

**A CONFLICT OF DESIRES: GLOBAL ENGLISH  
AND ITS EFFECTS ON CULTURAL IDENTITY IN  
THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

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## **Abstract**

### **A CONFLICT OF DESIRES: GLOBAL ENGLISH AND ITS EFFECTS ON CULTURAL IDENTITY IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES – BY SARAH HOPKYNs**

The United Arab Emirates' (UAE) complex history, its current demographics, its youthfulness as a country, and the fact that it is a region undergoing fast-paced change make the issue of cultural identity particularly relevant and urgent to address in this part of the world. This is especially true given the rapid spread of English in the sphere of education and everyday life in recent years. The study investigates the effects of global English on cultural identity in the UAE through the perspectives of three distinct participant groups all working or studying at a large state university in the UAE's capital, Abu Dhabi. Taking a hybrid approach in the form of a phenomenological case study, the research draws on in-depth qualitative data from open-response questionnaires, focus groups and the researcher's research journal. Salient findings from the study revealed vastly differing views concerning English and Arabic. While English was associated with the wider world, education, future careers and global communication, Arabic was connected to religion, home life, traditions and the region of the Middle East. Although the majority of Emirati participants held positive views towards English, seeing it as important, necessary and enabling, concerns were raised throughout the study over its dominance in multiple domains, including education, and its effects on the Arabic language and local culture, especially for the next generation. The study revealed Emirati cultural identities to be complex, multifaceted and at times conflicting. Hybridity in identity construction was prominent in terms of differentiated bilingualism, code switching and use of an informal creative written language combining English and Arabic, known as 'Arabizi'. In terms of teaching preferences, native-speaker English teachers were favoured, along with a marked interest in learning about western culture as part of an English course. The majority of participants called for a choice between or combination of English Medium Instruction (EMI) and Arabic Medium Instruction (AMI) in Emirati Higher Education (HE). The findings led to four main recommendations for future policy and practice. These include challenging contrasting views of English and Arabic, promoting Arabic and local culture in education, a greater acceptance of hybridity over purity, and providing a choice regarding medium of instruction in higher education.

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## Table of Abbreviations

ABP	Academic Bridge Program (Foundation program)
ADEC	Abu Dhabi Education Council
AMI	Arabic as a Medium of Education
BANA	British, Australian and North American
CAE	Cambridge Advanced Examination
CELTA	Certificate in Teaching English to Speaking of Other Languages
CEPA	Common Educational Proficiency Assessment
COC	Clash of Civilizations
EGAP	English for General Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
EMI	English as a Medium of Instruction
EmSAT	The Emirates Standardized Test
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
FNC	Federal National Council
GCC	Gulf Cooperative Council
HCT	Higher Colleges of Technology
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Educational Institutes

IB	International Baccalaureate
IC	Interculturality
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
KG	Kindergarten
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MOHESR	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic
NSM	New School Model
NS	Native speaker
NNS	Non-Native speaker
RP	Received Pronunciation
TA	Thematic Analysis
TANMIA	The National Human Resource Development and Employment Authority
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAEU	United Arab Emirates University

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Background to the study

One only has to open one of the many Arabian Gulf region newspapers from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to Qatar, from Saudi Arabia to Oman to see a consistent theme running through the headlines with regard to the English language.

1	Gulf News	<i>English proficiency comes at a cost</i>	February 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2011
2	The National	<i>English language “seducing” UAE pupils</i>	December 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2014
3	Gulf News	<i>Cultural identity in danger in the GCC</i>	December 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2013
4	The National	<i>Arabic must be the main language in UAE education, Federal National Council hears</i>	November 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2014
5	The National	<i>Poor literacy in Arabic is ‘the new disability’ in the UAE, FNC told</i>	June 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2013
6	Gulf News	<i>Education must be revamped to foster cultural identity, FNC says</i>	October 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2009
7	The National	<i>Arabic at risk of becoming a foreign language</i>	March 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2015
8	The Saudi Gazette	<i>Teach us English but without its cultural values</i>	January 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2013
9	The Arab News	<i>Embrace English...without losing Arab Identity</i>	December 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2013
10	Times of Oman	<i>Calls for overhaul of Arabic teaching in Oman</i>	February 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2016
11	The National	<i>Shock at youngsters’ neglect of Arabic in UAE</i>	March 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2015
12	The National	<i>Why Arabic must be preserved and promoted</i>	January 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2017

**Figure 1.1** Recent Gulf newspaper headlines

Three main themes emerge from the articles: the seductive nature of English, declining levels of Arabic, and the need for bolstering local cultural identity. These issues, which are regularly discussed by the federal authority of the UAE during Federal National Council (FNC) meetings, relate especially to English and Arabic in education. One



example among many is FNC member Dr. Shaika Al Ari (Umm Al Quwain) naming poor literacy in Arabic the nation's 'new disability' after recounting her experience of overseeing local schools. In these schools she witnessed a number of Grade Three students who were unable to tell one Arabic book from another and did not know which was the first page and which was the last. She describes this situation as 'something horrendous' (Figure 1.1:5). Experiences such as these, combined with similarly themed public and scholarly discourse in the region (Ahmed, 2011; Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011; Badry, 2011; Raddawi & Meslem, 2015; Said, 2011), indicate that the relationship between Arabic, local cultural identity and global English is strained, at best. Depicted by journalists through a binary east-west paradigm, English tends to be portrayed as the aggressor and local cultural identity, or Arabic, as the victim, in need of saving. Rightly or wrongly, this is the chosen angle taken and the one that regularly jumps out at the reader through headlines. It is clear that these issues are ongoing, and frequently debated in Emirati society, and therefore very much worthy of in-depth investigation. As Akbari (2013, p.10) explains, within applied linguistics, every context has a different 'reality', and for the Gulf region political issues such as cultural and linguistic identities are clearly a priority.

Whereas previous studies have investigated Gulf Arabs' attitudes towards English, finding mainly positive attitudes; in the UAE's fast-changing sociocultural and sociolinguistic landscape there is a need to investigate current attitudes in light of fresh scholarly and public discourse, as most obviously reflected in the media headlines in Figure 1.1. Previous studies have focused on gaining the perspectives of mainly single segments of society such as only university students, only university faculty, or only police officers. This study, however, looks at multiple perspectives in one setting and at one point in time. These perspectives include those of Emirati university students (both female and male), Emirati primary school teachers and expatriate university English teachers. The range of perspectives from these three groups of participants, all either working or studying at the university in which the study takes place, adds a particularly comprehensive and deep understanding to the timely issues under exploration. The study, therefore adds considerably to the knowledge base and fills an existing gap.

### 1.1.1) Global English: more than just a language

English has been given, at various points in time, the labels *world English* (since the 1920s), *international English* (since the 1930s), and most recently *global English* (since the mid-1990s). These labels have subtle differences in meaning with ‘the third being linked (often negatively) to socio-economic globalization’ (McArthur, 2004, p. 3). The terms are used somewhat interchangeably in public discourse though, and all relate to the fact that English, as a language, stands in a category of its own with regard to its far-reaching and immense influence. Whereas in the past, English was but one language among others, it is now, without dispute, in a category of its own. The success of the British colonial empire and the subsequent rise of American industrial and technological power have combined to create a situation in which English, uniquely, has come to be accepted as the symbol of a modern technologically advanced society. It is true to say that ‘whereas once Britannia ruled the waves, now English rules them’ (Phillipson, 1992, p. 1). De Swaan (2001) defines English as the world’s only ‘hypercentral’ language as it is estimated that a staggering ‘one in three of the world’s population are now capable of communicating to a useful level in English’ (Crystal, 2012, p. 155) which is a number that is on the rise. As Al-Dabbagh (2005) states, English has become ‘the Latin of the contemporary world’ (p. 3) or as Morrow and Castleton (2011) say, ‘the Walmart of the language universe’ (p. 313), meaning, just like the American megastore, it is omnipresent. It is the only language spoken on all five continents and is the official language of 52 countries. Consequently, as Mohd-Asraf (2005) points out, ‘Its influence spans the entire globe, and there is hardly any country today that does not use English in one way or another or that is not affected by its spread’ (p. 103). As English now occupies an important position in many education systems around the world, which is certainly the case in the Gulf Cooperate Council (GCC) states (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE), it has become the ‘global academic lingua franca’ (Jenkins, 2014, p. 10) or ‘*lingua academica*’ (Phillipson, 2008) and a ‘high stakes gatekeeper of educational and social success’ (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2015, p. 3). As ‘nothing succeeds like prestige’ (Thumboo, 2003, p. 237), it is likely to continue playing this role in years to come. Globalization, with English and technology as its ‘two inseparable meditational tools’ (Tsui & Tollefson, 2007, p. 1), now has a profound impact on world communication,

politics, science, technology, entertainment, social and cultural relations, international business and socioeconomics worldwide. One would suppose that such a powerful language could not fail to affect its speakers on multiple levels.

### **1.1.2) The ‘English Threat’ Debate**

Although the waves of English that are currently sweeping over the world in varying dimensions bring a rush of opportunity, progression and excitement in one sense, there is also a recognized ‘dark side of English’ (Karmani and Holliday, 2005, p. 165). Considered by some to be a lingua frankensteinia (Phillipson, 2008, p. 250), a ‘killer language’ (Fishman, 1999, p. 26) or an aggressive ‘Tynannosaurus Rex’ type tongue (Swales, 1997), English is often seen as a threat to local languages and cultures. To some, globalization, and the spread of English that accompanies it, is seen as ‘a system of mono-cultural or even mono-lingual dominance’ (Harrison, Kamphuis & Barnes, 2007, p. 20), a new form of ‘western cultural colonialism’ (Ahmed, 2011, p. 120) or ‘mental colonialism’: the subtle push to emulate everything Western including the English language’ (Suzuki, 1999, p. 145 cited in McKay, 2004, p. 12). As Qiang and Woolf (2005) powerfully describe, English in the eyes of many is ‘a modern day Trojan horse filled with EFL teachers/soldiers or missionaries, armed with English words rather than bullets, intent upon re-colonizing the world to remake it in the image of Western democracy’ (p. 60). In this sense, Globalization has been linked to ‘McDonaldization’ or ‘makdana’ in Arabic (Hammond, 2007, p. 33), which is ‘the process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world’ (Ritzer, 1993, p. 1, as cited in Qiang & Wolff, 2005, p. 55). Similarly, and more specifically, the spread of English has been called ‘McCommunication’ (Block, 2002, p. 117) or ‘Englishization’ (Hardt & Negri, p. 2000) due to its perceived homogenizing nature. Rather than being a neutral language owned equally by all its speakers, Pennycook (1994) argues that ‘English is deeply embedded in a set of social, cultural, political and economic relations’ (p. 158). In this sense, some benefit more from the language giving them greater ownership rights than others. Named *yingyu weixie* meaning ‘English language threat discussion’ in China (Pan & Seargeant, 2012, p.60), this topic has provoked discussions worldwide in countries such as Japan (Lehner, 2011), Turkey (Atay and Ece, 2009), Malaysia (Mohd-Asraf, 2005), Saudi Arabia (Alabbad and

Gitsaki, 2011), India (Hudawi, 2013) and the United Arab Emirates (Findlow, 2006; O'Neill, 2014; Randall and Samimi, 2010) to name just a few. Many parallels have been drawn between the spread of English and the loss of local languages. As Ryan (2010, p. 2), in her TED Talk, queries, 'a language dies every 14 days. At the same time, English is the undisputed global language. Could there be a connection?' Some would say, at best 'partly', and at worst 'absolutely'.

### **1.1.3) Hybridization and Superdiversity**

While some fear globalization is an extension of British and American imperialism, others argue that 'hybridization' (Pieterse, 1995) or 'glocalization' (Robertson, 1995), in which local versions of imported language and cultural artifacts are created, overpowers 'Englishization' in many societies. In this sense, 'a synergetic relationship between the global and the local' (Block & Cameron, 2002, p. 3) exists rather than the dominance of the former over the latter. Giddens (1990, 2000) sees globalization as an opportunity to engage with post-traditional order and forge new identities, rather than an impetus for returning to dreams of the past. This could be seen, in a neutral sense, as 'language evolution' (Mufwene, 2001) or 'a happenstance rather than planning' (Brumfit, 2004, p. 165) where English is used voluntarily and creatively adapted by local communities. For example, Blommaert (2016) gave examples at a recent linguistics conference in Muscat, Oman (Connecting the Dots on a Glocalized World, Sultan Qaboos University, November 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>, 2016), of how hybridized language often emerges in unexpected places, such as the unique versions of English or French seen throughout Japan on shop signs, for example. In this sense, there is an attitude of 'we're going to make our own English, but only in this context'. Therefore, the target language is being used without care or knowledge of a native-speaker model. In the UAE, linguistic hybridization can be seen through the emergence of 'Arabizi' or 'Arabish', a mix of Emirati Arabic (EA) and English used in both spoken and online written contexts, particularly among the younger generation (O'Neill, 2016, p.13). Arabizi involves the mixing of English and Arabic words using Arabic script, or most often, a modified Latin script (Bianchi, 2012; Palfreyman & Al Khalil, 2003) and the use of English numbers to replace Arabic sounds that have no spelling equivalent in English (Al Fardan & Al Kaabi, 2015, p. 16). For example, the Arabic letter 'ع' (Ain) is

represented as the English number '3'. The Arabic word for 'eye' would, therefore, be written as '3ain'.

Linguistic hybridization in the UAE can also be seen through extensive code-switching or code-merging using English and Arabic, as well as using vocabulary which is influenced by a range of other languages. As the UAE could be described as a 'superdiverse society' (Vertovec, 2007; Blackledge, Creese & Hu, 2016), with several varieties of Arabic, Tagalog, Hindi, Ajami (local name for Farsi), Urdu, Korean, as well as English being spoken in public domains, multiple forms of linguistic hybridization can be seen. For instance, it is common to hear English words related to mechanical matters pronounced with an Indian accent, such as 'draywel' as a modified version of 'driver' (Al Fardan & Al Kaabi, 2015, p. 14-15). Recently, due to hugely popular Korean TV dramas, Korean and 'Konglish' (hybrid Korean-English words) have become fashionable and appealing to Emirati teens, especially in terms of slang and informal expressions (e.g. '*sarang-he-you*' for 'I love you') (van den Hoven & Carroll, 2016, p. 52). Although hybridization according to Giddens (2000) is a positive way of forging new identities, unfortunately it is often viewed as equally threatening to the pure Emirati Arabic as native-speaker-like English (O'Neill, 2016, p.25).

#### **1.1.4) Arabic Diglossia**

As seen by the newspaper headings at the beginning of this chapter, the 'English threat discussion' is very much alive in the Arabian Gulf. Unlike languages such as Icelandic which is for the most part contained to speakers of one nation, Arabic does not fit the image of a small, isolated or fading language in danger of being 'Englishized'. Arabic is indeed in a strong position in the world today. It is the official language of 26 countries and spoken by over 300 million people as a first language (Nydell, 2012, p. 93). Arabic was even selected as one of the six official languages of the United Nations in 1997 due to the vast amount of people speaking it as a native or second language worldwide (Al Fardan & Al Kaabi, 2015, p. 11). In addition to this, Arabic remains strong globally through its intrinsic historical connection to Islam, and it being the language of the Quran, making it the religious language of over a billion Muslims around the world (Gebril and Taha-Thomure, 2014, p. 1). Furthermore, Arabic is

growing as a second language in Western countries. According to a survey conducted by the Modern Language Association, in the USA, Arabic is now the eighth most studied language in US universities (Furman, Goldberg, & Lusin, 2010, Cited in Gebril and Taha-Thomure, 2014, p. 1). Moreover, as Gebril and Taha-Thomure (2014, p.1) explain, many Western governments realize the importance of learning strategic languages such as Arabic as part of their national security plan, which was intensified after the events of 9/11, making its presence stronger yet.

However, the statistics above do not reveal the complexities and challenges involved in being an Arabic native-speaker. A salient feature of Arabic is *Diglossia* meaning that ‘two or more varieties of the same language are used by some speakers under different conditions’ (Ferguson, 1959, p.325). Diglossia is not unique to Arabic, rather it exists in multiple countries such as Switzerland, Greece and Haiti, to name just a few. In fact, before moving to the Arabian Peninsula, I encountered diglossia while teaching Swiss students at a private language college in Vancouver, Canada. Attracted to the world-famous ski slopes of Whistler, Grouse, Cypress and Seymour, the opportunity to be immersed in an English-speaking environment and the chance to return home with a Cambridge Advanced Examination (CAE) qualification, often Swiss students would be the majority in classes. They would frequently talk about their mother-tongue Swiss German having no written form. For reading, writing and for education they were required to use standard German. They partly saw this diglossia as something special and unique as it made Swiss-German a language very few spoke or could learn from textbooks, but partly they saw it as a hurdle to learning the standard version of their language. When moving to the UAE ten years later, despite being on the other side of the world, I was surprised to be in the center of a diglossic environment once again.

In the UAE, it is common for Abu Dhabi locals to speak their local Emirati Arabic (EA) dialect ‘Khaleeji’ at home and among family and friends of the same dialect but use the standard language ‘Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)’ or ‘Fusha’ to communicate with speakers of other dialects or on public occasions. MSA, which descends from Classical Arabic, provides ‘a pristine example of standard language ideology’ (Hachimi, 2013, p. 272) as it is used in education, religion and officially, and not commonly spoken in everyday life. This gives it distance and prestige. The local dialect, on the other hand,

is generally considered less prestigious than MSA and has no standard written form. All formal written communication is in MSA, including official documents, speeches, newspapers, magazines and bills, although recently with the increased use of social media, informal creative written forms, such as Arabizi (see Section 1.1.3), can be seen on social networking sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram, etc. and there are even ‘Khaleeji’ phrase books for sale in local book stores. There is a sense, however, that these are seen more as a novel gift, in the same way a ‘Glaswegian phrase book’ might be seen in the UK, rather than a serious study aid. Ferguson (1959, p.330) gives an example of the difference in the ways local dialects and MSA are seen by Arabic speakers.

*‘Speakers of Arabic may say (in their local dialect) that so-and-so doesn’t speak Arabic. This normally means he does not know MSA, although he may be a fluent, effective speaker in the local dialect. If a non-speaker of Arabic asks an educated Arab for help learning to speak Arabic, the Arab will normally try to teach him the standard forms, insisting that these are the only ones to use. Very often, educated Arabs will maintain that they never use the local dialect at all, in spite of the fact that direct observation shows that they use it constantly in all ordinary conversation.’*

Despite Ferguson’s comment being made decades ago, the situation remains the same in today’s Emirati society. This is partly due to the ways of learning MSA and EA / Khaleeji being very different. The local dialect, Khaleeji, is learnt by children as a ‘mother tongue’, whereas MSA is heard by children from time to time but learnt primarily at school as part of a formal education. There are significant differences between Khaleeji and MSA, mainly in terms of grammatical structure. MSA has grammatical categories and an inflectional system of nouns and verbs, which is greatly reduced in Khaleeji. There are pronunciation differences too, such as the MSA sound /j/ being pronounced as /y/ in EA (Al Fardan & Al Kaabi, 2015, p. 12). It can be seen, therefore, that the diglossic nature of Arabic, means that although MSA is the official language of 26 countries, including all 22 Arab states, it does not belong to a socially, politically, geographically or economically dominant group. In this sense, ‘it is nobody’s mother tongue’. (Badry and Willoughby, 2016, p. 179). Diglossia in Arabic

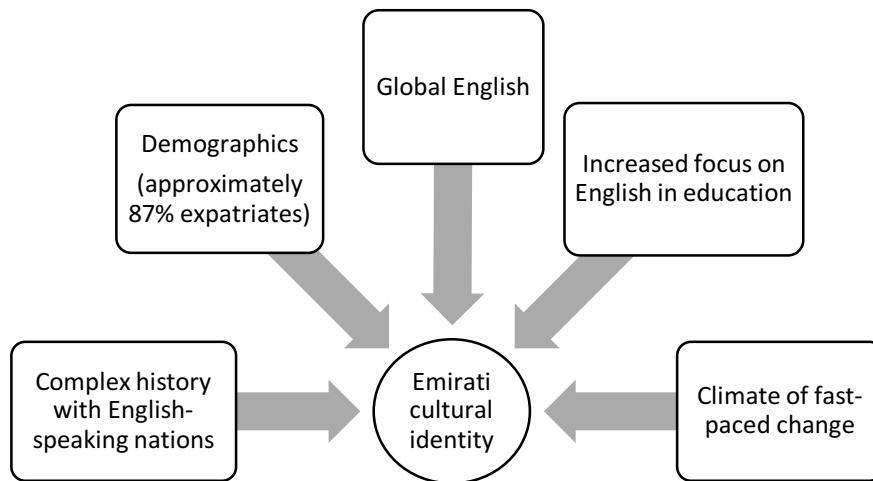
makes MSA harder to learn and arguably less appealing as a language in comparison to the more global and powerful English language.

## **1.2) Rationale for the study: Cultural and linguistic fragility in the UAE**

The challenge of maintaining one's own cultural identity, including linguistic identity, in the face of the increasing intensity of global English, is an issue faced across the globe, as explained in Section 1.2.2. However, due to the unique linguistic, social, demographic, historical and cultural landscape of the UAE, these challenges are intensified making the effects of global English on local cultural identity especially interesting and relevant to investigate.

Rather than accept the binary position of English versus Arabic or West versus East pushed forward by the headlines seen at the start of this chapter, where English is the clear aggressor and Arabic is the victim, the effects of global English on cultural identity in the UAE instead need to be recognized as complex and multi-dimensional. Arabic diglossia making MSA more challenging for learners to master, and thus allowing English even greater appeal, is only one factor contributing to the dominance of English and vulnerability of cultural identity in the region. Further key factors include the UAE's complex history with English-speaking nations, its current extremely high expatriate community, the fact that it is a region undergoing rapid change and the recent dramatic spread of English in the sphere of education and everyday life. It is the unique combination of linguistic, social and historical factors mentioned above, when added to the strong presence of global English, that appears to be responsible for cultural fragility in the region (see Figure 1.2).





**Figure 1.2.** Factors contributing to fragility of cultural identity in the UAE

### 1.3) Study setting

The setting for the study is a large federal university in the UAE’s capital, Abu Dhabi. This university was established in 1998, and also has a campus in Dubai. Federal, or public, universities such as the one in which the study takes place, serve mainly the local population and are gender-segregated for religious and cultural reasons. Curriculum-wise, it is ‘an interesting hybrid in that although a national university it offers an American liberal arts curriculum’ (Ashencaen Crabtree, 2010, p. 86). The faculty at the university are predominantly Western-educated, and despite the local populations’ first language being Arabic, English is the medium of instruction. This is the case for all federal higher education institutes in the UAE.

As well as having three English-medium federal universities, the UAE has a variety of other higher education institutes, which are also English-medium. There are 78 higher education institutes (HEIs) in fact (Al-Shaiba, 2014, p. 72), which include specialized technologically-orientated universities such as the Masdar Institute which has a strong link with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), international universities with complex cross-border higher educational environments, such as New York University, Abu Dhabi or Exeter University, Dubai and a growing private higher education sector. Unlike the federal universities, which have almost all Emirati

students, the remaining 75 cater for international and privately-educated local students. Due to this diversity in tertiary education, 'The UAE's higher education environment is both complex and highly globalized, perhaps to a greater extent than anywhere in the world' (Altbach, 2014, p.97).

The study involves three groups of participants who are all intrinsically connected to the university. The first group of participants (Group 1) includes 100 Emirati undergraduate students studying in the university's foundation program. The foundation program is an intensive 20-hours-a-week English course needed for students not meeting the EMI entry requirements. The second group (Group 2) includes 12 Emirati primary school teachers who were given a one-year sabbatical by the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) to study an intensive exam-based English course at the university at the time of the study in order to qualify to become EMI teachers. The third group (Group 3) includes 52 expatriate university English teachers who all teach in the university's foundation program, the majority of whom are British, Australian and North American (BANA).

All participants were asked to voice their perceptions and beliefs on the effects of global English on Emirati cultural identity through open-response questionnaires and focus groups. These groups of participants were chosen due to the fact they represent different sectors of society, adding a variety of perspectives, yet are connected due to either teaching or studying at the university.

#### **1.4) Research questions**

The study aims to explore four main research questions.

RQ1) What do the languages, English and Arabic, represent to Emirati undergraduates, Emirati primary school teachers and expatriate university English teachers?

RQ2) What are Emirati undergraduates', Emirati primary school teachers' and expatriate university English teachers' attitudes towards English as a global language?

RQ3) In the participants' view, how does English affect layers of cultural identity

in the UAE?

RQ4) In the participants' view, what are the English teaching preferences among Emirati undergraduates and Emirati primary school teachers with regard to teacher nationality, course content and medium of instruction?

Due to the wide variety of schools and higher education (HE) institutions in the UAE, it needs to be noted that participants in the study are specifically representative of a certain type of experience, namely the 'federal or state experience' at this point in time. The Emirati university student participants were state-school-educated and cannot be representative of all university students in the UAE. For privately-educated local students and international students, who had English Medium Instruction (EMI) at school from the start, perspectives may vary. It could be argued that the student participants in this study, who are in the university's English foundation program due to not meeting the direct entry requirements (IELTS 5.5), are those whose university lives and future prospects very much depend on their attitude, aptitude and progress in English. In a sense, they have more to lose than privately-educated locals whose English level has always been high. When the university students in the study attended secondary school, English was not yet the medium of education for higher grades which is part of the reason they were placed in the foundation programme. Likewise, the Emirati school teachers taught in state schools before taking a sabbatical to join the university English course, and therefore share perspectives related to this system. The University expatriate English teachers' perspectives on the issues discussed may also vary from teachers at private colleges and universities.

