena oli tarkastella koodinvaihtoa arabiaan sekä muita kulttuuri-identiteetin ilmentymiä englanniksi kirjoitetuissa, arabialaiseen ruokaan keskittyvissä blogeissa. Tutkielmaan valittiin kahdeksan eri reseptiblogia, joista yhteensä 40 julkaisua otettiin lähempään tarkasteluun. Blogit edustavat Levantia (Libanon, Syyria, Jordania ja Palestiina), Pohjois-Afrikkaa ja Lähi-Itää ja niiden kirjoittajat puhuvat kaikki arabiaa äidinkielenään. Viisi kahdeksasta bloggaajasta asuu englanninkielisessä maassa (kaksi Yhdysvaltoihin, kaksi Iso-Britanniaan ja yksi Kanadaan), kaksi palestiinalaista bloggaria asuu Jordaniassa ja yksi irakilainen bloggari asuu todennäköisesti Irakissa. Tarkasteltavaksi valitut blogijulkaisut analysoitiin ensin koodinvaihdon osalta ja tulokset kirjattiin kahteen eri taulukkoon. Tämän jälkeen teksteille suoritettiin kvalitatiivinen analyysi muiden kulttuuri-identiteettiä ilmentävien tekijöiden kartoittamiseksi.</p> <p>Koodinvaihdon osalta analyysin tulokset osoittivat ensinnäkin, että koodinvaihtoa esiintyi huomattavasti oletettua vähemmän ja että sitä esiintyi odottamattomissa yhteyksissä tai ei esiintynyt sellaisissa yhteyksissä, joissa sitä oletettiin esiintyvän. Toisekseen tuloksissa ilmeni selvä ero arabimaissa ja englanninkielisissä maissa asuvien bloggarien kesken: oman kulttuuripiirinsä ulkopuolella asuvat bloggaajat käyttivät koodinvaihtoa huomattavasti enemmän kuin arabimaissa asuvat kollegansa, joiden teksteissä koodinvaihto oli hyvin vähäistä.</p> <p>Muut kulttuuri-identiteettiä ilmentävät tekijät voitiin aineiston perusteella jakaa kahteen selkeään pääkategoriaan: ruokaan ja (ruoka)kulttuuriin liittyviin sekä identiteettiin liittyviin. Ensimmäisen kategorian osalta bloggaajien kesken ei ilmennyt merkittäviä eroja, mutta identiteettiin liittyvien teemojen kohdalla selkeitä eroja alkoi näkyä. Suurin eroavaisuus oli kenties se, että ainoastaan arabialaisen kulttuuripiirin ulkopuolella asuvien bloggaajien teksteissä ilmeni 'koti-ikävä' ja selkeää kaipuuta kotimaahan sekä eräänlaista tuskaa kaukana 'kotoa' olemisesta, ja vain heidän julkaisuissaan oli viitteitä identiteettiin liittyvistä ristiriitaisuuksista ja vaikeuksista.</p> <p>Aineiston perusteella voidaan siis todeta, että arabimaiden ulkopuolella olevien bloggaajien keskuudessa koodinvaihto arabiaan näyttäisi olevan huomattavasti arabimaissa asuvia blogin pitäjiä yleisempää, ja että identiteettiin ja kotimaahan liittyvät teemat olisivat ei-arabiankielisissä maissa asuville arabibloggaajille paljon keskeisempiä ja arkaluontoisempia. Aineiston suppeuden vuoksi tulokset eivät kuitenkaan ole yleistettävissä, vaan tutkimus tulisi toistaa suuressa mittakaavassa tukevampien todisteiden saamiseksi.</p> |   |   |  |
| Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords<br>Koodinvaihto, kulttuuri-identiteetti, ruokablogit, blogit, reseptit, arabian kieli  |   |   |  |
| Säilytyspaikka – Förvaringställe – Where deposited   |   |   |  |
| Muita tietoja – Övriga uppgifter – Additional information  |   |   |  |

## Table of Contents

|       |  |    |
|-------|--|----|
| 1     | Introduction.....  | 1  |
| 2     | Theoretical framework.....   | 4  |
| 2.1   | On identity, language, culture and migration.....                    | 4  |
| 2.2   | Code-switching .....   | 8  |
| 2.3   | Culinary linguistics and food as an expression of culture.....       | 10 |
| 2.4   | Recipes as a genre – the linguistic building blocks of a recipe..... | 11 |
| 2.5   | Blogs .....  | 13 |
| 3     | Data and methods.....  | 16 |
| 3.1   | Methods.....   | 16 |
| 3.2   | Code-switching .....   | 18 |
| 3.3   | Other indications of cultural identity .....                         | 21 |
| 4     | Results and analysis .....   | 22 |
| 4.1   | Code-switching in the food blogs .....                               | 24 |
| 4.2   | Non-code-switched items.....   | 29 |
| 4.3   | Other indications of cultural identity .....                         | 33 |
| 4.3.1 | Traditions and food culture .....                                    | 34 |
| 4.3.2 | Childhood memories .....   | 36 |
| 4.3.3 | Identities and identity-related issues .....                         | 38 |
| 4.3.4 | Cultural food experiments and identity struggles .....               | 40 |
| 4.3.5 | Home and homeland .....  | 43 |
| 5     | Discussion.....  | 44 |
| 6     | Conclusion .....   | 48 |
|       | References .....   | 50 |
|       | Appendix A.....  | 56 |
|       | Appendix B .....   | 59 |
|       | Appendix C .....   | 61 |

## 1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to investigate how cultural identity is manifested in the blog posts of Arab food bloggers who publish Arabic cooking recipes in English. For this purpose, eight food blogs from the Levant (Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria), Middle East and North Africa were chosen, and from these blogs a total of 40 posts were picked for qualitative content analysis on code-switching and other indicators of cultural identity.

The writers of these blogs are all Arabs by ethnic and geographic origin and speak Arabic as their first language but have decided to write their food blogs in English. Five of the bloggers have at some point in life migrated to English-speaking countries (two in the UK, two in the US and one in Canada), one Palestinian blogger has lived in Jordan and moved to the United Arab Emirates, another Palestinian lives in Jordan and an Iraqi blogger presumably lives in Iraq<sup>1</sup>. Because five of the bloggers are immigrants living in English-speaking countries and three bloggers are living in countries where Arabic is the official language and Arabic culture the dominant culture, it will be interesting to see if this has any effect on the amount or the kinds of cultural identity markers which can be found in the blogs. It must be noted that even the two Palestinian bloggers could to some degree be considered immigrants or exiles as they or their families have at some point had to leave Palestine and migrate to Jordan. It is, however, not clear from their blogs whether this has happened before the

---

<sup>1</sup> The blogger's location could not be fully confirmed because unlike the other seven blogs, her blog contains no introductory About-page with information about the blogger, and the blogger has not responded to an e-mail sent to her asking about her country of residence. The texts in the blog posts themselves also give no clear indications about this, but food packages with Arabic script on them can be seen in the photographs embedded in the posts, which gives reason to assume that the blogger lives in some Arabic speaking country. A further internet search on some names of the manufacturers seen on the packages gives further support to the assumption that the country of her residence is Iraq.

bloggers were born or at a later point, and thus no clear conclusions can be drawn about the issue.

In the past two to three decades, the notion of cultural identity and its different aspects have received increasing interest from scholars of various fields and disciplines. This is attested to by the great numbers of books and research papers written on this topic. Hall and du Gay (1996) edited a book consisting of essays compiled from a seminar series on cultural identities, and some years prior to them, Friedman (1994) edited a book on cultural identity from the point of view of anthropology. Preston (1997) authored a book on the relationship between politics and cultural identity, and Mathews (2000) wrote his book about the globalization of cultures and its effects on cultural identity. A more recent book was edited by Adrienne D. Warner (2015), and it aims to provide an overview of the most recent research on cultural and ethnic identity. On the basis of Warner's book, current popular trends in the field of linguistic studies on cultural identity seem to range from topics such as racism and discrimination to the development of self-esteem and perceptions of the self.

One linguistic tool very strongly linked to manifesting identity – be it linguistic, cultural or ethnic – is code-switching, “the alteration between two or more languages within a stretch of speech” (Rathert 2012: 7). According to Rathert, code-switching is one way for communicating linguistic identity, and it is considered “a valuable strategy of bilinguals in making linguistic choices for communicative purposes” (Rathert 2012: 7). John Darwin (2016: 529) asserts that code-switching “serves as a means for users to perform their ethnic identity and signal their affiliation with a specific community.”

Just as code-switching is strongly related to cultural identity and can be used as a tool for signaling ethnicity, the same applies to food recipes and culinary talk as well. Several recent studies see “...the description of food in an (inter) cultural context as an indispensable means of establishing identity” (Diemer 2015: 107), and it thus appears that descriptions of food related to the speaker's ethnic or

cultural background, and the usage of code-switching when talking about the food, are both useful tools for expressing cultural identity via language.

While a lot of research for the past two decades has drawn on the notion of social identity as one of the ways of explaining why code-switching occurs (Auer 2005), research on code-switching has mostly concentrated on the occurrence of code-switching in spontaneous oral communication, leaving its occurrence in written online interactions a much less researched phenomenon (Sebba 2012; Themistocleous 2015). While discussing the study of code-switching in computer-mediated communication, Androutsopoulos (2013) notes that even though code-switching in online communication has received scholarly attention for some three decades now, it is still not as thoroughly researched as other linguistic aspects of computer-mediated communication. As for written forms, Mark Sebba (2012) even goes as far as to claim that it is an understatement to call written multilingual discourse an under-researched area. The study of code-switching in written form seems to have concentrated more on areas like different social media platforms, whereas research on code-switching in blogs is considerably more difficult to find: apart from some master's theses and doctoral dissertations, only a handful of conference papers and other linguistic studies on the topic seem to be available (see Liu 2008 and Solorio and Y. Liu 2008 for example).

Some general linguistic research has been conducted on culinary recipes as a genre and on the features of food discourse (Cotter 1997; Pakkala-Weckström 2013; Gerhardt et al. 2013), weblogs have been quite considerably studied by linguists since their appearance as a new genre (Herring 2004; Miller & Shepherd 2004; Garden 2011; Pacea 2014), and even food blogs as a genre have received some scholarly attention (Diemer & Frobenius 2013; Burton 2016). The general link between food, culture and/or identity has been drawn by several scholars (Caplan 1997; Montanari 2006; Wilson 2006; Coveney 2014; Chrzan & Brett 2017). Of the somewhat similar studies which could be found through online databases, the one bearing closest resemblance to the present study, is

Kerstin McGaughey's 2010 study where she analyzed how identity is constructed and portrayed in two German food blogs, using mainly Susan Herrings' (2004) comprehensive Web Content Analysis framework. Herring's methodology, however, includes "the use of image, theme, feature, link, and exchange analyses in addition to language (discourse) analysis," (McGaughey 2010:73) making it too broad to be used for a study such as the present one.

However, no such earlier research could be found, which combines the notions of code-switching and/or *cultural* identity with food blogs in particular, which means that the realm of food blogs appears to have remained relatively untouched by linguistics studying code-switching or cultural identity in online discourse. With that in mind, this current study can be considered a pioneering study which sets out to fill an empty, previously unstudied slot in the field of applied linguistics – at the same time venturing slightly into the fields of cultural anthropology and sociolinguistics.

## **2 Theoretical framework**

### **2.1 On identity, language, culture and migration**

Identity is a multidimensional concept, which has consequently been divided by scholars into several types, among them being social, class, gender, national, racial, ethnic and linguistic identities (Block 2006). For the purposes of this study, the main focus shall be on ethnic, or cultural identity.<sup>2</sup> Albeit that one must simultaneously bear in mind that all different identity types are related to each other and can hardly be dealt with as isolated cases, rather it might be

---

<sup>2</sup> David Block (2006) notes that when social scientists use the term "ethnicity", they often leave it undefined, which leads to the reader wondering if what is meant by it is somewhat parallel to "culture", or if it is used to denote race for example. Joseph (2004: 162) has defined it as being about "common descent ... and a cultural heritage shared because of common descent." For the purposes of this study, the notion of ethnicity shall be used as being akin to culture, in accordance with Joseph's definition.

necessary to also consider race and nationality when discussing ethnicity for example (Block 2006).

Identity has been defined as “the way a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relation is constructed through time and space and how the person understands possibilities for the future” (Norton 2010: 351). Another relevant definition sees identity as a “relational and sociocultural phenomenon that emerges and circulates in local discourse contexts of interaction rather than as a stable structure located primarily in the individual psyche or in fixed social categories” (Bucholtz & Hall 2005: 585).

As for notions of language and identity in general, language is “a social practice in which experiences are organized and identities negotiated” (Norton 2010: 351). For humans, language is one of the most salient ways of representing oneself and one’s ideas. In addition to sharing information as they speak, people also reconstruct “a sense of who they are and how they relate to the world” (Norton 2013: 4). Linguistic identity, or language identity, can subsequently be seen as the relationship which exists between each individual’s perception of self and a means of communication, be it a language, a dialect or a sociolect for example (Block 2006).

Identities, however, are not static or unchangeable, rather they change and evolve over time and space, and people can construct and perform multiple identities in the different online and offline realities which they navigate across (Darvin 2015). Identities can also be challenged by other people, and they must constantly be reassessed (Kramsch 2013). Based on certain assumptions and judgements, others construct a person’s identity in a certain way, while that person at the same time has multiple identities to choose from, and he/she has the (theoretical) possibility to try to be whoever he or she desires to be (Kramsch 2013). This, on the other hand, as Kramsch (2013) continues, may not be approved of by other people who might see that new identity as unacceptable or incompatible, which in turn may lead to that identity having to be re-estimated and re-negotiated. Identity, in other words, is not seen as “something fixed for



life, but as fragmented and contested in nature” (Block 2006: 26). Thus, identities can be considered processual in nature, and constantly redefined through interaction with other people and the individual’s surroundings.

