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Sarah Hopkyns
Zayed University

Wafa Zoghbor
Zayed University, wafa.zoghbor@zu.ac.ae

Peter John Hassall
Zayed University

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Sarah Hopkyns[1] | **Wafa Zoghbor**[2] | **Peter John Hassall**[3]

[1] The College of Education, Zayed University, Abu Dhabi

[2] University College, Zayed University, Abu Dhabi

[3] University College, Zayed University, Dubai

Correspondence
Sarah Hopkyns, Zayed University, PO Box 144534, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.
Email: sarah.hopkyns@zu.ac.ae

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Abstract

For Emirati millennials, multilingualism is both typical and expected. Although Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is the official language of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Emiratis mainly use Khaleeji (Gulf Arabic) dialects at home. English is the lingua franca and common medium of instruction with approximately 100 other languages also being spoken in the nation. While top-down language policies overtly favor English and MSA, which appear on signage, in educational contexts, and online as two 'pure' languages placed side-by-side, language 'on the ground' is considerably more complex than as 'planned'. This paper explores the language ideologies and language use of 100 Emirati university students through mixed-method questionnaires and classroom observations recorded in researcher journals. Analysis of the data revealed creative translanguaging practices. It is argued that such grassroots hybridity could act as a counter-discourse to rigid 'English only' expectations in English-medium universities and policies advocating 'pure and separate' language use.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Sitting in a café in downtown Abu Dhabi or Dubai, one is surrounded by diversity. Not only do people's appearances vary dramatically from Emiratis in the distinctive national dress of black *abayas* and white *kandoras*, to expatriates dressed in jeans and T-shirts, but the language one hears is an equally vibrant mix. Emiratis' Arabic is almost always peppered with English words. Filipinos' Tagalog and English is inevitably interspersed with expressions from the local Khaleeji dialect, such as *yalla* ('come on') or *shuu?* ('what?'). British, Russian, and Lebanese expatriate friends might converse together in English, but when the Russian answers her phone she switches to her native tongue. The Lebanese woman dips in and out of French, Arabic, and English depending on social interactions. The ways in which such linguistic diversity and hybridity could be exemplified in the UAE's superdiverse cities are inexhaustible.

Multiple new terms relating to linguistic hybridity have flooded the field of sociolinguistics in recent times. Ways of mixing languages and discourses have been referred to as 'translingual practices' (Canagarajah, 2013), 'translanguaging' (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Garcia, 2009b; Li & Zhu, 2013), 'metrolingualism' (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010), 'polylingualism' (Jorgensen, 2008), and 'linguascapes' (Dovchin, 2017). When typing these terms onto a computer screen, a red squiggly line appears under each one which suggests that the concepts behind the terms are innovative, novel, modern, and unique. However, despite the many new ways to describe linguistic hybridity, the practices themselves are far from revolutionary in many multilingual settings, including the UAE. Rather, the everyday mixing of languages occurs quite naturally as a normal part of daily interaction. The 'ordinariness' of linguistic hybridity in multilingual contexts has been recognized by many scholars (Blommaert, 2015; Canagarajah, 2013; Dovchin, 2017; Dovchin & Lee, 2019). As Dovchin and Lee (2019, p. 2) state, 'there is nothing exotic, odd, or perhaps even "exciting"about linguistic creativity'. Such a reality is not often reflected in language planning and policy, including English as a medium of instruction (EMI) contexts.

In this paper, we start by exploring the linguistic landscape of the UAE and the background behind common language ideologies. We then explore linguistic hybridity amongst Emirati millennials and the marked gap between everyday translingual practices on the ground and policies advocating 'pure and separate' language use. We present the findings from a mixed-method study which gains the perspectives of 100 Emirati EMI university students, who were born in 2000 or later. They share views on their own language use in various domains as well as their attitudes towards mixing languages through translanguaging (mixing of languages to aid understanding) and Arabizi (using Roman letters and numbers to represent Arabic sounds in informal writing). Examples of linguistic hybridity in the classroom are also shared and analyzed before providing recommendations based on issues arising from the findings.

2 | THE UAE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE

As the UAE is a country where Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is the official language but English is both the lingua franca and a medium of instruction at all levels of education, official policies promote these languages over others. MSA and English are presented as 'separate but equal', 'two pure forms' or 'two solitudes' (Cummins, 2007). Organic mixing of the two is discouraged in formal settings such as English medium instruction (EMI) universities, where such practices are considered taboo (Carroll & van den Hoven, 2017). Such policies undeniably affect the mindsets of young Emiratis leading them to believe 'double monolingualism' (Al-Bataineh & Gallagher, 2018) is more acceptable than mixing languages. If we look at the historical and cultural context of the UAE, there are further factors influencing such 'monolingual ideologies' (Carroll & van den Hoven, 2017) or 'entrenched monolingualism' (Hall & Cook, 2012).