### **1.5) Overview of the thesis**

As seen from the research questions, the study primarily investigates the effects of global English on Emirati cultural identity through the perspectives of Emirati university students, Emirati primary school teachers and expatriate university English teachers. It also explores how the languages English and Arabic are represented in the eyes of the participants and attitudes towards the languages. Finally, the study looks at participants' preferences regarding language of instruction and cultural content of English courses, as well as teacher nationality.

The introductory chapter of this thesis started with a series of powerful and emotively worded local newspaper headings showcasing concerns over the effects of English on local cultural identity and the Arabic language. The larger context was then discussed with reference to the global power of English and the worldwide Englishization versus hybridization debate. The introductory chapter went on to explain the diglossic nature of Gulf Arabic and gave a brief overview of additional factors contributing to a sense of cultural fragility in the region.

Following the introductory chapter, the second chapter builds on the introduction by providing an extensive background to the study by outlining the specific context of the research and the key issues which motivated the research questions. This includes the UAE's climate of fast-paced change, its demographic imbalance, its complex history with English-speaking nations, the increased amount of English in education and the prevalence of global English in multiple domains.

The third chapter begins by presenting multiple forms of resistance to the dominance of English in the region, with reference to literature in the field. The theoretical and conceptual framework for the study is then explored by examining the inter-related concepts of language, culture, identity and interculturality. Previous local and international studies investigating global English and its effects on cultural identity are then reviewed, highlighting a current gap in the knowledge base, which leads to the need for this study, at this point in time.

The fourth and fifth chapters provide an outline of the methodology and data analysis used in the study. This includes detailed profiles of the three groups of participants as well as the justification for the chosen research paradigm, research tools, data collection methods and ethical considerations. An in-depth explanation of data analysis procedures is given in Chapter 5, as well as a discussion on the validity of the data.

The findings chapter, Chapter 6, is based on four main themes arising from the study, which relate to the four research questions. After the chapter introduction (6.1), Section 6.2 looks at how English and Arabic are represented in the eyes of the participants (RQ1). Section 6.3 then explores attitudes towards global English (RQ2). Section 6.4 looks at the effects of English on various layers of cultural identity (RQ3), and Section 6.5 presents participants' perspectives on English teacher nationality, English course

content and medium of instruction (RQ4). Salient findings from the study revealed greatly differing views concerning English and Arabic. While English was associated with the wider world, education, communication and the future, Arabic was connected to religion, the region of the Middle East, home (family and friends) and traditions. Although the majority of Emirati participants held positive views towards English, seeing it as important, enabling and necessary, concerns were raised throughout the study over its dominance in multiple domains, including education, and its effects on the Arabic language and local culture, especially for the next generation. The study revealed Emirati cultural identities to be complex, multifaceted and at times conflicting. The emergence of hybrid identity options and bilingual identities was a reoccurring theme in the data. In terms of teaching preferences, BANA English teachers were strongly preferred and there was substantial interest in learning about western culture as part of an English course. Considering the future of English in education in the UAE, the majority of participants were in favour of a choice or combination of EMI and AMI in HE.

In the discussion chapter, Chapter 7, these findings are critically discussed in relation to relevant literature. Finally, Chapter 8, the conclusion, examines implications of the findings and provides recommendations for future policy and practice. These include challenging contrasting views of English and Arabic, promoting Arabic and local culture in education, a greater acceptance of hybridity over purity, and providing a choice regarding medium of instruction in higher education.

## **Chapter 2: Contextual background**

### **2.1) Introduction**

This chapter will explore the contextual, sociocultural and sociolinguistic background of the UAE, specifically looking at key factors, as briefly outlined in Section 1.5, which have contributed to feelings of concern over local cultural identity and concerns over the strength of the Arabic language in the UAE. Key components of UAE society, which contribute to this cultural and linguistic fragility, include a climate of fast-paced change, imbalanced demographics, the dramatic and sudden increase of English in education and society in general, and the complex history with English-speaking nations. Each of these factors will be discussed in depth.

### **2.2) Climate of fast-paced change**

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), which shares borders with Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Oman, started as seven Trucial Sheikdom States of the Persian Gulf coast. The UK was given control of their defense and foreign affairs in a series of treaties made in the 1800s. After over 150 years of British rule of what was a mainly poor population of Bedouin tribes, traders and pearl divers thinly spread across vast and desolate desert lands, the British announced their planned departure in 1968, and three years later the United Arab Emirates as a country was formed (Martin, 2003, p. 50). Six of the states (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Ajman, Fujairah, Sharjah and Umm al-Qaiwain) merged in 1971, and the following year Ras Al Khaimah joined the new country (Al-Ali, 2008, p. 366). The British presence in the region was regarded as in some ways beneficial but also exploitative, especially once oil was discovered in the late 1950s (Al-Fahim, 1995, p.42). After the discovery of oil, economic and social conditions changed dramatically due to the newly acquired petrodollars being pumped into the economy, infrastructure and society at large.

Today's Arabian Gulf could be described as a parallel universe when comparing it to how it was less than five decades ago. The changes that have taken place in the UAE within only the last five decades are, as Al Fahim (1995, p. 15) states, 'difficult to

believe even for those who have seen them with their own eyes.’ Dramatic changes in wealth, demographics, infrastructure and lifestyle are a result of industrialization, urbanization, modernization, and perhaps most strikingly, globalization in terms of the English language and all that accompanies it. Winslow et al. (2002, p. 572) juxtapose the changes that have taken place within just one generation well by stating, ‘Adults who were Bedouins, tending goats and farming dates, have children driving Land Cruisers and studying in America’.

Now labeled the ‘land of superlatives’ (Burton, 2012, p. 4), the UAE’s climate of fast-paced change can most obviously be seen in the creation of multiple urban megaprojects ‘structured as global Disney Lands surrounded by sands engorged with oil and gas’ (Harris, 2013, p. 96). The presence of these megaprojects which include multiple new state-of-the-art hospitals, dazzling megamalls with 4D cinema complexes, futuristic-designed schools and universities, five-star-plus hotel resorts and even whole ‘entertainment islands’ has transformed the appearance of the nation. As the Emirate of Abu Dhabi alone is now home to one of the largest sovereign wealth funds in the world in terms of total assets, estimated at \$627 billion in 2012 (Burton, 2012, p. 22), there are no signs of this financial development slowing down.

This climate of extreme fast-paced change could be said to contribute towards feelings of cultural fragility where the current generation struggle with uncertainty over what was, what is and what is to come. During the pilot phase of the study (Hopkins, 2016, p. 103), an expatriate English university teacher participant, Matthew, summarized this phenomenon well during one of the focus group sessions when stating:

*“For such a young, fast changing country, I think the students see their culture changing around them. They have grandparents who seemingly could come from a completely different culture, and I think they see themselves as a new generation. I can only imagine it is difficult to identify with something so nebulous, even though at the core of family life there are strong cultural imperatives – honour, fidelity, familial respect, and the like.”*

## **2.3) Demographic imbalance**

Not only fast-paced changes to infrastructure, but also dramatic transformations to the population, job market, power and status have also occurred within the lifespan of the young nation. With a population of just over 2.5 million and an annual growth of over 8 per cent, which is one of the highest in the world (UAE Yearbook, 2013, p.54), Abu Dhabi is a rapidly expanding capital city. However, the majority of the UAE's population is not Emirati, but rather expatriate. Expatriates from India, Philippines, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Ethiopia, Egypt, Russia, UK, USA, Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand and other countries now outnumber the native population to the point where only approximately 13% of the UAE's residents are Emiratis, a figure projected to decline further to only 10% in 2020 (Harris, 2013, p. 87). This is in sharp contrast to other Arab nations such as Yemen and Egypt where expatriates account for only 1.4% and 0.2% respectively (Shah, 2004, as cited in Ahmad, 2016, p.31). As O'Neill (2016, p. 13) states, 'globally, the fact that migrants outnumber locals to such a degree is an unusual state of affairs'. The implications of this demographic imbalance are explained in the following sections.

### **2.3.1) Expatriate worker majority**

This unique demographic situation is a result of the rise of the UAE's oil-based economy and the resulting 'building frenzy' (Harris, 2013: 89) and rapid infrastructure transformation described in Section 2.2. To achieve such fast-paced change, it was necessary to employ a great number of expatriate workers, which was made particularly easy due to the alluring tax-free packages the UAE, and other GGC countries, were able to offer, hence making it an 'extremely attractive destination for skilled and unskilled labor from within the Arab world and beyond' (Ahmad, 2016, p. 31). Currently, there are approximately 1,553,733 foreign construction workers and 868,012 retail employees in the UAE. The third most common form of expatriate employment is in the field of education, which provides 57,142 jobs (UAE Yearbook 2013, p.159).

The UAE's 'intensive and increasing dependency on expatriates in all labor sectors' (Al-Shaiba, 2014, p.76) partly arose due to the relatively small local population not



being able to meet the human resources requirements of developmental plans. The immense wealth brought to the UAE by its natural resources also gave Emiratis a special status by which they could choose not to take certain jobs, especially those deemed physically demanding, of low-status, or those requiring rigorous training.

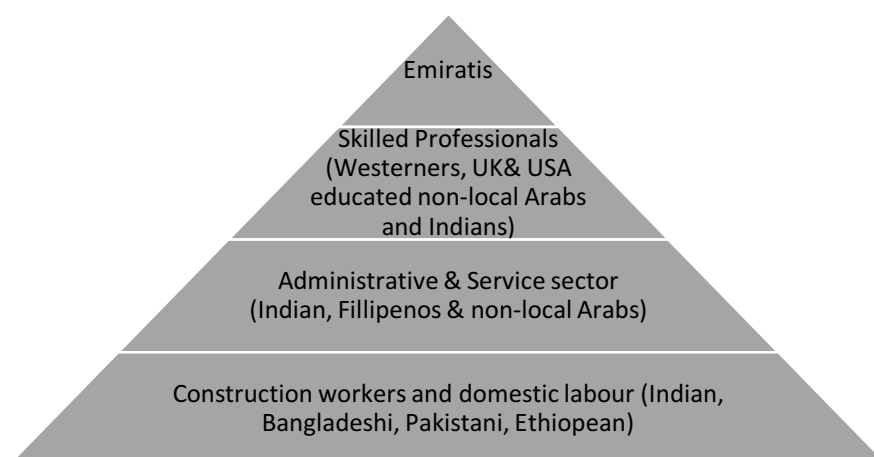
For this reason, as Al Ali (2008, p.367) states, although ‘the pace of growth continues.... UAE nationals are not employed in their own country’. Expatriates have an overwhelmingly high profile (91%) in the Emirati labour market, meaning only 9% of jobs are taken by Emiratis. From this 9%, 8% are in the public sector and just 1% is in the private sector (TANMIA, 2006). Public sector jobs, or government jobs, are far more popular amongst Emiratis due to more flexible working hours, culturally sensitive environments (e.g. no work on Fridays), higher pay and generous holidays. However, as a result of this preference, public sector organizations are now over-staffed. With the number of national graduates and job seekers increasing, social and economic pressure is building on the government to ensure Emiratis acquire the skills and work ethic necessary to gain employment in the private sector. This imbalance in the workforce and population at large is increasingly being recognized as an urgent social issue in the UAE.

### **2.3.2) Social stratification and *Wasta***

Although on the surface the UAE appears to be the apex of multiculturalism, there is a reluctance to readily embrace ‘outsiders’ as equals, whether they be strangers, colleagues, friends or family members. On a micro level, diversity amongst citizens is not fully accepted. Mixed marriages account for around 20% of marriages involving Emirati nationals (Shaaban, 2012), mainly with other Gulf countries. Marriages involving Emirati husbands and non-Emirati wives are far more common (O’Neill, 2016, p. 31), however the reverse also occurs. Locals with an Emirati mother and a foreign father are colloquially known as ‘mumeratis’ and tend to be discriminated against. ‘Mumerati’ students at the university in which the study takes place, for example, have the letter ‘M’ before their student identification number, to indicate their background. Generally, they are regarded as ‘different’ by students with ‘pure’ Emirati heritage. As Aydarova (2012, p. 292) states, ‘prejudice against certain tribes and racism

against certain racial groups are a commonplace occurrence in students' daily lives and in the classroom.'

On a macro level, social stratification based on nationality, ethnicity, and employment status is deeply embedded in UAE society (Davidson, 2005, p.90) as seen in Figure 2.1. Broadly speaking, society in the UAE can be divided into three main classes 'labor, brains, and bank' (Burton, 2012, p.71). In Davidson's social pyramid (Figure 2.1), Emiratis are the *bank* at the top, the Westerners/Western-educated are the *brains*, and the bottom two layers are the *labour*. These divisions are infamous both inside and outside the country, leading to common sayings such as '*Emirates stands for English-Managed, Indian-Run, Arabs Taking Enormous Salaries*' which is commonly known in Pakistan (Pieterse, 2010, p. 17). The division in social status between Emiratis and 'others' leads to a high degree of what James and Shammas (2013, p. 148-151) call 'cultural detachment' or even a 'cultural apartheid'. There are clear distinctions upon first glance between Emiratis and other nationalities by the traditional black *abaya* (a full-length black cloak) and *shayla* (black headscarf) worn without exception by Emirati women, and the *kandoura* (long white robe) and *gutra* (white head wear) often worn by Emirati men. Not only clothing, but a range of other attributes and lifestyle factors such as local dialect, wealth, status and connections, distinguish Emiratis from foreigners. As James and Shammas (2013, p. 161) point out, the UAE is 'a culturally complex environment, with a myriad of unwritten rules and codes of conduct which serve to accentuate the "otherness" of those culturally dissimilar'.



**Figure 2.1:** The Social Pyramid, adapted from Davidson (2005, p.90)

The layers of society within the social pyramid shown in Figure 2.1 tend to remain distinct, with their own social networks (Davidson, 2008, p.192). Especially in the case of Emiratis, there tends to be a marked detachment from those belonging to other layers of the social pyramid. Due to cultural constraints, it is highly unusual for Emiratis and expatriates to interact outside business or formal settings, with interaction tending to be transactional and service-based. Although expatriate university teachers typically interact with far more Emiratis than most professionals, it is still usually limited to the confines of the university (Burkett, 2016, p.6). Anecdotally, it is true to say that after years and years of living in the UAE, it is extremely rare for expatriate teachers at the university to socialize with Emiratis. Occasional wedding invitations from students are eagerly accepted, but being invited to an Emirati's home would be an extremely rare treat.

Being at the top of the social pyramid allows Emiratis to feel elite within their own society. Although they are the minority, they undisputedly hold most power due to nationality alone. In addition to the power of their nationality, a form of social capital or system of 'favouritism' known as *Wasta* is prevalent in almost all aspects of Emirati society: education and university admissions, job applications, government services, court decisions and marriage arrangements (Kropf and Newbury-Smith, 2016, p. 13). Known as *blat* in Russian and *Vitamin-B* in German (Kropf and Newbury-Smith, 2016, p. 3), *Wasta* can be defined as a type of official favouritism where Emiratis can 'employ connections or perhaps an intermediary to reach certain goals or to speed up certain processes' (Kropf and Newbury-Smith, 2016, p. 12). It is an important part of society and as Berger et al. (2014, p. 4) state, in Arab countries "succeeding or failing may depend heavily on the scale and scope' of *Wasta*. As Davidson (2014, p. 272) explains, in the Gulf monarchies, including the UAE, 'almost any bona fide citizen, regardless of background or education, can automatically assume a relatively high social standing'. In practice, this means citizens for some time have been able to 'queue-jump expatriates, win arguments with the traffic police (especially if the adversary was an expatriate) and in general enjoy preferential treatment in public' (Davidson, 2014, p. 272). A further example of social and economic exclusivity experienced by Emiratis is the *Kafala* system, where expatriates wanting to start a business must seek an Emirati partner (usually silent partner) who is to own 51% of the business. This directly benefits nationals by providing them with an easy source of income. It could be said that the

existence of *Wasta* and *Kafala*, as well as other forms of state-sponsored social inequity, serve to deepen the social divide between Emiratis and expatriates.

### **2.3.3) Wanted but not welcomed**

Despite the privileged position and increased opportunities Emiratis have access to through the social pyramid, *Wasta* and *Kafala*, the sheer number of foreigners in the UAE, using English in all spheres of life, leads to a general feeling of unease. The fact that Emiratis have become a minority in their homeland is seen by many to threaten the stability of society and language (Al-Kitbi, 2008, p. 3). This is especially felt due to expatriate workers being on short contracts as the frequent coming and going of this population results in Emiratis living amongst on-going demographic change. This ‘demographic instability and imbalance’ (Martin, 2003, p. 54) is regularly discussed in the media and among the local population with relation to ‘the negative impacts of foreign labour on Emirati national identity.’ (Al Shaiba, 2014, p. 76). The title of Khondker’s (2010) article ‘Wanted but not welcomed’ sums up the conflicting attitude towards expatriate workers that is felt by some in the Gulf today.

### **2.4) English as a lingua franca in public and private domains**

Due to the UAE’s history, unique demographics and the impact of globalization, English now dominates everyday public life and, to a lesser extent, private life too. As Altbach (2014, p. 99) explains, ‘because of its location, population base and economy – the UAE, and other Gulf countries as well, are more affected by globalization trends than most other parts of the world.’ It is estimated that approximately 100 languages, including Urdu, Malayalam, Hindi, Singhalese, Bengali, Farsi and Tagalog, are spoken in the UAE by 200 different nationalities (Habboush, 2009). However, as a large number of the UAE’s expatriate workers come from partly Anglophone countries such as India, Sri Lanka and the Philippines (Troudi, 2007, p. 4) and majority English-speaking countries such as the UK and USA, English, above other languages, has become a very practical tool as a lingua franca at ‘all levels of society’ (Randall and Samimi, 2010, p. 43).

### **2.4.1) English in public domains**

For the reasons discussed above, the official language in the UAE, Arabic, is not the one spoken by the majority of residents, which is an extremely unusual phenomenon. As Randall and Samimi (2010, p. 44) state, ‘there can be few societies in the world where a second language is necessary to carry out basic shopping tasks, from buying food in supermarkets to clothes in shopping malls’, meaning almost all aspects of daily life can be accomplished without ever using Arabic. It is true to say that on a social and practical level, English is essential for all types of daily economic transactions such as requesting information from a hotel receptionist or making a doctor’s appointment as well as enjoying time at malls and cinemas. Almost all shop and restaurant signs are in English and sitting in certain coffee shops positioned with a view of the surrounding shops, it is possible to see no Arabic whatsoever and to forget momentarily where one is. The same can be said when walking into popular Abu Dhabi bookstores, where English publications clearly outnumber the Arabic, and where Peppa Pig (a Muslim taboo) dominates the children’s sections.

A similar feeling occurs when picking up a copy of the Abu Dhabi free weekly magazine, ‘Abu Dhabi World’, which until only last year was called ‘Abu Dhabi Week’ and only published in English. Although there is now a separate Arabic version, it is not as readily available. Similarly, when looking through the popular ‘Time Out’ magazine which is still in English only, the list of establishments and events catering to expatriate lifestyles including pubs, nightclubs, bars as well as Christmas, Easter, St. Patrick’s Day and Halloween parties is overwhelming. This could be pandering to the notion of ‘the English abroad are more English than the English’ in that expatriates tend to crave the traditions from home more than anything else. It certainly helps to make English-speaking expatriates feel comfortable living in the UAE, which is perhaps part of the reason so many stay for so long. Being able to use one’s mother language, English, in every public sphere from hospitals to airports, from taxis to shops and at schools and universities, makes life very comfortable and convenient indeed. One cannot help but question how comfortable this English-dominated public life is for Emiratis, however.

## 2.4.2) English in private domains

Not only does English dominate the public domain, it also affects private spheres. As well as children being immersed in English at nurseries to give them a ‘head start’ (Badry, 2011, p. 91), hiring foreign maids, who also act as nannies, baby sitters, foster mothers, companions, cooks and teachers has become, as Taha-Thomure (2008, p.190) states, ‘a semi-new trend’ in Arab societies. English-speaking housemaids and nannies, who are hired by 94% of Emirati families (Dubai Statistics Centre, as cited in Ahmed, 2014, p. 1), use English to communicate with the children in their care. The maids hired in the Gulf states typically come from impoverished backgrounds with little education and, in many instances, poor language skills. As Taha-Thomure (2008) states:

*‘They (foreign nannies/maids) are not trained to raise children and as such it becomes an extremely dangerous and superfluous enterprise socially, linguistically, ethically and educationally to put the task of raising Arabic children in the hands of largely uneducated maids. Children are growing up missing that interpersonal bond between them and their very busy parents and along the way they may lose their mother tongue (Arabic) and not acquire proficiency in any other language’ (p. 190)*

As Taha-Thomure (2008, p. 190) points out, bringing English, or a basic version of English, into homes in such an all-encompassing way may very well affect language and cultural identity negatively. Not only is English being used with nannies inside the home, it is also used between family members, which can lead to family rifts. For example, it is not uncommon for children in a family to communicate with each other through English with the parents and grandparents not being able to fully understand. In this sense English becomes a ‘secret language’ which is used between siblings or friends for private discussions, intentionally or unintentionally, excluding certain family members. This was found in an earlier study by Johannsen (1996, pp 76-86) which used Arabic questionnaires to assess how often Emirati university students used English and with whom. Perhaps surprisingly, the most common area in which students used English every day after ‘with servants’ was ‘with siblings’. The students commented that they interacted in English with their sisters and brothers so that their parents would not understand, resulting in the use of ‘English as a secret language’ (Johannsen, 1996). O’ Neill’s study (2016) produced similar findings, with participants

commenting on finding it easier to use English at home with siblings than to use Arabic. O'Neill's participants did, however, comment on how older family members disapproved of this, feeling that the use of English and even Arabizi was 'invasive in the home context' (O'Neill, 2016, p.26). English is also used at home for expressing private thoughts and feelings that are perhaps difficult to express in Arabic due to cultural restraints. Using English on-line while at home is a further example of the private domain being affected. It was found in the 2014 pilot study that the adoption of Anglicized names such as 'Joey' instead of 'Mohamed', for example, and using only English or Arabizi on social networking sights such as Twitter is not uncommon amongst Emirati youth (Hopkins, 2015, p. 24). Considering the various ways in which English penetrates home life, Burden-Leahy (2009, p. 536) concludes that, 'there is a pattern emerging of Arabic being replaced by English as the main language in some Emirati homes.'

## **2.5) Increase of EMI at all levels of education**

In addition to English being used as a lingua franca in public and private domains, there has been a sudden and seismic shift in terms of the amount of English at all levels of education in the UAE. Mirroring the pace of general change, this increase in the amount of English in education has been far from gradual. In Abu Dhabi, as Gallagher (2016, p. 139) explains, 'the recent radical reformation of the state school system has included a shift in the medium of instruction from the traditional use of 'Arabic-only' to teach all school subjects, to include the use of 'English-also' as a medium of instruction from kindergarten onwards'. English medium instruction plays a particularly large role for the core subjects of science and mathematics, whereas Arabic is only the medium of instruction for subjects such as Arabic language and Islamic studies. As Gallagher (2013, p. 6) points out, in a short period of time, the UAE education system has veered from one extreme to the other by 'shifting paradigm from "late-late" immersion all the way down to "early-early" immersion starting from kindergarten'. Due to this abrupt switch to EMI from the very start, in the eyes of many, Emirati education has been 'de-Arabicised' (Solloway, 2016, p. 178) and English has essentially replaced Arabic as 'the language of education' in the UAE.

Although the UAE's first university 'United Arab Emirates University' (UAEU), established in 1976, was originally Arabic-medium (Leahy, 2009, as cited in Gallagher,

2016, p. 142), due to expertise provided from mainly English-speaking countries (BANA), the primary instructional language at all the UAE's federal universities is now English (excluding Islamic studies and Shari'a Law majors), despite Arabic being the official language of the UAE. These universities employ mainly expatriate teachers to teach foundation programmes and content areas in EMI. Currently there is a large discrepancy between the level of English most students have when leaving high school and the level of English required to undertake a degree program in English. For this reason, the majority of students are placed in six-month to two-year foundation programs, which involve twenty hours of English instruction a week by mainly Western English-native-speaker teachers (Chapman et al., 2014). Foundation programs are quite costly for the UAE government (Gitsaki, Robby and Bourini, 2014, p.171) and are generally resented by the students, who view them as a sort of 'educational limbo' (Gallagher, 2016, p.142), 'remedial work' (Solloway, 2016, p. 186) or holding station between school and university. It is the leaders' hope that due to the introduction of EMI in schools, the need for these foundation programs will cease to exist by the end of 2018, although some feel this is an unrealistic goal. Reasons behind the decision to dramatically increase the amount of English in all levels of education and reactions to this abrupt switch are complex and will be explored in depth in the following sections.

### **2.5.1) Educational background of the UAE**

To understand the dramatic increase of English in Emirati education, it is necessary to briefly look back at the history of education in the UAE. Formal education in the UAE, like the country itself, has a very short history. Schools in the Gulf region date back to the 1820s and these schools focused on religion. The schools were only for boys who were taught by the local Imam, the speaker of the mosque (Ridge, 2011, p.59). As wealth increased due to the booming pearling industry, families wanted to invest in more structured schools. To meet this desire, the first Western-style schools, run by Emiratis educated abroad and Arab expatriates, were set up in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was not until 1953 when the first Kuwaiti educational mission opened a school in Sharjah (Ridge, 2011, p.59), that formal education began. With the birth of the country in 1971, the Federal Government made education free and compulsory for all children with the aim of eradicating illiteracy and by 1985 a national curriculum, created by the Ministry of Education, was in full use (Ridge, 2011, p.60). Most of the 1,190 schools



in the UAE are public (61 percent) and follow this national curriculum. Within the private sector, the first foreign school in the UAE opened in the 1960s (Lootah, 2011, p.31). With a growing expatriate population, more and more private schools opened and today there are 467 (representing 39 percent), primarily in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, which offer more than 17 different school curricula (Al-Qutami, 2011, p.11). These schools include British and American curriculum schools, as well as nationality-based schools for dominant national and ethnic groups, such as German, French, Indian, Pakistani, Filipino and Iranian schools.

