LINGUISTIC IDENTITIES IN THE ARAB GULF STATES

Waves of Change

ROUTLEDGE STUDIES IN LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

EDITED BY SARAH HOPKYNS
AND WAFA ZOGHBOR

ROUTLEDGE

'A powerful, insightful, timely, diverse, and well-presented volume on the complexity of the multilingual context of the Gulf countries. This book is a must-read for any researcher, education policy maker, graduate and undergraduate student interested in the role of language in society, assessing multilingual development, language, identity and investment, language policy and planning, language and power, and linguistic landscape.'

Ahmad Al-Issa, *Professor, College of Arts and Science, American University of Sharjah, UAE*

'This edited volume demonstrates the significance in adopting a context-sensitive approach to researching language, identity and culture. It provides rich insights into the changing language policy, ideologies and practices in the Gulf region, as well as key global issues such as inequality, migration and cultural changes. It is a timely addition to the growing body of critical literature in applied linguistics.'

Zhu Hua, *Professor of Language Learning and Intercultural Communication, UCL Institute of Education, UCL, UK*

'Drawing on recent developments in identity, ideology and emotion research, this exciting volume gives readers fresh insights into how the multilingual ecologies of the Arab Gulf States are evolving in relation to contemporary phenomena like globalization and neoliberalism. This book is a must-read for applied linguists who are interested in language policy and practice issues in the Gulf region and beyond.'

Peter De Costa, *Associate Professor, Department of Linguistics, Languages, and Culture and the Department of Teacher Education, Michigan State University, US*

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Linguistic Identities in the Arab Gulf States

Combining empirical and theoretical approaches from a range of disciplines, *Linguistic Identities in the Arab Gulf States* examines current issues surrounding language and identity in the Arab Gulf states. Organized in four parts, the book addresses the overarching theme of 'waves of change' in relation to language and power, linguistic identities in the media, identities in transition, and language in education.

The authors of each chapter are renowned experts in their field and contribute to furthering our understanding of the dynamic, changeable, and socially constructed nature of identities and how identities are often intricately woven into and impacted by local and global developments. Although the book geographically covers Gulf region contexts, many of the concepts and dilemmas discussed are relevant to other highly diverse nations globally. For example, debates surrounding tolerance, diversity, neoliberal ideologies in English-medium instruction (EMI), media representation of language varieties, and sociolinguistic inequalities during coronavirus communication are pertinent to regions outside the Gulf, too.

This volume will particularly appeal to students and scholars interested in issues around language and identity, gender, language policy and planning, multilingualism, translingual practice, language in education, and language ideologies.

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Introduction

Linguistic identities in the Arab Gulf states: Waves of change

Sarah Hopkyns and Wafa Zoghbor

Rewind to early February 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic had not yet directly impacted the lives of most people in the world, including those living in the Gulf countries of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). We were in Muscat, Oman, attending the 4th International Conference on Language, Linguistics, Literature and Translation at Sultan Qaboos University. Over cups of Arabian coffee freshly poured from bronze *dallahs*, we buzzed with ideas stemming from talks we had attended and subsequent discussions. One of the most interesting exchanges we had was with plenary speaker and series editor Reem Bassiouney. Our discussion related to her plenary talk on Arabic critical linguistics and recent changes we had witnessed in the Gulf. It was this conversation which set the grounds for the current book.

Within weeks of returning to Abu Dhabi, UAE, the COVID-19 crisis was identified as a pandemic and, in March 2020, the UAE's national airline, Etihad, announced all flights would be grounded (Ryan, 2021). As we looked back on the Omani conference, we realized it was the last face-to-face conference we would attend for years rather than months. These pandemic-induced changes heightened the already established 'culture of change' in the Gulf region.

The Gulf's 'culture of change'

If the Gulf region were to be given a signature word it would be 'change'. The Gulf nations share particularly dynamic histories. Since the mid-20th-century discovery of oil in the region, dramatic changes have taken place with regard to infrastructure, cityscapes, demographics, education, culture, sociolinguistic landscapes, and identities. Vast oil resources have enabled many Gulf cities to transform from sleepy desert outposts to world-recognized centres of banking, tourism, commerce, shopping, innovation, and culture (Karolak & Allam, 2020). In the case of Abu Dhabi, rapid changes started to occur in the period of the UAE's union (1971–1991), known locally as 'etihad' (Sosa & Ahmad, 2021), and this pace of change has not slowed in the last five decades. The scale of such changes is documented and discussed on online forums

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such as the Facebook group 'Abu Dhabi Good Old Days', which has 11,000 members. Equally, 'Good Old Days' groups also exist for the Gulf cities of Dubai, Doha, and Muscat. On such sites, former and current residents share 'before and after' pictures and reminisce about often unrecognizable bygone cityscapes and spaces, which are testimony to the rapid changes that have taken place within a short space of time.

Not only have Gulf cities metamorphosized in terms of physical appearance and cityscapes, but Gulf demographics have also altered. Although South Asians have had a prominent presence in the Gulf region for centuries due to trade opportunities (Machado, 2014), the late 20th century saw large-scale waves of immigration, as foreign labourers and advisors were needed to help implement ambitious oil-funded transformations (Buckingham, 2017). As a result, transnational workers now outnumber local citizens in many Gulf states. While statistics vary, the UAE and Qatar have the highest percentage of transnational residents at just under 90% in both nations, and Kuwait's transnational residents comprise 70% of the population. Bahrain, the KSA, and Oman are more balanced, but still highly diverse, with approximately 52% of transnational residents in Bahrain, 45% in Oman, and 33% in the KSA (GLMM, 2016). Such demographic diversity together with globalization has affected the linguistic landscape of the region. Although symbolically powerful languages such as Arabic and English have a dominant presence, over 100 other languages are also part of the local linguistic ecology. When discussing 'Gulf linguistic identities' in this book, therefore, the concept is not restricted to Gulf nationals but to all those who call the Gulf their temporary, semi-permanent, or second home. While some chapters in this book focus on the identities of local citizens, whether it be Saudi Arabian Instagrammers in Chapter 4, Omani speakers of indigenous languages in Chapter 2, or generations of Kuwaiti citizens in Chapter 5, other chapters approach the topic of Gulf identities from the perspective of transnational residents such as UAE-based Bangladeshi third culture kids (TCKs) in Chapter 7 or multilingual foreign schoolteachers in Chapter 11.

Dubai and other Gulf cities have been named 'Globalization on Steroids' (Morehouse, 2008) due to elevated levels of linguistic and cultural diversity. This book recognizes the complexities of highly diverse globalized contexts and thus avoids celebrating diversity uncritically. Rather, the book explores paradoxical aspects of diversity and the resultant effects on Gulf linguistic identities. For example, on the one hand, there have been recent initiatives to promote tolerance in the region, such as the UAE's naming of 2019 as the 'Year of Tolerance' and many awareness campaigns promoting diversity and inclusion relating to nationalities, ethnicities, abilities, languages, and dialects (Hopkyns & van den Hoven, 2021). Diversity within the Arabic language has also been increasingly represented through popular media outlets, where varieties are gaining acceptance as a unifying force, as discussed in Chapter 6. On the other hand, there are also discourses, which are often part of Gulf national visions (e.g., Saudi Vision 2030 and

Qatar's National Vision), on the need to strengthen national identities by safeguarding Arabic as the region's official language and lessening reliance on transnational workers (Saleh & Malibari, 2021). Arabization agendas lie behind initiatives such as 'Bahrainization', 'Emiratization', 'Omanization', 'Qatarization', 'Saudization', and 'Kuwaitization', also known as 'Kuwait's expatriate quota system' (Al-Sherbini, 2020; Cook, 2016; Cummings, 2019). This book explores some of the challenges these initiatives face, especially in the context of Oman in Chapter 2. Further challenges to 'unity in diversity' goals (Nickerson, 2015) include social stratification tensions and linguistic hierarchies, which privilege certain groups over others (Ahmad, 2016; Le Renard, 2021). For example, Chapter 3 explores the cultural and linguistic friction between foreign domestic workers (FDWs) and the families they work for, as part of the Gulf's 'nanny culture' phenomenon (Hopkyns et al., 2021). Chapter 8 investigates issues of linguistic inclusion on signage, and Chapter 11 explores linguistic hierarchies in English-medium secondary schools.

Finally, changes in education could be seen as a microcosm for the Gulf's wider 'culture of change', with multiple reforms and a general increase in English reflecting the global trend of internationalization in higher education (Badry & Willoughby, 2016; Macaro, 2018). Several chapters in this book (Chapters 1, 2, 9, 12) explore neoliberal ideologies which promote English as a commodity as well as the symbolic power of English as a language of business amongst the Gulf's highly diverse populations. With English-medium instruction (EMI) policies being embedded in a context where English also dominates wider society, debates relating to 'Englishization' and its effects on linguistic and cultural identities are of direct relevance to both wider society and educational contexts (Hopkyns, 2020a).

Recent 'waves of change' affecting Gulf identities

Against the backdrop of the Gulf's broader culture of change, recent local and global developments have also impacted linguistic identities. A recent regional 'wave of change' includes reforms governing women's rights in Saudi Arabia such as legalizing women drivers and allowing for freer movement. In light of current developments, perspectives on gender and identity in the Arab world (Bassiouney, 2020; El-Azhary Sonbol, 2017; Elyas & Al-Jabri, 2020; Ghabra, 2015) are reflected on in Chapters 4 and 5. In an era when the media is perhaps at its most influential, this book also analyses representations of Arab identities through language use in various forms of media, and how audiences interact with such portrayals. As well as discussing women's dynamic and socially constructed identities on social media and in novels, the book analyses language use in a popular television series and subsequent debates regarding the status of Standard Arabic as a unifying force amongst Arabs, on the one hand, and its role in increasing multiplicity within Arab identities, on the other.

A recent global 'wave of change' discussed in the volume involves the 'translingual turn' in education (Horner et al., 2011) as a way to promote 'multilingualism as a resource' (Illman & Pietilä, 2018). The translingual turn refers to students and teachers using their full linguistic repertoires (or hybrid language, semiotic, and ecological resources) to aid learning and strengthen linguistic identities. This umbrella term encompasses multiple 'trans-concepts' (Sun & Lan, 2021) such as translanguaging (García & Wei, 2014; Williams, 1994), translingual practice (Canagarajah, 2013), translinguistics (Dovchin & Lee, 2019), translingual literacy (Lu & Horner, 2013), and translingual dispositions (Lee & Jenks, 2016). Although the translingual turn began in the 2010s, earlier research mainly covered bilingual Spanish-English primary school contexts in the US. Only recently has research related to the translingual turn expanded to include various levels of education in under-researched contexts such as the Gulf. This book investigates the emerging transition away from monolingual ideologies towards embracing and legitimizing multilingualism and translanguaging, as discussed in Chapters 1, 10 and 11. In addition, Chapter 12 explores Qatari university students' oscillating emotions of pride and shame around hybrid language use. The 'trans-concepts' are also discussed outside the domain of education in Chapter 7, where the related concept of 'glocalization' is explored amongst third culture kids (TCKs) navigating the creation of third spaces (Bhabha, 2004) through translingual practice and transcultural positioning.

The book also looks at how language can be decolonized by 'changing the human relationships of power around speech and language' (Phipps, 2019, p. 26). In this sense, Chapter 8 suggests ways in which language on public signage in Abu Dhabi can be more linguistically inclusive and Chapter 9 suggests alternatives to international English assessments which harbour cultural bias. Chapter 5 points to ways in which local Gulf writers' translingual practice can decolonize the Western canon. Such suggestions aim to address pressing issues of linguistic discrimination and social injustice.

Another 'wave of change', which has also not yet been investigated in a book-length publication, is the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on Gulf identities. In Gulf societies where populations are highly diverse, effective communication becomes especially vital in times of crisis, and linguistic divisions are often heightened rather than diminished (Ahmad, 2020; Hopkyns 2020b). For example, the COVID-19 pandemic has raised many social and linguistic questions relating to identity, inclusion, and belonging (Hopkyns & van den Hoven, 2021; Ahmad & Hillman, 2020). Covering such current and under-researched issues makes this volume timely, original, and relevant.

Interdisciplinary approaches to identity

This book employs an interdisciplinary approach to exploring language and identity in the Gulf countries. Being particularly wide in scope, the book investigates Gulf linguistic identities across various disciplines and domains.

Research presented in the book takes place in multiple sectors including education, media, domestic settings, and in the extraordinary era of the coronavirus. Within such domains, key themes explored include language and power, linguistic inequities, identities in transition, translingual and pluralized identities, and social justice. The present volume offers assessments of multilingual developments in the Gulf, employing a range of theoretical frameworks including critical applied linguistics, linguistic anthropology, ethnography, discourse analysis, semiotic analysis, linguistic landscaping, and case study approaches. The chapters in the volume take post-structuralist non-essentialized approaches to identities through a range of theoretical and conceptional lenses. The dynamic, changeable, and socially constructed nature of identities (Kroon & Swanenberg, 2020; Mercer, 2011; Norton, 2000; Suleiman, 2003; Zhu, 2017) is investigated with regard to how aspects of identity construction are intricately woven into and impacted by local and global developments.

Post-structural approaches to identity also pay attention to power, agency, and ideologies in understanding social dynamics and sense of self (Kayi-Aydar & Green-Eneix, 2019). For example, Chapter 12 illustrates how university students' linguistic identities may be positioned differently in an EMI university context, where English is highly valued, as opposed to in Arabic-speaking homes where Arabic is often preferred by family members. Fluidity and hybridity are further important components of identity construction commonly found in multicultural and multilingual contexts. Barriers or divisions between languages and linguistic identities often blur, and translingual identities become prominent. Here, plurality and complexity become critical elements to explore, as seen in Chapter 5 and Chapter 7.

When discussing Gulf citizens' identities in the book, it is recognized that, while there is an identifiable 'Khaleeji identity' or Gulf identity grounded in cultural, social, historical, and political similarities, particular differences and complexities also exist depending on current geopolitical circumstances and intersecting identity aspects (Karolak & Allam, 2020). Intersecting identity aspects include gender, ethnicity, class, and religion, amongst other factors. Regarding religious identities, for example, divisions exist between Shi'a and Sunni Muslim collective identities in Bahrain and the east coast of Saudi Arabia (Guta, 2020). Not only do social and religious divisions affect identities, but they also shape linguistic norms, as discussed in Chapter 6.

This book is particularly wide in scope with chapters specifically covering five of the six Gulf states (Kuwait, the KSA, Oman, Qatar, the UAE). Several of the authors draw on research from Bahrain, despite it not being the sole focus of a chapter. Incidentally, when reviewing existing Gulf literature on language and identity, we found certain Gulf countries, such as the UAE and Oman, were more widely covered than others, such as Bahrain and Kuwait. The current volume features 14 authors who are based in seven countries (Canada, the KSA, Norway, Oman, Qatar, the UAE, and the US), and all either live or have lived in the Arab Gulf countries. The authors

represent the disciplinary interests of education, applied linguistics, humanities and social sciences, media and communication, and anthropology. All contributions explore linguistic identities in the Gulf in light of recent local and global changes, movements, and circumstances from various angles, with seven of the chapters including empirical data (Chapters 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, and 12) and the remaining five building on theoretical arguments supported by current Gulf research (Chapters 1, 3, 5, 9, and 10). For the theoretical chapters, the chapter authors have conducted empirical studies on the topic of their chapter, meaning that any theoretical discussion has an empirical foundation.

Distinct but not exceptional: The regional and global relevance of the book

Although the Gulf setting is distinct from other global contexts in terms of its demographics, sociohistorical context, and linguistic landscape, this book acknowledges nuances between Gulf nations and parallels between aspects of the Gulf and numerous other global settings. There is a tendency in the literature to use exceptionalism as a discourse when analysing aspects of Gulf society, which dismisses complexities and implies that what happens in the Gulf is unconnected with what happens in other global contexts (Kanna et al., 2020). With this in mind, the book not only offers deep insights into factors influencing linguistic identities in the Gulf but also widens the debate to include other contexts that share similar dynamics. For example, when discussing issues such as social stratification, gendered identities, diversity and inclusion, and EMI, parallels are drawn with other contexts that share characteristics. As Siemund and Leimgruber (2020) state, there are many comparisons to be made between fast-growing Asian contexts such as the Gulf states, Singapore, and Hong Kong. For instance, although social stratification in the Gulf is often represented as exceptional, Lorente (2018) points out that such social and linguistic hierarchies also exist in Singapore, where firmly entrenched differentiations based on nationality are often made through the polarized labels of 'foreign talent' and 'foreign workers'. Similarly, the dominance of English in domains such as education and in public spaces is also recognized as a feature relating to many multilingual settings, not only the Gulf (Piller et al., 2020). Although the chapters focus on countries of the Arab Gulf states, as fitting the title of the book, many chapters situate the Gulf context within larger global discourses by relating to and building on wider research.

Introduction to the chapters

This book is divided into four parts, each consisting of three chapters. Part One looks at language, identity, and power; Part Two looks at Gulf linguistic and cultural identities in the media; Part Three looks at Gulf identities in

transition; and Part Four looks at Gulf identities in EMI contexts. Each chapter explores Gulf linguistic identities in relation to the overarching theme of change.

Part I: Language and power

The book's first part (Chapters 1–3) explores the theme of language and power from multiple angles, including an exploration of power relations between languages and their speakers in the Gulf. In Chapter 1, Hopkyns and Elyas explore how bottom-up and top-down language policies in the Gulf countries interact with wider language ideologies and discourses related to globalization, the internationalization of higher education, and neoliberalism. Drawing on Irvine and Gal's (2000) theories of the semiotic formation of language ideologies and Bourdieu's (1991) theory of language and symbolic power, Hopkyns and Elyas critically examine the interrelatedness of language ideologies, symbolic power, and policies surrounding Arabic and English and the resultant effects on linguistic identities. The chapter explores how the Arabic and English languages are often symbolically polarized even though, on the ground, the languages are interwoven through translingual practice. Hopkyns and Elyas go on to suggest concrete ways in which to bridge this ideological divide through glocalization and the legitimizing of translingual practice in multiple domains, including English-medium education.

Following the overarching exploration of language policies, practice, and ideologies across the Gulf provided in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 holds a microscope to one of the Gulf nations, the Sultanate of Oman. In Chapter 2, Al-Issa analyses the planning of language identity in Oman by employing a linguistic anthropology perspective. Through the analysis of two speeches from former leader, and founder of modern Oman, Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said, and current leader Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said, Al-Issa argues that there is a mismatch between the goals for Omanization put forward in the speeches and the failure to implement such initiatives effectively. Al-Issa problematizes the neoliberal push towards English at the expense of Oman's less powerful indigenous languages. Al-Issa suggests that the strengthening of linguistic identities in Oman can be achieved through enhanced teacher education and a revitalization of indigenous languages. Al-Issa argues that such changes would be a welcome development against the backdrop of arguably stagnant discourses and policies.

In Chapter 3, the focus turns to language and power in domestic domains across the Arab Gulf countries. Taha-Thomure takes a critical approach to the linguistic effects of the 'nanny culture' on Gulf identities. With the hiring of foreign domestic workers (FDWs) being a well-known phenomenon in the Gulf, Taha-Thomure argues that there is a profound yet often unacknowledged influence on children's language development as well as their linguistic and cultural identities. Drawing on studies from several parallel global contexts such as Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, Taha-Thomure explores

the complexities around power dynamics in households where foreign nannies reside, raising concerns over Arabic attrition in home environments where non-Arabic-speaking FDWs play a major role in raising children. Suggestions are made for the adoption of greater parental awareness, more transparent definitions of nannies' roles, open dialogue and discussion, and an investment mentality.

Part II: Gulf linguistic and cultural identities in the media

The book's second part (Chapters 4–6) explores media representations of Gulf linguistic identities through the mediums of social media, modern fiction, and television drama. In Chapter 4, Hurley provides a semiotic analysis of Saudi Arabian women's Instagrammable identities following the campaign for the right to drive in the KSA. Hurley describes how the 2018 law granting women the right to drive in the KSA sparked the social media movement '@ women2drive'. Hurley's study asks how the change in legislation regarding women's right to drive represents a rebranding of Saudi women's identities. The chapter focuses on two prominent Saudi influencers' Instagram posts and analyses the content of these posts through semiotic critical discourse analysis. Hurley argues that, while the new driving legislation has not impacted all women in the KSA, the prominent Instagrammers in the study offer tangible examples of Saudi women's serious commitment to gender equality by challenging disempowerment.

In Chapter 5, Buscemi explores the representation of Gulf linguistic and social identities in modern literature through an analysis of the Kuwaiti characters in Layla Alammar's 2019 novel *The Pact We Made*. Specifically, Buscemi takes readers on a journey through the thoughts, emotions, and reflections of the book's main character, 29-year-old Dahlia. A traumatic childhood event leads Dahlia to reflect on the affordances and constraints in Kuwaiti society for young women. In addition to cultural analysis, Buscemi explores the changing linguistic identities seen in the novel through the use of translingual practice and the ways in which characters change their language according to their audience. Here, the chapter offers important insights into social stratification and power dynamics within households and across gender and generational lines. Buscemi argues that the novel helps 'de-exoticize the non-West' (Lionnet, 1995, p. 5) by decolonizing the Western canon as seen in Alammar's authentic linguistic choices.

In Chapter 6, Zoghbor and Alqahtani turn to explore the representations of Gulf linguistic identities in the popular Arabic-medium television series *Khawaja Abdulqader*. The chapter examines the linguistic choices of the TV drama's main character Khawaja Abdulqader, after whom the series is named. Zoghbor and Alqahtani reveal how Khawaja Abdulqader, a British man who changed his name from Herbert to Khawaja Abdulqader after converting to Islam, utilizes linguistic resources to reveal the multiple identities of a non-Arab who speaks Arabic as a foreign language. Five scenes from the series

are analysed through discourse analysis with a focus on the phonological and morphological features of three Arabic variations: Standard Arabic, Sudanese dialect, and Egyptian dialect, shedding light on the differences and similarities between the dialects and Gulf varieties such as the Emirati dialect. In their analysis, Zoghbor and Alqahtani argue that variation across the Arabic dialects, including the Gulf variations, can unify rather than distance Arabic-speakers' identities.

Part III: Gulf identities in transition

The focus of the book's third part (Chapters 7–9) is on how local linguistic phenomena are situated in broader dynamic social movements. The transitions discussed in this section are wide in scope, ranging from an analysis of Gulf expatriates' ambivalent identities to changing sociolinguistic landscapes during the coronavirus pandemic. A further transition is the move away from culturally biased international English tests used in the Gulf towards locally produced assessments which better match Gulf sociolinguistic identities. Such a move relates to wider decolonizing movements seen globally. In Chapter 7, Khondker explores the social and linguistic identities of Bangladeshi third culture kids (TCKs) living in the UAE. TCKs are often defined as second-generation migrants who are born and raised in a foreign country (Useem & Useem, 1967). The chapter provides a rich discussion on the conceptualization of identity and the impact of the 'glocal turn' as it relates to the identities of TCKs in Gulf expatriate communities. Khondker shares narratives from three Bangladeshi TCK interlocutors and one Indian TCK interlocutor. Through an analysis of the narratives, Khondker argues that ambivalence is a key feature of many TCK identities. Unlike earlier studies that label TCKs as 'culturally homeless', Khondker notes that TCKs in the Gulf are starting to position their ambivalent identities as a source of strength in a highly globalized and multivalent society.

In Chapter 8, Hopkyns and van den Hoven discuss transitions in Abu Dhabi's linguistic landscape during the coronavirus pandemic. They take an ethnographic approach to linguistic landscaping where they analyse the languages and semiotic resources used on coronavirus signage in community and leisure spaces, with a focus on how these choices affect Gulf identities and sense of belonging. Findings revealed a prevalence of monolingual and bilingual signage which favoured the nation's official language, Arabic, and the global lingua franca, English. While Hopkyns and van den Hoven found examples of effective trilingual signage, these were the exception rather than the norm. The chapter argues that a greater linguistic inclusion of languages other than English and Arabic is needed to reflect Abu Dhabi's multilingual ecology and ensure safety messages are more accessible. Raising awareness of linguistic diversity in society as well as implementing translation drives are suggested as ways to promote a greater inclusion of common third languages on signage during the pandemic period and beyond.

In Chapter 9, Freimuth examines the cultural bias found in international English examinations and its effect on Gulf linguistic and cultural identities. The chapter begins by exploring the dominance of English as a global language since the early 1600s to the present day. Educational reforms with a move towards more and more English are then outlined. Freimuth goes on to examine the cultural content of common international English exams used in the Gulf, including the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Both exams have been found to harbour a cultural bias which can affect test takers' cultural identities, comfort levels, and achievement outcomes. Freimuth goes on to examine the relatively new Emirates Standardized Test (EmSAT) in terms of familiarity of topics and potential for cultural bias. Although further analysis on the EmSAT exam is needed, Freimuth suggests it could be a more culturally appropriate choice for the Gulf region. The chapter proposes a period of transition towards more locally produced English assessments.

Part IV: Gulf identities in English-medium instruction contexts

The final part of the book draws readers' attention to English-medium instruction contexts in the Gulf which cover secondary schools, government universities, and international branch campus (IBC) settings. Each chapter in this section approaches the topic from a different angle by exploring translanguaging for transformation, multilingual teacher identities, and the emotions of students studying in EMI IBCs.

In Chapter 10, Carroll explores ways in which teachers can transform educational experiences by valuing Gulf students' multilingual repertoires in English-medium classrooms. Carroll, in positive alignment with the suggestions made in Chapter 1, argues for the validation of translanguaging as a way to combat monolingual ideologies in educational settings. Carroll provides a comprehensive theoretical overview of translanguaging, with a discussion on the differences between strong and soft versions. Readers are then taken on a journey through the historical use of monolingual ideologies in Gulf education to a shift towards multilingualism in recent years. Carroll illustrates what translanguaging in formal education looks like by sharing practical applications from previous global research. The chapter reflects on how implementing a soft version of translanguaging in Gulf classrooms can result in a transformational educational experience where the translingual identities of learners are recognized and supported.

In Chapter 11, Calafato explores multilingual teacher identities in the UAE. The chapter discusses findings from an exploratory study investigating the perspectives of language teachers (English, Arabic, and French) at private EMI schools on multilingualism as a pedagogical resource. Findings revealed that, although language teachers valued multilingualism and tried to promote it in their classrooms, not all teacher participants made an effort to learn languages themselves. The study also revealed perceptions on

linguistic hierarchies, with English being placed at the top. Calafato provides suggestions for ways in which linguistic hierarchies can be dissipated and how multilingualism can be promoted in classrooms as well as amongst teachers. The chapter also stresses the importance of improving the teaching of Arabic in schools to make it more relevant, equitable, and attractive to learners. The chapter argues that such moves would allow teachers and students to harness their multilingual potential.

In the final chapter of the book, Chapter 12, Hillman explores emotions and EMI in Qatar. Hillman's chapter takes a critical perspective to examine notions of identity and belonging for Qatari national students who attended mixed gender EMI international branch campuses of the Qatar Foundation's Educational City. Specifically, Hillman explores the concept of linguistic shame, which is 'embarrassment in using a language resulting from the social discourses and practices that denigrate the identities and outcomes attached to such language use' (Liyange & Canagarajah, 2019). The students interviewed on emotions relating to EMI oscillated between discourses of pride and shame in relation to language use, leading to conflicting identities. Such emotions provoked students to navigate new understandings of what it means to be Qatari. Hillman suggests that students in Qatar could benefit from more space to reflect on the emotional aspect of being IBC students and how to traverse cultural and linguistic tensions.

Concluding remarks

This volume provides rich insights into multiple aspects of Gulf identities. The chapters report on how identities interact and are influenced by the Gulf's 'culture of change' and current 'waves of change'. When identifying the need for the volume, we noted a growing body of book-length research on various aspects of Gulf identities. Such books, however, each have their own primary focus, such as identity and education, identity and politics, identity and the arts, or identities relating to one area/country of the Gulf. Assessing existing coverage in previous publications led us to identify the need for the current volume. The topics covered in the current volume expand and move beyond existing literature by primarily focusing on how language and identity interact with current and ongoing societal changes. The volume also covers timely topics not yet discussed in relation to Gulf linguistic identities, as outlined previously.

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Part I

Language and power in the Gulf

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1 Arabic vis-à-vis English in the Gulf
Bridging the ideological divide

Sarah Hopkyns and Tariq Elyas

Language policy and planning (LPP) in the Gulf states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is frequently changing and constantly under the microscope. LPP is concerned with how languages are used, when, for what purpose and by whom (Grin, 2003), as well as the values and rights associated with those languages (Stemper & King, 2017). LPP research involves understanding the development of both top-down and bottom-up language policies in public domains such as cafés (Cook, 2021), on public signage (Hopkyns & van den Hoven, 2021), in official spaces such as courts, or in educational contexts relating to the Medium of Instruction (MOI). Rajagopalan (2013) reminds us that, rather than language policy being a set of official and finite rules governing language use, policies often stem from discussions about languages intended to create actions of public interest as well as from daily language use.

The metaphor of *linguistic ecologies* is often used in LPP research (Stemper & King, 2017) to refer to language practice, language use, or language on the ground (Spolsky, 2004). It is recognized that language is connected to multiple overlapping and intersecting 'real world contextual variables' (Finardi et al., 2021, p. 56) which include social, political, and ideological factors. In this sense, language policy is influenced by an often dynamic and complex mix of discourse, circumstances, forces, currents, and beliefs which flow or jar in accordance with the geopolitical spheres in which they are embedded.

In addition to geopolitical factors influencing language policy, global phenomena such as *globalization* and *internationalization* also play a critical role. *Globalization* refers to the increase in the movement of people, information and products, as well as an increased number of contact zones between people with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Albrow & King, 1990). *Internationalization* involves an increased mobility of students and faculty in higher education and the adoption of English-medium instruction (EMI) in what Collini (2012) names 'global multiversities'. As Finardi et al. (2021) point out, 'the conceptual link between globalization and internationalization is so close that it is hard to know whether internationalization is an agent of

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globalization or a result' (p. 54). However, the two concepts differ in relation to language policy. While the former is relatively uncontrolled, the latter is proactive, planned and moulded by 'conscious action' (Wächter, 2000, p. 9). A combined result of globalization and internationalization is the increase of English globally across multiple domains.

LPP, especially related to EMI, has been investigated in various contexts globally, as evident in a number of recent books solely focusing on this topic (Block & Khan, 2021; Macaro, 2018; Paulsrud et al., 2021). In addition, 2019 saw the launch of the *Journal of English-Medium Instruction* (JEMI) and the Routledge series on Studies in English-Medium Instruction. Despite this global surge of interest in LPP, Gulf contexts are notably underrepresented in the literature, and Gulf-based scholars are conspicuously absent from the editorial boards of key LPP journals such as *JEMI*, *Language Policy*, and *Current Issues in Language Planning*. As issues surrounding LPP vary according to cultural, sociolinguistic, and geopolitical factors, the Gulf context warrants further investigation, especially given the prominent role English plays in this multilingual region.

Previous Gulf LPP research has investigated initiatives such as Emiratization, Saudization and Omanization, which, among other objectives, aim to develop local citizens' English proficiency in order to replace foreign workers with Gulf nationals (Al Issa, 2020; Al-Shaiba, 2014; Sandiford, 2013). Gulf LPP research has also explored linguistic inclusivity on public signage (Ahmed, 2021; Buckingham, 2015; Hopkyns, 2020b; Hopkyns & van den Hoven, 2021) and family language policy (O'Neill, 2017; Said, 2011a; Taha-Thomure, 2019). Gulf EMI research has mainly focused on stakeholder perspectives (Belhiah & Elhami, 2015; Hopkyns, 2020a) and challenges (Abou-El-Kheir & MacLeod, 2017; Al-Bakri, 2013; Mouhanna, 2016; Rogier, 2012).

What is notably missing from Gulf LPP research is a deeper exploration of language ideologies and the role of the symbolic power that lies beneath language policies and the resultant effects on identities. Scholars such as Hillman et al. (2021) have recognized this gap in the literature and called for investigations into how bottom-up and top-down language policies in the Gulf interact with larger language ideologies and global discourses. This chapter, in turn, aims to help bridge this gap by exploring how language ideologies interact with LPP, drawing on Irvine and Gal's (2000) theories of the semiotic formation of language ideologies together with Bourdieu's (1991) theory of language and symbolic power. By critically examining the interrelatedness of language ideologies, symbolic power, and policies concerning the region's two dominant languages of Arabic and English, the resultant complexities in Gulf linguistic identities are examined. This chapter also fills a gap in the literature by suggesting concrete ways in which to bridge ideological divisions through glocalization and translingual practice, with the goal of strengthening authentic identities in the Gulf.

Linguistic ecology of the Gulf: The growing presence of English

When forming the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in 1981, the six countries of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates had the mutual objective of formulating 'similar policies in the fields of religion, finance, trade, customs, tourism, legislation, and administration' (Macaro, 2018, p. 64). Although neither 'language' nor 'education' is mentioned explicitly in the above shared policy goals, the GCC countries share family resemblances in terms of language-in-education policies and the dominance of Arabic and English in their linguistic landscapes.

While Arabic is the official language of the GCC countries, English is the de facto lingua franca (Alharbi, 2017). Due to the region's diverse demographics, many other languages are also present in various speech communities. Multilingualism in the region is closely tied to globalization, and global businesses using English are omnipresent. Even with Gulf-based companies such as Saudi Aramco and Saudi Airlines, English is the language used to train employees (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014) and English is also widely used online, especially on social media (Dashti, 2015). Multilingualism has especially mushroomed in the Gulf as a result of the region-specific 'culture of fast-paced change' (Hopkyns, 2020a). Due to the relatively recent discovery of oil and other natural resources, Gulf societies have undergone rapid transformations on multiple levels. With urbanization rates of over 90%, the resource-rich countries of the Gulf comprise the most urbanized region in the world (Ewers & Dicce, 2016). In the space of decades, a frenzy of development has occurred in the economies of finance, real estate, retail and hospitality alongside dramatic changes to infrastructure and education. Such fast-paced development has necessitated the import of a large expatriate population working in these new sectors. The UAE and Qatar have the highest numbers of expatriates at just under 90% in both nations, and Oman and Saudi Arabia have the lowest percentages at approximately 45% and 33% respectively (GLMM, 2016). Although the Gulf's multilingual population collectively speak over 100 different languages, Arabic and English are given textual priority in public spaces (Blum, 2014; Buckingham, 2015; Hopkyns & van den Hoven, 2021). Bilingual signage is often skewed slightly in favour of English (Ahmed, 2021; Hopkyns, 2021) despite Arabization efforts in place to 'clean up the linguistic landscape' such as Qatar's Ministry of Municipality and Urban Planning issuing fines for signage without the presence of Arabic (Said, 2011b). In major Gulf cities, English is also more often heard verbally than Arabic or peripheral languages (Randall & Samimi, 2010), which is in part due to the unusually large expatriate communities using English as a lingua franca and English's status as a global language.

The omnipresence of English in public domains is paired with full or partial EMI being a characteristic of the GCC countries' schooling, especially in tertiary institutions (Al-Issa, 2020; Hillman et al., 2019; Hopkyns, 2020a).

Mahboob and Elyas (2017) point out that, especially post-9/11, the Gulf countries have been affected by internationalization. Transnational political and economic pressure (Elyas & Picard, 2013) for Gulf countries to use EMI and imported Western curricula has led to an increase of English in education as well as the mass hiring of teachers and faculties from overseas (Gallagher, 2019). This is particularly apparent in the multitude of 'international' branch campuses across the Gulf such as New York University Abu Dhabi, Exeter University Dubai, and Georgetown University Doha. Such branch campuses predominantly originate from Anglophone countries and often directly transfer faculties from the home base campus. Such a phenomenon has led to the suggestion that the words 'international' and 'internationalization' are merely euphemisms for 'English' and 'Englishization' or 'Americanization' (Block & Khan, 2021).

English in education is often framed as a positive development fuelled by global and local neoliberal goals and expectations. Especially in wealthy developing nations such as Singapore and the Gulf states, EMI is ideologically connected to building linguistic and cultural capital (Foucault, 2008) and is seen as a form of commodification directly connected to economic success (Sharma & Phyak, 2017). De Costa et al. (2020) describe such neoliberal discourse as 'linguistic entrepreneurship', whereby the learning of languages (usually English) is framed as a moral obligation or 'responsibility as a good citizen' (De Costa et al., 2020, p. 3). Together with neoliberal mindsets being stimulated collectively by national agendas, individuals may also have independently adopted or internalized such goals of entrepreneurial self-development for themselves as 'neoliberal subjects' (De Costa et al., 2020), in which a key ingredient is high English proficiency.

In contrast, the less desirable effects of internationalization have not gone unnoticed. Concerns about the attrition of local languages and cultures have been voiced through the use of warfare metaphors such as 'neoliberal terror' (Lipman, 2004) and 'neoliberalism's war on higher education' (Giroux 2014). In the Gulf, such concerns centre around Arabic being pushed out of both the public and educational domain, English acting as an academic gatekeeper, an increased cognitive load for students, loss of creativity, and a reduced sense of belonging (Hillman & Ocampo Eibenschutz, 2018; Hopkyns 2020a, 2020b; Belhiah & Elhami, 2015; Carroll et al., 2017). Although Arabic is one of the world's 'hypercentral' (De Swaan, 2001) languages and the fourth language of the United Nations, in the Gulf context the combined ubiquity of English in public domains and in the educational sphere have caused some to view Arabic as a 'minority language' (Eisele, 2017, p. 309). In the following section we explore the complex and interwoven relationship of language ideologies, symbolic power, and identities.

Semiotic formation of language ideologies and symbolic power

Ideologies can be defined as positioned and partial visions of the world, relying on comparison and perspective. Ideologies exploit differences in

expressive features, linguistic or otherwise, to construct convincing stereotypes of people, spaces, and activities (Gal & Irvine, 2019). Language ideologies specifically refer to beliefs about languages and speakers of languages that are often below people's awareness, with the sources of such language ideologies often going unnoticed or unexamined. Often, the sources of such ideologies are societal, historical, and media-related. As Irvine and Gal (2000) state, 'there is no view from nowhere: no gaze that is not positioned' (p. 36). In post-colonial contexts, for example, symbolism around colonial languages and local languages remains deeply embedded in analytical frameworks (Irvine & Gal, 2000). In recent decades, globalization and internationalization have also impacted positions on languages. A further dynamic affecting ideologies in the Gulf context are *fatwas* (Alharbi, 2020), which are 'published opinions or decisions regarding religious doctrine or law made by a recognized authority' (Glasse, 1989, p. 125). *Fatwas* change over time and cover a wide range of topics including language learning, where both pro-English and anti-English sentiments exist (Alharbi, 2020). Additional sources of influence include children's storybooks (Gallagher & Bataineh, 2019) and media, where the representations of languages and the social groups attached to them can shape ideologies.

Ideologies are formed through symbolism or the semiotic process of assigning meaning to signs. Symbolism can be roughly understood as a 'stand-for' type of projection. Language symbolism projects what happens in the social world onto language, so languages and language varieties become symbols that stand for social agents, groups, and institutions, and intra- and inter-language relations become symbols that represent degrees of power. As Kroskrity (2004) states, language symbolism ideologizes language to drive it out of the seemingly value-neutral linguistic world and into the bog of sociopolitical complications.

Irvine and Gal (2000) identify three semiotic processes by which language ideologies are formed: *Iconization*, *fractal recursivity*, and *erasure*. *Iconization* involves linguistic features that index social groups, which could be historical, contingent, or conventional. Such features are seen as iconic representations of a group's inherent essence. Here, *indexicality* (Silverstein 2003; Eckert 2008) is employed whereby signs point to (or index) an object within the context it occurs. *Indexicality* naturalizes the correlation and co-occurrence of the linguistic and the sociopolitical, so the former can 'stand for' the latter. In this sense, ideologies of linguistic purity and monolingualism often imagine languages as corresponding with essentialized representations of social groups (Irvine & Gal, 2000). Here, stereotypes and biases result where English speakers are put into one box and Arabic speakers into another. *Fractal recursivity* involves the projection of an opposition, salient at some level of relationship, onto some other level (Irvine & Gal, 2000) – for example, a perception of a large group being applied to an individual within the group and vice versa. Here, differentiation through comparison results in essentialized assumptions. If a speaker of a language is inconsistent with the ideological scheme one has of the language, *erasure* often takes place. Here, a social group

or language is seen as homogeneous with its internal variation disregarded. In this sense, a person or linguistic aspect which does not fit into a 'neat box' may be rendered invisible. Through the semiotic formations of ideologies, we can see that, rather than languages being purely functional and neutral, they are deeply embedded in symbolism influenced by geopolitics, global forces, media, and other sources such as *fatwas*, storybooks and personal experiences. Languages, in this sense, are more than languages; they become symbolic of lives, cultures, and identities.

Bourdieu's (1977, 1991) theory of symbolic power is also relevant to language ideologies, LPP, and resultant identities in the Gulf context. Bourdieu (1991) stresses the social and political influence on languages, arguing that the value and meaning of speech is determined in part by the value ascribed to the person who speaks it. Access to language can influence access to social capital in terms of educational and employment opportunities (Heller, 2008), which results in a reciprocal relationship between a certain language and the power it symbolically possesses. Norton (2014) points out that the ascribed identities of both individuals and groups can affect access to language use and learning. Social pressure can place obligations on speakers of less symbolically powerful languages to conform to expectations associated with more powerful languages. For example, with English commonly symbolized as 'an icon of modernization' (Hopkyns, 2020a), considerable power is attributed to knowing and mastering English. Bourdieu (1991) names such pressure to acquire linguistic social capital as *symbolic violence*, which can result in 'harm to a person's symbolic self' (Kramsch, 2021, p. 216) in terms of sense of belonging and identity. In the following section, we turn to look at language ideologies in relation to Arabic and English, and we discuss the implications of language symbolism on Gulf LPP and linguistic identities.

Symbolic representation of Arabic and English

Previous studies in the Gulf have found binary and divisive language ideologies surrounding the regions' two dominant languages: Arabic and English. In Hopkyns' (2020a) study with 100 Emirati university students, 12 Emirati primary school teachers, and 52 expatriate faculty members, participants were asked to name words or phrases they associated with Arabic and English and then asked to reflect on what the languages symbolized. Findings revealed that the most common word associated with Arabic was *religion* and related words such as '*Quran*, *Islam*, *Muslim*, *pray*, *Mosque*, *Prophet Mohamed*, *Mecca*' (p. 114). *Religion* was closely followed by *culture*, *tradition*, and *customs*, then *history* and *heritage*. For Emirati participants, Arabic also symbolized domestic life and the local region, as indicated by the words *family*, *friends*, *home*, *Middle East*, *Gulf* and *desert*. Feelings of ownership were seen by word associations such as '*my*, *first*, *mother tongue language*' (p. 115). English, in contrast, was connected with public spheres and the wider world as indicated by the word associations *global, international*, *education/*

jobs, *internet, entertainment*, *communication*, *travel*, and *public life (hospitals*, *shops*, *restaurants)*. In contrast to Arabic, and despite the many roles English plays in Emiratis' lives, it was not seen as 'their' language. Rather, English was associated with '*Western*, *British*, *American*, *Western places or artifacts*' (p. 107). Arabic, in this sense, was closely tied to identity whereas English was positioned as a foreign or 'other' language.

Similarly, in Findlow's (2006) UAE-based study, Emirati university students exhibited distinct worldviews in relation to Arabic and English, with Arabic representing *cultural authenticity*, *localism*, *tradition*, *emotions*, and *religion*, and English representing *modernity*, *internationalism*, *business*, *material status*, and *secularism* (p. 25). Arabic was seen by some students as a language of the past, with a romantic image of nostalgia reminiscent of past glories (Findlow 2006). Al-Issa and Dahan (2011) also found that Arabic was seen to represent a less modern part of Arabs' lives. In previous studies mentioned above (Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011; Findlow, 2006; Hopkyns, 2020a), the lack of overlapping associations between Arabic and English indicates binary symbolism and polarized language ideologies. We can see the semiotic processes of iconization, fractal recursivity, and erasure functioning to divide the languages into different spaces (domestic/public sphere) as well as influencing differing degrees of ownership. Although, in reality, there are many exceptions to such firm divisions (such as Arabic speakers living in the UK, Arabic used in education, or English used in home settings), such instances tend to be 'erased' or neatened to fit definite binary categories.

Previous studies on the symbolism of English and Arabic also revealed English as having considerable symbolic power in the region. In Hopkyns' (2020a) study, Emirati participants saw English as symbolizing *the future* and *development*, as well as being *useful*, *necessary*, and *powerful*. The association between English and power was also found in Troudi and Jendli's (2011) study with Emirati university students, where English in education was said to represent 'power and success, modernism, liberalism, freedom, and equality' (p. 26). Dashti (2015) found that English was seen as the most prestigious language among all of those spoken in Kuwait, such as Kuwaiti Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic, with English symbolizing a 'highly educated and socially respected' language (p. 31).

Conflicting symbolism relating to English has also been revealed in previous studies. Some Emirati university students and schoolteachers in Hopkyns' (2020a) study viewed English as *easy*, *interesting*, and *enjoyable*, while others saw English as a subtractive force as indicated by the words '*imposed, affect society* and *influence*' (p. 107). Such conflicting symbolism surrounding English was also found in Alharbi's (2020) analysis of Saudi Arabian *fatwas* which contained two main ideological overarching frames: Anti-English and pro-English. Historical events have also impacted ideologies around English. For example, in Kuwait, Dashti (2015) found that the allied forces' liberation of the nation in 1991 had a great influence on the positive emotional feelings Kuwaitis have towards British and American people, and this

was consequently reflected in their attitudes towards the English language. Here, we see indexicality applied by associating a group of people with language. Conflicting language ideologies are also frequently voiced in Gulf newspapers where neoliberalism connected with English is pushed forward in some headlines and warned against in others (Hopkyns, 2016). The way in which Arabic and English tend to be positioned against each other in public discourse and the media, in a metaphorical battle for power and dominance, has arguably caused divisive ideologies to flourish.

Bridging the ideological divide

In a circular and interwoven manner, divisive language ideologies feed into language policies such as EMI and English-only classroom environments and vice versa. Here, English is seen as ideologically symbolizing education, and, at the same time, education is physically dominated by English, meaning that educational policies and ideologies are in lockstep. Issues arise when language ideologies clash with the linguistic ecology or language practice of a region. For example, although the mixing of Arabic and English through translingual practice (Canagarajah, 2013) is ordinary and commonplace in the multilingual Gulf states (Hopkyns et al., 2018, 2021), attitudes towards such a practice are decidedly mixed, with the ideological separation of the languages resulting in language purity beliefs centred around 'parallel monolingualism' (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). In this sense, Arabic and English are frequently seen as incompatible in the same space due to the polarized values attached (Hopkyns et al., 2021). As Calafato and Tang (2019, p. 135) state, often Gulf students believe that multilingualism should operate within a domain-specific framework, where English is used outside the home and Arabic inside.

Such a mismatch between practice and top-down policies influenced by dominant ideologies can result in discomfort, guilt, or 'shame' (see Hillman, this volume) around mixing languages. For example, O'Neill's (2017) article, which is entitled 'It's not comfortable being who I am', describes Emirati students' discomfort at being in between two linguistic worlds. Similarly, Emirati university students have been described as 'dancing in between' languages, as well as experiencing mixed loyalties to different aspects of their bilingual selves according to social context (Hopkyns, 2020c). Post-structuralist approaches to identity recognize that identities are not fixed but rather dynamic, plural, multi-faceted, complex, and socially constructed (Norton, 2013). Through a post-structuralist lens, it is not possible or desirable to compartmentalize English-speaking and Arabic-speaking selves into neat domain-determined boxes without overlap. Such divisional ideologies clash with natural and authentic language use where bilinguals fluidly mix languages in ordinary and 'unremarkable' (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2014) everyday practice.

Neoliberal-driven LPP, which places an emphasis on prioritizing English in education and in public spheres, has led to many counter movements aimed

at boosting the presence of Arabic in the region (Taha-Thomure, 2019). Initiatives such as *BilArabi* (meaning: 'In Arabic') encourage the use of Arabic in society via reading, writing, and social media with the aim of 'preserving' Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) (Ramahi, 2017). In addition, the Arabic Language Charter, which was introduced in the UAE in 2012, concentrates on 13 items, ranging from ensuring Arabic is used as the official language of government services as well as for formal written communication, laws, and decrees, to encouraging private schools and language centres to offer Arabic classes for non-native learners (Taha-Thomure, 2019). Similarly, Saudi Arabia's Education and Training Evaluation Commission (ETEC) has made plans to launch a global initiative for the accreditation of centres and programs to teach Arabic to non-native speakers with the aim of 'reinforcing Saudi Arabia's leadership role in preserving the Arabic language' (Al Shammari, 2020).