Firstly, English and Arabic are viewed very differently in terms of what they represent. In Hopkyns' (2016) study with 50 Emirati university students, English was seen as being connected with the wider world, education and global communication whereas Arabic related to traditions, religion and family life. Findlow (2006, p. 25) also found that 'distinct worldviews exist with relation to the two languages', meaning that the two do not comfortably mix ideologically. In the realm of religion for example, Arabic is inseparable from Islam (Alsohaibani, 2016; Zoghbor, 2018a) and English cannot infiltrate. Arabic is not only the language of the Holy Quran but throughout Arab history it has been named 'the language of miracles' or *lughat al I'jaz*, and considered an important part of education as promoted by 11th century scholar Abu Mansur al-Tha'labi in *Fiqh al-Lugha* ('Language comprehension') and Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Taymiya in *Iqtidaa as-Sirat al-Mustaqim* ('Straight path') (Al-Ajamy, 2016). Secondly, the framing of English and Arabic as separate 'pure' languages which are not to be mixed is emphasized in educational curriculums where course materials and publications are in English only and teachers are often non-Arabic speakers. Thirdly, the linguistic distance between English and Arabic is large due to different scripts, direction of writing, and few cognates. This makes using both in writing appear 'strange or messy', as was commented on by Emirati undergraduates in Al-Bataineh and Gallagher's (2018, p. 11) study. Finally, colonialism in the Middle East has led to a resistance to the languages of colonizers due to perceived threats to cultural identity and the undermining of local values and beliefs

(Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). French colonialism in Algeria, for example, led to a growing number of opponents to French-Arabic bilingualism (Hassaine, 2011). Although the use of linguistic hybridity emerged as a natural outcome of globalization and multiculturalism in the UAE, the Middle East's history of colonialism has built a wall between MSA (or the Arab dialects in the region) and the other languages, especially those languages considered the mother tongue of previous colonizers.

The present-day linguistic landscape of the UAE, however, means the English language is an unavoidable medium of communication in the globalized era and the language of education in most of the UAE higher education institutions. English is also omnipresent in daily life due to approximately 90% of the workforce of the UAE being expatriates coming from other Arab and non-Arab countries such as Egypt, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, and numerous others (Boyle, 2011). The UAE has currently more than 200 nationalities (Al-Khouri, 2012) and English is used as the preferred tool of communication across these nationalities. In Emirati homes, there is a strong 'nanny culture' where English is spoken daily (Hopkyns, Zoghbor, & Hassall, 2018). The deeply rooted position of English in the UAE has placed it into a transition stage where it is fast moving from a foreign-language-user country to a second-language-user country, along with Lebanon, Somalia and Sudan (Graddol, 1997; Zoghbor, 2018b). English is therefore as necessary as Arabic, albeit in different domains, and with different values attached.

Because of the opposing natures of Arabic and English, Emiratis have complex, and at times conflicting, loyalties to their nation's two dominant languages (Al-Issa, 2017; Hopkyns, 2017; O'Neill, 2017). This was documented in Al-Issa's (2017) study which explored how young Emiratis use Arabic and English in their everyday lives. The participants recognized the importance of Arabic in reading the Holy Quran and preserving Arab identity and culture. However, Al-Issa (2017) also found, in the same study, that 52% of his 91 university students felt uncomfortable writing in Arabic. In contrast, 88% reported that it was important for all Arabs to be able to read and write in Arabic. This led to the conclusion that young Emiratis have an unstable and paradoxical relationship with Arabic/English. While in their minds Arabic is important, in their actions English dominates. Despite a shared desire to keep their primary languages separate and pure, in practice these languages frequently leak at the boundaries and spill into each other. The following section explores different forms of linguistic hybridity in the UAE context with a focus on translanguaging and Arabizi.

3 | LINGUISTIC HYBRIDITY IN THE UAE

Four main types of linguistic hybridity exist in the UAE context. These include code-switching, translanguaging, Arabizi, and 'white dialects'. Code-switching and translanguaging can apply to all languages, whereas white dialects and Arabizi relate specifically to the mixing of Arabic and English. While code-switching refers narrowly to swapping between two or more systems of languages (Hymes, 1974), translanguaging refers more broadly to the implications of bilingualism for certain purposes such as maximizing communication potential, so it includes, but it is not limited to, code-switching (Garcia, 2009b). In the context of multilingual classrooms, translanguaging can refer to multilingual oral interaction (Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Garcia, 2009a) and using different languages in written texts such as notes (Canagarajah, 2011) as well as through technology use. From a translanguaging perspective, language is an ongoing process rather than an entity or a 'verb rather than a noun' (Becker, 1988, p. 25). Rather than the importance being placed on the number of individual languages a person knows, priority is placed on how they use their linguistic resources to aid communication. In this sense, conventional understandings of boundaries between culturally and politically distinct languages are challenged (Li, 2018). A common example of translanguaging in the UAE context is the use of 'Allah lexicon' (Morrow & Castleton, 2011) in mainly English sentences. For instance, when congratulating someone on an achievement (Example 1), one might say:

(1) Congrats! *Wallah*, you deserve it! *Alf Mabrook* to you and *MashAllah*.

This is easily understood by many people living the Gulf due to the prevalence of expressions such as *Wallah* ('I swear to God' or 'trust me') and *MashAllah* ('God willed it' or 'Safeguard from the evil eye') as well as *Alf Mabrook*

('1000 congratulations'). Here translanguaging eases communication and is comfortably familiar. It exemplifies Garcia's (2009a, p. 71) argument that bilingualism is not 'monolingualism times two' but a natural way of drawing on one's full linguistic resources to achieve a purpose.