### **2.5.2) Educational reforms in state education**

Since the formation of the nation, a series of reforms have shaped local education especially in terms of the adoption of Western educational models, the hiring of foreign consultants, teachers and faculty and increased emphasis on EMI. The following sections will explain the impetus for such reforms, which were shaped by both external pressures and internal influences. The implications of these reforms will also be discussed.

#### **2.5.2.1) External pressures**

Due to international and regional political developments starting in the early 1990s, significant educational reforms began to take place. As Lootah (2011, p.33) explains, the downfall of the Soviet Union resulting in Western capitalist domination, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and increased American presence in the Middle East, globalization of economics, politics, and culture, and the erosion of the concept of national sovereignty all affected educational policy. Subsequently, the aftermath of 9/11/2001 further influenced decision-makers and educational policy. Strong links between terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism were made in American political and media discourse, and education was pinpointed as the root cause of this. To eliminate what were viewed as fanatical trends in Islamic culture and Arab thinking, it was felt that intervention in the educational process was necessary in terms of ‘reforming school curricula, teaching methods, and the school environment in a manner that reinforces the culture of peace, tolerance and openness to other cultures and rejects extremism and violence’ (Lootah, 2011, p.37). This involved hiring foreign experts, consultants,

school teachers and university faculty, implementing educational programs designed to reform education and revising school curricula. American models of education were favoured cross-nationally by Emirati universities, including the one in which the study takes place. This could be accredited to the USA's image as a superpower, and its strong presence in the UAE in terms of the oil, military and construction industries (Davidson, 2005). Other higher education institutes looked to Singapore as a model due to the country's high performance on international tests, its ability to compete in the global economy and primarily, its citizens' ability to speak English, the language of global markets and knowledge economy (Aydarova, 2012, p. 293).

#### **2.5.2.2) Internal influences**

In addition to the external pressures for local educational reform, as mentioned above, the global trend of 'internationalizing' education to compete on the global stage appealed greatly to national leaders. Internally, in sync with the global 'discourse of opportunity' (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004), and under the directives of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahayn, 'English was promoted as the language of academic learning' (van den Hoven & Carroll, 2016, p. 41) in federal and emirate-funded institutions. As English was already the medium of instruction in higher education, the greatest focus was on producing high school graduates who would be ready to confidently and directly enter their EMI degree courses without the need for costly, time-consuming and unpopular foundation programmes.

With these goals in mind, an initial reformative step was taken in 2007 with the introduction of the Madares Al Ghad project in 50 schools distributed geographically and qualitatively all over the UAE. This involved reshaping school environments through the presence of foreign supervisors alongside school principles. Foreign teachers were hired to oversee class teachers and foreign training teams were introduced in schools as well as intervention in school curricula and teaching methods. Following this, a more significant and widespread initiative came into play with the introduction of the New School Model (NSM) in 2010. From the onset, one of the NSM's key learning outcomes was "developing students' Arabic and English skills through the use of Arabic and English teachers jointly planning for, and teaching classes" (Pierson,

2011, p.21). This involved the inclusion of English-medium education starting in all Kindergarten (KG) and Grade 1-3 classes in government schools in 2010, all Grade 4 classes in 2011 and all Grade 5 classes in 2012 which was introduced with the aim of students becoming bi-literate in Arabic and English by the time they reach university (ADEC, 2014). By 2015/2016 it was expected that, “all grades in all schools in Abu Dhabi emirate will be fully aligned to the New School Model” (Pierson, 2011, p.26) meaning all schools would use EMI for core subjects by this date.

In addition to English’s strong presence in state schools through the NSM’s policy of EMI from KG upwards, Emiratis have become increasingly attracted to private EMI international schools. Although generally associated with providing an education for children outside their own national context (Hayden & Thompson, 1995), private international schools have been attracting more and more nationals due to being ‘classified as “excellent”’ (Lootah, 2011, p. 43), parents seeing certificates such as the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and the International Baccalaureate (IB) as a ticket to international higher education (Mackenzie et al., 2003) or general dissatisfaction with national educational systems (Bray & Yamato, 2003, as cited in Hammad, 2014, p.58). This seems to be very much the case in the UAE’s capital. For example, in the researcher’s son’s Foundation Stage 2 (FS2) class at a British curriculum international school in Abu Dhabi, six of the 16 students are Emirati (37.5%), which according to the head teacher is average these days but more than was typical in the past. The sociolinguistic consequences of EMI schooling may mean increased English proficiency but at the expense of Arabic language skills and a secure sense of cultural identity, some would argue. This was found to be the case in a study by Al-Eriefy (2011) where international schools were found to have had a negative impact on Saudi Arabian students’ cultural identity in terms of religious, social, cognitive, psychological and political dimensions.

### **2.5.3) EMI in higher education**

Turning to look at EMI in higher education specifically, there is a ‘rainbow of motives’ (Coleman, 2006, p.4) behind the global trend of internationalizing higher education. These include the rise of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), teaching and research materials, staff mobility and graduate employability. Thus, reasons behind

the internationalization of HE 'range from ethical and pedagogical through pragmatic to the commercial' (Coleman, 2006, p.4).

English is clearly an omnipresent language in higher education worldwide. As Altbach (2014, p. 107) points out, it is not only the language of instruction in English-speaking giants such as the USA, UK, Canada and Australia but also the primary language of instruction in Singapore, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and much of Anglophone Africa. English is, therefore, key for communicating knowledge worldwide. English is also the medium of the majority of internationally circulated scientific journals, and scientific and scholarly Internet websites function primarily in English. The largest number of international students also go to English speaking universities (Altbach, 2014, p. 107). In this sense, academic power truly lies with English speaking universities. As Altbach (2014, p. 103) states the desire for EMI is, therefore, situated in the reality of 'the centers and peripheries of an unequal environment'.

Increasingly, universities in many countries are adopting complete or partial English medium instruction. For example, Korea's 2006 'Globalization Project' outlined a plan to increase EMI lectures by 10% annually and by 2010 all doctorate programs were to be taught in English (Cho, 2012, p. 18). In Europe too, EMI in HE is spreading. For example, Finland has the largest share of EMI in higher education outside English-speaking countries, earning it the name 'Little England' (Lehikoinen, 2004, p.46). Countries such as Cyprus, Germany, Denmark and even France have also identified the need for more English-medium university courses, and are accepting English as a lingua franca (Coleman, 2006, p. 8). With the acceleration of globalization comes the pressure to join the league of world-class English-medium universities. As Coleman (2006, p. 3) states, 'universities are no longer institutions but brands'. This is a phenomenon felt worldwide and the UAE is no exception

However, unlike other places in the world, which have taken a more partial, or gradual approach towards internationalizing education, the UAE's search for the 'silver bullet' (Aydarova, 2012, p.285), accelerated by the growing impact of globalization in multiple domains, has led to a more dramatic approach. In addition to importing Western models of education which is common worldwide, 'Westernization in GCC higher education has gone further by relying on Western faculty and administrators to implement and lead their reforms' (Badry and Willoughby, 2016, p. 208). Some feel,

however, such a dramatic approach is too much, too soon. As Aydrarova (2012, p. 291) states, ‘Importing these models into local contexts creates conflicts and tensions because Emiratis who are already outnumbered by foreigners in their own country feel threatened – their culture and language are being eroded by the introduction of foreign models and the English language’.

## **2.6) Complex history with English-speaking nations**

### **2.6.1) Early English-speaking dominance**

In addition to the factors already mentioned (climate of fast-paced change, demographics, dominance of English in education and society at large) the UAE’s complex history with English-speaking nations further contributes to how English is viewed in the region. Before the formation of the nation, when the UAE was known as the Trucial States, it was controlled and protected by truces with Britain, as mentioned in Section 2.2. This was a relationship, which although once viewed as mutually beneficial had turned into ‘unwanted dominance’ (Al-Fahim, 1995, p. 27). Arab nationalism peaked after the United Nation’s creation of the state of Israel in 1948, resulting in loss of land rights for 700,000 Palestinian Arabs (Darraj & Puller, 2009, p. 32), which was viewed as very much supported by English-speaking superpower the USA. Feelings of resentment over this decision continue, as can be seen by the placement of the Palestinian flag over Israel on world maps at the university in which the study takes place (Figure 2.2) as well as on maps for sale in local stores, which have Israel ‘blacked out’ before purchase.



**Figure 2.2.** Palestinian flag covering Israel on a world map in an Abu Dhabi university.

### **2.6.2) Post 9/11 war of words**

Decades later, the tragic events of 9/11/2001 and the post 9/11 media ‘war of words’ served to sharpen the debate on Huntington’s (1993) theory of the ‘Clash of Civilizations’ (COC), which hypothesized that people’s cultural and religious identities would be the main source of conflict in an increasingly globalized world. Bringing such a debate to the forefront, the events of 9/11 served to reinvigorate old and divisive stereotypes (Mohd-Asraf, 2005, p. 103; Raddaoui & Derbel, 2013 p. 70; Rehman, 2007, p. 212). It is true to say that the negative feelings surrounding the highly publicized and distressing events of 9/11/2001 and its aftermath have caused a deep rift between the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds which, although diffused significantly, is still felt over ten years later. This reality has created, what Findlow (2005, p. 285) describes as, ‘a schizophrenic cultural climate’. At the same time as English is gaining more and more ground in the Gulf, so is ‘sensitivity and mixed feelings about the pace and direction of modernization and globalization and resentment at the sheer numbers of foreigners on Emirati soil’ (Findlow, 2005, p. 296).

### **2.6.3) The election of an Islamophobic U.S. president**

This ‘schizophrenic cultural climate’ described by Findlow (2005, p. 285) has fluctuated in strength over the last decade. In the approach to the 2016 USA presidential election, tensions intensified, perhaps peaking on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016 with the triumph of Donald Trump. Known regionally and globally as ‘the Islamophobia President’ (Beydoun, 2016, p. 1), the day of the election was a distressing event for most in the Arabian Gulf. The atmosphere at the university in which the study took place, for example, was highly charged. In morning classes, the students found it difficult to focus on their work as they watched on their mobile devices news flashes showing the red vote column rising. During the researcher’s own morning class that day, a student asked for a short video of Michelle Obama’s powerful speech on the importance of tolerance, peace, harmony and unity among races and faiths to be shown, which resulted in a class discussion on the importance of this message. It was during the two-hour lunch break between classes that the final election result was revealed. This left teachers and students alike in a state of shock and disbelief. It was, however, moving to see students’

support for their teachers, especially American teachers, during this difficult time which was shown through increased sensitivity, kind words, flowers and gifts (Figure 2.3). Not a single voice in support of the result could be heard.



**Figure 2.3. Students show support for teachers on the day Donald Trump was elected with flowers and notes reading ‘Don’t be sad’ and ‘Don’t worry, we are all with you’.**

Although the election results did not negatively affect the students’ attitudes towards their American teachers, who were for most part extremely upset by the results, there was a widespread feeling of contempt for Americans in general, who were directly responsible for electing such a figure, as well as fear for the future. Ultimately, it could be said that Trump’s new role as president has served to deepen the notion of ‘us and them’ in the eyes of ‘them’.

## **2.7) Conclusion**

In this chapter the contextual, sociocultural and sociolinguistic reality of the UAE has been examined. The chapter has explained the complex web of factors contributing to perceptions of cultural fragility and linguistic vulnerability in the region. The chapter has specifically identified, together with global English, five key factors contributing to feelings of concern over local cultural identity and concerns over the strength of the Arabic language in the UAE. These factors include the UAE’s climate of fast-paced change, imbalanced demographics, the dominance of English in public and private domains, the dramatic and sudden increase of English in education, and the complex history the UAE has with English-speaking nations. Chapter 3 will begin by exploring various forms of resistance to the effects of global English on local cultural identity, before exploring key theory and concepts relevant to the study. This chapter will end by exploring previous empirical research in the region in relation to the literature.

## **Chapter 3) Literature Review**

### **3.1) Introduction**

In connection with the previous chapter which discussed the contextual background of English in the UAE and looked at key factors leading to local cultural and linguistic fragility, this chapter begins by exploring various forms of resistance to the effects of global English in the region (3.2). The chapter then moves on to discuss key concepts related to the study with reference to current literature in the field of sociolinguistics. The concepts of *culture* and *identity* are defined as well as discussing in depth the theory of *interculturality*. An explanation of how these key concepts connect to form the theoretical and conceptual framework for the study is then provided (3.3). The chapter then discusses existing empirical research in the region, primarily with regard to attitudes towards English, perceived effects of English on cultural identity and attitudes towards EMI (3.4). Finally, the chapter ends by highlighting the current gap in the knowledge base and the need for the study by situating it in the current body of literature (3.5).

### **3.2) Resistance to the dominance of English: Push and pull factors**

It is true to say that English is very much a part of the UAE's government's strategic plan (2020 vision) due to its connection with modernity and development, and it is undoubtedly pragmatic, exciting and even liberating for increasingly confident speakers to learn and use. However, in recent years, notable resistance to the effects of global English has been evident across the Gulf. Feelings of cultural fragility or 'superfluous vulnerability' (Al-Khouri, 2012, p. 5) have led the UAE, and other GCC countries, to construct new forms of legislative structures to preserve local identity (Al-Khouri, 2012, p. 5). Forms of resistance include the government's Emiratization initiative, an increase in cultural identity themed conferences and symposia, an Arabic language drive and the questioning of educational policy in terms of EMI and the involvement of foreign advisors, school teachers and university faculty. Each of these forms of resistance will be discussed in relation to relevant literature in the following sections.



### **3.2.1) Emiratization**

The UAE government's 'Emiratization' initiative, which encourages Emiratis to enter the workforce with the aim of reducing its reliance on so many foreign workers (Kirk, 2010, p. 11), is perhaps the most prominent sign of counteraction. In Abu Dhabi, a local Emiratization council (Tawteen) has been established to support and develop Emiratization strategies with the aim of increasing the Emiratization percentage in the private sector (Al Shaiba, 2014, p. 78). Emiratization within education has become significant with new teacher training colleges focusing on qualifying a generation of Emirati teachers (Sandiford, 2013, p.2). It is hoped that these new Emirati teachers will be personally invested in the system, able to promote a 'sense of national awareness and indigenous culture' (Findlow, 2005, p. 298) and at the same time raise educational standards. However, the process of Emiratization has been anything but smooth. A study by TAMNIA, which is part of the Ministry of Labor, examined problems national graduates encountered when trying to find work in the private sector. The findings from the study showed these problems included a reluctance to accept what were seen as low wages and long working hours, not meeting the English proficiency level required, and lack of certain skills required (Al Shaiba, 2014, p. 78). There is, therefore, a desire to lessen the reliance on foreign workers but at the same time a reluctance or inability to enter private sector work under the same conditions, which leads back to the 'wanted but not welcomed' feeling about expatriates discussed in Section 2.3.3.

### **3.2.2) Cultural identity themed conferences and symposia**

Naming Arabic the official language of all federal authorities and establishments in 2008, coupled with the fact that the same year was declared 'the year of national identity' in the UAE (Al Baik, 2008, as cited in Badry, 2011, p. 91), highlights a need, in the eyes of the leaders, for bolstering cultural and linguistic security in the UAE.

Furthermore, multiple conferences have recently been organized to discuss ways to reaffirm cultural security such as the 2012 Qatar University conference on Arabic and identity, the Sharjah 2013 conference on 'The Role of Museums and Cultural Institutions in Strengthening Identity', Dubai's 2013 'Second International Conference

on Arabic Language’ and the 2014 Gulf Comparative Education Society (GCES) symposium ‘Locating the National in the International’. In addition to this, the Gulf’s largest annual ELT conference, TESOL Arabia, chose the theme of ‘language, culture and communication’ for its March 2016 conference with plenaries focusing on the issue of culture, language, identity and globalization. Plenary speakers discussing these areas included Claire Kramsch (*Which culture should we teach in an era of globalization?*), Salah Troudi (*Teaching though culture: what culture? Whose culture?*), Peter Stanfield (*Language and Culture; the possibility of teaching*) and Neil McBeath (*Cultural change in the Arab Gulf: Natural progression or imperialist plot?*), to name just a few. Later in the same year, Oman’s most prestigious university, Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat organized an international conference on ‘Connecting the dots in a globalized world’ (November 2016) with plenary speakers Jan Blommaert and Rani Rubdy speaking on the topic of cultural globalization. It is clear, therefore, that globalization and cultural identity are recognized as highly relevant areas of discussion in the region and rather than there being a general feeling of content with the status quo, there are divided reactions to the pace and direction of English in the Gulf.

### **3.2.3) Arabic language drive**

Concerns over the dominance of English and loss of Arabic have also led to a marked Arabic language drive at multiple levels. Moves have been made to strengthen the Arabic language through awards as well as promoting the Arabic book industry. For example, in May 2014 the ‘Mohammed bin Rashid Arabic Language Award’ was launched to encourage ‘exceptional contributions in serving the Arabic language’ (Al Allaq, 2014, p. 120) and the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage has recently launched several projects to uplift the Arabic Language such as the ‘Kalima’ Project (meaning ‘word’ project) which aims to translate hundreds of foreign books into Arabic to overcome the ‘translation draught in the Arab world’ (Kalima, n.d., para.1).

On a smaller scale, locally organized events to promote Arabic have also been organized in Abu Dhabi such as the “Language of Happiness’ event on March 2016 in Delma Park (‘The National’, 2016), which focused on promoting Arabic through fun and engaging methods such as ventriloquists reading stories in Arabic and Arabic

quizzes with prizes. The project organizer Ms. Alsabaaneh, stated the purpose of the event was to promote Arabic within the family and ‘encourage parents to engage with their children in Arabic and take them to events predominately in Arabic’ (Alsabaaneh, as cited in Al Subaihi, 2016). This was a response to observations Alsabaaneh made upon moving to Abu Dhabi from Palestine, regarding the feeling of being surrounded by English. The promotion of Arabic over English can also be seen when walking along the corridors at the university in which the study takes place. Figure 2.4 shows one of many posters promoting the use of Arabic (the mother language) among Emiratis.

**Figure 2.4: Sign of resistance to English posted in a local university corridor**



The need for Arabic to be pushed forward in such a way to its own speakers could be interpreted as a concrete sign of its fragility in the region.

### **3.2.4) Resistance to educational reforms**

As well as resistance to the amount of English in general, there has specifically been a large body of resistance to the series of educational reforms outlined in Section 2.5, especially in terms of the adoption of Western educational models, increased EMI and the hiring of Western teachers. This resistance can be seen across the Gulf. One of the strongest forms of resistance in the region, which Belhiah and Elhami (2015, p. 4) describe as a ‘watershed moment in the history of higher education in the GCC’, was the decision of the Supreme Education Council in Qatar in 2012 to abandon EMI and instead make Arabic the language of instruction (AMI) at its most prestigious university, Qatar University. This momentous decision served to open up dialogue on this possibility in other GCC nations, especially as concerns about recent reforms involving EMI were mounting. Concerns in the UAE over imported Western education models and curriculums center around the lack of inclusion of local culture and the denigration of Arabic. Aydarova (2012) explains how even when attempts are made to indigenize or localize Western imported models, they are often unsuccessful, ‘as rather than blending Emirati culture into the mix, often teachers use their own interpretation

of Emirati culture as ‘a filter through which they sift the curriculum, eliminating features that they think do not belong’ (p. 291). This leads to a watered-down version of a Western model, where they get ‘little of “best of the West” and even less of “local culture and heritage”’ (Aydarova, 2012, p. 291). Lootah (2011) argues that hiring foreign expertise at the levels of consultation, setting programs, determining curriculum content and supervising teaching, as seen in the Madares Al Ghad project, NSM and the institutions of higher education, creates subordination to Western culture, which ‘undermines the chances of equipping students with knowledge, creativity and innovative ability’ (p. 49).

Further concerns have also been raised over the appropriateness of hiring Western educators due to Western teachers embodying Western cultural values which are vastly different to the students they teach. As Karmani (2005, p.95) states, in the university foundation program in particular, teachers consist primarily of ‘an exclusive corps of Anglo-Western TESOL practitioners, most of whom...lack the most rudimentary knowledge about “Islam” or...the most basic structures of the Arabic language’. Burkett’s study (2016) with 120 Emirati university student participants and five university teachers investigated Emirati students’ cultural norms and university teachers’ socio-cultural awareness, looking at whether there was a gap between the two. Findings revealed that there was ‘seemingly more of a cultural gap between expatriate teachers and their Emirati students than in other contexts – and in some cases, this gap can be quite large’ (p. 6). This is consistent with James and Shammas (2013) theory of ‘cultural apartheid’, explained in Section 2.3.2.

As well as criticisms over the hiring of Western teachers and the importation of foreign curriculums, the gatekeeper status of EMI has also been contested. As Ryan (2010, p.3) states, ‘the system (EMI) equates intelligence with knowledge of English, which is quite arbitrary’ (Ryan, 2010, p.3). It is true to say that many Emiratis with skills in areas other than languages are often ‘held back’ by not being able to master English to the required level needed to pursue their major. As Ryan states, ‘We (English teachers) put up a stop sign, and we stop them in their tracks They can’t pursue their dream any longer until they get English.....we teachers are the gatekeepers’ (2010, p.2). As Al Ameri (2013) states in a recent local newspaper article, ‘to hook success on the ability to speak a specific language rather than intellectual capability is just plain wrong’,

however, he goes on to say, ‘but this is the reality of the world we live in’. This comment, sums up the circular nature of EMI in that it is resented for its gatekeeper status but at the same time wanted and needed. It is not an easy issue to resolve.

### **3.2.5) Questioning the effectiveness of existing forms of resistance**

Scholars have warned of the dangers of the dominance of English in the region especially in terms of the Arabic language being affected. As Al-Issa & Dahan (2011) state, ‘The nefarious role that English seems to play appears designed to eventually remove Arabic from a place of prestige and power on the local scene, both educationally and socially’ (p. 3). Suleiman (2004, p. 35, as cited in Abdel-Jawad & Radwan, 2011, p.125) adds to this sentiment by powerfully describing Arabic as ‘a small island that is in danger of being submerged by the foreign linguistic flood.’ By far the biggest part of this ‘linguistic flood’ is global English being used as a lingua franca due to the numerous nationalities needing to communicate with each other on a daily basis. The importance of English continues to grow despite these concerns, and its importance at times seems to overshadow various forms of resistance. Lootah (2011, p. 47) effectively calls into question the contradictory forces at play regarding English’s role in the UAE.

*“How can we interpret the fact that the political leadership has sensed this danger and declared 2008 the year of national identity while education institutions continue reinforcing English language and marginalizing Arabic language as the first language of instruction? How can the Ministry of Education set about Emiratizing the educational cadre as a strategic goal while there is a foreign presence in all educational institutions which is still growing? How do we expect to reinforce students’ confidence in themselves and in their identity while we are reducing their confidence in Arab teachers and their conviction that their language is one of knowledge? The English language is being reinforced as a language of science and knowledge and foreign teachers are presented as exemplars.”*

### 3.3) Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

There are numerous possible ways of approaching studies relating to the effects of L2 on cultural identity. When exploring various theories in which to frame the study, I found myself in what Dervin and Liddicoat (2013) describe as a ‘conceptual jungle’ (p. 4), which, they state, is not an uncommon experience when researching intercultural education due to the complexity of the concepts involved. As the primary research question for the study concerns the effects of global English on Emirati cultural identity, it was firstly necessary to gain a clear understanding of the key concepts of culture and identity.

Far from straightforward, defining these concepts, partly by what they ‘were not’, which was prevalent in the literature, led to further questions regarding the intertwined nature of the concepts. *Culture* and *identity* share a similar pattern of understanding by scholars in the field. In the view of many scholars the concepts have evolved significantly partly due to the presence of superdiversity, hypermobility and globalization, and partly due to the increased recognition of the importance of the interpretivist paradigm in intercultural studies, with its central ontological tenant being constructivism. Constructivism, which will be explored in greater depth in Section 4.3, recognizes the presence and importance of subjective meanings in relation to social interaction. This approach leads to an understanding of culture and identity as being primarily socially-constructed as well as fluid, changeable, negotiated, and far from straightforward.

Drawing upon social constructivism, the theoretical perspective of interculturality (IC) is particularly useful and relevant to the study as it problematizes cultural differences and emphasizes the ‘inter’ nature of interactions (Nishizaka, 1995; Mori, 2003; Higgins, 2007; Zhu, 2010). IC proposes that although an individual belongs to several different membership categories such as Emirati, female, student, art-lover etc., not all identities are salient or relevant in the same way at a given point in time. This is particularly fitting to the study due to complex and, at times, conflicting cultural identities Emiratis may experience depending on context (e.g. public and private domains) and various forms of social interaction (e.g. generational differences, family, teachers, friends). As explained in Chapter 2 and earlier in this chapter, due to a multitude of contextual and sociolinguistic factors existing in the UAE, which were discussed in depth in the

opening chapter of the thesis, such as the climate of fast-paced change, demographic imbalance, dominance of English in multiple domains including EMI education, and a complex history with English-speaking nations, local cultural identity can be viewed as particularly fragile and complex. The study aims to explore such complexities through the theoretical lens of IC.

In the following sections, the key concepts of culture and identity will be investigated and defined in greater depth. The usefulness and suitability of interculturality (IC) as a theoretical lens for the study will then be justified further by providing a transparent path of decision-making regarding choice of theoretical framework, with reference to previous studies. Finally, the conceptual and theoretical framework for the study which involves the interrelated nature of culture, identity and language together with the theory of interculturality (IC) and social constructivism will be presented as a clear schematic model.