Although such efforts are well intentioned and effective in raising the profile of Arabic in the region and internationally, such Arabic language initiatives tend to focus on preserving 'pure' MSA (Taha-Thomure, 2019) or positioning Arabic as a replacement or competitor in relation to English. While preserving a work of art or historical building may be achievable, 'preserving' anything as characteristically fluid and flexible as language is a very difficult task. Part of what drives the desire to 'preserve' local languages, as part of language purity missions, are feelings of a lack of control due to the rapid pace of globalization which affects the Gulf region arguably more dramatically than many other global contexts (Hopkyns, 2020a). However, we argue in this chapter that, by focusing on the 'preservation' of MSA, ideological divisions between English and Arabic are reinforced. We argue that a more effective and less divisional way forward is to support and endorse authentic glocal and translingual identities by encouraging a blurring of the boundaries between languages in multiple domains leading to language sustainability. As García (2011) states, 'the concept of language sustainability is dynamic and future-orientated, rather than static and past-orientated' (p. 7). Language sustainability can be achieved by recognizing the dynamic, changeable, and localized character of language use and by applying such views across domains. The final section of this chapter will provide concrete suggestions for ways in which LPP can move towards 'language sustainability' rather than focusing primarily on 'language preservation'.

Conclusion: Strengthening glocal and translingual identities

To move away from the current situation where ideological divides place Arabic and English as symbolic opposites, leading to conflicted local linguistic identities, we suggest two future policy directions: An increased focus on glocalization and the need for translingual identities to be legitimized across domains.

As Finardi et al. (2021) point out, a natural tension between local and global results in the need for a counterbalance. A counterbalance is found

in the phenomenon of glocalization (Robertson, 1992) which refers to the intricate process in which 'the global is brought into conjunction with the local, and the local is modified to accommodate the global (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 45). Glocalization involves the dislodging of languages from particular locales (Rubdy & Alsagoff, 2014) and the creation of 'third spaces' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 4). Given that, in the Gulf, models of educational development reflect the 'best coming from the West' (Aydarova, 2012) position, it has been argued that local teachers, with their expertise and initiatives, are not easily able to contribute to the field. In cases where 'native English speakers' are seen as the best teachers in EMI contexts, the fallacy of native-speaker superiority is perpetuated and reinforced (Phillipson, 2009). This takes place at the expense of diversity, competence, and a major need for Gulf students to see successful role models represented through local English teachers. Rather than the current focus on hiring non-Arabic-speaking English teachers from Britain, Australia, and North America (BANA) together with using Western imported curricula, a move toward employing bilingual English-Arabic teachers and providing choice around the medium of instruction would strengthen glocal identities in educational spaces. The current symbolism of English as the possession of those from English-speaking countries and also as the language of education needs to be disrupted in favour of a less divisional view whereby English and Arabic are both seen as part of Gulf identities and knowledge production. An emphasis on glocalization involves not only the adaptation of English to fit local contexts, but also the adaptation of Arabic to reflect modern Gulf identities, which are influenced by multilingual ecologies. Here, Taha-Thomure (2019) stresses the need to embrace diglossia in Arabic as a strength rather than a weakness. Taha-Thomure (2019) goes on to argue that Arabic tends to be taught in a rigid way in schools where an emphasis on grammar and accuracy stifles students' ability to use the language in innovative, playful, and creative ways. To support such flexibility, it is necessary to allow Arabic to bend and reshape itself in a similar way to English's hydra-like nature. Greater flexibility around Arabic use would enliven Arabic rather than merely preserve a 'discrete mono-language fixed in time' (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2014, p. 84).

A second recommendation involves legitimizing translingual practice across domains. While translingual practice is a natural phenomenon in multilingual contexts, such a practice is often rejected in formal domains not only due to symbolic divisions of languages or linguistic purity ideologies but as a result of monolingual policies such as EMI supporting the use of one language only (Gramling, 2019). In informal spaces, translingual practice is often viewed as natural and comfortable, such as when chatting or texting (O'Neill, 2017), and the mixing of languages is also deemed appropriate and desirable on creative and amusing T-shirt designs and modern artwork (Hopkyns, 2021). However, current institutional multilingualism tends to support two pure languages

being used over translingual practice (Gramling, 2019). Stigma attached to mixing languages in EMI domains adds to divisional language ideologies. As Al-Bataineh (2020) points out, in the case of the UAE:

> By making higher education available only in English, a powerful two-fold message is communicated to the learners and the community: the first explicitly affirms the strong ties between knowledge acquisition and English, making English a must-have language and the measure of success while the second implicitly suggests no obvious relationship between Arabic and knowledge acquisition, making Arabic dispensable and irrelevant to success.
>
> (p. 12)

This process of inclusion and exclusion reflects the perceived symbolism and power relations associated with each language (Phillipson, 2009). If translingual practice were actively endorsed and validated in formal domains, such as in education, the increased presence of Arabic would counter domain loss, thus aiding language sustainability. In accordance with Cook's (1991) multicompetence model, translingual practice creates a lived experience and a social space for multilinguals to perform and transform their identity, attitudes, and values (Wei, 2015). Here, a natural fusion and harmony of languages which are part of Gulf linguistic identities would take place rather than a battle for dominance between ideologically separate languages. The 'traditional enumerative and classificatory view of multilingualism' (Lähteenmaki et al., 2011, p. 2) would subside to an emphasis on embracing authentic translingual identities.

This chapter has discussed the complex and interwoven relationship between language ideologies, symbolic power, LPP, and identities in the Gulf context. Based on findings from previous research, we have argued that divisive language ideologies place Arabic and English as symbolic opposites in the region, with Arabic associated with domestic and religious domains, and English representing the wider world and education. Such ideological divisions both contribute toward and are reinforced by neoliberal-driven language policies such as EMI. We have argued that divisive language ideologies and top-down policies conflict with linguistic ecologies in the region, where the mixing of languages is commonplace. The resultant effects on linguistic identities include feelings of guilt or discomfort mixing languages in what are seen as English-only or Arabic-only zones. We have suggested policy changes that emphasize glocalization and the endorsement of translingual identities across domains in order to strengthen authentic linguistic identities and bridge the current ideological divide. It is recognized that, rather like attempting to untie an intricate knot, unravelling dominant ideologies surrounding linguistic purism is a complex feat but an important one.

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2 Planning language identity in the Sultanate of Oman

A linguistic anthropological perspective

Ali Al-Issa

Languages are not just tools for communication; they also have a symbolic value and create reality for their users. Languages are powerfully connected with individual and group identity and their construction and negotiation (Val & Vinogradova, 2010). Languages also reflect a nation's culture, history, customs, and traditions. In this sense, languages are a 'central feature of human identity' and when they are lost, due to a lack of maintenance and preservation deriving from the speakers of those languages' lack of access to power, 'a world perspective is lost too' (Dastgoshadeh & Jalilzadeh, 2011, p. 661).

Different authors have highlighted the ideologically motivated and biased role of language policy and planning (LPP) as a tool for serving the neoliberal ideologies held by elites and ruling classes that create uneven power relations in multilingual contexts (Armenui, 2014; Bastardas-Boada, 2012; Dastgoshadeh & Jalilzadeh, 2011; Emenanjo, 2002; Val & Vinogradova, 2010). From a post-structural perspective, it is also recognized that identities are not only influenced by external factors but how 'people position themselves and are positioned' (Block, 2013, p. 18). Bucholtz and Hall (2004) stress that 'identity is not simply the source of culture but the outcome of culture: in other words, it is a cultural effect' (p. 382).

Armenui (2014) described the lingua franca movement as having been historically initiated by countries such as the UK, the US, the former Soviet Union, France, and Spain as a political trick. The language colonization process aimed to conquer different regions and diminish the significance of local languages and cultures. For example, the association of English with British colonialism and hegemonic American imperialism (Bastardas-Boada, 2012) triggered a reaction against hegemonic English ideology and its close connection with globalization in various parts of the world, where people asserted their right to preserve their national identity. The political trick of language colonization is also found in developing multilingual countries like the Sultanate of Oman, for example, where the planning of several indigenous languages is relegated to a secondary role for sociocultural and sociopolitical reasons.

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This chapter will begin with a background to the linguistic landscape of the Sultanate of Oman before looking at how language identity is built through language-in-education policy and planning (LEPP). A study exploring language ideologies in the speeches of Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said (the founder of modern Oman) and Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said (the current leader of Oman) will be presented, and recommendations for language planning and policy will be made.

Building language identity through language policy and planning in Oman

The Sultanate of Oman is a multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual country in the Arabian Peninsula with a population of just over five million. Oman was a former British protectorate which, after the discovery of oil, gained independence in 1970. Arabic is the official language and English is used as a lingua franca in multiple domains. In addition to Arabic and English, Oman has several indigenous languages independent from Arabic (see Table 2.1).

Most of the indigenous languages in Table 2.1 lack codification and elaboration systems, they are not associated with practical and scholarly knowledge, and they do not have any visible political status or economic impact on the country's development. While these languages have cultural autonomy and are linked to history, they lack the necessary language planning apparatus to defend and protect these cultures and histories. They are considered poor, weak, backwards, and subordinate without the requisite political or class support (Hassanpour, 1993). Furthermore, policy in Oman does not consider the role and contribution of indigenous languages that form part of the linguistic ecology of the country. Therefore, these languages are classified into 'definitely endangered', 'severely endangered', and 'critically endangered' (see Table 2.2), since the new generation favours Arabic and English, which

Table 2.1 Indigenous language distribution in Oman

Region	*Indigenous languages independent of Arabic*
Muscat	Lawati, Baluchi, Swahili, and Zadjali
Dhofar	Jibbali, Mihri, Batahari, Harsusi, Shahari, and Swahili
Al Batina	Lawati, Baluchi, and Swahili
Al Dhahira / Al Gharbiya	Baluchi
Al Sharqiya	Only Arabic
Al Dakhiliya	Swahili
Musandam	Kumzari
Al Wusta	Swahili, Bathari, and Harsusi

Source: Al-Issa, 2020

Table 2.2 Classification of endangered languages in Oman and approximate numbers of speakers

Language	*Approximate number of speakers*	*Classification*
Baluchi	320,000	Definitely endangered
Swahili	45,000	
Jibbali / Shehri	55,000	
Mihri	77,000	
Bathari	200	
Luwati	35,000	Severely endangered
Kumzari	4,000	
Harsusi	1,000	
Zadjali	300	Critically endangered
Hobyot	100	

Source: Al-Issa, 2020 * The categories 'definitely', 'severely', and 'critically' progress in level of danger from the former to the latter.

allow access to the upper socioeconomic class sectors of the labour market (Al-Issa, 2020).

Emenanjo (2002) comments that, in a country like Oman, which, to some scholars, appears to lack democracy and social justice, policies are ideologically biased, and one can expect a lack of 'egalitarian multilingualism' (p. 5), respect for language loyalty, human and linguistic rights, integration of languages, and promotion of 'horizontal communication' (p. 3). Such a situation has given social identity an edge over cultural identity and influenced the Omani speakers of indigenous languages in terms of choice and positioning (Val & Vinogradova, 2010).

Arabic and English, which coexist as lingua francas in Oman, have been dominant since the establishment of the Omani nation state in 1970. While Arabic remains stronger as the home language of local communities and the language of everyday interaction between members of different communities, English is tied to higher education, employment, and global interaction. Val and Vinogradova (2010) maintain that indigenous language speakers identify with the dominant discourse community and one of the indigenous languages at the same time.

Arabic in Oman

Omanis are emotionally attached to Arabic for its close link to Islam, 'Arabhood', and 'Arabness' (Al-Issa, 2020). The choice of Arabic as the language of the state is strongly tied to elements of nationalism (Bitar, 2011; Suleiman, 2003). Three varieties of Arabic are spoken in Oman: 1) Quranic/Classical Arabic, 2) Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), which is used in domains such as the media, political speeches, university lectures, and other official ceremonies, and 3) Colloquial Arabic (CA), which is used

in informal settings such as conversations with family. While there is only one MSA, there are several CAs depending on the context in which that variety exists. History has witnessed several executive attempts by different local and international agencies and organizations (Al-Issa, 2020) to plan and maintain MSA since 1990. However, Arabic is also infringing upon the sociolinguistic rights and heritage of minority communities in Oman (Al-Issa, 2020). Carter and Sealey (2007) viewed the use of one language for uniting a multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual nation as a myth and a manipulative act used by politicians to repress certain groups. To serve the one-language, one-nation ideology and achieve individual cohesion and collectivities, politicians claim that nationalism makes nations rather than the other way around. Language is often used as an important tool to promote 'the existence of nations' and distinguish 'those who belong from those who do not' (p. 22).

English in Oman

English is highly valued as it has political, economic, and legislative support, and it has been spoken in Oman for centuries. English is an economically viable force, as it is widely used in business and is seen as a tool for modernization or nationalization. People in Oman learn English for multiple purposes such as inter-lingual communication, travelling to non-Arabic speaking countries, conducting business, pursuing higher education, finding white-collar jobs, and cultural analysis and understanding (Al-Issa, 2020). In fact, a lack of English competence is considered by some elite Omanis and the government to be a serious obstacle to nationalization or modernization. Bastardas-Boada (2012) argues that techno-economic and political globalization are multidimensional phenomena with the interdependence of local and global realities leading to the emergence of what is known today as 'glocalization' (Robertson, 1995). As an example of glocalization, it is noteworthy that the economic power of Indian immigrants in Oman, who comprise most of the expatriate labour force (approximately 700,000) (Al-Issa, 2020), has been associated not only with technological skills but also the use of English. Knowledge of English has allowed Indian expatriates to produce and exercise technical and business power, authority, and superiority in fields such as telecommunication, banking, insurance and investment companies, and medicine (Al-Issa, 2020). This is not to underestimate the influence of expatriates from other nations in relation to the spread of English at the present time. A substantial number of expatriates from multiple nations occupy jobs and high-profile positions in Oman's various private sector organizations and institutions that require English. Carter and Sealey (2007) highlighted the role of the rapidly changing patterns of settlement and migration as major factors in the loss of numerous language varieties with a very small number of speakers.

Omanization

The presence of English and various other languages in society drove the Omani government to opt for 'Omanization', which is another word for modernization or nationalization. Omanization was a policy first enacted by the government of Oman in 1988 aimed at replacing expatriate workers with trained Omani personnel by setting quotas for various industries to reach in terms of the ratio of Omani to foreign workers. At the heart of Omanization sits the English language as a tool for achieving political and economic gains. Thus, agency in English has been used not only to minimize indigenous languages in Oman and confine them to families, leading to their gradual death, but also to lead speakers of indigenous languages to maximize their contact with English and shift to a new identity, one which is more in line with Omanization. Such a process has important implications for language choice, language contact, language maintenance, language shift, and language spread (Al-Issa, 2020).

According to Bastardas-Boada (2012), governments are responsible for dealing with the fears of their people as a result of globalization and excessive external influence which may affect national cultures and identities. Bastardas-Boada (2012) suggests that globalization, or glocalization, and the increasing number of bi- or multilingual individuals has not only presented different language communities with 'new needs, new fears, and new dilemmas' (p. 36), leading to increased language abandonment, but also posed challenges to LPP.

Many authors (Bastardas-Boada, 2012; Block, 2013; Dastgoshade & Jalilzadeh, 2011; Sarah, 2018; Val & Vinogradova, 2010) have highlighted the powerful relationship between language and identity, and momentum around research in this area is building in the field of applied linguistics. Therefore, an important site for identity construction is LEPP, where language identity is implemented (Altugan, 2015; Bucholtz & Hall, 2004).

Identity and language-in-education policy and planning (LEPP)

Bastardas-Boada (2012) highlighted the responsibility of political authorities and the pressure they are experiencing to provide adequate facilities for the learning of English in the state education system in order to help students 'compete in the job market, take full advantage of the Internet, enjoy the media and art produced in this language, and to travel to and around many other countries' (p. 44–45). However, the way English is implemented not only has an important bearing on its acquisition but also shows a commitment to globalization. This awareness of the communicative relevance and achieving a good command of the target language can potentially strengthen language attachment and identity.

To better understand the effect of LEPP on identity, Block (2013) suggested considering three aspects: the psychological angle, the relationship between

agency and structure, and socioeconomic stratification (pp. 14–15). First, from a psychological angle, some researchers (Altugan, 2015; Sarah, 2018) have problematized motivation. Motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, instrumental or integrative, directly affects learners' cultural identity formation and can either facilitate or hinder attitudes towards learning (Altugan, 2015; Sarah, 2018). Changes brought about by globalization can affect students' emotions and feelings of inequality due to the discrimination emanating from neoliberal economic policies and practices, low extrinsic learning motivation, a lack of trust between teachers and students, and a lack of investment in language (Altugan, 2015; Sarah, 2018). Second, linguistic identities are tied to agency, which is individuals developing the ability to make choices, take control, and self-regulate. Block (2013) holds that different power constitutive socialization agencies such as schools and higher education institutions largely control students' agency, which affects their identity formation and development. Leibowitz (2015) found that one way to oppress certain languages in a multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual society like South Africa, for example, is to give English privilege, authority, and power within education. Carter and Sealey (2007) argue that standardization is a 'political project' that usually accompanies nationalism, colonialism, and imperialism. Third, socioeconomic stratification is closely linked to language and identity. Block (2013) suggests that neoliberal ideologies, which are often imported from nations such as the US and UK, are used to widen the economic and cultural capital amongst different classes of society, acting to deepen socioeconomic stratification. At the heart of the neoliberal ideology sits the English language, which not only has a privileged status but is used as a tool for marking hierarchy and exercising social inequality (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). It has been argued that those who do not conform to such political ideology are considered socially deficient and become culturally and academically marginalized (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004).

Methods

Researcher role and approach

This chapter stems from the strong commitment I have as an activist, critical applied linguist, critical realist, critical pedagogue, and speaker of the severely endangered minority Lawati language, to maintain and protect the various endangered minority languages in Oman from Arabic and English domination as lingua francas. While I acknowledge the material and non-material benefits of Arabic and English in my life, I advocate celebrating linguistic diversity through multilingualism. In the field of applied linguistics, there has been a paradigm shift with more and more researchers discussing language and identity from an ideological perspective (Sarah, 2018). Therefore, in this chapter, I will use a case study methodology where I combine identity, subjectivities, agency, and ideological structure. I will connect language

ideology and identity, and I will consider the development of identity as 'a scholarly and political concept' (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004, p. 373) in an ever-changing globalized world.

Analytical framework and data analysis

I will take a linguistic anthropological perspective to argue how the government, as represented in the Diwan of Royal Court and through the speeches of Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said and his successor Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said, used a combination of essentialist and neoliberal ideologies. Such ideologies aimed to sell Arabic and English to the Omani people to serve political and economic interests, while oppressing and marginalizing minority languages. It is noteworthy that the Diwan is the council of state which established the political and administrative link between the central government, the armed forces, the security forces, and the people of Oman.

Language identity appears best in discourses (Block, 2013), as in the speeches of the two sultans of Oman in this chapter. Hence, due to the complexity of language as a system, and guided by Bucholtz and Hall (2004), I will use semiotics, or 'the study of systems of meaning' (p. 377), to explore how the meaning of identity within the Omani higher education ELT system is conveyed at the semantic/referential and pragmatic/contextual levels.

I consider practice, indexicality, ideology, and performance to be interrelated and overlapping processes fruitful for the anthropological understanding of language and identity in Oman. I further use the 'tactics of intersubjectivity' (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004) framework to describe the 'social relations established through semiotic processes' (p. 382). I use this framework to challenge the taken-for-granted essentialist and neoliberal ideology, and the bias embedded in them. I will attempt to unmask these ideologies' effect on the different underprivileged social classes and how those classes use different strategies to resist, subvert, and challenge oppression. Thus, the following section will analyse two speeches, one made by Sultan Qaboos and the other by Sultan Haitham, to understand the language ideologies embedded in them.

Findings

I retrieved 90 speeches in total (88 by Sultan Qaboos and two by Sultan Haitham, his successor). I first pursued a quantitative analysis of both sultans' Arabic-medium speeches. Over the 49 years of Sultan Qaboos's reign (1970–2019) and just over one year of Sultan Haitham's reign (2020–2021), the former addressed the nation on numerous important occasions such as National Day and the opening of Sultan Qaboos University. The latter has addressed the nation on two occasions: his inauguration (January 10, 2020) and when he was sworn in as the new Sultan of Oman (January 11, 2021).

While, interestingly, the word 'Arabic' did not appear in either of the sultans' speeches, 'English', 'Omanize' and 'Omanization' appeared only once

in Sultan Qaboos's speeches. One could interpret the lack of these words as a political trick to oversimplify a complex situation to achieve certain political gains. For the purpose of this chapter, I conducted a detailed qualitative analysis of two of the 90 speeches (the earliest and the most recent to cover a broad period of time). The first speech, which was delivered by Sultan Qaboos on November 26, 1975 on Omani TV, makes direct mention of English and Omanization. The second speech is the most recent one by Sultan Haitham, delivered on January 11, 2021, in which he continues planning language identity.

First speech by Sultan Qaboos

On November 26, 1975, respected founder of the nation Sultan Qaboos delivered a speech as part of the country's fifth National Day commemoration in Muscat, Oman. Extract 1 shows the opening of this speech:

> **Extract 1**
>
> As time goes by, we are making progress in every area of life. In the educational sphere, some 65 new schools have been opened in the Sultanate, increasing the number of classes by 485 and the number of teachers and administrators by 920. This means that we now have 176 schools with around 50,000 pupils – boys and girls – studying in them.

The mention of numerical details and the repetition of 'school' indirectly refers to schools as ultimately legitimate and recognized communities of practice that will equip students, regardless of their gender, with the required habits, experiences, skills, and dispositions to integrate them into Omani culture. This will not only allow students to socialize and form a sense of collective identity but also provide them with opportunities for finding white-collar jobs.

To fit with the global neoliberal ideology and push forward economic success and competitiveness, the speech then legitimized schools as sites for changing the ideologies and identities of adults, too (Extract 2). The speech stated that attending school, and thereby acquiring competence in Arabic and English, would help adults to obtain socioeconomic benefits. The purpose here may be to draw adults' attention to the honour, prestige, and value that languages like Arabic and English have over indigenous languages and the role of language education in providing this.

> **Extract 2**
>
> In addition to this, educational opportunities are also available for adults who missed out on the chance to study when they were young; a total of 182 evening centres with 1,584 students have been opened for men and six centres with 575 students have been opened for women.

Although not directly stated, Arabic and English (and the cultures associated with them) are iconized as superior languages to influence Omanis' ideologies and produce a strategically motivated bilingual community identity. In Extract 3, Sultan Qaboos highlights the natural link between acquiring competence in Arabic and English at school and receiving a scholarship to Arab countries such as Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Syria, and English-speaking countries such as the UK and US. He used an intrinsic and integrative motivation tactic here to enhance emotions in the case of Arabic and agency in the case of English. There is an assumption here, which derives from a biased essentialist ideology, that *all* Omanis want to learn and preserve Arabic, regardless of their culture, ethnicity, and language.

In contrast, an extrinsic and instrumental motivation tactic was used to indirectly point to the superiority of Anglophone countries over non-Anglophone countries in terms of the English language cultural capital they hold. The choice of coalition building and a politically motivated strategic essentialism is a tactic adopted not just to locate Omanis simultaneously within two different identity frames – Arabic and English – and allow both identities to coexist, but also to show that the two languages are distinguished from each other and serve different purposes, purposes that cannot be served by an illegitimate and unauthorized indigenous language such as Lawati, for example.

Extract 3

> We also sent young Omanis abroad to gain expertise. At present 59 students have completed English language courses in Britain and are studying in universities in the United States, a further 91 students are candidates for courses in America, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Syria during the 1975–76 academic year. We aim to extend education throughout the Sultanate so that everyone may have a chance to study according to his abilities.

The mention of the number of students who have completed their language courses in Britain and those nominated for candidature to the US (Extract 3) is a tactic to extrinsically and instrumentally motivate students to access science and technology in English, which serves Omanization. In this sense, English is promoted as a marker for social division and inequality.

Furthermore, an essentialist ideology was used to highlight and exaggerate the plan for replacing the expatriate labour force with Omanis (Extract 4). An attempt was made to rewrite Oman's linguistic and cultural history by repositioning English as a central language for pursuing higher education, finding white-collar jobs, and conducting business. Such domains of language practice are believed to facilitate achieving agency in English. The goal was also to expedite Omanization. English here is authenticated as a powerful force in the formation and articulation of an imagined stronger sense of cohesion and national unity.

Extract 4

> We are also working on a plan to eradicate illiteracy and we are focusing our attention particularly on vocational and higher education so that we can meet the country's needs for trained Omani manpower.

In Extract 4, Sultan Qaboos indirectly pointed to the choice of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in higher education as fundamental and authentic for the successful implementation of Omanization or the building of a nationalist identity. To bring Omanization into being, the powerful performative verb 'to Omanize' was used to point to the responsibility assigned to language education in schools to ensure students can use English communicatively from a very early age and throughout their school education, allowing them to cope with the EMI system (Extract 5).

Extract 5

> We are taking steps to 'Omanize' the school syllabi and expand educational services at the different levels, particularly primary, and provide preparatory and secondary schools at the main centres of population in the educational regions.

To empower Omanization, the centrality of training teachers was emphasized and teachers were put forward as agents who could help students cope with the EMI project. The establishment of a strong agency like teacher training is a tactic used to emphasize the socioeconomic gains underlying school education, pursuing higher education, and joining the teaching force (Extract 6).

Extract 6

> There are plans to establish two teacher training institutes for male and female teachers, to provide pre-service and in-service training for primary school teachers. Work will also continue on the construction of primary schools in those regions which do not yet have them. A number of secondary school graduates will be sent on scholarships to universities and higher institutes in Arab and friendly states.

The mention of scholarships to Arab countries conveys a general interactional stance not necessarily associated with Omanization. However, the role of language education in providing students with English language communicative competence is directly connected to fulfilling Omanization.

Second speech by Sultan Haitham

Interestingly, 50 years later, on January 11, 2021, Sultan Haitham's speech also stresses the need for Omanization. Sultan Haitham uses largely the same

tactics of intersubjectivity to achieve the same goals. Nationalistic rhetoric is used on national TV to market multicultural harmony (Extract 7).

Extract 7

> The past five decades have witnessed a great transformation in building a modern state, establishing advanced infrastructure, all over the country, under the leadership of the architect of modern Oman, the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said bin Taimur, and with the efforts of loyal people of Oman. We would like to voice our appreciation for their endeavours to promote Oman's prosperity and stature. We will proceed along the path of development and we will continue the blessed renaissance march as the late Sultan wished it to be. Conscious of the immense responsibility, we reaffirm that Oman will always remain our supreme goal, in all actions and pursuits. We call upon all citizens, without exception, to safeguard the gains of the blessed renaissance, and effectively contribute in maintaining the triumphant parade, relying on the Almighty Allah's assistance and support.

As a multiethnic, multilingual, and multicultural country, and having experienced the dramatic loss of Sultan Qaboos whom the Omanis iconized, it is deemed important to remind the people of their one identity as Omanis and encourage them to preserve it and show their loyalty to the one who established and promoted it. Omanis here are repositioned and re-socialized in a larger community of practice and as authentic agents who can fundamentally continue writing Oman's history as a nation state. The essentialist ideology was used not only to articulate and activate a national identity but also to build a coalition across the lines of the aforementioned differences and break down these boundaries for the sake of achieving Omanization.

In Extract 8, education in its entirety is iconized as the only means to economic development, or Omanization. In a nationalist movement started by Sultan Qaboos and continued by Sultan Haitham, education is called upon to provide students with agency to facilitate national unity and rewrite the history of modern Oman's 'blessed renaissance'. While a direct mention of English is missing from the speech, in an attempt to avoid ideological inconsistency, it is indexed in the mention of research and innovation, which signals a powerful ideology about the uses and values of English as a significant tool for achieving economic development.

Extract 8

> On top of our national priorities is the education sector, with all its types and levels. It will receive full attention, and it will be provided with the supporting environment which motivates research and innovation. We will also provide it with all means of empowerment, since it is the base upon which our children will be able to participate in meeting the requirements of the coming phase of development.

Shaped by neoliberal ideology and how it controls economic development, Extract 9 shows how Sultan Haitham uses globalization to index English. Such word choices were made deliberately by the government due to a belief that English is the route to achievement.

Extract 9

> We stand today with firm invincible will on the threshold of a vital stage of development and nation building. It is a stage which you all have participated in drawing out its prospects in Oman's 2040 Future Vision, and contributed to devising its economic, social and cultural goals, in a manner that embodies a clear-cut vision, great expectation towards a more prosperous future. We are all aware of the challenges imposed by the current global conditions, and their implications to the region and to us, since we are part of this world, influencing it and are influenced by it.

The private sector is used in Extract 10 to index English and is distinguished from the public sector by its reinforcement of Omanization. Hence, with English being considered a global lingua franca and the language of business, working in English and using it to achieve Omanization will come under close scrutiny. English language education is viewed as *the* tool for Oman's national economic development and its shortcomings have long contributed to the failure of achieving Omanization.

Extract 10

> Our government will follow up progress in various sectors, including small and medium enterprises, and entrepreneurship particularly those based on innovation, artificial intelligence, and advanced technology. This is in addition to training and enabling youth to benefit from the opportunities made available in this vital sector, so that it could form a cornerstone in the national economy.

The mention of employment in Extract 11 indexes English, which is considered a fundamental tool for finding white-collar jobs in Oman. English is being used not only to benchmark Omanis' competence to join the labour market, but also to mark a new global identity.

Extract 11

> We will also accord full attention and support to develop a comprehensive national framework of recruitment, considering it one of the fundamental pillars of the national economy. This necessitates the continuous improvement of employment environment in both public and private sector. Moreover, it requires revising and developing employment systems in the government sector, adopting new employment systems

> and policies that grant the government the flexibility and the ability that enable it to achieve optimal use of national resources, expertise and competencies, and to accommodate the largest volume of job seekers, enabling them to join the labour market to secure their stability and meet their expectations.

The repeated use of 'development' and 'nation building' in Extract 12 also indexes English. It is marked and used to convey a message to the speakers of minority and indigenous languages about the power and centrality of English as a tool for achieving national identity and modernization.

Extract 12

> Nation building and development are a public responsibility that requires the commitment of all, without exempting any one from their role, in their respective specialties, and within their capabilities. Oman has been founded, and its civilization has been established through the sacrifices of its people who used their utmost in preserving its dignity and strength, exhibiting their loyalty in performing their national duties and advancing national interests to personal interests. This is what we are resolved to consolidate and protect, so that we could attain the level of development that we aspire for, the prosperity which we will work to realize and the decency that must prevail in all sectors and become firm grounds for all that we will do.

Powerfully driven by essentialist ideology, the discourse in Extract 13 privileges English and makes it immune to challenge, despite English being unmarked in order to mask hierarchy and inequality. More importantly, perhaps, there is a message directed to those who lack competence in English that their identity will be less 'real' than those who are competent in English; more specifically, they will have a local identity but not a global one, which will affect their rights.

Extract 13

> We are proud that the citizens and residents in our dear country live, thanks be to Allah, in the purview of the State of Law and Institutions, a state built on the principles of freedom, indiscrimination, and equal opportunities, a state established on justice and dignity of individuals whose rights and liberties are secured, therein including the freedom of expression that is guaranteed under the Basic Law of the State.

Significantly, the mention of 'Law' in Extract 13 indexes punishing those who try to resist, destabilize, challenge, or question the Omani government's planning of language identity to achieve Omanization.

Discussion

In this linguistic anthropological study, I attempted to critically analyse an early speech by Sultan Qaboos and a recent speech by Sultan Haitam. Both speeches embraced a combination of essentialist ideology and neoliberal ideology to pursue building the Omani people's language identity. The findings showed that Omanization is here to stay, regardless of the results achieved. Several authors (Al-Harrasi, 2020; Ennis & Al-Jamali, 2014; Mashood et al., 2009) argue that Omanization, which is aimed at the private sector only, has borne fruit and reached the set quota only in certain sectors, occupations, and positions, while it has struggled in others, and that the marginalization of a productive indigenous labour force and reliance on foreign labour has persisted. Mashood et al. (2009) concluded that the Omani government has failed to strictly enforce Omanization as a strategic program due to the poor monitoring of business owners, which has created serious long-term political, economic, social, and security problems. Mashood et al. (2009) described Omanization as an 'intervention', rather than a nationalization, program. Similarly, Ennis and Al-Jamali (2014) described the solutions proposed to Omanize jobs as nothing more than 'ad hoc responses to social agitation' (p. 2), asserting that many of the policies since the Omani Spring (stemming from the wider Arab Spring) in 2011 have not only failed to resolve labour market challenges but have also been short-term solutions with long-term repercussions.

Today, the problem of implementing Omanization persists due to strategic planning issues. The figures released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (2020) show that expatriates in Oman still make up approximately 40% of the total population and that there was only a 1% change in the number of expatriates between 2019 and 2020. Interestingly, the number of expatriates increased from 995,630 in 2010 to 1,729,713 in 2020. Moreover, in May 2020, the unemployment rate reached 24.1% of the total number of Omani diploma holders and under- and postgraduates, bearing in mind that 10.2% of those are aged between 15 and 29 years old.

Significantly, and as the findings reveal, LEPP has been stressed as the main agency to achieve Omanization since 1975. Different psychological, agentic, and socioeconomic tactics were used by the government, which were influenced by essentialist and neoliberal ideologies. However, such tactics have proved inefficient due to a lack of strategic planning and poor policy implementation (Al-Issa, 2020). A closer review of pertinent research shows that English language teaching (ELT) at school level has suffered from a policy-practice rift, which has affected students' agency (Al-Azri, 2016; Al-Issa & Al-Bulushi, 2012). Despite several attempts to Omanize the syllabus and expand educational services at different levels, teachers continued to disrupt policy implementation as a result of inadequate preparation. More specifically, teachers continue to graduate with inadequate language proficiency and teaching methodology due to a lack of professional teacher educators

who teach and model humanistic/progressive ELT (Al-Issa, 2019, 2020). Al-Zadjali (2017) found that English teachers in Oman were passionate about their teaching, cared about their learners' academic, social, and moral development, and sought adaptation. Nonetheless, teachers lacked subject knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and curriculum knowledge, and they were not equipped with strategies for curriculum design and development.

The impact of this undesirable situation has stretched to the higher education sector. Sivaraman et al. (2014) found a connection between inadequate English teaching in schools and struggles with EMI in higher education, and that students' lack of proficiency affected motivation and agency. This led many students to prefer Arabic as a medium of instruction, despite those students not viewing English as a threat to their sense of identity (Denman & Al-Mahrooqi, 2019). Interestingly, Al-Bakri (2013) saw that low English proficiency and specialization make it very difficult for Omani graduates to replace the dominant expatriate workforce. Several authors (Al-Issa, 2014; Al-Harrasi, 2020; Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2016; Al-Mahrooqi & Tuzlukova, 2014) indicated that university faculties were partly responsible for students' lack of linguistic and pragmatic English communication skills, which impedes on employability and widens the policy-practice gap. Teachers' inadequacy has also been observed in vocational education (Al-Ani, 2017). Vocational training, which was imported from the UK as a magical solution to unemployment and Omanization problems, has arguably damaged the public education system by promoting social divisions (Exley & Ball, 2014). Despite over 30,000 students graduating from vocational education colleges since the academic year 2005/2006, vocational education has failed to serve Oman's strategic plan, economic aspirations, and future vision (Al-Ani, 2017).

Conclusion and recommendations

This section will suggest ways to overcome the problems resulting from the mismatch between the goals outlined in the speeches of both sultans and the failure of Omanization as a national policy. These recommendations include a focus on teacher education, strengthened identities in vocational education, and a revitalization of indigenous languages.

First, Al-Zadjali (2017) suggested that pre- and in-service teacher training allows teachers more autonomy by providing greater awareness of the ELT policies and philosophies in Oman. The Ministry of Education should involve pre- and in-service teachers in the curriculum design and allow them flexibility to develop their own teaching methods to match their learners' needs and abilities. This can potentially help students engage in 'acts of identities' and develop 'a sense of ownership of meaning-making' (Norton, 2010, p. 10) to facilitate learning. It can additionally empower teachers and emancipate their thinking and behaviour to resist top-down textbook-based ELT by committing to humanistic pedagogy. This would promote a student-centred environment by opening up educational opportunities for students beyond

what the curriculum transcribes (Al-Issa, 2019). Al Riyami (2016) also stresses the need for critical pedagogy (CP) as a humanistic pedagogy with the power to help teachers challenge the predominant banking models or one-size-fits-all policies and develop 'critical professional identities' (Sardabi et al., 2018). Ways to raise awareness amongst teachers of the sociocultural and sociopolitical complexities surrounding ELT include developing professional communities of practice and organizing conferences to help teachers share theoretical and practical knowledge of CP. In addition, Al Riyami (2016) suggests empowering students by integrating their cultures and concerns into the classroom to increase motivation and self-confidence and incorporating aspects of critical language testing into the curriculum.

Second, improvements to vocational training are needed. Klotz et al. (2014) point out that vocational identity is aligned with the development of vocational competence. They stressed the critical role of teachers in terms of creating positive vocational learning environments to 'optimize learners' perceptions of their occupations in practice, thereby shaping vocational identity, which then increases competence and willingness to perform' (p. 17). Hegna (2019) additionally concluded that the apprenticeship of communities of practice in vocational education has the potential to transform the identity of 'wounded learners' or 'school losers' into the 'skilled adult working man/woman' cultural identity.

Finally, it is important to pay attention to the revitalization of indigenous languages in Oman. The United Nations (UN) (2008, 2009) highlighted that linguistic diversity is being threatened around the world, as hundreds of indigenous languages have already disappeared during the last century. The UN (2008, 2009) attributed this to a lack of language rights and held world governments, especially in the developing world, responsible for denying those languages any official status and recognition and exercising linguistic discrimination, prejudice, and oppression. As parents often fail to pass down indigenous languages to their children, the UN also highlighted that more systematic efforts and measures are needed to save those languages from death and safeguard traditional heritage. For indigenous language revitalization, the UN emphasized the need for such languages to be officially recognized in constitutions and have representation in the media. It also stressed the right for indigenous people to be educated in their mother tongue through traditional education and the intergenerational transfer of knowledge aimed at maintaining a flourishing and harmonious community and/or the integration of indigenous perspectives and languages in mainstream education systems. Lastly, the UN (2008, 2009) asserted that children who learn their mother tongue through humanistic pedagogy find it easier to learn a second language, which is important for teacher training centres to communicate to pre-service and in-service teachers going forward.

To conclude, Oman has persistent problems with language choice, language contact, language maintenance, language shift, and language spread, which are due to ideological struggles and conflict. Such issues are also due

to a lack of systematic long-range strategic planning, clear directions, innovative solutions to problems, and an overreliance on imported solutions. The two speeches analysed in this chapter demonstrate the use of manipulative discourse to sell Omanization to the Omanis through LEPP. Students and society are led to believe that English provides them with agency and improved socioeconomic conditions. Nonetheless, this chapter argues that LEPP is part of the problem rather than the solution. Teachers have been a major source of language identity construction failure due to the absence of professional pre- and in-service teacher training and education agency. Teachers are yet to be recognized as strategic partners in need of better training to achieve the planned outcomes. The two sultans' political pragmatism and reliance on essentialist and neoliberal ideologies to solve Oman's socioeconomic problems were ineffective, in part due to poor LEPP implementation. Nonetheless, this chapter recommends that using CP can help transform ELT into a democratic agency in LEPP in Oman, including the revival of indigenous languages.

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3 No Mary Poppins in sight

Linguistic effects of the nanny culture on Gulf identities

Hanada Taha-Thomure

Nannies have mostly occupied a beloved and nearly iconic space in popular culture ranging from Maria, played by Julie Andrews, who cared for the talented Von Trapp family to Mary Poppins, Nanny McPhee, and Aibileen Clarke in *The Help*. The famous and sweet Dada Halima, played by Thuraya Fakhry, in classic Egyptian movies further warms viewers' hearts. These fictional nannies provide a vision of a mother substitute who always knows how to deal with difficult and unruly children with discipline, fun, music, and, at times, a bit of magic. These nannies have engraved a lasting memory in society's collective imagination. The picture in real life, however, is far from Maria's enchanting music or Nanny McPhee, who can make it snow in August. Saud Alsanousi, who won the 2013 International Booker Prize for Arabic Fiction, detailed the bleak reality of household maids in his award-winning novel *The Bamboo Stalk*. The novel, which is woven around a maid in a Kuwaiti household who falls in love with the kind adult son of the family she works for, chronicles themes of love, racism, cultural and linguistic schisms and taboos, contradicting value systems, and abandonment (Qualey, 2015). It was probably one of the first Arabic novels to touch on the topic of live-in foreign domestic workers (FDWs) and how their presence in Arab households not only affects them but naturally affects the families they work for as well. The novel's acclaim is largely down to the courageous tackling of the live-in housemaid phenomenon that is so common in the Gulf.

This influx of live-in FDWs to the Arabian Gulf states has brought to the region a welcome mosaic of different cultures, cuisines, belief systems, ethnicities, and languages. It has, in addition, infused millions of homes around the Gulf region with housemaids and nannies whose language repertoires do not usually include Arabic, the mother tongue of all locals as well as millions of expatriate families from various Arab countries. With most housemaids and nannies being the main caregivers to children under ten in the Gulf region, this situation can be challenging with regard to Arabic language acquisition and proficiency. While many scholars have investigated the linguistic identities of FDWs and their host families in the context of Singapore (Cheo & Quah, 2005; Lorente, 2018), Hong Kong (Ladagaard, 2012; Tang, 2018), and Taiwan (Lan, 2003), very little can be found in the literature on the

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language of FDWs and its effects on Arabic-speaking children in the Gulf context. Moreover, previous work tends to focus primarily on the linguistic identities of FDWs rather than the children they care for (Pattadath, 2020; Ueno, 2010). This chapter aims to bridge this identified gap in the knowledge base by exploring the multidimensional relationships between FDWs and the families with whom they work, with a particular focus on how the language of Arabic-speaking children is affected.

Domestic workers in the Gulf: What do the numbers say?

As of 2016, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries had approximately 3.77 million FDWs, 1.65 million of whom were women who mostly worked as live-in housemaids (Tayah & Assaf, 2018) (Table 3.1). Global estimates on migrant workers rank the Arab states as the number one host of FDWs, collectively hosting 27.4% of the world's FDWs, followed by Southeast Asia at 19.4% and Europe at 19.2% (ILO, 2015). Most FDWs come from Southeast Asian countries including India, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Nepal, and Bangladesh (Tayah & Assaf, 2018). It is very interesting to note in Table 3.1 the large number of male FDWs in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). This relates to the fact that women were not allowed to drive there until recently (see Hurley, this volume), therefore almost every household had to hire a male driver. It would be of importance to see if the numbers drop given the new legislation in the KSA allowing women to drive.

The demand for FDWs is said to have withstood the calamities of the 2008 financial crisis (Tayah & Assaf, 2018; Thimothy & Sasikumar, 2012). It is yet to be seen how much the COVID-19 pandemic has affected demand for domestic help in 2020 and 2021, with both parents in most families working online from home and the children doing schoolwork online as well.

It should be recognized that large numbers of FDWs have not always been present in the region. Prior to the 1970s oil and economic boom in the Gulf states, the notion of FDWs was largely unknown. Wealthy families in the

Table 3.1 Number of domestic workers in the GCC, 2016 (thousands)

Country	*Female*	*Male*
Bahrain	67	44
Kuwait	346	332
Oman	148	48
Qatar	108	66
Saudi Arabia	759	1,544
UAE	219	87
Total	1,647	2,121

Source: Tayah & Assaf (2018)

Table 3.2 Female labour force and female population aged 15–64 in the Gulf region, 2019

	Female labour force (% of total labour force)	*Female population aged 15–64 (thousands)*
Bahrain	20.1	417.63
Kuwait	25.1	1,178.83
Oman	12.7	1,085.38
Qatar	13.7	497.86
Saudi Arabia	15.8	9,747.76
UAE	17.6	2,256.75

Source: World Bank Organization (2020)

region who could afford domestic help used to have either local servants or servants who had been raised by them over the years and who dealt with household chores only (El-Haddad, 2003). For the most part, children were taken care of by their parents and members of their extended family who usually lived together within the same household. Accordingly, children were truly raised, as the saying goes, 'by a village', with numerous family members talking to them, telling them stories full of cultural nuances and tales about personalities of importance and acceptable behaviour (El-Haddad, 2003). With the oil boom and the riches it brought to the region and to individual lifestyles, both Emirati and expatriate households started employing FDWs as a way to unburden women of some of their household chores. With higher education levels for local women and increasing employment rates for local and expatriate women around the Gulf (Table 3.2), the region witnessed a sharp move from single- to dual-income families (Tayah & Assaf, 2018). In addition, the population of the GCC has increased by 51% over the past ten years, driven mostly by a rise in migrant expatriates holding middle to high income jobs (Tayah & Assaf, 2018).

All this created a need to hire domestic workers who could take care of homes and young children when both parents were out at work. Moreover, the move by so many locals and expatriates to an upper income bracket ushered in certain signs of prestige and social status, even for households where mothers did not work (Jabbar, 2014; Tayah & Assaf, 2018). These signs of social prestige included having one housemaid or more, a driver, owning increasingly larger homes, more cars, and indulging in buying luxury brands.

Governmental laws and regulations in place

Governments play an important role in regulating the relationship between employers and FDWs to ensure that the rights of both the employer and the domestic worker are respected (ILO, 2017). To hire an FDW, governments in the Gulf have stipulated several laws and regulations over the years to help

Table 3.3 Summary of requirements/income/benefits for FDWs in the Gulf

Country	*Summary of FDW working conditions*
Bahrain	Average salaries for a nanny – 640 BHD (1702 USD current rate), housekeeper – 540 BHD (1436 USD current rate).
Kuwait	147 USD is the minimum monthly wage. In June 2015, Kuwaiti legislators adopted a new law (the first of its kind in the GCC) giving domestic workers enforceable labour rights (a weekly day off, 30 days of annual paid leave, a 12-hour working day with rest, and an end of service benefit, among other rights).
Oman	The minimum wages for housemaids are set by the government and vary depending on the nationality of the housemaid hired. The average base is around 206 USD a month, but monthly salaries of live-in housemaids can vary from 247 to 686 USD a month.
Qatar	The monthly average wage for FDWs increased from 453 USD in 2006 to 800 USD by 2016. Besides housing, full-time housemaids have to be provided with money for food, clothing, and optional extras. Health cards are renewed every two years, tickets home are provided every two years, and repatriation costs are covered.
Saudi Arabia	Sri Lankan domestic workers earn a minimum of 80–100 USD a month. Kenyans in Saudi Arabia earn at least 375 USD per month plus benefits. The Philippines has set a 400 USD minimum wage for its citizens across all countries.
UAE	Private sponsorship requires that the sponsor must show a salary certificate of 6,800 USD, but those with a lower monthly salary can recruit a Tadbeer-sponsored worker. Costs are the same for workers from all nationalities at 30 USD for four hours daily or 1000 USD for a month plus benefits.

Sources: Average Salary in Bahrain (2020); Hubbard and Donovan (2020); Migrants-Rights Organization (2020); Salama (2020); Tayah and Assaf (2018); UN Migration (2018); Welcome Qatar (2016).

regulate the process. There are different government requirements that people need to meet to get nannies/housemaids (Table 3.3). The requirements to hire a nanny/housemaid in most countries in the Gulf region include a minimum household income, sponsorship regulations where the FDW's visa and residency need to be sponsored by the family hiring him or her, a minimum salary for FDWs, and benefits that include basic medical insurance, accommodation, food, clothing, and a plane ticket to return home once every two years (ILO, 2017; Tayah & Assaf, 2018). The UAE's policy on domestic workers, for example, stipulates 12 hours of rest per day, 30 days' medical leave per year, 30 days' annual vacation, and possession of their own identification papers including identity card and passport (UAE Portal, 2020).

What is expected of an FDW?

It is believed that the average number of hours worked by live-in domestic workers in Gulf countries is extremely high and could be as much as 101 hours

per week. This is compared to Costa Rica, for example, where the workload is 72 hours a week (Tayah & Assaf, 2018). Tasks may include cleaning the house while also looking after the children, playing with them, putting them to bed, taking them for walks, accompanying them to play dates and birthday parties, and doing school drop-offs and pick-ups. Sixteen to eighteen hours of work per day is the average for domestic workers in the Arab world (Esim & Smith, 2004; Human Rights Watch, 2020).

In interviews that Tayah and Assaf (2018) conducted with several live-in housemaids, comments such as 'Nationals and Arab expatriates are micro-managers', 'They monitor us closely', 'We prefer to work with Western expats', and 'They (Western expatriates) trust us with the work and let us manage our time' were prevalent. For their part, Arab families, when interviewed by the same researchers (Tayah & Assaf, 2018), expressed many concerns regarding their domestic helpers, particularly concerns that might not directly relate to an FDW's job description. Complaints included 'She is stubborn', 'She does not listen', 'She is not friendly with children', and 'She is distracted, always looking at her phone and checking family photos' (Tayah & Assaf, 2018).

It may be that too much is expected of the FDWs in Arab homes in terms of working hours, not leaving the house, and the range of tasks required including cooking, cleaning, laundering, and taking care of the children, the elderly, and any pets. In contrast, very little is offered in terms of investing in these FDWs to learn Arabic well and to grow and focus on certain tasks, rather than being the designated cook, nanny, caregiver, and cleaner.

A housemaid or a nanny?