Unique forms of translingual practice to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) include white dialects (a term that refers to the middle ground between MSA and regional dialects used to facilitate communication across speakers of Arabic dialects) as well as Arabizi. *Arabizi* which originates from the words *Arabi* ('Arabic') and *Engliszi* ('English'), refers to the use of the Roman script and numbers to represent Arabic sounds (Palfreyman & Al Khalil, 2003). It is mainly used for texting or typing, but has recently started to appear in students' study notes as well as in media and popular culture. While Arabizi broadly speaking replaces Arabic with the Latin script, it involves an encoding system using numbers, not just English letters (Allehaiby, 2013). For example, the Arabic letter ع (*ain*) is represented as the English number '3', and the Arabic letter ح is represented as the English number '7'. An example of Arabizi in popular culture can be seen in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1   Arabizi in art and popular culture: 'a7la ub' means 'the most precious father' [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

In Figure 1, the number '7' stands for the letter ح in Arabic and 'a7la' means 'the most precious'. *Ub* is أب in Arabic, or 'father' in English. As a result, the full message of 'A7la ub' is أحلى أب or 'the most precious father'. By using a popular soft drink logo (7 Up), this design on wall art or cards makes a creative Father's Day gift. We can see that reading Arabizi is an exercise in decoding. However, as it is often used spontaneously in social media and informal communication without knowledge of the encoding system, inconsistency between its users sometimes makes the messages difficult to read.

4 | A DISJUNCTION BETWEEN POLICIES AND PRACTICE

A disjunction between bilingual policies and translingual practice is found not only in the UAE but globally in countries where local languages and global English are spoken. Such countries include Tanzania (Higgins, 2009), Korea (Lee, 2006) and South Africa (Makoni, 2003) to name only a few. Often the official language of the country together with global English, is far more visible than other languages and they tend to appear side-by-side rather than mixed together. This is certainly true in the UAE where despite over 100 languages being spoken, it is almost always English and Modern Standard Arabic which appear next to each other, side-by-side, on shop signs, menus, in print, and on telephone answering machines. Often there is a choice between the two languages, such as when reading the capital's free weekly events magazine, *Abu Dhabi World* or عالم أبوظبي. One can choose the English version or the Arabic version with nothing 'in between'. This is in sharp contrast to the normal and frequent linguistic hybridity taking place at a grassroots level. The current study aims to explore this 'in between land'.

5 | THE STUDY

The study aimed to explore the language practices of Emirati millennials studying in a large public university in Abu Dhabi. This included self-reported (mixed-method questionnaires) and interactive data (from observations and classroom notes) on languages spoken and forms of linguistic hybridity used. The study also investigated participants' attitudes towards mixing languages in terms of their own practices and the language practices of those around them. As the study explores opinions, insights and perceptions on language use and linguistic hybridity through multiple data collection methods, the case study approach was appropriate. The 'bounded nature' (Cresswell, 1997, p. 61) of the case study approach fits the study as participants are bound by both place and time. It is descriptive in nature as the aim was to present a complete description of the phenomenon within its context (Yin, 2003, p. 5). The phenomenon being investigated is 'linguistic hybridity and Emirati millennials' and the case is the group of 100 university students. The study's main research questions included:

RQ1: To what extent and in which domains do Emirati university students use English and Arabic?
RQ2: To what extent do Emirati university students combine English and Arabic through translanguaging and Arabizi?
RQ3: What are Emirati university students' attitudes towards mixing English and Arabic?

For exploring language use, ideologies and attitudes, mixed-method questionnaires were used. For gathering samples of linguistic hybridity in the classroom, observation notes were made in researcher journals and samples of students' work were gathered. Used in conjunction, these methods presented an accurate portrait of the phenomenon.

The participants included 100 students studying an English writing course at the university's Abu Dhabi campus. This writing course is mandatory for all students and runs for one semester, twice a week for an hour and 20 minutes. The range of students taking this course is therefore diverse with students majoring in many subjects. At the time of the study (spring 2019), most of the students were in their second year at the university and had been learning English for 16–20 years. They therefore had a good level of English (IELTS 5.5 or above) and were accustomed to speaking and writing in both English and Arabic. All participants reported that they spoke at least two languages (Arabic and English) with 28% speaking three or more. Other languages included Turkish, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Persian/Farsi, French, Spanish, Hindi, Urdu, Tagalog and Swahili. It is worth mentioning that the students are far from a homogenous group. Some have one Emirati parent and one foreign parent (usually their mother) from Arab or non-Arab countries such as Oman, India, Russia or Scotland to name a few. Others were educated in private international schools which may have affected their language skills and ideologies. In response to this diversity, the university at the focus of this study provides an Arabic course for 'heritage students' who are half Emirati/half foreign, or students who studied MSA at school as a second language.

In accordance with the country's cultural and religious norms, the campus is divided into a male and a female side. Six female sections (n = 93) and one male section (n = 7) participated in the research (as seen in Table 1). This gender imbalance represents the university's student body due to males often studying abroad or completing military service. The sections involved were grouped in these classes at the start of the semester by the college administration team. As the participants were in pre-existing groups, cluster sampling was used. The questionnaires, which took approximately 20 minutes to complete, were given to the students in their classrooms with the permission of their teachers, who were from a range of countries other than the UAE. The nationalities of the teachers (Table 1) are representative of the university's linguistically and ethnically diverse faculty. A brief introduction to the project was provided (in English and Arabic) and both English and Arabic questionnaires were available. Students were given a choice as to which version of the questionnaire they wished to complete and they were told that they could respond to the questions in either language, or in both languages. It was interesting to see that numbers were almost equal with 51% choosing English and 49% choosing Arabic. This demonstrated their confidence in using either language, and the perceptions of the importance of both. A number of students who took the Arabic version of the questionnaire responded in English and vice versa.