Immigrants in particular, as David Block (2006) argues, are faced with the challenge that their perception of themselves becomes subverted and they have to struggle in order to strike a balance between the old and new identity. Before migrating, each individual has had a certain set of self-evident reference points, which after migration are disrupted by the new and diverse input he/she is exposed to in the new country (Block 2006). This, according to Block (2006) leads to the old identity becoming contested, and the struggle to finding a balance is often a difficult one accompanied with feelings of contradiction, uncertainty and discomfort. Signs of this can be seen in the data for the present study as well, as shall be shown and discussed later in the paper. The emerging new identity is also not simply a 50/50 product of what the person used to be and what he/she is now, rather the process is a complex one and the end result unpredictable (Block 2006).

Gordon Mathews (2000:16-17), discussing cultural identity in his relevant book *Global Culture/Individual Identity: Searching for Home in the Cultural Supermarket*, defined identity as “the ongoing sense the self has of who it is, as conditioned through its ongoing interactions with others. Identity is how the self conceives of itself, and labels itself.” And if culture has long been defined by anthropologists as “the way of life of a people” (Mathews 2000:2), then cultural identity can in short be said to mean *how people understand who they are culturally* (ibid).

Mathews (2000) provides a thorough discussion in his book about the relevance of the concept of culture in our modern, globalized world and he argues that culture has become like any other consumer product we choose from the local market according to our liking. He even offers a counter-definition for the classical anthropologist definition of culture, defining it as “the information and identities available from the global supermarket” (Mathews 2000:5). Mathews

claims that even though we seem to choose and shape our cultural identities according to our own taste, these choices are in reality not entirely free, but are conditioned by several factors – among them the national culture each of us belongs to (Mathews 2000). Bonny Norton (2013), while discussing the effect of culture (or ethnicity) on identity, is along the same lines and argues that ethnicity (along with gender and class) is no silent background factor, but that it is strongly connected to identity construction and speech choices or possibilities.

Haesook Han Chung (2006:294, emphasis added) asserts in his article that

In a multilingual society, each language uniquely fulfills certain roles and represents distinct identities ... For example, in the United States, English functions as the medium of education, administration, legal system, the nation's press and media outlets, and communication among different language users, whereas *minority languages essentially serve to establish and reinforce the ethnic identities of their speakers and their communities.*

Mahootian likewise argues that “mixed-code discourse is used to underscore a bilingual identity that is connected to, yet distinct from, the identity of speakers in their monolingual contexts.” (Mahootian 2005: 362)

In a way similar to ‘bilingual’ in linguistic research, the term ‘bicultural’ is used in the field of social psychology for people who have been exposed to and developed competences in two different cultures. Schindler et al. (2015) state that the two cultures are not necessarily mixed with each other and that adopting a second culture does not always mean that the original culture is replaced with the new one. Instead of code-switching, Schindler et al. (2015) talk about cultural identity switching – the trait and ability of biculturals “to switch between different cultural behaviors” depending on which cultural identity is activated (Schindler et al. 2015: 234). Schindler et al. also assert that biculturals perceive the compatibility of their two cultures in different ways even though they to some degree identify with both of them: “whereas some might find the two cultures as highly compatible and complementary, others might find them

rather oppositional and contradictory.” (Schindler et al. 2015: 234) Some indications of controversies like this are indeed present in the data for this study, as shall be seen in the data analysis section.

## 2.2 Code-switching

Code-switching basically means using another language (‘code’) within a stretch of speech, and it is a valuable strategy and means for communicating identity (Rathert 2012) – be it ethnic, cultural, linguistic identity or something else. Gardner-Chloros (2009: 4) states that mixing languages is a way of expressing identity, and adds that when bilinguals switch between languages, it is often “to communicate something beyond the superficial meaning of their words.” Anyone who comes into contact with more than one language has the potential ability to code-switch, regardless of factors such as educational background and social or socio-economical status (Gardner-Chloros 2009). Rosenhouse and Kowner (2008), however, note that there is a clear link between the frequency of code-switching, level of education and the extent of exposure to the other language.

The groundwork for defining and studying code-switching in oral communication was mainly done by three researchers: Gumperz (1972; 1982), Auer (1984) and Myers-Scotton (1997). Their work and theories are what most researchers have drawn on when studying code-switching in spoken interaction, but only Gumperz’s theory can be and has been applied to written communication (Sebba 2013). According to Mark Sebba (2012), Auer and Myers-Scotton’s models can be used with conversation-like or interactive written discourse, but are difficult or impossible to apply to such non-conversational written data (like blogs) where the interlocutor’s immediate responses are not available (Sebba 2012). Sebba (2012) claims that there is in fact no independent theoretical framework or model meant specifically for studying code-switching in written language, rather linguistic research has, according to him, mostly drawn on theories developed for studying code-switching in oral contexts. Neither is there, according to Androutsopoulos

(2013: 668), a “generally accepted methodology which takes the specifics of CMC [computer-mediated communication] into account” for studying code-switching in computer-mediated communication. It thus appears that in these two regards, linguistic research seems to have been lagging behind for a long time, and that either the existing theories should be developed to suit non-conversational written CMC as well, or that an entirely new framework and methodology designed specifically for the purpose ought to be generated from scratch.

A lot of research has been conducted on the motivation behind code-switching – on the reason why a bilingual speaker makes the choice to use another language in the middle of speech. Code-switching can, for example, be used to claim a higher social status, to claim membership of or solidarity towards a certain group or to enact a specific identity, and sometimes it is used just because it can be used, for no special motivation other than the possibility to do so (Bullock and Toribio 2009). For this study, the aspect of using code-switching for identity purposes is obviously the most interesting one. In the words of Mahootian (2012: 193): “The style, register and language(s) we choose to express ourselves all contribute to who (we think) we are, how we want others to see us and how others actually perceive us. In short, language constructs, indexes and reveals identity.” Each language also carries associations with a certain way of life and culture, so it may also be that claiming a share of that is the code-switcher’s intention (Gardner-Chloros 2009).

Since English is the global lingua franca today, it is the most popular language to code-switch into (Rosenhouse & Kowner 2008), and therefore most anglophone research conducted on code-switching is related to code-switching from another language *into* English, whereas research on code-switching into the opposite direction is considerably harder to find. Particularly non-oral code-switching with Arabic as one of the codes appears not to have received considerable attention from researchers, as only a few papers studying code-switching into or from Arabic in written communication were found from online

databases: Alhazmi (2016) studied Arabic-English code-switching in radio and Facebook conversations among Arabs living in Australia, and Sharaf Eldin (2014) examined English-Arabic code-switching in the Facebook walls of bilingual Arabs. Code-switching into languages other than English, such as into Arabic, is thus a somewhat under-researched topic, which deserves to be studied more. Studying the food-blogs selected for the present study will hopefully shed some light on code-switching from English into Arabic.

### **2.3 Culinary linguistics and food as an expression of culture**

The topic of food has been studied extensively for several centuries, from various angles and by experts of several and diverse fields ranging from functionalism and structuralism to anthropology, behaviorism and sociology (Gerhardt 2013). Nowadays there are even several journals dedicated to food studies. Culinary linguistics – the study of food and food-related discourse from a linguistic point of view –, however, still remains an under-researched topic according to Gerhardt (2013), and most linguistic research has concentrated on food recipes (Gerhardt 2013).

In addition to language, even food is culturally dependent, and representatives of different cultures differ in their food-related behavior just as the languages of the world differ (Gerhardt 2013). Language is a way of construing identity and different social groups have their own “foodways” (Counihan 1999: 6), and therefore also their unique ways of using language: “You are different or you are the same depending on what you eat and how you speak.” (Gerhardt 2013: 3)

In one of the earlier linguistic/discourse analytical studies about cookbooks and food recipes, Colleen Cotter (1997) notes that while the language of political and popular culture texts has long been studied for its communal aspects and ways of establishing identity, recipes should not be excluded from the discussion as they, too, can be considered “cultural artefacts” (Cotter 1997: 52), which help us understand the world and our places in it. Cotter argues that even a recipe can be seen as “a cultural narrative” (Cotter 1997: 52), which carries with it several

cultural practices and assumptions, and also contains elements for construing identity. In other words, recipes can be viewed as texts which reflect cultural contexts, and they, too, lend themselves to sociolinguistic research and can be scrutinized in terms of many variables such as race, nationality or locale (Cotter 1997). The link between culture and food has, in fact, been drawn as early as in the 1960's by Lévi-Strauss (Gerhardt 2013).

In a recent article, Paradowski (2018: 50) discusses the relationship between food and culture and claims that

When people prepare meals according to the customs prevalent in their society, they can experience the tradition and past of their country, which had been passed from generation to generation ensuring the continuity of culinary customs. Thus, by connecting contemporary times with the practices of our ancestors, food can be viewed as a tool helping preserve the culture of a society.

In the data of the present study, there are hints which lead to the assumption that this may be at least part of the motivation for some of the bloggers behind wanting to publish Arabic food recipes for an English-speaking audience.

Katelyn Leigh Burton (2016) wrote her doctoral dissertation on food discourse and digital identity management, and in her thesis she discusses the common phrase “you are what you eat” from a different perspective, asserting that what we eat and how we discuss it conveys a lot about who we are and even how we view ourselves. Thus she, too, draws a strong link between the identities which are conveyed to others and the food we eat and talk about.

#### **2.4 Recipes as a genre – the linguistic building blocks of a recipe**

According to Pakkala-Weckström (2013), food recipes as a genre are familiar to practically everyone, and the genre is a rather straight-forward genre that one encounters on an almost daily basis and in several different places. She also points out that it is a highly conventionalized, relatively old genre whose

conventions have not changed much in the course of centuries (Pakkala-Weckström 2013). Pakkala-Weckström (2013) lists eight components of a typical culinary recipe and states that three of them are ‘obligatory’ and always appear in the same order: “(1) the name of the dish, (2) an ingredients list, (3) instructions for the preparation of the dish.” (Pakkala-Weckström 2013: 329; see also Gerhardt 2013: 41)

The ingredients list enumerates all the necessary items for preparing the dish, usually in the order in which they are to be used, and the instructions are commonly given in a logical and clear order and feature a lot of imperative verb forms and clear, short sentences (Pakkala-Weckström 2013). Cotter (1997) claims that even though recipes may differ in style and the same things can be expressed in several different ways, certain distinctive features of discourse, syntactics and semantics are shared between all recipes – the most distinguishing syntactic characteristic being the use of imperatives, as mentioned by Pakkala-Weckström (2013) as well. The imperative sentences are often preceded or followed by descriptive or prepositional phrases which aid in understanding what is instructed by the verb phrase. These additional phrases are usually either locative or instructive, expressing where or by which means the action is to be carried out (e.g. in a deep bowl; with a rolling pin) (Cotter 1997).

As for the semantic peculiarities of food recipes, this refers to what Cotter (1997:57) calls “evaluative clauses”, and in order for the reader to understand such clauses, he/she has to have some kind of prior knowledge about the genre of recipes and the specific procedures and scales related to food preparation and descriptions of the preparation phases and techniques (Cotter 1997). By evaluative clauses she means scalar expressions such as “the size of an olive”, “very thin” or “don’t beat it too much,” where it is up to the recipe reader and his/her familiarity with the genre to know what these and similar descriptions mean in practice (Cotter 1997). Oftentimes even for understanding the ingredients list and certain terms and abbreviations occurring in it, some kind of previous cooking expertise is required and even presupposed (Gerhardt 2013).

Cotter (1997) claims that even though tense shifts or temporal markers can be present in culinary recipes, it is more common for them to be absent and for their part to be played by the order of the components, and often explicitly by numbers delineating each phase of action. Another feature of food recipes is that the text and context are in constant mediation, and the cook and the author (who in the case of blogs are usually the same person) add to the mixture their own expectations about the social identity and background of members of their audience. This makes food recipes a rich and interesting source for linguistic analysis (Cotter 1997).

## 2.5 Blogs

The evolvement of modern technology along with its different channels of virtual communication has had several profound effects on our ways and possibilities of self-representation. The blog, short for weblog, can at its simplest be defined as “a website where content is posted periodically and displayed in reverse-chronological order.” (Li & Chignell 2010: 589) It is “a new rhetorical opportunity” (Miller & Shepherd 2004: 1) and

can be both public and intensely personal in possibly contradictory ways. They are addressed to everyone and at the same time to no one. They seem to serve no immediate practical purpose, yet increasing numbers of both writers and readers are devoting increasing numbers of time to them. (Miller & Shepherd 2004: 1)

The blog is an online communication platform which can be traced back to the 90's and whose popularity exploded at the turn of the century (Diemer & Frobenius 2013). A probable reason for the timing of the increase in popularity is the coinciding publication of several easy-to-use blog hosting sites which offered easily editable blog platforms, the using of which no longer required special computer skills as had been the case before (Miller & Shepherd 2004). According to Miller and Shepherd (2004), blogs acquired the status of a genre and increased in status and the amount of attention they received very quickly.



They connect this and the appearance of blogs with a notable cultural trend of the 90's: "the weakening boundary between the public and the private" (Miller & Shepherd 2004: 3) and the public's growing thirst for more personal information about other people, which they call "voyeurism" (Miller & Shepherd 2004: 4).