The Cambridge Dictionary (2020), accessed online, defines a nanny as 'a person whose job is to take care of a particular family's children' (para. 1). A housemaid is defined by the same dictionary as 'a woman who is employed to clean hotel rooms and make them neat, or a woman who is a servant in a person's home' (para. 1). Although there seems to be a clear difference between the role of a nanny and that of a housemaid, this may not be the case in many households around the world and in the Gulf region. The two roles tend to converge into something that is less defined and more encompassing than the definitions above suggest (Romero, 2013). What is regularly seen in households in the region is housemaids who mostly do not have the credentials or certification needed to be nannies, such as having an associate degree or certificate in early childhood development, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training, or a functional level of Arabic or knowledge of the culture. Domestic workers usually double up as a housemaid and a nanny. FDWs in most households have little authority over the children they care for and are rarely allowed to act in their role as a caregiver and discipline them. A FDW is almost never tasked with helping the children they care for with their homework, as the task of helping children with their schoolwork is reserved for parents or possibly a private tutor in the Arab culture. Even if parents were

open to having the nanny/housemaid help children with their homework, this may be difficult because of the often low educational attainment level of domestic workers.

Initially, households in the region, when hiring domestic helpers, know that they are hiring a housemaid whose Arabic language skills and education are quite limited. The pressure, in many cases, of having both parents working and possibly travelling for business purposes several times a year has necessitated the elevation of a housemaid's role to that of nanny as well. However, this increase in responsibilities does not usually come with training, support, or the trust to be given enough authority to take on the role of caregiver, which may result in the children having behavioural problems that manifest themselves at school and home (Tang, 2018). It is estimated that some infants and toddlers in the Gulf region spend between 30 to 70 hours a week in the care of a housemaid due to their parents' busy schedules (Al Sumaiti, 2012). It is argued that this is much higher than any number of hours an infant or toddler would spend in a professional nursery or preschool (Al Sumaiti, 2012).

Arab parents in the region seem to oscillate between the pragmatism of needing a nanny to enable mothers to work and, at the same time, limiting the role and authority of the nanny in order not to encroach on their role as parents. At times, a parental void develops when parents are not home to exercise their roles, yet nannies are not empowered to discipline children in the absence of their parents. This often leaves nannies seeking to appease the children with unhealthy, sugar-filled food or by tolerating unacceptable behaviours (Yeoh et al., 1999). Additionally, younger children can get emotionally attached to their nanny, which may result in parents feeling a certain resentment towards the nanny. A love-hate relationship can develop between mothers and nannies in many households where children tend to seek the nanny for comfort and attention rather than their mother (Jabbar, 2014). This complex relationship triangle between nannies, parents, and children leaves parents, especially mothers, feeling guilty about having to leave their children in the care of a nanny and also frustrated that their children are not developing in the way that they had hoped linguistically and behaviourally (Yeoh et al., 1999).

Nannies' impact on children's linguistic identities and language practice

Research largely suggests that young children's home background and environment influence their academic achievement in school (Tang, 2018). The quality of parent-child interactions and the availability of learning resources at home are important factors that can support children's language and pre-academic skills in early childhood (Al Sumaiti, 2012; Rodriguez & Tamis-LeMonda, 2011) and educational achievement during their school years (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). The richness and proficiency of caregivers' language can be related to children's language development (Dickinson & Tabors, 1991; Hart

& Risley, 1995; Song et al., 2014; Weizman & Snow, 2001). Parents around the world are usually considered to be their children's first teachers, reading to them in some cultures, leaning more on oral traditions in other cultures where they tell stories, and reciting religious songs or verses from a holy book in other contexts (Fenimore, 2015; Taha-Thomure et al., 2020). Moreover, parents' contingent responsiveness and sensitivity to infants, toddlers and young children relate to children's receptive and expressive language, story comprehension, and phonological development (Beals & DeTemple, 1993; Hart & Risley, 1995; Hirsh-Pasek & Burchinal, 2006; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2001, 2014). The number of children's books in a child's home environment also relates to the development of receptive and expressive vocabulary (Payne et al., 1994; Raikes et al., 2006).

The level of education among domestic workers ranges from unschooled to college graduates (ILO, 2013). In a study conducted by Esim and Smith (2004) on Kuwaiti FDWs, a high number of both male and female domestic workers had high-school certification. The study revealed that 46% of Filipino women and only 13% of Sri Lankan women had school certificates (Esim & Smith, 2004). The same study also found that only a limited number of surveyed domestic workers were able to read and write in Arabic and 53% reported that they spoke Arabic satisfactorily (Esim & Smith, 2004).

In a study by Tang (2018), it was concluded that, in Hong Kong, Filipino FDWs who were mature and proficient in English raised the educational outcomes of the children in the households they worked for. This is due to their maturity, level of education, and ability to speak and communicate regularly with the children they cared for in English, the language that the parents in the study wanted their children to learn. In contrast, Cheuk and Wong (2005) found that young children under the care of other FDWs were more prone to serious language impairment and deficiencies.

In a study conducted with two groups of children, a control group (without a nanny) and a test group, 50% of the children in the test group did not use Arabic to communicate with the nanny and 20% of the children communicated with the nanny in her language. Interestingly, 20% of the children developed their nannies' accent (Hijab, 1994). Clearly, research on this matter is still in its exploratory phase, with more longitudinal studies needed to understand the lasting linguistic effects of non-Arabic speaking FDWs on children's language development. This begs the question of identity, given the intertwined and complex relationship between language and identity. In countries where the native language (L1) takes a back seat due to domestic, economic, and social circumstances, the lack of L1 in the immediate environment may affect children's identities and the imprints of who they really are or will become (Suleiman, 2003). Complex linguistic realities including linguistic hybridity, as seen in several countries of the Arab Gulf (Hillman et al., 2018; Hopkyns et al., 2018, 2021), influence youth whose Arabic language skills are sometimes inadequate for accessing their written history, literary works, and long tradition of philosophical treatise that thrived from the 7th to the

13th centuries. Scarce exposure to their native language, namely Arabic, due to the long hours spent with non-Arabic speaking nannies may also affect how children acquire concepts relating to cultural viewpoints. Such factors may also affect the development of children's cognition and thought, and the acquisition of that inner speech that Vygotsky presented in his renowned book *Thought and Language*. Vygotsky (1997) believed that the basic speech structures developed by children form the basic structures of their thinking and, without verbal thinking, it would be almost impossible to understand concepts. In this sense, verbal communication and internal thoughts can influence the identities of children, which extend into ways of thinking as adults. More longitudinal research is needed with subsequent reflection, not only on the family or small community level but also on a national level. As acclaimed Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish (2005) says, addressing the Arabic language: 'Am I you my language, or are you me? Oh, my language, help me fuse every letter of the alphabet into my body so I can become a master, not an echo'.

Arabic language challenges in the Gulf

A case study by Fenimore (2015), which explored home reading practices in the Kuwaiti culture, involved interviewing five nannies who cared for children with additional needs. The focus of the interviews was on reading practices in the households in which they worked. The study reported a lack of engagement by Kuwaiti adults in preparing their children for school, a lack of books around the home, and a perception on the part of nannies that reading is an educational task linked to homework and not part of childcare (Fenimore, 2015). The study also revealed that nannies believed the purpose of reading was solely linked to schoolwork and that, in their own homes, children's books were not something they grew up with.

The Dubai Women's Establishment surveyed 1,186 Emirati working women in various governmental jobs in Dubai and found that 62% of children under four years of age are taken care of by housemaids, 32% of children under four are cared for by extended families, and 5% by private nurseries (Dhal, 2011). Bennet (2009) reports that only 5.4% of nursery staff in Dubai speak Arabic, a rate that is alarming for children whose first language is Arabic. Moreover, results from the 'Progress in International Reading Literacy Study' (PIRLS), which is a standardized test of international impact and reputation for assessing fourth graders' reading comprehension in their native language, show that in all Arab countries, including the Gulf states, students performed below the international average of 500 on Arabic reading comprehension (Mullis et al., 2012, 2016; Taha-Thomure, 2017, 2019).

Dhal (2011) argued that children growing up with nannies experienced language delays due to a lack of conversation and language use. In the absence of parents in many Gulf homes, children spend much more time with FDWs than they do in childcare centres (Al Sumaiti, 2012; Dhal,

2011). This means that, in many cases, children are left with a pseudo-parent who not only lacks the necessary skills and education to raise a child, but also the level of Arabic language proficiency needed for a child who is at a critical age for mother tongue language acquisition (Taha-Thomure, 2019). The Philippines, for example, mandates only a four-day preparatory course for all Filipino maids heading overseas (Lorente, 2018). The four-day course includes one day of cultural familiarization and, if the maids are heading to Arab countries, they have to do a three-day crash course in Arabic to know the basics of the language and learn hurriedly memorized phrases such as 'cut the meat', 'iron the shirt', or 'change sheets' (Lorente, 2018). This type of language training means that FDWs often come to host countries with almost no Arabic and commit basic language errors that render communication ineffective. Even those who have spent several years in Arab countries are not at a level of Arabic language usage that would be considered acceptable to transfer to children. Errors in feminine-masculine tense agreement are widespread, as well as limited vocabulary, incorrect use of major timeframes such as past, present, and future, singular and plural tenses, and confusing pronouns, to name just a few. These errors are transferred to children who spend many hours with nannies in the absence of their parents, and this could lead to problems and delays in children's language development (Lorente, 2018).

Kagan (2017) argues that employers' frustration towards domestic workers is largely due to their lack of language proficiency, which creates a communication barrier. In a Twitter poll I conducted for the purpose of this chapter, a question was posed to Arabs in the Gulf on the effect of having non-Arabic speaking nannies/housemaids in their homes. The poll offered three options: a) negatively affects their children's Arabic language acquisition, b) no effect, c) positively affects their children's Arabic language acquisition. There were 148 responses to the poll and 60% of respondents felt that having a non-Arabic speaking housemaid at home affected their children's Arabic language acquisition negatively, 5% said it had a positive effect on their children's Arabic language, and 35% said it had no effect. Four respondents left comments saying that it is mostly the parents who influence their children's Arabic language. One added that it really depends on how long the children are left alone with the housemaid. Another said that if the child is immersed in an Arabic environment, then it will be hard for the non-Arabic speaking housemaid to have a negative effect. In some sense, the results of this poll mirror the results noted in earlier studies. Some studies found the effect of housemaids on children's academic attainment and language proficiency to be insignificant (Al-Jarf, 2005; Cheo & Quah, 2005), some found that English speaking nannies had a positive effect on children's achievement (Tang & Yung, 2014), while others found negative effects (Jabbar, 2014; Cheuk & Wong, 2005). Reasons for the contradicting results might be due to several factors, including the level of Arabic language proficiency of domestic workers, their level of education, the

belief systems they bring into the hosts' homes, and whether collectivism or individualism is nurtured and prized (Greenfield et al., 2008).

In summary, there is a general societal concern for children's Arabic language proficiency that has been blamed on many factors, including the rush to enrol children from a very young age in English-medium private schools, the extreme reliance on non-Arabic speaking live-in housemaids to care for younger children, minimal time spent immersed in Arabic, and the 'Anglicization' of everything considered to be pop culture surrounding children in the Gulf (Al Kuttab, 2017). Newspapers have repeatedly raised the topic of lack of parental involvement in their children's lives. There is not a month that goes by without a newspaper article addressing this issue (Almazroui, 2014). Headlines include: 'Parents must be more involved in children's lives' (Almazroui, 2014); 'The power of parental involvement' (Brown, 2019); 'Arab fathers' role key to shaping children's future' (Mojib, 2019); 'Are foreign nannies a bad influence on UAE children?' (Al Kuttab, 2017); and many more that reveal the level of concern not only for children's Arabic language proficiency, but for their social, emotional, and psychological wellbeing. There is a general call for more parental involvement in children's lives. This is not an unsubstantiated call, as research has repeatedly highlighted that parental involvement in children's lives, especially in the first eight years, is associated with greater reading skills and improved scholastic achievement (Almazroui, 2014).

Implications and Conclusion

This chapter explored the nanny culture phenomenon in the Gulf and zoomed in on the effect that this phenomenon has on children's language acquisition. The chapter, moreover, explored the effects of the nanny culture on language identities, concept formation, and the challenges currently being faced in the teaching and learning of Arabic. Due to the often limited educational level and skills that FDWs bring into the households they work for, it is imperative that parents become seriously engaged in their children's lives and education as parental involvement is the best indicator of children's success and achievement (Al Sumaiti, 2012). This chapter has argued that, in the Gulf, housemaids have a strong yet invisible and unacknowledged influence on children's linguistic, cultural, social, behavioural, and communication skills. Recognizing such a situation is a must, considering the large number of families who depend on the help of FDWs (Scheftel, 2016). Five suggestions can be made to raise awareness and instigate change.

First, parental awareness and education campaigns are needed to help inform society about the importance of parental involvement. Parents talking to their children in their native language is a key factor in helping them acquire the language and cultural nuances expected of a native speaker of any language. Such awareness campaigns could be instigated by schools or

universities with the purpose of discussing current sociolinguistic realities and context-specific strategies rather than providing generalized recommendations for good parenting practice.

Second, new government regulations might be needed to help improve the relationship between FDWs and employers by defining the roles of housemaids, nannies and parents more clearly. This could include minimal requirements regarding necessary skills such as Arabic and English language literacy, financial education, and communication training so that FDWs are in a better place to negotiate their rights and feel confident in their ability to do the jobs required of them. For employers, it is crucial that they have realistic expectations of what the FDWs can do coming in. Moreover, it is essential that employers understand that FDWs have left their own children and families to care for families and children they don't know, in countries that are far away from their homes and anything familiar.

Third, there is also a need for Arab movies and TV reality shows that feature nannies and housemaids as central characters, or programs that include scenes with realistic nanny-parent dynamics and common dilemmas (Dahlstedt & Fejes, 2014; Newbould, 2017). Such programs could prove to be a welcome forum where neglected conversations linked to parenting might be highlighted and where parents can choose to attend informal and indirect coaching sessions on the art and science of being parents. This is a sensitive issue that needs to be treated with great tact.

Fourth, an important area that the Gulf and Arab region at large needs to look into more seriously is investment in quality public and private early childhood education. Children would be cared for by trained and credentialed Arabic speaking staff for a specific number of hours while parents are at work (Adamson & Brennan, 2017), and this would limit the time spent with non-Arabic speaking nannies, expose children to their mother tongue, and allow them to interact with other children within a safe and pedagogically appropriate environment.

Finally, it is important that a win-win formula is reached, where working mothers in the Gulf and elsewhere in the world are enabled and empowered to pursue their careers and dreams while their children at home receive the best childcare they can get. This is only possible if an investment mentality is adopted. Society at large needs to invest in FDWs, educating and empowering them to care for children in a way that will not clash with parents' expectations. At the same time, parents need to be educated and made aware that no nanny, no matter how qualified she is, can replace them and play the role reserved solely for them. This includes frequently communicating with their children in their mother tongue, exposing them to Arab culture and pop culture, and ensuring that everyone in the household plays by the same rules. Only then might we reach the place that Nanny McPhee, played by Emma Thompson in the 2005 film, so wisely described: 'When you need me, but do not want me, then I must stay. When you want me, but no longer need me, then I have to go'.

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Part II

Gulf cultural and linguistic identities in the media

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4 A semiotic analysis of Saudi Arabian women's Instagrammable identities following the campaign for the right to drive

Zoe Hurley

The 2017 decision to grant women in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) the right to drive, while not without controversy, was celebrated by many across the nation's cities, international media, women's rights groups, and social media activists who had formed under the banner of the '@women2drive' movement (Chulov, 2017; Altoaimy, 2018). Shalhoub (2019), a Jeddah-based freelance journalist working for the BBC's Arabic Service in London, states, 'Since the bar on women driving was lifted, I have never felt as empowered and independent'. However, for some, lifting the ban in rural areas was considered less relevant for the many women who had already been driving for decades (Al-Khamri, 2019). In contrast, in the cities of Jeddah and Riyadh, many women still do not drive due to the challenges of the traffic system, as well as the lack of opportunities and/or incentives to pass the driving test (Wheeler, 2020).

It is also argued that the @women2drive movement gives visibility to certain forms of activism, aligning with Western narratives about women's empowerment that ignore Saudi women's issues more pertinent locally (Le Renard, 2019). Nevertheless, change is occurring, but the KSA's royal advisor, Hanan Al-Ahmadi, says, 'We need to be able to create this change gradually and maintain our identity' (*The Week*, 2020).

Prior scholarship focusing on the @women2drive movement has advocated the pivotal role of Twitter and YouTube (Altoaimy, 2018). However, there has been less theorizing about Instagram, the video and image sharing social networking site, despite the 22.45 million Saudis that use the platform (Global Media Insight, 2020). In this study, Instagram is taken as a case to illustrate Saudi women's changing identities and the rising number of social media influencers, defined as microcelebrities, who make incomes from social media (Senft, 2013). The focus is social media language. This is defined as multimodal and includes textual, audio-visual, spoken, body, stance, music, aesthetics, filters, hashtags, and any other elements occurring in combination to convey meanings (Hurley, 2019). While the trends of social media influencers are not necessarily representative of the lives of ordinary Saudi women, Instagram is indicative of the discourses being mediated by and about Saudi women. The current study asks: To what extent does the 2018 law granting women the right to drive in the KSA represent the rebranding of Saudi women's identities?

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To address this question, the novel conceptual framework 'semiotic critical discourse analysis' (semiotic CDA) synthesizes semiotics and CDA. Semiotics is the study of signs (Peirce, 1998). Signs refer to images, sounds, movements, marks, codes, symbols, technologies, or anything communicating meaning (Petrilli, 2017). Semiotics could help to explore Saudi women's positionalities through the study of signs being employed as markers of identity. CDA aligns with semiotics and has been developed as a method to reveal the structures, locations, and effects of power at discursive levels (Fairclough, 1985, 1995). Discourse is broadly defined as texts, media, and everyday communication practices (Janks, 1997). The study takes two popular Saudi women influencers, @darin00013 and @amyroko, as a case to consider social media positionalities. The influencers' positionalities, and the extent to which their interests are served and/or negated from this positioning, are explored through the semiotic CDA lens. Comparison enables similarities and differences to be theorized as well as in relation to the KSA context. Next, the fuzzy concept of 'context' is defined to identify empirical challenges and theoretical tensions surrounding online/offline positionalities.

Questions of context

Considering the increasing intersections between offline and online practices, the ability to differentiate transnational spaces can also be challenging. What happens online is always informed and embodied by practices and positionality offline (Hurley, 2020; Kaur-Gill & Dutta, 2017). Transnationalism refers to the crisscrossing of national cultures, languages, and discourses involving not only pluralism but also cultural difference (Massey et al., 1994). The perspective of transnationalism scrutinizes localities in more than one nation state and helps to illuminate those aspects of migrants and citizens' lives that could remain hidden when considered from the perspectives of normative or universal theorizing (Massey et al., 1994). Digital researchers need to consider these tricky questions of transnational context while clarifying the aspects of offline sociocultural histories and phenomena informing online practices. Transnationalism thus contests simplistic notions of context and locates social actors' positionalities as always diverse, intertextual, and in process (Petrilli, 2017).

In terms of demographics, the KSA is a country located in the furthermost part of southwestern Asia. Arabic is the official language, and Islam is the official religion. According to government statistics, the KSA has a total population of approximately 34 million people (stats.gov.sa., 2020). Out of the approximately 20 million Saudi nationals, 40% of men and 10% of women are employed (Hvidt, 2018). However, statistics concerning employment are variable. The system of law in the KSA is based on two major subsystems: (1) The Islamic religion, which is the religion for the majority of Saudi citizens and has a crucial influence; and (2) traditional tribal customs. These two elements are of paramount importance when discussing the topic of women's rights

in Saudi Arabia (Alharbi, 2015, p. 9). As part of its program for 'Sustainable development goals in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia', the General Authority of Statistics (2019) states that its fifth goal is to achieve 'gender equality and empower all women and girls' (p. 58). 'Saudi Vision 2030' is the nation's strategic framework to reduce Saudi Arabia's dependence on oil, diversify its economy, and develop public service sectors such as health, education, infrastructure, recreation, and tourism. Instrumental to this is the goal of increasing women's participation in the labour force to 30%.

Lifting the driving ban on Saudi women should be considered within the context of these top-down initiatives. Furthermore, although there is no hard data available, officials in the KSA say thousands of Saudi women have applied for driving licences since 2018, and seven driving schools for women have opened (*Saudi Gazette*, 2019). Yet Wheeler (2020), while carrying out empirical research, found relatively few examples of women driving in the KSA but numerous examples of the continuing resistance to women as drivers. However, in March 2019, Major General Mohammad al Bassami, a Saudi transportation official, said that at least 70,000 women have been issued licences (*Saudi Gazette*, 2019). The above variances indicate some of the discrepancies and complexities of hard and soft discursive practices that underpin women driving in the KSA. In the next section, I propose how the semiotic CDA conceptual framework could help to develop nuanced inquiry into this opaque subject matter.

Conceptual framework

Transnationalism indicates that discourses surrounding Saudi women, for example on Instagram or through KSA government information, occur at local and global intersections. However, modernization theorists have viewed Westernization and/or modernization as a movement whereby Western values and techniques spread from a centre of modernity to its 'developing' peripheries (Jouhki, 2006). Jouhki (2006) says that synchronic comparisons of the West versus the Middle East within a specific time and place are presented as diachronic, across time and contexts, to construct a hierarchy of progress. Yet this is a highly Eurocentric model in which the complexity of modernity, and the extent to which the model reduces phenomena within a solely European and linear timescale from traditional to modern, are ignored. For post-colonial theorist Bhabha (1994), the Western preoccupation with the Western subject, unequivocally located at the centre of history, is indicative of the 'narcissism' (p. 109) of the West, which cannot look beyond its own imagined subjectivities. Bhabha (1994) explains:

> In the act of disavowal and fixation the colonial subject is returned to the narcissism of the imaginary and its identification of an ideal ego that is white and whole. For what these primal scenes illustrate is that looking/hearing/reading as sites of subjectification in colonial discourse

> are evidence of the importance of the visual and auditory imaginary for the *histories* of societies.
>
> (p. 109)

Bhabha explains here that 'subjectification' is the process by which social actors' positionalities are framed through 'visual and auditory imaginary' discourses, including scopic regimes or ways of seeing, locating, listening, and interpreting social actors' positionalities. In the case of Saudi women, subjectification occurs through local and regional patriarchal discourses as well as transnational and intersectional global media, including Instagram. However, Bhabha's sense of transnationalism, unlike Western-centric colonial and/or neo-colonial perspectives, recognizes crisscrossing cultural identities, practices, and positionalities. These are local and defined in their own terms, even while being infused with global elements, '*histories*', and hard and soft power (Bhabha, 1994).

Conversely, a transnational view of discourses helps to explore the texts, media, and social practices that often reinforce traditions, ethnocentric hierarchies, and ideologies through situated and intersecting language and texts (Fairclough, 1995). Following critical theory, postcolonialism and transnationalism approaches help to conceive of discourse not purely as bounded by Western models, driven entirely by social media platforms or produced by individual authors (influencers). Alternatively, they are conceived as a system of social practices that are informed by historic and current sociocultural practices while not entirely disseminated from a single location, origin, or centre. This helps to consider how discourses, for example Instagram posts, are not disembodied but located and enacted through offline and online social contexts while simultaneously constituting social practices.

Conceptually, semiotic CDA has scope to investigate discourse at both the micro-textual, meso-institutional and macro-sociopolitical levels, as well as at transnational interchanges. CDA views discourse as 'text in context', being not only the product of language use but also the action of the process and production of context (van Dijk, 2006). Fairclough's (1985, 1995) model for CDA consists of three interrelated processes of analysis – *object of analysis*, *processes of production*, and *sociohistorical conditions* – to interpret the interrelated dimensions of discourse. In this study, these processes include:

(1) Object of analysis: Saudi women influencers' Instagram posts.
(2) Processes by which the objects are produced and received: Semiotic-discursive practices of production and reception on Instagram.
(3) Sociohistorical conditions governing all of the above: Range of interpretative meanings available, emerging through literature, media, and digital field research interviews.

The semiotic CDA framework helps to identify the analytical categories, including the Instagram posts to be studied; the processes of production

and interpretation; and the sociocultural factors impacting on the meanings produced both within the immediate context of the study as well as the researcher's broader theoretical context of interpretation. These analytical categories are adapted and refined further through an alignment with Peirce's (1992) doctrine of signs.

According to the Peircean semiotic doctrine of signs, signs broadly include icons (a sign that looks like its meanings – for example, a portrait); symbols (signs used in rituals and routines, e.g., letters and numbers); and indexes (signs that point to a particular meaning at conceptual, abstract, or imaginary levels). Peirce (1998) also discusses 'rhemes' – signs that are observable; 'dicents' – signs as they occur in interpretation via indexical signs (that indicate a general rule, symptom, or effect); and 'dicisigns' – the effect of signs in the observer's mind. This provides a useful breakdown of specific sign properties as well as the way that audio-visual signs repeat, coalesce, and combine as semiotic phenomena. The Peircean semiotic doctrine indicates how iconic, symbolic, and indexical signs combine as compound signs to ascribe meanings to objects, rituals, and practices. In linguistic terms, the doctrine could be compared to Arabizi (the informal use of Arabic dialects and script that is transcribed or encoded into a combination of Latin script and Arabic numerals); translanguaging (the process by which multilingual speakers use their languages as an integrated communication system); and code-switching (the use of two or more languages within a single text or utterance) (Hopkyns at al., 2018).

The semiotic CDA perspective could help to bring the transnational linguistic, semiotic, and discursive aspects of digital convergence to the forefront of our understandings of social media language and multimodality. Digital convergence has been defined as the mixing of old and new media. According to Jensen (2010), who is a Peircean media scholar, digital convergence includes the human body enabling communication in the flesh; the technically reproduced means of mass communication; and the digital technologies facilitating interaction one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many. The analytical categories of semiotic CDA, including the Peircean doctrine of signs, are developed as the semiotic CDA conceptual framework. This further underpins the methods of study that are discussed next.

Methods

The research methods were designed through a synthesis of Fairclough's CDA and Peircean semiotics, as semiotic CDA, to construct the embedding of different kinds of analysis, one inside the other and occurring simultaneously. The analytical elements are conceived as occurring in tandem with, as well as in relation to, the research question of the study, which is concerned with the extent to which the 2018 law (granting women the right to drive in the KSA) represents the rebranding of Saudi women's identities. Semiotic CDA nodes include CDA; semiotics; and aspects of the Saudi women's Instagram

corpora that were collated to address the research question and the extent to which the 2018 law, granting women the right to drive in the KSA, represents the rebranding of Saudi women's identities.

The specific Instagram posts of two Saudi women influencers were sampled within corpora under three modes. These included (1) videos and audio-visual content; (2) still images and/or captions; and (3) text, hashtags and captions. The corpora were stored on the digital portfolio site Pathbrite, which enabled both audio-visual and textual data to be collated. Google Docs provided the database for the analysis, transcription, and field notes. The research presented in this chapter is part of a larger study which was informed by six months of digital field research, involving secondary texts gathered by research assistants and unstructured interviews with 12 Saudi women, including students, academics, and activists, to obtain a range of perspectives. These approaches to data collection involved the following seven broad methods.

First, the study was informed by secondary texts. Immersion in literature relevant to the @women2drive movement, including academic scholarship, news articles, autobiographies, advertisements, newspapers, television and documentaries, helped to gather nuanced insights.

Second, three bilingual Arabic-English-speaking research assistants from the United Arab Emirates were involved in the study, collecting and interpreting data. They were familiar with the KSA, having Saudi family members and/or friends. However, they requested that their identities remain anonymous due to the 'sensitive' (politicized) nature of the @women2drive movement (Altoaimy, 2018).

Third, digital field research involved interviews with 12 Saudi women, including professionals, students, academics, and activists. These interviews were not analysed as data in the current chapter due to word limit constraints but rather informed the issues under discussion.

Fourth, the bulk of the study involved a digital analysis of the social media language. This was carried out with the help of the research assistants, whose Arabic-English bilingualism was invaluable in sampling, collating, and interpreting the Instagram posts.

Fifth, selection of the two prominent influencers to be discussed in the study was made. These are @darin00013 and @amyroko. Although a larger corpus of 36 Saudi women influencers was compiled, the focused selection for this chapter was based on @darin00013 and @amyroko's popularity, as evidenced through their numbers of followers, but also the relevance of their Instagram posts to the @women2drive movement.

Sixth, after selecting the Instagrammers @darin00013 and @amyroko, the semiotic CDA could be applied to systematically view, describe, interpret, and analyse the compound signs. This helped to consider the Instagrammers' multimodal uses of *Arabizi* (the use of English letters or numbers for Arabic sounds); *translanguaging* (the fusion of linguistic resources, such as English, Arabic and semiotics); and *code-switching* (going between English and Arabic words or between dialects within the same language) (Hopkyns et al., 2018).

Seventh, in order to facilitate coding, each post was summarized in text form, coded with key sign descriptors, and saved with a free-form description of what in the post was considered relatable, who and what was visible, and what was inferential. This method enabled systematic rigour, clarity, and transparency in coding the content in terms of the orientated categories and emerging themes. The above method was applied via the following analytical steps:

1. Identification of sign elements in the Instagram images.
2. Description of the qualities of the images (what they look like and what is happening).
3. Exploration of the sociocultural meanings of the descriptions in the text.
4. Conceptual links to how the above links to the assigned (or spontaneously inferred) concept to address the research question: 'To what extent does the 2018 law, granting women the right to drive in the KSA, represent the rebranding of Saudi women's identities?'

Self-reflexivity is an important aspect of qualitative research since a researcher always speaks from a particular gender, class, racial, and ethnic background (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Denzin, 2001). Although I am originally from the United Kingdom, I have spent my adult working life in Muslim countries in Southeast Asia and the Gulf, including Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. I have travelled to the KSA for work assignments and have a close network of Saudi Arabian colleagues, friends, and students. I therefore recognized my outsider (e.g., nationality) and insider (e.g., female, shared location) roles as a researcher. Ethical issues were managed through adhering to the guidelines of the Association of Internet Researchers (2019). These provisions are intended to protect the safety of participants, research assistants, author(s), and those mentioned within the study. All participants were provided with opportunities to withdraw without consequence and their identities have been kept anonymous. The images included in this chapter are available in the public domain on Instagram. Although I contacted the influencers directly, I did not receive a reply, which is probably indicative of their popularity as influencers (Hurley, 2019). Nevertheless, I am mindful that the digital medium allows researchers to be completely inconspicuous observers. This has led to different debates on the role of the researcher in digital spaces which I am cautious about (Whiting & Pritchard, 2017). In view of these debates, I acknowledge that the semiotic CDA framework is interpretative and qualitative rather than broadly representational. The following section presents the findings and related discussion.

Findings and discussion

The presentation of digital research always involves the selection of certain elements to both foreground and background (Kaur-Gill & Dutta, 2017).

Table 4.1 Influencers' biodata

Influencer	*Name*	*Age*	*Location*	*Number of followers*	*Number of posts*	*Year of first post*
@darin00013	Darin Al Bayed	20	Jeddah	4.2m	492	2014
@amyroko	Amy Roko (pseudonym)	27	Riyadh	1.5m	186	2014

This section analyses two influencers' posts and the surrounding discourse. The first influencer is Darin Al Bayed and the second is Amy Roko. Their Instagram biodata is summarized in Table 4.1.

Influencer 1: Darin Al Bayed

Sign elements

In Example 1, in order to convey the series of sign elements from the semiotic CDA perspective, I include the image, caption, and transcript of a video in both English and Arabic from the Instagram account of @darin00013. Darin Al Bayed is an influencer and comedian who has 4.2 million followers (Table 4.1) and is one of the KSA's most prominent women influencers. Darin Al Bayed's Instagram account is available in the public domain, and the video transcribed here was uploaded on September 17, 2017, following the announcement to lift the bar on Saudi women drivers. At the time of analysis, the post had received 945,113 views. It is a comic video skit in which a woman 'sassily' leaves her house while a man (her brother) begs for a lift in her car.

The dialogue is in Arabic and underscored by the soundtrack of 'Mi Gente' by J. Balvin and Willy William, Colombian reggaeton singers. The reggaeton track in the video includes rapping and singing in Spanish and is defined by a bouncy 'dembow' beat (Ugwu, 2019). The soundtrack evokes a festive and triumphant mood as @darin00013 swaggers, with comic arrogance, to proudly get into her car and into the driver's seat. Meanwhile, a young man (presumably her brother) begs for a lift but is denied. The script has been translated into English for the purpose of this chapter, as seen in Example 1.

Example 1

الرجل: الله يخليك وصليني بس عند العيال.
المرأة: ما شاء الله. وين قلت لي؟ عند العيال، ها؟ نسيت؟ نسيت لما كنت اقول لك وديني السوبرماركت، نفسي في شوكولاتة .شوكولاتة، ساعة ٥ الفجر ما وديتني. ابا اروح عند البنات تقول لي مشغول. صاحبتي كانت حامل، حامل! في الشارع مرمية وديها المستشفى 'ماني فاضيلك!'
الرجل: صاحبتك حامل شدخل أمي فيها، لو انتي حامل حوديك!
المرأة: كل شيء اقولك انت مو فاضي لي، تعال أقول لك شيء. في ابليكيشن صج؟

الرجل: في برامج ايه.
المرأة: في برامج توصيل وكذا، صح!
الرجل: ايه، موجودة.
المرأة: كنت توصلني فيها، لو مو معاك فلوس كمان هذي ١١. حبيبي اطلب سيارة، ٥ دقايق، ٥ دقايق عند الباب، يلا. بعدين تعال هنا! لا تتأخر، ما عندنا رجال يطول في آخر الشوارع، ما عندنا رجال يقعدون لين الصباح!

MAN: Please, just drop me off to see the kids.
WOMAN: Wow, where did you tell me? To see the kids, huh? You forgot? You forgot when I used to say take me to the supermarket, I'm craving chocolate. Chocolate at 5 am and you didn't take me. I want to go to my friends, and you say you're busy. My friend was pregnant – pregnant! – and stuck in traffic, and you wouldn't take her to the hospital. I'm not free for you!
MAN: Your friend is pregnant, what does that have to do with me? If you were pregnant I would take you!
WOMAN: Anything I ask you, you're not available for me. Let me ask you something, there are apps?
MAN: Yeah, there are apps.
WOMAN: Driver apps, right?
MAN: Yeah, they're available.
WOMAN: You used to make me use them to get around. If you don't have money, here's 11. Darling, order a car. Five minutes, just five minutes and they will arrive, come on. And then come back here! Don't be late, we don't have men who are always on the street. No men here stay out late!

Qualities: Who is positioned? How are they positioned?

The self-reflexive scene in Example 1 humorously references the struggles of women in Saudi Arabia who previously may have had to depend on the good will of male relatives for transport. Willems (2011) suggests that self-reflexive laughter, or laughing at oneself, does not only address those in power but may also point fingers at those who are subject to power. A self-reflexive mode helps subjects to address their own powerlessness and lack of agency in a system that appears unalterable. In the comic skit in Example 1, @darin00013's self-reflexivity encapsulates the magnitude of the frustrations endured by women through not being allowed to drive. In terms of positioning, the non-diegetic music and visual scenario convey the perspective of the woman, who is positioned as dominant and literally in the driving seat, while rendering the man in the position of feminine dependence and powerlessness through begging for a lift to see 'the kids'.

The scene in Example 1 is shot in a home garage and the fluorescent lighting and confined space conveys claustrophobia. The woman almost trips over her cat as she approaches her car. The woman's triumph is further conveyed through

the humour of the skit, which emerges from the push and pull of the dialogue, the reversal of gender roles, and @darin00013's new positionality. This is further reiterated in the accompanying caption (Example 2), which states:

Example 2

الف مبروك يا بنات على القرار'
🚗🚗🎩🎩🎩🎩🎩🎩🎩
سبحان الله الدنيا دوارة
@rekssfamous @adhxm', 😂😂😂😂😂🤣

This translates into English as: 'Congrats girls on the decree. Subhanallah [glory be to God] what goes around comes around [karma]'. The emojis depict cars and top hats as compound icon-symbol-indexical signs, suggesting that women are now the 'boss' and in a position of power.

Sociocultural meanings and consequences of positionings

The meanings of the video in Example 1 are contextualized and the self-reflexive use of humour, to acknowledge the lifting of the driving ban, was used by a number of other Saudi women entertainers. The female Saudi comedian Hadi Katoon, for example, said, 'So, when the ban was lifted, I said, "Look, now the Saudi man gains back his original position as being the most important man in his woman's life"' (Jaafari, 2019). The implication is that a Saudi woman's paid driver was previously more important than her husband. This is contextually provocative since imported drivers, usually from South Asia, are often not paid well (Le Renard, 2019).

The semiotic CDA analysis helps to consider not only the observable elements within a sociocultural situation or text but also the tacit meanings concerning ideology and structures of power. In terms of this reverse of positionality, the observable elements or rhemes include the actors' body language. In Figure 4.1, @darin00013 leads the narrative and is positioned in a dominant yet agitated stance, as indicated by her raised eyebrows.

The body language shown in Figure 4.1 differs from the body language of the man in Figure 4.2, whose arms are reaching out, the hands are open, his facial expression is calm, and his eyebrows are more relaxed. These elements are compound icon-symbol-indexical signs, signalling his performance of passivity and reduced positionality.

However, the humour also lies in the exaggerated, satirical self-reflexive nature of the scenario, since interpretation of the skit would be informed by the sense of continuing powerlessness of many women in the KSA. The meanings emerging from the interpretation occur as 'dicent' signs, which take on meaning via interpretation and indexical signs (that indicate a general rule, symptom, or effect), and 'dicisigns' (the effect of signs in the observer's mind). The comic skit is a theatrical scenario, and the effect comes from the subversive

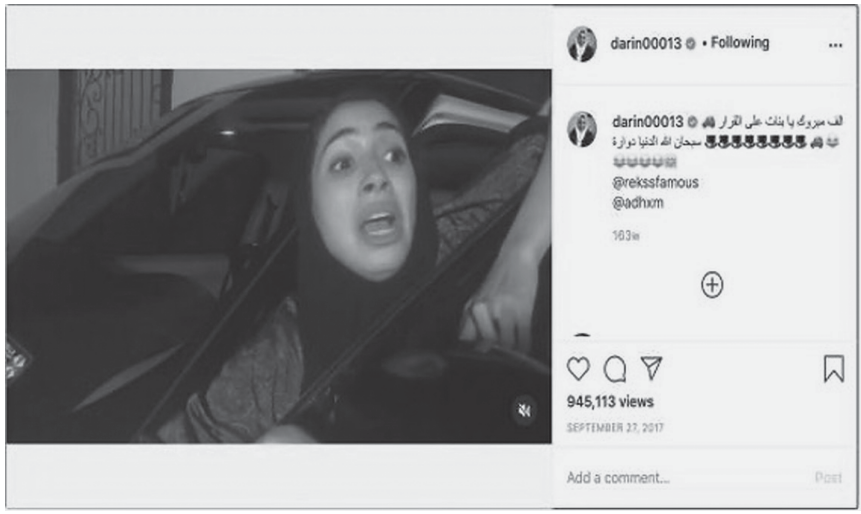

Figure 4.1 Darin Al Bayed.
Source: Screengrab from @darin00013.

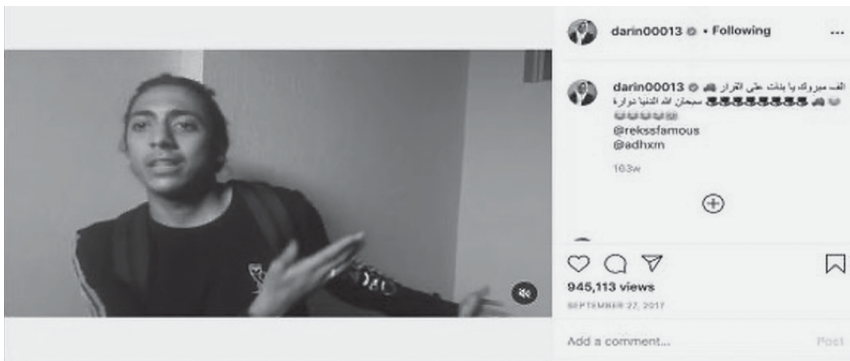

Figure 4.2 Darin Al Bayed's male relative.
Source: Screengrab from @darin00013.

potential of imagining that such a scene could now occur, following the lifting of the driving bar on women.

Conceptual links: Addressing the research question

At a conceptual level, visual comedy enables social actors to probe, expose, and satirize deep-seated cultural taboos. A lot of the humour is derived from @darin00013's body language, sassy demeanour, and enjoyment in taking

revenge on the man, now that their positions of power have been momentarily reversed via comedy. However, the semiotic CDA enables us to conceive how sign-meanings have significance at abstract levels and offer nuanced insights into the imaginary aspects and pleasures of humour. Bakhtin's (1965) philosophy shares a number of similarities to Peircean semiotics (Petrilli, 2017). Significantly, Bakhtin suggests that humour indicates excitement, revelry, danger, and a certain topsy-turviness to the way the world works.

In @darin00013's skit, logic is reversed when a woman is positioned to defy a man's mobility, access to his children, and basic rights. From Peircean and Bakhtinian perspectives, comedy can provide social actors with contextually pragmatic modes for negotiating and coping with repressive environments, whereby censorship and surveillance are prolific and self-censorship is internalized. In terms of the research question, these insights suggest that lifting the ban on women driving in Saudi Arabia could be helping to change the conversation and introduce a new branding of women's positionalities. Next, the analysis of second influencer Amy Roko develops further insights.

Influencer 2: Amy Roko

Sign elements

Amy Roko is another Saudi woman influencer who uses humour to comment on the changing positionalities of Saudi women. The Instagram video stories of @amyroko, who has 1.4 million followers (Table 4.1), include sign elements of a traditionally dressed Saudi woman wearing the niqab (face covering) and abaya (black robe). As soon as the decree to lift the bar on women driving was announced in September 2017, @amyroko posted a photograph of herself in a car-racing arcade game machine (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3 Amy Roko driving in an arcade.
Source: Screengrab from @amyroko.

Figure 4.4 Amy Roko driving.
Source: Screengrab from @amyroko.

The Arabic caption reads, 'This is what I'll do from now until 10/10', a reference to the 'optimal' moment of the driving bar being lifted. This is followed by the Arabic hashtag: 'The king wins to allow women to drive'. Subsequently, in 2018, @amyroko posted a music video in which she is the only woman driving. The following day she shared a photograph of herself behind the steering wheel doing a peace sign (Figure 4.4). The Arabic caption reads, 'Cute nails, cute face, what about manners? Also cute'. This refers to the changing mode of women's driving as prohibited to a new feminized mode of 'cuteness' that is simultaneously youthful, polite, attractive, and aesthetically performed by @amyroko.

Three days later, @amyroko posted another video of herself in the driving seat, flipping her niqab (Figure 4.5). The Arabic caption reads, 'Do you want me to drive you to your destination? Lol I'm busy'. The English says, 'I think this driving thing suits me more than I thought it did. Next step? Fast and furiously cute'. This is a further reference to women's driving as 'cute', indicating this new and exciting yet feminine and youthful vitality.

Qualities: Who is positioned? How are they positioned?

The positioning of @amyroko's identity, while appearing to be highly traditional at the visible sign levels of dress, is situated within the converging social media's multimodal language ecology of apps and digital practices. For example, one of the commenters on the post wrote 'Niqab flip', indicating that @amyroko's flip of her niqab is a visibly discursive practice, taking on significance at conceptual levels. In this instance, the 'Niqab flip' emerges as a symbol-index of Saudi women's emancipation and legitimately being in the driving seat. Subsequently, the 'Niqab flip' becomes a discursive practice and object of meaning. While the niqab has been perceived as a symbol of

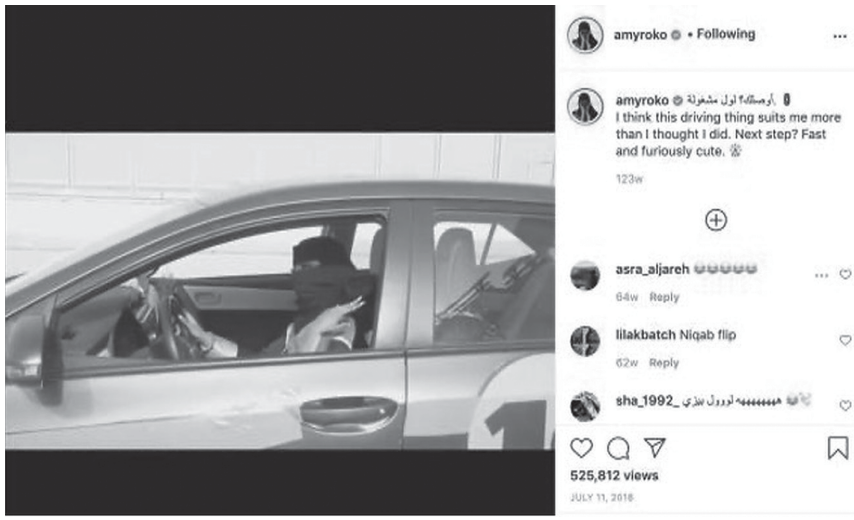

Figure 4.5 Amy Roko's niqab flip.
Source: Screengrab from @amyroko.

oppression in Western contexts, in @amyroko's posts it transforms as an icon-symbol-index for rebellion, sassiness, and an object of cool.

Further objects of meaning in @amyroko's video stories also link to trends on TikTok. For example, in one video she buries a human tooth in the earth to see if people will still follow her on social media despite these 'weird' antics. In her YouTube posts, she drives to rural parts of the KSA, to its mountains and beaches, rapping and seemingly dancing while driving. Driving around the KSA, @amyroko is representative of young Saudi women whose identities are evolving in self-reflexive terms.

In terms of 'dicent' signs, which take on meaning via interpretation and indexical signs, @amyroko's Instagram identity is not exclusively stereotypical or traditional. In another video that @amyroko shared on her Instagram and TikTok accounts, the song 'Muffins in the freezer' by American male rap and hip-hop artist Tiagz is playing in the background. The English lyrics rap: 'Who in the hell put the muffins in the freezer? I did. What you gonna do about it? (Nothing)'.

The positioning of @amyroko could be considered dominant, as she provocatively gestures and points at the camera while waving her hands in time to the beat (Figure 4.6). The combination of the rap track and @amyroko's coordinated moves index @amyroko's mock defiance at being culpable for 'putting the muffins in the freezer'. The text insert states: 'My friend's mother: Who is sitting and ruining you and telling you that a woman must have her full rights?'

Figure 4.6 Amy Roko on TikTok.
Source: Screengrab from @amyroko.

While self-reflexively pointing her finger at the hierarchy of powerless women attempting to disempower other powerless women, @amyroko continues to play with her nails. This is a nonchalant index, suggesting that she does care for what her friend's mother is saying. She then looks directly at the camera and winks (Figure 4.7). The accompanying caption states, 'What type of friends are you? How was the wink? I sat practicing for three months for it'. The hashtag says, 'With a wink I'll give you five/One wink and I'll give you five' (it rhymes when said in Arabic).

Sociocultural meanings and consequences of positionings.

The video @amyroko posted (Figures 4.6 and 4.7) may be interpreted as fun, light, and humorous. However, it self-reflexively indexes @amyroko's defiance towards older Saudi women like her friend's mother, who view women's emancipation in the KSA as negative. Social media multimodality, involving audio-visual code-switching and translanguaging, indexes new identities. It utilizes practices of synthetic embodiment whereby @amyroko digitally inhabits the verbal and bodily performance of others. The combination of American rap and Arabic text are a form of audio-visual Arabizi as @amyroko converges with the persona of the hip-hop artist Tiagz. Through the overlay of the audio track, @amyroko synthetically remixes her subjectivity, which becomes associated with Tiagz's stance, via her body, eye contact, gestures, and 'transmodal stylization' (Goodwin & Alim, 2010).

Figure 4.7 Amy Roko's wink.
Source: Screengrab from @amyroko.

Conceptual links: Addressing the research question

Applying semiotic CDA helps to address the deeper meanings embedded within this Instagram video. The stance of the rap song and the defiant act of 'putting the muffins in the freezer' is an act symbolizing the rupture of feminine domestic obedience. It suggests a household chore was not carried out in the correct way or even that a deliberate act of defiance has occurred. In terms of dicents, signs as they occur in interpretation via indexical signs (that indicate a general rule, symptom, or effect), and 'dicisigns' (the effect of signs in the observer's mind), 'putting the muffins in the freezer' could be interpreted as a tacit reference to putting women's gendered identities on ice or on hold. @amyroko is a notable advocate of women's rights in the KSA (Morris, 2020) and has declared her intention to never marry and to 'delete' men in a (flippant) Instagram comment. In an interview with a journalist, Amy Roko states that she values '[t]he freedom to live life according to the rules that you set for yourself – not society's rules, not the culture and tradition's rules, not people's rules and definitely not men's rules. My life, my rules' (Morris, 2020).

The traditional niqab and abaya are a central aspect of @amyroko's Instagram persona, via synthetic embodiment, rap, code-switching, translanguaging, and audio-visual Arabizi that help to create new meanings. @amyroko's Instagram and TikTok personae indicate that allowing women to drive in the KSA has been a catalyst for rebranding some Saudi women's identities. However, the extent and depth of the rebranding has been questioned (Qiblawi, 2019). Humour emerges as a discursive mode that enables Saudi

women influencers' self-reflexivity about some women's emerging identities, as resistance to but also acknowledgment of powerlessness. Next, I offer some conclusions, recommendations, and limitations of the study.