TABLE 1 Participants' choices of English/Arabic questionnaires to complete

Class teacher nationality	Number of participants and version of the questionnaire they chose to complete	Female/male classes
Canada	17 (11 English, 6 Arabic)	Female
Turkey	22 (12 English, 10 Arabic)	Female
UK	16 (3 English, 13 Arabic)	Female
Australia	7 (6 English, 1 Arabic)	Male
Turkey	15 (7 English, 8 Arabic)	Female
Lebanon	12 (10 English, 2 Arabic)	Female
Lebanon	11 (5 English, 6 Arabic)	Female
Total: 7 classes	Total: 100 participants (51 English, 49 Arabic)	

The topic of linguistic hybridity (mixing languages through code-switching, translanguaging and Arabizi) could be viewed as a potentially sensitive topic as previous research in the region has shown ideologies based on 'language purity' (not mixing languages) are strong (Al-Bataineh & Gallagher, 2018; Palfreyman & Al-Bataineh, 2018). We were aware that participants may have felt uncomfortable discussing language practices which possibly clashed with language ideologies. Despite the possible sensitivity of the topic under investigation, linguistic hybridity is very much present in the UAE and should, therefore, not be avoided as a topic. The researchers took precautions such as avoiding potentially loaded questions. Participants were assured confidentiality and anonymity. Only the researchers had access to the data, and pseudonyms were used in place of real names. In addition to this, none of the participating students were the researchers' own students.

For the questionnaire data, thematic data analysis was used to identify patterns in the data and report on overall trends. Quantitative data from Likert scale items on the questionnaire were represented in charts and qualitative data were represented in the participants' own words through quotes, often giving nuanced insights into language ideologies and attitudes. Responses were organized according to the key research questions and patterns within these categories were identified. Once patterns were found, data were reduced into manageable proportions through synthesis and summarization. Language use was recorded in researcher journals and photographs were taken of students' work.

6 | FINDINGS

6.1 | English and Arabic use across domains

Participants were asked in which areas they used English and Arabic and to what extent. As Table 2 indicates, the vast majority of Emirati millennials often or always use Arabic with parents (94%) and siblings (91%) at home. Although English is also a language used at home, it is used to a much lesser extent with only 25% stating they often or always used English with siblings and a mere 16% stating they often or always used it with parents. With household employees the use of English and Arabic is balanced, which is a little surprising as maids and nannies are most often from the Philippines (where English and Tagalog are the official languages) and drivers are usually from Pakistan, where English has a long history of use alongside local languages (Mahboob, 2013). With friends, Arabic is the most commonly used language with 87% often or always using it, compared to English (31%). What this tells us is that Arabic is the preferred and most frequently used language in Emirati homes, although English is also present.

TABLE 2 English and Arabic use at home and with friends

Extent	Never		Sometimes		Often		Always	
Arabic/English	A	E	A	E	A	E	A	E
At home with parents	0%	47%	6%	37%	6%	13%	88%	3%
At home with siblings	0%	28%	9%	47%	19%	21%	72%	4%
With friends	0%	21%	13%	48%	26%	26%	61%	5%
At home with maids/nannies/drivers	16%	17%	34%	33%	22%	19%	28%	31%

Outside the home the balance between the languages changes notably (Table 3). At the students' EMI university 73% use English often or always. However, Arabic is also used often or always by 61% of students despite English being the medium of instruction. In public spaces where English is the lingua franca a similar pattern can be seen with 71% often or always using English. On the other hand, only 36% reported often or always using Arabic in public space. We can, therefore, clearly see that in tertiary education and public spaces English is the most prominent language with Arabic still being used to a lesser extent.

TABLE 3 English and Arabic use outside the home

| Extent	Never		Sometimes		Often		Always	
Arabic/English	A	E	A	E	A	E	A	E
At the university	3%	1%	37%	26%	36%	53%	25%	20%
In public spaces in the UAE (malls, restaurants, hospitals, hotels)	6%	1%	58%	28%	24%	45%	12%	26%

When looking at the third domain of entertainment and online contexts, English also dominates (Table 4). For entertainment, 68% of respondents often or always used English as opposed to Arabic (37%). The same can be said for writing emails (72%) and surfing the internet (65%) in English, as opposed to Arabic (27% and 35% respectively). For social media, however, which is more closely tied to friendship groups, the languages are often and always used almost equally (English 54% and Arabic 49%).