### **3.3.1) Culture**

Culture, in its anthropological sense, was traditionally seen as ‘the whole way of life of a people’ (Young, 1996, p. 37) or ‘the ways of people’ (Lado, 1986, p. 52). However, much controversy now surrounds such a definition due to the fact that as the world is becoming more and more globalized and cosmopolitan in nature, it is becoming increasingly rare to find groups of people sharing an identical way of life. Instead, as Spencer-Oatey (2000) points out, ‘members of cultural groups tend to show “family resemblances” meaning that it is impossible to distinguish definitively one cultural group from another’ (p. 4). Moving away from an essentialist view of culture, Holliday (2005) explains, ‘culture is not a geographical place which can be visited and to which someone can belong, but a social force which is evident wherever it emerges as being significant’ (p. 23). In this sense, cultural identity is constantly evolving and leaking at the boundaries. It is not static or neatly packaged, and it is connected to several smaller overlapping groups rather than one large ‘catch all’ group, such as nationality.

In today’s globalized and highly mobile world, individuals tend to create cultures through multiple smaller social groupings such as families, colleagues, friendship circles, special interest groups, contemporaries etc. Holliday (1999) identifies such ‘cohesive social groupings’ as ‘small cultures’ (p. 237). By attaching ‘culture’ to small

social groupings or activities wherever there is cohesive behaviour, Holliday's (1999) small culture paradigm avoids 'culturalist' ethnic, national or international stereotyping (p. 237). Similarly, Atkinson (1999, p. 633) emphasizes the need to put aside notions of monolithic cultures, and instead focus on differences that exist within cultures. In this sense, culture should be explored 'from the bottom up' (Atkinson & Sohn, 2013, p. 671) with an emphasis on individuals within cultural groups.

It is important to point out that small cultures differ from subcultures in that they do not necessarily have a 'Russian doll or onion-skin relationship with parent large cultures' (Holliday, 1999, p. 239). For example, a small culture such as 'EMI learners' can extend beyond the borders of large cultures such as a nation. As Poppleton & Riseborough (1990) point out, certain educational environments around the world are very similar in terms of teacher-student behavior despite national cultural differences. Holliday (1999) adds that 'small' is not just a matter of size but 'the degree of imposition on reality' (p. 240). Whereas notions of large culture divide the social world into 'hard', essentially different ethnic, national or international cultures, the small culture notion 'leaves the picture open, finding "softer cultures" in all types of social grouping, which may or may not have significant ethnic, national or international qualities' (Holliday, 1999, p. 240). In this sense, the small culture approach focuses on social processes as they emerge. This softer and less rigid approach correlates with the researcher's epistemological beliefs in terms of interpretivism (see 4.3.2).

A part of this softer and less rigid approach to cultures comes a marked awareness of the dynamic and changeable nature of culture. As Ingold (1994, as cited in Atkinson, 1999, p. 632) sums up well, nowadays 'people live culturally' rather than living *in* cultures. This more 'minimal, small, operational' (Holliday, 2002, p.12) notion of culture allows culture to be discovered rather than presumed. Clifford (1992, p. 101) stresses that cultures should no longer be viewed as 'a rooted body that grows, lives, and dies', instead favouring the notion of cultures travelling in that they are often unrooted, ever-developing and highly changeable. Indeed, such change often takes place through individuals contesting or negotiating aspects of their presumed cultural identity. This is especially the case in multicultural societies such as the UAE where individuals perhaps have a heightened awareness of how they are viewed and want to be viewed by others. Agency becomes especially important in such contexts as well as



outside influences associated with globalization and personal idiosyncrasy, which can subvert the idea of homogeneous cultures. In this sense, ‘individuals frequently act in ways that modify, resist, or ignore cultural norms’ (Atkinson, 1999, p. 633), making them active players in the formation of their cultural identities rather than merely ‘cultural dopes’ (Crane, 1994, p. 11).

Considering the points above, culture can, generally, be defined as a way of life or outlook adopted by a community, making it a form of ‘collective subjectivity’ (Alasuutari, 1995, p.25). This definition is useful for the study as it reflects the complexity and socially-constructed nature of ‘cultures’ which matches the multidimensional linguistic and cultural landscape found in superdiverse societies such as the UAE.

### **3.3.2) Identity**

#### **3.3.2.1) Towards a definition of identity**

Risager & Dervin (2015, p. 7) stress that the concept of identity is one of the pivotal concepts of our times. Like culture, however, due to its complexity, identity can be described as a ‘fuzzy concept’ (Strauss and Quinn, 1997, p. 7) or a ‘slippery’ term (Riley, 2006, p. 296). Recent years have seen a paradigm shift moving away from ‘inter-group approaches’ to identity (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 5), which tended to over-simplify and essentialize differences between large groups such as nationality or language, while paying less attention to the multiplicities within groups. Although there has not been a full-scale replacement of essentialist views (Lytra, 2016), identities in recent times are generally recognized by most scholars as plural, rich, complex, and sometimes contradictory (Block, 2007; Diallo, 2014; Kramsch, 1998; Mercer, 2011; Norton, 2000; Pierce, 1995; Scotland, 2014; Suleiman, 2003, Zhu, 2014, 2017). Many aspects of identity are accepted as highly changeable due to social, linguistic and personal factors, making them fluid and dynamic over time and space. Considering these factors, identity can be defined as ‘how 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, 2000, p. 5). The following sections will explore identity construction in greater depth in relation to plurality, positioning, power, and negotiation, and how they are relevant to the study.

### 3.3.2.2) Plurality and positioning in identity construction

Scholars have highlighted the plural nature of identity in numerous ways. For Tracy (2002) there are four categories of identity which are *Master* (gender, ethnicity, age, nationality), *Interactional* (specific roles people enact such as mother, teacher, customer), *Relational* (interpersonal relationships such as power difference or social distance which are context-dependent) and *Personal* (personality, attitudes, character), making one's identity multifaceted and complex. Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004, p. 21) also recognize the plurality of identities by categorizing them as follows: *imposed identities* (which are not negotiable in a particular time and space), *assumed identities* (which are accepted and not negotiated), and *negotiable identities* (which are contested by groups and individuals). Imposed (or non-negotiable) identities are those assigned to individuals that they cannot resist such as, compulsory name changes for immigrants in the early 1900s in the United States, for example. Assumed (or non-negotiated) identities are those that individuals are usually happy with and do not wish to negotiate or contest. These are usually legitimized by traditionally dominant discourses, such as being heterosexual, white, monolingual etc. Negotiable identities, which are arguably the most interesting types to investigate, refer to all identity options which can be contested and resisted by individuals and groups. Examples include race, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, religious affiliation and 'linguistic competence and ability to claim a "voice" in a second language' (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 22). It is the latter form of negotiable identity which is particularly relevant to the study context. Due to the dominance and power of English in the region in multiple domains, there is a sense of vulnerability surrounding Arabic and local cultural identities, which affects identity options and can lead to resistance to certain aspects of such options.

Pavlenko & Blackledge's (2004) categories of *imposed*, *assumed*, and *negotiable* identities were influenced by *positioning theory*, which can traditionally be defined as 'the process by which selves are located in conversation as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines, informed by particular discourses' (Davies & Harre, 1990, p. 48). While Davies & Harre's (1990) saw positioning as mainly a conversational phenomenon, Pavlenko & Blackledge (2004) expanded and built upon the traditional meaning of positioning to include 'all discursive practices which may position individuals in particular ways or allow individuals to position

themselves’ (p. 20). In this sense, how individuals see themselves (*reflective positioning*) or are seen by others (*interactive positioning*) affects identities in a variety of settings and in multiple ways. Based on the combination of *reflexive* and *interactive positioning*, identity becomes a process of analyzing and reanalyzing, reflecting and re-reflecting, negotiating and renegotiating; it is not something one *has*, rather it is ‘something which people *use* to justify, explain, and make sense of themselves in relation to other people and to the contexts in which they operate’ (MacLure, 1993, p. 312). It is important to realize that reflective positioning is often contested by others causing ‘perpetual tension between self-chosen identities and others attempts to position them’ (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 20). As Emiratis in the study participate in discourses related to a range of roles such as *university student, daughter in a large family, shopper, traveler, primary school teacher, mother, etc.*, various identities are co-constructed, and at times contested. The complex interplay between reflective and interactive positioning, in this sense, is shaped to serve specific purposes, affiliations, contexts and spaces.

### **3.3.2.3) Power and negotiation of identities**

It is true to say that identity becomes particularly interesting, important, and relevant, ‘when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty’ (Mercer, 1990, p. 43). Based on the contextual background of the UAE explained in Chapter 2 and earlier in this chapter, the study setting can be viewed as one such ‘context of crisis’ due in part to the binary ways in which English and Arabic are positioned by the media and in public discourses, as well as the overt power English yields over Arabic in multiple public domains, particularly in education. French sociologist, Bourdieu’s (1977, 1991) concept of linguistic stratification is, therefore, useful to the study, in that language often acts as a form of symbolic, economic and social capital which tends to be unevenly distributed according to the social setting, making individuals favourably or unfavourably positioned according to the context or space. In the context of the study, the power surrounding English and its gatekeeper status in education can unfavourably position those struggling to meet EMI university standards, for example.

Language ideologies are far from neutral, particularly in multilingual societies such as the UAE where Orwellian perceptions of languages and identity result in some being seen as ‘more equal than others’ (Selvi, 2016, p. 62). Negotiation is a logical outcome of such inequality. When some identity options are more valued than others, people often not only have to negotiate and ‘defend’ their national and ethnic identities but also construct each other’s perceptions (Dervin, 2014, p.191). In postmodern societies, especially in the case of the UAE, languages may serve as sites of solidarity, empowerment, resistance, disempowerment, or discrimination. How one positions oneself depends upon ‘the level of inclusion, acceptance, and equality’ one feels among certain communities (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 17). In this study, Emirati participants, for example, may feel the English-speaking aspect of their identities receives a greater level of acceptance in the EMI university setting, whereas their Arabic-speaking (Emirati dialect) self receives greater inclusion at home, especially with older family members for which speaking English is often not an option or not desirable. Feeling perhaps a lack of acceptance in purely English-speaking domains or purely Arabic-speaking domains may lead to a feeling of dancing in between. As Pavlenko & Blackledge, (2004, p. 17) explain, ‘At times, fragmentation and splintering give birth to new, hybrid, identities and linguistic repertoires’. Such hybridity in positioning, or a creation of a ‘third space’ (Keith & Pile, 1993; Bhabha, 1994) was a prominent finding from the pilot stage of the study. Exploring the way in which individuals reconfigure and/or establish ‘other centers’ (Giampapa, 2004, p. 193) is, therefore, of direct relevance to the study.

### **3.3.3) The theory of Interculturality (IC)**

Considering the definitions and discussion of culture (Section 3.3.1) and identity (Section 3.3.2), the theoretical perspective of ‘interculturality’ (IC), which originates in Nishizaka’s seminal work (1995) and was extended by Mori (2003) and Zhu (2010, 2014) is particularly useful for this study. This section highlights the main background and principles of IC before explaining the three primary reasons for its suitability as a theoretical framework for the study. These reasons include ICs close connection with social constructivism, its relevance to the superdiverse context of the study, and its usefulness in explaining complexity and multiplicity found in cultural identities in the study context.

### 3.3.3.1) Background and principles of IC

The theory of IC has traditionally been used in two different ways: *IC as being* and *IC as doing*. The first way of viewing IC is as a state *of being* ‘intercultural’. In this sense, people have cultural values and cultural differences which are part of their state of being. By taking this view, previous studies have tended to concentrate on the search for cultural values that underlie cultural differences, and theories and models that bridge differences in communication (Zhu, 2010, p. 192). Although popular between the 1970’s and 1990’s with Hofstede’s often-cited work (1980) exemplifying this approach, recently criticisms have been launched against ‘IC as being’ due to it being seen as ‘essentialist’ (Holliday, 2010), ‘reductionist’ (Kubota & Lehner, 2004) and lacking problematization.

In contrast, *IC as doing*, which has become increasingly popular in recent years due to the paradigm shift with regard to identity studies (see Section 3.3.2.1), views cultural identities as multidimensional and socially-constructed. According to this perspective, an individual has a number of identities and belongs to many membership categories, but not all identities are equally salient or relevant at a given point in different social interactions (Zhu, 2014, p. 209). Instead of seeing cultural identity as static or given, the theoretical lens of *IC as doing* ‘problematizes the notion of cultural identities and emphasizes the emergent, discursive and inter- nature of interactions’ (Zhu, 2014, p. 209). *IC as doing* very much matches the interpretivist paradigm with social constructivism, which reflects the researcher’s epistemological and ontological beliefs, as explained further in Chapter 4.

Early studies employing the theory of *IC as doing* have focused primarily on discourse analysis in the field of applied linguistics (Nishizaka, 1995; Mori 2003). However, the theory of IC has more recently been applied to a range of studies in other disciplines including social psychology, sociology, anthropology, education, language teaching and learning, and identity studies. Both Nishizaka (1995) and Mori (2003) seminal work using IC as a framework involved its application to the analysis of discourse between Japanese participants and foreigners. Through analysis of such discourse, Nishizaka (1995, p. 302) emphasized that rather than taking cultural differences for granted, one should understand ‘the fact of being intercultural is organized as a social phenomenon’. In this sense, one’s cultural identity is ‘interactively achieved through

and as a sequential arrangement of the participants' (p. 311) making it far from fixed or based on nationality, but rather fluid, changeable and socially-constructed. Nishizaka (1995, p. 311) also drew on the theory of IC to demonstrate how native-speaker-ownership of 'their' language is often a normative expectation, despite others using the language well or better in some cases. This can have an effect on L2 identities with regard to feelings of lack of ownership, distancing or resentment, which was found to be the case in the present study where English-native-speakers were overwhelmingly preferred as English teachers partly due to their 'original ownership' of the language.

In Mori's (2003, p. 180) study investigating the role of IC between Japanese and American students, it was found that cultural identities were very much context-dependent. For example, participants being on or off the university campus generated different types of assumptions towards their identities, relating to native-speaker/non-native-speaker identities amongst other factors. Thus, Mori (2003, p. 181) made the important point that:

*'varying kinds of intercultural interaction should not be lumped together as intercultural just because they involve people with various backgrounds. Instead, its relevance or irrelevance should be discovered'*

Similarly, in the current study, the perceived effects of English on various layers of cultural identity varied according to context. For example, effects of English on individual lives are often seen as positive, whereas when participants speak about the use of English in the context of family life, tensions sometimes emerge, as can be seen in Chapter 6.

### **3.3.3.2) IC and the study**

IC was chosen as the main theoretical underpinning of the study for three main reasons: firstly, its intrinsic connection with social constructivism (as explained in Section 3.3.3.1), secondly, its relevance to the superdiverse contexts, such as that of the study, and thirdly, its usefulness in explaining complexity and multiplicity within cultural identity. The connections between IC and superdiversity, complexity and multiplicity will be explored in greater depth below.

### **3.3.3.2.1) Superdiversity**

Although IC has been present throughout the different stages of world history (Pieterse, 2004), it has become particularly salient in today's globalized world where different cultures frequently meet and interact in 'global contact zones' (Clifford, 1997, p. 7). Such global contact zones are both face-to-face and online. Globalization can be defined as 'a system of interrelationships between regions and territories, places and settings, actors and actions, marked by massively increased velocity, intensity, reach, and impact (Held et al. 1999, cited in Jayyusi, 2010, p.154). It is the speed with which people can move around the earth (hypermobility) and connect online at the click of a button which has intensified IC recently. In the case of the UAE's multinational demographics even without movement intercultural relations are daily. Pratt (1992, p.4) states, within these global contact zones people with different cultural identities, 'meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination.' Such meeting, grappling and clashing is a daily occurrence in the UAE due to the fact over 200 nationalities reside in the country ('The National', 2009), and especially for participants in the study who encounter multiculturalism inside and outside the university. This cannot help but influence cultural identities in numerous ways and is certainly worthy of exploration.

Previous studies have successfully used IC in similar superdiverse study contexts in order to analyse 'the diversification of diversity' (Blackledge, Creese & Hu, 2016, p. 5) and the complex cultural identities often found in such contexts. For example, Zhu's (2010) study investigated the process of language socialization in Chinese diasporic families in the United Kingdom with reference to the theory of IC. Zhu (2010, p. 190) explains that 'diaspora is one of the best sites for the examination of changes in cultural dynamics and values'. Although the present study cannot be described as diasporic in that the participants are not part of a community which has moved from its original homeland to another country, there are many similarities and parallels between the diasporic setting of Zhu's study and the present study's context. These similarities include, a multilingual landscape in both public and private domains (see Section 2.4 and 2.5), a climate of fast-paced change which exacerbates generational gaps (see Section 2.2), and 'push and pull' or 'want-hate relationship' (Solloway, 2016a, p.43) with the L2 (See Section 3.2) where English is seen as necessary but at the same time

resented by some due to its dominance. In Zhu's study context, tensions within communities, especially between different generations were frequently found. For example, often adolescent children of immigrant parents are exposed to possibly conflicting sets of cultural values and practices. This can lead to challenges and complexities when constructing their own sociocultural identities. Based on the contextual background of the UAE, as explained in Chapter 2, this phenomenon is very much applicable to the present study's context due to English being viewed as a 'double-edged sword' in previous Gulf studies, and the present study.

A further similarity between the diasporic communities in Zhu's study (2010), is potential tensions revolving around 'language ideology' (p. 190). For instance, often in superdiverse environments older generations tend to view the L2 (English) as the 'they-code' (Gumperz, 1982) and therefore prefer to use their mother-tongue language for family interaction. On the other hand, the younger generation often consider English as a 'we-code' and prefer it to ethnic languages. Such discrepancies in language ideologies challenge language maintenance and can result in 'conflict and tension regarding what language to use, when and to what extent' (Zhu, 2010, p. 191). Findings from the present study as well as findings from previous empirical research in the Gulf region mirror Zhu's (2010) description of 'they-code versus we-code' tensions. The question as to how to use English without marginalizing Arabic is central to the study.

A final similarity between the superdiverse setting of the UAE and that of diasporic communities is that younger generations tend to 'not only internalize the social and cultural norms of a community, but also actively participate in the construction of their own social and cultural identities' (Zhu, 2010, p. 191). The way in which the Emirati participants in the present study shape and negotiate their identities through use of hybridity, for example, also relates strongly to the theory of IC. In the context of the UAE where English is used as the lingua franca as well as in education, cultural identity tends to display itself in what Baker (2009, p. 567) describes as 'a hybrid, mixed and liminal manner, drawing on and moving between global, national, local, and individual orientations'. Originally a term associated with biology (Zhu, 2017, p. 119), hybridity is now often used in cultural studies to describe the mix and plurality of identity that results from the phenomenon of "togetherness-in-difference" (Ang, 2001) or 'double



belonging' (Lam & Warriner, 2012). Hybridity is increasingly found in multicultural linguistic landscapes which was certainly revealed to be the case in the UAE setting as can be seen in the findings (Chapter 6) from the study.

Although some scholars have argued that lingua franca communication or global English has a minimal effect on cultural identity due to the belief that global English is 'native-culture-free' (Polzl, 2003, p.5), a 'linguistic masala' (Meierkord, 2002, p.128) or 'a mere tool bereft of collective cultural capital' (House, 2003, p.560), I have to agree with Zhu (2015, p. 23), and the theory of IC, in that 'culture permeates and means different things to different people'. In this sense, cultural identities are complex and should be recognized as such.

### **3.3.3.2.2) Multiplicity in identities**

Despite today's age being labeled postmodern, there is still a tendency to try and simplify the concept of culture by mistakenly using the words 'culture' and 'country' as synonyms, as outlined in Section 3.2.1. Even though nationality still plays a large role in defining one's identity in intercultural relationships (Dervin, 2014, p. 192), it should be recognized that this strand is only one element of intercultural relations. Defining culture by nationality alone hides a multiplicity of differences between individuals such as 'unequal power relations, including poverty, violence, structural inequalities such as racism and the possibilities of multiple identities' (Hoskins and Sallah, 2011, p. 114). When we talk of 'Western culture' or 'Emirati culture' in this study, therefore, we must do so with the understanding that there are variations and fluidity within these categories, and recognize the multi-faceted, co-constructed nature of participants' cultural identities.

Especially in the case of the Emirati participants in the study, arguably more prominent than *national identities* are emerging *bicultural identities*. According to Arnett (2002, p. 777), many people in the world 'now develop a *bicultural identity*, in which part of their identity is rooted in their local culture while another part stems from awareness of their relation to the global culture.' Adopting one language for cultural identity and another for utilitarian communication is becoming increasingly common where many 'might come to choose this differentiated bilingualism' (Wright, 2004, p.249). In this sense, as de Swann (2001, p.ix) suggests, this emerging bicultural identity involving

both the use of local languages and English could be compared to choosing to 'take a plane to a remote destination while riding one's bike on nearby trips'. Looking further ahead, Coleman (2006, p. 11) suggests this concept may well spread globally, stating, 'Ultimately, the world will become diglossic, with one language for local communication, culture and expression of identity, and another- English- for wider and more formal communication, especially in writing'. There are very real signs of this already happening in the UAE, as explained in Chapter 1, with the tendency to use of Emirati Arabic or Khaleeji mainly at home and with friends and family and English in public, online, in education and the workplace.

As well as IC leading to the development of bicultural identities, a further feature of IC is the possibility of individuals not relating to any specific culture in particular. In today's 'post-modern' society, many scholars and writers emphasize a self which is unrestricted by any specific cultures. In this sense, people are fluid and many-sided, endlessly changing and recreating identities, which Lifton (1999) refers to as "the protean self" after Proteus, the Greek sea god of many forms. Building on this perspective, Mathews (2000, p. 4) compares modern cultural identity to shopping in a 'cultural supermarket' arguing that, 'we have come to live in a world of culture as fashion, in which each of us can pick and choose cultural identities like we pick and choose clothes.' Mathews' study (1996) investigating cultural identity in the shadow of Hong Kong's return to China in 1997 by interviewing 32 teachers, graduate students and alumni from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, supported this notion. The study setting was similar to the present study's context in that faculty at the university were English-speaking and almost all had obtained their PhDs abroad, and English not Chinese, was the main medium of 94 percent of secondary schools in the region. Findings indicated that participants enjoyed choosing or 'shopping for' Western names for themselves to be used in public (e.g. Vivian, Alice, Henry) feeling that 'Chinese names were "old-fashioned", and restricted for use at home' (Mathews, 1996, p. 404). A similar situation was highlighted in the pilot stage of the present study where it was commented on that, especially online, Emirati teenagers frequently adopt Western names in order to present a certain image (Hopkins, 2014, p.24).

Although to a certain extent, the presence of a cultural supermarket exists as is demonstrated in numerous ways in the findings chapter of this thesis by participants

‘choosing the best of the west’ and rejecting other parts of what English symbolizes, it should be recognized that identity is not entirely a ‘free-floating concept’ (Zhu, 2017, p.131) or a ‘choose your own adventure novel’, where each choice takes on in seemingly undefined directions (Mulcock, 2001, p. 171). Rather, restrictions do exist especially in the Middle Eastern context. As Mathews’ (1996, p. 401) recognizes:

*‘One’s choices from the cultural supermarket are deeply influenced by one’s given cultural shaping, and also by the array of social and institutional rules one must conform to and the roles one must fit. They are also shaped by the array of competing voices aimed at molding one’s mind, from the propaganda of nations, to the blandishments of advertisements and the allure of popular culture, to the pressures of one’s immediate social world.’*

Such restrictions in the study context would be lack of choice for women with regard to clothing, religion, dating and hobbies (e.g. horse riding is not culturally acceptable for adult women despite many female students wishing to do this) due to cultural norms in Emirati society.

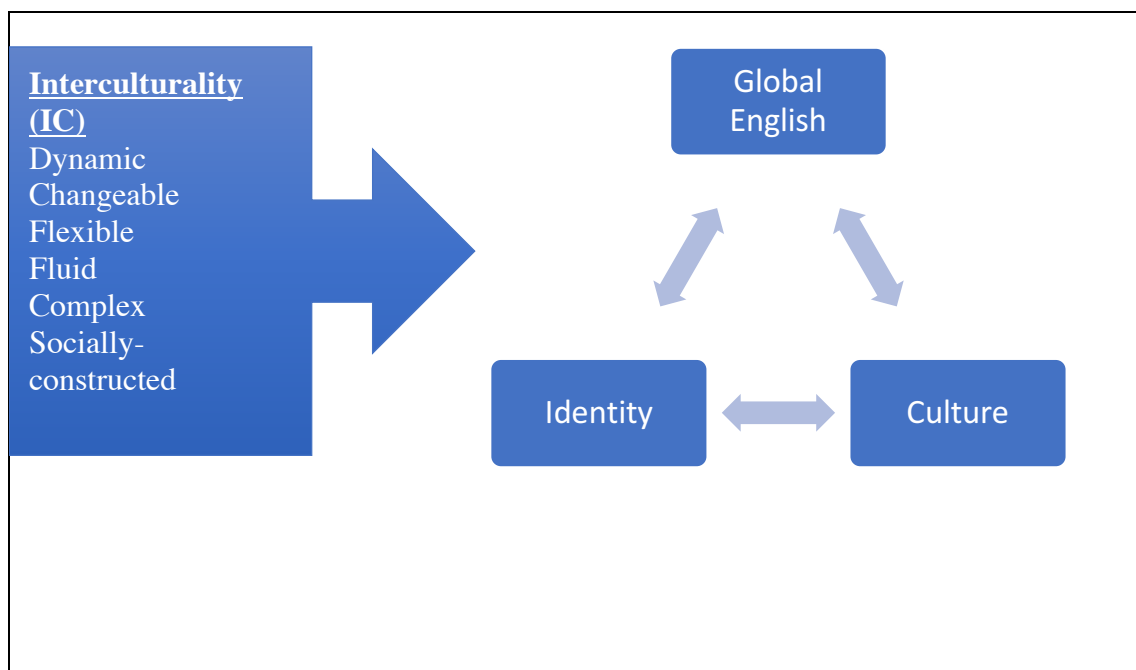
### **3.3.4) The connection between global English, culture and identity**

Many scholars have recognized the strong connections between language, culture and identity (Al-Dabbagh, 2005; Jenkins, 2007; Karmani, 2005; Kramsch, 1998, 2005; Suleiman, 2003), to the point where ‘language is the main ingredient in any discussion on culture and cultural identity’ (Ahmed, 2011, p.123). As Kramsch (1998) states, ‘Language is the principle means whereby we conduct our social lives. When it is used in contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways’ (p. 3). Al-Dabbagh (2005) adds, ‘Language is the major vehicle of culture and human communication’, going on to say that seeing English as a ‘neutral force in the cultural battle is a fatal supposition’ (p. 5). Scholars researching in the Gulf region draw parallels between the far-reaching power English has as a language and Islam has as a religion. Both are far more than their labels suggest. As Harris (1991, p. 90) states, ‘English is not just a language, any more than Islam is just a religion’, in that neither can be easily restricted or contained. Morrow and Castleton (2011, p. 329) point out the pervasive nature of both Islam and English in the context of the Gulf by stating, ‘Even those who are briefly in an Arabic speaking country will

find themselves, without conscious thought, utilizing the more common Allah phrases. Who, then, can learn English without learning all that comes along with it?'.