Conclusion

Saudi women's changing sociocultural practices, underpinned by Vision 2030, are transnational and multifaceted. This study has briefly discussed two examples of Saudi women influencers on Instagram but indicates a growing movement of young Saudi women using social media. The central research question asked was 'to what extent does the 2018 law, granting women the right to drive in the KSA, represent the rebranding of Saudi women's identities?' Findings indicate that lifting the women's driving bar may not, as yet, have impacted all women in the KSA, and opposition to Saudi women in the driving seat lingers. Analysis indicates that Saudi women have themselves been rendered texts, objects of meaning, and social products. However, @amyroko and @darin00013, while pragmatically approaching these issues with self-reflexivity and humour, offer bold examples of Saudi women's serious commitment to gender equality by challenging disempowerment.

Findings illustrate the multimodality of social media language in the influencers' posts. This provides unique insights into how social media language on Instagram entangles technologies, social actors, digital media, discursive signs, and synthetic embodiment across linguistic, cultural, national, and gender borders. These insights into synthetic embodiment reveal transnational and gender fluid positionalities that could be generalizable to discursive positionalities elsewhere. Semiotic CDA could also be considered as more than just a method to reveal tacit meanings and the positionality of social actors, since it offers an epistemological and ontological grounding of identities as semiotic, digital, entangled, and in process. This offers novel insights into how the @women2drive movement, despite its origins in Saudi feminist activism, became a globalized branding moment. Future studies could explore the role of other young Saudi women influencers in the KSA's development but also women in other professions who utilize social media to communicate a range of positionalities.

With regard to limitations, it would have been beneficial from an ethnographic perspective to interview @amyroko and @darin00013 directly to incorporate their voices. However, while sociolinguists have developed a rich lexicon for discussing linguistic practices, Instagram's unique affordances present new theoretical challenges that problematize traditional methods of meeting social actors face to face. Furthermore, synthetic embodiment by Saudi influencers such as @amyroko is not simply a matter of linguistic mimicry or cultural appropriation but represents a digital entanglement of bodies, voices, languages, clothing, music, material spaces, and technologies. Moreover, it is indicated that social media's multimodal language facilitates transnational opportunities to converge American rap, reggaeton tunes,

English slang, Arabic beats, Arabizi text, and traditional KSA fashion for collective creativity and critique.

Finally, the study suggests that the rebranding of Saudi women and the @women2drive movement, while stemming from activism and the frustrations of ordinary Saudis, calibrates via top-down and hard-power governmental decrees into the soft-power discourses of social media. In some instances, the rebranding of Saudi women's positionalities is led self-reflexively by and for Saudi women while debating complex issues of race, gender, sexuality, self, and other. Within these discursive struggles, social media language continues as a driving force of Saudi women's transnational, digital semiotic vernacular.

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5 The pact(s)

Identity, gender, and social order in Kuwaiti literature

Emanuela Buscemi

Kuwait is one of the wealthiest countries in the world. As the oil economy rapidly inserted the small city-state into the globalized era, Kuwait began attracting a number of foreign workers that nowadays represent over 60% of the country's population (United Nations Population Division, 2019). The international character of the economy has also allowed citizens to travel and live abroad, while a generous government-funded scholarship scheme enables young locals to further their education overseas. The pulls of globalization are also observed in the multicultural composition of the local culture, in the shopping mall brands and foreign chain restaurants, in the consumption of music, and in youth's cultural references (Buscemi & Kaposi, 2020). As a result, multilingualism and translingual identities are a feature of the Gulf countries. This situation, however, has gradually generated a clash between programs aimed at the *Kuwaitization* of the country towards a more authentic, Islamic, and traditional way of life, and the international aspirations of a predominantly young population accustomed to the wealthy living standards awarded to them by way of their nationality.

Kuwaiti American writer Layla AlAmmar's novel *The Pact We Made* depicts characters caught between these opposing forces. Published in English in 2019, the novel narrates the vicissitudes of a 29-year-old woman trapped by societal restrictions and cultural taboos in contemporary Kuwait. Dahlia refuses to conform to her parents' expectations by turning down arranged marriages and ignoring the admonitions to carry the family's honour and respectability. Suffering from the emotional and psychological repercussions of a sexual assault perpetrated by a family member when she was very young, Dahlia's character is torn between the comfortable lifestyle afforded to her by her family's socioeconomic standing and the freedom she yearns from the submission she is bound to respect. The intimate narrative is structured around Dahlia's emotions, trauma, and hope. Moreover, frequent literary devices frame Dahlia's struggle within the symbolism of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, suggesting a parallel between the young Kuwaiti woman and the rebellious spirit Ariel. The use of the English language, along with everyday Arabic terms, can be interpreted as a way to represent the multilingual, translingual, and glocal nature of Kuwait and the existential quests that the

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book's characters engage in, while accounting for the distance from the quotidian nature of societal restrictions.

This book chapter addresses the introspective journey of the novel's main character and the evolution she undergoes in search of her own identity. Dahlia seeks affirmation as a woman by confronting the pact on which the narration centres to investigate a plurality of arrangements that delimit Kuwaiti contemporary society. The pact is initially intended as an agreement among Dahlia and her best friends, Mona and Zaina, as eight-year-olds playing brides and maids of honour. The pact they make is to get married and be maids of honour at each other's weddings. The pact highlights the kin-based nature of Gulf societies and the prescribed gender roles that family members have to conform to in order to maintain the family reputation. In this context, therefore, the pact referred to in the title exemplifies the multiplicity of cultural and social connections, as well as the related expectations that are placed upon family members. In this sense, the storyline functions as a synecdoche of Kuwaiti society.

Accordingly, the chapter investigates the creation of an Arab counter-hegemonic literary canon as political engagement, as well as glocal and transnational identities and their reflection in the novel's linguistic choices. In particular, theories on women's citizenship and their contribution to the nation and the maintenance of the status quo are employed, as well as an analysis of the tenets of the familial basis of Arab societies, and the gender-related social expectations between the public and private sphere. The pulling forces of tradition and globalization are examined in light of the non-conformity to family and social roles, with special relevance to gender-based violence and mental health issues.

Arab women, literature, and society: Decolonizing the Western canon

A significant tradition of Arab women writers and characters counters the Western image of the passive, voiceless, and subaltern Arab woman (Badran & cooke, 2004; Malti-Douglas, 1991). It has also contributed to the creation of a (counter-)canon that has posited itself as an alternative to the Western one, rejecting orientalized visions and depictions of gender relations and social mores. For Arab women writers, decolonizing the Western canon has amounted to 'enter[ing] the field of power and knowledge' (Badran & cooke, 2004, p. XXXVIII), that of 'power and desire […], entrapment and empowerment' (Braidotti, 2014, p. 169) to investigate power constructions in language, institutions, and social arrangements.

Writing as a 'political and ethical engagement' (Braidotti, 2014, p. 163) implies the adoption of 'the difference of view, the difference of standards' (Woolf, 1966, p. 204) to appropriate and inhabit meaning and the production of knowledge so as to challenge otherness (Jacobus, 1997, p. 68). A voice is found in 'writing against the current' (Woolf, 1953, p. 4) to resist the reproduction of the silent woman as the 'silent bearer of ideology' (Jacobus, 1997,

p. 66). Linguistic identities and arrangements in women's literature account for a decolonizing feature while they depict societies characterized by global exchanges and local traditions.

A growing number of Arab women writers have been publishing their works in foreign languages, frequently the language of the colonial experience, to mark the globalized, across-the-borders nature of their writing, to appeal to a wider audience, or to prevent censorship (Al Maleh, 2009; Mirgani, 2017; Al Yousef, 2020). Over the past 20 years, novels by women writers educated abroad or with hybrid identities have increasingly been published or self-published in English in Arab Gulf countries. This also translates in linguistic choices that privilege a mix of English and Arabic in their narratives. The use of Arabic, or a local Arabic dialect, is employed in the novels beyond the need to give local colour or to essentialize the background, as it linguistically depicts the overlapping of distinct registers that account for glocal and transnational identities. In other words, the interpenetration of English and Arabic portrays the societies of the Arabian Peninsula, where conservative traditions and mores contend with global aspirations and interconnectedness in the residents' lives. Local assertions and cosmopolitanism, therefore, coexist between the essentialization of a local Arab Muslim identity and the celebration of global goals and record-breaking achievements.

The younger generations are the ones that best exemplify the interconnectedness and interdependence of global cultures and transnational identities (Buscemi & Kaposi, 2020). Literarily, these apparently diverging forces result in novels that depict local societies and portray their contradictions. Omani Jokha Alharthi's novel *Celestial Bodies* (2018) revolves around memory and forgetting by exploring the country's slave trade past, highlighting unresolved issues like race and gender. In this way, the writer delves into hybridity as a linguistic and cultural issue, as well as a feature of Omani contemporary society exemplified by the characters' linguistic preferences, names, and quotidian choices. Similarly, Kuwaiti author Shahd Alshammari's *Notes on the Flesh* (2017) reveals the stigmatization at the intersection between race, gender, and disability, where disability is entrenched in the flesh and the body becomes a site of resistance, in the same way as the preponderant use of the English language problematizes ambivalent hybrid identities. *The Bamboo Stalk*, authored by Kuwaiti writer Saud Alsanousi, furthers issues of social stigma, migrant workers' conditions, and racism through the narrative of the protagonist Isa/José, whose double nationality and mixed features raise questions of hybrid cultural and linguistic identity, belonging, and acceptance. Similarly, Saudi women authors like Badriya Al-Bishr and Raja Alem have progressively examined the woman's gaze and women's experiences in a traditional society, exploring forms of resistance and non-conformity to social and gender expectations through literary interventions portraying the glocal nature of the kingdom.

Among these literary endeavours stands *The Pact We Made*. The novel is marked by the use of the English language interspersed with Kuwaiti dialect

expressions and idioms, thereby reconceptualizing experiences through language as 'the mediator between the self and both the natural and social environments' (Braidotti, 2014, p. 164). According to Braidotti (2014), language amounts to a site of discovery and self-discovery and as a space for critique and exploration. Similarly, Bhabha (2004) identifies glocal identities as those exemplifying a transition, inhabiting a third space of hybrid cultures and identities. An example of cultural hybridity in the form of a third space can be seen in the novel when Dahlia adapts classic European masterpieces, explaining 'I would alter the paintings in some way, twist them into something relevant to my own time and place; I'd add Bedouin tents to the background or turn an English nose into one more reminiscent of a Saluki' (AlAmmar, 2019, p. 24). Examples of linguistic hybridity can be seen throughout the novel where the author mixes English and Arabic, such as when she refers to the untranslatable demon-like *yathoom* that also serves as an inspiration for her drawings and Arabized copies of European classic paintings:

> There's this lore, or perhaps it's superstition. It's about a demon called *yathoom* who comes to you in the night. He sits on your chest, feet splayed in a squat, growing heavier and heavier until you wake because you can no longer breathe […]. When you feel on the brink […], the *yathoom* rolls off and back down to hell.
>
> (AlAmmar, 2019, p. 15)

AlAmmar also employs Arabic words to describe the Kuwaiti wedding ceremony, such as *kosha* (the seating area reserved for the bride and groom), *yelwa* (an embroidered green cloth suspended over the seated bride as a ritual of fertility and prosperity), and the well-wishing exclamations: 'All the lights went out and there was just a spot light on her, and then 'Heb AlSa'ada came on and she started walking' (AlAmmar, 2019, p. 1).

Periphery characters in the novel include foreign maids and servants attending to the different families' needs. Dahlia's parents, Baba and Mama, are particularly unforgiving to their domestic helpers, often treating them with disrespect. For example, Baba makes fun of the houseboy's lack of Arabic and English proficiency, as he struggles to understand his employer. The relationships among the different characters in the household attests the widespread 'nanny culture' (Hopkyns, et al., 2021) in the Gulf, a deep-rooted feature that intersects linguistic patterns, household roles, and international and migration law (see Taha-Thomure's chapter in this volume). Interestingly, AlAmmar (2019) employs the nanny culture dynamic as a literary device when Mama accuses Dahlia of being incapable of taking care of herself and unable to attend to daily chores as a consequence of the domestic help that she has benefited from in her family house. Glocal identities such as Dahlia's, but also the household employees', bridge the space between belonging and culture, as they navigate new hybridities born out of multiple copies, as AlAmmar suggests in her sketching metaphor.

AlAmmar's constant references to Western and, in particular, British literature and art also attest the transcultural nature of contemporary Gulf countries, mediating the clash between cultures and the multicultural nature and aspirations of their societies, and signalling a multiplicity of belongings. Moreover, the adoption of a non-local language contributes to distancing Arab identity or national identity as sites of inscription or structures of oppression to 'resist the uncritical reproduction of sameness' (Braidotti, 2014, p. 178). The linguistic decision to use English with some degree of Arabic therefore mimics Dahlia's estrangement in her family and society and inhabits the destabilizing journey to truth and agency. Thus, by centring on the main character's search for a voice, AlAmmar's literary operation inhabits the margins between two cultures, two languages, and two worlds, appealing to the wider search for women's voices in Gulf literature and resulting in a destabilization of the Western literary canon and of the related expectations for the characters' arcs in the novel. As pointed out earlier, this destabilization is rooted in the search for an original local perspective that is liberated from the orientalized gaze that depicts Arab Muslim women as oppressed powerless victims.

Family and social order

The family is considered the central social institution in Arab Muslim countries. The social pact between citizens and the state is based on the intermediary relationship with the family as a social, political, cultural, and financial gatekeeper and regulator. Family idioms and tropes have therefore spread to all sectors of society to mobilize loyalty and belonging (Joseph, 2018). This connection has enabled the process of nation-building and the construction of local postcolonial national identities. Through citizenship and familial control, participation in the national community is highly gendered (Enloe, 1989; Jayawardena, 1986; Yuval-Davis, 1997; Yuval-Davis & Anthias, 1989). Socially and culturally constructed gender roles have played an important part in maintaining the national identity and consolidating the nation (Mayer, 2000, p. 1). Moreover, as the purity of the nation is represented by the purity of womanhood, the latter has come to symbolize the boundary of respectability and honour, both in society and for the nation. Through kin-based patriarchy, the cultural boundaries of the nation are delineated by the subjectivation of gender in citizenship provisions (Ong, 1996), thus configuring the 'domesticated woman upholding the sacred family as the authentic core of the nation' (Joseph, 2000, p. 6). The kin-based patriarchal nature of the state is strengthened through the reproduction of the family in an Islamic framework, establishing tight relations between nation, state, kinship, and religion (Joseph, 2000). Through the performativity of its members (Mayer, 2000), the family emerges as the privileged site of authenticity to which the state delegates the control, reward and sanctioning of its member citizens.

However, it is important to note that significant progress has been made in recent years in women's role in Gulf societies, such as women's growing participation in the labour market and in political life, as well as women's activism on societal issues (see Hurley, this volume) such as the reform of the guardian system and the revision of penal code dispositions on honour killings. An increased visibility and presence in leadership positions was sanctioned, for instance, with the 2005 change in Kuwaiti law that allowed women the right to vote and stand for office (Buscemi, 2016), and the recent 'Arabs to Mars' mission led by an Emirati woman.

Family tropes between private and public spheres

Constitutional and other legal provisions, as well as social and cultural mores, strengthen the centrality of the family in Arab Islamic societies, and especially in the Gulf. These arrangements de facto delegate to the patriarch and elderly kin the socialization of its members to the values and norms of the nation and religion. These arrangements sanction the family as the social and cultural gatekeeper of morality, honour and respectability, blurring the distinction between the public and private sphere, between the public domain and domesticity. Family tropes and kin-based patriarchal idioms (Joseph, 2000) establish continuities between the patriarchal authority of the family and the authoritarian nature of the state, whereby the family is tasked with the social, economic, and political stability of its members (De Bel-Air et al., 2018).

The family provides cohesion, security, identity, and safety (Al-Mughni & Tétreault, 2000) on a quotidian basis while also ensuring the social order and the perpetuation of the status quo. In exchange for loyalty and allegiance, the Kuwaiti state provides comprehensive care for its citizens through an extensive welfare system fuelled by oil revenues. This neopatrimonial system is based on the institutionalization of patron-client relations between the state and its citizens that normalizes the control of elites and strengthens the parallel kinship-based patriarchal arrangements of the family (De Bel-Air et al., 2018, par. 31), resulting in the adoption of family processes and idioms by the state (Joseph, 2000).

One of the main forms of socialization to norms and values within the family is the relationship to women and the regulation of gendered identities, as will be examined in the next section. Women's roles have been primarily ascribed to the house as a 'social space of citizenship' (Najmabadi, 1998, quoted in Joseph, 2000, p. 15), where they have been located in terms of their family roles and predominantly prioritized as mothers, wives, and daughters. According to Joseph (2000), despite the evolution of women's roles in Middle Eastern countries, the continuities between the family and the state have resulted in an 'infantilisation of women' (Joseph, 2000, p. 17) and the institutionalization of their second-class citizenship.

In *The Pact We Made*, family tropes are represented through the language and definition of the characters. Some important characters are merely

identified by their family-related names. Throughout the novel, Dahlia's parents are referred to as Mama and Baba, flattened to their familial and domestic tasks. In this way they become the epitome of parenthood according to societal and religious expectations. In particular, Baba is frequently depicted as tending to the house garden or talking about his work in the garden as a metaphor for his attempts at controlling his family and shaping its members' behaviours according to social norms: 'lives […] that he couldn't keep in line' (AlAmmar, 2019, p. 265), unlike his rosemary and mint.

Uncle Omar, the adopted maternal kin who assaults Dahlia, is always framed by the familial title that precedes his name, strengthening his membership, aggravating his acts, and ultimately silencing the shame. Another relevant character, Bu Faisal, whom Dahlia eventually agrees to marry and become a second wife to, is predominantly identified as the father of his oldest son (the prefix Bu meaning father), insisting on the patrilineal arrangements of Kuwaiti society and his role as kin and patriarch of a related family. Some women characters are identified by the prefix Um, meaning mother, confirming, also in their case, the genealogy to which all characters are bound, and the importance of family ties in the region. Here, AlAmmar (2019) retraces the continuities between the public and private sphere, between the state and the family, inscribing some of the most relevant characters into family idioms that recall 'customs and bonds and the burden of ancestry' (AlAmmar, 2019, p. 4).

Marriage, family, and gender

Marriage as a form of social and cultural control exercised by the family is regarded as the natural mode of adult life, as well as a rite of passage to adulthood. It is also inscribed into tradition as a pact between spouses and the foundation of the family that recalls the social pact with the state: In the same way that the family patriarch establishes his authority over the family members, the patriarch-ruler presides over the national community, and god over his worshippers (Buscemi, 2018).

In recent years, the state has sought to preserve and strengthen the family as a primary institution through the provision of laws, subsidies, and material benefits to counter what has been perceived as the crisis of the family (Hasso, 2011) and rising divorce rates (El Feki, 2014), and to consolidate its power in times of financial restraints due to the fall of oil prices. The stability of the family is, therefore, perceived as being strictly linked to the stability of the state.

In the case of Dahlia, the burden of the family honour that rests upon kin women is complicated by the violence, shame, and trauma that are brought upon her:

> The most monumental thing to ever happen to me was buried and covered over […]. For the sake of my reputation, my future, my sister's and my

> cousins': the family honour sat on my little shoulders, so no one could ever know what he'd done to me.
>
> (AlAmmar, 2019, pp. 135–136)

Anxiety, self-harm, and eating disorders are some of the effects of the sexual violence that Dahlia struggles to recompose in a family environment that pushes silence and secrets upon her: 'Mama had pleaded and wailed and pleaded some more for Baba not to tell anyone, not to bring shame down on us all' (AlAmmar, 2019, p. 101).

The silencing of the memories of the assault parallels the silencing of the voice of the women that have been victims of gender violence. Dahlia struggles to find her voice and define her own identity, first during her teenage years, then throughout her twenties, and, finally, when she learns that Uncle Omar has been killed in a car accident. The silence and secrets imposed upon Dahlia generate self-doubt as she struggles to reconcile parental authority, safety, and security. However, a deep sense of betrayal surges when she discovers that, during a holiday abroad with other families many years earlier, Bu Faisal had confronted Uncle Omar over intentionally touching his daughter and subsequently informed Baba. The incident, which occurred before the sexual violence to Dahlia, further complicates the net of secrecy and complicities within her own family and generates deception and betrayal at the hands of her own parents.

Dahlia's feelings and sentiments are exemplified by the literary figure of Shakespeare's Ariel, a spirit character in the play *The Tempest* that is held captive by his master Prospero and attempts to free himself (AlAmmar, 2019, p. 178). Ariel becomes a quotidian presence and inspiration: Dahlia incessantly draws, doodles, and even tattoos Ariel. What AlAmmar (2019) appears to suggest is that the ambivalence of the voicing/silencing dichotomy is embedded in women's structural condition of 'political silencing' (Felman, 1997).

Gender roles and expectations

Gendered citizenship provisions and the institutionalized family control over its members can establish a heteronormative grid that perpetuates dichotomic gender identities, although it varies greatly among families and their values. In this sense, marriage is a central theme throughout the novel. Marriage is the maternal obsession of Mama, a primary concern of Baba, and an unavoidable topic when Dahlia meets with her friends Zaina and Mona. It appears to be a primary preoccupation of the women characters, either to succeed in securing a suitable suitor, or in avoiding it. For the past ten years, Dahlia's weekly encounters with suitors have been punctuated by preparations arranged by her mother. However, Mama's insistence that she performs the role of the dutiful daughter and the model young woman fails to acknowledge the pain and trauma that she has been through:

> It was like she refused to acknowledge how 'ruined' my chances already were. It was like she denied all that had happened, denied that it might have had any sort of permanent effect on me, denied that a man might not want someone who's been through that. It was like she rejected reality, living in her little world of tradition where if you were good and followed the rules, you were rewarded.
>
> (AlAmmar, 2019, p. 118)

The 'little world of tradition' attributed to the maternal figure linguistically exemplifies the contrast between the parents' mentality of familial values and morals, and the transcultural identity embodied by Dahlia though her personal experiences and trauma. Here, tradition is conceptualized as the forced and forged continuity of rituals and customs that guarantee safety and prosperity. Similarly entrenched in tradition, the performativity of fixed heteronormative gender roles further enhances the patriarchal control over family members in terms of daily decisions:

> The boys were running screaming circles around Baba […]. They would have freedoms my sister and I never contemplated: the freedom to study anywhere in the world; the freedom to live their lives without constant scrutiny, where society responded to their mistakes with 'boys will be boys' instead of 'you bear the family's honor'; and, perhaps most meaningful of all, the freedom to *not* marry without the shame or guilt.
>
> (AlAmmar, 2019, p. 30)

Gendered roles, in fact, are reproduced in the quotidian by means of performativity (Butler, 1990). Marriage as a coming-of-age ritual and rite of passage is one of many decisions that are entrusted to the parents in conformity with familial and kin interests. It also reinforces the role of the family as a gatekeeper through the power relations among its members and the naturalization of gender-specific familial roles (Joseph, 2000). Those who do not conform to societal expectations of gender roles and marriage are often stigmatized for their transgressive behaviour (De Bel-Air et al., 2018). In the novel, Dahlia's friend Yousef tries to conceal his non-conforming masculinity by passing as an artsy, career-oriented young man who has not yet found the right person. Cornered by his parents' pressures to get married, he proposes a white marriage to Dahlia, a friendship arrangement of sorts to silence the stigma and earn some degree of freedom. Interestingly, the only love marriage presented in the novel, Mona and Rashid's, does not seem to work out for the couple, while the relationships based on arranged marriages, like Nadia's, Zaina's, or Baba and Mama's, tend to succeed. In a way, AlAmmar points to the naturalization of the family as a site of social, cultural, and political reproduction (De Bel-Air et al., 2018) and the inescapability of its arrangements.

However, in the context of wider socioeconomic and cultural dynamics, the pulls of modernization and the exposure to foreign influences have

revealed different gender constructions. Moreover, the cleavages heightened by the Arab Spring uprisings have strengthened the critique of the family as a cornerstone of society (De Bel-Air et al., 2018) and of the status quo. They have also revealed the politicization of sectors of the population previously demobilized by the government, such as women and youth (Buscemi & Kaposi, 2020). Another potential threat for the further institutionalization of the family in the form of non-conforming behaviour and disruption of the established gender order is mental illness as a transgression of the boundaries of social acceptability. While mental illnesses are still considered a powerful taboo, women in the arts and culture have increasingly raised the question of mental instability as a structural condition of impotence and political silencing (Felman, 1997).

The body as a 'shared entity'

Dahlia, the novel's main character, is single and approaching her thirtieth birthday. Her mother, a Kuwaiti version of *Pride and Prejudice*'s Mrs Bennet, frantically arranges dates and sets up a meeting with the *khataba*, a professional Islamic matchmaker, to marry off Dahlia before she turns 30, an age at which marriage prospects thin out significantly. At the same time, Mama and Baba closely monitor Dahlia's movements and actions to make sure that the respectability of the family is preserved, and in order to increase the chances of good suitors. As the novel develops, Dahlia feels increasingly trapped in a claustrophobic domestic environment that is replicated both in her professional life and in the relationship with her best friends Zaina and Mona. Dahlia's body is the expression and battleground of these interactions:

> I realized a long time ago that, in a lot of ways, my body is not strictly mine. It's a shared entity, something to be criticized, guarded, commented on, and violated. I learned it at twelve when Nadia said I should start shaving my legs […]. At thirteen Baba decided I wasn't dressing right. I had to wear skirts with hems below the knee and long shirts that fully covered my butt […]. Sleeveless tops were forbidden and V-necks couldn't dip too low (though at the time there was nothing to conceal).
>
> (AlAmmar, 2019, pp. 54–55)

The control over women's sexuality and bodies entrusted to the parents, and especially the father, is meant to result in the 'domestication of women' (Joseph, 2000). Both parents try to confine Dahlia to the domestic sphere by arranging a suitable marriage, as was the case with her sister Nadia, whose arranged marriage meant that she only briefly met her husband before the wedding ceremony. Similarly, her friends Mona and Zaina have long been married with the approval of their families. Often, it is only through marriage that women can leave the patriarchal home where the control of parents,

particularly over kin women, is strongest (Al-Mughni & Tétreault, 2000), and it reflects the family's mediating role between the individual and the state in a framework that privileges kinship arrangements over individual rights (Joseph, 2000).

The depiction of Dahlia's body's 'entrapment and empowerment' (Braidotti, 2014, p. 169) is narrated through a very intimate and powerful style that privileges the main character's voice and perspective. The post-traumatic condition caused by the sexual violence and assault she endured from Uncle Omar is depicted in vivid terms, breaking the taboo over gender-based violence. While AlAmmar sheds light on a topic that is rarely discussed in public, her stance and active challenge are mimicked by Dahlia's slow and careful revelation to her first boyfriend (who breaks up with her upon being informed of the rape) and to her best friends. As Dahlia's purity is now tainted, all the family members are at risk of practical consequences from the family reputation being questioned.

The control over women's bodies is also exercised though physical appearance. As Dahlia starts stress-eating due to anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder, her mother accompanies her to the *memsha*, a public walkway and feature of wealthy Kuwaiti neighbourhoods, to run off the excess weight 'because nobody would marry a fat girl' (AlAmmar, 2019, p. 55). The woman's body is an asset and a symbol:

> At weddings, appraising eyes dissected me. In the street, men with greasy eyes let out catcalls […]. I relinquished control of my body a long time ago. I no longer have a connection to it. Perhaps I never truly did. My point is that my life was not my own either. It too was something to be controlled, commented upon, and directed to the will of others.
>
> (AlAmmar, 2019, p. 55)

The control and manipulation of women's bodies also signals the nearly complete parental authority within the family. As a consequence, when Dahlia decides to get a tattoo on her shoulder, she makes a statement about her life and her control over it: 'Because it's my body. It's my body, and I want to' (AlAmmar, 2019, p. 235). She further elaborates on her decision and its social and cultural meaning:

> A tattoo is a statement, an expression. It would say, for me, all the things I couldn't say. [It] is a horrible transgression, where it's equated with intentionally scarring your body, where it's tantamount to turning your back on religion and renouncing your family.
>
> (AlAmmar, 2019, p. 256)

Tattoos are considered an abominable practice that not only reflects on the family and parental control but is also a subversive act against religion and established order. A tattoo and the impossibility of covering it up, especially if

it is located in a visible part of the body, amount to openly trespassing the limits of decency and social acceptability, and disrespecting tradition. As a consequence, a tattoo on a woman lowers marriage prospects. Reacting to Dahlia's tattoo, Mama accuses her of committing a sin and being unworthy and unfit for praying. For Dahlia, the tattoo is the first step towards reappropriating her otherwise scarred body and making more impacting decisions on her future by willingly sanctioning her non-belonging to the multiple interconnections between family, state, and religion.

Inhabiting marginality

Dahlia, despite being raised in a relatively conservative household, has been exposed to foreign cultures and habits since early childhood, as the family used to travel abroad in the summer months to escape the heat of Kuwait, and she also attends seminars abroad as part of her job assignments. During family summer trips, she visited museums and learned to appreciate art and literature. While Ariel is the main influence for her doodles and tattoo, she also draws inspiration from reinterpreting classic European art masters like Gustav Doré and Henry Fuseli. The double life Dahlia leads also conceals her artistic tendencies: 'Is art about seeing what's there, or discerning how it relates to your existence?' (AlAmmar, 2019, p. 106). Devoid of adherence to Islamic artistic precepts, her reinterpretations of Gothic art classics graphically translate her in-betweenness and non-belonging.

Throughout the novel, Dahlia comes to realize that, in order to disregard social expectations, pressures, and family arrangements, she has to leave the country: 'I couldn't bear the sameness of it all' (AlAmmar, 2019, p. 204). Physically distancing herself from Kuwait is the only solution she can envision to come to terms with her trauma and find safety elsewhere to escape the *ad nauseam* repetition of rituals and double standards. Leaving comes to signify freedom and self-affirmation, as well as liberation from the oppressive protection of her family. As her parents reject her initial suggestion to enrol in a university program abroad, a 'smokescreen' (AlAmmar, 2019, p. 143) to be able to leave, the reader realises that, for Dahlia, the possibility of a new beginning is a sort of reparation for her parents' inability to protect her:

> Therapy was a no-no; divulge our shame to a stranger? One who might know friends and family? A good dose of denial […] would do it. There was no other choice […]. Normal behavior is a language you can learn […]. Blend in with the crowd. See the sheep, be the sheep. It's not difficult to act like a normal person. It is, after all, a ritual like any other. […] repeat, *ad nauseam*, forever and ever because that's all there is.
>
> (AlAmmar, 2019, pp. 201–202)

Being denied the possibility of talking about the violence, of grieving for her teenage self, as well as being forbidden professional medical and psychological

care, Dahlia contests the paternal authority and secretly plans for an escape, longing for anonymity and freedom (AlAmmar, 2019, p. 202). Rejecting the daily 'show of domestication' (AlAmmar, 2019, p. 67) that she has to put up for the sake of the family's respectability, she questions the effects that her choices will have on her family:

> If I were a second wife, would Mama forgive me that? […] running away with Bu Faisal, I had a sense the shame of it would eclipse, somehow, even that other unspeakable act. It would break them – my mother, my father, all of them. And in twenty years' time, when Nadia's little girl was ready to marry, the stain would still be there for society to hold up to the light, to hold against her. I was not the only one who would bear the consequences of such a path.
>
> (AlAmmar, 2019, p. 226–227)

Ultimately, Dahlia accepts Bu Faisal's proposal to move abroad, marry him secretly, and become his second wife, an arrangement that traditionally lowers the status of the woman. By inhabiting her marginal condition as a victim of gender violence and as a social outcast for her impurity and the resulting tainted reputation, she embraces a socially unequal marriage arrangement with a friend of the family and a client of the bank where she works. Despite being aware of the fateful consequences that her choices will have on her family, not only for her immediate family but also future generations, she commits the ultimate betrayal of the family institution. Leaving symbolizes her quest for independence and the will to lead her own life (Al-Mughni & Tétreault, 2000), rejecting the traditional mentality that places kin interests and logics above individual rights and prerogatives. The novel's final words signal Dahlia's powerful stance in the first person: 'I have chosen' (AlAmmar, 2019, p. 274).

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, Layla AlAmmar's novel *The Pact We Made* has been analysed in order to investigate the hybrid identities and the sociolinguistic prerogatives of the characters within the broader framework of the opposing pulls of traditional values and multicultural aspirations in contemporary Kuwaiti society. Through the main character's vicissitudes, the chapter has focused on the family as an institution designated to protect and perpetuate the social order, as well as gendered social expectations based on marriage, whereby the body is elaborated as a site of struggle between the private and public domain, and the double standards employed to uphold the social, cultural, religious, and political tenets. The characters depicted in the novel represent the different prototypical roles in society, equally divided among insiders and outsiders. As pointed out earlier, the storyline functions as a synecdoche of Kuwaiti society, a part of a whole, contributing to the ongoing

debate on the foundations of Arab Muslim, and particularly Gulf, societies. AlAmmar, in fact, successfully manages to politicize the personal to abstract the characters' struggles to a general level that invests taboos and controversial topics such as women's self-determination, gender-based violence, non-normative sexual preferences, and, more broadly, identity and belonging.

The novel, therefore, helps to 'de-exoticize the non-West' (Lionnet, 1995, p. 5) by decolonizing the Western canon also through the writer's linguistic choices. In particular, the use of the English language interspersed with untranslated Arabic and Kuwaiti dialect words is employed as a powerful and effective narrative device to portray the in-betweenness of the characters and their identities, their choices, and their ambivalent stances, as well as the hybridity that pervades their everyday cultural references and translingual preferences. In a recent talk, Layla AlAmmar, interviewed by fellow Kuwaiti writer Shahd Alshammari, stated that she decided to write her novel in English in order to open up the dialogue to a wider audience (AlAmmar, 2021). The use of Kuwaiti dialect words in her novel, moreover, felt 'organic' to her, even more so as she decided not to provide a glossary or any form of translation. Using Arabic words, she stated, was also 'a gesture of inclusion' to make bilingual readers feel at home, thus stressing the importance of translingual identities whereby young Gulf nationals often use languages fluidly (AlAmmar, 2021).

The relevance of *The Pact We Made* resides precisely in its ability not only to portray change through agency, but also to posit the historical relevance of the personal as political. Dahlia's struggles can, thus, be regarded as a representation of the difficulties posed to a social, cultural, and political system that, throughout the protests of the Arab Spring, has revealed its ability to survive but also its reluctance to face significant change.

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6 Unifying multiple identities through Arabic varieties

An analysis of Arabic dialects in Kawaja Abdulqader's discourse

Wafa Zoghbor and Muneer Alqahtani

The Arab world consists of 22 countries that adopt Standard Arabic (SA) as an official language. They have a population that exceeds 420 million inhabitants (World Population Review, 2020), and it is believed that they share a similar linguistic landscape connected with similar cultures and a common history (Toffolo, 2008). However, since this vast population stretches from the Arabian Peninsula and Indian Ocean in the east to the Atlantic Ocean in the west, it is hardly possible to argue that their shared language of Arabic is uniform. Shafik (2017) argues that 'on the linguistic level little unity exists [in the Arab World]; in addition to the languages of ethnic minorities like Berbers, Nubians, and Kurds, the Arabic language itself has split into a huge variety of local dialects' (p. 1). Such linguistic diversity within Arabic itself has influenced the dominance of some Arabic dialects over others based on their outreach. The media, in this case, is an effective tool for reaching a wider audience and, as a result, the dialect used in media production is more likely to have a greater influence over other dialects not represented, or which have a weak presence, in the media.

Due to mass media production and its high quality in Egypt, the Egyptian dialect has a clear dominance and is the most recognized amongst other dialects in the Arab world (Amin, 2002). For comparison, in countries like Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Libya, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), media production is limited to television series and short films (Shafik, 2017). Other countries such as Algeria and Iraq have produced around 100 films, Syria around 150, Tunisia some 130, Lebanon has produced some 180 films, whilst Egypt has remarkably dominated media production with more than 2,500 films (Shafik, 2017). Furthermore, when it comes to quality of production, the Arab world has witnessed fierce competition. For example, the media industry in Syria has excelled in producing high-quality drama series, in Lebanon the media industry focuses on producing music clips and advertisements (Shafik, 2007), and in Dubai a pioneering media city was built to be 'a focal point of media activity in the region' (Quinn et al., 2003, p. 6). Nevertheless, media production in Egypt, ranging from talk shows and quizzes to television serials, remains the leading hub for media production in the Arab world (Shafik, 2007). The reason behind Egypt's superiority in the media relates to its long

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history, with the introduction of cinema in 1896, radio in 1926, and TV in 1962 (Allam, 2019). As Shafik (2007) states:

> Egypt feeds the numerous channels of other Arab broadcasting stations, in particular those of the Arabian Peninsula. Even more importantly, Egyptian movies with their popular film stars are […] still screened and aired all over the Arab world.
>
> (p. 5)

The wide-reaching Egyptian media has resulted in the widespread visibility of the Egyptian dialect in the Arab world (Amin, 2002). Awareness and recognition of the Egyptian dialect led to media production in some Arab countries, such as Lebanon, adopting the Egyptian dialect in their productions (Hammond, 2007). Similarly, Egyptian media productions also include several Arabic dialects that reveal the variations within this language and the linguistic identities that each of these variations might represent. An example of this is *Khawaja Abdulqader*, a popular TV drama set in the Middle East, including the Gulf region.

Khawaja Abdulqader is an Arabic drama consisting of 30 episodes, broadcast in 2012, about Herbert Doperfield, an English man who falls into a depression following the death of his brother and brother-in-law in the Second World War. This depression influences his social and professional life. Herbert moves from London to Sudan to work in a quarry as a stone maker. He is greatly influenced by a religious man, Sheikh Abdulqader (SAQ), then embraces Islam and changes his name to Abdulqader (known subsequently as Khawaja Abdulqader – KAQ). After spending a couple of years in Sudan, Herbert/Khawaja Abdulqader (H/KAQ) moves to Upper Egypt.

While this is a brief summary of the 30 episodes of *Khawaja Abdulqader*, there are two levels of linguistic identity that are revealed beyond the plot. The first level relates to Sufism. The term 'Sufism' (or 'Taṣawwuf' in Arabic) refers to 'a Muslim ascetic who withdrew from the world and attained a high degree of piety and closeness to God' (Hill, 2019, p. 3). It is also derived from the Arabic word 'suf' or 'wool', so *mutasawif* is 'the person of wool', referring to wool as the rough piece of cloth worn by ascetics (Hill, 2019). The reference to Sufism is obvious in the use of Sufi-related words and the Arabic poem written more than 1,000 years ago by Al-Hallaj, a Sufi poet of Persian origin (Mason, 1995). The second level of linguistic identity, which is also the focus of this chapter, relates to portraying different identities in the character of H/KAQ through the use of three variations of Arabic: Standard Arabic (SA), Marked Sudanese Dialect (MSD), and Marked Sa'idi Egyptian Dialect (MSED).

This chapter examines how the character of H/KAQ utilizes linguistic resources to reveal the multiple identities of a non-Arab who speaks Arabic as a foreign language. This chapter will, first, introduce the theoretical approach, focusing on Arabic variation and language identity and the extent to which

variation influences intelligibility. It will then draw on five scenes from the drama, in which three types of codes are used, to argue that, despite the variation in the Arabic language, the language unifies, rather than creates divisions in, Arab speakers' identities.

Arabic dialects: Issues of variation and identity

A dialect is a code of language which is associated with a local area and/or a community of speakers that share sociolinguistic variables (Bassiouney, 2018). Language is associated with a social group through which linguistic choices show claim to social identities and groups of people (Barber, 2018; Giles et al., 1991). Many studies have investigated the relationship between language and identity on both the social and the personal level, which affects the way individuals interact and communicate (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). While social identity can be defined on different levels such as nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, language, geography, history, and ideology (Albirini, 2016), it includes 'self-definition as a group member in terms of in-group-out-group differentiations' (Simon, 2004, p. 37). Personal identities, in contrast, are 'based on one-on-one relationships with others' (Holmes, 2006, p. 167). Albirini (2016) argues that the relationship between language and identity has been addressed by different fields such as sociology, anthropology, social psychology, history, communication studies, political science, and linguistics. Therefore, different approaches and frameworks such as social constructionism (Kroskrity, 2000), anti-essentialist views of identity (Dervin, 2012), and group membership (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998) have shaped post-structuralist discussions of identity.

Joseph (2004) argues that language and identity are 'ultimately inseparable' and, hence, 'the entire phenomenon of identity can be understood as a linguistic one' (p. 12–13). Moreover, Edwards (2009) asserts that any study considering identity must also investigate language. To clarify such a relationship, Block (2009) uses the term 'language identity' to refer to 'the assumed and/or attributed relationship between one's sense of self and a means of communication' (p. 40). Block (2009) argues that 'language identity' includes three types of relationship: 1) *language expertise*, or an individual's proficiency in a language; 2) *language affiliation*, which denotes an individual's attitudes towards a particular language; and 3) *language inheritance*, which is the language that an individual has learned since birth. These three types of relationship between language and identity can be seen in the definition of 'an Arab' provided by the Arab League: 'a person whose language is Arabic, who lives in an Arabic-speaking country, and who is in sympathy with the aspirations of the Arabic-speaking people' (Albirini, 2016, p.122). Nonetheless, such a definition does not fully consider the unique sociohistorical environment of the Arab world (Suleiman, 2003) and its multiple identities (Albirini, 2016). Thus, defining 'one Arab identity' is neither viable nor desirable.

Before Islam, 'Arabs did not form a coherent religious group or a unified political entity, and therefore, the Arabic language was possibly one of the main shared resources linking the various Arab tribes' (Albirini, 2016, p. 124). In this case, language was used as an identifying feature that distinguished their social identity from the 'others' and highlighted any differences (Barth, 1998). Moreover, Arabic was a language of importance, since Mecca held significant religious, commercial, and literary statuses (Albirini, 2016). Therefore, people held a sense of pride in the Arabic language and used the term 'Ajam' to describe non-Arabic-speaking individuals (Aldawri, 1984). After the rise of Islam, Arabic gained further significance as the language of Prophet Mohammed and the Quran. This religious feature strengthened Arabs' sense of identity as a privileged group whose language was chosen to carry the sacred message. Furthermore, after the death of Prophet Mohammed, Arabs led the Islamic conquests beyond the Arabian Peninsula and viewed themselves as the carriers of the message of Islam, which is in Arabic. Arabic also worked as an identifier of Arab Muslims, distinguishing them from the non-Arab Muslims who entered Islam after the conquests (Albirini, 2016).

Arabs' pride in their language was not only on the individual level but also the state level. Aldawri (1984) points out that, during the Umayyad Caliphate, Arabic 'drew the demographic and geographical parameters of the Arab nation' (p. 50), and senior roles in the state were assigned to Arabs. This privilege that Arabs held continued for centuries until the rise of the Ottoman Empire. In the beginning, the Ottomans recognized the importance of Arabic as the language of the Quran and viewed Arabs as their associates in Islam (Makdisi, 1996, 2002). However, at a later stage, the Ottomans adopted a nation-state model and introduced a 'Turkification' policy that favoured the Turks over other ethnic groups (Albirini, 2016). As a result, the Arabs revolted against the Turks, and the Arabic language was an identity aspect that unified them. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the success of the Arabs' revolution, Arabs desired to establish a nation state in which the Arabic language was its core identity regardless of faith and ethnicity. However, this attempt failed because of colonizing powers which divided the land between them, resulting in different experiences where some countries, such as Algeria, were colonized for a longer period, and others, such as Iraq, for a shorter period, whilst some countries such as Saudi Arabia were barely influenced (Albirini, 2016). Therefore, the Arab world is not a homogeneous place where Arabs have shared the same history and circumstances but rather a heterogeneous place that covers a vast area of land where Arabs' linguistic identities have been influenced by social factors such as religion, region, ideology, history, and class. As a result, when studying the relationship between Arabic and identity, the unique sociohistorical environment of the Arab world and its multiple identities should be considered (Albirini, 2016; Suleiman, 2003).

Such multiple identities have influenced the varieties of Arabic used across the Arab world and have affected morphemes, phonemes, lexis, and grammar.

For example, at a regional level, many words have different meanings depending on where they are spoken, such as the word <ماشي> /ma:ʃi/, which means 'no' in Yemen and Morocco, 'yes' in Jordan, and 'walking' in Saudi Arabia (Alshargi et al., 2019), and it could mean either 'yes' or 'walking' in Syria and Palestine, depending on the context. Such differences do not only occur on a country level but also within the same country. For example, on the phonemic level, <فجر> /faʤr/ in SA (pronounced /fagr/ in Yemen) means 'early morning' in Taizz, south Yemen, while it means 'poverty' in Sana'a (Alshargi et al., 2019). These examples illustrate how Arabic varies based on the region.

Religion and identity

Religious identities have also influenced Arabic variations. For example, Abu-Haidar (1991) reported phonological differences between Christians and Muslims in Baghdad, where the former group used the pronunciation /neɪs/ for 'people', whilst the latter group pronounced it as /næs/. Differences were also apparent on the morphological level, where the Christian group used the broken-plural forms in words such as /xababi:z/ 'bakers' and /xajai:t/ 'tailors', whilst the Muslim group used the masculine plural form /xabbazi:n/ and /xajati:n/. Nonetheless, Abu-Haidar (1991) observed that the Christians in Baghdad started to assimilate their dialect to the Muslims' dialect. Similarly, Holes (1983, 1987), who studied the dialects of the Sunni and Shia groups in Bahrain, observed that the minority Shia population in a Sunni-majority neighbourhood assimilated their dialects to the Sunnis' dialect. In contrast, when a Sunni population was a minority in a Shia-majority neighbourhood, they would maintain their Sunni dialect. For example, Sunni groups would maintain Sunni-specific sounds such as/ɡ/, /θ/, and /ð/, whilst the Shia groups would not do so with their Shia-specific sounds such as /j/, /f/, and /ɣ/ (Holes, 1983, 1987). Such examples could be explained by the power that Muslims and Sunnis hold in both cases. These dialects represent a 'social group in which political and commercial power is concentrated, and whose dialect as a consequence has acquired a locally prestigious status' (Holes, 1983, p. 38). Further, it is worth noting that the influence of religious identities on Arabic variations do not necessarily occur across religions but also on the denomination level within the same religion. These examples further illustrate the complexities of Arabic identities and their influences on Arabic dialects.

The above examples also show how language reflects multi-identities within the same religious group, but, at a more generic level, language reveals an identity that reflects Aljinsiyya or Alqawmiyya (used by Suleiman, 2003 to mean 'nationalism') despite belonging to different religions (Zoghbor, 2018a). For example, an Egyptian (whether a Muslim or a Qibti (a minority Christian in Egypt)) will still reveal by his or her accented English his or her belonging to Egypt, reflecting the Arab identity

with no indication of religion (Alsohaibani, 2016). Despite this view about how language unifies groups of people into one (Arabic-speaking identity), some linguists claim the opposite and argue that Arabic dialects are 'separate, distinct languages' (Bassiouney, 2020, p. 28). Such disagreements, according to Albirini (2016), might be attributed to 'language attitudes' which he defines as 'the socio-psychologically evaluative reactions to a certain language or to the speakers of that language' (p. 68). Here, both Arabic speakers and Arabic linguists tend to have more positive attitudes towards Standard Arabic (SA) (a variety of Arabic that has no native speakers) (Bassiouney, 2020) than of local dialects. SA is the language used in religious sermons, universities, and formal occasions (Bassiouney, 2020), whilst local dialects are often considered as a 'distorted, debased, and a deficient form of SA […] with many borrowed words and with no underlying system, logic, or rules' (Albirini, 2016, p. 81). However, when it comes to attitudes towards local dialects, the speakers of such dialects tend to hold more positive attitudes towards their own dialect depending on 'the context of speech, social appropriateness, personality, group membership, and cultural influences' (Albirini, 2016, p. 86). Therefore, although Arabs in general hold more positive attitudes towards SA than towards their own dialects, they still view their local dialects as a 'better form of Arabic' when compared to other dialects, which shows how a language is not only linguistically defined but also socially constructed.

Variation of Arabic and intelligibility

The term 'intelligibility' has been defined differently, but all definitions are linked to verbal communication and the extent to which oral speech can be understood by interlocutors (Smith & Nelson, 2008). Additionally, in verbal communication, pronunciation (rather than any aspects of language) carries identity, as it is more noticeable than other language aspects, such as grammar or vocabulary (Zoghbor, 2016, 2018b).

To distinguish between 'dialect' and 'language', Edwards (2018) uses intelligibility as the main criteria. For example, speakers of French and English are not expected to understand one another, but English speakers of different varieties are usually able to. Smakman and van der Meulen (2018) consider linguistic borders as the most obvious division between Arabic variations, indicating that the closer the words are (in meaning and how they are related), the thinner the dividing line. These linguistic borders are followed by ethnic borders, identity borders, social connotation borders, and communication-based borders.