TABLE 4 English and Arabic use for entertainment and online

| Extent	Never		Sometimes		Often		Always	
Arabic/English	A	E	A	E	A	E	A	E
Entertainment (movies, books)	18%	5%	45%	27%	23%	33%	14%	35%
Social media (such as Facebook and Instagram)	9%	8%	42%	38%	27%	27%	22%	27%
Writing emails	18%	3%	55%	24%	17%	30%	10%	42%
Surfing topics on the Internet	18%	3%	47%	32%	25%	33%	10%	32%

To look more closely at language use in the context of the EMI university in which the students are studying, participants were asked to comment more specifically on English and Arabic in their classrooms and for certain activities. As Figure 2 demonstrates, the vast majority of students (77%) use both English and Arabic in their EMI classrooms.
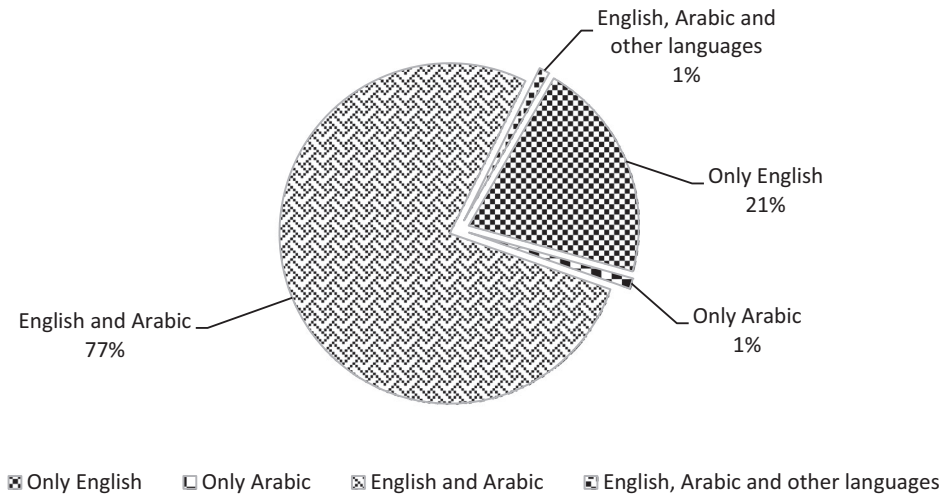
FIGURE 2 Languages used by Emirati millennials in their EMI classrooms

When asked to specify with whom they used Arabic in EMI classrooms, 86% stated they used their first language with classmates, 21% used it with Arabic-speaking teachers, 23% while making notes, and 7% while doing research. Figure 3 shows typical examples of students using both languages for reading and notetaking, with the work on the left showing an English text with all the study notes written in Arabic and the work on the right containing a mix of English and Arabic words and sentences.
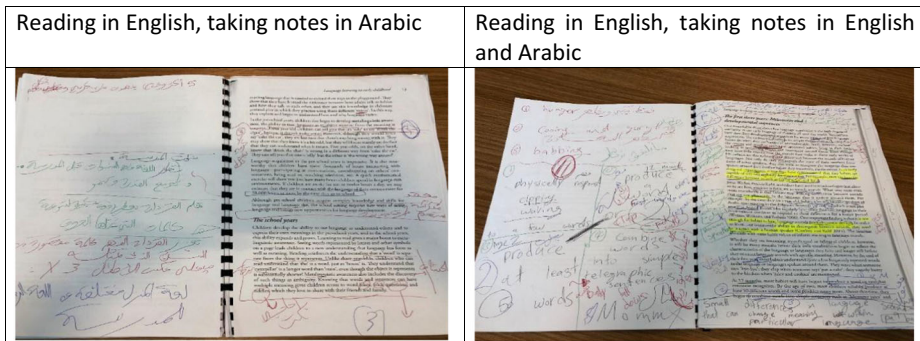
FIGURE 3 Examples of translanguaging in note-taking [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

Although EMI classrooms are often thought of as being 'English only zones', most students use a combination of English and Arabic as exemplified by Figure 3 and Table 5 which show the preponderance of an Arabic-English mix.

TABLE 5 Language use for academic skills

Skills	English 100%	70% English 30% Arabic	50% English 50% Arabic	70% Arabic 30% English	Arabic 100%
Academic writing	33%	29%	24%	11%	3%
Academic presentations	28%	23%	36%	7%	6%
Read and find academic sources	21%	29%	36%	9%	5%

For academic presentations, students may be nervous and naturally rely on both languages to keep talking. A typical example of this can be seen below (Example 2) when a student was introducing her group presentation topic:

(2) Okay, *yalla*. We will talk about the writing process and *shoo*, ah the results … and the result, *khalas*.

The Arabic words *yalla* ('let's go, come on'), *shuu?* ('what?') and *khalas* ('the end, that's it') helped the student continue talking. As seen from Table 5, 66% of students use both languages during presentations.
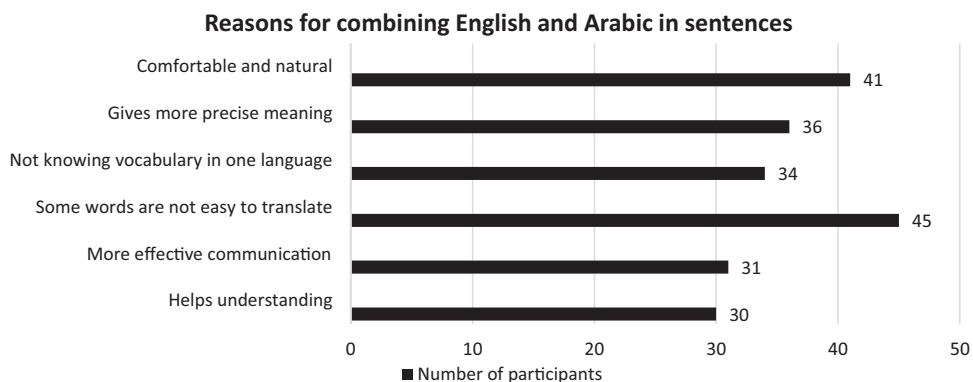
6.2 | Translanguaging