In this sense, language, culture and identity are intrinsically intertwined, 'making them prone to the domino effect, in that if one is affected or threatened, the others are not far behind' (Hopkyns, 2014, p. 5). As Said (2011) powerfully states, 'losing a language is losing a culture and losing culture is losing one's identity' (p. 191). This strong statement which focuses on 'losing' rather than 'gaining' does, however, imply that without one's own language, one is left with nothing, which is certainly not the case. While language is an important part of identity, as discussed earlier in this chapter, it should be recognized that it is one of many aspects contributing to identity construction. These multi-faceted aspects of a persons' identity are fluid, changeable and constantly evolving. It, therefore, is not possible, or desirable, to remain in a state in which one's culture, language and identity remain unchanged. Indeed, changes to identity through the use of English may be welcomed changes, which add rather than subtract from a person's sense of identity. Block (2008) challenges the term 'loss' in relation to multilingualism and multiculturalism, stating that for many individuals the focus is not on what they might be losing, but rather what they seek to develop. As Cheng (2010, cited in Dervin, 2014, p.193) correctly states, 'Every culture changes; otherwise it is not culture, but a museum piece'.

Together with the theory of interculturality, the intertwined nature of the three key concepts, culture, identity and language form the core theoretical and conceptual framework of the study as can be seen in Figure 3.1.



**Figure 3.1: The theoretical and conceptual framework of the study showing interculturality and the intertwined nature of global English, culture and identity.**

It is the complexity and inter-related nature of language, culture and identity as outlined in Figure 3.1, that directly relate to the research questions. The findings of the study, which are presented in Chapter 6, very much reconfirm the importance of viewing culture, identity and language as complex, changeable, socially-constructed and intertwined.

### **3.4) Previous Empirical Studies**

With the key concepts of culture and identity, and the theory of interculturality defined and discussed in relation to the study, this section will now turn to look at relevant previous empirical research. There is a growing body of international and Arabian Gulf region literature on English as a global language and its effects on cultural identity (Ahmed, 2011; Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011; Al-Jarf, 2008; Badry, 2011; Belhiah & Elhami, 2015; Findlow, 2005, 2006; Hagler, 2014; Hopkyns, 2014, 2015, 2016, Morrow and Castleton, 2011; O'Neill, 2016; Randall and Samimi, 2010; Solloway, 2016). This section highlights and critically examines key research particularly in the Gulf context and highlights the need for this study to bridge a gap in the knowledge base. Key areas previous empirical studies have focused primarily on are attitudes towards English in

general, EMI, western culture and western native-speaker teachers. Findings from previous studies investigating the perceived effects of English on culture, religion and the Arabic language will also be discussed.

### **3.4.1) Positive attitudes towards English in the Gulf**

Previous studies in the Gulf have investigated the effects of global English on cultural identity with a particular focus on attitudes towards English. For the most part, these studies have found mainly positive attitudes (Findlow, 2006; Hagler, 2014; Morrow and Castleton, 2011; Randall and Samimi, 2010). For example, Findlow's study between 1997 and 2000 examined linguistic-cultural dualism and how far this leads to loss of linguistic-cultural diversity and whether there is resistance to such a process. The results showed that although there may be underlying ideological conflict between wanting to maintain heritage versus opportunity associated with English, the climate (modernist, global, a strong economy, comfortable lifestyles) meant English was above all 'enabling' (Findlow, 2006, p. 33). Similarly, Randall and Samimi's study in 2010 with the Dubai Police Academy showed no sign of any overt opposition to English in the open responses, apart from the word 'unfortunately' used in relation to the fact that English is a global language. A year later, Morrow and Castleton's study investigated a range of issues including attitudes towards the English language, with volunteers from across the Arab world and found responses to be almost entirely positive. Similarly, Alkaff's (2013) study with 47 foundation year students at the English Language Institute of King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah found that students generally had positive attitudes towards English (p. 119). It is evident from previous studies in the region that English, and particularly EMI, is associated with prestige and success in the eyes of Gulf students. Al-Jarf's (2008) study using open-response questionnaires with 470 female Saudi Arabian undergraduates found that 96% of participants saw English as a superior language to Arabic due to its importance globally, 91% equated mastery of English with success in life and 89% believed that people who study in English are more qualified and have a better social status than those who study in Arabic. Responses demonstrating this included, 'Society respects those who can communicate in English and those who have graduated from an English-medium college or university' and 'A person who can communicate in English has a better self-esteem and

more self-confidence' (Al-Jarf, 2008, p. 202). Clarke's study (2006) with Emirati B.Ed. students found there was an assumption of cultural superiority that accompanies English language teaching. For example, it was stated during a focus group session that, 'when we were in schools, we were told that we should learn English because it would make us better human beings' (p. 229). Equally, Solloway's study (2016, p. 186) with foundation-program female university students across the seven Emirates of the UAE using a sixteen-item Likert scale questionnaire (in Arabic and English) revealed that the majority (56%) felt the UAE needs English in order to become a leading nation in the world and 93% felt English was vital for international business. Perhaps for these reasons 90% of the participants wanted their future children to speak English.

### **3.4.2) Mixed perspectives on EMI**

With regard to English medium education, Al-Jarf's (2008) Saudi Arabian participants felt that English was more appropriate for teaching certain core subjects such as medicine, pharmacy, engineering, science, nursing, and computer science. The main reason given for this was English being the language of modernity (96% stated this) and the majority of research articles and textbooks being available in English. Arabic on the other hand was seen as being more appropriate for teaching Islamic Studies, Arabic literature and education. 93% of participants believed that books and articles in medicine, engineering, science and technology are not translated into Arabic and that 'Arabizing technical terms is ineffective because many technical concepts cannot be translated and explained in Arabic. It was felt that knowledge of technical terms in English would make knowledge transfer easier' (Al-Jarf, 2008, p. 201). Findlow's study (2006) surveyed Emirati students in federal HE regarding preferred medium of instruction. The findings showed a marked preference for EMI (50%). Only 22% preferred AMI, and the remaining participants ignored the rubric on the answer sheet and inserted 'both' (p. 26). Reasons for preferring English centered around specific career goals, whereas reasons for wanting AMI correlated with holistic, 'doing well', type goals, which led Findlow to conclude that competing values were at play with English representing individualism and Arabic representing affiliation to society (p. 32).

A decade later, Solloway (2016) surveyed female Emirati participants, on the subject of EMI in education. The findings, in this case, were quite different. The majority

disagreed with all core subjects being taught in English (81%) and preferred instead to have the choice of EMI or AMI. It was also mainly felt (77%) that using Arabic in English lessons, rather than 'English-only', would help English learning. This preference could be a reaction to the frustration of having been taught by BANA teachers with no Arabic or minimal Arabic, despite living in the Gulf for many years.

Burkett's 2016 study investigated Emirati students' cultural norms and university teachers' socio-cultural awareness, looking at whether there was a gap between the two. Participants in the study included 120 Emirati university students and five university teachers with multiple decades of experience teaching in the Gulf. Findings revealed that among the weakest areas for expatriate university teachers was 'knowledge of Arabic'. Only one of the teachers who was married to an Arab national knew minimal Arabic. This could be explained by Arabic diglossia acting as a learning barrier for expatriates (as explained in Chapter 1) and the sheer amount of English in multiple domains of society making Arabic seem unnecessary or a lesser priority, as explained in Chapter 2.

### **3.4.3) Effects of English on culture and religion**

Previous studies have also investigated attitudes towards the West and whether learning about Western native-speaker cultures was desirable when studying English. In Saudi Arabia, Hagler's study in 2012 at King Saud University assessed students' attitudes to the West and found most (62% of males and 70% of females) had a positive outlook to Western culture and were curious and eager to learn more about it (Hagler, 2014, p. 6). In Solloway's study (2016, p. 184), however, the Emirati university student participants were more divided with only 40% of the Emirati university students feeling that knowing about English-native-speaker countries was important when studying English.

The impact of English on local cultural identity, with a particular focus on 'spiritual pollution' (Solloway, 2016, p. 181) has also previously been investigated. In the majority of previous studies it was found that English did not threaten Islam, in the eyes of participants. For example, Al-Haq and Smadi's (1996, p. 313) study with 1176 Saudi Arabian university students found that 68.5% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that English corrupted their religious commitment. Similar results were found in other Muslim nations such as India (Hudawi, 2013), Malaysia (Mohd-Asraf, 2005) and



Pakistan (Mahboob, 2009). However, in Haque's (2007) study with 727 Emirati respondents, over 50% felt a conflict existed between local culture and modern Western culture. In addition, in Solloway's recent study in the UAE (2016, p. 184), participants were divided, with just over half (56%) feeling that English was a threat to traditions, and Islamic values and customs. Findlow's study (2005) investigating global-local tensions involving Emirati university students also found a 'cumulative general impression of concern for cultural preservation' (p. 298). When asked about the importance of education in the UAE, 87% felt being educated was important to help the country and a further 11% added, unprompted, that further education was needed in order to rely less on foreign workers / expatriates (Findlow, 2005, p. 298).

#### **3.4.4) The future of Arabic in the region**

Finally, previous studies have investigated the future of Arabic in the region, with mixed findings being revealed. Morrow and Castleton's study (2011) with participants across the Arab world found approximately 80% were positive about the future of the Arabic language, while the other 20% were pessimistic (p. 322). However, Al-Jarf's Saudi Arabian participants were more pessimistic. When they were asked about their future role in protecting the Arabic language, 91% of participants indicated there was nothing they could do as individuals and that political resolution was the only way forward. Participants also commented on the current lack of incentives and motivation for researchers and authors to write in Arabic. In Solloway's UAE study (2016) the majority (79%) liked to see leaders communicate or 'tweet' in both Arabic and English, but 70% believed Arabic should be free of English words and 63% felt annoyed when hearing Emiratis speaking English together (Solloway, 2016, p. 184). This implies while English-Arabic bilingualism is approved of for important figures due to English's connection to prestige, it is perhaps still viewed as perhaps 'uncomfortable' or 'disloyal' for the average Emirati. Here we see the double-edged sword nature of English discussed in Chapter 2.

### **3.5) Bridging a gap in the knowledge base: the need for the study**

The previous studies mentioned, although all taking place in the Gulf and wider world in the last fifteen years and investigating similar issues, vary in nature. There are three main gaps in the knowledge base which this study addresses.

Firstly, there is a lack of previous research investigating multiple perspectives in one setting. Existing studies have tended to involve just one, or occasionally two participant groups, mainly only university students. Researchers in the region have named the lack of more than one or two participant groups as being their studies' primary weakness (Mouhanna, 2016, p.202; Solloway, 2016, p. 191), and have called for further research involving a greater range of participant views. For example, Mouhanna (2016) states, 'accessing a range of sources of data will provide studies with diverse insights and experiences.....and a more evenly balanced narrative' (p.202). This study, by presenting the current perspectives of not only university students but also others who live within the system, namely Emirati primary teachers and expatriate university English teachers, meets this demand. The present study's inclusion of Emirati primary teachers, who have been directly affected by the spread of English to the point where their careers may be in danger due to the New School Model, brings a particularly unique angle to the research, which has not previously been investigated. In summary, including multiple perspectives adds considerable depth to the way in which the phenomenon is examined.

Secondly, previous studies have predominately been either quantitative or mixed method in approach, using Likert scale surveys as a main data collection tool. The present study, in contrast, uses two qualitative data collection tools, open-response questionnaires and focus groups, as well as a research journal by the researcher, in order to delve deeper into the issues and hear rich responses in the participants' own words. The use of Arabic translators also gave the participants in the study the choice of using the language they were most comfortable with, also leading to richer and unrestricted data. From the small number of previous studies which are qualitative in nature, in many there appears to be a lack of depth to the data in terms of detailed real-life accounts and experiences relating to the phenomenon of English in the Gulf. The present study, on the other hand, delves more deeply into issues previously explored on a relatively surface level. As well observing this as a researcher, positive comments

from conference presentation audience members and reviewers specifically relating to the depth of data obtained, testify to this fact.

Finally, due to the UAE's climate of fast-paced change, as described in Chapter 2, it is necessary to frequently revisit pivotal issues such as attitudes towards English, the effects of English on cultural identity and attitudes towards EMI, as fresh circumstances arise. Due to the surge of media attention relating to the issues under investigation and the New School Model nearing its first full cycle, it is timely and essential to explore current views and fresh perspectives on these ongoing issues.

Overall, this study adds to a growing body of knowledge in the region as well as bringing greater awareness to the fields of language, culture and identity. Most importantly, it gives opportunities for the voices of a range of stakeholders to be heard.

### **3.6) Conclusion**

This chapter began by discussing various forms of resistance to the effects of global English in the Gulf region. The effectiveness of such resistance was called into question due to the continuation of English being viewed as the 'icon of the contemporary age' (Guilherme, 2007, p. 74) compiled by its growing dominance in multiple domains, as seen in Chapter 2. The chapter moved on to review the literature surrounding the key concepts of *culture* and *identity* and the theory of *interculturality*. The dynamic, changeable, flexible, fluid and socially-constructed complexion of modern global identities was discussed before explaining the closely interwoven nature of culture, identity and global English, which forms the theoretical and conceptual framework for the study. Finally, the chapter presented previous empirical research related to the study. As well as reviewing the literature connected to global English and cultural identity, and attitudes towards English, the West and EMI, gaps in the knowledge base were highlighted. These gaps included limited perspectives (one or two participant groups) and depth of qualitative data. Bringing fresh views to ongoing pivotal issues, the inclusion of multiple perspectives in one setting, and being solely qualitative in nature resulting in particularly rich data were advocated as the study's key strengths. Having provided a detail background to the study and review of relevant literature, the following chapter presents the research methods utilized in the study.

## Chapter 4: Research Methods

### 4.1) Introduction

It could be argued that the most important part of any research study is its methodology, as it is this that provides the information by which a study's validity is ultimately judged. As Denscombe (2010, p. 3) points out, 'there is no single pathway to good research: there are always options and alternatives'. In order to be fully transparent and to provide a detailed account of the data collection procedure (Holliday, 2007, p. 54), this chapter will summarize the options and alternatives considered and explain how the research methodology was developed, modified, and refined over the period of the study. An overview of the research design will be given, beginning with the research questions and research paradigm. This is followed by an explanation of the participants and data collection tools. This chapter will conclude with an account of the procedures used to collect the data and a description of ethics.

### 4.2) Research Questions

The study aimed to provide valuable insights into how global English affects cultural identity in the UAE. This was achieved through gaining the perspectives of three distinct groups of participants: Emirati university students, Emirati primary school teachers and expatriate university English teachers. Mason (2002, p. 20) describes research questions as vehicles that 'move you from your broad interest to your specific research focus and project'. Hence, from the main aim of the study, four specific research questions were developed, as outlined in Section 1.4:

*RQ1) What do the languages, English and Arabic, represent to Emirati undergraduates, Emirati primary school teachers and expatriate university English teachers?*

*RQ2) What are Emirati undergraduates', Emirati primary school teachers' and expatriate university English teachers' attitudes towards English as a global language?*

*RQ3) In the participants' view, how does English affect layers of cultural identity in the UAE?*

*RQ4) In the participants' view, what are the English teaching preferences among Emirati undergraduates and Emirati primary school teachers with regard to teacher nationality, course content and medium of instruction?*

### **4.3) The Research Paradigm**

#### **4.3.1) Paradigmatic considerations**

In this section I will explain paradigmatic considerations for the study and justify the chosen paradigm. Paradigms can be defined as 'basic beliefs' or 'ways of thinking about the world' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 15). As Patton (1990, p. 67) states, 'How you study the world determines what you learn about the world', making paradigmatic choice an essential consideration. Although there are numerous possible paradigms or worldviews in modern educational research, historically, there are two well-established dominant and opposing orientations (Richards, 2003, p.29). These two opposing paradigms, known as the scientific (or positivist) paradigm and the interpretive paradigm, involve the philosophical concepts of epistemology and ontology. *Epistemology* is the study of our beliefs about knowledge (Richards, 2003, p.33). As Walliman (2006, p. 15) states, 'Epistemology is concerned with how we know things and what we can regard as acceptable knowledge in a discipline.' In other words, 'what is knowledge? And, how do we know what we perceive is real?' *Ontology*, on the other hand, is our beliefs about reality (Richards, 2003, p.33) or essentially, 'what there exists to be investigated' (Walliman, 2006, p.15).

The scientific paradigm or 'positivism', which holds the central assumption that 'it is possible to describe the world objectively, from a scientific vantage point', has traditionally dominated research in the social sciences (Travers, 2001, p11). However, significant criticisms of the paradigm resulted in the increasing popularity of the interpretive paradigm. The interpretive paradigm aims to reveal interpretations and meanings rather than scientific rules. Ontologically, the central tenet of the interpretive paradigm is *Constructivism*. Constructivism is grounded in the belief that the 'human world is different from the natural, physical world and therefore must be studied

differently' (Guba and Lincoln, 1990, as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 96). It advocates that social phenomena are in a constant state of change due to being reliant on social interactions as they take place, and recognizes the crucial role subjective meanings play in social interaction. Rather than conceiving knowledge as a mirror of reality, "the social construction of reality" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) focuses on the interpretation and negotiation of the meaning of the social world (Kvale, 1996, p.41). The interpretive paradigm is, therefore, particularly suited to qualitative research due to its aim being to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Cresswell, 2009. P. 232).

#### 4.3.2) Justification of chosen paradigm

Given the epistemological and ontological positions described above, this study adopts an interpretive and a constructivist stance for the reasons briefly summarized in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 – Justification of Choice of Research Paradigm**

	<b>Interpretivism /Constructionism</b>	<b>Links to research aims</b>
<b>Epistemology</b>	<b>Interpretivist/Subjectivist</b> – findings are the creation of the process of interaction between the researcher and the participants.	The research questions center around opinions and perceptions of the participants. These opinions and perceptions are inherently subjective. Especially in a focus group setting, meaning will be jointly constructed by the researcher and the participants.
<b>Ontology</b>	<b>Relativist /constructivist</b> –The realities we study are social products of the actors, of interactions and institutions (Flick, 2007, p. 12)	Subjective experiences and perceptions of the participants are being explored in relation to their attitudes towards global English and its effect on cultural identity.

#### 4.4) Approach

When considering possible approaches to the study, case study and phenomenology were equally appealing and well-suited. A hybridized approach in the form of a

phenomenological case study was therefore chosen. The value of combining these two approaches and their appropriateness are explained below.

As this study aims to explore opinions, insights and perceptions on the effects of global English on Emirati cultural identity from multiple angles and by using multiple data collection methods (Keddie, 2006, p.20), the case study approach is appropriate. Also, the 'bounded nature' (Creswell, 2007, p.61) of case studies fits this study as participants are bounded by both time and place, due to living in Abu Dhabi, and, more specifically, working or studying at the university. As the study looks at the perspectives of three groups of participants: Emirati undergraduate students, Emirati primary school teachers and expatriate university English teachers, it can be described as a 'multiple case study' which is descriptive in nature, as the aim is to present a complete description of the phenomenon within its context (Yin, 2003, p.5). In this study, the phenomenon being investigated is 'English in the UAE and its effect on cultural identity' and the cases or units of analysis are the three groups of participants.

Due to the fact that the study investigates how these three groups of individuals (three cases) understand and perceive their experiences of a particular phenomenon, it is also appropriate to use the phenomenological approach. Phenomenology, which was founded in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by Edmund Hesserl and was later furthered by Berger and Luckmann in *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966) (Kvale, 1996, p. 52), generally deals with 'people's perceptions or meanings; people's attitudes and beliefs; people's feelings and emotions' (Denscombe, 2010, p. 93), making it ideally suited to addressing the research questions in this study.

Another feature of phenomenology is its emphasis on the existence of multiple realities. As Denscombe (2010, p.97) states, 'Phenomenology rejects the notion that there is one universal reality and accepts, instead, that things can be seen in different ways by different people at different times in different circumstances, and that each alternative version needs to be recognized as being valid in its own right'. This exemplifies the researcher's chosen epistemological and ontological beliefs that center around interpretivism, subjectivity, relativism and social constructivism. Phenomenological research essentially aims to 'to make the invisible visible' (Kvale, 1996, p. 53) and focuses on the life world of participants with an openness to their experiences.

## **4.5) Participants**

Three groups of participants were selected for this study due to the varied perspectives they bring to the research questions. All participants were either studying or working at the university in which the study takes place, which is located in the capital city of the UAE, Abu Dhabi. Group One included 100 Emirati Undergraduate students studying in the university's foundation program. Their perspectives were seen as valuable as they will soon be taking their majors in the medium of English. However, in order to reach the level required, they are taking intensive English courses, which makes them very much involved in the topic, as their future education depends on their English level.

Group Two included 12 Emirati primary school teachers. The views of this group were seen as pivotal to the research as they have been affected by English in education in multiple ways. Firstly, they were all given a two-year sabbatical from their teaching roles in order to reach the English proficiency level required to return to work in their schools where all core subjects are taught in English. The fact that their future careers depend on their level of English, makes them extremely important stakeholders. They also have the benefit of being older than the participants in Group 1, and therefore have seen more of the changes discussed in Chapter 2. Finally, many of them are mothers and have a vested interest in the topic from their own points of view, but also for the next generation including their own children.

Group Three included 52 expatriate English University teachers. The views of this group were deemed important and relevant as they are part of the majority expatriate population in the UAE, also with a vested interest in the topic. They have a wealth of experience teaching in the Gulf and have witnessed the fast-paced change which has taken place in the UAE. Some of them have lived in the Gulf region longer than participants in Group 1 have been alive. They too are directly affected by educational policies centering around English as a medium of instruction (EMI). A more detailed account of each group is given below.



#### **4.5.1) Group 1: Emirati University Students**

The 100 undergraduate participants (80 female and 20 male) who make up Group 1 all stated that their nationality was Emirati although some may have varied backgrounds such as having family members from other Gulf states or elsewhere. This was not asked as it was considered a sensitive question, as explained in Section 2.3.2. All students were living in Abu Dhabi at the time of the study and all named Arabic as their first language. They were all studying in the highest level (Level 040) of the Academic Bridge Program (ABP). The ABP is the university's foundation English program. Depending on students' level upon entering the university, which is assessed through their CEPA (Common Educational Proficiency Assessment) score, they either move directly into their undergraduate degree course, or they are required to spend up to two years in the ABP. The CEPA exam is designed and delivered by the UAE Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and a CEPA score of 180 or above (equivalent to IELTS 5 or above) is needed to directly enter a bachelor programme (Gitsaki, Robby & Bourini, 2014, p.169). In February 2017, over a year after the study took place, the CEPA was replaced with the Emirates Standardized Test (EmSat).

The ABP curriculum and structure has undergone several changes in the last five years. Firstly, the names of the levels have changed three times during the period of the study. At the start of the study, Level 040 was called 'Level 8' only to be changed again a semester after the study took place to EGAP 4 (English for General Academic Purposes). This new name reflects a change in the curriculum to move towards more academic English. Despite the name changes, which could be seen as a microcosm of the 'UAE's climate of change', the English level of the students in 'Level 040' remains the same. A further change, which had a more dramatic effect on the student sample for the study, was the difference in female/male student numbers at the university. Whilst there have always been more females than males, this gender imbalance was exacerbated in the months leading up to the main data collection period, by the Cabinet's new requirement for Emirati men between the ages of 18 and 30 to do between nine months to two years of military service (The National, January 20, 2014). Most high school graduates choose to do this before enrolling in higher education. This requirement dramatically reduced the number of male students in the program during

the study period. The decision for the undergraduate student sample to be 80% female and 20% male, although not balanced as was hoped, is representative of the current number of students at the university.

Students from the highest level of the ABP were selected due to their relatively high level of English (between Band 5/6 IELTS overall, and 6/7 in IELTS speaking) and the fact they had been at the university for longer, ranging from one semester (15%) to one year (54%) up until two years (31%). It was felt that having been at the university for a length of time would make them feel more comfortable participating in research in a university setting. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to over 30, with the majority being between 18-20 years old (95%), 3% between 21 and 24 years old and 2% being between 25 and 40 years of age. The majority of the students (80%) had been learning English from between 12 to 15 years, meaning they started learning English in Kindergarten (KG) or Grade 1. The students plan to major in a range of 17 different subjects in total. The most popular majors chosen amongst this group were Information Technology (16%), Media (12%), Business (10%) and Art/Design (7%). Due to the range of chosen majors, it could be said that the participants represent a wide range of university students. However, it should be noted that all the students in this group required time in the foundation program and all attended state schools rather than private schools. They can, therefore, not be representative of all Emirati university students, as a whole.