At the same time, the blog offers everyone willing an easy access to a potentially wide audience and the possibility to publish whatever personal information they wish to share and to get their "five minutes of fame", with no need for first obtaining contracts with publishing houses or media houses. What is also appealing to blog writers, is the refreshing chance "to combine the immediately real and the genuinely personal." (Miller & Shepherd: 8) With personal blogs, the blogger's identity is commonly manifested in the blog posts and the style of writing, which includes such deviations from linguistic norms that have, apart from literature, previously not been seen in printed, written form (Crystal 2007). In an earlier paper, Crystal noted that the style of writing in blogs is not restricted by any genre conventions and that it allows for using personal linguistic features and styles, and thus called it "free prose" in analogy with free verse (Crystal 2006: 246).

The blog as a genre is considered a hybrid one: it does not entirely copy existing offline genres nor is it completely unique, rather it combines features from offline genres and other internet genres (Herring et al. 2004). The core distinguishing features which make a blog a blog and distinguish it from other genres are the reverse chronological order of the posts, which is probably the most salient feature along with regular and often frequent updating, (in the majority of blogs) the occurrence of links combined with personal commentary (Miller & Shepherd 2004), and also generally a space for the readers to leave their comments and feedback about each post.

As for the pragmatic or social actions that blogs perform, the two most relevant issues with regards to these are community development and self-expression, the latter being a very salient theme for many bloggers (Miller & Shepherd 2004).

Other possibly desirable social actions for bloggers include forming (and managing) social relationships with other people and influencing the way others think, but also validating and cultivating the self (Miller & Shepherd 2004). For the majority of private bloggers, however, self-expression is what appears to be the most common motivating factor for writing a blog (Puschmann 2013).

According to Puschmann (2013), the main reason that has drawn linguists to studying blogs is the easiness of acquiring data for corpus-based studies. He then notes that other kinds of approaches beyond the scope of corpus linguistics might in fact be even more fruitful and beneficial for interdisciplinary research. Puschmann (2013) suggests that in order to understand the concept of blogs and all matters related to writing a blog as a whole, linguistic research should be paired with sociologic, psychologic and ethnographic approaches for example.

Even for culinary writing, the digital realm is a relatively new platform which differs considerably from the traditional forms such as cookbooks and recipe-dedicated sections of newspapers and magazines. Diemer and Frobenius (2013:53) discussed food blogs as a genre and asserted that they are a form of computer-mediated communication which revolves around “the preparing, consumption and evaluation of food in all varieties and contexts.” This is attested to by the blogs studied for the present paper as well.

While oral food discussion has for long ranged from ‘dinner talk’ to food commercials and cookery shows on the radio and the television, written forms of food-related talk were mainly restricted to cookbooks and regular recipe sections in newspapers and magazines. Only after the emergence of the internet, and later on blogs, did written food discussion spread more widely and become more easily accessible to general masses through computer-mediated communication. With the internet and blogs, it became easier for practically anyone to circulate recipes and gain a wider public for them, and for anyone to quickly and easily browse and find recipes to their liking – and all this for free and without the trouble of having to go to a publisher or to a bookstore. These are

unquestionably some of the main reasons for why food blogs have become so popular nowadays.

### **3 Data and methods**

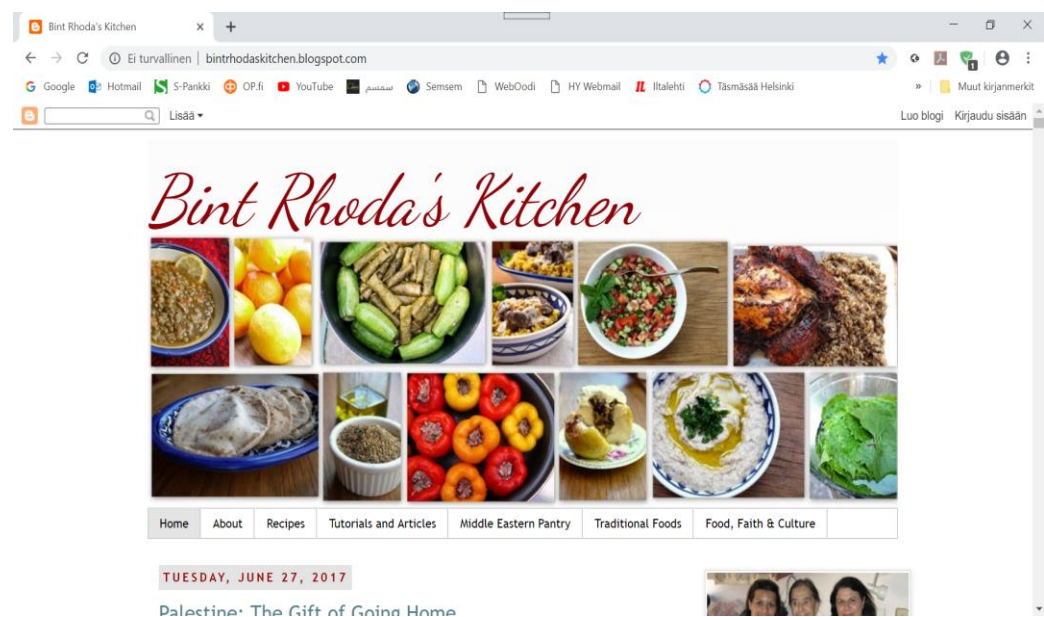
#### **3.1 Methods**

For the purposes of this study, eight culinary blogs from the Levant area (Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria), the Middle East and North Africa were chosen. The blogs are all written by women who speak Arabic as their first language and have spent considerable parts of their childhood in their native countries. Five of the bloggers have later in life migrated to an anglophone country (UK, US or Canada), one Palestinian from Jordan has relocated to the UAE, another Palestinian has grown up in and remained in Jordan, and an Iraqi blogger (presumably) lives in Iraq. A total of 40 posts were selected for the study and their contents were qualitatively analyzed in order to trace signs of cultural identity and instances of code-switching.

The blog posts mainly feature food recipes for Arabic dishes typical to the regions which the bloggers grew up in, but some of the blogs include other Arabic recipes and even international ones. The posts chosen for further analysis were picked with the criterion that the recipe had to be related to the culture which the blogger herself grew up in, i.e. if a Palestinian or Lebanese author had posted a Moroccan recipe, it would not be included as data in the study. This is mainly because it is presumed that the emotional ties and through them the chances for manifestations of cultural identity would be greater with a dish that directly relates to the bloggers 'own' culture and childhood memories. It must be noted though, that most Levantine dishes are eaten throughout the Levant area (with possible regional variations in the ingredients), and tracing the origin of a dish to a certain country in that region is in most cases not something that can be easily done, so for the bloggers from that area, any Levantine dish was accepted as data.

Furthermore, only such blog posts were included as data, which included a 'prologue', i.e. some "surrounding text, which often recounts an event or the

preparation of a dish, and sometimes also the reason for preparing it.” (Diemer & Probenius 2013: 55) This is because the assumption is that any possible indications of cultural identity (apart from code-switching) are more likely to occur in more casual and freely written text such as the forewords, rather than in the recipes themselves, since they are rather formulaic and mainly only include a list of ingredients and the instructions for preparing the dish. Such posts were also discarded, which included neither code-switching nor other clear implications of/to the blogger’s cultural identity or culture.



**Figure 1.** A screenshot from the homepage of one of the blogs chosen for this study.

The chosen blog posts were first copied into Microsoft Word, the textual contents of the posts were then qualitatively analyzed in their entirety (the post heading, the recipe itself and any surrounding text) for instances of code-switching. Pictures or any other non-textual items were not included in the analysis. It was hypothesized that for the most part, the recipe names or post headings would consist of the Arabic name of the dish and its translation or an explanation/description of the dish, in whichever order. The headings corresponding to the hypothesis were highlighted in yellow, only-English headings in cyan and only-Arabic headings in green. The same color-codes were

applied throughout the text: occurrences of code-switching to Arabic were highlighted in green and any un-code-switched items which were somehow unexpected, unusual or otherwise interesting were highlighted in cyan. All highlighted occurrences of code-switching or the lack of it were then inserted in two separate tables (see Table 1 in Appendix A and Table 2 in Appendix B), where also their frequencies were recorded in terms of how many times an item occurred in the data and in how many blog posts and blogs. An overview of the results will be presented in the following section and discussed in section 4 with the most interesting cases analyzed in more detail.

After color-coding the blog entries for instances of code-switching, the contents of the foreword part of each post were then qualitatively analyzed for other kinds of expressions of cultural identity. Any references to “the homeland”, memories of childhood and time spent in the native country, and talk of Arabic culture, the Arabic language, Arabic identity or being an Arab were counted as such. The majority of prologues did indeed include cultural indications and some even featured very straightforward and interesting discussions of struggling with conflicting cultural identities and the like. These shall be presented below in section 3.3 and discussed in more detail in section 4.

### **3.2 Code-switching**

When studying code-switching into English, the researcher is often faced with much hardship in deciding what to consider as code-switching and where to draw the line between what is another code and what, on the other hand, was perhaps once a loanword but has in the course of time merged into the language and become part of it. This would be the case in studying code-switching into English in, for example, any Scandinavian blog written in the local language: The influence of English is so wide-spread and multilayered that it often takes some kind of detective skills to be able to determine whether an expression is to be considered code-switching or part of the local language. The same would equally apply to studying code-switching into English (or French in the Arab countries of North Africa) in written or oral Arabic communication, as so many English (or

French) expressions have now become part of the language, especially in spoken casual conversations. With code-switching from English into Arabic, however, the task is much easier, as the influence of Arabic on the English language is relatively small and Arabic loanwords in English are not very frequent, since Arabic does not hold the position of a global lingua franca in the same way that English does.

Based on what was mentioned above, defining what constitutes code-switching into Arabic was fairly straightforward in the case of my data. However, the amount of code-switching used in the blogs which were studied for this paper was surprisingly low. In fact, several otherwise good blog candidates had to be completely discarded from the study simply because apart from the names of the dishes, the posts in them contained no code-switching whatsoever. Even in the blogs which were included in the study as sources for data, finding instances of code-switching was not easy, and several – if not even most – blog entries featured no code-switching at all.

At this point, it is appropriate to note Graedler's (1999) hypothetical argument that since written language, as opposed to oral discourse, can be planned and modified before letting others read it, it is possible that it will contain less code-switching than oral language, which often is spontaneous. This means that even though occurrences of code-switching in the blog posts could possibly be fewer, when they do occur, it means the use of an Arabic word or phrase has probably been a very conscious and thought-out choice – which makes it even more meaningful.

Although, in contradiction to Graedler's assertion, Androutsopoulos (2013:670) claims that in computer-mediated conversation,

interlocutors use code-switching, style shifting, and other manipulations of written signs to accomplish pragmatic work that would be accomplished by phonological variation, prosody, gaze, posture, and other cues in ordinary spoken conversation.

In other words, he is making an opposite suggestion saying that code-switching might in fact be used more in computer-mediated communication as a strategy to make up for the limitations and lack of contextualization cues that online communication poses as opposed to direct ordinary conversation. One might argue, though, that this could apply more to such interactive, conversation-like forms of online communication as chats, discussion forums and e-mails where a somewhat immediate response and reaction from the addressee is being expected – as opposed to blogs where the addressees are unknown and are not expected to necessarily react to the post in any way or at least will do so with a delay.

It is also quite possible that the scarcity of code-switching in the data has to do with the language that was code-switched into (Arabic), and that similar results would be obtained from any language pair where the code-switching is done from English into another language. Whereas if the study had been about code-switching from Arabic or almost any other currently less influential and less widespread language into English, the results would arguably have been rather different and shown code-switching to be considerably more frequent.

As stated previously, instances of code-switching in the data were far less than expected, and code-switching occurred or was absent in unexpected contexts. In the case of the post headlines, it was hypothesized that they would in most cases contain both the Arabic name of the dish and either a translation for it or an explanation if producing a literal translation would be difficult or otherwise impractical. This proved to be mostly true. As for other parts of the posts, it was part of the original hypothesis that names of certain ingredients (such as specific spices and herbs commonly used in Arabic cooking, and types of waters infused from different kinds of flowers) would often appear in Arabic. The results, however, show that code-switching mostly only occurred with such herbs or plants which do have equivalent English names but are not typically used for cooking in Western kitchens, whereas the names of common herbs such as parsley, cilantro and mint, did not occur in Arabic at all. The only exception to this was thyme, *za'tar*, which is commonly used in the Levant area in a famous

spice mixture also called za'tar. This case shall be discussed separately in the results section. Apart from these, instances of code-switching were mostly singular cases which only occurred in few posts and often only in one or two blogs.

The findings are presented in two separate tables in Appendix A and B, and the main findings along with an analysis of the results are given in section 4. Table 1 (Appendix A) includes all cases of code-switched items with their different spellings, along with frequencies of occurrence (how many times a word/phrase occurred in the data and in how many posts and blogs). Table 2 (Appendix B) presents all unexpected or otherwise interesting or noteworthy cases where code-switching did not occur, along with frequencies as in Table 1.

### **3.3 Other indications of cultural identity**

As mentioned earlier, only such blog posts were selected as data which included a 'prologue' before the recipe, i.e. a few sentences where the writer of the blog tells the readers something about the recipe, its history and its meaning for the blogger, and explains why she decided to share the recipe with her followers online. The reason for this was simply that while it was assumed that most of the code-switching would occur in the ingredients lists of the recipes, other expressions of cultural identity were expected to mainly appear in the 'surrounding text' where the blogger is able to write more freely and more casually.