The large distribution of Arabic speakers in the world (Anishchenkova, 2020) has caused a rich diversity of variations and dialects. Not only do these variations exist on a national or regional level, but they may also exist in the same small geographical area (Albirini, 2016). In some cases, these variations may be vastly different to the extent that they are not intelligible

to other speakers of Arabic dialects (e.g., the difference between Yemeni and Moroccan dialects). Despite their differences, Arabic dialects are still classified as variations of the same language because they differ on the lexical and phonological levels (Albirini, 2016) rather than the structure (Aoun et al., 2010; Benmamoun, 2000; Soltan, 2007). Such dialects are regularly used 'in everyday conversations and other informal communicative exchanges: sports, music, film, and some TV show broadcasts' (Albirini, 2016, p. 13).

In contrast, SA is the same across the Arab world and, therefore, is intelligible to Arabic speakers regardless of their local dialects. Some differences may occur, nonetheless, on phonological and lexical levels due to the influence of local dialects (Holes, 2004; Parkinson, 1991; Schulz, 1981). As SA is mainly used in formal education, print publications, news broadcasts, official speeches, and political announcements (Albirini, 2016), Holes (2004) argues:

> [SA] is the language of power and control, as opposed to the language of intimacy and domesticity (the dialect), and it impinges in multifarious and sometimes subliminal ways on the daily life of Arabs of all generations, backgrounds, and educational levels.
>
> (p. 6)

As a result, the choice of SA may work as an identifying factor for the level of education that its speakers have since they use some of its linguistic aspects even when they speak in their local dialects (Bassiouney, 2020; Holes, 2004). The elite status that SA holds is demonstrated in dramatic and literary works, where SA is often used in certain circumstances where no other variety would be appropriate to reveal a neutral identity or hide the origin of the speaker. For example, the Egyptian playwright Mahmud Taymour in his plays *Ibn Jalā* and *Saqr Quraysh* in the 1950s (Holes, 2004), and Tawfiq al-Hakim in his plays *al-Safqa* and *al-Warta*, used SA for characters whose country of origin was unknown or not important to identify.

The study

The data in this chapter includes five scenes that have been selected from several episodes of the *Khawaja Abdulqader* series. The scenes were chosen for two main reasons. First, these episodes contained the three main codes of Standard Arabic (SA), Marked Sudanese Dialect (MSD), and Marked Sa'idi Dialect (MSAE) – more information about the scenes is provided in Table 6.1. Second, the scenes speak to the main theme of this chapter and demonstrate that various codes within the Arabic language unify rather than divide Arabic speakers. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was used to examine the utterance structure, form, usage, meaning, and pronunciation that were employed in the creation of these utterances (Fairclough, 1995). To render actual pronunciation, this chapter uses IPA symbols (Brierley et al., 2016) in transcribing examples and linguistic data.

Table 6.1 Summary of scenes in Figures 6.1–6.5

Scene #	*Characters in the scene*	*Code choice*	*Topic of scene*
1	H/KAQ and Sheikh Abdulqader (SAQ) (religious man in Sudan)	SA	H/KAQ is dreaming about meeting SAQ before travelling to Sudan.
2	H/KAQ and his sister Katy	SA	H/KAQ is talking to his sister before travelling to Sudan.
3	H/KAQ and Fadlallah (one of the workers in Sudan)	MSD	H/KAQ is in Sudan and asking Fadlallah about Al-Hadhra (praying with a Sheikh).
4	H/KAQ and Kamal (a teenager in Upper Egypt)	MSED	H/KAQ moves to Upper Egypt and is asking Kamal about Surat Al-Fajr (in Chapter 89 of the Quran).
5	H/KAQ and his wife Margaret	MSED and SA	H/KAQ is thinking about Shahwaniya and speaking to Margaret.

Findings

The data in this section reveal the types of codes that are used throughout the 30 episodes of *Khawaja Abdulqader* by providing the frequency of the occurrence of each code. Then the five scenes mentioned previously are analysed to consider the context where each code is used, focusing on its linguistic features, particularly the properties. Table 6.2 shows the frequency of scenes where H/KAQ uses each of these codes. It is necessary to draw attention to the fact that the Marked Sudanese Dialect (MSD) is the accented Sudanese Dialect (SD) used by H/KAQ, who uses SD as a foreign language (in Table 6.2. and the rest of the chapter). Similarly, the Marked Sa'idi Egyptian Dialect (MSED) is the accented version of SED used by H/KAQ. In most of the scenes provided in Table 6.2, MSED was predominantly used, then SA, and finally MSD. It should be noted that the borders between these codes were not rigid, as will be shown in the following sections.

The scene in Figure 6.1 is an example of how SA is used to represent H/KAQ's mother tongue. Most utterances in this scene have equivalent, but not identical, vocabulary in other dialects. Of all the words that are said by H/KAQ in this scene, only two are identical in SA and the Egyptian Dialect, which is a common media dialect in the Arab world. These words are <أنا>, which means 'I', and <أموت>, which means 'I die'. Apart from these two words, all the other words are different in SA and the Egyptian Dialect. In some cases, the same vocabulary with the same orthography is used in both varieties but with different vowel pronunciations (e.g., <هنا>, which means 'here', is pronounced as /huna/ in SA and /hina/ in the Egyptian Dialect, and <أنت>, which means 'you', is pronounced as /anta/ in SA but /Inta/ in ED).

Table 6.2 Summary of codes used by the character Khawaja Abdulqader

Code choice	*Frequency*	*Comments*
SA – Standard Arabic	45	H/KAQ uses SA in scenes where one would expect to hear his mother tongue (English). Therefore, Arabic is used with Margaret (his wife), Beident (his colleague), Katy (his sister), and every English speaker in Britain, Sudan, and Upper Egypt.
MSD – Marked Sudanese Dialect	30	MSD is the dialect that H/KAQ learns and uses when he is working in Sudan as a stone maker. He uses it to communicate with Sudanese characters such as Fadlallah and Sheikh Abdulqader.
MSED – Marked Sa'idi Egyptian Dialect	138	H/KAQ starts to modify his MSD to MSED based on communication with Sa'idi Egyptians after moving to Upper Egypt. It is used with all Sa'idis: Kamal, Zeinab, Haj Abduldhaher and Shahwaniya. When using MSED, some Sudanese words he used to use in Sudan also occur, especially the word '/ʃinu/' <شنو> ('what').

The SA code (with an Egyptian accent) is even more noticeable in other incidents where SA is used to communicate with English-speaking characters, such as the conversation between H/KAQ and his sister Katy in the scene in Figure 6.2. In this scene, the words in bold are either vocabulary used in the Egyptian Dialect (not SA) or words that are in SA but pronounced with an Egyptian accent. Table 6.3 demonstrates how these words were pronounced differently in SA and ED.

The scene in Figure 6.2 shows two examples of interference from the actor and actress's first dialect, which is the Egyptian Dialect. The first is the choice of vocabulary, as in 'no travelling … no Sudan', where the negation tool /ma/ is used instead of /la/. The second is the use of the same word in SA and the Egyptian Dialect but pronounced differently. In the case of consonants, this can be heard in the pronunciation of 'very', where /g/ is used instead of /ʤ/, and 'keep', where $/\delta^{\varsigma}/$ is velarized. In the case of vowels, it can be heard in phrases like 'I can', where the vowel in the last syllable is shortened, so it is /i/ instead of /iː/, and the same with the word 'really', where the vowel in the first syllable is shortened to sound like /a/ instead of /aː/. The phrase 'his colour' has a unique modification in pronunciation, where the vowel in the first syllable changes from /a/ to /u/, along with the rounded consonant /w/. The consonant /w/ is elided and the word sounds like /lunu/ instead of /lawnu/. The scene in Figure 6.2 reveals how SA was used in different incidents and how the code that was produced reflected the characters' Egyptian Dialect through the choice of vocabulary or pronunciation of words that are identical

الشيخ عبد القادر	مرحباً، مرحباً بك أين كنت طوال هذه المدة؟ أنا أقف هنا في انتظارك وتقد تأخرت كثيراً. أعطني هذه العصا.
هاربرت	أنا **لا أستطيع السير** بدون العصا
الشيخ عبد القادر	**غير صحيح من قال لك هذا؟**
هاربرت	**أنت تقف هنا في انتظاري، اتعرفني؟**
الشيخ عبد القادر	**طبعاً أعرفك وأعرف ماذا تريد**
هاربرت	**أريد أن أموت**
الشيخ عبد القادر	هنا لا يوجد موت، ما دمت وصلت هنا سوف تعيش إلى الأبد. أعطني هذه العصا.

SAQ	Welcome, welcome. Where have you been all this time? I am standing here waiting for you. You are too late. Give me this stick.
H/KAQ	I cannot walk without the stick.
SAQ	That is not true. Who told you this?
H/KAQ	You were standing here waiting for me. Do you know me?
SAQ	Sure, I know you. And I know what you want.
H/KAQ	I want to die.
SAQ	Here, there is no death, since you arrived here you will live forever. Give me this stick.

Figure 6.1 Scene where H/KAQ dreams about talking to SAQ before moving to live in Sudan.

in orthography in both varieties but different in pronunciation. The scenes in Figure 6.3 and Figure 6.4 focus on the use of MSD (Marked Sudanese Dialect) and MSED (Marked Sa'idi Egyptian Dialect) when H/KAQ travels to Sudan and then to Upper Egypt.

The scene in Figure 6.3 shows examples of the vocabulary that H/KAQ uses in MSD; e.g., the word 'what' (/shenu/) and the negation tool /ma/ (or 'not') in 'not a dream' (/ma hilm/) and 'I did NOT see it' (/ma ʃuft/). Syntactical and grammatical features in the scene in Figure 6.3 are also noticeable. For example, 'I saw', /ana ʃaf/ instead of /ana ʃuft/, where the former should be used to describe a male third person (he saw), while the /t/ at the end (which

كاتي	**مافيش وداع مافيش سفر مافيش** سودان
هاربرت	**خلاص** كاتي، **مافيش** سودان **مافيش** سفر
كاتي	**بجد**
هاربرت	هل **تستطيعين الاحتفاظ** بالقطة؟ مارجريت لا تحبها
كاتي	مارجريت **أنانية**
هاربرت	انت حنونة وطيبة **جداً**، تذكريني بأمي. هل تعرفين بأني رأيت ملك الموت في الحلم
كاتي	**ملك الموت؟**
هاربرت	نعم **لونه** أسمر

Katy	There is no goodbye, no traveling, no Sudan.
H/KAQ	Alright Katy. No Sudan, no traveling.
Katy	Really?
H/KAQ	Can you keep the cat? Margret does not love her.
Katy	Margret is selfish.
H/KAQ	You are very kind. You remined me of my mother. Do you know I have seen the angel of death in my dream?
Katy	Angel of death?
H/KAQ	Yes. He was black.

Figure 6.2 Scene where H/KAQ is talking to his sister Katy before travelling to Sudan.

should have been used) indicates a first-person speaker and is 'I' in 'I saw'. Another example is the demonstrative pronoun /di/ (or 'this' in English), which is /haða/ in SA. In this example, /di/ is used as a demonstrative to point at the dream (which is masculine), so, in the Sudanese Dialect, /da/ rather than /di/ should have been used. In <أنا كان صاحي> ('I was awake'), one would expect /kunt/ to be used instead of /kan/, as the former is used for the first person (I was) and the latter is used with the masculine third person (he was).

The conversation in Figure 6.4 is between H/KAQ and Kamal in Upper Egypt. In this scene, while Kamal is using the Sa'idi Egyptian Dialect (SED), H/KAQ is using the marked version of this code (which is MSED). In this conversation, H/KAQ is trying to tell Kamal the bad news about the death of his father. To reduce the negative effect of this news on Kamal, H/KAQ starts

Table 6.3 Pronunciation of SA by H/KAQ and Katy

Standard Arabic *(produced by H/KAQ and Katy, with interference from accented Egyptian Dialect*	***Standard Arabic***
مافيش سفر مافيش وداع /mafiʃ wadaʕ mafiʃ safar/	لا وداع لا سفر **/la wadaʕ la safar/** **Different vocabulary in SA and ED in the word /la/ or /mafiʃ/, which means 'there is no …'**.
خلاص كاتي /xalasˁ Ki:ti/	حسناً يا كاتي /ħasanan ya Ki:ti/ Different vocabulary in SA and ED in the word /ħasanan/ or /xalasˁ/, which means 'all right'.
بجد /bigad/	حقاً **/ħaqqan/** **Different vocabulary in SA and ED**.
تستطيعين الاحتفاظ /tastatˁiʕin al eħtifaðˁ/	تستطيعين الاحتفاظ /tastatˁi:ʕi:n al eħtif**a**:ðˁ/ The same orthography but different vowel pronunciation.
أنانية /ananiyya/	أنانية **/ana:niyya/** **The same orthography as in SA but different vowel pronunciation.**
جداً /geddan/ – with shadda on /d/	جداً **/ʤiddan/ – with shadda on /d/** **The same orthography as in SA and ED but different vowel pronunciation**.
لونه /lunu/	لونه **/lawnu/** **The same orthography as in SA but different pronunciation**.

to remind Kamal about a Surat in the Quran that talks about souls going to heaven after death, and the belief that dead people can be met in the hereafter in heaven, a better place than the current life.

Table 6.4 shows that the utterances of H/KAQ are identical in SD and SED, but the vocabulary in SA, in the second column, is different either in pronunciation (as in the word <يقول> or 'says', which is /jaqu:l/ in SA but /jugu:l/ in the other two variations) or vocabulary (as in the words <ينتقل إلى>, which mean 'to go', and <أريد>, which mean 'I want to').

In Figure 6.5, Margaret is talking in SA to H/KAQ, who is not paying her any attention and is crying while whispering about Shahwaniya being murdered. The scene in Figure 6.5 reflects H/KAQ's spiritual closeness to God, his purification, and his withdrawal from his surrounding context that exemplifies God's characteristics of knowing the unseen realities, which are

هاربرت / خواجة عبد القادر	فضل الله
فضل الله	نعم يا خواجة
هاربرت / خواجة عبد القادر	أنا عايز يسأل على حاجة. أنا امبارح شاف حلم.
فضل الله	خيريا خواجة
هاربرت / خواجة عبد القادر	أنا ما يعرف دي كان حلم ولا ما حلم أنا كان صاحي أنا ما شفت أنا سمعت
فضل الله	سمعت حلم كيف ؟
هاربرت / خواجة عبد القادر	سمعت حاجة موسيقى ... كدة الناس يقول موسيقى .... اللللههههههههه اللللههههههه
	أيوة يا خواجة دا ما حلم دي الحضرة
هاربرت / خواجة عبد القادر	شنو الحضرة
فضل الله	الحضرة كلنا بنجعد مع الشيخ وبنذكر الله
هاربرت / خواجة عبد القادر	شنو الشيخ؟

H/KAQ	Fadlallah
Fadlallah	Yes Khawaja
H/KAQ	I want to ask about something. Yesterday I had a dream.
Fadlallah	Yes, tell me?
H/KAQ	I do not know if it was a dream or not. I was awake, I did not see it, but I heard it.
Fadlallah	How did you hear a dream?
H/KAQ	I heard something like music ... people are singing with music... Allah… Allah..
Fadlallah	Yes Khawaja this is not a dream. This is called "Al-Hadhra".
H/KAQ	What is "Al-Hadhra"?
Fadlallah	Al-Hadhra is when we sit with the Sheikh and pray for Allah.
H KAQ	What is "Sheikh"?

Figure 6.3 Scene involving a conversation between H/KAQ and Fadlallah (a Sudanese character).

all Sufism beliefs and practices. H/KAQ switched from MSED to SA when he angrily replies to Margaret asking her why she followed him to Upper Egypt. What is noticeable in this short conversation is the switch between the two codes, SA and MSED, when H/KAQ is directing his speech at Margaret.

الخواجة عبد القادر	في المصحف في القرآن ربنا كان يجول حاجة عن واحد يموت يروح جنة
كمال	إنت عاوز إيه يا خواجة عبد القادر
الخواجة عبد القادر	أنا عاوز يحفظ آية واحد يموت يروح جنة
كمال	(يحاول التذكر) موت وجنة ... موت وجنة .... سورة الفجر، آخر سورة الفجر
الخواجة عبد القادر	أنا عاوز يحفظ آخر سورة الفجر

H/KAQ	In the Holy Book in the Quran, God was saying something about if the person dies, he goes to heaven
Kamal	What do you want Khawaja Abdulqader?
H/KAQ	I want to memorize the Aya that says that one goes to heaven when he dies.
Kamal	*[trying to remember]* death and heaven … death and heaven … Sourate Al-Fajr, the end of Sourate Al-Fajr.
H/KAQ	*[confirming]* I want to memorize the end of Sourate Al-Fajr.

Figure 6.4 Scene where H/KAQ asks Kamal about Surat Al-Fajr.

Table 6.4 Variation in the vocabulary used in SA, SD, and SED

Utterance by H/KAQ	*SA*	*SD*	*SED*
يجول /jugu:l/ (He says)	**يقول** **/jaqu:l/**	يجول /juɣu:l/	يجول /jugu:l/
يروح /jiru:ħ/ (He goes)	**ينتقل إلى** **/jantiqil ʔila/**	يمشي* /yamʃi/	يروح /jiru:ħ/ or يمشي* /yamʃi/
عاوز /ʕa:wiz/ (I want)	**أريد** **/ʔuri:d/**	عاوز /ʕa:wiz/ Or عايز /ʕa:jiz/	عاوز /ʕa:wiz/

Note: * In SA, <يمشي> (/yamʃi/) means 'he walks'.

MSED	(باكيا) مسكين شهوانية، مسكين حبيبي، عاش تعبان، مات مظلوم	هاربرت / خواجة عبد القادر
SA	كلمني بلغتنا ... أنا لا أفهم هذيانك	مارجريت
MSED	(باكيا) الله يرحمك شهوانية .... الله يرحمك حبيبي	هاربرت / خواجة عبد القادر
SA	(وهي تصرخ) أنا لا أفهمك	مارجريت
SA	لماذا اتيت مارجريت؟	هاربرت / خواجة عبد القادر
SA	لماذا تكرر هذا السؤال ولا تصدق إجاباتي؟	مارجريت

H/KAQ	[Crying] poor Shahwaniya, poor dear, she lived a hard life and was unjustly killed	**MSED**
Margret	[Screaming] talk to me in a language that I understand … I cannot understand you.	**SA**
H/KAQ	[Crying] may your soul rest in peace, Shahwaniya … May your soul rest in peace my dear.	**MSED**
Margret	[Screaming] I cannot understand you.	**SA**
H/KAQ	[Speaking angrily to Margret] Why did you come, Margret?	**SA**
Margret	Why do you keep asking me this question and yet do not believe my answers?	**SA**

Figure 6.5 Scene where H/KAQ ignores Margaret as he thinks about the death of Shahwaniya.

The scene in Figure 6.5 shows differences in vocabulary and pronunciation between SA and other Arabic variations. The same level of difference exists between the Gulf dialects and other codes. Table 6.5 includes examples of words from the five scenes and the differences/similarities between them in SA, SD, ED, and one variation of the Gulf dialect, the Emirati Dialect, which is used in the UAE. Table 6.5 shows the similarities and differences between the words in each code. One example is the pronunciation of demonstratives, which is /di/ (for a singular feminine) in the Sudanese and Egyptian dialects. In the Emirati dialect, it is /haði/ (for feminine), which is close to the SA /haðihi/. The word <عاوز> /ʕawiz/ ('I want') is identical in the Sudanese and Egyptian dialects, and the word <أريد> /ʔari:d/ in the Emirati dialect is similar to that in SA (/ʔari:d/), with a difference in the short vowel /u/.

In Table 6.5, another variation for the word <لا أستطيع> (/la ʔastatʕi:ʕ/, which means 'I cannot') in SA is <لا أقدر> (/ʔaqder/), which is also used in the Sudanese

Table 6.5 Differences/similarities in the vocabulary used in the four codes

Utterance by H/KAQ	*SA*	*Sudanese*	*Egyptian*	*Emirati*
ما 'Not' / 'No' (negation tool – أداة نفي)	ما /ma/	ما /ma/	مش /muʃ/	ما /ma/
لا أستطيع / la ʔastatʕiːʕ/ 'I cannot' (for first-person speaker, /la/ at start is a negation tool)	**لا أستطيع** /la ʔastatʕiːʕ/ (another word is **لا أقدر** /la ʔaqder/)	**ما أقدر** written as /ma ʔaqder/ but pronounced /ma ʔagder/	**ما أقدرش** in Sa'idi Dialect and written as /m ʔaqderʃ/ but pronounced /ma ʔagderʃ/ In some other parts of Egypt (e.g., Cairo), it is pronounced / ma ʔdarʃ/	ما أقدر written as /ma ʔaqder/ but pronounced /ma ʔagder/ Another word is أروم The /ʔ/ at the start of the word is omitted and pronounced /ma ruːm/
اتعرفني /ʔataʕrifuni/ '**Do you know me?**'	اتعرفني /ʔataʕrifuni/	تعرفني /tiʕrafni/	تعرفني /tiʕrafni/	تعرفني /tʕarifni/ Same orthography in Egyptian and Sudanese dialect. Differs in pronunciation –consonant cluster used instead of vowel /i/
دي /di/ '**This is**'	هذه /haðihi/	دي /di/	دي /di/	هذي /haði/
شنو /ʃinu/ '**What**'	ماذا /maða/	شنو /ʃinu/	إيه /ʔiːh/	شنو /ʃinu/
عاوز /ʕawiz/ '**I want**'	أريد /ʔuriːd/	عاوز /ʕawiz/	عاوز /ʕawiz/	أريد /ʔuriːd/

and Emirati dialects, but the /q/ is pronounced as /g/ and the negation tool /ma/ is used instead of /la/. The latter dialect also has another common word to express the same meaning, <ما روم> (/maruːm/), which does not exist in any of the other codes. The same word is also generated in the Egyptian dialect but with slight changes in sound, so it is pronounced /mʔaqderʃ/ in the Upper Egypt code but /ma ʔagderʃ/ in other parts such as Cairo.

Discussion

The dominance of Egyptian media production, described by Shafik (2017), Allam (2019) and Amin (2002) at the start of this chapter, contributed to the enhanced intelligibility of the Arabic varieties in two senses. First, it increased Arabs' exposure to the Egyptian dialect, making it the most recognized version in the Arab world (Amin, 2002). Second, it allowed for several variations of Arabic to enter the homes of Arabs, including those in the Gulf, as in the case of *Khawaja Abdulqader*, with SA, SED and SD being used. Thus, despite the large area of the Arab region and the demographical distribution of the Arabs, exposure and familiarity reduces the intelligibility threshold.

Throughout the episodes, H/KAQ uses the Arabic code associated with the social group he is interacting with, thereby claiming the social identity of that group (Barber, 2018, Giles et al., 1991). Religious identity was prominent in revealing the strong linkage between the Arabic language and the religion of Islam. Arabic as the language of the Quran made non-Arab Muslims view Arab Muslims as having a close association with Islam (Makdisi, 1996, 2002). In the scene in Figure 6.4, where H/KAQ refers to Sourate Al-Fajr in the Holy Quran while delivering the news to Kamal about the death of his father, his language choices indicate his wish to belong to Kamal's ethnic group, and he eventually gains more acceptance and trust during the conversation. Along with language use, the act of Sufism appears often as the framework within which multiple identities are revealed through the use of different codes: SA, SED, and MESD.

Despite morphological and phonological differences across Arabic dialects, differences in linguistic properties are not rigid and border lines are grey, allowing overlap of and similarities between the language systems of different codes. Acting beyond differences across codes, the Arabic language, rather than codes, is the main representation of Arab identity. Despite the link between Arabic and Islam (Albirini, 2016), and the positive attitudes towards SA as a prestigious variety of Arabic (Bassiouney, 2020), Arabic in its generic form is an umbrella that represents Alqawmiyya (Arab nationalism) (Suleiman, 2003), regardless of religion, ethnicity, or dialect (Zoghbor, 2018a).

The morphological and phonological analysis of the scenes indicates that SA was used as a neutral language that does not reflect the identity of any specific Arabic region. Considering that SA is a variety of Arabic with no native speakers (Bassiouney 2018, 2020), it was manipulated throughout the episodes to perform different types of identities. SA was used in the episodes by H/KAQ and all the other non-Arab characters (e.g., Margaret and Katy) as their mother tongue instead of English. This indicates that these characters' identities are not connected to the Arab regions in this drama and do not belong to the Arab communities of Sudan and then of Egypt. SA was introduced as an independent language rather than a variety within Arabic, and 'intelligibility' was the criteria that revealed this distinction. As Edwards (2018) states, one of

the definitions of 'language' and 'dialect' is based on if one understands it or not. Evidence of this was provided in the scene in Figure 6.5, when Margaret tells H/KAQ that she does not understand the language he is using when he is crying and whispering while thinking of 'Shahwania'. Further evidence that Arabic was considered an independent code is when H/KAQ dreams about SAQ (Figure 6.1) before travelling to Sudan. In his dream, SA is spoken by both of them, but in reality, after travelling to Sudan, SAQ speaks in SD, and H/KAQ, as a user of SD as a foreign language, speaks in MSD.

More evidence regarding the representation of SA as an independent code rather than a variety was provided by non-Arab characters such as H/KAQ. For example, in scenes where H/KAQ is supposed to speak in his native language (which the audience understands to be English), SA is used instead. Since SA in these scenes is performing the role of the first language, it is spoken in the same way a language is spoken by native speakers who show control over the language usage (without grammar mistakes, with a wide vocabulary range suitable for the context, and with standardized pronunciation). Having said this, there may be some interference from the Egyptian dialect, the dialect of the non-Arab actors and actresses in this episode who use sounds such as /g/ instead of /ʤ/, as in the conversation between H/KAQ and his sister Katy. While H/KAQ shows control over SA, as it is used as the character's first language in place of English, he uses accented SA when reading from the Quran with Kamal. The pronunciation of proper names, such as Abdulqader, is further evidence of the neutral role of SA; /q/ is pronounced as in SA when H/KAQ speaks in SA to an English-speaking character, but the name is pronounced with a /g/ when he speaks in MS or MES with Sudanese or Sa'idi characters.

Conclusion

The chapter has established how different types of Arabic language (SA, SD, and SED) are used to portray different types of identities in the character of H/KAQ in the TV series *Khawaja Abdulqader*. This chapter analysed the phonological and lexical features in five scenes that represented three Arabic variations – SA, Sudanese Dialect, and Egyptian Dialect – and shed light on the differences and similarities between these and Gulf varieties such as the Emirati dialect.

Overall, the lexicon between the codes used were either completely different or identical in orthography, but different in the pronunciation of consonants or vowels across these variations. As a result, it was revealed that the distinction in phonology and lexicon, which are also important elements in the production of identity, is not rigid but rather overlaps across the variations as well as in the Gulf varieties of Arabic such as the Emirati dialect. This indicates that linguistic features and variation unify, rather than distance, the identities that are produced when Arabic variations are used in communication.

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Part III

Gulf identities in transition

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7 Glocal identities in the Gulf

Narratives of Bangladeshi third culture kids

Habibul Haque Khondker

The Gulf region is a potpourri of national, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and gender identities caused in large part by the flow of people from nearly 200 countries around the world. A defining characteristic of the Gulf region as a location is the fluidity and transiency of the people. Despite this transiency, some middle- and upper-class segments of the expatriate populations have made cities such as Dubai or Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) their home. Officially non-citizens, many have been living in the UAE for three to four decades, either serving as professionals, business people, skilled workers, or technicians.

The transnational flows of national and ethnic groups in the UAE have been superimposed on the traditional diversity of the region, rendering it more variegated. Emiratis, having originated from surrounding territories over the centuries, have become well-integrated as a nation, yet tribal and regional identities have not been completely obliterated. Since the formation of the UAE on December 2, 1971, however, the main demarcation has been between citizens (Emiratis) and non-citizens (transnational workers). Non-citizens are not only a significant part of the UAE's population but also that of the Gulf states – ranging from approximately 37% in Saudi Arabia and 70% in Kuwait to almost 90% in Qatar and the UAE. On the whole, 51% of the GCC population is made up of foreigners (GLMM, 2017). While transnational migrants in many parts of the world – especially North America, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand – become naturalized as citizens over time, in the Gulf states they are less likely to ever become naturalized citizens. It is only in recent years that discussions about 'citizen openings' have started taking place. A small number of leading business people, some highly specialized professionals, and some property owners have been granted 'golden' visas with a validity of ten years and, in rare cases, citizenship has been offered. The UAE government has only recently announced plans to expand the ten-year golden visa opportunity to all doctors, PhD holders, and highly skilled workers (Reynolds et al., 2020). However, such restrictions and limited opportunities for becoming a long-term resident or citizen highlight the inherently transient nature of the Gulf.

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Second-generation migrants who were born and raised in a foreign country have been named *third culture kids* (TCKs) (Useem & Useem, 1967; Pollock et al., 2001), as they are influenced by both their parents' home culture as well as that of their place of birth and country of childhood. The idea of 'third' in TCKs refers to the emergent amalgamated culture that is neither their traditional culture nor the culture of the local host society. The identities of TCKs in diaspora communities in the Gulf region involve a blending of the global with the local, and the faraway national with the regional. Glocal identities are thus produced as a result of the influences of these multiple belongings. Though, arguably, such identities could be viewed as unsettling, there are also certain advantages to glocal or third culture identities. For example, TCKs are known to be culturally adept, knowledgeable about the world, and versatile in their use of languages.

A typical example of the ambivalent identities of TCKs in diaspora communities can be seen in the case of 'Sherina', a 14-year-old growing up in Amsterdam whose father is a Dutch citizen of Bangladeshi origin and whose mother is from Colombia:

> The 2014 World Cup Soccer posed a particular problem for Sherina. One day she was supporting the Dutch team, another day the Colombian team. Thanks to the lack of soccer skills of the Bangladeshi team that failed in the preliminary qualifiers, she was spared further complications of competing loyalties. As the World Cup proceeded there was a theoretical possibility that the Dutch and the Colombians might face-off, a possibility that was averted when Colombia lost to the Brazilian team and Sherina was spared of a huge dilemma. As the Dutch team took on the Brazilians for the third position, Sherina finally showed her unalloyed support for her national, namely, the Dutch team.
>
> (Khondker, 2017, p. 1)

The above example illustrates the dilemmas TCKs face in relation to multiple and contested loyalties in a highly globalized world. Many Bangladeshi TCKs in the Gulf, as well as Pakistanis, Nepalese, Indians, and Europeans, are faced with similar dilemmas of having to live with multiple, and sometimes conflicting, localities (Dillon & Ali, 2019). Here, TCKs often inhabit one locality physically and another psychologically or 'nostalgically' (Khondker, 2017), or they identify with multiple localities without singling out a primary locality.

In literature, the well-known novelist Jhumpa Lahiri, amongst others, has written in depth about the complexities of TCKs' identities. Lahiri was born in London to Bengali parents who immigrated to the United Kingdom from India. Later, Lahiri migrated to the United States, where, after completing her education, she launched her writing career. Currently, she is based in Italy. While Lahiri explores glocal identities in her novels (*Whereabouts*, 2021; *The*

Namesake, 2004; and *Interpreter of Maladies*, 2000), the experiences of TCKs remain under researched in academic publications, especially in the Gulf.

This chapter argues that TCKs in Bangladeshi diaspora communities in the UAE often construct ambivalent identities or glocal identities involving intersecting global and local influences. The chapter starts by conceptualizing identity and glocalization before exploring complexities within TCK identities. The chapter then presents narratives from three Bangladeshi TCKs and one Indian TCK articulating their experiences of identity construction as Gulf residents. The chapter ends with an analysis relating to ways in which the linguistic and cultural identities of TCKs are changing in the region.

Conceptualization of identity

There are two schools of thought when it comes to definitions of concepts. The Nietzschean school does not believe in definitions, as Nietzsche once said, 'Only that which has no history can be defined'. In other words, anything that has a history (more or less everything) cannot be defined. The other school, based on the work of Raymond Williams, holds that concepts can be defined by going to the roots and historical development of the concepts to add much-needed clarity so that social scientists can use them in meaningful conversations without talking past each other. Ironically, Williams did not include either diaspora or identity in his original 1976 or revised 1985 versions of *Keywords*. However, others have taken on that task. I subscribe to the latter school on the grounds that social sciences are better served if we have a repertoire of defined concepts that can help initiate a meaningful conversation. However, I also agree with Levine (1985) that sociologists (inter alia, social scientists) must have a high tolerance for ambiguity. Ambiguity is part and parcel of our social experience because social processes are to some extent ambiguous. In this sense, our understanding of any aspect of society and social processes is partial. Accepting the idea that partial understanding is better than no understanding, let us proceed to define the concepts at hand.

Legitimizing, resistance, and project identities

Castells (2010) states that identity is people's source of meaning and experience. Sociologists, though not all, often lean towards the idea that all identities are constructed. That idea, though popular, has some problems. Identity, however we define the concept, needs some degree of stability. It is a product of time (and space). The moot question is which social, political, economic, and historical factors shape identity and give it some stability? Identity, over time, does change, hence it can be conceptualized as malleable, but it is by no means ephemeral. It is important to identify the markers of identity. Castells (2010) lists three types of identities: *legitimizing identity*, *resistance*

identity, and *project identity*. *Legitimizing identity* is introduced by the dominant institutions of society. The state is the dominant institution in modern society that officially grants identity to its citizens. In this regard, it may be useful to highlight the importance of a passport in modern society, which was introduced so that the state could take control over the means of movement (Torpey, 2000). For Castells, various theories of nationalism also fit into this category. Castells' (2010) second category is *resistance identity*. This is an identity generated by those actors who are in positions or conditions devalued and/or stigmatized by the dominant group. In defending their rights, ostensibly marginal groups gain an identity that is different from the identity of the dominant group or groups. Marginalized groups often seek to establish their rights to redress past injustices or assert their newly gained rights. *Project identity*, for Castells (2010), is when social actors, based on whatever cultural materials are available to them, build a new identity that redefines their position in society and, by so doing, seek the transformation of the overall social structure. This is the case, for instance, when feminism moves out of the trenches of resistance of women's identity and women's rights to challenge patriarchalism, thus the patriarchal family, and thus the entire structure of production, reproduction, sexuality, and personality on which societies have been historically based. Castells (2010) recognizes that, over time, 'identities that start as resistance may induce projects, and may also, along the course of history, become dominant in the institutions of society, thus becoming legitimizing identities to rationalize their domination' (p. 7). Here, it is important to highlight the historical or temporal dimensions of identity formation.

Identity and social background

The discussion of identity came to social sciences from psychology, especially the social psychology of Erik Erikson. The idea is that one's personal or self-identity is shaped by one's social background and cultural moorings. Language and physical features are the immediate markers of one's self-identity. Ethnicity, gender, religious background, socioeconomic status, sexual orientations, and physical disabilities are further aspects which contribute to social identities. Linguistic identities in many societies have become important markers for dividing populations. However, in modern multicultural conditions, such markers may be misleading. In our lived experience we come across identities that are layered and complex. While most people have multiple identities, various social contexts can make one identity aspect more dominant than the rest of the markers. For example, with a growing surge of politically motivated Hindu fanaticism in one of the states of India (Uttar Pradesh), interreligious marriages, in particular a Muslim man marrying a Hindu woman, have been forbidden and made into a punishable offense (Abdul & Yasir, 2020). In that context, the identity of a person is equated to their religion, whereby a person with multiple social identities is reduced to a one-dimensional identity, a Muslim.

The malleability of the question of social identity has given rise to a certain level of ambiguity. For Brubaker and Cooper (2000), 'identity tends to mean too much (when understood in a strong sense), too little (when understood in a weak sense), or nothing at all (because of its sheer ambiguity)' (p. 1). Identity, too, is both a category of practice and a category of analysis. As a category of practice, it is used by 'lay' actors in some (not all) everyday settings to 'make sense of themselves, of their activities, of what they share with, and how they differ from others' (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 4). Brubaker and Cooper (2000) make a distinction between strong conceptions of identity and weak conceptions of identity. Strong conceptions of identity preserve the common sense meaning of the term, where the emphasis is on sameness over time or across persons. This is used in most forms of identity politics, but often entails a series of deeply problematic assumptions, including that identity is something all groups (at least groups of a certain kind, e.g., ethnic, racial, or national) have or ought to have. It replicates the Marxian epistemology of class. Weak or 'soft' conceptions of identity, by contrast, break consciously with the everyday meaning of the term. Soft conceptions of identity have received more favour in theoretical discussions of identity in recent years, as theorists have become increasingly aware of, and uncomfortable with, the strong or 'hard' implications of everyday meanings of identity. Yet this new theoretical 'common sense' is not without problems. Brubaker and Cooper (2000) point out that soft notions of identity, which centre around constructivism, are so 'multiple, malleable, fluid, and so on, soft identitarians leave us with a term so […] elastic as to be incapable of performing serious analytical work' (p. 11). Whether we accept a strong or soft view of identity, we need to recognize that the concept of identity is 'blurred but indispensable' (Tilly, 1978, as cited in Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 12).

The glocal turn

It would be useful at this point to shed some light on the concept of 'glocalization' in an attempt towards conceptual clarity. First, the connected term 'globalization' was introduced in the early 1980s by Roland Robertson, a British sociologist at the University of Pittsburgh, US. Robertson (1992) defined globalization as 'the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole' (p. 8). Later, the term 'globalization' was overused by social scientists, journalists, and lay public to the extent that it began to lose its conceptual efficacy. Then arrived the concept 'glocalization', which was also introduced by Robertson (1994, 1995) and elaborated on by Khondker (2004, 2019), among others, such as Roudometof (2015, 2016), both students of Robertson. The term 'glocalization' was originally inspired by the Japanese term 'dochakuka', which can roughly be translated as 'indigenization'. The concept was adopted by Japanese businesses to adapt products, taking into account the local culture where these products would be marketed. Ironically, while Robertson was on a lecture tour in Japan in

2002, he read in the English language newspaper *Japan Times* that a new term had arrived in Japan – 'glocalization'. Here, Robertson (2014) points out the circular nature in which the concept developed. Also, in the mid-1990s, Appadurai (1996) developed a somewhat similar idea to Robertson (1995, 2020) without using the term glocal or glocalization, as did the British geographer Swyngedouw (1997). Robertson himself gives credit to Swyngedouw and states that the concept of glocalization is a case of parallel invention. Similarly, when Robertson introduced the term globalization to sociology, initially in class lectures that the present author was privileged to attend by sheer coincidence, most were unaware of the term that had been first introduced in a *Harvard Business Review* article in 1983 (James & Steger, 2014).

While several writers viewed globalization as standardization or homogenization, Robertson conceptualized globalization as a sociological concept and argued that 'its central *dynamic* involves the two-fold processes of the particularization of the universal and the universalization of the particular' (Robertson, 1992, p. 177–178; emphasis in original). In providing the intellectual context for the rise of glocalization in sociological discourse, Robertson (2014) claims that it arose in the mid-1990s, as globalization was generally perceived – with exceptions – as resulting in homogenization and standardization, and since then it has had to encounter 'such motifs as polyethnicity, cosmopolitanism, interculturality, synchronicity, hybridity, transculturality, creolization; indigenization; vernacularization; diasporization, and yet others' (p. 1). In an interview with Featherstone (2020), Robertson elaborated on his transition from globalization and glocalization, providing a rationale and reflecting on the transition in the academic field.

Roudometof (2015) suggests that the 'glocal turn' became visible at the beginning of the 2010s, as a headline in the *Financial Post* declared that 'Glocalization Rules the World' (Shaw, 2011), and in an article in *Time* magazine, the post-crisis economy was described as 'going glocal' (Foroohar, 2012). Yet concepts somewhat similar to glocalization such as hybridization, mélange, and syncretic (often used in the discussion of religion) dominated sociological and cultural discourses for a long time and became especially well-known in the 1990s. The contributions of Nederveen Pieterse (1995), Appadurai (1996), and others are worth mentioning in this regard. The various usages of the term glocalization elsewhere were mapped in Khondker (2019). Together with the concept of glocalization, the dimensions of temporality and spatiality are important in the discussion of the cultural and linguistic identities of Gulf foreign residents, including Bangladeshi TCKs, which will be explored in the following section.

Linguistic and cultural identities of third culture kids in the Gulf

Historically, the Gulf region has been a busy area of intercultural and cross-cultural flows. People from different regions passed through the Dubai port, which became an important port of call after the decline of the Iranian port.

Modern Dubai, like in the past, is a node in intercontinental seafaring and now an air traffic hub. The flow of people, goods, and ideas – all the features of globalization – are present. Most discussions of ethnic diversity in the region, and Dubai in particular, begin with the large influx of expatriates after the sudden rise of petroleum prices in 1974. The number of foreign residents increased sharply, but the movement of people of Indian origin to this region is hundreds of years old, as this region is part of the Indian ocean's connected history. Indians are the largest single community in the UAE, especially in Dubai (Vora, 2011). Though they are considered temporary, many of the business-class Indian families have been there for generations. In recent years, rich and highly skilled Indians have been granted golden visas, as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter.

TCKs most often belong to 'diaspora', which can be defined as 'a group that recognizes its separatedness based on common ethnicity/ nationality, lives in a host country and maintains some kind of attachment to its home country or homeland' (Lahneman, 2005, p. 7). The multiple dimensions of identities that feature in diaspora communities in the Gulf region present social scientists with an opportunity to deploy their conceptual frames not only to explore and understand the communities they research but also to examine their conceptual apparatuses. Globalization is often the dominant paradigm that is used in understanding the constructed or concocted nature of identities.

Collective cultural and linguistic TCK identities

Collective identities can often form between TCKs living in diaspora communities. Useem and Useem (1967) conducted an ethnographic study of expatriate communities in India, and they found that, although each specific expatriate community had its distinctive characteristics (for example missionaries, foreign-service officers, educators, and corporate people), all these groups preferred to spend time with each other irrespective of culture or nationality. This interactivity is common in Abu Dhabi and Dubai in designated social spaces such as the British Club or the American Club. This social interaction creates a third culture and a lifestyle that is shared and understood only by the community of expatriates. This third or glocal culture is a culture different from that of either the home or the host culture. Jenkins (1996) describes collective identity as constituted by a dialectic interplay of processes of internal and external definition. On the one hand, individuals must be able to differentiate themselves from others by drawing on criteria of community and a sense of shared belonging within their subgroup. On the other hand, this internal identification process must be recognized by outsiders for an objectified collective identity to emerge.

Vora (2008) showed that middle-class Indians in Dubai attributed the change in their identity to migration. They 'articulated their differences from people in India and performed and narrated subjectivities that emerged in the

particular context of Dubai' (p. 379). Younger members of Dubai's Indian diaspora, many of whom were born and raised in the Emirates and have never known another home, articulate their belonging in radically different terms from their parents and older generations. Many describe themselves as 'second class citizens' (Vora, 2008, p. 379). In contrast, TCKs in Bangladeshi diaspora communities show little evidence of such frustration due to the subject of citizenship being viewed as irrelevant and Bangladeshis living in the Gulf stating that they 'knew their places in society' (Khondker, 2018). In this sense, Bangladeshis tend to be more realistic insofar as expectations are concerned. Young Bangladeshis raised in Abu Dhabi tend to appreciate the opportunities they receive more than lamenting over what they do not have. Their parents' generation, however, had experience of the rights and privileges they enjoyed back home as citizens, which younger Bangladeshis do not have now. Even for many older Bangladeshis, the benefits they have received in the host country usually outweigh the rights they have lost, meaning that it is a trade-off they are happy to accept. For the younger generation, citizenship does not have as much salience as their consumer rights. Here, young Bangladeshis often see themselves as consumers in a free-market economy where abundance and consumer freedom is paramount (Khondker, 2018).

Generational and class diversity within TCK identities

In Vora's (2011) study, the older generation of Indians in Dubai who are engaged in trade and entrepreneurship showed little interest in obtaining citizenship. Rather, they were more interested in retaining their Indian traditions (p. 128–129) through various community organizations. Indian community organizations in Abu Dhabi are also strong, routinely hosting visiting artists, observing national days, and arranging traditional Indian dance classes through the facilities of the Indian Association in Abu Dhabi. Some of the Bangladeshi Hindu families avail themselves of these opportunities. By engaging in these cultural performative activities, young Indian children not only develop a deep respect for their traditions, but they are also able to maintain their competence and fluency in their native tongues.

Similarly, through the celebrations of various national days at the Bangladesh School in Abu Dhabi, children and young adults are re-socialized into their traditions. One of the major celebrations is the commemoration of Language Martyrs' Day on February 21. On that day in 1952, university students in Dhaka laid down their lives to defend their mother tongue, Bengali (also known as Bangla), in the face of the opposing Pakistani ruling class who wanted to impose Urdu as the national language of the then unified Pakistan. The language movement in the then East Pakistan, centred in Dhaka, sowed the seeds of nationalist aspiration that culminated in the independence of Bangladesh two decades later. For some time, the Bangladesh School in Abu Dhabi traditionally ran education in two language streams, with the justification that the children of Bangladeshi families would return

to their native land and would prefer Bengali as their medium of instruction, while the children who would go on to pursue higher education and presumably offer themselves as labour for the global market would benefit from English-medium instruction. As the two-track education program was costly to sustain for a financially strapped community school, after much debate the Bengali medium was dropped. Even though a number of parents were unhappy, they accepted this course of action since English is more fungible in a globalized world, even if some of the children have to return to their homeland. However, Bengali remained a compulsory subject to ensure that the children did not lose their proficiency in their mother tongue. Bengali as a mother tongue has gained special significance since UNESCO accepted Language Martyrs' Day (February 21) as an international mother language day. For Bangladeshis, as well as the Bengali-speaking Bengalis in West Bengal, India, the Bangla language (anglicized as Bengali) is the most important marker of Bengali identity.

Here, we see that linguistic identities not only relate to monolingual nations but also to multilingual societies where multilingual speakers emphasize different languages depending on who they are conversing with and the social context. Second-generation expatriates or TCKs display a good deal of ambivalence with regard to their linguistic identities, and there is a great deal of overlap or intersectionality regarding language use that deserves careful attention. Their use of language is therefore situational, and they are very conscious of the specific encounter.

When diaspora communities are seen through the lens of class, we find that, in the middle and professional classes who have made the Gulf region their home, the issue of identity is often marked by generational divisions. While the parents look to their homelands as their true homes for which they remain nostalgic, the meaning of home is more ambiguous for the second generation born and brought up in the Gulf region. For them, the UAE (or Saudi Arabia or Kuwait) is their virtual home, yet they know that these are not their true homes. On one level, this is a source of uncertainty and anxiety, and, on another, it produces a deep ambivalence. While some look to the greener pastures of more liberal societies in the west as their dream homes, for most, the concept of home remains ambiguous and unsettling. The relationship between place and identity is intimate and often causes TCKs to reflect deeply as a result of acquiring their parents' cultural heritage as well as being influenced by the cultures of the host societies where they grow up, attend schools, and socialize with their local friends. Thus, they grow up bilingual, sometimes multilingual, multicultural, cosmopolitan – in one word, glocal. They are immersed in both global and local cultures. Ambivalence marks most of their experiences, leading to the development of an ambivalent identity. As Turner (2009) states, TCKs

> are very much aware of international affairs, and when they go back home, the reason why they have trouble with it – and many do – is because

> they are 'bigger thinkers', […]. By contrast, children who have not been through the same experience can appear 'provincial'.
>
> (para. 2)

The following section will explore the narratives of mainly Bangladeshi TCKs living in the Gulf in terms of ambivalence.

Narratives of third culture kids in the Gulf: Ambivalent identities

Over my 15 years living in the Gulf as a sociologist, I have had numerous conversations with Gulf residents, both casual and for research purposes. My own positionality as a researcher from Bangladesh who has lived abroad for most of my life in the UAE and elsewhere fuelled my interest in the experiences and identities of TCKs living in the Gulf, especially those whose families came from Bangladesh and India. In this section, I will explore four examples of the ambivalent construction of identities as voiced by TCK interlocutors I have interviewed over my years living and researching in the UAE, in addition to voices from TCKs interviewed in local Gulf newspapers (Table 7.1).

Although the TCKs represented in this section vary in terms of gender, experience, cultural and linguistic background, and other intersecting identity aspects, a strong theme to emerge amongst the four narratives was the concept of ambivalent or glocal identities.