#### **4.5.2) Group 2: Emirati Primary School Teachers**

The 12 Emirati primary school teachers in Group 2 were not originally included in the research design. However, whilst conducting the pilot study in February 2014, the opportunity arose to include them in the data set. I decided to do this due to the valuable, additional perspectives they bring to the research questions. The primary school teachers were all females, aged between mid-20s to late-40s, with 50% between 31-40, 33% between 25-30 and 17% between 41-50. They all stated that they were Emirati, although as with Group 1 participants, they may have mixed ethnicity or family members from other countries. They did not volunteer this information, however. They all named Arabic as their first language and they all work for the local educational

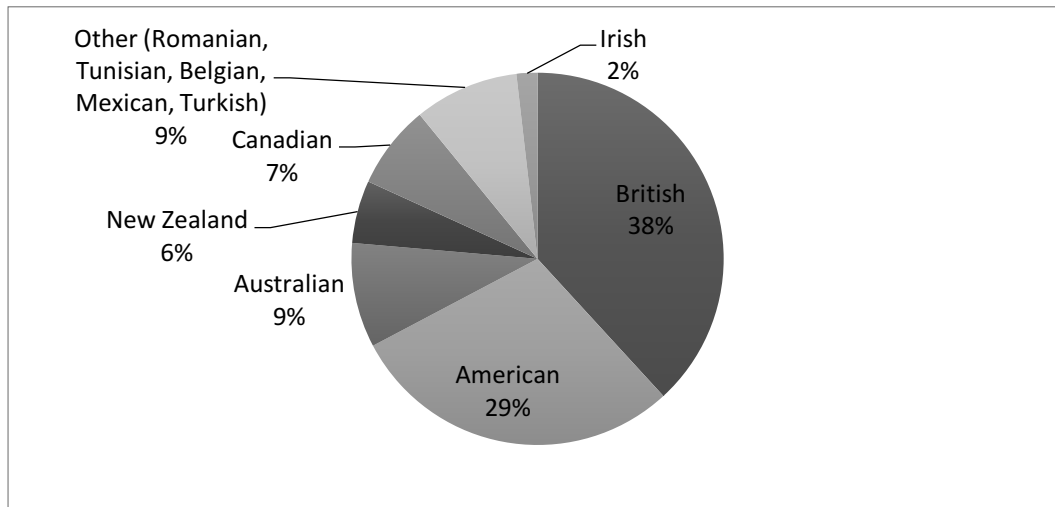
council, teaching a range of subjects from English to Science and Mathematics. They were on sabbatical at the university to improve their English proficiency level as a result of the new requirements (teaching core subjects in English from kindergarten) imposed by the New School Model (NSM), as mentioned in Section 2.5.2.2. When this model was introduced in 2010, teachers whose English was below the level of IELTS 6.5 were granted a sabbatical for up to two years in order to achieve the language proficiency needed to deliver the curriculum in English and continue their teaching careers. At the time of the pilot study, these teachers were in their last semester, studying a full-time IELTS-based course. I knew the group well, as I had taught them for a semester in 2013.

Similar to Group 1, the majority (58%) of the primary school teachers had been studying English between 10-15 years. From the others, 25% had been studying English between 16-21 years and 17% had been studying English for under 9 years. All the members of this group were trained and experienced teachers who were having to undergo retraining. All but two were mothers, with the majority having children of school age. One of the teachers, in her late forties, has a daughter studying at university in the UK. As well as being in frequent contact with the Emirati primary school students they teach, having families of their own also gave this group additional, and highly personal, perspectives on the effects of English on the next generation, a subject that they mentioned frequently and spoke about at length. Just as the English level of Group 1 participants affects their academic future, with Group 2, their future as teachers depends directly on their performance in English. This situation generally made them eager to discuss the topic due to its direct relevance and importance to their lives.

#### **4.5.3) Group 3: Expatriate university English teachers**

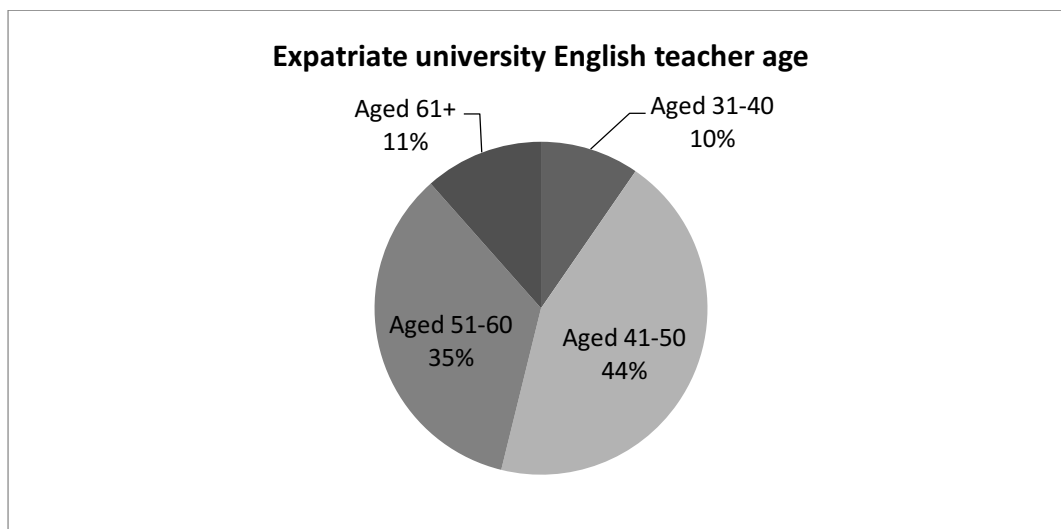
The 52 expatriate university English teachers (40 questionnaire respondents and 12 focus group members) who made up Group 3 all taught on the Academic Bridge Program. In this group, 29 (56%) were male and 23 (44%) were female, which reflects the gender balance in the program. The teachers were born and raised in a range of countries, as can be seen in Figure 4.1. The majority of the teachers are from English-speaking countries such as the UK (38%), USA (29%), Australia (9%) and Canada (7%). Three of the teachers have dual nationality and therefore both named nationalities

have been included.



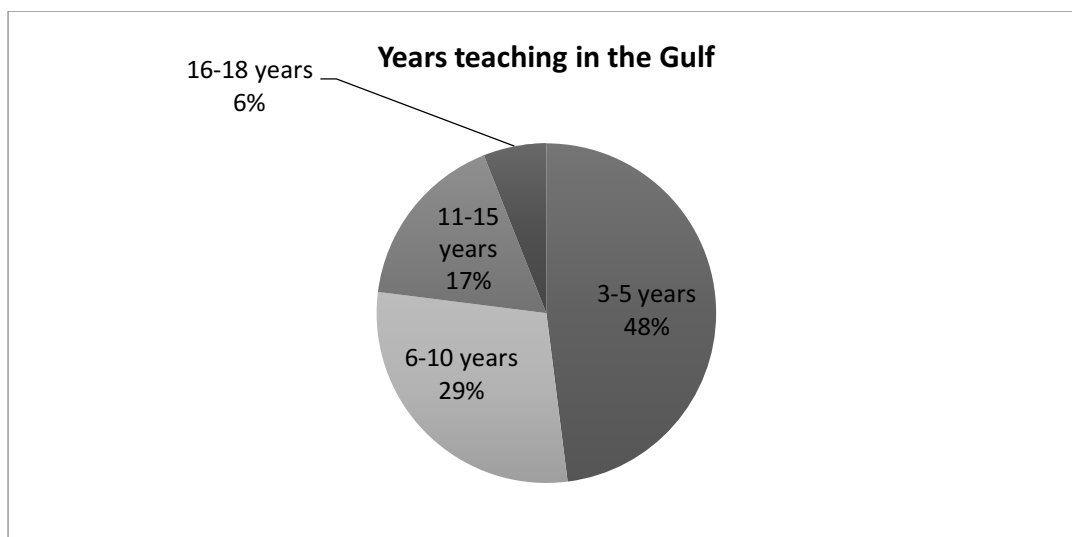
**Figure 4.1: Expatriate university English teacher nationality**

The largest portion of teachers were aged between 41 and 50 (44%), with 35% aged between 51-60, 11% aged over 61 and 10% aged 31-40, as can be seen in Figure 4.2.



**Figure 4.2: Expatriate university English teacher age**

The teachers were all experienced in term of teaching generally. Teaching experience in the Gulf ranged from 3-5 years to 16-18 years, as illustrated in Figure 4.3.



**Figure 4.3: Expatriate university English teachers' Gulf teaching experience**

Apart from the UAE, the teachers have taught in 52 other countries in all corners of the globe, ranging from Finland to Pakistan, from Hong Kong to Mozambique and from Japan to Germany, just to name a few. The most common countries the teachers have taught English are the UK (18), Japan (14), Korea (8), Spain (8) and USA (8) as in can be seen in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Most common countries where the expatriate university English teachers have taught**

Country	Number of teachers	Country	Number of teachers
UK	18	Turkey	7
Japan	14	Australia	6
Korea	8	Saudi Arabia	6
USA	8	Germany	6
Spain	8	Italy	5

In summary, Group 3 represent a diverse group of English teachers with a wealth of experience in the Gulf and internationally, making their perspectives well-informed and diverse.

The views of the participants in each stakeholder group are important because the issues under investigation involve and surround them on a daily basis. The careers and livelihoods of the primary school teachers, in particular, are now dependent upon their success in English as the continuation of their teaching careers are at risk if they cannot gain IELTS 6.5 by the end of their sabbatical period studying at the university, as explained in Section 4.5.2.

## **4.6) Research tools**

One of the distinct features of a phenomenological case study is the use of multiple research tools in order to provide a rigorous account which investigates the attitudes and experiences of the participants in depth. For this reason, three distinct and complimentary research instruments were used: focus groups, open-response questionnaires and a research diary. This section describes and justifies the chosen research instruments in greater detail.

### **4.6.1) Focus Groups**

Focus groups can be defined as ‘group discussions exploring different sets of issues’ (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999, p. 4). Unlike a group interview, the discussion is not only between the researcher and a group member but also between group members themselves (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999; Wilson, 1997; Parker and Tritter, 2006). The group is ‘focused’ as it involves some kind of collective activity such as debating a set of questions. Although focus groups are not as common as interviews, in everyday life (Edley and Litosseliti, 2010, p.156), in academia focus groups or group interviews have grown in popularity (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 373, Wilson, 1997, p.209, Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999, p.1, Farquhar & Das, 1999, p. 47) to the point where they are now considered to be ‘at the heart of qualitative research’ (Stephens, 2009, p.93).

Focus groups were chosen for two main reasons. Firstly, focus groups allow for different perspectives in an informal discussion and are, therefore, ideal for exploring people’s experiences, opinions, wishes and concerns’ (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999, p. 5). They also challenge the power dynamics often found in standard interviews by giving the participants greater control and turning the interviewer into more of a facilitator or moderator. This power is achieved by participants shaping the flow of the

discussion and co-constructing knowledge as a group. As Thomas (2008, p. 78), points out, 'focus group discussions emphasize participation, supportive environments, discussion, depth and interaction between all members.'

Secondly, focus groups are particularly recommended for Gulf Arabs (Thomas, 2008; Winslow et al. 2002; van den Hoven, 2014) as they replicate a culturally familiar form of discussion. Traditionally and still today, social, religious, political or business meetings among common interest groups take place in 'majlis' (place of sitting). This is a public space in houses or offices where guests are received and entertained. Due to a tradition of discussing issues in this fashion, participants in this study are likely to feel comfortable in a focus group setting. Stephens (2009, p. 94) emphasizes this point when stating that focus groups are 'well suited to cultural contexts that privilege the communal over the individual'. In a supportive group environment, a level of candor and spontaneity from members tends to be evoked that is not achieved in one-to-one interviews (Winslow et al., 2002, p.566).

Although, for the above reasons, focus groups were seen as an appropriate data collection tool, there are a few potential problems with the method. Firstly, with increased power for the participants comes less control for the facilitator. There is the possibility of 'losing control', although as Kitzinger & Barbour (1999, p.13) point out, 'the "freer" and more dynamic situation of a focus group may actually access "better data" than a more subdued and formal encounter'. Secondly, peer interaction may result in 'group think' (Dreachslin, 1999, as cited in Thomas, 2008, p.8), where one or two dominant members of the group lead the discussion and other members tend to agree or stay silent, perhaps not having the chance to make themselves heard. Finally, a further concern was whether or not some issues were too sensitive to discuss in a group. As previously noted, the influence of English as a global language on culture and identity may be regarded as a sensitive issue in the Arab world nowadays. In a focus group interview, the speakers may feel inhibited by others' perceptions of their opinions. This is especially true if there is a dominant and religiously conservative character in the group who prevents participants from openly expressing their opinions 'in deference to perceived righteousness and singular religious interpretations of culture' (James and Shamma, 2013, p. 155), which is not uncommon. However, the literature shows that sensitive topics can be discussed in groups and people may be

more, rather than less, likely to self-disclose or share personal experiences in group rather than dyadic settings (Winslow et al., 2002; Morgan and Krueger, 1993; Carey, 1994). Indeed, Morgan and Krueger (1993) even refer to ‘a certain thrill in the open discussion of taboo topics’. In the Gulf countries, open group discussions are usually lively rather than inducing group members to feel awkward or shy. To conclude, the benefits outweigh the negatives in this setting.

#### **4.6.2) Open-response Questionnaires**

To counter some of the disadvantages of focus groups, provide a fuller picture and increase the rigor of the study in line with a case study approach, a second research tool was used: the open-response questionnaire.

Open-response questionnaires were used for four main reasons. Firstly, a large amount of data (152 questionnaires in total) can be collected in a relatively short amount of time. Secondly, using questionnaires assures complete anonymity which most other techniques do not provide. This means that students and teachers may be more likely to disclose true opinions without any fear of being judged, and this may counter ‘group think’, which was identified as a potential flaw in focus group data. Thirdly, the rate of return is generally high, as it is not so much of a commitment in terms of time and energy. Finally, using questionnaires means that the questions are identical for each participant, and no facilitator comes between the participant and the question, perhaps influencing responses. As the questionnaires were self-administered (without the presence of the researcher) (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 344), respondents were able to complete them in familiar surroundings and did not, therefore, feel any pressure from the researcher.

Disadvantages of using questionnaires, such as participants not always giving as much detail as one might like, are countered by the complimentary use of focus groups. Both questionnaire and focus data may be influenced by ‘self-flattery’. As Skehan (1989, p. 61) points out, ‘the approval motive (or the social desirability factor) is a danger for any sort of self-report data’. Teachers and students, in this case, may want to show themselves in a positive light. In this sense, ‘responses are often coloured by what respondents assume is desired by the investigator or by what is socially acceptable’ (Gass and Selinker, 1994, p. 254). Questions relating to emotionally sensitive areas



such as ‘identity’ may attract less-than-honest answers in order to avoid embarrassment, or disloyalty. It was hoped, however, that the anonymity of the questionnaires and the supportive atmosphere of the focus groups would counter these potential problems.

#### **4.6.3) Research Journal**

The third method used was a research journal. This decision was made as a result of the pilot study. After collecting copious amounts of rich data, weeks later when it came to transcribing data from the pilot study focus groups, there were details that were difficult to remember such as facial expressions or gestures. I regretted not having made detailed notes in the form of a journal, recording small but significant details. The value of keeping a research journal is reaffirmed in the literature (Borg, 2001; Dornyei, 2007; Engin, 2011). Research journals help with the process of researching (Borg, 2001, pp.162-169) and facilitate the development of ‘thick description’, which is relevant to a phenomenological approach. Geertz’s (1973, p.3) notion of ‘thick description’, borrowed from Gilbert Ryle, focuses on recording not only what the participants say, but also their tone of voice, gestures, facial expressions and circumstances to provide fuller and richer data.

Research journals also give the opportunity for reflexive research. Reflexivity can be defined as ‘critical reflection on the research process and on one’s own role as a researcher’ (Finlay, 2002) or, in other words, ‘bending back or turning back one’s awareness on oneself’ (McLeod, 2001, p. 195). As Bensa (2010, p. 39, as cited in Risager & Dervin, 2015, p. 14) states, data collection is often, mistakenly, thought of as simply picking, ‘mushrooms in a forest’. Instead, it is important to recognize the process of negotiations and encounters that take place and to distinctly ‘hear’ rather than ‘listen to’ the study’s social players. As Risager & Dervin (2015, p. 14) state, ‘leaving out this reflexive work exoticises the research participants, whereas our interlocutors should be “co-authors” instead.’ Flood (1999, p. 35) further stresses the importance of reflective research by stating, ‘without some degree of reflexivity any research is blind and without purpose.’ It is generally agreed upon in the literature that reflexivity is an important part of qualitative data (Denscombe, 2010; Findlay, 2002; Kramsch, 2012; Lockwood Harris, 2016; Mann, 2016; Pillow, 2003; Roegman et al, 2016).

Pillow (2003, p.181) names reflexivity as *recognition of self*; and reflexivity as *recognition of other* as useful reflexive strategies. These strategies were used in varying degrees throughout the data collection and data analysis stages of the study. Firstly, reflexivity was used as *recognition of self* by observing myself through the use of reflective notes. It is true to say that, 'Embedded within the research process are relationships of power that all researchers must face' (Pillow, 2003, p. 182). Facing these power relationships involved recognizing the 'insider' and 'outsider' roles I had as a researcher and how these roles could be affecting the research. As Roegman et al. (2016, p. 45) explain, 'outsider' describes researchers who work with participants who are different from themselves, whereas the 'insider' researcher shares significant identities with the participants. For this study the role of the researcher was far from simple, but rather multifaceted and frequently changing according to the participant group. As Braun and Clarke (2013, p.10) point out, for any research, we are likely to have multiple insider and outsider positions. For example, as a woman I had an insider role with the majority of the participants (the majority of Group 1, and all of Group 2). This similarity between us may have helped the participants to feel more comfortable and open, especially in a society in which the sexes are often separated. However, I had a greater number of outsider roles with Group 1 (Emirati undergraduate students) in particular, such as nationality, age, religion, race, dress, language and level of education. Although, being an 'outsider' is often seen as an advantage due to presumed objectivity (Roegman et al., 2016, p.45), I was aware that my outside status may have caused participants to be more wary, less candid and in some cases this could have affected responses. For example, being a white female non-Muslim British PhD candidate in my 30s dressed in Western business clothes distinguished me as a clear 'outsider'. When asked questions about attitudes towards English, therefore, it was hard to ignore the fact with English being my first language, participants were perhaps reluctant to be critical out of kindness or sensitivity. They were perhaps more likely to answer in an 'English-friendly' way, so as not to offend what I clearly represented merely by appearance.

I was also aware of the effect the presence of the translators may have on the participants. Both translators were female, giving them an 'insider role' with the majority of the participants. One translator was in her 40s, born in Syria but a citizen of the United States. The other translator was in her 50s, a British and Sudanese citizen.

They both had friendly demeanors and were helpful when needed for translating Arabic, but quietly listening when English was being spoken, which was the majority of the time in most focus groups. However, the male university student focus group members chose to use Arabic for greater part of the focus group interview. It was hoped that the presence of an Arabic-speaker may have made participants more relaxed and able to use both languages, which seemed to be the case.

Finally, I was also aware of my need to self-monitor and self-censor. I was careful not to voice my own opinions on the culturally sensitive topics being discussed. Not only was this important as a researcher, not wanting to influence the data, but in addition, as James and Shammas (2013, p. 155) state it is particularly important due to ‘the current political climate where criticism of UAE society can result in extreme consequences’. For example, in numerous cases, voicing a critical opinion of the UAE government or ‘transgressing unwritten rules’ (James and Shammas, 2013, p. 155), has resulted in academics having contracts immediately terminated.

As well as reflecting on my role as a researcher, I also used reflexivity to gain a deeper understanding of the participants (reflexivity as *recognition of other*). Making notes on focus group participants such as dress, way of sitting, gestures and manners created a more accurate picture of not only what was said, but also feelings surrounding thoughts and comments. Braun and Clarke (2013, p.9) highlight the importance in being able to ‘reflect on, and step outside your cultural membership, to become a cultural commentator, so that you can see, and question, the shared values and assumptions that make up being a member of a particular society’. This involved identifying my own assumptions, and putting them aside (‘bracketing’ them off) so that the research was not automatically shaped by my identity as a researcher (Fischer, 2009). For example, whereas I had expected Emirati participants to be in favour of Arabic medium instruction (AMI) over EMI, due partly to how I might feel if I were in the same situation and media attention on the need to protect Arabic from fading, often participants were wholeheartedly in favour of EMI, seeing it as the only way forward. At points in the focus group sessions, I had to fight my instinct to become involved in the discussion personally, giving the counter argument. As Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 9) state, bracketing off one’s own assumptions is ‘hard to do, but vitally important for being able to get ‘deep’ into qualitative data’, as well as being, ‘a continuing mode of

self-analysis and political awareness' (Callaway, 1992, p.33).

## **4.7) Data collection**

The process of collecting the data will be explained in the following sections. To begin, the broader setting of the university will be described as well as the specific setting of the data collection sites. The participant sampling will then be described before explaining the rationale behind the design of the research tools.

### **4.7.1) Setting**

The university in which the study takes place is a large federal institution with campuses in both Abu Dhabi and Dubai, as mentioned in Chapter 1. The Abu Dhabi campus was originally in the center of Abu Dhabi Island. However, shortly before the researcher arrived in Abu Dhabi (2011), a huge new futuristic spaceship-shaped campus was built in Khalifa City on the outskirts of Abu Dhabi, which replaced the old campus and is where the data were collected. The building is stunning, but is literally in the middle of the desert with very little surrounding it that one could walk to. As Pieterse (2010) states, this is typical of “petro-urbanism” found in the Gulf states. These oil cities are ‘characterized by rapid development organized around car transport, with broad multi-lane roads that barely have sidewalks’ (p.23). As a result of its location, once at the university students and faculty are generally there for the whole day. Breaks are spent in offices for faculty and in the many campus cafes, including Starbucks, and shops for students. This setup is very convenient for scheduling research time with participants.

When collecting the data, the questionnaires were given to the university students and primary school teachers in their classrooms with the permission of their teachers, who acted as gatekeepers. The focus groups took place in a reserved meeting room, which provided a quiet and comfortable setting during the daily two-hour lunch break. Coffee and chocolates were served to create an atmosphere of openness and relaxation conducive to more meaningful interaction, similar to the *majlis* tradition. Further details on the administration of the questionnaires and focus groups as well as sampling can be seen in the following section.

#### **4.7.2) Sampling – Selecting the Participants**

Different types of data sampling were used for specific reasons. For the university student sample (Group 1), all 100 students were from Level 040 classes. Students from this level were chosen due to the fact that they have the highest proficiency level in English and were able to express themselves competently. For the student questionnaires, ‘cluster sampling’ (Kelly, 2006, p. 29) was used as the research population (all Level 040 students in the university) had been divided into random classes or ‘clusters’ at the start of the semester. From a total of 14 classes (clusters), nine were used as the university student participant sample (7 female and 2 male classes). As these classes (clusters) were already in existence at the start of the data collection period, the sample represented a random cross-section of the program’s students.

The average class size for 040 classes in Spring 2015 was 14. The sample of nine classes contained 122 students in total. On the days of data collection attendance was generally high, although none of the classes had full attendance, which is usual given the university’s fairly flexible attendance policy. A total of 104 students attended classes on the data collection days. From this number, two students chose not to participate in the research. They were provided with an IELTS reading activity while their classmates completed the questionnaire. A further two students only completed one or two questions and could therefore not be included in the data set. As a result, from a possible 104 participants, 100 fully completed the questionnaires. This was a high return rate of 96%, which had been anticipated due to the research tool chosen as explained in Section 4.6.2.

The classes (clusters) were selected based on whether the teacher of the class was willing to sacrifice around 20 minutes of class time for the students to complete the questionnaires. An email requesting this was sent to all the 040 class teachers and nine teachers responded positively to this request. The questionnaires were given to the participants over the course of a week. I visited two classes on average a day in order to accommodate my own teaching schedule. A time was arranged for my visit with the class teachers ahead of time via email. I entered the classrooms and briefly explained the research project. Participants were given the project information sheet (Appendix 5) and consent form (Appendix 6) in both English and Arabic. It was made clear to the

participants that their names would not be used in researcher's writing, they would be participating on a voluntary basis and could leave at any time, and their information would be private and confidential. After explaining the project briefly, the researcher left the room and asked the classroom teacher to monitor the participants to ensure each participant completed his/her questionnaire independently. After 20 minutes, the researcher returned to collect the signed consent forms and completed questionnaires.

For the student focus groups, 'purposive sampling' was used. This involves participants being 'hand-picked' (Denscombe, 2010, p. 35) in order to get the best information from those who are more likely to provide detailed and valuable insights on the research topic. To ensure this was the case, the classroom teachers were asked to recommend students from their classes who they felt would participate fully in a focus group setting, these tended to include confident speakers or students who had shown interest in the topic. Focus group sign-up sheets were left with the teachers upon collection of the completed questionnaires. It was explained to the students that the focus groups would be taking place the following week. As the sign-up sheets were given to all nine classes, there were over 20 volunteers. The first 18 on the lists were included in the focus groups due to the researcher wanting to restrict the groups to three groups of six (two female groups and one male group). As a result, the groups partly consisted of students who knew each other and also strangers. As mentioned in Section 4.7.1, the focus group sessions took place during the students' two-hour lunch break in a reserved meeting room on campus.

Sampling for the primary school teachers was less complex. As mentioned in Section 4.5.2., access to this group became available during the pilot stage of the study. They were a group of 12 already in existence. Although there were several other classes of primary school teachers studying at the university, at the time of the data collection this was only group I had access to, partly due to having taught them during the previous year. Their current teacher acted as a gatekeeper in allowing me to conduct the research in the same way described above for Group 1. Unlike Group 1, however, all members of the group were present on the data collection day and all agreed to participate in the research.

Finally, for the expatriate teacher sample, purposive sampling was used for the focus group members (two groups of six) as teachers were specifically selected in order to

include a range of nationalities and experiences in the Gulf. Once the twelve focus group members had agreed to participate, the researcher approached the remaining 50 teachers in the program by visiting their offices and explaining the project in person. From this research population of 50, 40 teachers completed the questionnaires, which was a return rate of 80%. These teachers provided valuable insights and represented a broad range of nationality groups and experience.