The paragraphs before the actual recipes did often include several different kinds of manifestations and expressions of cultural identity. In many blog posts the writers actually themselves reflect on their linguistic and cultural identities and discuss them quite explicitly. Apart from overt instances such as these, several posts feature references to "the homeland" and how life used to be there and how things were done there; to cherished childhood memories related to a certain dish, and to the Arabic culture in general and Arabic food culture in particular. Some of the posts also include intriguing contemplations on cultural contradictions, when in the new culture things would be done a certain way but the Arab within the



blogger resists the idea, which leads to a mental struggle in her head. Examples of all these will be discussed and analyzed below.

#### **4 Results and analysis**

The purpose of this paper was to study code-switching to Arabic and other markers of Arabic cultural identity in the blog posts of eight Arab food bloggers who publish in English. A total of 40 blog posts were quantitatively analyzed for the purpose, and the results show that while code-switching occurred less frequently than expected and in somewhat unexpected ways, the surrounding texts around the recipes were indeed rich sources of different cultural identity indicators.

The act of writing a blog to share Arabic food recipes online could in itself be viewed as a way of enacting cultural identity, and another interesting aspect is the choice of language to write blog in. At least one blogger explicitly states that her reason for opting to write in English rather than in Arabic is to reach a larger audience and to convey Arabic food, life and culture to that English-speaking audience. The Arabs can be considered as being somewhat familiar with their own culture and food throughout the Arab world, so it is at least this blogger's particular wish to be able to give *Westerners* a glimpse of the authentic Arabic food, culture and way of life and to set straight some common misunderstandings and prejudices related to those topics.

While it could be that for some immigrants living in a new linguistic and cultural environment, trying to preserve and convey the original cultural and linguistic identity is a more important factor, other immigrants might opt for an integrative strategy and be keener to fit in than to explicitly express and emphasize their 'otherness' or 'foreignness' – be it through code-switching or other identity markers. The same might apply for the bloggers still living in Arab countries: they may have made a conscious decision from the beginning to either distance themselves from their (presumably) mostly Western audience by underlining their 'Arabness' and 'otherness' through different kinds of linguistic tools, or they may

want to present themselves as being close to the audience and more similar to their readers, thus using fewer instruments to emphasize their cultural identity.

For an immigrant, code-switching to his/her first language in the foreign language environment is a clear, conscious language choice which immediately positions the speaker or writer as a foreigner and sets them outside the local cultural circle. Instead of adopting an integrationist language strategy (cf. Block 2006), the person code-switching deliberately underlines his or her “otherness” with an identity marker that places them in a group other than that of the majority, marking them as “different from others”. In the case of an Arabic food blog, code-switching to Arabic could also be seen as an attempt to convey an expert identity as someone who is well knowledgeable about Arabic cooking and culture. This is attested to by Diemer and Frobenius (2013:59), who asserted that “[t]he use of code ... indicates expertise ..., possibly to create local reference and to reinforce the indication of familiarity on the part of the blogger.”

When the bloggers studied in this study code-switch to Arabic, they are essentially invoking an Arabic group-identity tied to Arabs as an ethnic group, and to their cultural background and language. This, especially among the immigrant bloggers, may be a conscious attempt to conserve their Arabic identity, possibly even rising out of a fear of losing that identity and wanting to prevent it from happening (cf. Block 2006). It is clear that some of the bloggers are more conscious of their linguistic or cultural identities than others, and some are keener on maintaining and manifesting their Arabic identity and culture than others.

As mentioned above, the decision to write a blog and publish Arabic culinary recipes in it is obviously in itself a very strong identity marker and a conscious choice and attempt at maintaining and spreading one’s culture – which is what some of the bloggers overtly voice. A completely different choice, however, is the blog writers’ decision to opt for English instead of Arabic as the primary writing language. It could thus be argued that the linguistic and non-linguistic choices the bloggers make convey the public just as much about how they perceive *themselves*,

and how they wish *others* to perceive them – or, about who they are and who they are not.

This section presents the results which were obtained from the 40 blog posts chosen as data for the current study. For section 4.1, all instances of code-switching, and interesting or otherwise important or noteworthy instances of un-code-switched items have been arranged into two separate tables (Table 1 and Table 2, see Appendix A and Appendix B), and the key findings shall be presented, analyzed and discussed in more detail below. Section 4.2 gives an account of other indications of cultural identity which occurred in the data, and then goes on to analyze the reported cases.

#### 4.1 Code-switching in the food blogs

As can be seen from Table 1 (see Appendix A), the vast majority – roughly 2/3 – of the occurrences of code-switching in the data are names of foodstuffs: out of a total of 30 code-switched items, 15 are ingredients and four are types of foods (*mezze*, *chorba*, *mouneh* and *zait and zaatar* – ‘starters/appetizers’, ‘soup’, ‘preserves made of seasonal produce’, ‘olive oil and zaatar spice mix’). As for the 11 remaining occurrences, even from those, six are somehow related to preparing food or eating, and only five are not:

- 3 are related to preparing food (*mathaneh*, *ghourbaal* and *saj* – ‘a mill’, ‘a sieve’ and a type of pan for preparing bread)
- 3 are expressions of wishing something, 2 of them being expressions said at the time of eating (*Sahtain*, *Sahha wa ‘aafiya*, *Ahlan wa sahlán* – ‘May this double your health’, ‘Health and wellbeing’, ‘Welcome’)
- 1 is the name of a food used as a verb (to *tagine* something – to prepare ‘tagine’ [stew-like Moroccan dish] out of something)
- 4 are other expressions (*aywa*, *hayk*, *teta* and *dabkeh* – ‘yes’, ‘like this’, ‘grandmother’ and a type of dance).

This means that 25 out of the total 30 occurrences of code-switching in the data are food-related. In terms of the numbers, this is hardly a surprising result in data obtained from blogs where the main focus is on food. However, an interesting phenomenon which was to be found throughout the blogs is that the majority of code-switching occurred in the surrounding text, but to a lesser extent in the recipes themselves. In several cases the bloggers would discuss the recipe and/or its ingredients before giving the actual recipe, and in this discussion they would use code-switching, but in the case of ingredients (15 items in total), often only the English equivalent of the word would be used in the recipe itself, even though the Arabic equivalent was used in the prologue. If the Arabic word was used in the recipe as well, it was still in most cases used less frequently than its English translation. Of the four code-switched foods and the 11 occurrences which are not ingredients or food, none ever occurred in a recipe, rather all were used in the surrounding text only.

The 15 ingredients which occurred code-switched in the data are listed and discussed below. In the list, each code-switched item is presented along with its English equivalent/translation, and in brackets are (total number of occurrences/in x posts/in y blogs). So, for example (12/3/2) would mean that the word occurred 12 times in the data, in a total of three posts and in two different blogs. The words are presented in descending numerical order starting with the one with most occurrences. The items in **bold** are herbs or leafy plants, and underlined items are ones that were used both in recipes and in the surrounding text.

- 1) zaatar/za'tar/za'atar – a spice mix with thyme, sumac and sesame (48/6/4)
- 2) **mloukhieh/mouloukhiya/molokhia** – jute mallow/Jew's mallow (32/3/2)
- 3) **zaatar/za'tar/za'atar** – thyme (26/4/5)
- 4) cousa – zucchini/squash (18/2/2)
- 5) **khobeizah/bakoula** – mallow/malva (15/2/2)
- 6) loomi/noomi/noomi basra – dried limes (11/4/1)
- 7) **hindaba/hindbeh** – dandelion leaves (10/2/2)
- 8) freekeh – (cracked) green wheat (9/1/1)

- 9) mishmish – apricot (4/1/1)
- 10) fassoulia – green beans/beans (3/1/1)
- 11) jereesh/jareesh – cracked wheat (3/2/1)
- 12) **baqleh** – purslane (2/1/1)
- 13) behar – allspice/7-spice mixture (1/1/1)
- 14) bamia – okra (1/1/1)
- 15) sumaq – sumac (1/1/1)

Starting with the frequencies, *zaatar*, with its two different meanings, is the obvious winner and it shall be discussed separately in a paragraph of its own. The reason why *mloukhieh*, *khobeizah/bakoula*, *loomi*, *hindaba* and *freekeh* occurred so frequently in the data even though they were only used in a few posts (1-3), is probably their unfamiliarity to the Western kitchen. Apart from the somewhat rare use of dandelion leaves (*hidaba*) in salads, I am not aware of the other ingredients being generally used in Western cooking. It could thus be that the bloggers felt they are closer and more related to them than to the Western readers, and therefore decided to retain the use of Arabic along with English equivalents in the posts.

As for the frequent usage of *cousa* (zucchini/squash), then it can be explained by the two following quotes on the importance of a dish called *cousa mehshi* (stuffed zucchini/squash) to the Arabs. First, the author of Bint Rhoda's Kitchen gives an account of cooking traditionally being a communal activity in Palestine, describing how "aunties and tetas (grandmothers)" gather in the kitchen to prepare stuffed vine/grape leaves and stuffed *cousa*, happily chatting while drinking mint tea and showing the younger generation how to make the two dishes. She then continues by saying

These two dishes, often served together, are the jewels of Palestinian cuisine ... these dishes are special enough to serve guests, but also well-loved enough to be served to the family every week ... these dishes have settled into the hearts and onto the tables of Arab homes and are here to stay. (Bint Rhoda's Kitchen)

If there is one dish that sums up Lebanese homestyle cooking, this is it! Humble yet delicious ... I remember meeting an elderly gentleman who had lived a long portion of his life in Egypt and who swooned when I served it at a get-together telling me how he had missed eating this dish all these years. (Taste of Beirut)

However, as the blogger behind Bint Rhoda's Kitchen is describing how the variety of squash that Arabs generally use in their cooking is a smooth, sweet and light green type, she tells her readers about an event where she came across this particular variety in a farmer's market in the US. She asked the farmer selling the light green squash what they are called, and the farmer's answer was "Oh those? We call them *cousa*." (Bint Rhoda's Kitchen) It appears that the most common dictionaries and thesauruses (such as Merriam-Webster, Collins or Macmillan) do not include the word *cousa* or any alternative spellings such as *kousa*, *coosa* or *koosa*, but it could be that at least for this blogger, knowing that the name is used even by some native Americans, made her feel more confident about using the term in her post.

As can be seen from the list above, only six – a little less than half – of the code-switched foodstuffs were used in the actual recipes in addition to occurring in the surrounding text. Thus, the majority of the items (9 out of 15; almost 2/3) were used in Arabic in the discussion parts exclusively, whereas only their English equivalents occurred in the recipes. Of the six words used in the recipes as well as in the surrounding text, all (apart from *cousa*, which was discussed above) are words which either have no simple English equivalent (*zaatar/za'tar/za'atar* as the name of the spice mix), or which are relatively unknown and/or unused in the West as cooking ingredients.

The case of *zaatar* in both its meanings (the herb and the spice mix) will be discussed separately in the next paragraph. As for the remaining four cases – *mloukhiyeh*, *loomi*, *freekah* and *jereesh* (with their different spellings), namely 'jute mallow', 'dried limes', 'green wheat' and 'cracked wheat', then these are foodstuffs which to my knowledge are practically not used in Western cooking at

all, so their unfamiliarity to the Western audience would at least partially explain retaining the usage of their Arabic names throughout the blog posts. Although at the same time, it is interesting to notice that three other equally uncommon foodstuffs in the West were only used in Arabic in the surrounding text, but in the recipes the usage of their English equivalents was maintained: *hindaba* and *khobeizah/bakoula* were referred to as ‘dandelion leaves’ and ‘mallow/malva’ in both the recipes that they occurred in, and *baqleh* as ‘purslane’ in the only recipe that it occurred in. This might simply be explained by differing personal preferences, as the bloggers in the latter three cases were not the same as in the first four cases.

As for *zaatar* (or za’tar/za’atar), then it is most famously known as the spice mixture which consists of dried thyme, sumac and sesame seeds, and is very widely used in the Levant region. It is used as a bread topping in a bread called *manqousheh* (or manousheh, manaqish, manaish, manaesh...), mixed with olive oil and eaten with pieces of Arabic bread, or used as a condiment in cheese, or for sprinkling on different foods for example. In several Levantine homes it is eaten on a daily basis in one way or another, especially at breakfast time. In the Levant area, everybody knows it, and everybody loves it. This is also attested to by the high frequencies in which it occurred in the data throughout the Levantine blogs, which totaled 6 (out of 8): every single one mentioned *zaatar* in at least one of its meanings (thyme or the spice mix). A further picture of just how beloved and important this spice mixture is, can be drawn from the following remarks made by some of the bloggers:

No visit to Lebanon, for me or for anyone else for that matter, is complete without at least one manqousheh [bread topped with zaatar]... the quintessential Lebanese breakfast. (Anissa’s, brackets added)

This spice mixture, collected from the land that they live on, holds in it the heart of the Palestinian. To eat zait-and-za’atar, olive oil and the spice mixture, is to partake of our land. (Bint Rhoda’s Kitchen)

Zaatar has become (along with olive tree [sic]) a symbol of the land of Palestine. It is strongly associated with the Palestinian identity that is being widely adopted by poets, writers and artists in their writings and songs ... Personally, I'm in a never-ending romantic relationship with zaatar bread! Smelling the scent of baking bread mixed with the aroma of roasting thyme greased with olive oil, is where the romance starts over again every time. (Kitchen of Palestine)

Thus, in addition to the fact when talking about the spice mixture, *zaatar* could not be properly translated into English, it is obvious that the bloggers want to use the Arabic version instead of saying something like 'thyme spice mix' or 'spice mixture with thyme', because they are so attached to zaatar for both culinary and identity reasons. They adore its taste, and to them it is a representation of who they are.