Abdulla

My first interlocutor, Abdulla, was born in Oman, where his father worked in a bank before relocating to Abu Dhabi for better opportunities. After his father had worked in Abu Dhabi for some years, he unfortunately died of a heart attack. Rather than packing the family off to Bangladesh, the family's home country, the financial institution hired the widow (Abdulla's mother) and gave her the job of her husband. Abdulla and his two siblings thus grew up in Abu Dhabi as TCKs. I had the occasion of spending hours together with these three TCKs playing cricket, which brought us together on the same plane on a level playing field. When asked about their national

Table 7.1 Third culture kid (TCK) narratives

Narrative	*Pseudonym*	*Gender*	*TCK background*	*Source*
1	Abdulla	Male	Bangladesh, Oman, UAE	Interview notes
2	Mishita	Female	Bangladesh, UAE	Interview notes
3	Aaravi	Female	Bangladesh, UAE	Interview notes
4	Dona (real name)	Female	India, Yemen, UAE	Newspaper report (*The Gulf News*)

identities, Abdulla and his siblings were reluctant to identify themselves as Bangladeshi due to a large segment of the working-class population in the UAE originating from Bangladesh. Except for a thin layer of professionals (a dozen or so physicians, a couple of hundred engineers, and a dozen or so academics), of the 700,000 Bangladeshis living in the UAE, most have migrant worker visas. Over the years, however, the sharp division between professional Bangladeshis and migrant worker Bangladeshis (mainly working in construction) has diversified with the development of Bangladeshi-owned small-scale shops, enterprises and trading businesses, especially automobile repair and servicing shops in Mussafah, an industrial district near Abu Dhabi. Nevertheless, while interviewing Abdulla and his siblings during our cricket game, it was apparent that the overarching association between Bangladeshis and low social status affected their readiness to self-identify as Bangladeshi. This could be interpreted as a form of conscious distancing from low-skilled migrant worker Bangladeshis living in the UAE in terms of positioning. Abdulla and his siblings saw social class as affecting levels of belonging in the host country. Here we see complex and conflicting feelings around the family's home country (Bangladesh), the country of their early childhood (Oman), and the country where they came of age (UAE).

Mishita

A second example of ambivalent identities seen amongst TCKs in the Gulf was articulated by Mishita, one of my Bangladeshi-born interlocutors who had spent 20 of her 23 years in the UAE. In response to my question about her experience as a TCK in a 'foreign land', she was hesitant to call the UAE a foreign land. For her, it was a 'little bit odd' to describe the UAE as a foreign land. In her words:

> The United Arab Emirates is a country where you are free as a bird, but at the same time, one is very respectful and obedient to the laws. It is home to several people from all over the world. A country of a lot of career opportunities for people who dream of a great future. United Arab Emirates never feels like a foreign country. It feels like one's very own homeland. It has the warmth and beauty that makes a land great to live on. There is no restriction on people speaking any language, belonging to any culture or following any religion. Being in an Indian School, it has given me opportunities to perform at many government functions, and not for once, I have seen any discrimination, even after they knew I am from Bangladesh. UAE is a home away from home.
>
> (Interview notes)

While children of Bangladeshi professionals usually attend international schools and, upon graduating, head for North America or Australia for higher education, many of the students attending Abu Dhabi's Bangladeshi

or Indian schools, who come from lower middle-class family backgrounds (such as Mishita), show a great degree of innovation in finding educational opportunities in non-traditional destinations such as Taiwan or leveraging their linguistic skills and pursuing careers in the media. Mishita refers to opportunities she has been given in the UAE at government functions where her bilingualism was valued. Here, we see a glocal identity emerge where Mishita feels a level of belonging as a global citizen in a local (government) setting.

Aaravi

My third interlocutor, Aaravi, spoke about the generational differences she has witnessed with regard to her own identity as a Bangladeshi-born UAE-based TCK, and the identities of her Bangladeshi parents, who also live in the UAE. Aaravi discussed the fact that, as a young adult, she wished she could move out of her family home to pursue her own career but felt reluctant to do that lest it hurt the feelings of her parents. She explained the push-pull factors at play with regard to following traditional patterns of behaviour (staying at home until marriage) and her sense of self as a global citizen wanting to forge her individual path forward. Here we see how Aaravi's 'glocal identity' is produced in the dialectical interplay of multiple temporal and spatial experiences and contingencies. My interlocutors, including Aaravi, stressed time and time again how many ways they are different from their parents and 'other older' generations. Their subjective experiences in the transnational milieu of uncertainty have given them a sense of certainty in their ambivalent identity. When asked where she felt at home, Aaravi stated:

> Both Bangladesh and UAE. I cannot differentiate between […] But […] if you ask me about settling or where I dream to live, it is Bangladesh because nature pulls me but I spent 20 years in UAE and that is not less home too.
>
> (Interview notes)

From Aaravi's response, we can see a merging of Bangladesh and the UAE in her mind, where she cannot 'differentiate between' the two places. Each place is as much a part of her identity as the other.

Dona

A fourth narrative can be found through the experience of Dona, an Indian-born TCK who grew up in Yemen and now lives and works in Dubai, UAE. Although not one of my interlocutors, her narrative succinctly sums up many of the feelings expressed by my TCK interlocutors. In the popular English-language UAE newspaper *The Gulf News*, Dona discusses her own experience as a TCK and reflects on the concept of TCK identities in general.

> I am a third-culture kid and am very proud, angry, jittery, and happy about being one. They [TCKs] are, in my humble opinion, quite confused about where they're from and defensive about that confusion. Being a third-culture kid also means a certain sense of freedom and confidence when it comes to taking on the world. It deeply embeds the fact that home is really where the heart is and not bound by passports or languages. Life for most TCKs is not easy with the constant moving, packing and unpacking, losing and finding friends -- but this life, I think, teaches us resilience, aptitude, and a sense of gratitude to be in such a diverse world. We are the truest form of global citizens.
>
> (Dona's narrative published in *The Gulf News* [Cherian, 2017])

In Dona's narrative, we can see a complex concoction of feelings (pride, anger, jitters, and happiness) tied to TCK identities. The adjectives 'confused' and 'defensive' also highlight ambivalence and uncertainty. Psychological studies have investigated the emotional challenges of TCKs. Earlier studies emphasized the vulnerability of 'cultural homelessness' which denoted individuals of mixed ethnic and/or cultural backgrounds who grew up in multicultural settings (Vivero & Jenkins, 1999, pp. 9–12). Recent work in the UAE has also looked at emotional adjustment and depression amongst TCKs (Thomas et al., 2021). However, a common problem in these studies is the lack of attention given to human agency. Earlier studies especially tended to privilege a nostalgic monocultural setting, which has irrevocably gone in the face of cultural globalization. In today's globalized world, TCK identities are more complex, as seen in Dona's narrative when describing both the benefits of TCK identities, such as increased confidence and worldliness, and the disadvantages, such as temporary and nomadic lifestyles. Dona concludes, however, that, above all else, TCKs are part of a globalized era and could be considered 'the truest form of global citizens'.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the glocal identities of TCKs in the UAE. Concepts such as glocal and glocalization have so far been used as a process with emphasis on its spatial aspect. Here, these are used with reference to one's identity, which is highly ambivalent and contingent. The four interlocuters' narratives in the previous section of this chapter displayed ambivalence, yet they had a clear sense of who they were, showing a strong sense of agency rather than vulnerability. Historically, the UAE has been a multicultural society. The recent waves of temporary migration have made multiculturalism multi-layered. Through the narratives of TCKs, this chapter demonstrated that an ambivalent identity can be a source of strength in a highly globalized and multivalent society. Contrary to the pessimistic takes on TCKs found in earlier studies, it is argued that TCKs are not 'culturally homeless'. The cultural home is not lost in a multicultural setting. Rather, it provides them with

a sense of belonging. Their linguistic identities give them a sense of rootedness, and yet they tend to be adept in embracing the forces of globalization – new ideas, experiences, and adapting to multilingual contexts.

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8 Linguistic inclusion and exclusion on Abu Dhabi coronavirus signage

Sarah Hopkyns and Melanie van den Hoven

The coronavirus pandemic has cast a spotlight on inequalities across many sectors of society around the globe. Clear communication in a crisis is vital, and such a task can be made more challenging in multilingual contexts. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is characterized by both cultural and linguistic diversity, with almost 90% of the population being transnational workers who collectively speak over 100 languages (UAE Fact Sheet, 2019). Labour migration in the UAE follows a 'dual employment structure' (Malecki & Ewers, 2007) of unskilled/low skilled labourers juxtaposed with 'professional transients' (Castells, 2000). The former group is much larger in number and tends to include workers from South and Southeast Asia, resulting in the four largest foreign communities in the UAE being Indians (2,600,000), Pakistanis (1,200,000), Bangladeshis (700,000), and Filipinos (525,530) (The Media Lab, 2019). The latter group, in contrast, tend to originate mainly from neighbouring Arab countries, Asia, Europe, and North America. The number of expatriates from inner-circle English-speaking countries (Kachru, 1992) is comparatively high globally, with 28,760 from the UK and 15,390 from the US (UAE Population & Demographics, 2020). In addition, a wave of approximately 13,000 Koreans recently relocated to the UAE (Amed, 2019), due in part to growing business connections. Due to such diversity, commonly spoken languages in the UAE, in addition to Arabic and English, include Hindi, Farsi, Urdu, Malayalam, Bengali, Tamil, Tagalog, and Korean, amongst many others.

Despite the UAE's multilingual population, not all languages are 'textually present' (Ahmed, 2021) in the linguistic landscape. Textual visibility is heavily skewed in favour of the official language, Arabic, and the nation's de facto lingua franca, English. This is particularly apparent on public signage, where it is rare to see third languages (Ahmed, 2021; Hopkyns & van den Hoven, 2021). As a result, minority languages and dialects remain 'linguistic outsiders' (Smakman & Heinrich, 2018, p. 44) in public spaces. An exception to the monopoly of Arabic and English on signage can be found in strategic settings where particular speech communities are predominant, warranting the display of a third language. For example, Piller (2018) found that South Asian languages were prominent on signage in Dubai money exchange booths, where many migrant workers gather to send remittances back home to their

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families. Ahmed (2021) found that third languages such as Malayalam and Sinhala were present on signage at Dubai metro stations, where workers travel to and from their workplaces. Similarly, in our previous study of signage on an Abu Dhabi industrial site, Korean featured as a third language, as many Koreans lived and worked there (Hopkyns & van den Hoven, 2021). As Ahmed (2021) summarizes, 'signs that include other languages besides Arabic and English are rarely found, and when they are, they are restricted to particular places and locations where a high density of expatriate communities, speaking those languages, are present' (p. 193).

In the past decade, a growing interest in language and semiotic resources on signage in Gulf contexts has emerged. Previous studies have looked at signage in various cityscapes and public spaces in the UAE (Ahmed, 2021; Hopkyns, 2020a, 2021; Hopkyns & van den Hoven; 2021; Karolak, 2020a), Oman (Buckingham, 2015; Buckingham & Al-Athwary, 2017), Saudi Arabia (Blum, 2014), Bahrain (Gomaa, 2007), Kuwait (Brdarević Čeljo & Zolota, 2019), and Yemen (Al-Athwary, 2012). Linguistic landscaping (LL) research tends to fall into two broad categories: general and specific. The former category of study gives a descriptive overview of signage in a city or country with select examples to demonstrate trends, as seen in Ahmed's (2021) LL research in Dubai and Hopkyns' (2021) analysis of UAE signage. The latter type of LL study looks at a small area in greater detail as seen in Karolak's (2020a) study of the Souk Naif area of Dubai, and our previous ethnographic study of coronavirus signage in an Abu Dhabi beachside community and industrial zone (Hopkyns & van den Hoven, 2021).

To the best of our knowledge, only two previous studies have explored coronavirus communication in the Gulf context. These studies either focused on signage in specific geographical zones (Hopkyns & van den Hoven, 2021) or looked more broadly at a range of communication forms apart from signage (Ahmad & Hillman, 2020). Hence, a holistic exploration of languages used for coronavirus health warnings on signage in transactional zones, where residents meet and interact in a Gulf context, is notably missing from the current literature. This chapter aims to help close this gap by providing an ethnographic analysis of languages appearing on coronavirus signage in multiple Abu Dhabi transactional spaces across a wide geographical area in the Abu Dhabi Emirate. Such a holistic analysis is valuable in providing insights into linguistic inclusivity across spaces and domains.

Communication during crises

While linguistic inclusion and exclusion affect access to information and a sense of belonging in ordinary times, such effects are amplified in times of crisis. Often, in a crisis, immediate decisions need to be made when creating health warning signs (Hopkyns, 2020a). This leads to many handmade make-shift signs (bottom up) suddenly appearing alongside official government-produced ones (top down). Previous studies have found that crisis communication

tends to be dominated by a nation's official language as well as English as a global language. For example, when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in 2005, English-only storm warnings disadvantaged the relatively large Spanish-speaking population, many of whom did not evacuate in time (Petri, 2009). Similarly, after the 2011 earthquakes in Canterbury, New Zealand, and Miyagi, Japan, information in languages other than English and Japanese, respectively, was limited (Uekusa, 2019). Such studies point to what Uekusa (2019) calls 'disaster linguicism', where crisis communication favours only dominant languages, and the exclusion of linguistic minorities is a by-product.

Phyak (2020) points out that, during the coronavirus pandemic, a parallel linguistic pandemic or 'linguademic' exists, whereby certain speech communities are unable to access health warnings and guidance in their L1. Contexts in which monolingual or bilingual coronavirus information has been found to conflict with the needs of multilingual societies include Taiwan (Chen, 2020), Nepal (Phyak, 2020), the UK (Zhu, 2020), and Australia (Grey, 2020). In the Gulf context, governments have made laudable efforts to include minority languages in online communication and through radio broadcasts and community leaders (Ahmad & Hillman, 2020). For example, Hindi is a language choice on the Al Hosn coronavirus tracing app. However, as we observed in our earlier study of coronavirus signage in two Abu Dhabi live/work zones, coronavirus public signage rarely includes 'peripheral languages' (van den Hoven & Carroll, 2017) and is instead dominated by English and Arabic (Hopkyns, 2020a; Hopkyns & van den Hoven, 2021).

It could be argued that signage is just one of many ways to access coronavirus safety warnings (Ahmad & Hillman, 2020; Chen, 2020; Phyak, 2020). For example, information can be gained through official government announcements on websites and social media, such as Facebook, Instagram or WhatsApp. Community centres or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also play a part in spreading information in less textually visible languages. However, while 'informal networks of care' (Kathiravelu, 2012, p. 103) through community leaders, NGOs, and social media groups are important for supporting linguistic minorities during the crisis, Jang and Choi (2020) argue that, for such means to be effective, adequate resources and levels of infrastructure need to be in place. In the context of the UAE, we have questioned the adequacy of social media for reaching low skilled migrants, who may have long working hours and reduced access to the mobile phone data needed (Hopkyns & van den Hoven, 2021). Lack of social capital amongst some linguistic minority groups highlights the importance of linguistic inclusivity on public signage so that context-specific messages are effective by being immediate, trustworthy, and visually reinforced.

Linguistic landscaping and identities

Linguistic landscaping (LL), which is a rapidly expanding branch of sociolinguistics (Blommaert, 2013), can be defined as 'the visibility and

salience of languages on public signs within a territory' (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, p. 23). Signs are important features for the development and construction of public spaces with the purpose of disseminating information and directing behaviours. Signs reveal information not only about the geographical space but also the sign maker. In this sense, a sign in a given space can be interpreted as 'a symbolic marker communicating the relative power and status of linguistic communities in a given territory' (Mooney & Evans, 2015, p. 8). Bassiouney (2020) points out that signage is closely connected with the society and culture of a place. Rather than signage only being top-down or government-produced, society members such as shopkeepers, hotel managers, and school leaders also make decisions regarding bottom-up signage and the intentional or unintentional inclusion/exclusion of certain languages and speech communities.

Scollon and Scollon (2003) stress the importance of 'geosemiotics', which is 'the study of the social meaning of the material placement of signs in the world' (p. 1). Here, the languages and symbols chosen for signs in a particular space can indicate the social dynamics of an area, power relations, and linguistic priorities. In many multilingual spaces, 'minority languages and minority language speakers are, more often than not, less valued compared to languages and speakers who enjoy more powerful and prestigious positions' (Blackwood et al., 2016, p. xviii). Language, culture, and identity are interwoven into the LL of a given space, making linguistic and semiotic landscapes active sites of identity construction and representation (Rubdy & Said, 2015). In this sense, one's identity and sense of belonging can be strengthened or weakened by the presence or absence of information in one's L1. The concept of 'belonging' is an under-theorized term, which is often used interchangeably with home, identity, or citizenship (Walsh, 2014). As recognized by post-structural approaches to identity (Norton, 2013), the concept of belonging is 'always a dynamic process, not a reified fixity, which is only a naturalized construction of a particular hegemonic form of power relations' (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 199). In this way, a sense of belonging can vary according to social context, social interaction patterns, and power relations within a given space. The 'politics of belonging' (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 197) are, therefore, complex, multifaceted, and socially constructed. The concept of belonging is increasingly being theorized as spatialized phenomena where places, sites, spaces, territories, and landscapes are viewed in conjunction with belonging, rendering belonging an inherently geographical concept for connecting physical objects to place through various practices of boundary making and inhabitation (Mee & Wright, 2009, p. 772). Such sites of belonging can be viewed as an emotional, contested, and politicized way of relating to place and space (Antonsich, 2010).

The concept of belonging is salient for UAE residents, who, distinguished from citizens, are a broad group constituting a dominant majority of the nation (Hopkyns, 2020b). Although many UAE residents with L1s other than English and Arabic have high levels of English proficiency, and therefore

are able to access monolingual (English) or bilingual (Arabic and English) information, others may lack proficiency in either of the UAE's dominant languages. For example, it is common for families to move to the UAE primarily for work opportunities. In such cases, one parent may have the required English level needed for working in the UAE, but a 'trailing spouse' (Walsh, 2014) and children may only have basic English (Amed, 2019). Equally, as Karolak (2020a) points out, often low-skilled workers from the global south do not arrive in the UAE literate in English or Arabic and therefore may not easily access monolingual (English) or bilingual (English and Arabic) signage. Lack of peripheral languages on signage may have unwanted effects not only in terms of access to information but also for compliance with government regulations, particularly for residents without full or partial proficiency in English and/or Arabic. As Piller (2018) argues, being a linguistic outsider leads to a tacit acceptance that one's own language is not only undervalued in social spaces but also undervalued in general. In this sense, Yuming (2020) argues that linguistic inclusion is important for emotional wellbeing when describing the 'linguistic comforting' which occurs when seeing messages in a familiar or home language, especially in a crisis context.

The study

The study investigates linguistic inclusion and exclusion on coronavirus signage in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and the resultant effects on Gulf linguistic identities. We address three main research questions:

RQ1) Which languages appear on coronavirus signage in transactional spaces in the public domain of Abu Dhabi?
RQ2) In what ways do the languages and semiotic resources on signage support residents' identities and sense of belonging?
RQ3) What evidence is there to support linguistic inclusion among speakers of peripheral languages?

We employed linguistic ethnography as an approach to linguistic landscaping. Linguistic ethnography recognizes that 'language and the social world are mutually shaping, and that close analysis of situated language use can provide both fundamental and distinctive insights into the mechanisms and dynamics of social and cultural production in everyday activity' (Rampton et al., 2004, p. 2). Here, an emphasis on the close connection between language and social context is stressed. Rather than language standing alone, social and political issues such as power and identity are a primary concern for linguistic ethnographers. In this sense, linguistic ethnography can be characterized as a 'site of encounter' (Rampton, 2007, p. 585), whereby various research perspectives can come together (Edwards, 2009, p. 17).

During the coronavirus period, border closures and travel restrictions forced us to pay greater attention to our immediate surroundings. In our earlier study,

which was conducted during the spring 2020 lockdown (Hopkyns & van den Hoven, 2021), our movement was restricted to small live/work areas. The current study, which is part of a larger research project, took place in the autumn of 2020 when the national lockdown had ended. Abu Dhabi was starting to cautiously open up again with face-to-face education resuming in most schools, and with shops, restaurants, galleries, and hotels reopening with capacity limits and coronavirus safety measures in place. With travel restrictions easing, we were able to document signage in multiple locations within Abu Dhabi as we conducted our daily lives. As researchers who are also community members and residents of Abu Dhabi, we adopted the roles of participant observers (Spradley, 1980). In September 2020, we photographed coronavirus signage in a range of settings including our places of work (university and industrial site), schools, health clinics, malls, petrol stations, hotels, beaches, parks, and

Figure 8.1 Geographical area explored.
Source: Map data @2022 Google

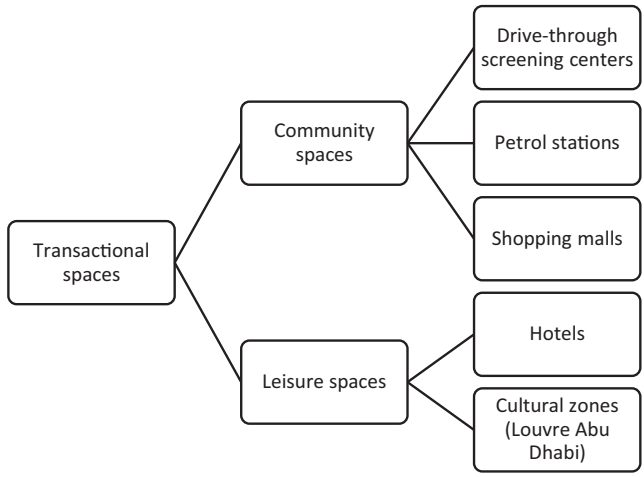

Figure 8.2 Coronavirus signage spaces explored in the study.

galleries. Figure 8.1 shows the geographical area in which we collected data, which includes both Abu Dhabi's 'on-island' (city centre) and 'off-island' suburban locations as well as the highway leading to the Western Region, which is an industrialized area of the Abu Dhabi Emirate.

A joint corpus of over 800 signs was documented over this period. For the purpose of this chapter, we narrowed the focus down to two transactional zones: Community spaces and leisure spaces. Within each transactional space, five specific zones were identified for being high-contact sites for diverse residents. These zones included drive-through screening centres, petrol stations, shopping malls, hotels, and cultural zones such as galleries (Figure 8.2).

When analysing our combined corpus, we employed thematic data analysis to organize signs according to the type of transactional space. We then generated classifications of signage into four broad linguistic categories:

- Monolingual (usually English only)
- Bilingual (English and Arabic)
- Trilingual (English, Arabic, and one other language)
- Multilingual (more than three languages)

In addition to analysing language choice, we noted the size, spacing, order, and symbols used. We also analysed the social context surrounding the signs for evidence of the kind of sign maker (top down or bottom up) and the intended and actual audience. Such analysis allowed us to gain valuable insights into power dynamics, issues of inclusion/exclusion, 'belonging', and the identities of speech communities in the areas under study.

Findings

Signs in community spaces

An important space to investigate in relation to coronavirus signage is 'the community'. The concept of 'community' has multiple definitions which vary according to individual and civic orientations. However, our perspective of community space is a geographical area where people, often from diverse backgrounds, interact socially and conduct everyday transactions. We classified shopping malls, petrol stations, medical clinics, drive-through testing centres, and pharmacies as contact zones for all sectors of the UAE's diverse population. We hypothesized that such sites would generate the greatest range of multilingual signs. However, when visiting these various routine places, coronavirus signage was mainly bilingual (Arabic and English) if top down or monolingual (English) if bottom up, with some variance in the form of a third language or additional languages, as is reported in the following sections.

Drive-through screening centres

Drive-through screening centres are a type of community access initiative that received national attention shortly after lockdown ended in spring 2020. Over 20 drive-through screening centres were set up in Abu Dhabi for the rapid coordination of polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests. While it is customary for hospitals and clinics to provide PCR tests, Abu Dhabi was one of the first cities to launch these makeshift testing centres. According to a national newspaper, in January 2021, 6.2 million of all 20.5 million PCR tests were taken via screening centres (Goodier, 2021), meaning that community members from all sectors of society would frequent these facilities. These centres were designed to be fast and convenient, allowing tests to be administered with minimal human contact. Signage at these makeshift screening centres was often visible from the roadside. Located in non-descript neighbourhoods (without tourist attractions or other notable architecture), signage and branding were important for helping residents locate the facility, its authority, and, once in situ, knowing what to do. As shown in Figure 8.3, a white marquee demarcated the entrance to the facility in Al Shamkha, a large residential neighbourhood on the outskirts of Abu Dhabi. Here, a placard with Arabic at the top and English below identified the screening centre and its sponsorship.

In Figure 8.3, screening centre signage functions as both road signage and facility branding for the public health care services on offer. The choice of English and Arabic align with bilingual road signs prevalent in the UAE. While apps such as Google Maps and Waze enable drivers to identify their route and hours of operation, these signs identify the structure by name as well as the institutional logos, further communicating the legitimacy of services on offer. While such drive-through centres make assumptions about the socioeconomic profile of test takers, whereby users have access to a private

Figure 8.3 Bilingual sign at a COVID-19 drive-through screening centre.

vehicle, signage in Arabic and English carries important assumptions about the adequacy of these two languages for the community of test takers.

A further dimension of linguistic inclusion to consider more closely is the available digital communication and the related social connectivity of test takers. According to Al-Suwaidi (2014), UAE residents are among the most socially networked in the Arab world. However, as Kathiravelu (2012) points out, migrant workers often have restricted access to digital resources and mobility. Screening centres require access to online resources for effective use of these community services. In Figure 8.3, there is no attention to the online resources which permit access to the facilities for a special date and time. Before the pandemic, these public areas were small parks or hospital parking areas, open fully for a range of community services. However, during most of 2020–2021, they have been temporarily restricted. Permission to access these community spaces was dependent on advanced booking on associated online resources. For instance, an appointment displayed on a health services app is needed to get past the entry gate. In addition, a specially designed national tracing app (Al Hosn) serves as the main channel for tracing interaction with others and documenting the validity of the PCR test. The app will reliably communicate the date and result of each PCR test within two days of the test without the need for human contact. As mentioned earlier, the settings on this app allow displays in three languages: English, Arabic, and Hindi. However, the screening centres themselves use only two languages: Arabic and English. While UAE test takers using English and Arabic with access to vehicles and the internet via mobile phones were well supported with up-to-date information on coronavirus communication, speakers of minority languages, such as migrant workers, received less support.

Petrol stations

Another community zone we explored was petrol stations. Figure 8.4 shows a sign posted on a petrol station window on a long stretch of off-island highway

Figure 8.4 Trilingual coronavirus sign at a petrol station in the Abu Dhabi Emirate.

from Abu Dhabi to the Al Dhafra region. This effective but rare trilingual coronavirus sign, made on an A4-size sheet of paper, has been displayed for customers at the entry way to the associated shop. Taped in front of a Red Crescent donation box, it shows an image of a typical customer: a young male with brown hair and a light blue mask. A year earlier, a masked man would have connotations of a burglar, but now the man, dressed in a blue similar to that of the coveralls commonly worn by workers in the surrounding male-dominated industries (oil, gas, nuclear energy, mining, and construction) reflects the appropriate and generic look of socially responsible shop-goers.

The image of a masked man is qualified by the text below it, which states that entrance is forbidden without a mask. The message is written in three languages: Arabic, English, and Urdu. Arabic is at the top, English in the middle, and Urdu at the bottom. The spelling mistake in the word 'Entrance' indicates that the sign maker did not have English as an L1 but was familiar with the end users. Note that the misspelling allows the root word, 'enter', to effectively reinforce the main meaning and could be an example of the way

English is modified by end users to ensure comprehensibility (van den Hoven & Carroll, 2021). The petrol station is an important transactional zone, where multilingual customers, including local Emiratis, converge. From observation, the choice of languages and images is an accurate representation of the gender and language profile of the patrons visiting this space.

Shopping malls

Shopping malls in Abu Dhabi serve as community hubs due to the extreme heat for much of the year. While most shop signs are bilingual (Arabic and English), some appear only in English. The same pattern can be observed with coronavirus signage in malls, which tends to be bilingual if top down and English-only if bottom up. Coronavirus safety signs in malls mostly appeared as 'floor stickers', with some being bilingual (Arabic and English) as seen in Figure 8.5 and others being monolingual (English) as seen in Figure 8.6, which uses the image of a cactus to dissuade mall visitors from hugging or having any physical contact.

There were a few exceptions to the dominance of bilingual (Arabic and English) and monolingual (English) signs in malls. For example, Figure 8.7 shows a multilingual sign in a pharmacy window. The word 'Pharmacy' appears in five languages: Arabic, English, Russian, Chinese, and Hindi. This sign could be seen as an attempt to include and respect Abu Dhabi's linguistically diverse population, especially during the coronavirus pandemic. However, as Piller (2017) points out, often token multilingual signs such as

Figure 8.5 Bilingual coronavirus floor sign in an Abu Dhabi mall.

Figure 8.6 Monolingual coronavirus floor sign in an Abu Dhabi mall.

Figure 8.7 Multilingual pharmacy sign in an Abu Dhabi mall.

popular 'welcome' signs written in many languages, which are present in many global locations, represent 'banal cosmopolitanism'. Banal cosmopolitanism refers to multilingualism being used to create a 'realm of the global' (Piller, 2017, para. 7) without being particularly useful or inclusive. Similarly, for the sign in Figure 8.7, it could be argued that anyone walking by it would be able to see from the store window what type of store it is.

We argue that a more effective use of multilingual text would be to identify available stock of protective equipment such as masks, hand sanitizers, and gloves, which would offer more relevant information for linguistic minorities to read and access during the pandemic.

Signs in leisure spaces

A second transactional space explored in this study was leisure spaces. In the UAE, leisure time is a serious business for tourists and residents alike. It is not uncommon to hear mid- to high-income expatriates speak about a 'work hard, play hard' lifestyle. The UAE can no longer solely rely on oil money, hence the tourist industry has exploded in the last decade. As Karolak (2020b) states, the UAE and particularly Dubai 'has turned tourism into an important driver of the economy' (p. 139). In 2016, tourism accounted for 8.7% of the nation's GDP, and, in Dubai, tourism accounted for 31% of the UAE's GDP (WTTC 2017). In ordinary times, hotels and museums cater primarily to international tourists from the Middle East (33.5%), Europe (30%), and Asia-Pacific (26%) (Karolak, 2020b), as well as locals and residents. During the coronavirus period, however, the closing of external and internal borders meant that such facilities were reserved only for local citizens and residents. With the exception of repatriation flights, residents were strongly recommended to stay in the Emirates for the whole of 2020.

Hotel spaces

While staycations and hotel day passes are popular year-round with Abu Dhabi residents, after hotels opened again following the spring 2020 lockdown, a more pronounced 'culture of staycations' developed as hotels lowered prices and offered special 'staycation resident deals'. Hotels were monitored for compliance with top-down directives about appropriate safety measures. Hotels then became sites that hosted a proliferation of top-down and bottom-up coronavirus signage. It was apparent, however, that, despite the multilingual composition of the UAE's population, coronavirus signs in Abu Dhabi's many four- and five-star hotels were mainly monolingual (English) or bilingual (Arabic and English). Figure 8.8 shows an English-only coronavirus health warning located near a hotel pool, and Figure 8.9 shows an English list of coronavirus guidelines when approaching a hotel beach. The signs in Figure 8.8 and Figure 8.9 use full sentences with passive construction and no

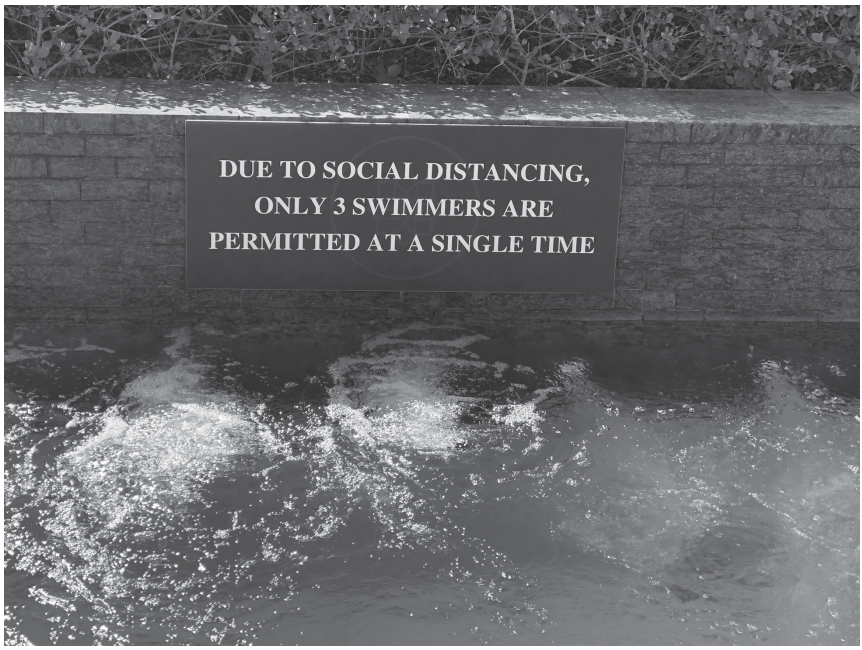

Figure 8.8 A monolingual coronavirus health warning at an Abu Dhabi hotel pool.

symbols or other languages, making the signs accessible only to those proficient in English.

Other hotel signs, such as the one seen in Figure 8.10, were more accessible due to the use of symbols and short phrases in both Arabic and English. Nevertheless, third languages are missing in this public space. Although hotels could be described as 'spaces of expatriate sociality' (Norum, 2013, p. 31), with guests primarily being mid- to high-income cosmopolitan residents, not all guests necessarily have a high level of English proficiency.

The choice of mainly monolingual signage in hotels sends out a message that English-speaking residents 'belong' in these spaces, whereas speakers of periphery languages may feel a reduced sense of belonging.

Cultural spaces

Another leisure space which has grown tremendously in the Gulf context in the last decade is cultural entertainment venues, such as museums, art galleries, theatres, opera houses, and heritage villages. As with hotels, cultural attractions were forced to reduce their visitor numbers after reopening post-lockdown and to create safety signage. An increased number of resident deals and free entry passes also appeared due to the loss of international

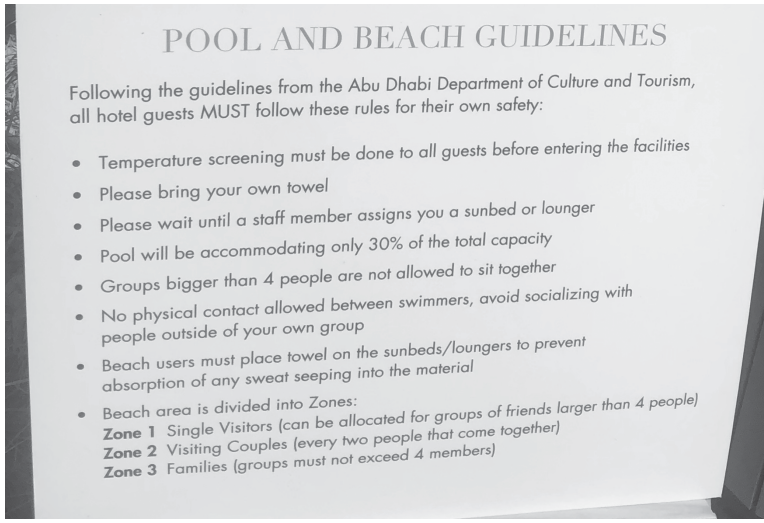

Figure 8.9 Monolingual guidelines at an Abu Dhabi hotel beach.

Figure 8.10 Bilingual coronavirus hotel signs.

Figure 8.11 Trilingual coronavirus sign (English, Arabic, and French) at the Louvre, Abu Dhabi.

tourism. For example, the sister branch of the Paris Louvre, which opened in Abu Dhabi in 2017, offered free entry to teachers in September 2020. In the Louvre, a trilingual policy of English, Arabic, and French features on a wide range of signs including labels and placards throughout the museum (Figure 8.11).

The cultural legacy of the Louvre in Paris explains the obvious choice of French as the third language. Despite a dramatic fall in tourists from France and elsewhere internationally, French maintained a high visibility, showing a commitment to upholding the prestige of the French brand rather than ensuring compliance amongst museum goers. A more appropriate third language would be one more commonly spoken by UAE residents, such as Urdu, Hindi, Farsi, or even Korean.

Discussion: Crisis sociolinguistics as an impetus for change

The findings of the study revealed a prevalence of monolingual and bilingual coronavirus signage. Our study drew attention to the rare instances of context-specific trilingual and multilingual signage. Such minimal textual visibility of languages other than English and Arabic juxtaposes the UAE's linguistically diverse population. The findings support our previous study in two Abu Dhabi live/work zones during lockdown, where few third languages were found on coronavirus signage (Hopkyns & van den Hoven, 2021).

Although third languages were textually present on signage in community and leisure spaces, they were limited to certain speech communities. The presence of Urdu on coronavirus signs at petrol stations was a good example of a trilingual sign that reflects the linguistic profile of this site. This petrol station hosts a wide range of travellers, including a large number of Pakistani truck drivers transporting goods to and from Saudi Arabia, and skilled labour working in local industries who need to frequently refuel vehicles in such locations. The presence of Urdu in other locations such as malls, however, was notably missing. In other cases, third languages were used only

symbolically on safety signs, such as French in the Louvre gallery, rather than sign makers addressing the needs of the most common speech communities in the local area. A symbolic use of peripheral languages could also be seen in community hubs such as malls, as was demonstrated in the multilingual pharmacy sign. The languages chosen and the text translated on such signs need to be (re)examined for their effectiveness during a crisis. While the presence of one's first language on signage and in messages is primarily important for accessing information, especially during a crisis, seeing one's first language on signage is also important for emotional wellbeing and a sense of belonging. In a crisis such as the coronavirus pandemic, 'linguistic comforting' (Yuming, 2020) and emotional support in one's L1 strengthens identities and feelings of self-worth.

A challenge the UAE faces is the highly transient nature of large parts of the expatriate population, which, as Ahmed (2021) recognizes, 'may work against or at least slow down the process of localization' (p. 193). In this sense, as UAE residents are temporary members of the nation's society, it is understandable that there is often a lack of investment in changing signage in public spaces to reinforce existing messages of tolerance and inclusion. While sensitive to such limitations, two concrete ways to increase the visibility of minority languages on coronavirus signage include raising awareness and the context-specific translation of bilingual and monolingual signage.

First, greater public awareness should be raised as to the importance of linguistic inclusion for long-term change. While messages supporting linguistic awareness are promoted in the media with the aim of greater inclusivity and greater social justice (May, cited in McVeigh, 2020), this can be enhanced at a grassroots level by introducing LL studies into schools and universities. Task-based projects involving the documentation of languages visible in public domains can lead to important discussions on social diversity, including issues of linguistic inclusion and exclusion. Second, students and community members could be encouraged to take greater social responsibility by becoming involved in translation drives aimed at producing multilingual coronavirus signage. An inclusive model would not involve the blanket translation of all signage into multiple peripheral languages. Rather, an ethnographic analysis of contexts would inform policymakers of the linguistic needs found in transactional spaces. Greater attention should also be given to the strategic use of pictograms and other internationally recognized symbols by taking cues from bodies concerned with managing risks and promoting industrial safety. Two examples are the Codes of Practice issued by the Abu Dhabi Occupational Safety and Health Center (OSHAD) and the Globally Harmonized System that both provide guidance on the design of safety signage. Greater official engagement of speakers of minority languages for the making of bottom-up coronavirus safety signage is also necessary in order for messaging to be aligned across various iterations. Such signage would include both basic safety protocols such as handwashing and maintaining social distance and signs relating to emotional wellbeing and

comfort. Such action would increase access to health communication at the street level while validating the linguistic identities of the UAE's multilingual population.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored linguistic inclusion and exclusion on public signage in two interactional spaces: community spaces and leisure spaces. While our findings revealed examples of effective trilingual signage in these spaces, such signs were the exception rather than the norm. Our findings show that signage caters mainly to English- and Arabic-speaking residents, whereas the linguistic identities of minority language speakers are rarely visible in transactional spaces where members of diverse speech communities meet and gather. The chapter suggested a move towards greater inclusion of third languages on public signage in multilingual contexts such as Abu Dhabi. It was argued that greater linguistic inclusion in the coronavirus period and beyond could be achieved by raising public awareness, introducing LL projects into schools and universities that document and critique language use on signage, and encouraging translation drives with an emphasis on the use of strategic languages and symbols on signage. Such strategies are not only relevant for the Abu Dhabi context but for other multilingual contexts where power disparities exist between the languages selected for communicating health warnings on public signage.

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9 Cultural bias in English examinations and its effect on Gulf linguistic and cultural identities

Hilda Freimuth

The rise of the English language is often said to be no different from the rise of other powerful languages in the history of the world. However, the rise of the English language is different from the rise (and fall) of Latin or Greek, for example. The speed of its rise, along with its remarkable reach, has resulted in outcomes never witnessed before in the annals of human history (Johnson, 2009). Britain's rise to economic dominance through its colonization of large areas of the world began in the 17th century. In the early 1600s, the East India Company created trading posts in India, Penang, Singapore, and Malacca (Lawson, 2013). By 1670, the British had begun the colonization of America, Canada, and the Caribbean Islands. At the same time, Britain reached into Africa, establishing its first permanent settlement on James Island (now Kunta Kinteh Island) in Gambia (Wikle & Nightfoot, 2014). In 1806, Britain acquired the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa (Anderson, 2008). New Zealand came under British rule in 1840 (O'Malley, 2019), and the surrounding areas of Tonga, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea soon followed. In 1886, Myanmar was taken and the monarchy there abolished (Myint-U, 2001).

With the completion of the Suez Canal in 1869, Britain's influence in the Middle East took a firm hold (Varble, 2009), including in the Gulf region where troops remained until 1971 (Bradshaw, 2020). The Arabian Peninsula was critical to the British Empire for the protection of its largest colony, India. Upon the independence of India in 1947, however, the British continued to remain in the region. The most compelling reason for their presence after the loss of India was the oil found in the Gulf region. After World War II, Britain relied on the region to provide 80% of its crude oil imports, thereby requiring the empire to defend the region's shores once again (Rabi, 2006).

The power of the British Empire, however, began with Britain's industrial revolution. It was the revolution that helped Britain become the world's foremost commercial trading nation (Crystal, 2003; Reisman, 1998). Hence, with the country's new financial and political power came the spread of the English language. In the mid-19th century, the United States of America (another English-speaking country) witnessed an explosion of technological advances, including the invention of the electric light bulb, the telephone, and

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the automobile. This propelled the English language even further onto the world stage, thereby strengthening the need or desire to speak English. At the end of the 20th century, the English language, now considered a global *lingua franca*, was firmly embedded in various industries around the world, including the transportation, film, music, communication, and technology industries, to name but a few (Crystal, 2003). With so much knowledge now encoded in one language, governments around the world realized the value of English as a global language. It was now desirable to learn the English language, not just for the economic doors it opened but also for its cultural value (Johnson, 2009). *The Economist* (2004) described the learning of the English language as a 'basic skill of modern life comparable with the ability to drive a car or use a personal computer' (para. 3). As a result, there has been a 'conscious adoption' of the English language by people and governments around the world, including the Gulf region.

This chapter aims to assess the cultural impact of international English tests on Gulf students and suggest ways in which English tests could be more inclusive and context appropriate. The chapter will begin with a look at the education system in the Gulf and the changes seen in the last half a century, including a general move towards English as a medium of instruction (EMI) at all levels of education, especially in higher educational institutions. It will then move on to examine the standardized tests, in particular the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), often used as gatekeepers to these higher educational institutions. To this end, the chapter will explore the cultural bias found on such exams and how this affects the linguistic and cultural identities of the test takers. It will conclude with recommendations on how to mitigate these effects and offer alternative options to the IELTS as a gatekeeper, such as locally produced assessments like the Emirates Standardized Test (EmSAT) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Educational change in the Gulf

In an effort to compete on the global stage, many countries in the Gulf, and indeed globally, have adopted an increasing amount of English-medium instruction (EMI) in education. The UAE over time has transformed their Arabic-dominated education system to a mainly English-medium speaking system, in particular with regard to higher educational institutions, many of which adopted EMI when founded (Randall & Samimi, 2010). In the UAE, educational reforms have been numerous, targeting not only traditional learning environments and teaching techniques but also curricula and the medium of instruction. The education system in the region had historically been based on religion. The early to mid-20th century saw education limited to young males and religious teachings, with much time being spent on memorizing the Holy Quran and the Prophet's Hadiths (Al Farra, 2011). Other subjects taught by the Imams in the region included calligraphy and Islamic rituals. In the 1950s, this changed in the Trucial States (now the UAE) as

Egypt and Kuwait provided assistance with the establishment of an education system (Kirk, 2010; Lootah, 2011). Consequently, the curricula and teaching methodology (and teachers) of these two countries formed the basis of the UAE's first formal education system. However, access to an education at this time was not available to all. According to Al Farra (2011), a decade before the formation of the UAE there were only 20 schools nationwide with a total of 4,000 students. For any form of higher education, students had to travel abroad. In 1971, upon the founding of the UAE, education for all became an immediate priority, including female education. It is this traditional model of education that has underpinned the system for decades and is now undergoing reform in the UAE. In order for the UAE to become globally competitive, a different type of education was needed, one that more closely matched the style of countries where English is used as a first language, such as the US and UK (Alhebsi et al., 2015). This change, then, brought with it English as a medium of instruction in the higher educational institutions in the UAE and other Gulf countries.

One concern with this change in medium of instruction is that it may come with a cost to the linguistic and cultural identities of the nations in the Gulf. In the case of the UAE, such an impact is already being felt. The English-medium education policy is viewed by some as a threat to the Arabic language and culture (Al-Issa, 2011), and there is a fear that the Arabic language and its accompanying identity will be lost. In the context of Saudi Arabia, Habbash and Troudi (2015) found that Arabic is now perceived by some Saudi English-language teachers and students as an inferior language to English. This is problematic, as language and identity are closely linked, according to Brown's (2006) explanation of acculturation. In the case of the UAE, some experts believe that 'for Emirati identity to remain strong, the Arabic language must remain firmly grounded in a place of prestige' (Al-Issa, 2011, p. 12–13). Hopkyns (2014) found in her cultural identity study in the UAE that Emirati teachers and undergraduate students felt that Emirati culture and their cultural identity had notably changed due to the influence of the English language. Examples of both positive and negative change, according to the study, included some Arabic attrition, increased knowledge of other cultures, and lifestyle and clothing changes. With reference to Arabic attrition, the Arab Human Development Report (United Nations Development Programme, 2003) argued that the Arabic language was in deep crisis, with 'grave dangers beset[ting]' (p. 174) the language, and called for the re-Arabicization of higher education. Recent Gulf studies testify to the notion that Arabic is increasingly becoming disassociated with education in Gulf countries (Al-Bakri, 2013; Hillman & Ocampo Eibenschutz, 2018; Hopkyns, 2020a, 2020b).

The mass hiring of Western-educated university teachers in the UAE (Toth, 2019) has affected ways of teaching and learning in English-medium classrooms. The UAE's historical approach to teaching and learning comes from a banking model with an emphasis on rote learning (Bailey et al., 2021), and students' learning preferences tend to be influenced by this style

of teaching and learning. In Bailey et al.'s (2021) study with ten Emirati students and ten Western-educated university teachers, it was found that cultural clashes centred around Emirati students' preferences for passive learning and expatriate teachers' preferences for active participation, independence, and critical thinking. To study at higher educational institutions in the UAE, students have to achieve a minimum band 5 in the International English Language Testing System exam (IELTS). This band level refers to the language proficiency of a modest user who has only partial command of the language but can navigate most basic language situations to some degree with errors (IELTS, 2020a). The academic IELTS exam, and to a lesser degree the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), act as gatekeepers to post-secondary study in the UAE. The IELTS exam, however, has come under scrutiny in the past decade for several reasons, one of which is the cultural bias that the exam is said to harbour.

Cultural bias in the IELTS exam

The academic IELTS exam tests four language skills: Listening, reading, writing, and speaking. The unfamiliarity of topics found throughout the exam ranks high on the list of concerns. One of the first researchers to shed light on this issue was Hawkey (2005). In a survey of 572 IELTS test takers, Hawkey reported that 27% of the candidates had concerns about the unfamiliarity of the topics in the exam they had just sat. Research has shown that background knowledge, which includes text knowledge, linguistic knowledge, cultural knowledge, and topic knowledge, is needed to process a written text (Alderson, 2000). In fact, Alderson (2000) underscored the importance of having background knowledge in *all* language processing, not just reading. Knowledge of topics and how the world works is necessary for any communicative act to occur. Unfamiliar or culturally inappropriate topics on the IELTS exam can therefore hinder candidates' performance. In the context of Bangladesh, Khan's (2006) study highlighted the need for IELTS examiners to screen speaking topics to ensure appropriateness for the Bangladeshi culture, suggesting that topics such as pets or solitude be avoided due to the infrequency of these concepts in this context. The same difficulty holds true for any candidate whose cultural background differs from that of the people writing the IELTS tests. Sensitive topics in the Gulf context include religion (Freimuth, 2014b), gender (Bailey et al., 2021), and aspects of lifestyles that are not in compliance with the values of Islam (Bailey et al., 2021; Hudson, 2019). As Diallo (2014) points out, reading about topics that contradict the students' political and spiritual views and values can cause varying degrees of resistance and discomfort as well as potentially affect performance outcomes. In the IELTS writing test, Green (2007) found cultural concerns surrounding Task 2 prompts, leading to the questioning of their cultural accessibility. Furthermore, Freimuth's (2014a) investigation into Task 2 writing prompts (an essay) revealed that both teachers and students on a foundation program

at a UAE engineering university felt that 17% of the prompts harboured some kind of cultural concern.