Participants were asked about translanguaging practices and their attitudes towards mixing English and Arabic at a sentence level. In the questionnaires, participants were asked if they used English and Arabic in the same sentence. A sentence which combined both English and Arabic was given as an example ('*Yalla, ina* class, let's go' - ياالله عنا كلاس ليتس جو or 'Come on, we have got a class, let's go'). The most common response was 'sometimes' (42%), followed by 'never' (22%), 'always' (15%) and 'often' (2%). Overall, 78% of participants stated that they mixed English and Arabic together in sentences to varying degrees. This self-reported data was supported by notes made by the researchers in journals throughout the semester. When analyzing these notes, it was observed that many students switched languages frequently. English sentences were often punctuated with Arabic words such as *yani* ('it means'), *hatha* ('this and that'), *wallah* ('trust me, it's true') or *khalas* ('finished'). Likewise, Arabic sentences often contained English words such as 'okay', 'lap' (laptop), 'total', and 'project'. An example of translanguaging can be seen in a student's project work, which in this case is a short story named 'Third Wife':

> Married to Abu Khalid, I woke to the warm laughter of his children playing with Salma, thirty, and Maryam, even older. Recalling some moment from the past I was bathed in long hot minutes of silence. Until Abu Khalid's voice boomed. Reluctantly, they coolly sauntered to greet me 'Mabrook, mabrook!'

Mabrook is a transliteration of colloquial Arabic meaning 'congratulations'. Whether, this item is being used ironically by wives one and two is perhaps as unclear to the reader as it is to wife three herself. However, without repetition of this Arabic word, the piece would certainly not make such a powerful impact. In order to retain authenticity, the student felt it was necessary to keep the Arabic words despite most probably knowing the English translation.

Participants were asked to reflect on reasons for translanguaging (Figure 4). Six main reasons were given with the top two explanations being 'it's comfortable and natural' and 'some words are not easy to translate'.

Reasons for combining English and Arabic in sentences

Reason	Number of participants
Comfortable and natural	41
Gives more precise meaning	36
Not knowing vocabulary in one language	34
Some words are not easy to translate	45
More effective communication	31
Helps understanding	30

FIGURE 4 Reasons for combining English and Arabic in the same sentence

For the following student comments, 'S' and 'a number' (e.g. S1) are used to identify students rather than names. With reference to mixing languages being natural (comments 3-7), students explained:

(3) I use it because it (mixing languages) has become kind of second nature to me. (S4)

(4) Sometimes we are used to mix languages without feeling. It's comfortable and natural. (S10)

(5) In our modern life, English has influenced us for many years through the media, it became essential to our lifestyle. (S16)

(6) Since I use two languages in my daily life, some English words be said directly and I can't control it. (S37)

(7) I got used to it since we communicate in English during our classes, it's hard to turn it off after class is over. (S42)

Others explained that using both languages can enhance the meaning and aid communication (comments 8-10).

(8) I don't know, seems like a stronger meaning when changing. (S27)

(9) Because it can be easier to say some words in other languages. It helps practicing both languages and it can sometimes be more effective for the other party to get what you want to say. (S9)

(10) Some words have a softer meaning in English than in Arabic. (S85)

Participants were asked how they felt about using English and Arabic in one sentence (for example, '*Indi soual, mata el deadline lal homework?*' which means ؟عندي سؤال، متى الديدلاين للهوموورك or 'I have got a question, when is the deadline for the homework?'). We can see from Figure 5 that attitudes towards mixing the languages were generally neutral or positive. However approximately one third of the students viewed mixing the languages negatively.

Attitudes towards using English and Arabic within one sentence
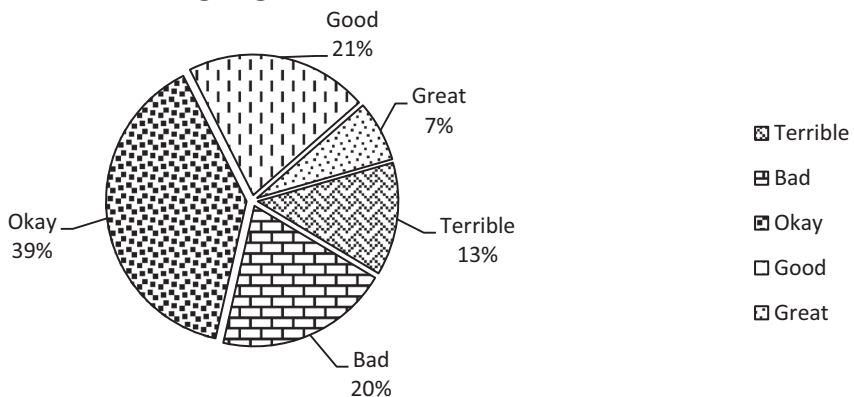
FIGURE 5 Attitudes towards mixing English and Arabic

The main reason given for translanguaging being 'great', 'good' or 'okay' included aiding communication and the naturalness of mixing the languages (comments 11-16).