Having discussed and analyzed the findings presented in Table 1 (Appendix A), I now move on to discuss the unexpected or otherwise interesting or significant instances where code-switching did *not* occur much or at all. A complete list of these findings is presented in Table 2 (see Appendix B).

#### 4.2 Non-code-switched items

A complete list of the instances where code-switching did unexpectedly not occur, or occurred much less frequently than expected, is presented in Table 2 (see Appendix B). The items listed in Table 2 (Appendix B) total 17. Starting with the words which occurred both code-switched and non-code-switched in the data, there were a total of 12 such words, and below is a list of them. Frequencies are presented in brackets as follows: (non-code-switched/number of posts – code-switched/number of posts). Thus, (11/2 – 3/1) for example would mean that the word occurred in English 11 times in a total of two posts, and in Arabic three times and in only one post. If the number of occurrences in either Arabic or English was considerably higher than in the other language, the result is shown in **bold**.



- 1) allspice/7-spice mix – behar (**18/9** – 1/1)
- 2) sumac – sumaq (**24/6** – 1/1)
- 3) cracked wheat – jereesh/jareesh (2/1 – 3/2)
- 4) okra – bamia (2/1 – 1/1)
- 5) dandelion – hidbeh/hindaba (**17/2** – 10/2)
- 6) thyme – zaatar/za'tar/za'atar (15/3 – **26/4**)
- 7) squash/zucchini – cousa (**32/4** – 18/2)
- 8) purslane – baqleh (**14/1** – 1/1)
- 9) green beans – fassoulia (**8/1** – 3/1)
- 10) apricot – mishmish (**27/2** – 4/1)
- 11) mallow/malva – khobeizeh/bakouleh (4/3 – **15/2**)
- 12) (cracked) green wheat – freekeh (2/1 – **9/1**)

As can be seen from the results presented in the above list, it is a clear trend throughout the data that the preference is on using the English equivalent even if the Arabic word was used alongside the English one. In only four cases was the Arabic word used more than its English translation: thyme (which was discussed above with *zaatar*), (cracked) green wheat, mallow/malva and cracked wheat. Mallow, green wheat and cracked wheat are all relatively unused in the Western kitchen as was previously mentioned, which could explain why there was a small tendency to use their Arabic names over the English ones.

It can also be seen from the list that all the words which were used both in English and in Arabic by the bloggers are names of ingredients. Only five of the 12 ingredients are commonly used in Western cooking (okra, thyme, squash, green beans and apricots), while the remaining seven are more common to Arabic cuisine.

A note must be made here about allspice and why it is not included as one of the common ingredients in Western cuisine. This is because even though several of the bloggers use allspice as a translation for *behar* (which actually in standard Arabic is a general noun meaning any spice), the correct translation in this context is in fact 7-spice mix, which is a spice mixture where allspice is one of the seven

ingredients. The 7-spice mix is a very famous and widely used spice mixture in the Levant, and that – not allspice – is what a Levantine refers to when he/she says *behar*. Thus, the use of allspice in the blogs is probably either just a false translation, or an attempt to come up with the closest equivalent, as the 7-spice mix might not be readily available in the West other than in ethnic food markets. In some blogs apart from the ones used for this study, the bloggers have solved the problem by providing a recipe of the spice mix so that the readers can prepare it themselves at home. In any case, as *behar* is indeed so well-known and commonly used in Levantine cuisine, especially in Lebanon, it was rather unexpected to find that it was only mentioned once in one single blog post, and all the other 18 occurrences in a total of four blogs were in English, either as ‘7-spice mix’ or the not-entirely-correct ‘allspice’.

The English word sumac, on the other hand, is so close to the Arabic word *sumaq* that the close resemblance between the two words probably explains why the bloggers did not feel the need to introduce its Arabic version into their texts – even though sumac is another example of a typical Arabic, especially Levantine, ingredient that is not so commonly used in the West. Only one blogger made one mention of the word’s Arabic equivalent in passing, without even explicitly mentioning that *sumaq* is the word’s Arabic name. The same blogger, demonstrating the unfamiliarity of the spice for Westerners, mentions some Americans being astonished and worried about her using sumac in her cooking, exclaiming “*isn't sumac a poisonous weed, like poison ivy or poison oak?*” (Bint Rhoda’s Kitchen). After investigating the matter, the blogger found out that the botanical category includes over 200 different kinds of plants, many of which are indeed poisonous, but that the sumac tree which mostly grows in the Levant, is not poisonous and has been used in the area for cooking for centuries.

Another point of interest to rise from the data are the names of such ingredients which are very commonly used in Arabic cooking and were thus thought to at least occasionally occur in Arabic, but which nevertheless did not occur code-switched even once. These are the names of common herbs and leafy plants (such

as parsley, cilantro, mint, spinach etc.), waters infused from different kinds of flowers (such as rose water and orange blossom water), and chickpeas.

Common herbs such as parsley and cilantro are very frequently used in Arabic cooking, particularly in Morocco, and in the Levant to some extent, and it was therefore expected that they would at least sometimes be mentioned in Arabic as well, but this hypothesis turned out to be completely false in the light of my data. The reason might be that the same herbs are much used in the West as well, and are thus conceived as equally shared between the two cultures, so perhaps the bloggers felt, as opposed to the less common plants discussed before, that there were no grounds for marking them as ‘their own’ by using another code when talking about them.

As for rose water and orange blossom water (also geranium water in North Africa), these infused waters are used in practically all Arabic desserts and sweets, and they are *not* used in the West and most Westerners unfamiliar with Arabic or Turkish cuisine have probably not even heard of them. Thus, in this case, the formerly mentioned hypothesis that Arabic expressions would be used because the ingredients are so common and well-known to Arabs but less so to Westerners, does not hold true at all, which was another surprising finding. The same goes for chickpeas (*hummus* – also the name of a famous Levantine dip where chickpeas are the main ingredient), which are used a lot throughout the Arabic world, especially in North Africa. On the other hand, their use is nowadays more common in the West as well – although arguably mostly in ethnic foods such as falafel, the hummus dip and couscous.

The last one of the six completely non-code-switched cases is *the Levant*, ‘Ash-Shaam’ in Arabic. It not occurring in Arabic at all was unexpected because of the great and important status of that area for Arabs in general and for Muslims in particular, in several significant ways including historical, geographical, ethnic and religious. *Ash-Shaam* is a word which has been used by the Arabs for more than 1,500 years to refer to the area which today consists of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Palestine, and the word occurs in religious texts dating from over

1,000 years ago. As for the religious aspect though, it applies mainly to Muslims but some of the bloggers are Christian, and perhaps for some of the ones who identify themselves as Muslims, the religious status of the area is not that significant.

Another very potential reason for not mentioning *Ash-Shaam* is geo-political: the once unified Levant area ruled by the Ottomans was divided into the current four separate states by the French-British initiated Sykes-Picot agreement in 1916 with the intention of ending the Ottoman empire, and nationalism was encouraged among the inhabitants of the new nation states to weaken the former unity (History.com Editors 2018). It is thus possible, and even probable, that instead of feeling attachment to the Levant area as a whole, the people there now feel more connected to their separate native states and the concept of Ash-Shaam has faded in their minds. Three bloggers mentioned the Levant in a total of 6 posts, but for one reason or another did not feel the need to bring up its Arabic name, even though, while every single Arab knows what *Ash-Shaam* is, it might be argued that matters are probably not the same with English speakers and the word ‘the Levant’.

### **4.3 Other indications of cultural identity**

For each blog post, the text surrounding the recipe was analyzed for instances of code-switching and other indications of cultural identity. The results on code-switching within the posts have been presented and discussed above. In terms of other tokens of cultural identity, four main themes which are consistently repeated throughout the texts, clearly emerge from the data. The themes are listed below, and information on how many posts (out of 40) they occurred in, is given in brackets. In most cases, more than one theme was present within the same post.

- 1) (Food) traditions and (food) culture (15 posts)
- 2) Childhood memories and recollecting the childhood and past days; mostly related to food (14 posts)

- 3) a) Cultural identity in general; b) Conflicting identities and identity or culture struggles (9 posts)
- 4) Home and homeland: reminiscences about the home country, expressions of longing and pain, discussions about migration/exile and political situations (8 posts)

What emerges clearly from this listing, is that the two most popular themes are 1) mostly food-related traditions and culture, and 2) childhood- and past-related recollections which in most cases are related to food. This comes as no surprise as the data comes from food blogs and the bloggers all share a common passion for food and cooking. The two slightly less common themes are both related to migration or exile and the identity- and culture-related conflicts and inner struggles which come along with having to leave a dear place and adjust and adapt to a new, unfamiliar world and culture. The four themes could thus be further divided into two main topics occurring in all of the blog posts: food-related issues and identity-related issues. In the following sections, the four themes will, however, be dealt with separately, and each theme will be discussed along with examples from the data. For the sake of clarity, theme number three has been divided into two subsections: Identity and identity-related issues (4.3.3), and Cultural food experiments and identity struggles (4.3.4).

### **4.3.1 Traditions and food culture**

Some bloggers wrote accounts about what is traditionally done on and prepared for certain holidays which either Muslims or Arab Christians celebrate, others wrote about what is traditionally eaten for breakfast or on other more or less special occasions, or in the springtime for example. One blogger, for instance, writes about Christmas traditions in her family:

Christmas is round [sic] the corner and I thought I could share with you this festive stuffed breast of lamb that my mother used to cook for xmas [sic] when it was only us around the table. I much preferred it to the turkey she roasted when my grandmother, aunt and uncles joined us. (Anissa's)

Some bloggers narrate about the communal and traditional aspects of how the whole family, often along with relatives, would gather to prepare and eat a dish together, happily chatting with each other and sipping tea at the same time:

Cooking is a communal activity in traditional Palestinian culture ... Whenever families gather together to share a meal, you will find aunties and tetas (grandmothers) gathered around the kitchen table ... Time flies quickly when many are gathered to do the work, while sharing jokes and family gossip, and passing cups of hot mint tea. Aunties teach their nieces how to roll the grape leaves *hayk*, *like this*, nice and tight, so that they don't unravel in the hot pot. (Bint Rhoda's Kitchen, emphasis in the original)

In other posts, bloggers describe Arabic food culture, typical Arabic home cooking, and which ingredients are typically used in Arabic cuisine or which ones the Arabs are particularly fond of:

What does sumac taste like? Sumac has a bright, acidic, lemony flavor, and lends a tartness to foods that tantalize the Arab palate. An herb that tastes like lemon? It's true! And my, how Arabs love their lemons. Fresh lemons are used in almost every meal - mixed into dressings, squeezed over soups and salads, poured over meats . . . perhaps you have noticed this. (Bint Rhoda's Kitchen)

You see, in the Levant (Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan) wild greens play a major roll [sic] in people's diet, especially around spring. ... They are used to make a variety of vegetarian recipes which are quite popular around spring time. The reason behind that is that in the old days, people in large areas of the Levant were farmers and shepherds, they lived off the land and what it provided. As a result of that, the Levantine cuisine is very rice [sic] in plant-based recipes. Greens (wild and cultivated), seeds, and legumes are key players in the Levantine cuisine. (Chef in Disguise)

One feature of Middle Eastern cuisine is that the dishes are named after the main ingredient of the dish – and that main ingredient is always a vegetable. (Bint Rhoda's Kitchen)

Others write about how fond they are of their traditional cuisine and how delicious they find the dishes are, and some write about how, in most Arabs' minds, traditions should be respected and how people are delicate to any attempted changes to their traditional foods. One blogger, for example, recounts how the Lebanese were outraged when the French made two major offences and thus practically destroyed the Lebanese national salad *tabbouleh* by replacing bulgur with couscous and only using a pinch of parsley, when parsley is supposed to be the main ingredient of the salad.

#### **4.3.2 Childhood memories**

When the bloggers studied for this paper wrote about their childhood and reminisced past days, in all but one post it was somehow related to food, food culture and food traditions. The bloggers recount childhood memories which cooking or eating the particular dish that they are sharing with the readers brings back to their minds.

One blogger accounts how a certain dish is associated with spring cleaning, when the entire house would be turned upside down and cleaned to the core, and how on those busy, work-filled days, that particular dish would be served because it is so easy and fast to prepare. Another one narrates how, instead of being served spaghetti and meatballs every Wednesday, her mother would make her stewed green beans and seasoned rice, and how each time, to this day, the smell of them brings the blogger back to her mother's kitchen and her mother's pots of rice and bean stew bubbling on the stove. A third blogger remembers how she used to go out with her mother and grandmother to collect fresh thyme for making *zaatar*, and how, when seeing thyme sprigs, the adults would enthusiastically call "*zaatar!*"

In another post, a blogger talks about cauliflower, about having eaten it several times a week when she was little, and how it is to her like a close childhood friend. In a post on My Moroccan Food, the blogger discusses *maakouda*, Moroccan fried potato crockets, and says she loves to eat them in sandwiches because it reminds her of childhood holidays spent with relatives in Morocco, and how she would go with her cousins to buy those sandwiches from street vendors. Yet another blogger, talking about preparing traditional date-filled cookies (*maamoul*) for *Eid*, an Islamic holiday, recounts:

I have fond memories of making cookies with my mum for Eid. Making maamoul is usually an event for family and friends to come together, all helping and participating in making the dough, filling the cookies, forming them and baking them. All this happens in a cosy [sic] atmosphere filling [sic] with chats about the blessings of Ramadan, the experience of fasting, Eid preparations and plans. Kids talk about the new cloths [sic] and toys they bought for Eid, all the places they plan on going, helping deform a few maamoul cookies here and there in the process. As soon as the first baking sheet goes into the oven, a cloud of spice and heavenly smells fills the house and it suddenly feels like Eid is indeed a couple of days away.  
(Chef in Disguise)

In the following quote, the author of Taste of Beirut gives a fairly good description of just how beautiful a sensation it can be, to eat something which brings back memories of something dear that one has had to leave behind:

We are told that Marcel Proust loved his *madeleines*, because when he would bite into one a flood of childhood memories would overtake him and he would experience bliss...