The most comprehensive study on the cultural bias of the IELTS exam in the UAE, however, took place on the reading component of the exam (Freimuth, 2013, 2014b). There were three components to the study: The cultural content of the texts, an analysis of the question types, and an examination of student perceptions of bias. The study found that, on average, the IELTS reading exam held 14 cultural references – a notable amount of cultural capital. References included mentions of cultural objects, historical events/times, political ideals, societal structures and roles, and idiomatic expressions. Examples from the study include cultural references to the Holy Grail, igloos, Britain in 1946, and expressions such as 'gone off the boil', as well as references to Nicaragua in 1979, the Toji temple, the Apache, and a sea loch. Geographical references did not fare any better. The study found that 65% of all locations mentioned in the texts related to countries in North America, Europe and Australia, with only 5 out of the 90 references referring to the Middle East (none specifically about the UAE). Even the questions in the reading exam harboured potential bias. At least 50% of the questions required candidates to reinterpret the text or apply critical thinking skills, which has traditionally been less common than passive learning in the UAE education system (Ridge, 2011), as found in the Bailey et al. (2021) study mentioned previously.

The focus group in Freimuth's (2013, 2014b) study revealed that students were aware of the cultural bias inherent in the exam, and noted the unfamiliarity of topics as a concern. Other student perceptions revolved around the difficulty of the vocabulary, the length of the texts, and the questions being too challenging. The act of reading itself, they claimed, was hard and undesirable, particularly in the set time frame given. Freimuth (2014b) traced student concerns back to the sociocultural structures and discourses found in the UAE. Traditionally, the UAE and other Gulf nations have strong oral cultures with a focus on storytelling over reading. Although the habit of reading has been promoted heavily in the UAE in recent years, with the UAE cabinet declaring 2016 the 'Year of Reading', current Emirati university students are often the first in their families to attend university due to the UAE being a young and newly developed country (Bailey, et al., 2021) and thus do not often have a long-established habit of academic reading in the home setting.

Even in students' first language, Arabic, reading scores on international tests are below average. As Tsimpera and Taha-Thomure (2021) point out, in the 2011 and 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), Emirati primary school students performed below the 'low international' benchmark score, and, in the 2018 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) for secondary school students, the UAE ranked 46 out of the 79 participating countries. Thus, when students are asked to apply critical reading skills to long and complex passages on topics unfamiliar to them in another language, and in a limited amount of time, they often struggle.

In Freimuth's study (2013, 2014b), other concerns were found to stem from students' religious beliefs, home life, and attitudes towards learning. Such findings contradict the IELTS organization's claim of cultural neutrality, which states:

> The IELTS approach is recognised as being fair, reliable and valid to all candidates, whatever their nationality, cultural background, gender or special needs.
>
> (IELTS, 2020b)

Rather, the findings from Freimuth's study (2013, 2014b) support the argument found in new literacy studies where literacy is understood to be part of one's social identity not a neutral act (Street, 1993). It is important to note that the worldview presented in the texts of the IELTS reading exams do not necessarily match those of the candidates taking the exam. This is because texts of any kind are sociocultural products of the society in which they are produced (Fairclough, 2001). They are not neutral in nature. They hide, perhaps unwittingly, the sociocultural perspectives, knowledge, and norms of the writer.

Other exams and cultural bias

IELTS is not alone in its cultural bias. Other standardized tests harbour cultural bias as much as, if not more than, the IELTS. In a comparative study of cultural capital between the readings in the TOEFL and IELTS exams, Freimuth (2015) found the TOEFL exam to have on average 15 *more* cultural references than the IELTS. These references, however, related to the United States and Europe more than to any other locations, particularly their history, economy, culture, and geography. Examples include mentions of Puget Sound in the early 1800s, huckleberry and dogwood, the social structure of an American city, the Sierra Nevada mountain range, and the Duchenne smile, to name but a few. The reason for the large American bias is that the exam is produced in the United States and is meant to serve as a proficiency exam to enter university study there. The academic IELTS' original purpose was similar; it was originally designed to measure academic English ability for university study in English-medium universities mainly located in Anglophone countries. The use of the IELTS or the TOEFL for English-medium universities *outside* the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, is in breach of the exams' original purpose and design. The learning environments of many Anglophone universities tend to differ from those found in English-medium universities in the UAE. For example, lecturers in previous studies have commented on notable differences in students' learning styles, learning preferences, and ability in relation to various task types (Freimuth, 2016; Sonleitner & Khelifa, 2005).

Other standardized exams have also come under scrutiny for bias. As an example, the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) has been repeatedly accused of racial, economic, gender, and cultural bias. An example of this cultural bias is the following infamous analogy question (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994):

Runner: Marathon
A) envoy: embassy
B) martyr: massacre
C) oarsman: regatta
D) horse: stable

The answer to the prompt is 'oarsman: regatta'. The problem with this is that the answer reflects the vernacular and experiences found in white upper-middle-class society in America, not that of immigrants or lower classes in American society. Also, the gender specific word 'oarsman' implies women are not involved in the sport of rowing. The Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), a gatekeeper exam for business leadership education, is also suspected of harbouring cultural bias. According to Aggarwal et al. (2013), as much as an 80-point difference exists in GMAT scores cross-nationally. It is clear from these studies that cultural bias is difficult to eliminate from any standardized test. However, the effects of such bias can alter the linguistic and cultural identities of those studying for the test, in terms of confidence, attainment, and sense of belonging.

The effect of bias in assessments on linguistic and cultural identities

Studying for international English exams requires students to broaden their horizons. Linguistic and cultural identities are influenced, for example, in the IELTS from the cultural content in the readings alone. To attain higher scores on the readings, students must challenge themselves to learn more about the English language as well as other places, societies, and belief systems. It calls on students to confront their own belief systems and way of life and to critically think about others' worldviews. This may, at times, unsettle Emirati students, who may believe they should not have to engage with topics and themes deemed unacceptable in Islam (e.g., alcohol, relationships before marriage, food that is not 'halal' ['permissible']) (Freimuth, 2014b). This coming together of two worlds may, in contrast, bring about what undergraduate students in Hopkyns' (2014) study called 'open-mindedness and acceptance of other cultures' (p. 9). Regardless of whether contact with unfamiliar exam content is viewed positively or negatively, it is clear that the test-taking experience is far from neutral. It should also be recognized that test takers may engage with content differently at any one time or across time. This affects identities in nuanced ways, as identities are fluid, dynamic, socially constructed, and

multi-dimensional (Joseph, 2016; Kroon & Swanenberg, 2020; Norton, 1997) rather than static, permanent, or a single entity.

As cultural identities are closely linked to the mother tongue (Fishman, 1997), a person's cultural beliefs, worldviews, and values are encoded in the language they speak, and this language is often seen as unique to the speech community or nation in which they live (Bunge, 1992). With that being said, the notion of 'one culture for one nation' is somewhat of a misnomer. In the case of the UAE, Emirati nationals are not a homogenous group; there is great diversity found amongst them. First, they come from different tribes in the region, with at least 44 different tribes existing in the Trucial States before the formation of the nation (Al Qassemi, 2013). This diversity is the result of the people's ancient roots, which can be traced back to the inhabitants of the Indian Ocean, Yemen, Baluchistan, Persia, Zanzibar, and other parts of Africa. Second, mixed marriages between mainly female foreigners and male Emiratis in the past several decades have increased, and multifaceted national identities for many have emerged. Diversity amongst Emiratis in relation to the English experience is also common due to the many types of schooling available in the UAE, from international EMI schools to government schools using partial EMI. As Bailey et al. (2021) point out, the students in their recent UAE study had various schooling backgrounds which affected their level of English proficiency and familiarity with Western influenced methodologies and cultural content.

In many cases, it is believed that learning another language is equivalent to learning another culture (Brown, 2006; Day, 2002; Edwards, 2009). According to Brown (2006), the process of acculturation results in the creation of a new identity, and a student's contact with another language (and thus culture) will not only challenge his/her worldview but result in a changed or 'new' self. Indeed, Norton (1997) believes that this is a daily struggle for language learners and supports the claims of Day (2002) and Edwards (2009) that language learning and identity re-construction are, in fact, inseparable. In the UAE, for example, English has been given high status in the education system, which has resulted in some Emirati youth believing that the language is now superior, especially in the educational domain (Hopkyns, 2020a). With English as a lingua franca in the UAE, it is also influencing the communication of Emiratis and other bilingual and multilingual speakers at a grassroots level in the form of translanguaging. Translanguaging is defined by Garcia (2009, p. 140) as 'an act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages, in order to maximize communicative potential'. Here, Arabic is often fluidly mixed with English and/or other languages and symbols to communicate more efficiently or to fit into a multilingual context. One form of linguistic hybridity, known as 'Arabizi', involves a combination of Latin letters and English numbers to represent Arabic sounds (Al Fardan & Al Kaabi, 2015). It is mainly used by the young on social media and for texting. Studies have shown that the

younger the learners of English are, the more willing they are to adapt their cultural identities to match that of the target language (Razmeh & Davoodi, 2015). An example of such an adaption can be seen in the youth clothing visible in malls across Dubai, which often boasts a mix of Arabic and English (Hopkyns, 2021). This is not, in and of itself, unusual, as the mixing of English and other languages is seen on clothing all around the world. In some cases, there are only random English words being used with no understanding of their meaning. One study in Thailand revealed that the reason for English words on T-shirts was that they made the clothing more prestigious to its wearers (Angelina, 2019). However, in the case of Arabizi on T-shirts in the UAE, Hopkyns (2021) argues that, rather than a desire to promote English as a prestigious language, 'a third space' (Bhabha, 2004) is created which creatively combines the languages of Arabic and English, thus representing translingual identities. The use of English and Arabic on youth clothing in the UAE indicates an openness to allowing English as an influence on younger generation's linguistic and cultural identities.

As students learn a second or foreign language (in the case of the UAE, this is usually in kindergarten), they often begin to examine their own culture in a new light, where various aspects may be appreciated or devalued according to individual beliefs, situations, and contexts. In the UAE, there is a desire to learn not only the English language but also the cultural aspects that accompany the language. For example, in Hopkyns' (2020a) study, 68% of her Emirati university student participants wanted to learn about the cultures associated with the Anglophone countries of their teachers. The expatriate university teachers in Hopkyns' (2020a) study also recognized that the teaching of the English language exposed learners to some expatriate values, such as individualism. In this sense, multiple languages come with cultural baggage, including English used in classrooms and on exams such as IELTS and TOEFL, which, in turn, may influence the linguistic and cultural identities of learners in the Gulf.

Towards localized English assessments

To minimize the impact of cultural bias in international English tests, experts in the region should aim to use localized English entrance exams for university study, which focus on topics related to the region and allow for a format more in line with the sociocultural and educational structures that currently exist in the Gulf context. This thought was expressed in Hopkyns' (2020a) study, when Emirati primary school teachers voiced the need for more locally focused IELTS exams that would not only make them feel more at ease but also help them do better on the test. The relatively new Emirates Standardized Test (EmSAT) may be a better choice of assessment for these teachers, and others with similar perspectives, than the IELTS. The EmSAT is the first national computer-based exam in the UAE that measures English, Arabic, mathematics, and physics for 12th grade nationals, and it has been touted as an

Table 9.1 EmSAT and IELTS equivalency scores

IELTS Academic Track	*EmSAT*
8	1925-2000
7.5	1800-1900
7	1675-1775
6.5	1550-1650
6	1400-1525
5.5	1250-1375
5	1100-1225
4.5	950-1075
4	825-925
<4	<800

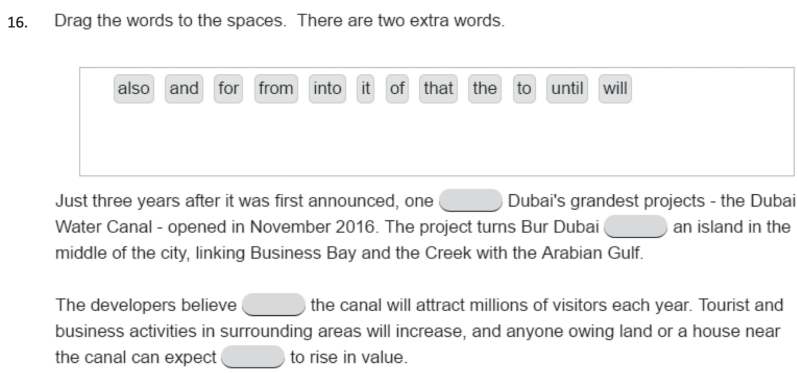

Figure 9.1 Screenshot of UAE-based topic on the EmSAT exam (online sample test).

alternative to the IELTS for university entrance as can be seen in the equivalency chart in Table 9.1 (United Arab Emirates Ministry of Education, n.d.).

The English component of the EmSAT test is 135 minutes long, with 110 questions and one essay writing task (200–250 words). The test covers grammar, vocabulary, reading, and writing. At first glance, the test appears to be more in line with UAE culture. The sample test available on the same government site shows elements of this. For example, Figure 9.1 shows one of the grammar activities where students need to fill in the blanks on a familiar topic of the Dubai water canal (United Arab Emirates Ministry of Education, n.d.). The example in Figure 9.1, however, is quickly followed by another, more American-centric, sample, as seen in Figure 9.2 (United Arab Emirates Ministry of Education, n.d.).

It should be recognized that a topic based on something outside the region does not necessarily mean that this topic is culturally inappropriate

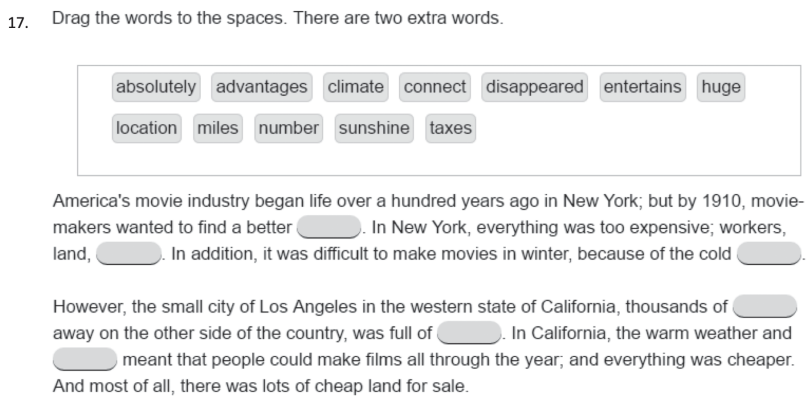

Figure 9.2 Screenshot of American-themed topic on the EmSAT exam (online sample test).

(Figure 9.2). However, when texts contain a multitude of unfamiliar concepts or geographical references, students are arguably disadvantaged in comparison to test takers for whom such concepts are familiar and easily understood. To assess to what degree the EmSAT exam avoids cultural bias, there needs to be a detailed investigation into its content.

Compared to some of the objections that students voiced to the IELTS reading exam (Freimuth, 2014b), the EmSAT reading component seems to be a better sociocultural fit. As mentioned previously, Freimuth's (2014b) study revealed that university students felt the IELTS reading passages were too long and difficult, among other issues. One IELTS reading passage is usually between 750 to 1,000 words in length. The EmSAT's extended reading passages range from 450 to 550 words (which is closer to the TOEFL reading passage length at 700 words). This shorter length is more manageable for students who are not used to sustained reading. In terms of the students' other concerns regarding the IELTS reading exam in Freimuth's 2014 study (the questions are too difficult, the topics are unfamiliar, the topics are not interesting, the vocabulary is too difficult, and there is not enough time), the EmSAT still needs further investigation. The writing component of the EmSAT appears more favourable to Emirati students. Rather than two writing tasks as in the IELTS (graph/process and essay) and TOEFL (response to lecture and essay), the EmSAT requires the writing of just one essay. The topic given as an example is as follows (United Arab Emirates Ministry of Education, 2017):

> In most developed countries, people are living longer lives. Discuss the positive and negative effects on a society of people living longer.

In terms of cultural bias, this prompt is fairly neutral. With the UAE now considered by the United Nations to be a highly developed country and ranked 31 out of 189 countries (United Nations Development Programme, 2020), the students should have the background knowledge needed to adequately address the prompt. Of course, more EmSAT question prompts would need to be analysed before a general statement of favourability could be made.

Alternatively, the idea of an English standardized exam could be set aside if the policy of EMI were to be reconsidered. Many scholars have suggested a combination of English and Arabic as a medium of instruction would better serve the region (Belhiah & Elhami, 2015; Hopkyns 2014, 2020a, 2020b; Troudi & Jendli, 2011). This was strongly recommended by the United Nations in their Arab Human Development Report (United Nations Development Programme, 2003). As mentioned earlier, Arabic literacy is feared to be losing ground in the UAE (Raddawi & Meslem, 2015; Randall & Samimi, 2010), prompting a call for a revision of the policies related to EMI in higher education. It has been argued that Arabic as a medium of instruction either needs to be reinstated fully into the school system or at least share the spotlight with English to some degree if it is not to be lost (Al-Issa, 2017). In Qatar, for example, the decision to revert to Arabic as a medium of instruction (AMI) took place in 2012. During Qatar's EMI period, fears had arisen among the population that the government's EMI policy would bring about the loss of the nation's mother tongue and national identity (Ellili-Cherif & Alkhateeb, 2015). The EMI policy's failure to improve the educational outcomes of Qatari students eventually led to a reversal in policy (Mustafawi & Shaaban, 2019). In the UAE, Troudi and Jendli's (2011) study revealed that dual language instruction (Arabic and English) for university students could be a solution to the medium of instruction debate. The data showed that a number of Emirati students would welcome Arabic as a medium of instruction for certain university courses. Hopkyns' (2020a) study further confirmed these findings, with students expressing that they would at least like to be given the choice.

Conclusion

With the emergence of the EmSAT in the UAE, there is hope for a more balanced assessment of the English language in the region. Other Gulf nations, if they have not already, need to follow suit in order to minimize the cultural bias currently found in major international exams such as the IELTS and TOEFL. One consideration, however, is to carefully examine the background of the writers producing the more localized exam. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the worldview and value systems of the writers unwittingly embed themselves into the product. The onus is on the organization producing the exam to ensure there is minimal bias in their end product. Standardized tests of any kind simply hold too much power over students' lives not to be closely scrutinized. As the former US Assistant Secretary of Education and

well-known educationalist Diane Ravitch pointed out in her 2015 speech in New York City, 'Sometimes, the most brilliant and intelligent minds do not shine in standardized tests because they do not have standardized minds'. To conclude, it is important not to let bright minds in the Gulf nations be undermined by the use of standardized exams that are not well matched to their specific sociocultural contexts.

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Part IV

Gulf identities in English-medium instruction (EMI) contexts

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10 Translanguaging for transformation

Resisting monolingual ideologies

Kevin S. Carroll

The interconnectedness of Islam, Arabic, and long-standing traditions, particularly in Arab Gulf countries, has resulted in language education that has idealized and perpetuated a 'pure' form of Arabic that is taught and used throughout the Arab-speaking world (Carroll et al., 2017; Mahmoud, 2000; Al-Batal, 2017). Given the massive expansion and development of an ever-changing rentier economy (Karmani, 2005) throughout the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, diversity in the languages and cultures that Gulf Arabs are in contact with continues to expand. These changes in the economies of the GCC countries have led to an increased emphasis on globalization, where English plays a key role as the lingua franca between expatriates living in these Gulf nations and the local population (Zoghbor, 2014; Elyas et al., 2020). While the increasing linguistic diversity in these countries has been the focus of various studies (Buckingham, 2017; Hillman & Ocampo Eibenschutz, 2018; Hopkyns et al., 2018, 2021; Kennetz & Carroll, 2018; van den Hoven & Carroll, 2021) throughout the Arab world, far less attention has been paid to the monolingual ideologies that often underpin the Arabic language and teaching throughout the region (Al-Bataineh & Gallagher, 2018). In this chapter, I identify and highlight how traditional monolingual ideologies and perceptions of language can actually hurt more contemporary political movements to globalize local curricula and economy. Ultimately, I argue that, to truly globalize and internationalize, government institutions, particularly K-16 institutions, would benefit from the incorporation of translanguaging pedagogies that facilitate the transformation of monolingual ideologies to more heteroglossic ideologies that are more representative of the daily lived experiences of multilingualism in the GCC countries, particularly in the United Arab Emirates.

Theoretical overview of translanguaging

Within the field of applied linguistics and language teaching, the term 'translanguaging' has revolutionized the way practitioners and teacher trainers approach using languages in the classroom. Unlike traditional

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approaches to language use in the classroom, which have historically looked to separate languages, the use of translanguaging in a school or classroom works to build on or complement the linguistic resources that students have in order to increase their linguistic competencies in a wide range of areas of communication.

The term translanguaging comes from the Welsh pedagogue Cen Williams (1994), who used the term in Welsh to describe the teaching strategies he used in his Welsh classes, where students were required to read a text in one language (Welsh) and then respond to comprehension questions in another language (English) (Baker & Wright, 2017). Williams (1994) felt that his students' ability to comprehend their reading in Welsh could be demonstrated by articulating orally in English the main ideas of what they had been assigned to read, which was in the language they felt more comfortable with. While the use of students' first language in formal English-medium classroom environments was not invented by Williams, identifying a term for the practice helped raise the profile of the phenomenon. The term translanguaging was further popularized by Baker (2001, 2003) and subsequently by García (2009), thus allowing applied linguists and language educators to quickly describe the act of using two languages for pedagogical purposes.

With the term translanguaging in hand, Cuban-born, and US-raised, Ofelia García latched on to the term translanguaging as she, like many other multilinguals around the world, was in search of a term that represented the multilingual reality she lives in (personal communication). Thus, while Williams is credited with describing the pedagogical implications and fruitful nature of translanguaging, it has been García and her colleagues' work that has popularized the term and transitioned it from a pedagogical approach to an umbrella term to describe the multifaceted process of 'languaging' (García, 2009, p. 40).

García's (2009) representation of translanguaging went far beyond the sole use of different languages for pedagogical utility, as she worked to expand on linguistic theory itself by calling into question the very boundaries that define named languages. Adapting this post-structural stance to linguistic theory, García and Wei (2014) argue that the onus of linguistic analysis should be placed on documenting how individuals are languaging. Thus, from García and Wei's point of view, the emphasis and focus for applied linguists and educators should be on the action, not on defining language itself. In more recent work, García and Lin (2016) go on to describe translanguaging by defining a strong and weak form. In the strong form, translanguaging theorizes that 'bilingual people do not speak languageS, but rather use their repertoire of linguistic features selectively' (García & Lin, 2016, p. 124, emphasis in original). In contrast, the weak version of translanguaging 'supports national and state language boundaries, and yet calls for softening these boundaries' (García & Lin, 2016, p. 124).

Thus, from the point of view of the strong form of translanguaging, popular concepts like code-switching are deemed relatively irrelevant

because, in code-switching research, the focus is on the 'switch' between languages, which the strong version of translanguaging argues is not actually a movement between two languages but rather signals the language users' ability to selectively, and perhaps strategically, 'language' to get their message across. While there is an intriguing and ongoing theoretical debate about the strong form of translanguaging (see Otheguy et al., 2018 and MacSwan, 2017), the 'weak' form of translanguaging is far less controversial, and even García and Lin (2016) admit that 'bilingual education responds to the conception of languages as defined by states and nations. After all, language as names of enumerable things have been socially constructed and maintained and regulated especially through schools' (p. 125). While I support the strong version of translanguaging as a theoretical concept, I have also spent most of my career working directly with teachers, who have always been more pragmatic in their need to understand what can and should be done in schools in their particular context. Thus, I find what García and Lin (2016) call the weak version extremely refreshing and pragmatic. I would argue that this 'weak' version of translanguaging should be renamed or rebranded as 'soft' translanguaging so as not to take away from the real benefits that its implementation can have on reimagining how languages are used in learning environments around the world. Furthermore, calling it 'soft translanguaging' gives it the best chance of actually being taken up by curricular experts, teacher educators, and hiring committees.

A relatable definition that speaks to the multifaceted nature of translanguaging comes from Mazak (2017), who classifies translanguaging in five different ways:

1. Translanguaging as a *language ideology* that normalizes bilingualism.
2. Translanguaging as a *theory of bilingualism* that is based on authentic multilingual experiences.
3. Translanguaging as a *pedagogical stance* that allows teachers and students to build on and pull from their various linguistic and semiotic resources as they work to teach/learn both the target language and content.
4. Translanguaging as a *set of practices* that are still being researched and described. Thus, it is not limited to what has historically been known as 'code-switching' but includes all practices that draw on students' varied linguistic repertoires.
5. Translanguaging as *transformational*. It changes the world as it continually invents and reinvents language practices in a perpetual process of meaning-making.

(adapted from Mazak, 2017, pp. 5–6)

The use of translanguaging as an umbrella term to describe and normalize how multilinguals use languages eventually seeks to shift the monolingual mindset to be more understanding of the linguistic realities that multilinguals

deal with on a day-to-day basis. Thus, as May (2013) argues, instead of using relatively monolingual contexts and research as the norm, translanguaging research and practices view the process and product of moving between languages as powerful and emblematic of language competency not deficiency. Such a view of language use complements Ruiz's (1984) seminal argument for the need of a language-as-a-resource orientation versus a language-as-a-problem orientation. Similar to Ruiz's language-as-a-resource orientation, those who promote translanguaging seek to eliminate deficit-minded perspectives. Instead, they work to enhance and create more avenues in which students can express themselves and make themselves understood in appropriate ways given the linguistic context they find themselves in. Doing so works towards transformation in that students whose language(s) or varieties have largely been absent from formal education will now see a way in which they can use language naturally in their learning context. The absence of local, non-standard varieties of Arabic in classrooms, and even the absence of Arabic altogether, has been an issue that has been argued over for decades throughout the GCC countries.

Historical use of monolingual language ideologies in Arab Gulf countries and a shift towards multilingualism

Historically, Arabic has been described by sociolinguists as the exemplary case of a traditionally diglossic language. Ferguson's (1959) original description of diglossic languages included Arabic, where Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is the agreed upon high variety (H), and local varieties used for oral communication throughout Arabic-speaking countries are seen as the low varieties (L). Similar to English, there are countless different variations of what Ferguson would describe as L varieties. However, vastly different from English, the H variety, or MSA, is markedly different from the L varieties used throughout the Arabic-using world. This marked difference between H and L varieties has had major consequences in terms of literacy attainment and even assessing literacy in countries that use Arabic as their dominant language (Saiegh-Haddad, 2003; Saiegh-Haddad & Joshi, 2014; Saiegh-Haddad & Spolsky, 2014). The differences between H and L varieties are so stark that many parents and students attest to the fact that learning MSA in school almost amounts to learning a new language (Carroll et al., 2017). While Al-Batal (2017) argues convincingly that these H and L varieties are indeed one language, their differences, particularly the goal of separating these varieties in formal education, result in many users of Arabic feeling insecure about their own language use proficiencies. The distinction between H and L varieties of Arabic is important in that, over centuries, they have helped to solidify and strengthen a pan-Arab identity that has interwoven Arabic and Islam so that the H variety of 'Classical Arabic' (CA) is essentially equated to the language of the Quran. Thus, any attempt to alter or equate other varieties as equal is looked down upon. This has also worked to downplay the importance and

value of local varieties of Arabic that are viewed by most, even the users of these varieties, as inferior, illegitimate, or incomplete (Bassiouney, 2020).

The by-product of decades, if not centuries, of de facto language policies that have favoured MSA has led to a very prescriptivist approach to language education which, in turn, has led to monolingual language ideologies prevailing in most Arabic using countries (Al-Batal, 2017). These monolingual language ideologies echo the importance of keeping varieties of Arabic separate so as not to contaminate or disrespect MSA (Al-Batal, 2017; Zoghbor, 2018). As such, within formal education, the use of local varieties of Arabic is frowned upon, and, particularly in countries like the UAE or Qatar where most teachers are not from the host country, these teachers are often unfamiliar with the local variety of Arabic that their students use on a daily basis (Tibi & McLeod, 2014). Unfortunately, such monolingual language ideologies actually contradict clear findings from applied linguists and educators on the benefits of education in the language of the home, which, in the case of the vast majority of Arabic speakers, is the L variety of Arabic.

Thus, to improve literacy and overall educational attainment, countries like the UAE, Qatar and other GCC countries would benefit from the strategic and purposeful implementation of translanguaging approaches. Such implementation could slowly chip away at the long-held prescriptive, monolingual ideologies and teach teachers, students, and family members the real value that their local varieties have in learning content. In doing so, students would be able to make clearer sense of the content, as teachers and professors would work to make more meaningful learning experiences in students' weaker language and increase metalinguistic awareness. Such metalinguistic awareness is essential, particularly with an ever-diversifying local economy where residents of the GCC countries are increasingly exposed to speakers of different varieties of Arabic and English.

Al-Bataineh and Gallagher's (2018) study demonstrated the deeply ingrained monolingual ideologies of future teachers and the negative attitudes towards translanguaging in Arabic and English in children's storybooks. Similar findings among researchers in the UAE (Hopkyns et al., 2021; Palfreyman & Al-Bataineh, 2018) revealed negative attitudes towards translanguaging. Most teacher candidates throughout the GCC have experienced formal education and training almost exclusively in one language or another. While their daily lives and the communities they live in might be more emblematic of other superdiverse contexts where multiple languages and varieties are used throughout the day (Hillman & Ocampo Eibenschutz, 2018; Hopkyns, 2020), their formal educational experiences have largely shunned such practices. Thus, for the remainder of this chapter, I will focus on ways in which teacher educators and teachers themselves have implemented translanguaging pedagogies around the world, with some connections to what can be done in the GCC nations to demonstrate that the use of such translanguaging practices can eventually lead to a transformative experience where students value their

multilingual repertoires and the multilingual and multicultural context they call home.

What does translanguaging in formal educational contexts look like?

Most of the early research that has been published on translanguaging focused on primary school grades in the United States or on complementary schools in the United Kingdom (van den Hoven & Carroll, 2017). Such contexts and research, while important in popularizing the term, were far removed from the educational and linguistic realities of the GCC countries. Nevertheless, there are some important lessons that can be taken from the research in these two contexts as well as a great deal more from more recent research that has unfolded in other European countries, particularly in Scandinavian countries where, similar to the GCC, English plays an important role as the lingua franca.

Similar to the way that research on translanguaging initially focused on two geographical contexts, the early research largely left out secondary and post-secondary (tertiary) contexts. These are some of the most important educational levels in the UAE and other GCC nations, where many students are expected to engage in a bilingual curriculum or even one that is exclusively in English, which is the case in many universities in the region (Al-Issa, 2017). There is much to be learned from how translanguaging research and implementation has evolved across school levels as well as in international contexts. Thus, multilingual contexts such as South Africa (Makalela, 2017), Ukraine (Goodman & Tastanbek, 2021), and Hong Kong (He et al., 2017), among others, all provide interesting and important lessons as to the benefits of adopting translanguaging in formal education. Below, I outline some of the ways in which researchers have documented the implementation of different strategies or curricular initiatives in favour of multilingual language ideologies.

Assigning readings in one language and discussing them in another

From Williams' (1994) original research, getting students to read texts in one language and discuss what they have read in another has always been a central approach to translanguaging in the classroom. More recently, in the Puerto Rican university context of a basic English course, Carroll and Sambolín (2016) described the use of literature circles, where Spanish L1 students were tasked with reading a text in English, engaging in a structured discussion in their groups in any language they preferred, then producing a summary or presentation of their discussion in English for the rest of their classmates. Carroll and Sambolín (2016) argue that, by providing students the space to discuss their reading using their full linguistic repertoires, they allowed students time to gather their thoughts, check their comprehension with that of their peers, and demonstrate their reading comprehension, regardless of

the language they used to engage with their peers. Furthermore, it allowed the professor, who was also a Spanish speaker, to assess students' reading comprehension and ability to meaningfully engage with the text as she observed the students' work in the literature circles.

Encouraging students to ask and answer questions in a language that is not the language of instruction

Making students feel safe and welcome in a classroom is an integral part of any translanguaging pedagogy. Teachers and professors who choose to use such an approach work to meet their students where they are in terms of their emergent linguistic abilities. Thus, instead of enacting strict language policies that shun the students' dominant language, these teachers will go out of their way to let students know it is acceptable to use or build on their more dominant language. Such practices manifest themselves in classrooms where teachers allow students to ask a question or rephrase one in their dominant language. Depending on the context and the teacher's own linguistic repertoire, the response might come in the students' dominant language, the official language of the class, or a mixture of both. Such practices were outlined in Sayer's (2013) description of an elementary school classroom in a largely Spanish/English-speaking community in Texas, US. These practices helped teachers build a rapport with the students as well as open the door for other students to help their peers by, at times, translating concepts or instructions that might have been misunderstood. Encouraging students to use their dominant language, particularly among themselves, creates an atmosphere where the teacher understands the importance of peer interaction in mediating understanding and that such mediation can be done successfully in a multitude of ways.

Similar examples from Makalela's (2017) research in South Africa come to mind, where a linguistically diverse student body was strategically grouped with students of similar linguistic backgrounds and encouraged to participate in the language with which they felt most comfortable. Such practices, which were largely understood by everyone in the class, gave greater power to users of languages that, historically, have not been used in formal education. In so doing, the professor demonstrated the power and value in allowing flexible language policies, which ultimately made students question why this was one of the first times that they were being invited to use their dominant language(s) in the classroom.

Incorporating language and examples from students' culture and background

While the two previous examples do not necessarily require an understanding of the students' dominant language to be implemented, it would certainly help. However, incorporating the language and culture of students into one's classroom does not always require proficiency in the students' home language.

For example, Mary and Young (2017) discuss how preschool teachers in France, who were not everyday users of their students' dominant languages, learned important phrases in the various languages of their students to make them feel more comfortable and at home.

Furthermore, Charamba's (2020) mixed method study examining translanguaging in a science and technology classroom at the primary level in Zimbabwe attests to the benefits of using students' dominant language to make sense of their world. His study demonstrates how, when students and teachers consciously bring in multimodal and multilingual resources, students can actually perform better in content than their peers who only experience an immersion classroom where their dominant language is not permitted. Charamba's (2020) research demonstrates how conscious decisions in the make-up and organization of a classroom and the implementation of a translanguaging pedagogy can set the tone for children and make them understand that they, and the variety of language they use at home, are welcome.

Promoting student engagement with multimedia to complete tasks

Activities that highlight the multimodal aspects of translanguaging in different contexts have been outlined in detail by Hawkins (2020). For example, by engaging in activities such as Global StoryBridges, where 'English-learning youth in diverse global locales connect through digital stories (short videos) of their lives and communities that they make and share on a dedicated project website, and ensuing chat discussions' (Hawkins, 2020, p. 25), students use a whole host of different linguistic and multimodal resources to communicate with their peers around the world.

Activities such as Global StoryBridges encourage students to do research and/or use multimedia in their dominant language as they search for information that can connect them to others around the world, and they expose them to different ways of knowing. For example, from my career as a professor of English as a second language, my students have mostly just assumed that all of the research they do online should be done in English. While the goal of my English classes is certainly to expose my students to as much English as possible, it is also important that, when they do research on a topic, they do an exhaustive search in whatever language(s) they know. Such a search allows them to understand different perspectives. It also allows them to learn concepts and key terms in multiple languages, which increases the possibility that they will be able to discuss the topics with friends and family outside of class. Throughout my experience of teaching in the UAE, my students were almost always shocked when I asked them to look up concepts being discussed in class in Arabic and include them in their reference section or summarize them in English in a subsequent class. While it is often true that English dominates academic texts (Toth, 2019), incorporating such tasks into the classroom demonstrates to students that important information is not solely published in English. Furthermore, it teaches students that, as an

educated populous, we must use our full linguistic repertoires in the search for knowledge.

Code-switching and translating

The more theoretical definitions of translanguaging, or its 'strong form', would generally ignore the use of code-switching or translating in a formal classroom, as traditional definitions of these terms rely on clear understandings of the named languages that one is moving between. Nevertheless, a softer approach to translanguaging sees pedagogical benefits to code-switching and translating. Their incorporation into educational environments can play an important role in changing students' language ideologies as well as making their understanding of content more comprehensible. For instance, in Carroll & van den Hoven's (2017) study in the UAE, bilingual Arabic/English professors discussed how they used Arabic in targeted ways so that their students would quickly understand concepts they were covering. At times, this use of Arabic could match what would traditionally be seen as a code-switch, where one part of a sentence or utterance is in one named language and another part is in another named language. Similarly, translating key concepts, particularly in content areas where learning the language of instruction is not the primary goal, allows the teacher to move through content at a quicker pace. It is obviously important that not everything a teacher teaches is translated. If translation is overused, students are liable to tune out the teacher's use of the language of instruction until they use their dominant language. Nevertheless, the strategic use of translation can indeed allow students to make clearer connections to a related concept taught in class. Such code-switching and translating might not even happen in the formal classroom but be reserved for office hours or other more informal meetings with the students. As students see teachers and professors using their linguistic repertoires in meaningful ways, they are leading by example and opening the door for students to be more critically aware of how people communicate effectively in bi/multilingual environments.

Implementing translanguaging to transform Gulf learners' identities

The use and modelling of translanguaging in language and content classrooms is essential for students to understand the value in their diverse and complex linguistic repertoires (Viesca & Teeman, 2019). Within the GCC countries, students speak a multitude of languages, and those who come from Arabic-speaking families undoubtedly speak a variety of Arabic that is not the one used or prioritized in formal instruction. Thus, the use of translanguaging, while admittedly controversial, can help students to view the varieties of Arabic their family and community use at home as somehow not flawed or incorrect. However, to do so, these same students need Arabic-medium teachers as well as English-medium teachers who themselves understand the

benefits of mother tongue instruction (MTI) and the value of the linguistic idiosyncrasies of local Arabic and English varieties. In this section, I outline four suggestions that could help achieve the implementation of context-specific translanguaging that will lead to transformation.

Revisit language policies

Ministries of education, school districts, schools, and teachers themselves must revisit their language policies to allow for spaces where students and teachers can translanguage. This does not necessarily mean that students never experience immersion education in one particular language or variety, but it would force administrators and teaching personnel to identify when it would be appropriate and in what creative ways the school community could foster a type of multilingualism that values all languages and varieties, not just those who speak a privileged variety of Arabic or English. At the institutional level, school administrators need to examine the school's linguistic landscape and what it represents. If necessary, changes should be made accordingly so that the school's linguistic landscape is representative of the larger student population and context in which it is situated.

At the school and classroom level, teachers need to make conscious decisions on how they are willing to allow students to participate in a given language. Furthermore, their own language use needs to be strategic. For instance, it is fine for a teacher of Islamic studies to teach exclusively in MSA or a more privileged variety of Arabic. However, the same professor can make a conscious decision not to reprimand or correct students if and when they speak using non-prestigious varieties of Arabic. Furthermore, in a mathematics class or another content area, teachers need to be given the flexibility to implement translanguaging to benefit their students. As such, the teacher should use language in a way that ensures students are learning content but also receiving important exposure to the target language. This means that the teacher is given more flexibility and can use or facilitate both Arabic and English in targeted and meaningful ways depending on the language policy of that particular unit or assignment.

Consider teachers' language ideologies and competencies in hiring practices

Understanding the linguistic, cultural, and religious realities of the context in which one teaches is essential for being able to connect with students. Therefore, if the goal is to provide an environment in which students are transformed into critical thinkers, it is imperative that the teachers hired are representative of the linguistic and cultural diversity of the host country (Carroll, 2017). Furthermore, having teachers who are trained in both Arabic and English and who know, or are respectful of, the local language varieties is essential. Simply hiring a person because they speak both Arabic and English is not enough. If they view local varieties of Arabic as deficient, they will

only perpetuate the same monolingual language ideologies that have led to so many linguistic insecurities among Arabic speakers.

Hiring teachers with such a skill set means that adjustments need to be made at the tertiary level where future teachers are being trained. It is at the university level that these future teachers need to be given exercises requiring them to reflect on their own language practices and that of their communities. Engaging in meaningful dialogue about how language and literacy is used, as well as how they see linguistic dynamics changing, are all important issues that need to be addressed. Furthermore, exercises such as requiring students to create bilingual Arabic and English texts, which was described in Al-Bataineh and Gallagher's (2018) study, is an example of an experience that students need. This experience teases out long-held language ideologies and forces students to build their metalinguistic understandings as they meaningfully work on the interplay of languages while creating a text.

Create teaching materials to suit the linguistic realities of Gulf-based students

Having well-qualified and trained teachers is essential for the implementation of any educational policy, but, in contexts like the GCC, having linguistically and culturally relevant teaching materials is also essential. Too often, Gulf countries' textbooks come from outside the region (Toth, 2019). As a result, the topics, images, names of characters, and even varieties of languages used in the materials are nowhere near the realities of the local population. When students do not see themselves in the way language is used by the characters in the books they are reading in class, they are receiving a message that the institution of formal schooling does not see value in their own language and culture. The only way around this is through the creation of materials, at the nation-state level or even at the school level, in which students' lived realities are represented. Similar to Freirean teachings in critical pedagogy (Freire & Macedo, 1987), the adoption of a soft translanguaging approach requires students to see themselves in the texts being used, and, if those texts do not exist, the students themselves can be agents in their creation.

When the creation of materials is not possible, teachers need to look to the surrounding communities that their students hail from to bring in examples of how language is used in authentic environments. For instance, in most Arabic-speaking nations of the Gulf, the official names of foreign stores have an Arabic equivalent. For example, where McDonald's is ماكدونالدز, students know that this is a foreign word, yet the word is written using the Arabic script. This attests to the fact that there are new words being brought into local Arabic varieties as countries and communities continue to open up to the global economy. Thus, teachers need to bring this complex linguistic reality into their classrooms. Not only does it make learning more relevant, but it also allows students to see real value in their own daily linguistic practices.

Foster collaboration between language and content teachers / professors

To enable students to read the world and see value in their full linguistic repertoires, teachers from across disciplines need to collaborate. This is particularly important as the language policies of a school or district would likely have to change to allow teachers and local administrators more flexibility in their own language policies. However, teachers must work in constant collaboration with their colleagues (both Arabic-medium and English-medium teachers) to ensure that students are receiving enough access to the different languages and varieties that the school is targeting. Particularly in English-medium classrooms, teachers need to understand the concepts and material that have been taught in Arabic so as to be sure to make the connections to their own course content. While collaboration between teachers is a hallmark of any excellent school, the failure to have all teaching personnel on board when implementing translanguaging pedagogy can send mixed messages to students on what kind of language practices are appropriate and valued in that particular school setting. Thus, collaboration can lead to a program's success or the lack thereof.

Concluding remarks

Economic trends and a push towards globalization have turned many GCC countries into spaces that were unimaginable to many just two decades ago. These economic changes have given way to an increasingly diverse set of residents and a changing linguistic landscape. Despite concerns that Arabic is threatened in the UAE and other GCC nations, users are not abandoning their use of Arabic but perhaps shifting in how and when it is used. Given the superdiversity that is characteristic of many of the large cities in the GCC nations, policymakers and educators need to embrace a soft approach to translanguaging. Here, students' home language varieties are seen as valuable in an attempt to create a stable, triglossic environment (Kennetz & Carroll, 2018) where MSA, local Arabic varieties, and English all play an important role. Despite my recommendation of using a soft approach to translanguaging, it should be noted that translanguaging, particularly in formal teaching contexts, needs to be used critically and with the understanding that there is no one-size-fits-all model that cures all ills (Dovchin & Canagarajah, 2020; Kuteeva, 2019; Sah & Li, 2020). Like all sociolinguistic approaches, the implementation of translanguaging needs to take into consideration the lived, cultural, political, economic, and linguistic realities of the constituents in a set place and time. Nevertheless, if done thoughtfully, the implementation of a soft version of translanguaging across the curriculum in the GCC nations has the potential to set the groundwork for a transformational education where students are taught to read the world around them and grow up with the metalinguistic understanding and ability to navigate the superdiverse world in which they live.

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11 Multilingual teacher identity in the Emirates

Implications for language policy and education

Raees Calafato

The super-diverse Gulf states must contend with an evolving geopolitical and sociocultural landscape that places them at the centre of the competition between regional and global powers. Such competition can often influence government policies concerning language education (Hussein & Gitsaki, 2018). For instance, China and Russia have recently started to make inroads into what were previously areas of exclusively Western influence. This has begun to affect the linguistic market (Bourdieu, 1990) in the Gulf states, perhaps only minimally for now, but changes are occurring. Such changes can be seen in the recent announcements by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that Chinese will be taught in schools alongside English (Al Arabiya, 2019; *The National*, 2019), as well as in the opening of Hebrew language schools in the UAE (*The National*, 2020). These developments can be said to form part of a growing realization among policymakers worldwide that becoming multilingual is both desirable and necessary for younger generations to survive in a globalized world (Calafato, 2020b; European Commission, 2018). Researchers, too, have begun to highlight the need for language teachers to adopt approaches that boost their students' awareness of the benefits of being multilingual (Makalela, 2015; Kirsch, 2020). Collectively termed multilingual pedagogy by researchers (Madiba, 2013; Otwinowska, 2017; Vaudrin-Charette & Fleuret, 2016), such approaches comprise activities and techniques (e.g., translanguaging) that develop students' metalinguistic knowledge and cross-linguistic awareness (Tang & Calafato, 2021), their multicompetence (Cook, 2016), their awareness of linguistic diversity (Calafato, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c), and their ability to interact in monolingual *and* multilingual contexts (García & Sylvan, 2011). This is a radical departure from the widely employed monolingual approach to teaching languages, where teachers and students conform to a monolingual native speaker ideal that views multilingualism as problematic (Calafato, 2019; Conteh, 2018).

In the Gulf states, there has traditionally been a strict, monolingual division between languages at educational institutions. English has dominated as a medium of instruction in private schools and universities, whereas Arabic has been the medium of instruction in public schools (Hopkyns, 2020; Kippels & Ridge, 2019). This division may have started to change

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somewhat, although the country continues to face challenges in smoothly and effectively transitioning to a more holistic format for multilingual education that does not approach languages monolingually (Hopkyns, 2020). These challenges are not unique to the UAE. Multilingual educational initiatives are often implemented monolingually, where the opportunity to learn multiple languages is offered to students, yet each language is taught in isolation (Al-Bataineh & Gallagher, 2018). Such initiatives are also sometimes accompanied by a teacher-as-technician approach, which assumes that the success of any initiative can be achieved if teachers simply implement a specific methodology or curriculum (Connell, 2009). What is often ignored is that teachers might not have the desire or the training to effectively implement what is required of them (Schedel & Bonvin, 2017). These aspects of language teachers – that is, their ability and willingness to engage in specific teaching practices – have yet to be studied in relation to multilingualism in education in the super-diverse Gulf states. As Tudor (2003) observes, teachers are not simply 'teachers', and their pedagogical decisions might be influenced by more than just their teaching experiences, which requires a deeper exploration of who they are as individuals. Finally, the English language has received the bulk of attention from researchers investigating language education and multilingualism in the Gulf. Fewer studies have focused on other languages – for instance, Arabic (e.g. Calafato & Tang, 2019a; Tang & Calafato, 2021) – which has mostly been investigated as a first language among Emirati citizens (Hopkyns et al., 2021).

This chapter discusses the findings from an exploratory study that investigated what language teachers employed in private English-medium (EMI) secondary schools in the UAE thought about multilingualism as a pedagogical resource and the extent to which they implemented multilingual pedagogy with their students. The chapter concludes with recommendations for making the language teaching and learning process more effective so that teachers and students can fully realize their multilingual potential.

Super-diversity and the UAE

The UAE is a super-diverse state that is home to hundreds of nationalities and languages. This multilingualism is due in part to the presence of large numbers of expatriate workers who comprise the majority of the UAE's population. English is the dominant language in the Gulf even though Arabic is the national language (Siemund et al., 2021). Other languages such as Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Persian, and Tagalog are widely spoken in the UAE (van den Hoven & Carroll, 2017), yet they do not enjoy the same status as English or the country's national language, much like in many countries worldwide (Kanna et al., 2020). In some instances, the dominance of English has affected the language attitudes and the level of multilingualism of the country's inhabitants. For example, Hopkyns (2014) reported that few UAE university students in her study listed proficiency in a language other than English (LOTE). Perhaps many of the participants felt that English alone was sufficient for them to

realize their goals. However, more recent studies on the UAE have found changes in the language attitudes of younger generations. Calafato and Tang (2019a, 2019b) discovered that, while English enjoyed a high status among secondary school students in Dubai, regardless of whether they were Emirati or expatriate, the students felt that the learning of multiple languages had become more widespread and that knowledge of only English was no longer enough. Many of the students also reported learning multiple languages themselves, although there was a clear hierarchy in terms of motivational intensity, with English being at the top. Studies on the UAE that have involved language teachers, expatriate or Emirati, are far fewer in number. They indicate that teachers, much like their students, possess varying levels of multilingualism and can assign different values to the languages they encounter in the country (Hopkyns, 2020). Overall, despite the UAE's multilingual nature (Hopkyns, 2021; Zoghbor, 2018), it is surprising that little research exists on whether language teachers have tried to harness this multilingualism as a pedagogical resource (for an exception, see Tang & Calafato, 2021).