Data were collected in several phases as outlined in Table 4.3. As mentioned in Section 4.5.2, Group 2 (G2) data-collection took place during the pilot study phase of the study, a year earlier than the main data-collection period, as this was the only possible time to gain access to this group due to it being their last semester at the university.

**Table 4.3: Data collection phases for the main study**

<b>Group number and data collection tool used</b>	<b>Date of data collection</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Further participant details</b>
G2-Q	February 2014	12	12 female Emirati primary school teacher questionnaire respondents
G2-FG	February 2014	12	12 female Emirati primary school teacher focus group members (2 groups of 6)
G1-Q	April 2015	100	80 female Emirati university student questionnaire respondents, 20 male Emirati university student questionnaire respondents
G1-FG	May 2015	18	Two female Emirati university student focus groups (6 in each group), one male Emirati university student focus group (6 in the group)
G3-Q	April 2015	40	22 male and 18 female faculty questionnaire respondents
G3-FG	May 2015	12	Two faculty focus groups of 6 members (7 male, 5 female)

### **4.7.3) Design of questionnaires**

According to McDonough and McDonough (1997, p. 177) ‘a good questionnaire is one which is relatively easy to answer, easy to record and evaluate, user-friendly and unambiguous’. They also recommend that ‘leading (where the respondent is encouraged to answer in a certain way), highbrow, complex, irritating and negative questions’ be avoided, which I took into consideration when designing the questionnaires. I chose to use mostly open-response questions for the questionnaires (see Appendix 1 and 2). Although fully closed-answer or multiple-choice survey would have made for more easily quantifiable results, I wanted the participants to give thought to the questions and to express their opinions in their own words, which is in line with an interpretivist paradigm. Ultimately a fuller picture and richer data can be obtained this way, as participants are treated as ‘real people rather than theoretical abstractions’ (Ushioda, 2009, p. 220). As Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p. 331) correctly point out, ‘the space provided for an open-ended response is a window of opportunity for the respondent to shed light on an issue’.

The questionnaires were divided into four sections and organized thematically to match the research questions (See Appendix 3). Part 1 concentrated on biographic information. Part 2 focused on Research Questions 1 and 2 (how the languages English and Arabic are represented and attitudes towards global English). Part 3 relates to Research Question 3 on how English affects layers of cultural identity. Finally, Part 4 concentrated on future developments in English teaching relating to Research Question 4 on preferences regarding English teachers, cultural content of English courses and preferences for the medium of instruction in Emirati universities. The table in Appendix 3 shows how each individual questionnaire and focus group question directly relates to the four research questions.

As the topic of English and cultural identity could be seen as controversial or sensitive, I paid careful attention not to include questions which could be described as ‘loaded’, in that I avoided words which were emotionally charged, or overly positive or negative. Questions that may cause embarrassment or those that could be considered culturally insensitive were also avoided. For example, any reference to a perceived ‘clash of civilizations’ as mentioned in Section 2.6 or the events of 9/11 in relation to attitudes towards the West was avoided, despite being potentially relevant to the subject under



discussion. It was felt that any mention of this would make participants feel uncomfortable and emotionally sensitive.

As well as considering individual questions as explained above, the overall appearance of the questionnaire was important. Directions were made clear, without superfluous information, which can confuse and irritate respondents (see Appendix 1 and 2). Finally, it was decided that the questionnaires would be paper-based. Although the university is pro-technology and, in fact, every student is provided with an iPad on enrolling at the university, from experience, there are often hitches with using electronic questionnaires. This includes some students coming to class without their iPad, having no charge or intermittent Wi-Fi issues.

#### **4.7.4) Design of interview schedules**

The same considerations regarding question choice, noted above, were given to the design of the semi-structured focus group questions (see Appendix 4). As with the questionnaires, focus group questions were organized thematically to systematically cover the research questions (see Appendix 3).

In the context of the UAE, particular attention needed to be paid to group composition in terms of gender, group size, and identity. The Emirati university student and Emirati primary school focus groups were single-sex groups due to the culture and the religion of the UAE requiring strict segregation of the sexes (Winslow et al., 2002, p.572). The expatriate teacher focus groups, on the other hand, were mixed to add variety to the groups and to allow the researcher to distinguish individual voices in the recorded data more effectively.

Another consideration with focus groups is whether to work with people who already know each other or whether to work with strangers. Kitzinger & Barbour (1999, p. 8) point out that many social science researchers prefer to work with pre-existing groups. This happened in the case for the expatriate teachers who are colleagues, and the primary school teachers who are classmates. This was partly true for the student focus groups as some members were classmates and some were not.

The focus groups varied in length, with the average time for Group 1 being 37 minutes, Group 2 being 36 minutes and Group 3 being 67 minutes. Differences in length of focus

groups were due to personality types, confidence, group composition and language skills. All seven focus groups were recorded using a digital recorder as well as the 'sound note' app. The recorder and iPad were placed in an unobtrusive position to minimize nervousness. Recording the focus group discussions allowed me to have an accurate record of the conversations with pauses, hesitations, intonation patterns etc. This way I was also free to note down non-verbal signals. Although video data of the focus groups would have been preferable, it is a strict cultural and religious taboo to video Emirati women, and was therefore not permissible in this study.

Each focus group contained six members. From the pilot study, this group size worked well, as it allowed for a range of opinions to be heard without being 'out of control' or having several simultaneous conversations taking place.

A final consideration relevant to the collection of focus group data was the role of the researcher, as discussed previously in Section 4.6.3. As Winslow et al. (2002, p.567) state, 'A skilled facilitator is the key to success'. This became apparent during the pilot study focus groups. When listening to the recorded data, I was able to reflect critically on my role as facilitator. For example, at times during the expatriate teacher focus group, I, unintentionally, presented myself as 'an expert', which may have inhibited further discussion on certain issues. For the main study, therefore, it was important to follow Kitzinger & Barbour's (1999, p. 13) advice, 'Researchers should avoid being judgmental, presenting themselves as experts or making assumptions which close off exploration'.

#### **4.8) Changes made as a result of the pilot study**

As mentioned at various points in this thesis, a pilot study was conducted from February 2014 –May 2014. It was fairly large in scale and involved:

- 50 student questionnaire respondents (20 male, 30 female)
- 10 student focus group members (1 female group and 1 male group)
- 10 expatriate English teacher questionnaire respondents
- 5 expatriate English teacher focus group members

The results of the pilot study led to several useful modifications in the research design which are outlined below.

#### **4.8.1) Changes to the focus group and questionnaire questions**

Firstly, several individual questions on the questionnaire were changed. For example, originally, I had asked participants to comment only on what 'English' represented (Questionnaire, Part 2, Question 1). In the main study, I also asked participants to comment on what 'Arabic' represented (See Appendix 1 and 2). This better clarified the difference in how the languages were viewed.

As well as modifications to individual questions, other issues arose. For example, feedback from the expatriate teachers led to providing more space to answer the questionnaire questions.

#### **4.8.2) Bilingual Support**

Perhaps the biggest dilemma to arise from the pilot study was the issue of language proficiency level of the research participants. For the pilot study, although the questionnaire questions were written in English and Arabic, the students were told to respond to the questions in English only and the focus groups were conducted solely in English. The highest level students in the ABP were selected because it was felt they would be able to express their opinions in English. However, to be sure this was the case, a main aim of the pilot study was to assess whether the Emirati participants could cope sufficiently using English. Mostly, the data from the student focus groups and questionnaires was sufficiently rich and it seemed the participants' level of English had not hindered the quality or depth of their responses. With the male focus group, however, there were times when members seemed to be struggling for English words to communicate more complex ideas. This led to careful consideration regarding how to proceed in the main study.

On the one hand, one could argue that richer data would emerge if participants were able to use their first language, Arabic. However, there are also many arguments for using the medium of English. Firstly, Twinn (1998, as cited in Winslow et al., 2002, p.572) describes the importance of undertaking data analysis in the language of the interview. This is due to meanings being lost in translation or some Arabic expressions having no direct equivalent in English. It was also felt that if the focus groups were conducted solely or mostly in Arabic, it would remove my involvement as a facilitator. How would I know to probe for more information? The spontaneity and naturalness of

focus groups, which is a key strength of the method, would be taken away if a research assistant needed to translate everything for me after each person had spoken. It was, therefore, decided that it would be helpful to have 'bilingual support' in the form of an Arabic-speaking research assistant, but that this assistant would only be used in situations where it was absolutely necessary. For the researcher to play an active part in the study, in line with the interpretive paradigm, it was important that as much of the research be conducted in English as possible.

Based on these considerations, I applied for, and was pleased to receive, a grant from the university in which the study takes place. The Research Incentive Fund (RIF) grant from the Office of Research provided a budget of 18,000 UAE Dirhams (3,400 British pounds) to be used for the provision of bilingual support. I therefore hired two translators who spoke fluent Arabic and English. Both translators were female colleagues who taught English at the university and also worked in assessment and student support. As mentioned previously, they were in their 40s and 50s. One of the translators was from Sudan and the other from Syria. Both were fully bilingual holding British and American passports respectively. For the Group 1 focus groups (x3) the first translator was present for the two female groups and the second translator was present for the male group. During the focus group sessions the translators were there to aid understanding and translate Arabic responses. The translators were then given the focus group transcriptions and were tasked with transcribing the Arabic parts of the recordings. All translated parts of the focus group and questionnaires were checked by the second translator to ensure greater accuracy.

#### **4.9) Ethical Dimensions**

Before embarking on the pilot study in February 2014, ethical approval was sought from both the Ethics Committee at the University of Leicester and the Ethics Committee at university in which the research took place. In both cases this was granted at the start of 2014 (Appendix 7 and 8).

Ethical considerations are essential when conducting social research (Denscombe, 2010; Ryen, 2011; Creswell, 2007; Richards, 2003). There are three key principles which underlie codes of research ethics:

- Participants' interests should be protected
- Participation should be voluntary and based on informed consent
- Researchers should operate in an open and honest manner with respect to the investigation (Denscombe, 2010, pp. 330-338)

These principles were incorporated into the study. Firstly, every effort was made to protect participants' interests and avoid psychological harm. In particular, in this study, it was important to be aware of the sensitive nature of the topic under discussion, given the socio-politically charged climate of the Middle East context. It was therefore my responsibility to keep the discussion focused on language as much as possible and to avoid initiating overly sensitive lines of enquiry that could harm respondents, by incriminating them in some way. Of course, with focus groups the facilitator cannot always fully control the direction of the discussion. As Kitinger & Barbour (1999, p. 17) point out, 'members may voice opinions that are upsetting to other participants'. In order to reduce the possibility of this, guidelines were given on what was expected from the focus group participants. For example, it was made clear to participants that it was fine to agree or disagree with each other but it was important to respect a range of opinions. It was also made clear that I, as the researcher, would be facilitating the discussion rather than participating.

Secondly, participation was voluntary and based on informed consent. Informed consent forms included information about the research, expectations about participants' contributions, the right to withdraw consent, assured anonymity, confidentiality and security of data (Appendix 6). Pseudonyms were used for participants and the university in reporting data.

Finally, it is important that researchers operate in an open and honest manner. As a researcher from England working in a university where most of the English teachers are also from the West, by investigating this issue, it could be perceived that I was somehow betraying my position and perhaps even undermining the university's decision to hire Western English teachers and the values of my workplace. For this reason, I ensured that participants were aware that the issues under discussion were of a general nature and that my personal beliefs were irrelevant. This was made clear by stressing my role as a facilitator who was there to hear their views on the subject rather than being an active participant in the group.

#### **4.10) Conclusion**

This chapter has explained and justified the chosen research methodology for the study. The chapter began by presenting the study's research design, research questions and research paradigm. This was followed by an explanation of the chosen approach for the study, a phenomenological case study. Key information regarding the three groups of participants was provided as well as a description of the data collection tools used, which included semi-structured focus groups, open-response questionnaires and a research journal. Special attention was given to the importance of reflexivity in qualitative research and how research journals are useful in this respect. The chapter went on to explain the setting, sampling and design of research tools, before discussing changes made to the study as a result of the pilot study, as well as ethical considerations. The following chapter will explain how the data was analysed and provide an overview for the organization of the findings.

## **Chapter 5: Analytical Methods**

### **5.1) Introduction**

After data collection was complete, the exciting but at the same time daunting task of data analysis began. Holliday (2002, p.101) aptly calls the process of getting from data to written study, the ‘dark night of the soul’ in that the task ahead seems unruly and mammoth at times. This chapter will give a detailed and precise description of each stage of data analysis, before discussing data validity. It will conclude with a description of the thematic structure used to present the data in the findings chapter.

### **5.2) Thematic data analysis**

Data analysis can be defined as ‘a process of making sense of, sifting, organizing, cataloguing, selecting, determining themes and processing the data’ (Holliday, 2002, p. 99). Analyzing qualitative data is far from simple and straightforward. As Marshall & Rossman (1999, p.150) state, qualitative data analysis is ‘a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating process. It does not proceed in a linear fashion: it is not neat’. In this section I describe this ‘messy process’ from the initial design of tables to record biographical details and open-response questionnaire responses to the process of transcribing the focus group recordings, through to a detailed description of the coding and categorization of the resultant data.

In total, data from 152 open-response questionnaires and seven focus group recordings, together with notes from the research, were analysed. As the questionnaire and focus group questions were organized around the four research questions (see Appendix 3), thematic analysis (TA) of the data was an appropriate choice (Holliday, 2002, p.100). Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns in the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). As Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2013, p. 440) point out, ‘What is unique about thematic analysis is that it acknowledges that analysis happens at an intuitive level’. In this sense, it is less about hard statistics but rather *interpreting* the mass of data collected, falling in line with the interpretive paradigm.

The strengths of the approach are that it is flexible in terms of research questions,

theoretical framework, methods of data collection and sample size. Also, the findings from thematic analysis are generally accessible to a wide range of readers due to the organization of the findings under distinct themes, making for a more reader-friendly experience. Alleged limitations of the approach include its perception by some qualitative researchers as ‘lacking substance’ (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 180) in that by focusing on patterns across data sets, contradictions and continuity of individual voices can get lost. In the present study, however, reporting long and direct quotes from the participants on multiple themes enables individual voices to be very much heard. Furthermore, TA is often compared negatively to more theoretically driven approaches such as Grounded Theory (GT) which is an inductive method aiming to reach a substantive or formal theory through systematic or concurrent data collection and analysis (Glaser, 1978). However, whereas GT tends to be used for under-researched areas where little relevant literature exists or is used (Ünlü, 2017, p.34), the current study used previous literature and discourse to guide the research questions making TA more suitable. A final limitation of TA is that it cannot make claims about the effects of language use, unlike Discourse Analysis (DA), for example (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.180). Despite these potential limitations, considering the study’s research questions, approach, and following the interpretive paradigm, thematic analysis was seen as an appropriate choice.

### **5.3) Coding of biographical information and open-response questionnaire responses**

#### **5.3.1) Quantifiable data**

To prepare for the coding of the data, I designed a series of tables for biographical information for each of the three participant groups. The screenshot below (Table 5.1) shows the first eight rows of the biographical information table for Group 3 (40 expatriate English university teachers).



**Table 5.1: Sample of biographical information data analysis****Main Study – May 2015 – 40 ABP Instructor questionnaire respondents**

T	Age	Sex	Nationality	First language	Second Language	Other languages	Started teaching at this university	Years teaching in Gulf	Years as English teacher	Other countries taught in
1	51-60	F	Romanian	Romanian	English and French	Spanish, Italian, Greek, Swahili (different levels of skills)	2009	6 and 1/2	34	Romania, Greece, UAE
2	51-60	F	British	English	-----	Spanish, Portuguese, German	2012	12	33	England, Germany, Malaysia, Colombia, Spain, Portugal, Brazil
3	41-50	F	USA	English	-----	A little bit of Spanish and French	2001	14	17-18	USA
4	41-50	M	American	English	Korean	Some Japanese and Spanish	2008	8	20	Korea
5	51-60	F	British	English	-----	French, German, a little Turkish	2012	3	22+	France, Germany, Portugal, Tajikistan, Turkey, UK
6	41-50	M	Tunisian	Arabic	French / English	Italian	2010	18	23	Tunisia
7	61+	F	USA	English	-----	Not fluently	2010	20	25	Pakistan, USA, India
8	61+	M	Canadian	English	-----	-----	1998	28	31	Turkey, Saudi

Questionnaire respondent answers were entered into ‘biographical information tables’ and ‘open response question tables’ immediately after receiving the questionnaires. In the case of Group 1 (100 Emirati undergraduates) and Group 2 (12 Emirati primary school teachers) this was after collecting each class set of questionnaire responses. For Group 3 (40 expatriate university English teachers), information was entered into the table almost daily as teachers returned the questionnaires on different days and times of the day over the three-month period of data collection. The use of these tables allowed me to analyze the respondents’ biographical details by ‘quantitizing’ (Dornyei, 2007, p. 270) the data. Despite the study being qualitative, as Kirk and Miller (1986, p. 10) point out, ‘in our pragmatic view, qualitative research.....does not imply a commitment to innumeracy.’ In this sense, gathering the percentage of expatriate English teachers who speak Arabic or other languages, for example, helped to build a picture of the group’s linguistic background. Likewise, gathering statistics on the number of years the undergraduate students had been studying English was revealing and relevant to the student group composition.

Some parts of the questionnaire were more easily quantifiable than others. For example, Part 4, Question 1 in the questionnaire for Group 1 and Group 2 involved participants

ticking boxes, with regard to their preferences for English teacher nationality (see Appendix 1). The screenshot below (Table 5.2) shows the data for the first ten female undergraduate students. A ‘Y’ standing for ‘yes’ was recorded in boxes students had ticked. Ten other identical tables were created for the rest of the participants.

**Table 5.2: Sample of data analysis on quantifiable data**

**Part 4**

**Q1. Where would you like your English teacher to be from?**

Category	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
USA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
UK		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y
Canada	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y
Australia	Y	Y	Y	Y				Y		Y
India										
Germany		Y						Y		Y
UAE	Y				Y			Y		Y
China										
Egypt										
Other										

Using these initial tables, I was then able to summarize results for this question in another “data summary table”, as can be seen below in Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3: Data summary table for quantifiable data**

Part 4, Question 1: Where would you like your English teacher to be from?

Nationality of English teacher	Group 1 males	Group 1 females	Group 1 all	Group 2
USA	19 (95%)	59 (74%)	78%	5 (42%)
UK	13 (65%)	61 (76%)	74%	6 (50%)
Canada	15 (75%)	47 (59%)	62%	7 (58%)
Australia	8 (40%)	32 (40%)	40%	3 (25%)
India	2 (10%)	0 (0%)	2%	0 (0%)
Germany	2 (10%)	22 (27.5%)	24%	0 (0%)
UAE	8 (40%)	30 (37.5%)	38%	4 (33%)
China	1 (5%)	3 (4%)	4%	0 (0%)
Egypt	1 (5%)	1 (sometimes) (1%)	2%	0 (0%)
Other	3 (15%)	3 (4%)	6%	1 (8%)

Other (Group 1 male): Russia

Other (Group 1 female): South Africa, anywhere, Africa

Other (Group 2): in general any person who has English as a second language.

Another quantifiable part of questionnaire data was Part 2, Question 1, where participants were asked to name five words they associated with the languages English and Arabic (see Appendix 1 and 2). For this data, I used ‘code landscaping’. As Saldana (2013, p. 199) explains, ‘code landscaping is based on the visual technique of “tags” in which the most frequent word or phrase from a text appears larger than the others. As the frequency of words or phrases decrease, so does the visual size’. I used the online software ‘Wordle’ ([www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net)) to achieve this through ‘word clouds’.

Initially, I encountered some difficulties. For example, when I entered the raw data into the online software, the resulting word cloud was a little misleading. This is due to the fact that the software is unable to perform *stemming*, which means it is unable to understand different words as variations of the same root or stem. For example, it is not able to recognize *talks*, *talking* and *talked* as variants of the stem *talk*. In the case of my data, if 70% of the participants said the word ‘religion’, 30% said ‘religious’ in association with the Arabic language, these two words would be shown separately and smaller than they would if they were combined (100%). I therefore decided to do the stemming manually and enter ‘religious’ and ‘religion’ as only ‘religion’. This was seen as more accurate representation of the number of participants who had chosen this concept. Although time-consuming, I also decided to manually change punctuation differences (e.g. some participants used a capital letter and others did not), which would also be recognized as a different word by the software, and therefore be misleading. A final change to the raw data was to use a hyphen for two-word answers if both words were important to ensure the words remained together in the word cloud (For example, ‘English-teacher’). Despite the minor shortcomings of the software, the word clouds proved to be a highly effective way of analyzing and displaying the data. The screenshot below (Figure 5.1) shows Group 1’s word cloud for the Arabic language.



**Figure 5.1: Example of code landscaping**

### **5.3.2) Open-response questionnaire data**

Open-response answers in the questionnaires were more complex and far messier to analyze. Analyzing the open-response answers was achieved by creating separate tables for each question. The screenshot below (Table 5.4) shows the first six rows of Group 1 (university students) answers to Part 2, Question 2. As the questionnaires were in English and Arabic, some participants chose to use Arabic. These students are highlighted in yellow. As can be seen in the screenshot below, Female Student number 5 (G1-Q5) chose to answer in Arabic, for example. All students' Arabic questionnaire answers were translated into English by the two translators working with me (as mentioned in Section 4.8.2). From Group 1, 14% of the participants choose to use Arabic for all or some of their questionnaire responses. Group 2 and 3 only used English.

**Table 5.4: Sample of a raw data table for open-response questionnaire questions**

G1-Q	Q2 Part 2 Feelings about English How do you feel about English being a global language?
1	It's good, but it shouldn't be controller to other society. It's good to learn other language but I should not be affected to other society.
2	I feel it is easy to learn than other languages such as Japanese... and everyone can learn it. It makes the connection easy with others.
3	That's a good thing but we should study more about the language and teaching more in schools to don't have any obstacles in the future.
4	I feel it is important for the future.
5	It is good for the world to be able to communicate and understand each other through one language regardless of what that language is.
6	I think it's the best language to communicate and to connect with the other countries around the world because it's a language that most of the people can understand.

Coding the open-response answers on the questionnaire was a multi-step process. For initial coding, it was possible to divide responses into broad groups. For example, for Group 1 (Emirati university students) answers to the question, “Has English changed Emirati culture?” answers usually began with ‘yes’ (highlighted in pink), ‘no’ (highlighted in blue) or ‘in some ways /partly’ (highlighted in green). I was therefore able to categorize students into these three general positions as can be seen in Table 5.5.

**Table 5.5: Initial coding sample of open-response questionnaire data**

G1-Q	Q3 Part 3 The effects of English Has English changed Emirati Culture? If so, how?
1	<b>Yes</b> , there are many people nowadays who forget Arabic. They all talk English. Now this world is all about English, especially universities. Students can't pass and graduate from universities or schools without learning English and <u>have to</u> get IELTS to pass levels and go to general or majors. And that's not fair. People stopped university because they didn't bring IELTS. Some of them go straight get a job with <u>wasta</u> and some stay at home without job or continuing their education.
2	<b>No</b> , we believe in our culture and it stays in our hearts and English developed us and didn't change our belonging or feeling of our culture.
3	<b>Yes</b> , students speak all the time English and they forget our Arabic language. This point is strange to forget our traditional and our parent language.
4	<b>Yes</b> , some events change. It looks better.
5	<b>For me, no. But for some other people, yes</b> Children (and some people) don't speak Arabic and that's not good.
6	<b>No</b> , because our Emirati language and Emirati culture it still our life and we use it <u>everyday</u> with our family, friends and many close people to us, but English we use it with the foreign people so it helps us to understand each other.

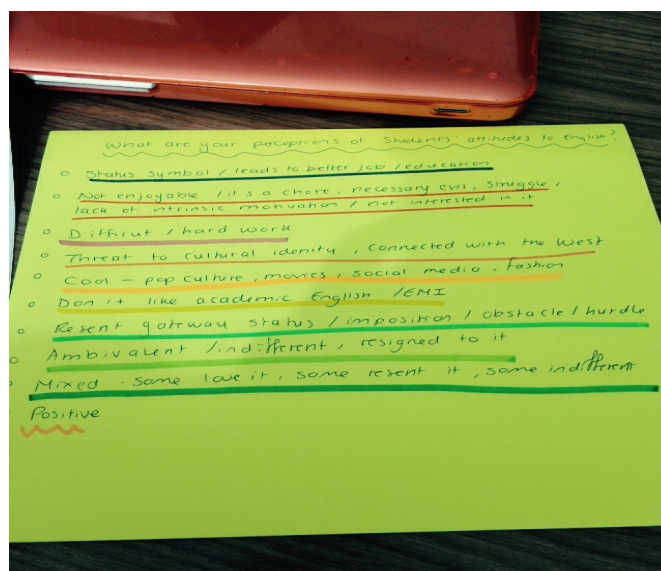
For the second coding, it was necessary to delve more deeply into the data and look at the most common reasons for these general positions. This involved sweeping the data in search of patterns and themes. In order to do this, I printed out all the open-response tables (95 pages of written data in total) and coded the data by hand.