I am willing to bet that for a large majority of Lebanese expats the feeling is similar when a plate of *labneh* [yoghurt cheese] is presented to them.  
(Taste of Beirut, emphasis in the original, brackets added)



### 4.3.3 Identities and identity-related issues

Of the nine blog posts where cultural, ethnic or linguistic identity is more or less present as a theme, four come from the Palestinian blog called Bint Rhoda's Kitchen. In her posts, she has lengthy and fascinating contemplations about what it means to be an Arab, and the pain she felt for a long time for not knowing her mother tongue, culture, traditions and homeland as well as she felt she should have.

In one post, the author of Bint Rhoda's Kitchen gives her readers an account of how, as a child, she would hear adults around her say "*Aywa, aywa, fil mishmish*" when talking about when something would happen or be done. She was puzzled, because she was able to translate the phrase into English literally: "*Yes, yes, in the apricot*", but she could not comprehend what that had to with things such as when the road or the toilet would be fixed. As a child, she never found the answer and felt too shy to ask her mother, as she was already asking her what she means on so many other occasions. She then discusses her relationship and history with the Arabic language, noting that her Palestinian mother did not pass her mother tongue on to her children:

Growing up in my half-Arab half-American home meant living on the shore of understanding, but never venturing into deep waters. My Arabic was spotty. I could understand words, phrases, simple sentences ... But there were some things that eluded translation: insults, proverbs, food.  
(Bint Rhoda's Kitchen)

The author recounts how she would mainly learn Arabic by listening to adults speak with each other over dinner or in a get-together, not fully understanding, but trying to keep track of what was being said. She remembers how her mother used to speak to her and her sister in English or partial English, and how the two of them were very accustomed to "sentences that began in one language and ended in another" (Bint Rhoda's Blog) – that is, their mother code-switching between English and Arabic. The blogger then returns to the apricot-mystery,

saying she only recently, as an adult, found out what is meant by the phrase: as the apricot-season in Palestine is very short and only lasts a few weeks which often go by so fast that one doesn't even notice, referring to the apricot season has become a humorous way of saying something is never going to happen.

In another, even more personal and heartbreaking post, the same blogger mentions a discussion which she had with her daughter and which triggered a painful struggle in her head about her cultural and linguistic identity. The words that triggered the contemplation were when the blogger's daughter said to her mother "*Mommy, my skin is lighter than yours, because I am just a beginner Arab,*" and after a pause added "*You are a middle Arab and Teta [grandmother] is an advanced Arab.*" (Bint Rhoda's Kitchen, emphasis in the original, brackets added) To the child, the words were careless, but to her mother they were sharp and brought back painful memories, and she could not stop thinking about those words: "I am haunted by this sentence: *I am a beginner Arab*" (Bint Rhoda's Kitchen, emphasis in the original). The blogger says the topic became difficult for her when the family moved to Palestine when she was 9 years old and so many things changed:

I was expected to (learn to) speak Arabic ... *Why don't you speak Arabic?* everyone asked me. I couldn't explain why my tongue didn't work ... I didn't have the words to tell my story ... All I knew was that I was broken. I was an Arabic-less half-Arab ... *I just can't*, I would say. My answer was as bitter as the spring green almonds that children stole from our almond tree. (Bint Rhoda's Kitchen, emphasis in the original)

The blogger recounts how, even though her mother had cooked simple Palestinian foods before, the traditions and almost all the food in Palestine were new and strange to her. And because she did not know the language, she would eat the food and listen to others talk, absorbing the food culture and the language little by little. Now, a long time after that, as an adult and in the US, she writes:

I find myself asking, as I stir my pots of Palestinian foods, can you be a “beginner” Arab? Is my Arabness (or Americanness) something that I can learn, that I can progress with, that I can advance in, as I learn more? Am I more Arab if I cook Arab food? If I study Arabic? If I go back to Palestine more often? If I am more educated on our politics and history? Is my Arabness something that I possess, that I can become more proficient in, or is it my birthright, a gift given to me at birth? (Bint Rhoda’s Kitchen)

The blogger then asks those of her readers with a similar background how they have answered the question, noting that she herself is not sure if she has the answer. She does tell that “There was a time when the question itself was too painful to even speak out loud, to admit” (Bint Rhoda’s Kitchen), but then concludes by saying that now she has come to terms with it and is at peace with her identity.

#### 4.3.4 Cultural food experiments and identity struggles

In the data, four bloggers had posts where they shared a modified or ‘modernized’ recipe and wrote about combining something from their new culture with their old cultural traditions in cooking. Only one blogger, one of the youngest among the eight blog keepers referred to in this study, did so confidently and with ease. Even the introduction to her blog suggests that it is something she regularly likes to do:

I like to develop recipes ... and I love to do it by putting my own twist into Moroccan classics ... to make Moroccan dishes more modern and accessible. (My Moroccan Kitchen)

As for the three other bloggers, they had to go through serious mental battles, asking themselves if they *really* are going to do it, and *can* they do it, is it *allowed*? Some even struggled with feelings of guilt and being scared for merely thinking about changing the traditions, and then for actually going on to do that. One blogger talked about mixing zaatar with *baba ghannouj*, a famous

Levantine eggplant dip, and commented on the perceived radicalness of her deed by saying:

As a Lebanese-born American, adding *zaatar* to baba ghannouj is like telling your family you will not be serving turkey for Thanksgiving. I was scared, but hey, I was ready to take the plunge. (Taste of Beirut, emphasis in the original)

Another blogger has a lengthy discussion about making *fawaffles* – falafels on a waffle iron. Tellingly, the name of her post is *Making “Fawaffles”: An Experiment with Arab and American Cultural Identity*. She had initially read about the idea on another food blog, and her first reaction was something between disgust and anger:

*Really? Fawaffle? Make falafels in your waffle iron?*

I jumped right up on my soapbox, and began to mentally enumerate all of the ways that this dish was just. plain. wrong. *Leave it to Americans*, I thought to myself, *to take a perfectly good falafel and squish it into a waffle iron. Always innovating. Always trying to change things up. Always trying to improve on perfection.*

*Grrr.* (Bint Rhoda’s Kitchen, emphasis in the original)

But, as the thought ripened in her head, she started to feel a secret urge to try it, thinking it would be so much easier and faster than deep-frying. She then describes a mental battle which took place between two competing voices in her head:

I walked around the house for a while, taking care of this and that, and listened to the two competing voices in my head. One voice, calling for tradition and authenticity. The other voice, calling for playful innovation. And as I listened, I really heard these two voices clearly, maybe for the first time. One, the collective voice of the neighbors, relatives and friends

from my childhood in Palestine, extolling the virtue of authenticity, the beauty of tradition, vying between them to produce the best versions of classic dishes, laughing at strange variations. The other voice a quieter one, Western and pragmatic, but just as compelling. I just shrugged and said, seductively: what if it's great?

*What if?* (Bint Rhoda's kitchen, emphasis in the original)

After this, the two following pictures along with their captions appear in the post:



**Figures 2 and 3.** Making “fawaffles.”

The blogger then continues:

I hate to admit this, but . . . right off of [sic] the waffle grill, these babies were pretty good . . . After they cooled down, though, it was a different story. The magic of the fawaffle was gone . . . My ancestors got it right. Falafels are for frying.

And yet.

I stood over the kitchen sick, with dripping hands and a strange new feeling. Was it liberation? Honesty? Sauciness? Rebellion? Shame? *Am I allowed to take something from one of my heritages and crush it into the shape of the other?* I had a sense that I had broken a rule, an unspoken

rule *that an Arab would never do this*, and that by breaking the rule, my cultural confusion was exposed. Is this a bright line – the line between someone inside and someone outside of a culture? (Bint Rhoda’s Kitchen, emphasis in the original)

Even after this, the blogger still continues about the topic for one last chapter, talking about having shown her cards by attempting to make an Arab-American dish, voicing that those living between two or more cultures always have more cards than they show. She then concludes her post by saying “And maybe, just maybe, the only way to truly be at home is for you to occasionally, just occasionally, throw down your whole hand.” (Bint Rhoda’s Kitchen)

This long excerpt gives us a good glimpse into what life is like for an exile: living in a constant struggle between two conflicting and competing worlds, cultures and identities.

#### **4.3.5 Home and homeland**

For many of the Levantine bloggers, the political unrest of that area, along with the mental agony caused by it, is echoed in their writings:

I think that exiles also cook the best dishes from home. And yet, it is bittersweet because these foods are a celebration of my people, a people who love to eat and dance and sing but who are still under occupation. (Bint Rhoda’s Kitchen)

I have recently moved to Sicily in search of sunshine and a place that reminds me of home (Lebanon & Syria) but where I do not have to worry about ISIS! (Anissa’s)

I have never been able to go to Gaza. This recipe, though, has sneaked out and I cannot help but think about the people who live behind those walls, and pray for their peace, as I crack the eggs for this omelette [sic]. (Bint Rhoda’s Kitchen)

Other writings about homeland simply depict the longing and fondness these bloggers have for their home countries, and this can be seen in the above example from Anissa's blog, where she describes having relocated from London to Sicily in order to be in a place which reminds her of her homeland. In a post in the Moroccan food blog, the author tells her readers how excited and enthusiastic she is about an upcoming summer trip to Morocco, when she will be able to spend more time in her native country than she has for a long time. With yearning, she reminisces past childhood summers spent in Morocco, and remembers feeling very sad every time she had to leave and go back to her new country.

## **5 Discussion**

In this study, a qualitative content analysis was conducted on 40 posts from a total of 8 Arabic food blogs written in English. The chosen posts were analyzed for instances of code-switching to Arabic and for other markers of cultural identity. In the case of code-switching, the results were somewhat surprising as code-switching occurred at a considerably lower frequency than expected, and in several cases did not occur at all with such words that were presumed to at least occasionally appear in Arabic. As mentioned earlier, there were also several blogs which had to be discarded because they contained virtually no instances of code-switching into Arabic. As indicated before, it is somewhat probable that this is at least partly due to the fact that the Arabic language does currently not enjoy such a highly influential and in a way prestigious status as English, which practically dominates the world of the internet and is the lingua franca of today.

There were a total of 30 words or expressions which occurred code-switched in the data, and – as can be expected in the case of data coming from food blogs – the vast majority of them were related to food in one way or another. The original hypothesis was that the names of such ingredients that are very commonly used in Arabic cooking would occur in Arabic because of them being so familiar and close to the hearts of the bloggers. This turned out to be only partly true, and in some cases the results were in fact completely contrary to the initial assumption, as

several of the very basic ingredients of Arabic cuisine did not occur code-switched in the chosen blog posts at all. In the light of my data, it appears that rather than being based on the frequency of usage in Arabic cooking, the tendency to use Arabic would be based not on familiarity to the Arabs, but on unfamiliarity to the Western cuisine and Western readers. It is therefore as if the Arab bloggers in such cases felt the items to be more ‘theirs’ and belonging more to ‘them’ and ‘their culture’, thus marking them as their own by opting to use Arabic in such cases.

When looking at the occurrences and frequencies of code-switching among the 40 posts and comparing them between the bloggers who live and do not live in the West, a somewhat clear division can be observed. The data collected from the three blogs whose authors reside in Arab countries includes occurrences of only eight code-switched items, when the code-switched items in all of the data totaled 30. In *Chef in Disguise* and *Maryam’s Culinary Wonders*, only two code-switched items a blog infrequently appear in the posts collected from those blogs. In the case of *Kitchen of Palestine*, four code-switched items occur in the data with slightly, but not notably higher frequencies. This means that most occurrences of code-switching appeared in the data collected from the blogs whose authors live in anglophone countries, and that the usage of code-switching to Arabic was thus more frequent among the bloggers who live outside the sphere of their native culture environment.

The above-mentioned results are in line with Block’s (2006) discussion about immigrants wanting to preserve and maintain their cultural identities, and the assumption that this would be the motivating factor behind code-switching is supported by Han Chung’s (2006: 294) claim that using a minority language serves “to establish and reinforce the ethnic identities of their speakers,” as well as by Mahootian’s argument that “mixed-code discourse is used to underscore a bilingual identity that is connected to, yet distinct from, the identity of speakers in their monolingual contexts.” (Mahootian 2005: 362) According to Mahootian (2012), how we choose to express ourselves, be it through the language or languages we opt to use or through some other linguistic feature, is directly related to how we



want others to see us. And as each language carries with it associations to a certain culture and way of life (Gardner-Chloros 2009), it could be that expressing affiliation to the Arabic culture and claiming an expert-identity in Arabness (cf. Diemer and Frobenius 2013: 59) is what these bloggers' intention is when they choose to code-switch into Arabic. And as Graedler (1999) asserted, since written language can be planned ahead, the choice to use another code is probably a conscious and therefore a more meaningful one than it would be in oral discourse.