(11) I think it's fine because if you're bilingual or speak several languages your brain gets confused while switching. To communicate quickly we use terms we think of first. (S40)

(12) It's okay because the important thing I get the meaning and I understand. (S13)

(13) Because I am used to it. As in our university we always talk both languages and we can easily understand each other. (S20)

(14) It's okay because most of the time I mix between the two to explain to classmates a certain subject, which she doesn't understand in English. (S23)

(15) That's usually how I speak because it's difficult for me to understand most things in Arabic (S24)

(16) It became a normal thing between girls. (S25)

For the 33% who disapproved of translanguaging, mixing the languages served to confuse and distort each language. We can see here the presence of 'double monolingual ideologies', where having two languages is viewed positively as long as they do not occupy the same space (comments 17-20)

(17) It's terrible because it doesn't make sense to me. I think you either talk in English or in Arabic. (S17)

(18) I find it unprofessional. (S35)

(19) It is bad; using a single language is better. (S85)

(20) This influences the two languages in a negative way. (S94)

Other participants voiced more serious concerns over past colonialism as well as globalization, and 'global English' affecting Arabic and local mindsets (comments 21-22).

(21) Every once in a while, when I hear myself talking in that way/others, it makes me worried about our mother language is fading away day by day and how we might be under extreme globalization. It's taking over our minds and culture. (S9)

(22) Our language is facing a bad time because of the colonialism that happened in the last decade, so I think that we should focus more on it. (S29)

6.3 | Arabizi

After reflecting on the mixing of languages at the sentence level, students were asked to comment on their use of and attitudes toward a second form of linguistic hybridity 'Arabizi' (English numbers and letters to represent Arabic sounds). They were given an example of Arabizi (writing 'Wa7ad' instead of *one* or واحد) to ensure they understood the concept. While the majority of participants stated they used Arabizi to some extent (55%), a relatively high percentage (45%) stated they never used it (Figure 6a). It was clear that Arabizi as a type of linguistic hybridity is viewed more critically than translanguaging as over half (52%) felt bad or terrible about it (Figure 6b).
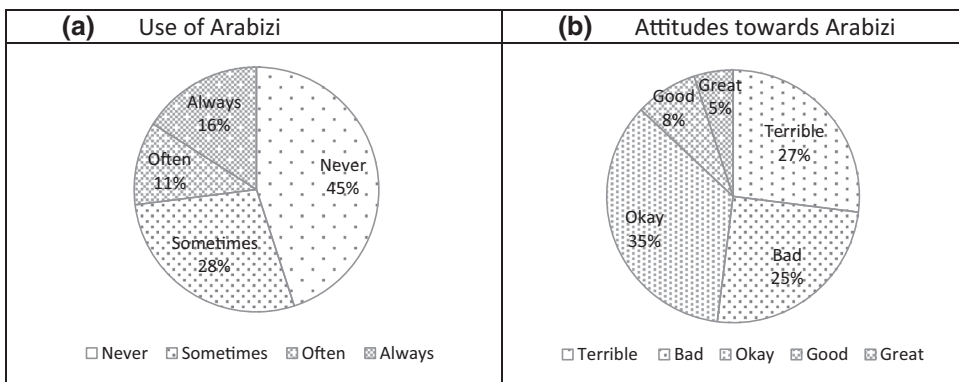
FIGURE 6 Use of and attitudes towards Arabizi

The most common reason for disapproving of Arabizi was its perceived negative effect on the Arabic language.

(23)   Either talk/type in English or Arabic. I feel like it's unnecessary to mix both in different letters/numbers. However, I am guilty myself of doing so in the past. (S9)

(24)   Because the original word in Arabic might be forgotten, and this might confuse the coming generations. (S100)

(25)   When Arabizi is used, it becomes complex to understand and depending on it makes a decreasing on writing skills and spelling skills. (S22)

(26)   This act distorts the Arabic language. (S53)

In comments 23-26, there is a repeated message that Arabizi threatens the 'purity' or 'correctness' of Arabic or even its future existence. Comment 23 acknowledges that Arabizi is common but it is seen as a 'guilty pleasure' or a 'naughty act', perhaps equivalent to smoking or eating chocolate cake. For others mixing English and Arabic in speech was acceptable but doing so through Arabizi in writing was not, as illustrated in comments 27 and 28.

(27)   I'm fine with speaking both but when texting I prefer sticking to one because there's the ability to pause and think. I hate the thought of Arabizi diminishing the use of Arabic writing. (S40)

(28)   Because it is about writing I am not convinced with it at all. Either write in Arabic or English, but don't confuse me, mixing words and letters together makes me dizzy. (S84)

The main reason given by those who felt Arabizi was 'okay' was its normalcy or ordinariness. Such students felt Arabizi may be far from perfect in that it can be hard to understand but it is more 'just a fact of life'. It is 'real' rather than 'ideal' language use, as seen in comments 29-31.

(29)   Since Blackberry phone exists, we started to use this language as it is so easy and we all know what does the numbers goes for. (S20)

(30)   Everyone is using it so it's normal. (S11)

(31)   People who use it sometimes forget which number represents which letter in Arabic, which makes the word really hard to understand. But when people know how to use them, it becomes really flexible to read and I don't face any problems. (S65)

To summarise, English and Arabic are an essential part of Emirati students' university lives. While linguistic hybridity is viewed as normal, attitudes towards it are decidedly mixed. Clear patterns emerged in the data; however, the study is relatively small in scale, so one should be wary of making widespread generalizations regarding the attitudes and ideologies of Emirati undergraduate students in general. Also, as the UAE has a highly dynamic and ever-changing linguistic landscape, what may be true for participants at the present time may alter with time and experience.