Globally, comparatively more research has been done on language teachers' implementation of multilingual pedagogy, including how they draw (or do not draw) on their affordances in instances where they are multilingual (Calafato, 2019, 2021; Leonet et al., 2017). Such pedagogy has been found to boost students' awareness of linguistic diversity (Coelho et al., 2018), support their literacy skills (Rowe, 2018), aid their performance in language tests (Ng, 2018), and enhance their multilingual competence (Figueiredo, 2011). For language teachers in the UAE, implementing multilingual pedagogy can not only lead to a closer rapport with students (for an example of how this might be done, see Jiang et al., 2014), but it also reflects how daily interactions occur in a mix of languages and dialects in the country (Hopkyns, 2020; van den Hoven & Carroll, 2017). In terms of language education policy, English has started to carry greater weight in public schools and universities than in the past (Hopkyns et al., 2018; Hussein & Gitsaki, 2018). In Abu Dhabi, for instance, English now serves as the medium of instruction alongside Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) in public schools. Foreign languages, meanwhile, are generally not offered in public schools, which are mostly reserved for Emirati citizens, although there have been announcements regarding the introduction of Chinese and even French (*Gulf News*, 2018; *The National*, 2019). Private schools, in contrast, offer a wide selection of curricula from around the world (Calafato & Tang, 2019a, 2019b). MSA is taught as a compulsory subject in private schools to both expatriate (Arabic B) and Emirati students (Arabic A). This often results in many private school students learning English, MSA (as a first or second language), and an additional foreign language (Calafato & Tang, 2019b), usually French or Spanish. A limited number of EMI schools also offer students the chance to study community languages – for example, Urdu, Russian, and Greek. The chance to study community languages represents a break with the traditional practice of offering exclusively European languages and a move towards a more accurate representation

of the UAE's linguistic diversity in school language programs. UK and US curriculum schools are the most popular choices among both expatriate and Emirati families because of their international environment and educational offerings (Calafato & Tang, 2019a).

Multilingualism and affordances theory

Multilingualism in this study is defined as an individual's knowledge and use of two or more languages in their daily lives (Bot, 2019). The study avoids maximalist definitions of multilingualism, where individuals must have a very advanced level of proficiency in two or more languages to be considered multilingual (for a discussion, see Cenoz, 2013). Most multilingual individuals can be described as having sequentially learned their languages in different contexts (e.g., at home, at school, etc.). One framework that has proved popular for conceptualizing the resources available to individuals as a result of being multilingual is the theory of affordances (Gibson, 1977). Affordances are defined as the various uses a person can draw from their environment. For example, a bookshelf can be used to store not only books but also clothes; it can be used as a makeshift bed or even as a box in which to grow plants. When applied to multilingual individuals, affordances theory posits that their multilingualism provides them with more options to interact with the environment due to their ability to draw on, among other things, a pool of discourse, pragmatic and morphosyntactic competences that are linked to multiple languages (Aronin, 2014). However, studies indicate that not all multilingual individuals are necessarily aware or appreciative of their affordances (e.g., Zheng, 2017), especially if they grew up in an environment where the native speaker ideal was dominant. Studies show that when multilingual language teachers are aware of their affordances, they draw on these to enhance their students' language learning experiences multilingually (Ng, 2018). Monolingual teachers, too, have been found to implement activities that harness their students' awareness of their multilingual affordances and help them learn more effectively (see Barros et al., 2020). Still, while several studies (e.g. Ljunggren, 2016) have focused on the affordances of multilingual learners, few have investigated the affordances of language teachers in any way, especially in the Gulf states.

Research questions

To shed more light on the extent to which language teachers in the UAE, many of whom are multilingual, draw on their and their students' multilingualism at school, this study sought to answer the following research questions (RQs):

1. How do the participants approach multilingualism as a resource in education?
2. To what extent do the participants implement multilingual pedagogy when teaching?

3. Are there differences in the participants' implementation of multilingual pedagogy based on the languages they teach?

Methods and instruments

Participants

Ten language teachers from private UK curriculum secondary schools in the UAE participated in the study. The participants taught English, Arabic as a second (ASL) (Arabic B) and/or first language (AL) (Arabic A), or French as a foreign language (FFL). They were contacted via an email sent to their respective school administrations that explained the scope of the study and requested help with recruiting language teachers. The schools, which were all located in Dubai, were selected based on convenience. They had offered to help with previous projects, so it was easier to enlist their support than if schools were contacted randomly, especially given the COVID-19 situation. Table 11.1 provides some details regarding the participants' backgrounds, knowledge of additional languages to their L1s (Lx), languages taught (LT), and years of teaching experience (Exp). Pseudonyms were used for the participants to protect their anonymity.

UK curriculum schools were selected for the study due to several considerations in addition to convenience. UK curriculum schools, as already mentioned, are popular among both expatriate and Emirati students. In fact, many Emirati families prefer to send their children to UK curriculum schools because of the international learning environment that such schools represent. Public schools in the UAE, in contrast, are reserved for Emirati students, which has implications for the level of multilingualism encountered there among students and teachers and whether such an environment is reflective of UAE society, where *multiple* nationalities interact in a mix of languages (Hopkyns, 2021; van den Hoven & Carroll, 2017).

Table 11.1 Profiles of the teacher participants

Teacher	*LT*	*Country*	*Age*	*Exp*	*Lx*
Huda	ASL/AL	Jordan	50	20	English, French
Mona	ASL/AL	Egypt	46	12	English, French
Gamal	ASL	Egypt	39	6	English, French
Adam	English	South Africa	42	15	-
Tim	English	Canada	35	7	Arabic, Russian, Tagalog
Ahmed	English	Pakistan	37	12	Urdu
Samira	ASL	Jordan	45	11	English, French
Diana	FFL	Algeria	39	10	Arabic, English
Emna	FFL	Tunisia	54	23	Arabic, English
Sara	ASL/AL	Jordan	42	12	English

Data collection and analysis

The study, which was exploratory, used unstructured interviews to collect data (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). The aim was to encourage teachers to talk freely about their multilingualism and their experiences teaching languages. At the same time, some signposting was used during the interviews, with the study adopting an ecological approach (Tudor, 2003) to investigating the participants' multilingualism and how they drew on their and their students' knowledge of other languages during lessons. The study also drew on affordances theory (Aronin, 2014; Gibson, 1977) to probe the participants' practices and the extent to which they drew on their (if they were multilingual) and their students' multilingualism when teaching. The interviews were conducted online, with each interview lasting an average of 45 minutes. Following the interviews, contact was maintained with the participants via email to seek clarification regarding their interview responses and to ask additional questions. All the interviews were recorded (audio and video) and transcribed, following which the interview transcripts and email correspondences underwent hybrid inductive-deductive thematic analysis. The transcribed data were read multiple times to generate a set of initial codes, which derived principally from the readings but were also partly based on affordances theory (Aronin, 2014). These codes were checked with the email correspondences, refined where appropriate, and collated into categories and themes (for a more detailed example of inductive-deductive thematic analysis, see Xu & Zammit, 2020).

Results

The importance of becoming multilingual and the linguistic hierarchy

In discussing their teaching experiences, all participants touched on the multilingualism of their students and the cultural and linguistic diversity of UAE society. For instance, the Arabic teacher participants talked about how they came from countries where everyone mostly spoke Arabic to one where they regularly encountered people of different nationalities. Only Adam felt that the cultural and linguistic diversity he had witnessed in the UAE somewhat resembled the situation back in his home country of South Africa. However, there were specific differences in how each participant valued the multilingualism they saw in UAE society and their schools, and all the participants alluded to a clear linguistic hierarchy when discussing their experiences as language teachers in the UAE. In general, the participants felt that becoming multilingual was not only a positive development but also necessary for students in a country like the UAE. The Arabic teacher participants were especially warm to the idea of students becoming multilingual.

> Now, even in all the universities, it is good for students to learn lot of language, to speak lot of language, they have more choice, they have more

> opportunities. We try to pass this to them but it's not every time they can understand this.
>
> (Emna)

> You need to add a new language to your language. What happens you cannot find someone who speaks your language?
>
> (Gamal)

The role of parents figured prominently during the participants' discussion of the need to learn several languages, with the Arabic and French teacher participants expressing divergent opinions about what multilingualism meant to school parents. The Arabic teacher participants felt that many school parents, expatriates, and Emiratis did not consider Arabic to be an important subject, which affected some of their students' motivation to learn the language. The French teacher participants, in contrast, reported that many parents, regardless of nationality, were quite happy to see their children become multilingual.

> The parents prefer if their kids can talk a lot of languages. They like the idea. Some parents think that it is very, very important.
>
> (Diana)

> Some parents not respect Arabic teachers because he only teach Arabic language but when they meet Science or Math teacher then they show more respect.
>
> (Gamal)

In discussing this linguistic hierarchy, all the participants placed English at the top in terms of students' motivation to learn languages, followed by French and other languages, with Arabic at the bottom.

> I think if we were to look at something like a hierarchy, Arabic as a teaching subject would be considered at the bottom of the academic hierarchy.
>
> (Ahmed)

The Arabic teacher participants offered two additional reasons, besides a lack of interest among some school parents, for why Arabic was not considered as important as other subjects. First, they felt that the Arabic materials issued by the Ministry of Education (MoE) were too difficult for both expatriate and Emirati students, and they did not reflect how the students encountered Arabic in daily life. As a solution, four Arabic teacher participants (everyone except for Gamal) felt that the Arabic curriculum should integrate the teaching of Arabic dialects alongside MSA to increase students' motivation to learn Arabic.

> We can use local beside standard Arabic language. They must use this language because they are living here. We can use UAE dialect and Fusha (MSA) to show them the differences between.
>
> (Mona)

Second, as Gamal observed, some expatriate students planned to study or work abroad in the future and felt that Arabic might be of little use once they left the UAE. He said that he found it difficult to convince such students to take Arabic seriously. All the Arabic teacher participants and even Tim, who spoke fluent Arabic but did not teach it, felt that Arab and non-Arab students should learn Arabic together, especially in primary school, because it would motivate the students and be a more logical approach to teaching the language.

> Why not put Arabic and non-Arab students in one class and not separate them? It is not different between Arab and non-Arab. For Arabs and non-Arabs, when learn English, do we separate them? Then why do we separate them when learning Arabic? It is the same, language and language.
>
> (Huda)

Interestingly, while the English teacher participants felt that multilingualism was important for their students, they reported making little effort to become multilingual themselves. The only exception was Tim, who had learned Russian and Tagalog in addition to Arabic. For example, both Adam and Ahmed stated that they mostly knew English (Ahmed also knew Urdu), and they had not tried to learn a new language over the years.

> People generally assume I am from Egypt and so they always start a conversation in Arabic. And I am always apologizing because I can't speak the language. I have been spoilt in that, everywhere I go, people can speak English. So, it has never pushed me to learn any other language that is spoken.
>
> (Adam)

Adam noted that there was also little pressure from his school to speak Arabic, with Ahmed confirming that the situation was much the same at his school.

> With the staff in the school who are not fluent in English, they are encouraged to speak English more than we are encouraged to speak Arabic.
>
> (Adam)

Tim, in contrast, was quite critical of English teachers who had not tried to learn Arabic.

> You've lived in a country for 10, 15, or 20 years and you still can't speak the native language? I don't want to hear excuses. So, they say, 'But everybody around me speaks English', No! Shame!
>
> (Tim)

Teaching practices in the multilingual classroom

Apart from Ahmed, all the participants implemented translanguaging and cross-linguistic awareness-raising activities to varying degrees during lessons, notably when teaching grammar.

> I use English but little bit and sometimes I like to link in Arabic because there is some word from Arabic in French and from French in Arabic.
>
> (Diana)

> French grammar must pass a little bit by English because it is close to English. They need to know that it is a pronoun and after they need to understand infinitive and how it can come to do like present. Many things are similar in grammar like adjective, adverb.
>
> (Emna)

Discussing why he drew on other languages during his lessons, Gamal stressed that he found it impossible to teach Arabic grammar using only Arabic, adding that it had not worked. Samira revealed that she used English to draw cross-linguistic comparisons between Arabic and English when teaching verb and noun placement despite her department head telling her to use only Arabic.

> When he comes to visit me, I use English language. He says don't use. You are the teacher; you must use all the time Arabic. They ask us to stop using it but I use it, especially with the grammar. If any teacher do it, they will hide but, in high grades, it should be used.
>
> (Samira)

In contrast, Sara and Huda preferred to limit their use of other languages in the classroom, especially English, arguing that students already used English in all their non-language subjects, so it was important not to let it encroach on their Arabic lessons. Meanwhile, Adam said that each language teacher implemented a hidden curriculum at his school. Discussing his hidden curriculum, he reported encouraging his students to mix languages in the classroom to help them express their thoughts, although he could not participate since he only knew English. He said that he understood the need to mix languages when learning a new language.

> I feel that in order for them to learn, they must first learn in the languages they think in. So, if you think in Arabic but you are learning English it is

> really important that you gauge in Arabic first what something means. It is very important how people process.
>
> (Adam)

He reported pairing up students who were fluent Arabic-English and English-Urdu speakers with weaker multilingual students, explaining that it promoted greater peer learning in his class. He also encouraged his students to keep a multilingual dictionary on their desks during lessons. Ahmed, in contrast, felt that most students had a high enough level of English, so there was no reason to use other languages. For weaker students, he said that he helped them learn English through English. He discouraged the use of other languages during lessons, including when students tried to speak to him in Urdu or Hindi, languages that he knew well. He reasoned that his students were there to learn English.

> Many students do try to speak in Urdu or Hindi but that, as a rule, I do not allow.
>
> (Ahmed)

Tim had reservations about using multiple languages during lessons, saying that it would help those students who were motivated to learn, whereas those who, in his opinion, were lazy would take it as a cue to communicate only in Arabic.

Teacher collaboration across languages

Three of the participants, Mona, Diana, and Tim, reported collaborating with their colleagues from other language departments at their schools. Diana said that she periodically worked with her English and Science teacher colleagues to link content in multiple languages and subjects.

> We plan the same lesson and the kids see the lesson in different subjects. If it is like science vocabulary, like body parts, in French class, in this time he also learn in science class something related to body parts, and at the same time in English we try to link. We did this experience three times a year no more because they have more periods than me so I don't have enough time to follow them. So, we fix two weeks by term. These weeks, all the subjects must link.
>
> (Diana)

For Mona, collaboration involved exchanging notes on students and class activities with an English teacher colleague, whom she had known for a long time. Tim reported teaching his English teacher colleagues a combination of MSA and Arabic dialects. He said that the school had agreed to host his initiative, which had him organizing weekly hour-long lessons on campus for the

English teachers. He said that he had organized similar lessons in schools in other Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia where he had taught. He explained that the lessons had helped many teachers, who had told him that they could now better understand and communicate with their students. He remarked, however, that a similarly large number of teachers that he had taught had not been good students.

> They expect that it is supposed to be a lot easier. They weren't good students. They started and then quit. They didn't have that commitment. Even just one hour a week to learn Arabic.
>
> (Tim)

When asked about teaching English to Arabic teachers, he said that he had not thought about it, adding that it might have produced better results overall.

> I think the reverse would have been different. I think that would have been a nice initiative.
>
> (Tim)

Tim also stated that, while his school was supportive of his initiative, he felt that the school administration had not provided sufficient encouragement to the English teachers to attend. Ahmed and Adam, meanwhile, reported that there had been no real collaboration between different language departments at their schools.

> You would generally find that Arabic-speaking staff would sort of keep to themselves, English-speaking staff would keep to themselves. There are a few teachers who try to break those barriers but it is typically an Arabic-speaking staff who is learning English that would integrate with us.
>
> (Adam)

Discussion

The study explored how the participants approached multilingualism as a resource in education, their implementation of multilingual pedagogy, and whether there were differences between the Arabic, English, and French teacher participants in this regard. The findings indicated that most of the participants were aware of the importance of being multilingual, much like the UAE secondary school students surveyed by Calafato and Tang (2019a, 2019b), and tried to implement multilingual pedagogy with their students. At the same time, despite their awareness of its importance, not all the participants (e.g., Ahmed and Adam) made an effort to become multilingual themselves. The use of English as a lingua franca appeared to have lowered their motivation to learn languages other than English, with parallels to the students in

the study by Hopkyns (2014). The linguistic hierarchy at school and the fact that the school administration did not encourage them to learn Arabic were likely also contributing factors. Moreover, while some participants observed that parents supported their children's learning of multiple languages, those teaching Arabic felt that it was not considered as important as other languages. The Arabic teacher participants suggested two changes that they thought would increase student motivation to learn Arabic: introducing dialects into the Arabic curriculum and using more relevant materials. Integrating dialects into MSA lessons is supported by several researchers (e.g., Al-Batal, 2018; Huntley, 2018), who have called for a move away from teaching only MSA so that learners can participate in a greater variety of authentic interactions that involve Arabic. Such a shift might present challenges for teachers – for instance, exposing learners to Arabic diglossia (and the potential confusion that might cause), selecting appropriate pedagogical materials, and choosing which dialects to teach and how to teach them since many dialects do not have a written form. However, there are several curricular models (e.g., Trentman, 2018) that schools and teachers could draw inspiration from when integrating dialects into MSA lessons.

The findings also indicated that the majority of the participants used multilingual pedagogy to varying extents when teaching and that this did not necessarily depend on *their* level of multilingualism and potential affordances. For example, Adam promoted translanguaging and multilingual peer learning among his students despite being mostly monolingual (and making little effort to become multilingual). Ahmed, in contrast, despite knowing English *and* Urdu/Hindi, used English exclusively even though there were many opportunities to draw on his and his students' multilingual affordances during lessons. The Arabic and French teacher participants, most of whom spoke three languages, were more uniform in their use of multilingual pedagogy, especially when teaching grammar, although some of the Arabic teacher participants also clearly wanted to devote more time to using Arabic during lessons. This appeared to be a reaction to what they saw as too much attention being given to English at school and in society, which is a view that has gained some traction in the UAE (see Siemund et al., 2021). In terms of specific practices, the participants reported using translanguaging, drawing on cross-linguistic comparisons regarding grammar, and bilingual dictionaries, with a minority collaborating with other language and non-language subject teachers. These activities represent critical components of multilingual pedagogy (Haukås, 2016) and are evidence of how the participants drew on their and their students' multilingual affordances to enhance their teaching in diverse ways.

Moreover, teacher collaboration in this study was not only aimed at boosting students' cross-linguistic awareness but also manifested as participants teaching languages to their colleagues. Indeed, Tim's efforts to teach his English teacher colleagues Arabic appeared to be a rare, albeit potentially very fruitful, initiative even if he reported that not all the

colleagues whom he taught had committed to learning Arabic. A more systematic initiative where teachers volunteer to teach each other languages and share ideas, either in tandem or group format (see Szyszka et al., 2018), could lead to them understanding their students' language learning experiences better and interacting with them on a deeper level. It would also create more opportunities for collaboration among teachers due to stronger collegial bonds and a deeper awareness of each other's subjects. Such an initiative could start with a focus on teaching English and Arabic, and then expand to cover other languages. Stronger support from schools and the MoE, which was not provided in Tim's case, would likely lead to more teachers staying committed. Finally, it is difficult to say that there were notable differences between the participants based on whether they taught Arabic, English, or French. The study was exploratory and consisted of a small sample of participants, which affects the generalizability of the findings. The teachers were also not observed while teaching, although the COVID-19 situation would have made conducting observations difficult. In any event, only Ahmed appeared to reject multilingual pedagogy in its entirety, whereas all the other participants used multilingual pedagogy to varying extents and recognized its benefits, even when their heads of department encouraged a more monolingual approach.

Conclusion and implications for language education and policy

This study is one of the first to look at teachers of Arabic, English, and French in the UAE and the extent to which they implement multilingual pedagogy. In terms of language policy, the findings hold implications for private EMI schools, as well as public schools that have moved towards a more multilingual education format that places greater emphasis on English (e.g., in Abu Dhabi). Specifically, having English as the medium or principal language of instruction should be done with an eye to making sure that students are cognizant of the importance of interacting in both multilingual and monolingual contexts, as is done in daily life in many countries, including in the UAE. This means implementing certain measures at the curriculum and school levels to dissipate the linguistic hierarchies with which teachers and students have to contend. At the school level, one such measure would be to promote *systematic* collaboration between language teachers and those of other subjects. Such collaboration could be reinforced by raising awareness among teachers of the benefits of implementing multilingual pedagogy when teaching their students. It is also advisable for the MoE to take steps to make Arabic instruction more relevant and equitable. This means integrating an Arabic dialect or dialects into the Arabic curriculum, discontinuing separate Arabic streams for Arabs and non-Arabs, and assigning materials to teachers that more accurately reflect how Arabic is used in real-world interactions. Barring these measures, it is difficult to see how students, regardless of whether they are Emirati or expatriate, will be motivated to develop advanced proficiency in a

language that corresponds so little to the Arabic used outside of school, with strong implications for their multilingual competence. Finally, one hopes that this exploratory study will serve as an impetus for researchers to explore how language teachers navigate the multilingualism found in their classrooms in the super-diverse Gulf states in greater depth, especially as this concerns the teaching of languages other than English.

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12 Navigating identity and belonging as international branch campus students

The role of linguistic shame

Sara Hillman

Travelling neoliberal ideologies, policies, and practices have led to the internationalization and 'Englishization' of higher education over the past two decades (Barnawi, 2018). This can be observed both in the rapid spread of English as the medium of instruction (EMI) in higher education (Macaro et al., 2017) and the significant increase of higher education institutions, predominantly based in the United States and United Kingdom, exporting their academic programs across geopolitical borders and establishing international branch campuses (IBCs). According to the Cross-Border Education Research Team (2020), the largest importers of these transnational higher education programs have been countries in East and Southeast Asia (China, Singapore, Malaysia) and the Gulf (United Arab Emirates and Qatar). Qatar hosts 11 IBCs, with six prestigious American IBCs forming part of Qatar Foundation's (QF) massive 'Education City' project. US international branch campuses in Qatar's Education City include Carnegie Mellon University, Georgetown University, Northwestern University, Texas A&M, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Arts, and Weill Cornell Medicine. As Graham et al. (2021) state, 'IBCs are established with the intention of creating an educational environment that mirrors the language, culture, and academic standards for faculty and students of the home campus' (p. 2). However, as Vora (2019) argues, these campuses are not just transplants but 'sites of new agencies and belongings' (p. 29). Students are expected to develop competencies, skills, and identities – linguistic and otherwise – that will give them better chances of succeeding in the job market, and this is treated as something desirable in the neoliberal ideology of the IBC.

IBCs must often navigate various tensions between their stakeholders such as the home campus and the local government, but the voices of other important stakeholders such as the local communities and students have been heard less. Walsh (2019) discusses the sociocultural challenges of IBCs in Qatar and how participants she interviewed from Qatari communities were concerned about the 'potential loss of Qatari culture and religion' (p. 281) in IBCs. Crist (2015) lists one of the common concerns about QF's IBCs as 'the erosion of cultural values, norms, and language that is thought to be caused

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by foreign institutions, either directly or indirectly' (p. 114). Additionally, Vora (2019) argues:

> [H]aving an Arabic and English option for higher education in Doha in the form of the local Qatar University and the more globally oriented Education City has created new divisions among Qataris, or intensified preexisting ones: as students of the same generation graduate in higher numbers from both places, often from within the same family, they increasingly live in different linguistic and social worlds.
>
> (p. 45)

This chapter takes a critical approach to examine notions of identity and belonging for Qatari national students who attend the mixed gender, EMI IBCs in QF's Education City. In Qatar, these students are often juxtaposed with students who attend Qatar University (QU), the primary national institution of higher education in Qatar, which employs gender segregation policies and offers many of its degrees through Arabic-medium instruction. Drawing on a five-year ethnographic study of QF students' experiences, this chapter specifically examines the integral role that 'linguistic shame' plays in identity construction as QF students engage with neoliberal, transnational higher education and navigate different cultural and linguistic norms as they traverse between their home communities and Education City. Liyanage and Canagarajah (2019) define linguistic shame as 'embarrassment in using a language resulting from the social discourses and practices that denigrate the identities and outcomes attached to such language use' (p. 2). This study follows other 'critically-inflected emotion research' (e.g., De Costa et al., 2018, p. 91) and expands the limited research on linguistic shame in applied linguistics (Liyanage & Canagarajah, 2019) by examining it within an EMI and IBC context.

The chapter first provides an overview of the notions of identity, belonging, and linguistic shame and gives examples from previous studies in the Gulf. The chapter then describes the macro-level (e.g., language policies, rhetoric of Qatar's leaders), meso-level (e.g., university and home communities), and micro-level (e.g., student choices, identity) contexts of the study. After briefly describing the methodology, the chapter then explores how students' emotions of linguistic shame are shaped by the forces of the macro-, meso-, and micro-level contexts. Lastly, the chapter reflects on the need for IBC faculties to be strategic in their pedagogy in terms of helping students reflect on and navigate these emotions. The emotions of students have often been overlooked in EMI and IBC literature, and this chapter heeds the call of Golkowska (2016) to give more attention to the 'lived experience of students negotiating disparate discourses and conflicting cultural value systems' (p. 3) in IBCs. Additionally, it heeds the call of Liyanage and Canagarajah (2019), who argue that 'shame emerging from local community norms' deserves more recognition.

Identity, belonging, and linguistic shame

Emotions such as linguistic shame are an integral part of people's notions of identity and belonging (Benesch, 2012). Identity can be defined as 'the way a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future' (Norton, 2013, p. 4). Belonging can be simply understood as a person's sense of connection to a community (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). Shame is theorized to be a self-conscious or social emotion (Ross & Stracke, 2016; Teimouri, 2018). This is because 'other people's thoughts, judgements, and feelings play a substantive role' (Teimouri, 2018, p. 634) in a person's feelings of shame. Self-conscious emotions such as shame shape a person's sense of self (or identity) and sense of belonging, as shame helps facilitate the 'maintenance or enhancement of one's social status, gaining social acceptance, or avoiding group rejection' (p. 634). Galmiche (2018) describes how the emotion of shame can cause one's sense of self to feel 'inadequate or defective' and how shame is accompanied with 'exposure to the others' gaze' (p. 102). However, notions of identity, belonging, and shame should not be understood as static but rather are under constant fluctuation. As Liyanage and Canagarajah (2019) argue, they are constructed in discourse and within sociohistorical contexts.

Few empirical studies have examined how learning or using English can evoke the emotion of shame, especially within the context of EMI higher education or IBCs. Liyanage and Canagarajah's (2019) study analyses linguistic shame in English language teaching in the Republic of Kiribati and its identity implications. Specifically, they analyse the shame of 'projecting an out-group identity in violation of local solidarity and shame of abandoning the heritage language for gaining a powerful new language' (p. 7). They state that 'at a time when English is uncritically and universally treated as desirable, it is significant that it evokes shame in some communities' (p. 4). While emotions often get divided into categories of either positive or negative, Liyanage and Canagarajah argue that shame has its own complexity and is not always negative related to language use. For example, shame about using English from community members may help to maintain heritage languages or cultural identity. They also argue that 'practices of shaming have the potential to counter neoliberal ideologies' (p. 4) and strengthen community values. While shame in terms of learning or using a second language can be related to embarrassment or fear of ridicule, it can also be related to new identities that are viewed as undesirable by a local community. For example, there are many accounts of how acting like a Westerner or using English outside of formal classroom environments can be positioned as showing off and evoke shaming (e.g., Hillman & Ocampo Eibenschutz, 2018; Hopkyns, 2020b; Kane, 2014).

Previous studies have illustrated ways that Gulf students navigate linguistic and cultural identities in EMI higher education contexts and how

these contexts influence notions of students' identity and belonging to the nation (e.g., Abou-El-Kheir, 2017; Golkowska, 2016; Hopkyns 2020a, 2020b; Kane, 2014; Masri, 2020; Pessoa & Rajakumar, 2011; Vora, 2015, 2019). For example, within the context of the UAE, Hopkyns (2020b) examines the effect of English on Emirati university students' identities. Hopkyns discusses how students negotiate their hybridized linguistic and cultural identities as they move between various communities, such as the university or home with family and friends. One of the study's participants, Abdul, feels proud of being bilingual in public spaces, but Hopkyns writes that 'in other contexts, such as at home with parents, his English-speaking self may not induce the same levels of self-worth' (p. 257). Within the context of Qatar, Pessoa and Rajakumar (2011) collected data from QU and QF students to examine students' perspectives on the impact of EMI higher education in Qatar and discuss how students navigate 'concerns of parents who see changes in the personality, behavior, and values of their children, especially their female children, as a result of attending an American university in Education City' (p. 165). Their study sheds light on complex issues of culture and identity and illustrates how many QF students embrace as well as resist aspects of linguistic and cultural hybridity. However, the emotional impact of shame and its role in embracing or resisting hybridity has not been investigated deeply in previous studies on identity and belonging in the Gulf.

Context of the study

The macro level: Qatar's demographics and language policies

Qatar is a very small country, bordered only by Saudi Arabia on the Arabian Peninsula, and it is ruled by a constitutional monarchy. The population has grown rapidly in the past several decades from nearly 750,000 in 2004 to a population of around 2.7 million people in 2021 (Qatar Planning and Statistics Authority, 2021). This is due to a dependence on foreign labour and a rapid influx of guest workers in the country. Among the Gulf states, Qatar currently has the highest percentage of foreign nationals, approximately 89.5%, as part of its total population (Snoj, 2019). Arabic is the only official language of Qatar. However, given that there are an estimated 94 different nationalities in Qatar, and Arabic speakers only constitute about a third of the population (Ahmad & Hillman, 2020), English acts as a de facto second official language and is used as a lingua franca. Given growing concerns about the increasing dominance of English in the country, Qatar has engaged in several Arabization policies over the past decade. In 2012, an Emiri decree made Arabic mandatory on all public signs, and Arabic was reinstated as the medium of instruction in K-12 education as well as Qatar University in many social science subjects. This abrupt shift came after a trial of EMI that was launched in 2003 and deemed unsuccessful (Mustafawi & Shaaban, 2019). Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, chairperson of QF and the driving force behind

EMI education and social reforms in Qatar, spoke at the Renaissance of Arabic Language Forum in 2016 and expressed her sadness that Qatari children were retreating from Arabic. She stated:

> We in the Arab world did not invest in the extraordinary scientific advancements, particularly in the fields of education, information, communications and media and the development of language education and we left our children to use other languages even while communicating with their parents.
>
> (*The Peninsula*, 2016)

These concerns led to a more comprehensive Arabic Language Protection Law in 2019. The law requires, among other stipulations, that ministries, government agencies, and public entities and institutions use Arabic as the primary language in all their functions. The law also stipulates that public higher education institutions teach in the Arabic language and conduct research in Arabic, 'unless the nature of some courses requires teaching in another language' (Amiri, 2019). Private universities such as QF's IBCs, however, are exempt from this law.

As part of the goal of human development in Qatar's National Vision 2030 (General Secretariat for Development Planning, 2008) and the move away from the dependence on hydrocarbons, Qatar has made education one of its highest priorities and invested millions in both reforming the flagship national university – Qatar University – and in establishing QF's Education City.

The meso level: Qatar University versus Qatar Foundation

Qatar University

QU is Qatar's flagship public research university and its primary institution of higher education with a current student body of around 23, 000 students, which is roughly 70% of all students attending higher education programs in Qatar. QU accommodates most Qatari secondary school graduates who seek higher education but either do not have the academic qualifications, or choose not to study abroad or attend one of the IBCs in Qatar. Approximately 60% of its students are local and 75% of its students are female (Times Higher Education, 2021). The university has a reputation for maintaining traditional Qatari values, with separate campuses for men and women, and all undergraduate classrooms and facilities, as well as many extracurricular activities, continue to be gender segregated. It is viewed as the central institution for 'training the workforce and preserving cultural traditions and heritage' (Crist, 2015, p. 93).

While QU adopted an EMI policy as part of a process of internationalization in the early 2000s, it abruptly switched back to Arabic-medium instruction (AMI) in 2012 as tensions and concerns increased regarding loss

of Arabic language literacy skills and Arab cultural and linguistic identity in Qatar and the Gulf region (Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011; Pessoa & Rajakumar, 2011). Hillman (2019, p. 182) describes how 'debates around national cultural identity in Qatar have juxtaposed English against an increasing promotion of Arabization, which has led to educational and workplace language policies zigzagging between monolingual English and monolingual Arabic'. Currently at QU, education, art, and social science courses use AMI, and the natural sciences, engineering, and business programs use EMI. In the early 2000s, QU's reputation as the primary higher education institution was viewed as deteriorating due to a lack of rigorous academic standards. However, QU has undergone major reforms and increased its academic standards over the past two decades. It has also built numerous programs and a reputation for research excellence. Nevertheless, QU continues not to be viewed with the same prestige as QF's IBCs.

In Barnawi's (2018) chapter overviewing the contemporary situation of higher education in Qatar, he argues that Qatar's zigzagging language policy between EMI and AMI has produced 'inverted realities' in Qatar (p. 101). He defines 'inverted realities' within the context of Qatar as follows:

> […] that upward social mobility and choices of Arabic-medium instruction have become available for all Qataris under the abrupt policy convergence, but expectations and access to better education are continued to be conditioned by the market forces, which value the English language over Arabic.
>
> (pp. 107–108)

These inverted realities can clearly be seen in many Qatari national students' continued investment in English language education and their desire to be accepted into one of QF's IBCs in order to be competitive on the job market.

Qatar Foundation and international branch campuses

Given the potential for economic development through higher education, specifically EMI higher education, Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, the wife of the former Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, was the driving force behind the founding of QF in 1995. QF is a private non-profit organization, and the multibillion-dollar investment in Education City, launched in 1997, was its flagship initiative. Currently consisting of seven IBCs and one homegrown university, it is a massive transnational higher education project and was the first example of multiple IBCs under one umbrella organization (Crist, 2015). The IBCs have graduated 4,000 students since the early 2000s, and there are more than 3,000 undergraduate and graduate students currently enrolled (Qatar Foundation, 2020). Qatari nationals make up somewhere between 35–70% of the student body population of individual IBCs in Education City, with other students largely coming from neighbouring Arab

countries and South Asia, although many have been raised in Qatar. There is significant pressure from QF to continue to increase the overall percentage of Qatari national students; however, students need to meet the English language requirements for IBCs. For example, Texas A&M University at Qatar requires a minimum overall band score of 6.0 on the IETLS (or other minimum English scores such as an 80 on TOEFL) to be admitted into the university and a 7.0 to be able to skip foundation English courses and be enrolled directly into the English composition course that counts towards their major. QU, in contast, only requires a minimum overall band score of 5.5 on the IELTS or 61 on the TOEFL.

In theory, all the IBCs follow the same admissions standards as their home institution and courses are taught in English. Students obtain the same degree as from the university's home campus when they graduate. QF advertises these programs as having identical curricula to those taught on the home campuses but also refers to them with the slogan of 'international degree, regional culture' (Qatar Foundation, 2020). As Vora (2019) describes:

> Mission statements, communications, and orientations inculcate home campus identity as transposable to Qatar – thus one regularly hears 'howdy' within the hallways and classrooms of Texas A&M Qatar, and admission pamphlets at Carnegie Mellon Qatar are peppered with Tartan print and Scottie dogs.
>
> (p. 6)

Most faculty are not Qatari nationals, and many have been recruited from the respective home campuses. While a certain segment of Qataris (mostly male) still study abroad for higher education, the IBCs offer them brand name alternatives for higher education at home.

The micro level: Students' reasons for choosing Qatar Foundation over Qatar University

Qatari national students at QF's IBCs express extreme pride at being QF students and will often claim that being a QF student is far superior to being a QU student, despite many having siblings, extended family, and friends studying at QU (Hillman & Ocampo Eibenschutz, 2018). Some of the reasons why students choose to study at a QF IBC over QU include the academic reputation, the university brand reputation, the student characteristics, and the medium of instruction.

Since QU shifted many of its degree programs back to Arabic, EMI is a significant reason why Qatari students choose to study at an IBC. Students often give more importance to being in an EMI institution with a well-known brand reputation than the specific degree they are pursuing (Hillman et al., 2021). Despite most Qatari students attending Arabic-medium secondary schools, they value EMI for higher education and feel that, whether they want to work

in the public or private sector in Qatar, most companies will be using English and desire graduates with strong English communication skills (Hillman et al., 2021). Sheikha Moza bint Nasser has heavily emphasized the prestige of QF's IBCs and how QF students are able to secure the best jobs or be accepted into elite graduate schools abroad (Hillman & Ocampo Eibenschutz, 2018).

However, students tend to perceive academic and social divisions between QF and QU students (Vora, 2019). While they and their families take tremendous pride in studying at elite Western institutions in English, students often discuss being the recipients of linguistic shaming from family and friends for being QF students or feeling self-shame. Therefore, the current study takes a critical approach to examine linguistic shame and its influence on notions of identity and belonging for Qatari national students who attend QF's IBCs. Taking into consideration the social ecologies of the participants, I consider how students' emotions are shaped by some of these macro-, meso-, and micro-level forces.

The study

Setting: Texas A&M University at Qatar

The data for this study was collected at one of QF's IBCs – Texas A&M University at Qatar (TAMUQ) – which offers engineering degrees. In terms of student demographics, there were 538 degree-seeking students at the start of the 2019–2020 academic year. The majority of the students (54%) were Qatari nationals, while the remaining population of non-national students mostly originated from other parts of the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. Previous internal surveys have indicated that 80–85% of students speak a dialect of Arabic as their first language.

Participants

The data for the current study is taken from a larger set of data that was collected over the course of five different semesters (2015–2020) as part of an ethnographic study investigating the educational and linguistic experiences of Qatari national students studying at QF's EMI IBCs. Participants for the study were recruited from Foundation English classes at TAMUQ. Informed consent was received from 102 (female = 68, 67%; male = 34, 33%) Qatari national students. Participants were aged between 17 and 19 years old. On the background questionnaire, all 102 participants listed Arabic as their mother tongue/first language, English as their second language, and only four participants listed a third language, which was French.

Data collection and analysis

Although 102 students were involved in the larger ethnographic study, data from 82 Qatari university students who participated in face-to-face interviews

with me are the focus of this chapter. The interviews allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of why the students chose to study at an IBC, and their beliefs and practices when it came to language use both inside and outside the university. While there were no specific questions related to their orientations towards shame, the 42-item interview protocol sought to collect the students' perspectives, feelings, beliefs, and desires in relation to acculturation, language use, language attitudes, language prestige, motivation, and identity. Each of the 82 interviews was semi-structured and conducted with me in English or a mixture of English and Arabic. They ranged from 40 to 70 minutes long.

The data were analysed using discourse and qualitative analysis techniques. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, and I immersed myself in the data using the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to help generate codes and identify and refine the themes and subthemes that emerged from the data. When reporting the findings, pseudonyms were used for all participant names. As a researcher, I had both outsider and insider statuses. I am a white American female who speaks English as a first language. However, I have been living in Qatar and working at the institution for six years and had previously taught all the participants. I also speak Arabic as a second language. This afforded me a more emic perspective, and both male and female students appeared very comfortable expressing their viewpoints with me.

Findings and discussion

Shaming of hybrid linguistic practices

My participants frequently brought up examples of how studying in QF's IBCs made them lose their sense of belonging in their communities and complicated their identities. While my participants mainly spoke Arabic at home and in their communities, once they became QF students, they found themselves naturally mixing in English more frequently with their interactions with family members and friends in these domains outside of the university. Many of the participants discussed how they were recipients of linguistic shaming for using English too well or for mixing English with Arabic. Many of their family and friends explicitly connected their use of English to being a QF student, and it was viewed as showing off an 'out-group identity in violation of local solidarity' (Liyanage & Canagarajah, 2019, p. 7). Barnawi (2018) describes how families who try to preserve the Arabic language and local identity and traditions are 'forced to engage in confrontation and tensions with teenagers surrounded by an environment supportive to a neoliberal-based culture of education and globalization' (p. 110). For example, my participant Sara discussed how it was easier to speak English in QF. With her extended family, they shamed her for speaking in English and felt that her speaking in English was a result of the IBC changing her in some way. She was also accused of bragging and showing off when she spoke English:

> Here [in QF] it's easier to me to speak in English. But, like, I was sitting in my cousin's and I spoke in English. They're like, 'We know that you're at Texas A&M, but you don't have to talk in English'. They say that I'm bragging … like you went to Texas A&M, like you've changed a lot.
>
> (Sara)

Likewise, my participant Hissa discussed how her family shamed her for mixing English words with Arabic and would not listen to her when she used English. They blamed this mixing on her being a QF student:

> I mix, like, the English words with Arabic now, so my family they started, like, 'Oh, Texas made you like…'. So, they don't listen to my story or anything when I use English. They like to shame me by using the Arabic word that is the same to the English word that I used before, you know?
>
> (Hissa)

My participant Njoud explained how she sometimes forgets she must switch to Arabic when she is outside of QF, and Qataris will tell her that Arabic is her language even though she goes to an 'English university'. She describes how they 'look down on' her for speaking English:

> Sometimes, like, society will say, like, 'Oh, why you're speaking in English instead of Arabic? That's your language'. And I don't know what … They look down on, I mean, they don't like the fact that you're speaking English … Like, my family. They'd say, like, 'Why English? Like we know you're in English university, but speak in Arabic' … And, like, yeah, I forgot that I have to switch.
>
> (Njoud)

As another example, my participant Maeen told me how he had high school friends that attended QU. He used to only speak in Arabic with them, but now he finds it more natural to switch between English and Arabic. However, his QU friends will immediately shame him when he uses English and tell him to stop showing off:

> Some of the times I speak with my friends from the high school in English, like for, for … in one sentence …[They] say, 'Shut the f…, just shut up and talk in Arabic'. Ha.
>
> (Maeen)

Many of my participants expressed how, even though they valued the hybrid (mixed) identities and language practices they were developing as IBC students and felt this would help them succeed in the workplace later, linguistic hybridity accommodating English was not something viewed as desirable within the context of their family homes and local communities. Outside QF,

when they mixed English with Arabic, they came up against family members and friends who shamed them for it and worried about their loss of Arabic, even though some of those same family members were simultaneously very proud that their children were developing language skills at an EMI institution with a brand name that would help them in the global economy. Many students, such as my participants Njoud and Abdulaziz, spoke about how they felt they had more freedom to speak English or mix English with Arabic in QF's Education City than outside or at home with other Qataris:

> Here [in QF] I feel like freedom but outside if you use, if, like, if somebody is Qatari and talking to Qatari and you speak in English, they will say, like, 'What, why you didn't use Arabic?'
>
> (Njoud)

> Here [in QF] I can speak both English and Arabic, but in, like, at home, you cannot speak English because, first, brothers will make fun of you, that, like, you're showing off, and then your mother may, like, hit you or something because she doesn't understand English.
>
> (Abdulaziz)

Kane (2014) provides similar examples of student participants at another IBC – Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar – reporting on 'the danger of being perceived as "arrogant" and "superior" outside the academic venue' (p. 103). In order 'to avoid estrangement and the risk of alienating one's family members, friends, and/or professional superiors', Kane found that students had to downplay their English abilities (Kane, 2014, p. 105). Similarly, Liyanage and Canagarajah (2019) found in their study that '[s]peaking English locally is interpreted as claiming higher social status, as indexed by the power of English as a linguistic capital and is an invitation to be shamed in public' (p. 15). Additionally, Hopkyns (2020b, p. 258) mentions how using English at home can be interpreted as 'condescending or snobbish interactive positioning' in the UAE. There were identity implications for my participants when they used English in their homes and local communities, as it was often met with shaming. Families desired English for their children, but they also wanted it restricted to certain domains such as education and workplace. As Liyanage and Canagarajah (2019) state, 'shame derives from adopting an alienating identity through the use of a foreign language. People may desire and value English but find new identities undesirable in local community contexts' (p. 6).

Ahmed's navigation of linguistic shaming

Many of my participants described the challenge of only speaking Arabic at home and how they were constantly adjusting their speech as a result of shaming by family and friends. Additionally, many students described how

they would navigate linguistic shaming by speaking a more localized Gulf English (Hillman & Ocampo Eibenschutz, 2018) or English in a 'less fluent' or 'broken' way, as they described it. My participant Ahmed discussed how he felt uncomfortable speaking in English in his community 'because of fear of judgment of others'. In order not to be shamed and made fun of, he described how he does not speak in a 'fluent manner' outside of Education City:

> I used to talk in English and then my brother would shout at me. He's like, 'Don't talk in English, talk in Arabic when you're in the house', so I started talking Arabic and now I feel uncomfortable talking in English … like, basically in our community … was preventing us from doing something because of fear of judgment of others, so I don't really feel comfortable talking in English, and when I talk in English, I don't talk in, like, a fluent manner. Even when all my friends know how to talk English fluently, I don't really talk in it fluently. If I do it outside of Education City, they'll make fun of me.
>
> (Ahmed)

My participant Ahmed talked about how, even though he felt uncomfortable speaking in English, he still preferred English and felt this was 'wrong'. He felt shame since his English literacy skills had become stronger than his Arabic due to his EMI schooling, and this influenced how he viewed his Qatari identity and his sense of belonging to his community. He navigated not being able to chat on a chemistry WhatsApp group in Arabic by making up excuses such as not having downloaded the Arabic keyboard:

> I do prefer English more than Arabic, I feel it's wrong, so I want to improve my Arabic. Like, I just feel ashamed in a way that … things are changing to Arabic and then I feel bad that I don't know how to talk in Arabic. So, there is, like, groups in WhatsApp for, like, chemistry, for chemistry, and all the people talk in Arabic. I know how to read it, but I'd reply in English, and they are, like, 'Why, why you're not typing Arabic?' 'I don't download the Arabic keyboard' [I say], (ha ha) just a fast excuse. Like, I know better English than Arabic, so I do feel ashamed.
>
> (Ahmed)

Ahmed felt ashamed that his Arabic was not strong, especially since he said, 'Sheikha Moza bint Nasser was stressing on English' and then 'she completely changed' to lamenting that children do not know Arabic anymore. Ahmed had gone through several shifts between Arabic and EMI education in his K-12 schooling and remembered when English was at the height of its prestige in the early 2000s. The case of Ahmed highlights how students' emotions are shaped by macro, meso, and micro levels, and particular sociohistorical moments. Qatar's educational leaders have stressed that the relationship between university institutions and the job market is an integral one, and

more EMI undergraduate options continue to be launched and lauded. Yet, at the same time, leaders lament the loss of Arabic, and Arabization increases in the country. Participants like Ahmed struggle to find a sense of belonging amidst these inverted realities in which leaders support neoliberal English language ideologies, but their rhetoric also evokes shame regarding the status of Qatari national students' Arabic skills.

Conclusion

English use, as Liyanage and Canagarajah (2019) describe, can evoke 'powerful affective dimensions elemental to the ongoing constitution of social structures in many communities' (p. 3). This chapter sheds lights on some of the linguistic identity tensions facing young Qatari national students and the role of linguistic shame when it comes to current undergraduate education choices in Qatar. While identity tensions are in many ways 'ordinary' and not evidence of a crisis (Vora, 2019, p. 29), Qatari national students who attend IBCs are often forced to navigate conflicting discourses and practices to find belonging within their communities.

My participants frequently oscillated between discourses of pride and shame in relation to being QF students. On the one hand, my participants felt a sense of pride that they were QF students and chose QF over QU because they wanted institutions that were known worldwide with strong academic reputations, serious students, and curricula taught in English. English was an 'object of desire' (Liyanage & Canagarajah, 2019, p. 3) for them and their families. They felt this was the way to be competitive in the job market in Qatar. Despite major reforms of the national university, QU's move to Arabic-medium instruction only weakened its position in attracting these students who arguably were already 'groomed' (Barnawi, 2018, p. 101) to follow neoliberal ideologies promoting Western, EMI education as the way to a successful future within Qatar.

At the same time, by being QF students, my participants were often shamed by family members and friends and felt shame for taking on what was perceived as an otherness and an estrangement from their communities because of the change in their linguistic identities. They had to navigate new ways of what it means to be 'Qatari'. Their conflicted identities and sense of national belonging mirror Qatar's conflicting ideological rhetoric at the macro level about the prestige of QF's IBCs while also increasingly pushing and praising Arabization policies as essential to not losing Qatari culture and identity. Qatar also continues to invest in more EMI university programs, which only creates further inverted realities for students to navigate. Additionally, in the current era of online education due to COVID-19, the domains of campus and home have become more blurred, perhaps complicating linguistic identities for QF students even more.

There is an obvious tension that students must navigate between the need for English for economic prospects and the importance of Arabic for

preserving local culture and religion. As Liyanage and Canagarajah (2019) point out, linguistic shaming is not always negative, and it can help to counter neoliberal ideologies that support the individual and materialism more than the community, and, within the context of this study, linguistic shaming may help preserve the transgenerational use of the Arabic language amidst the hegemony of English in Qatar. Liyanage and Canagarajah (2019) argue that the people of Kiribati 'are adopting shaming to prevent English from reshaping their values and identities' (p. 20) and this seemed to be the purpose of the shaming practices described by my student participants as well. Qatari communities recognize the functional purposes of sending their children to IBCs, but they also want to be able to maintain local ways of life, with the Arabic language being an essential part of that.

IBC students in Qatar and beyond could benefit from space to reflect on the emotional impact of being IBC students and how they navigate cultural and linguistic tensions. IBCs can and should provide supportive environments for students to discuss neoliberal ideologies, policies, and practices, and the hegemony of English in their lives. This support might come through classroom discussions, readings, personal/literacy narrative assignments, and related research and projects in local communities. This may help IBC students like Ahmad, who told me over and over that he feels ashamed, to be more confident in their sense of self and belonging to their communities.

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Note: Tables are in **bold** type and figures are in *italics*. The acronyms FDW, IELTS and TCK stand for "foreign domestic worker", "International English Language Testing System" and "third culture kids" respectively.