As for other markers and indicators of cultural identity, the results showed that like in the case of code-switching, most of them are somehow related to food. As mentioned earlier, the occurrences of cultural identity markers in the data can roughly be divided into two main themes, one of them being food-related and the other, slightly less frequent one identity-related. For the purposes of the study, the two major themes were divided into four sub-categories for the sake of clarity and ease. The categories were a) traditions and culture (mostly related to food), b) childhood and past recollections (mostly related to food), c) home and homeland, and d) cultural identity. The last sub-category was further divided into a separate category for cultural identity in general, and another category for conflicting identities and identity or culture struggles.

For the first two categories (traditions and culture; childhood and past recollections), which were the two categories that were mostly related to food, there were no notable frequency differences between the bloggers living in anglophone countries and those living in Arab countries. This is not a surprising finding, as the main purpose of all the blogs is to talk about food and to share recipes, and as probably virtually all people regardless of their past and background have fond food-related childhood memories, it is a common thing shared by all people everywhere. Sharing recipes and telling about culinary customs related to one's native culture can, however, be seen as a way to help preserve and ensure the continuity of a society's culture and culinary practices (cf. Paradowski 2018: 50).

When moving on to the two identity-related sub-categories, differences do start to emerge. All the references to home or homeland and expressions of longing for

them were made by the immigrant bloggers living in anglophone countries. As for cultural identity, even the bloggers residing in Arab countries made some references to cultural identity in general, but only the posts of bloggers living in the West contained implications of conflicting linguistic or cultural identities. This is in line with Schindler et al.'s (2015) research on biculturals, where they assert that some immigrants living in a new cultural environment may find their 'own' culture and the new culture "rather oppositional and contradictory." (Schindler et al. 2015: 234)

On the basis of the data for this study, it could thus be said that the usage of Arabic words and expressions is notably more frequent among the Arab bloggers who live outside the Arab world, and that only the exiles or immigrants living outside their own cultural sphere (that being the Arab culture in this case) appear to experience cultural identity struggles and clashes, and that they have a stronger sense of yearning and longing for their native counties than the ones still residing somewhere in the Arab world.

It must, however, be borne in mind that the data set for this study is limited, and that therefore no generalizations pertaining to Arab immigrants or Arab food bloggers as a whole (be it ones living in the West or ones residing in Arab countries) can be made on the basis of these data. It must also be taken into consideration that the qualitative analysis on the data was carried out by a human, not by a computer, and it is therefore possible that something has been left unnoticed or that a mistake has been made in the results or in calculating the frequencies for example, and this might in some way affect the results of the study. Also, the criteria for what to count as code-switching – for example, should the names of the dishes and recipes or certain foods be considered code-switching as well, – and what is considered as an interesting or noteworthy case where code-switching did not occur, could be defined differently, which would naturally have yielded different results. Therefore, had the criteria been different, had decisions about excluding or including something been made differently, or had another

person conducted this study, the results and thus the conclusions to be drawn on the basis of those results might considerably differ from the ones obtained this time.

## **6 Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to find out how code-switching to Arabic and other markers of Arab cultural identity appear in the blog posts of Arab food bloggers who publish Arabic food recipes in English. A total of 40 posts were chosen from 8 blogs where five of the bloggers live in anglophone countries and three in Arabic-speaking countries. The chosen posts were qualitatively analyzed, and the results showed that the vast majority of code-switched items were food-related and that while code-switching generally occurred less frequently than expected, it occurred much more frequently in the posts of those bloggers who reside in the West. In terms of other indicators of cultural identity, they, too, were mostly related to food and there were no considerable frequency differences between the eight bloggers in terms of food-related discussions. There was, however, another noteworthy theme related to cultural markers, and in terms of this theme, the data once again showed notable divergence between the bloggers who reside outside the Arab countries and those who do not. The other frequently recurring theme included topics such as conflicting identities and cultural clashes, reminiscences about the homeland and contemplations about migration or exile. While all bloggers made some references to cultural identity in general, it was only the authors living in anglophone countries who wrote about struggles and clashes with conflicting cultural identities and voiced their strong yearning for the other world which they call home.

As was mentioned earlier when discussing the results, only eight of the thirty items which were found code-switched in the data, infrequently occurred in the three blogs whose authors reside in Arab countries. On the basis of the results, it can thus be concluded that the bloggers who live in the West appear to code-switch more frequently than the ones living in the Arab world, and that it seems to be those bloggers who live within the sphere of another culture who experience more 'homesickness' and identity conflicts than the bloggers who are still residing in an Arab country. In the light of the analysis, it would thus appear that for bicultural

bloggers, questions of identity are more crucial and salient, and that they feel it to be more important to express and emphasize their cultural identity than their monocultural counterparts. As indicated before, the results can, however, not be generalized because of the limited set of data used in this study.

Also, as mentioned earlier, while several sectors of this study have been separately researched a great deal in the past, no previous study that I am aware of has combined cultural identity and/or code-switching with food blogs, even though the link between food and ethnic or cultural identity has been established before. Also, as studies on code-switching from English to other languages have also been to some extent outnumbered and even possibly overshadowed by studies on code-switching *into* English, undoubtedly because of the current status and distribution of English, it is hoped that this study works to turn more scholarly attention to other languages as well.

The findings and results of this study are therefore significant, but more extensive and more in-depth studies with richer data are required to gain more reliable results and for the findings to be more generalizable. What this study does establish, is that food blogs authored by biculturals are rich and fascinating sources of data for studying code-switching and cultural identity, and that they therefore deserve more scholarly attention – and so does code-switching into languages other than English. Also, as it was established that no theoretical framework or methodology intended specifically for studying code-switching in written computer-mediated communication exists (Sebba 2012 and 2013; Androutsopoulos 2013), and since the previous frameworks cannot be applied to written CMC without problems (Sebba 2012), it is definitely about time someone took on the task of developing such a framework.

## References

- Alhazmi, A. (2016) Linguistic Aspects of Arabic-English Code-Switching on Facebook and Radio in Australia, *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature* 5(3): 184-198.
- Androutsopoulos, J. (2013) Code-switching in computer-mediated communication. In Herring, S. C., Stein, D. & Virtanen, T. (Eds) *Handbooks of Pragmatics (Vol. 9): Pragmatics of Computer-Mediated Communication* (pp. 667-694). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Auer, P. (1984) *Bilingual Conversation*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Auer, P. (2005) A postscript: code-switching and social identity, *Journal of Pragmatics* 37: 403-410.
- Block, D. (2006) *Multicultural identities in a global city: London stories*. Hampshire/New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bowden, D. (1999) *The Mythology of Voice*. Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook.
- Bucholtz, M. & Hall, K. (2005) Identity and interaction: A sociocultural linguistic approach, *Discourse Studies* 7(4-5): 585-614.
- Bullock, B. E. & Toribio, A. J. (2009) Themes in the Study of Code-Switching. In Bullock, B. E. & Toribio, A. J. (Eds.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Linguistic Code-Switching* (pp. 1-17). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Burton, K. (2016) You Are What You Eat: Investigating Food Discourse and Digitally-Mediated Identities. *Open Access Dissertations*, paper 432.
- Caplan, P. (1997) *Food, Health and Identity*. Milton Park/New York: Routledge.
- Chrzan, J. & Brett, T. (2017) *Food Culture: Anthropology, Linguistics and Food Studies*. New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Chung, H. H. (2006) Code-Switching as a Communicative Strategy: A Case Study of Korean-English Bilinguals, *Bilingual Research Journal* 30(2): 293-307.

- Collins Dictionary American Thesaurus (2019), accessed 9 March 2019, <<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/american-thesaurus>>.
- Cotter, C. (1997) Claiming a piece of the pie: how the language of recipes affects community. In Bower, A. (Ed.) *Recipes for Reading: Community Cookbooks, Stories, Histories* (pp. 51-71). Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Counihan, C. (1999) *The Anthropology of Food and Body: Gender, Meaning and Power*. New York: Routledge.
- Coveney, J. (2014) *Food*. Milton Park/New York: Routledge.
- Crystal, D. (2006) *Language and the Internet*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Darvin, R. & Norton, B. (2015) Identity and a Model of Investment in Applied Linguistics, *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 35: 36-56.
- Darvin, R. (2016) Language and Identity in the Digital Age. In Preece, S. (Ed.) *The Routledge Handbook of Language Identity* (pp. 523-540). New York: Routledge.
- Diemer, S. (2016) Book Review: Sensory adjectives in the discourse of food: a frame-semantic approach to language and perception, *The Translator* 22(1): 107-109.
- Diemer, S. & Frobenius, M. (2013) When making pie, all ingredients must be chilled. Including you: Lexical, syntactic and interactive features in online discourse – a synchronic study of food blogs. In Gerhardt, C. et al. (Eds.) *Culinary Linguistics: The Chef's Special* (pp. 53-82). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Friedman, J. (1994) *Cultural Identity and Global Process*. Trowbridge: Sage Publications.
- Garden, M. (2011) Defining blog: A fool's errand or a necessary undertaking, *Journalism* 13(4): 483-499.
- Gardner-Chloros, P. (2009) *Code-Switching*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Gerhardt, C. (2013) Food and language – language and food. In Gerhardt, C. et al. (Eds.) *Culinary Linguistics: The Chef's Special* (pp. 3-52). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Graedler, A. L. (1999) Where English and Norwegian meet: Codeswitching in written texts, *Language and computers* 26: 327-344.
- Gumperz, J. J. (1982) *Discourse Strategies* (Vol 1), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hall, S. & du Gay, P. (1997) *Questions of Cultural Identity*. Gosport: Sage Publications.
- Herring, S. (2004) Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis: An Approach to Researching Online Behavior. In Garab, S. A. et al. (Eds.) *Designing for Virtual Communities in the Service of Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Herring, S. C. et al (2004) Bridging the gap: A genre analysis of weblogs. In: *Proceedings of the 37<sup>th</sup> Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS-37)*. Los Alamitos CA: IEE Computer Society Press.
- History.com Editors (2018) *Britain and France conclude Sykes-Picot agreement*, accessed 2 February 2019, <<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/britain-and-france-conclude-sykes-picot-agreement>>.
- Joseph, J. (2004) *Language and Identity*. London: Palgrave.
- Kramsch, C. (2003) Identity, role and voice in cross-cultural (mis)communication. In House, J. et al. (Eds.) *Misunderstanding in social life: Discourse approaches to problematic talk* (pp. 129-153). London: Longman.
- Kramsch, C. (2013) Afterword. In Norton, B. *Identity and language learning: Extending the conversation*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Leigh Burton, K. (2016) You Are What You Eat: Investigating Food Discourse and Digitally-Mediated Identities, *Open Access Dissertations*, paper 432.
- Li, J. & Chignell, M. (2010) Birds of a feather: How personality influences blog writing and reading, *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies* 68: 589-602.

Liu, Y. (2008) Evaluation of the Matrix Language Hypothesis: Evidence from Chinese-English Code-switching Phenomena in Blogs, *Journal of Chinese Language and Computing* 18(2): 75-92.

Macmillan Thesaurus (2019), accessed 9 March 2019, <<https://www.macmillanthesaurus.com>>.

Mahootian, S. (2005) Linguistic change and social meaning: Codeswitching in the media, *International Journal of Bilingualism* 9(3-49): 361-376.

Mahootian, S. (2012) Repertoires and Resources: Accounting for Code-mixing in the Media. In Sebba, M., Mahootian, S. & Jonsson, C. (Eds.) *Language Mixing and Code-Switching in Writing: Approaches to Mixed-Language Written Discourse* (pp. 192-211). London/New York: Routledge.

Mathews, G. (2000) *Global Culture/Individual Identity: Searching for Home in the Cultural Supermarket*. London/New York: Routledge.

McGaughey, K. (2010) Food in Binary: Identity and Interaction in Two German Food Blogs. *Cultural Analysis* 9: 69-98.

Merriam-Webster Thesaurus (2019), accessed 9 March 2019, <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus>>.

Miller, C. & Shepherd, D. (2004) Blogging as Social Action: A Genre Analysis of the Weblog. In Gurak, L. & Antonijevic, S. (Eds.) *Into the Blogosphere: Rhetoric, Community, and Culture of Weblogs*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Libraries.

Montanari, M. (2004) *Food is Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Myers-Scotton, C. (1997) *Dueling Languages: Grammatical Structure in Code-Switching*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Norton, B. (2000) *Identity and language learning: Gender, ethnicity and educational change*. Harlow: Longman/Pearson Education.

Norton, B (2010) Language and identity. In Hornberger, N. & McKay, S. (Eds.) *Sociolinguistics and language education* (pp. 349-369). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.



- Norton, B. (2013) *Identity and language learning: extending the conversation*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Norton Peirce, B. (1995) Social identity, investment, and language learning. *TESOL Quarterly* 29: 9-31.
- Pacea, O. (2014) Are We Really Wor(l)ds Apart? On Gender, Genre and Language Use in Blogs, *Journal of Research in Gender Studies* 4(1): 670-686.
- Pakkala-Weckström, M. (2013) The Food Recipe as a Genre – What Challenges can it Pose to a Translator? In Tyrkkö, J. et al. (Eds.) *Ex Philologia Lux: Essays in Honour of Leena Kahlas-Tarkka* (pp. 327-342). Helsinki: Société Néophilologique.
- Paradowski, M. B. (2018) What's cooking in English culinary texts? Insights from genre corpora for cookbook and menu writers and translators, *The Translator* 24(1): 50-69.
- Preston, P.W. (1997) *Political/Cultural Identity: Citizens and Nations in a Global Era*. Guildford: Sage Publications.
- Puschmann, C. (2013) Blogging. In Herring, S. C., Stein, D. & Virtanen, T. (Eds) *Handbooks of Pragmatics (Vol. 9): Pragmatics of Computer-Mediated Communication* (pp. 83-108). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Rathert, S. (2015) Functions of teacher and student code-switching in an EFL classroom and pedagogical focus: observations and implications, *Educational process: International journal* 1(1-2): 7-18.
- Rosenhouse, J. & Kowner, R. (2008) *Globally Speaking: Motives for Adopting English Vocabulary in Other Languages* (Vol. 149). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Schinder, S. et al. (2015) The Bicultural Phenomenon: The Interplay of Group Prototypicality and Cultural Identity Switching, *Social Psychology* 47(5): 233-243.
- Sebba, M. (2012) Researching and Theorizing Multilingual Texts. In Sebba, M., Mahootian, S. & Jonsson, C. (Eds.) *Language Mixing and Code-Switching in Writing: Approaches to Mixed-Language Written Discourse* (pp. 1-26). London/New York: Routledge.