7 | DISCUSSION

The findings show that for Emirati millennials both English and Arabic are a daily part of life. Each language is more prominent in different domains (Arabic at home and English in public life, online, and in education), leading to the presence of linguistic dualism (Findlow, 2006) or differentiated bilingualism. In the EMI context, while English is used most often, Arabic is also used in multiple areas such as for communicating difficult concepts with classmates and taking notes under pressure. Despite 28% of participants speaking more than two languages, only one student reported using a language other than English and Arabic in the classroom, which is a testament to the power of English and Arabic (both MSA and Khaleeji) as the two dominant languages. Although both English and Arabic hold the most power in UAE society as influential and prestigious languages placed side-by-side, mixed attitudes exist towards combining the

two. On the ground, the majority of Emirati millennials mix the languages through various forms of linguistic hybridity such as translanguaging and Arabizi, and this is a phenomenon which is generally considered 'second nature', 'an essential part of lifestyles' and 'hard to turn off'. In this regard, the participants' viewpoints support scholarly perspectives on the ordinariness of translingual practices (Blommaert, 2015; Canagarajah, 2013; Dovchin, 2017; Dovchin & Lee, 2019). While some participants viewed the mixing of languages as a pragmatic tool which comes naturally, eases communication and enhanced meaning, others held firm monolingual ideologies. For the latter group, there was a pronounced sense that mixing the languages was 'wrong', 'bad', 'distorting' and 'unprofessional'. On the lighter end of the scale, it was a guilty pleasure or bad habit. On a more somber note, it damaged the purity or correctness of the Arabic language, and threatened the existence of Arabic words for future generations. Here connections were made with colonialism and globalization, with global English being viewed as a subtractive force.

Monolingual ideologies in the region were also found in previous studies. For example, in Palfreyman and Al-Bataineh's (2018) study investigating attitudes towards translanguaging with two Emirati undergraduates majoring in Business, one participant was 'rather shocked' when hearing a recording of herself mixing English and Arabic, commenting on her usage of the words being 'wrong' and 'inarticulate' and likening her mixing of the languages to a 'disaster'. Translanguaging was seen as 'a bilingual deficit' which 'violates linguistic integrity or respect' and was even called an 'Arab-franko' language. Similarly, in Al-Bataineh and Gallagher's study (2018) with Emirati undergraduates majoring in Education, a strong objection was expressed to using translanguaging in storybooks for young learners. Al-Bataineh and Gallagher (2018, p. 12) concluded that Emirati undergraduates 'were ambivalent if not downright hostile' towards the use of translanguaging for ideological, linguistic, and pedagogical reasons.

Although many participants in the current study accepted and even embraced linguistic hybridity, others did not. Monolingual ideologies, which exist in a sizable segment of young society, need to be challenged. Steps towards this include teachers recognizing the benefits of translanguaging in EMI settings in terms of students feeling a sense of belonging as bilingual individuals through using their full linguistic repertoires to support learning. This can be done by providing translanguaging spaces where students are encouraged to communicate naturally through any language or mix of languages they choose, rather than adhere to strict 'English only' classroom rules. This would empower students to embrace 'real language' rather than coveting 'standard ideals'. In addition, research which places a priority on translanguaging for classroom-based investigations, would give stakeholders insights into how translanguaging pedagogies can be implemented in the future (Conteh, 2018, p. 446). An example in the UAE is Steinhagen and Alijanadbah's (2019) investigation into translanguaging pedagogy at university level. When giving students the choice of using Arabic or English for reading academic papers, discussing and writing, they received positive feedback regarding the use of both languages in the classroom and the provision of structured translanguaging spaces. Finally, for linguistic hybridity to be embraced, its needs to be recognized as a 'social fact' (Blommaert, 2019) rather than as exotic, new, or strange. Equally, we must be wary of presenting hybridity as 'a romanticized and celebratory valorization' (Rubdy & Alsgoff, 2014, p. 4) of current linguistic diversity as this also takes the concept further away from being seen as a natural phenomenon or something that 'just is'. Just as the title of David Gramling's AAAL award-winning book *The invention of monolingualism* suggests, monolingualism is the anomaly, not translingual practices.

8 | CONCLUSION

The grassroots mixing of languages, as seen in the study findings, could be viewed as a counter-discourse to rigid 'English only' expectations in English medium universities and policies advocating 'pure and separate' language use. However, for such hybridity to be an effective counter-discourse, deficit ideologies surrounding multilingualism in education (Blackledge, Creese, & Takhi, 2014) need to be challenged amongst educators and students themselves. If linguistic hybridity is viewed as not only normal (which it is) but acceptable in all domains, including EMI classrooms, one would expect the division between practice, ideologies, and future policies to lessen. Viewing multilingualism and translingual practices as enabling, negates concepts such as 'language purity' or 'native-speaker norms' and challenges

the implied hierarchies which accompany such notions. Especially in today's globalized world, the idea of 'language purity' is unsustainable as well as undesirable. As the Red Queen character in Lewis Carroll's novel 'Alice through the looking glass' proclaims 'it takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place'. If we relate 'the Red Queen hypothesis' (Van Valen, 1973; Ridley, 1995), to linguistics, change must happen in order for languages not to die, and this change often comes from the bottom-up rather than top-down. Ultimately, embracing the translingual turn places value on how languages are actually used rather than how policies state they 'should' be used, which results in a power shift in relation to social justice.

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