- Sebba, M. (2013) Multilingualism in written discourse: An approach to the analysis of multilingual texts, *International Journal of Bilingualism* 17(1): 97-118.
- Sharaf Eldin, A. A. T. (2015) Socio Linguistic Study of Code Switching of the Arabic Language Speakers on Social Networking, *International Journal of English Linguistics* 4(6): 78-86.
- Solorio, T. & Liu, Y. (2008) Learning to Predict Code-Switching Points, *Proceedings of the 2008 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing*, pp. 973-981.
- Themistocleous, C. (2015) Digital code-switching between Cypriot and Standard Greek: Performance and identity play online, *International journal of bilingualism* 19(3): 282-297.
- Warner, A. D. (2015) *Ethnic and Cultural Identity: Perceptions, Discrimination and Social Challenges*. New York: Nova Science Publishers Inc.
- Wilson, T. M. (2006) *Food, Drink and Identity in Europe*. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi B.V.

## Appendix A

### Code-switched items

The findings are presented below in Table 1, but first a note about the different spellings and pronunciations in the table. The different spellings for some of the words are because Arabic is written in a script different from English, so each blogger has made her own transliterations based on what spelling she felt is closest to how the word is pronounced in Arabic. Sometimes the same blogger would use different spelling even within the same post, perhaps out of forgetfulness, just because there are no established correct transliterations for these words. Some spellings also represent regional spelling differences depending on whether English or French is the more dominant foreign language in that particular region. For example, the phoneme /ʃ/ is represented by *sh* in the words ‘jereesh/jareesh’ and ‘mishmish’ where the bloggers are from areas where English has had a stronger influence in the Latin spelling system, but it is represented by *ch* in ‘chorba’ where the blogger is from Morocco, where the Latin alphabet is spelled according to French pronunciation conventions. The same goes for the phoneme /q/ (an uvular consonant; no equivalent in English) which is expressed by *q* in English transliteration and *k* in French transliteration. The phoneme /u/ is spelled *o* or *ou* in the data and /u:/ as *oo* or *ou* independent of where the blogger is from – although generally *ou* for both phonemes is what I have seen used in French transliteration and *o/oo* are used in the English transliterations of the official English translation of the Holy Quran for example. The apostrophe in *za'tar* and *za'atar* is meant to represent the pharyngeal consonant /ʕ/, and *gh* in ‘ghorbaal’ stands for the velar consonant /ɣ/ – both phonemes not found in English.

| <b>Word</b>            | <b>Meaning</b>                                    | <b>Occurrences</b> | <b>Posts<br/>(out of 40)</b> | <b>Blogs<br/>(out of 8)</b> |
|------------------------|---|--------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| zaatar/za'tar/za'atar* | thyme   | 26                 | 4                            | 5                           |
| zaatar/za'tar/za'atar  | a spice mix made of thyme, sumac and sesame seeds | 48                 | 6                            | 4                           |

|                            |  |    |   |   |
|----------------------------|--|----|---|---|
| zait and zaatar            | olive oil [lit. 'oil']<br>and the above-<br>mentioned spice<br>mix | 1  | 1 | 1 |
| jereesh/jareesh            | cracked wheat  | 3  | 2 | 1 |
| mishmish                   | apricot  | 4  | 1 | 1 |
| aywa, aywa                 | yes, yes   | 1  | 1 | 1 |
| loomi/noomi/noomi<br>basra | dried limes  | 11 | 4 | 1 |
| hindaba/hindbeh*           | dandelion leaves   | 10 | 2 | 2 |
| mouneh                     | “preserves made<br>of seasonal<br>produce”                         | 2  | 1 | 1 |
| mat'haneh                  | mill   | 1  | 1 | 1 |
| teta                       | grandmother  | 4  | 4 | 2 |
| saj                        | type of pan used<br>for making bread                               | 2  | 1 | 1 |
| baqleh*                    | purslane   | 1  | 1 | 1 |
| Sahtain!                   | May this double<br>your health! [lit.<br>'two healths']            | 4  | 4 | 1 |
| cousa                      | zucchini/squash  | 18 | 2 | 2 |
| hayk                       | like this (local<br>dialect)                                       | 1  | 1 | 1 |
| fassoulia                  | beans/green beans  | 3  | 1 | 1 |
| dabkeh                     | name of Arabic<br>dance  | 1  | 1 | 1 |
| Ahlan wa sahlan            | Welcome  | 1  | 1 | 1 |
| behar                      | allspice/7-spice<br>mix  | 1  | 1 | 1 |

|   |  |    |   |   |
|---|--|----|---|---|
| khobeizah/bakoula*  | mallow/malva   | 15 | 2 | 2 |
| mloukhieh/moulouk<br>hiya/molokhia*                           | jute mallow/Jew's<br>mallow  | 32 | 3 | 2 |
| freekeh   | (cracked) green<br>wheat   | 9  | 1 | 1 |
| صحة و عافية<br>(sahha wa 'aafiya)                             | lit. health and<br>wellbeing   | 2  | 2 | 1 |
| to 'tagine'<br>something<br>(“I was going to<br>*tagine* it”) | to make <i>tagine</i><br>(Moroccan stew-<br>like dishes) out of<br>something | 1  | 1 | 1 |
| chorba  | soup   | 6  | 1 | 1 |
| bamia   | okra   | 1  | 1 | 1 |
| ghourbaal   | a large sieve  | 2  | 1 | 1 |
| mezze   | starters/<br>appetizers  | 1  | 1 | 1 |
| sumaq   | sumac  | 1  | 1 | 1 |

**Table 1** Code-switched items (occurrences in the names of recipes not counted).

(\* = herb/leafy plant)

## Appendix B

### Non-code-switched items

| Word  | Expected                  | Occurrences | Posts<br>(out of 40) | Blogs<br>(out of 8) |
|---|---------------------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| the Levant  | Ash-Shaam                 | 10          | 6                    | 3                   |
| names of<br>common herbs<br>(parsley, mint,<br>cilantro, spinach<br>etc.) | Arabic<br>equivalent      | 84          | 23                   | 8                   |
| rose water  | ma ward                   | 1           | 1                    | 1                   |
| orange blossom<br>water   | ma zahr                   | 9           | 2                    | 2                   |
| allspice/7-spice<br>mix*  | bhar/baharat/<br>behar    | 18          | 9                    | 4                   |
| sumac*  | sumaq                     | 24          | 6                    | 5                   |
| cracked wheat*  | jereesh/jareesh           | 2           | 1                    | 1                   |
| okra*   | bamia                     | 1           | 1                    | 1                   |
| dandelion*  | hidbeh/hindaba            | 17          | 2                    | 2                   |
| thyme*  | zaatar/za'tar/<br>za'atar | 15          | 3                    | 3                   |
| squash/zucchini*  | cousa                     | 32          | 5                    | 4                   |
| purslane*   | baqleh                    | 14          | 2                    | 1                   |
| green beans*  | fassoulia                 | 8           | 1                    | 1                   |
| apricot*  | mishmish                  | 27          | 3                    | 2                   |
| mallow/malva*   | khobeizah/<br>bakoula     | 4           | 3                    | 3                   |

|                        |         |   |   |   |
|------------------------|---------|---|---|---|
| (cracked) green wheat* | freekeh | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| chickpeas              | hummus  | 7 | 2 | 2 |

**Table 2** Non-code-switched items (occurrences in the names of recipes and translations of Arabic terms not counted). (\*= occurred code-switched in some instances).

## Appendix C

### Primary sources: The blogs and blog posts used as data for this study

All last accessed 10 March 2019.

<<http://www.anissas.com/about/>>

<<http://bintrhodaskitchen.blogspot.com/p/about-me.html>>

<<https://chefindisguise.com/about/>>

<<http://www.kitchenofpalestine.com/about/>>

<<http://www.mymoroccanfood.com/about/>>

<<https://cookingmiddleeasternfood.com/about-nadia/>>

<<http://www.tasteofbeirut.com/about/>>

<<http://www.anissas.com/hindbeh-bil-zeyt-or-italian-dandelion-in-olive-oil/>>

<<http://www.anissas.com/zatar-2/>>

<<http://www.anissas.com/purslane-fatayer/>>

<<http://www.anissas.com/mujaddara/>>

<<http://www.anissas.com/dole-mehshi-or-stuffed-breast-of-lamb/>>

<<http://www.anissas.com/kibbeh-nayeh-or-lebanese-steak-tartare/>>

<<http://bintrhodaskitchen.blogspot.com/2013/03/fresh-herb-gaza-omelette-or-ijee.html>>

<<http://bintrhodaskitchen.blogspot.com/2013/08/cousa-mahshi-or-stuffed-baby-summer.html>>

<<http://bintrhodaskitchen.blogspot.com/2013/02/stewed-green-beans-or-fassoulia.html>>

<<http://bintrhodaskitchen.blogspot.com/2013/04/spotlight-on-ancient-herbs-zaatar-and.html>>

<<http://bintrhodaskitchen.blogspot.com/2016/05/baked-apricots-with-honey-and-orange.html#more>>

<<http://bintrhodaskitchen.blogspot.com/2015/05/middle-eastern-lemon-herb-potato-salad.html>>

<<http://bintrhodaskitchen.blogspot.com/2015/01/making-fawaffles-experiment-with-arab.html>>

<<http://bintrhodaskitchen.blogspot.com/2014/02/savory-palestinian-cauliflower-pancakes.html>>

<<http://bintrhodaskitchen.blogspot.com/2013/05/am-i-beginner-arab-and-other-questions.html>>



<[https://2.bp.blogspot.com/-JtmXv2dwYjU/VMpOWFwEcrI/AAAAAAAAAKFU/IKhT6\\_bpRYI/s1600/P1130905.JPG](https://2.bp.blogspot.com/-JtmXv2dwYjU/VMpOWFwEcrI/AAAAAAAAAKFU/IKhT6_bpRYI/s1600/P1130905.JPG)>

<<https://4.bp.blogspot.com/-QtznNA0C5JU/VMpOWE-8nUI/AAAAAAAAAKFk/IO0ut7CYX84/s1600/P1130910.JPG>>

<<https://chefindisguise.com/2012/05/12/homemade-labneh-recipe/>>

<<https://chefindisguise.com/2012/08/12/maamoul-stuffed-shortbread-cookies/>>

<<https://chefindisguise.com/2018/03/21/zucchini-boats-in-tahini-sauce/>>

<<https://chefindisguise.com/2018/02/27/hindbeh-sauteed-dandelion-greens/>>

<<https://chefindisguise.com/2017/12/25/labneh-and-makdous-salad/>>

<<http://www.kitchenofpalestine.com/khobeizeh/>>

<<http://www.kitchenofpalestine.com/besara/>>

<<http://www.kitchenofpalestine.com/zaatar-bread/>>

<<http://www.kitchenofpalestine.com/freekeh-soup/>>

<<http://www.maryamsculinarywonders.com/2013/12/31/538-iraqi-herbed-fish-stew/>>

<<http://www.maryamsculinarywonders.com/2013/07/25/425-iraqi-chicken-with-red-rice/>>

<<http://www.maryamsculinarywonders.com/2012/10/29/221-iraqi-spinach-stew/>>

<<http://www.maryamsculinarywonders.com/2016/09/23/990-iraqi-kubba-mosel/>>

<<http://maryamsculinarywonders.blogspot.com/2012/07/103-kubba-halab.html>>

<<http://www.mymoroccanfood.com/home/artichoke-tagine-with-peas-and-preserved-lemon-vegan>>

<<http://www.mymoroccanfood.com/home/maakouda>>

<<http://www.mymoroccanfood.com/home/bakoula-feta-and-pine-nuts-hand-pies>>

<<http://www.mymoroccanfood.com/home/saffron-vegan-chorba-with-roasted-aubergine-and-sweet-potatoes>>

<<https://cookingmiddleeasternfood.com/2013/08/22/macaroni-hilwi-anise-cookies/>>

<<https://cookingmiddleeasternfood.com/2012/08/02/shoulbatou-cracked-wheat-in-tomato-sauce-2/>>

<<https://cookingmiddleeasternfood.com/2012/09/30/mouloukhiya-bedoun-lahmeh-meatless-mouloukhiya-2/>>

<<https://cookingmiddleeasternfood.com/2012/11/08/mouloukhiya-be-jaaj-mouloukhiya-with-chicken/>>

<<http://www.tasteofbeirut.com/basil-hummus/>>

<<http://www.tasteofbeirut.com/baba-ghannouj-with-zaatar/>>

<<http://www.tasteofbeirut.com/cauliflower-tabbouleh/>>

<<http://www.tasteofbeirut.com/stuffed-zucchini-in-tomato-sauce/>>

<<http://www.tasteofbeirut.com/labneh/>>