Although many computer software programmes exist for analyzing qualitative data, such as ATLAS, Nvivo and HyperResearch, my preference, as a researcher and with this particular study, was the old fashioned ‘by hand’ method. This decision was made after much deliberation. Shortly after the pilot study, I took a training course on Nvivo at the University of Leicester with the idea of using it for the data analysis of the main study. I was able to see the benefits of using such programs, such as managing large amounts of text in ways that provide quick counts and displays of information and allowing for data sharing between multiple researchers in different locations. However, I also saw some potential problems. These included the risk of ‘missing the forest for the trees’ (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013, p. 431), and the potential for losing parts of information at the click of a button. A final feeling about using a program such as Nvivo was it seemed to distance the researcher somewhat from the data. I preferred the feeling of spreading out the written data sheets on a large desk and physically ordering and arranging the data. This allowed me to feel particularly connected and close to the data. As Savin-Baden & Howell Major (2013, p. 431) point out:

*‘sorting by hand allows researchers to be “hands on” during the process. They work with the data enough to know it extensively and to develop an intuitive sense of its essential features and elements. It allows them to begin to feel the patterns in the data and to physically shift and sort until findings emerge from the chaos’.*

With the printed open-response questionnaire data in front of me (a welcome break from looking at the computer screen), I read the answers for each question systematically and noted down all the reasons participants had given for their responses in note form. The same or similar reasons could be seen in the data over and over again and usually around fifteen to seventeen categories could be identified for each question. I then looked at the categories and combined similar ones. For example, the initial categories ‘resent gate-keeper status’, ‘imposition’, ‘hurdle’ and ‘obstacle’ were viewed as similar and therefore combined. This resulted in a reduction in the number of categories to around eight to ten for each question. I wrote the categories out onto a

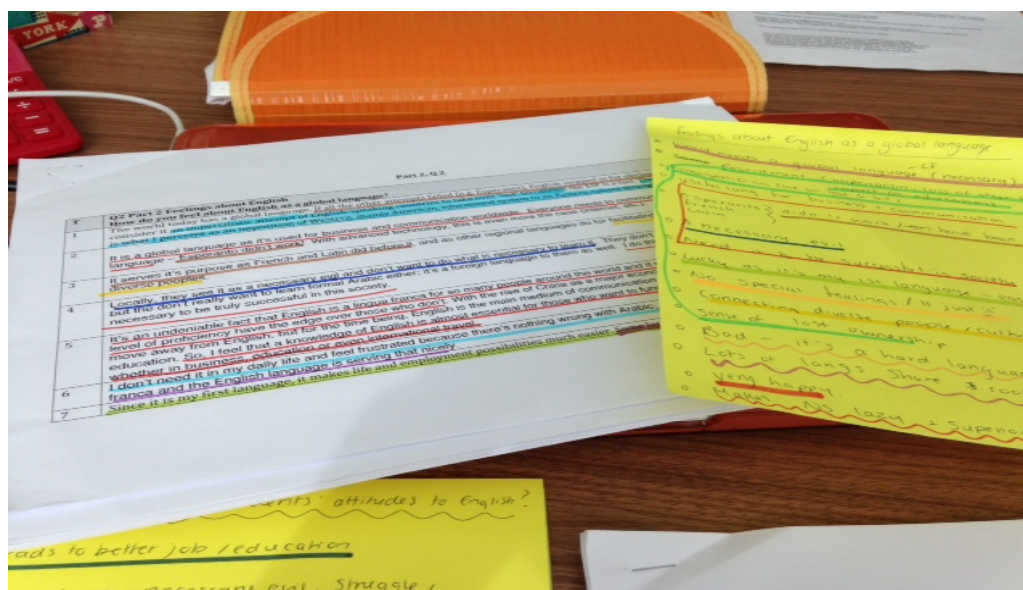
large yellow piece of card and gave each category a colour, using highlighter pens. Figure 5.2 shows the ten categories for Group 3's responses to the question 'What are your perceptions of students' attitudes to English?'



**Figure 5.2: Example of second manual coding of open-response questionnaire data**

I chose colours which were similar for similar categories. For example, as can be seen above the categories “ambivalent” and “mixed” are different but both neither positive nor negative responses, so therefore both in shades of green. This made it easier to organize the data. I was then able to return to the tables and highlight the data according to the colour code key. The picture below (Figure 5.3) shows this process in action, for Group 3's response to the question, “How do you feel about English as a global language?”





**Figure 5.3: Example of colour coding open-response questionnaire data**

### 5.3.3) Descriptive summary tables

After each questionnaire question data set had been coded in this way for each of the three participant groups, descriptive summary tables (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013, p. 428) were created for the four themes (which corresponded with the four research questions) for each of the three participant groups. This resulted in 12 descriptive summary tables in total. This visual representation of the data or ‘data display’ (Miles and Huberman, 1994) was useful in allowing me to quickly and efficiently summarize a general overview of the findings and easily compare participant groups.

An example descriptive summary table can be seen Table 5.6 (screenshot). This table includes three sub themes, each of which is shaded in a different colour. From the sub themes the data is coded further under more specific categories. The numbers in brackets after each category indicate how many times it occurred in the data.



**Table 5.6: Example of a descriptive summary table of open-response questionnaire data**

Theme 4	GROUP 3: Future developments of English teaching in the UAE		
Sub themes	Nationality of English teachers (Has your nationality been an advantage or disadvantage in the classroom?)	Local or global topics (Should students be taught English based on local topics?)	Feelings about English medium instruction (EMI) in higher education
Coding	<b>NS Advantage (25):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outside perspective (more to share) (5)</li> <li>Strong role models (1)</li> <li>NS expert (10)</li> <li>NS accents (3)</li> <li>High esteem for Westerners (6)</li> </ul>	<b>Global (16):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International world. Need it for work, IELTS exam and life (12)</li> <li>Local topics have been done too much at school (3)</li> <li>Local would mean too many Arabic words (1)</li> </ul>	<b>EMI is positive (22):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students can be world players /enter more prestigious universities (1)</li> <li>Most literature/work environments are in English (17)</li> <li>Grateful, gives me a job (4)</li> </ul>
	<b>NS Disadvantage (11):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students may prefer an Arabic-speaking teacher (7)</li> <li>Feel like an “outsider” (4)</li> </ul>	<b>Local (22):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced cognitive load (4)</li> <li>More interesting and relevant (16)</li> <li>Can explain local issues to others in English (1)</li> <li>Some global topics are taboo (1)</li> </ul>	<b>EMI is negative (15):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arabic should be the priority (5)</li> <li>English shouldn’t be a gate-keeper (7)</li> <li>Too ambitious, hard for students (3)</li> </ul>
	<b>NS Neither advantage nor disadvantage (17):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No influence (11)</li> <li>Both (6)</li> <li>Personality is more important (1)</li> </ul>	<b>A mix (24):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both (12)</li> <li>Depends on the level (9)</li> <li>Depends on reason for learning English (1)</li> <li>Any topic that interests them (2)</li> </ul>	<b>A mix/choice (22):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should be a choice (dual stream approach) (18)</li> <li>Should depend on major (4)</li> </ul>
	<b>NNS Advantage (3):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher must be bilingual (1)</li> <li>Have learned the language (1)</li> <li>Have mixed culture (1)</li> </ul>	<b>Other (3):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not sure (1)</li> <li>Shouldn’t be taught in English at all (2)</li> </ul>	<b>Other (8):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English should be taught well in schools so students don’t struggle at the university level (4)</li> <li>No strong feelings about it (4)</li> </ul>

As I wanted participants’ voices to be heard in their own words, for each theme, as well as providing a summary of the data, I was able to select a number of representative quotes for the most mentioned categories, which I included in the findings section to support points being made. It is recognized that extracts from open-response questionnaires and transcripts play an important role in qualitative research. As Denscombe (2010, p. 296) states, extracts give ‘the reader a flavor of the data and let

the reader ‘hear’ the points as stated by the informants.’ This also allows readers to make up their own minds about what the data says rather than having only to trust the interpretation of the researcher.

#### **5.4) Transcribing and coding the focus group data**

The focus group interviews covered the same themes in the same order as the questionnaires (see Appendix 3). Despite the many similarities with regard to the content of the data, the process of data analysis for the focus groups was more complex and messier still.

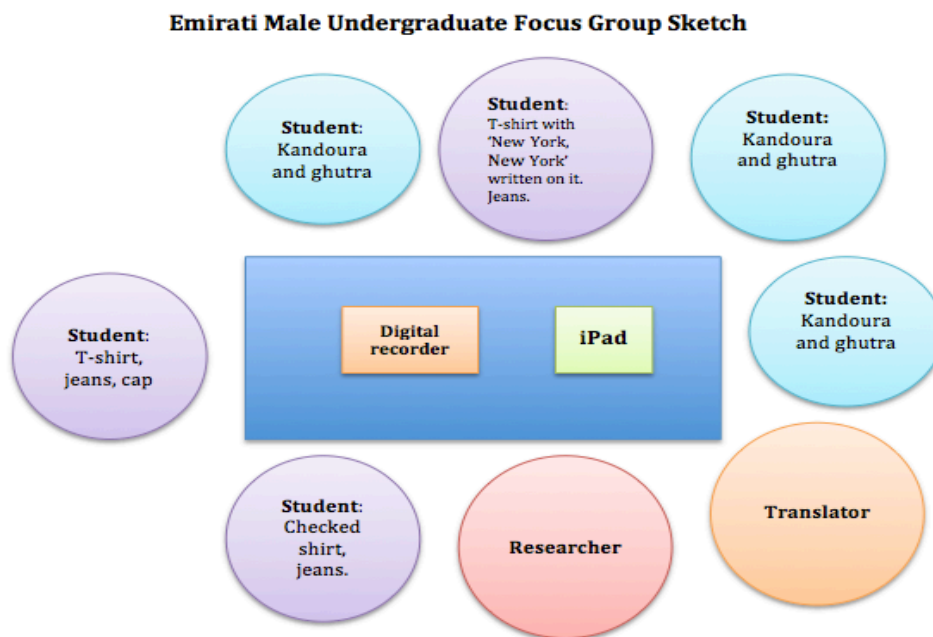
Several factors contributed to the ‘messiness’ of the focus group data. Firstly, the nature of focus groups meant greater freedom to the participants in terms of shaping the discussion. For this reason, at times the discussions veered off the researcher’s questions. For example, when the expatriate university English teachers in Focus Group 1 were asked to comment on students’ preference for teachers’ nationality, the topic moved on to student preferences for male or female teachers (See Appendix 9, G3, FG1, Lines 866-886). At other times a focus group would comment on a topic relating to questions scheduled for later in the session. As the focus groups were semi-structured in nature, I allowed for some flexibility with the order of topics. There were also variations in the focus groups. For example some groups were very talkative and actually ran slightly over the one-hour time slot. Others were reticent and ended earlier than I would have liked. As well as different personalities among the members, issues such as familiarity, responses to translators and English level also had an impact. Finally, some unexpected events took place, which were difficult to prevent. For example, heated discussions on sensitive points and also, students asking the researcher to respond personally to focus group questions. When this happened, I gave a short neutral response in a friendly but professional manner and steered the discussion back towards the participants’ perspectives.

##### **5.4.1) Characterizing**

I started my data analysis of the focus group recordings by ‘characterizing’ the data (Savin-Boden and Howell Major, 2013, p. 419). I did this by transcribing the recorded speech “verbatim”, in that exactly the same words that were used were transcribed. However, as Savin-Boden and Howell Major (2013, p. 419) point out, “verbatim” is

somewhat of a ‘slippery term’ as the process still requires analysis, interpretation and close observation, which can lead to “noticing unanticipated phenomena” (Bailey, 2008, p. 130). For example, one researcher may transcribe the social talk at the beginning of a focus group session or include the content of an interrupting telephone call, whereas another may decide it is not important. My approach to transcription is explained below.

As Bailey (2008, p. 127) states, ‘different levels of detail and different representations of data will be required for projects with differing aims and methodological approaches’. In my case, due to the mass of data collected (5 hours and 25 minutes of recorded data), rather than using overly complex transcription codes, I decided that the primary focus would be on the content of what was being said. I was, however, careful not to oversimplify the data. As Savin-Baden & Howel Major (2013, p. 467) state, ‘Oversimplification is the process of just taking what I said at face value, and expecting those reading the data to necessarily understand what is being said without it being explained’. In order to avoid oversimplification, I indicated long silences, pauses and change of tone by using elements of Psathas’s (1995, p. 70-78) transcription code (see Appendix 9), as well as including the social talk before and after the focus group sessions. I also made detailed notes in my researcher diary before, during and after the focus groups. These notes included descriptions of what the participants were wearing, facial expressions and gestures. For example, for the Emirati students and Emirati primary school teachers, comments on dress were seen as relevant because, especially for the male undergraduate focus group, dress varied greatly. Some of the students wore the traditional ‘Kandoura’ (long white traditional robe) and ‘Ghutra’ (white headscarf held on the head by a black cotton ring) and others were dressed in jeans and t-shirts with English slogans on them, which could relate to attitudes towards English as well as cultural identity. The picture below (Figure 5.4) shows a digital version of a sketch made in the research diary at the start of the Emirati undergraduate male focus group. The sketch indicates details such as the position of the participants and dress.



**Figure 5.4: Research diary sketch indicating focus group layout and participant details**

Despite having the RIF grant, as mentioned in Section 4.8.2, which would have covered the cost of hiring a transcriber as well as translators, I decided to transcribe the data myself. As Bailey (2008, p. 129) points out, delegating the task of transcribing to a junior researcher or research assistant ‘can be a mistake if the transcriber is inadequately trained or briefed.’ Although the process of transcription is laborious, it was viewed as a valuable stage in the analysis, which brought me ‘close to the data’ (Denscombe, 2010, p.275). The 5 hours, 25 minutes of focus group data collected took around one hour to transcribe for around 10 minutes of recorded data. The total time for transcribing was, therefore, around 32.5 hours.

For each transcription the lines were numbered for ease of reference. The screenshot below (Figure 5.5) shows part of female university student focus group 1 (G1-FG1). For the two female undergraduate focus groups, despite the presence of an Arabic-speaking translator, the participants mainly chose to use English. Their English was punctuated with the odd Arabic word such as ‘yani’ which means ‘how do you say it’ or ‘you know’ (highlighted in yellow in the transcript).

93. Researcher: Do you think it's too much English for the younger generation.  
 94. Alva: Maybe yes. In some schools, yes.  
 95. Reem: Nowadays, because nowadays in many schools they teach the children  
 96. science and math, English, in English language. In the past we learn science  
 97. and math in Arabic and maybe, it's okay. It has benefit and bad things.  
 98. Researcher: Okay. So what are the benefits and what are the negative things?  
 99. Alva: The benefits are it helps us to social and communicate with other people  
 100. and travel and for all the world it is good for us. But not good to forget our  
 101. language.  
 102. Researcher: Umhum. And do you feel worried about the next generation losing Arabic?  
 103. Alva: Really, yes.  
 104. Marwa: Yes, because when I travel to China, they have, how do you say it, China  
 105. word and English word, here in the UAE, not Arabic. Just English, English,  
 106. English. In all malls, hospitals everything. If they put both for foreign  
 107. people and for Emirates people it would be good but they just put English.  
 108. Researcher: Right.  
 109. Kaltham: No, there is Arabic also.  
 110. Marwa: No. Some of them they have just English, English, English. If they put both  
 111. maybe it would be good.  
 112. Reem: They should focus on the two languages.  
 113. Researcher: Umhum. So they should be equally important?  
 114. Alva: Umhum  
 115. Marwa: Yes  
 116. Kaltham: If there are old people here, they didn't know English here.  
 117. Alva: My grandmother take me to hospital. She has appointment because, how  
 118. do you say it, nothing Arabic in the hospital.

**Figure 5.5: Sample focus group transcription extract with Arabic translations highlighted**

For the male undergraduate focus group, more Arabic was used. Two translators were given the focus group recordings to translate the Arabic parts, as mentioned in Section 4.8.2., which ensured greater accuracy. A sample of the male undergraduate transcript with Arabic parts translated into English (highlighted in yellow) can be seen in the screenshot below (Figure 5.6).

106. Researcher: So, give an example, if you can.  
 107. Fahad: Umm. When a person uses English, his personality changes.  
 108. Translator: Umm, so when he uses English, he is a different person, he has a different  
 109. personality. It just changes, he just changes when he uses English verses  
 110. when you use Arabic. So like two different people. But how, how? How does  
 111. he change?  
 112. Fahad: Umm. He expresses different views, a different side of himself.  
 113. Translator: Different points of views, yeah, and?  
 114. Fahad: Different way of thinking.  
 115. Translator: Yeah, different ideas.  
 116. Fahad: Some people, when they start using English, think that anyone who only uses  
 117. Arabic is ignorant. Sometimes.

**Figure 5.6: Sample focus group transcription extract with Arabic translated into English (highlighted in yellow).**

### 5.4.2) Data immersion and initial coding

After characterizing the data, I was able to immerse myself in it further by reading and viewing it over and over again. The purpose of this was to understand it at ‘both a gut level and as a whole’ (Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2013, p. 420) before beginning to analyse it, or break it apart. As mentioned previously, the focus group schedule followed the same themes in the same order as the questionnaires, based progressively on the four research questions. This aided the process of dividing the data chunks that matched the main research themes. However, as mentioned in Section 4.6.1, due to the semi-structured nature of the focus groups, the data was not always easily neatly dividable. Sometimes the flow of the conversation took the participants off on tangents. As was hoped, this meant for more detailed information on the pre-established main themes and also led to emergent themes that did not occur in the questionnaire data.

### 5.4.3) Further coding

Once the focus group data had been divided into the four major themes, further coding began in the same fashion as the thematic analysis for the open-response questionnaire data. Little attempt to quantify the data was made in this case though due to the fact that not all participants responded to every question, or if they did, it was not in a linear fashion. Instead the main sub-themes were noted, colour-coded and recorded on a yellow piece of card as can be seen below in the screenshot (Figure 5.7) which shows an example of data coding for Group 2 (Emirati primary school teacher Focus Group 1 (G2-FG1)) for the question “Has global English affected culture in the UAE?”.

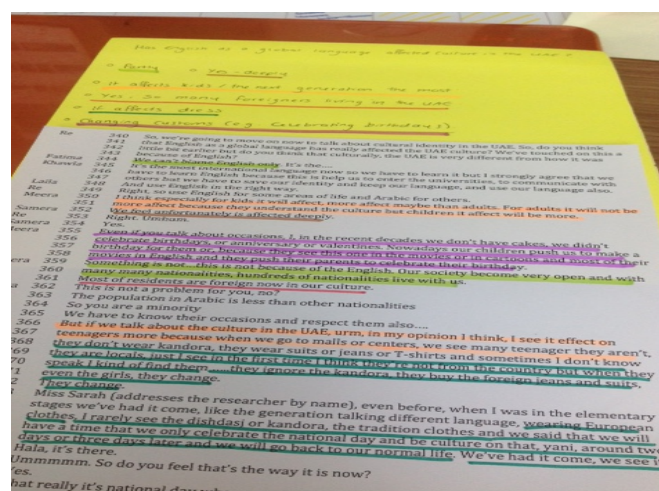


Figure 5.7: Sample of focus group coding

Similar to the coding process for the open-response questionnaire data, descriptive summary tables were also created for the focus groups. These tables included themes, diversions and supporting quotes to be used in the Findings section. Below is a screenshot (Table 5.7) of the descriptive summary table for Group 3 Focus Groups 1 and 2's responses to Question 1, Part 4.

**Table 5.7: Sample descriptive summary table of focus group data**

Descriptive Summary table – Group 3 Focus groups, Theme 4, Sub theme 1	
<b>Theme:</b> Future developments of English teaching in the UAE – Group 3	
<b>Sub theme:</b> English teacher nationality (Has your nationality been an advantage or disadvantage in the classroom?)	
Coding	Supporting sample
<b>Advantage (NS and NNS comments)</b>	
Students like British spelling (FG1)	
Students like NS accents and make fun of NNS accents (FG2)	“There was this video my students <b>loved</b> to show me of an Egyptian teaching English and they thought it was hilarious and they were making fun of the Egyptian English accent and I think it was supposed to be in Saudi, it was a cartoon and they thought it was absolutely hilarious. Teacher, teacher look and basically the gag was how these Egyptian English teachers are terrible because they have this <u>particular accent</u> and students thought it was funny. So there is a perception among students that the accent matters” <b>(Joe, Canada)</b>
Linguistic imperialism / NS fallacy (FG2)	“If they have choices (NS vs NNS teachers), they will choose those (NS teachers) because its in their heads” <b>(Sebastian, UK)</b>
Native speaker teachers match the goal of bilingualism (FG2)	
Poor image of Emirati teachers (Strict and old-fashioned) (FG1)	“It’s again another association of Emirati teachers having a stick in their hands and you know, their understanding of Emirati teachers is different” <b>(Yonka, Turkey)</b>
<b>Disadvantage (NS and NNS comments)</b>	
Differences in dress and religion (FG1)	“I’m a Turk and Muslim, married to a <u>‘halaljaid’</u> , which is a foreigner, a Christian. I’m not wearing a <u>shaela</u> (head covering) so therefore..... <u>they</u> are very sad for me” <b>(Yonka, Turkey)</b>
<b>Divergences</b>	
Students prefer male teachers (FG1)	

## 5.5 Validity of the data

Before moving on to the findings chapters, it is important to end the methodology chapter with a discussion relating to the validity of the data. For qualitative data analysis, verifying data depends on the concepts of: dependability, credibility, confirmability, and transferability. As Brown (2001, p. 11) states, ‘these concepts are as important for open-response data as reliability and validity are for closed-response data, because the results of a survey project can be no better than the instruments and procedures on which they are based.’

### 5.5.1) Credibility

Credibility is concerned with data being accurate and appropriate. By focusing on three different methods of data collection within a phenomenological case study, and by gaining views from different groups of participants, the study aimed to reveal a deeper and increased understanding of participants’ attitudes. This allowed for the use of *Methodological triangulation* (within-methods). As Denscombe (2010, p. 136) states, ‘comparisons using similar methods can provide a check on the accuracy of findings.’ I was also able to use *data triangulation* in the form of *informant triangulation*, as there were three different groups of participants (Emirati university students, Emirati primary school teachers, and expatriate university English teachers). By looking at issues from more than one view point and in more than one way, one can gain greater knowledge, specifically in terms of improved credibility, accuracy and gaining a fuller picture. For example, responses to questionnaire questions and responses to focus group questions on the same theme often supported each other.

In addition to triangulating the data, respondent validation was used as a further way of checking accuracy. Respondent validation involves the researcher returning to the participants with the data and findings as a means of checking validity of the findings (Denscombe, 2010, p. 299). As well as being given the right to withdraw from the study at any time, the participants also had the right to change their minds about what they said in the focus groups at the respondent validation stage (Richie & Lewis, 2003). In this stage, the transcribed manuscripts were shared with participants for confirmation, addition or deletion of any of the information, which included parts which had been translated. While not all participant chose to review the manuscripts, the primary school



teachers, in particular, were curious and interested to see their opinions in writing. There was a general sense of pride in seeing their views recorded in such a way. It was felt that by doing this, the study was able to represent accurate and real views of the participants.

### **5.5.2) Dependability, transferability and confirmability**

Dependability in qualitative research is concerned with ‘reputable procedures and reasonable decisions’ (Denscombe, 2010, p. 300). This involves ‘the provision of a fully reflexive account of procedures and methods, showing the readers in as much detail as possible the lines of enquiry that led to particular conclusions’ (Seale et al., 1999, p. 157). As Denscombe (2010, p. 300) states, ‘the research process must be open for audit’. With this in mind, a detailed record of the research path was kept including key decisions made after analyzing the findings of the extensive pilot study. Recording such details of the research journey allowed for an audit trail to be constructed, which enables readers to follow the research path and understand key decisions made.

A further consideration to consider in qualitative research is transferability. According to Denscombe (2010, p. 301), this is ‘an imaginative process in which the reader of the research uses information about the particular instance that has been studied to arrive at a judgement about how far it would apply to comparable instances.’ In this way, ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973) was used to provide details surrounding the case study, such as setting, participants and cultural aspects, which aids in the transferability of research findings and allows readers to make judgments regarding how far the findings would apply to other instances.

Finally, confirmability, which recognizes the influence of the researcher on the findings, was taken into account. As Denscombe (2010, p. 301) states, ‘no research is ever free from the influence of those who conduct it’. It was important during the research process to recognize how the researcher ‘self’ is interwoven with research activity. It was also important to exercise control over personal beliefs and values so as to not to cloud the data. This was achieved by providing a reflexive account of the researcher’s self where biographical details about the researcher were provided and inside/outside roles (Roegman et al., 2016, p. 45) were analysed in relation to how they

may affect the data. A further element relevant to confirmability is the need for the researcher to keep an open mind. Seale et al. (1999) and Silverman (2006) argue that data that does not fit the analysis should not be neglected. Due to the ‘messiness of qualitative data’, in the present study there were often ‘negative instances or deviant cases’ (Denscombe, 2010, p. 303) which contradicted main findings. These cases were also explored, analysed and discussed in the findings chapter, rather than being ignored due to not falling neatly in line with the analysis.

## 5.6) Thematic structure for the presentation of the findings

After the completion of data analysis, it was decided that the four main themes would form the section headings for the finding chapter. Table 5.8 shows the thematic structure of the following sections.

**Table 5.8: Thematic structure of the findings chapter**

Chapter section	Theme	Sub-themes
6.1	Introduction to the Findings Chapter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview</li> </ul>
6.2	How English and Arabic are represented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevalence of English (English use)</li> <li>• What English represents</li> <li>• What Arabic represents</li> </ul>
6.3	Attitudes towards English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of English</li> <li>• Feelings about global English</li> <li>• Connection between English and Western culture</li> </ul>
6.4	Impact of English on cultural identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive effects of English on layers of cultural identity</li> <li>• Negative effects of English on cultural identity</li> <li>• Ambivalence or resistance to the effects of English on cultural identity</li> <li>• Expatriate teachers’ perceptions of cultural identity in the UAE</li> </ul>

6.5	Future developments of English teaching in the UAE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nationality of English teachers</li> <li>• Interest in learning about Western culture in English classes</li> <li>• Preferences for local vs global topics</li> <li>• Feelings about English medium education in higher education</li> </ul>
6.7	Chapter conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of content of chapter and lead in to the discussion chapter</li> </ul>

## 5.7) Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed and transparent description of how thematic data analysis was used to analyse the data collected. The multi-step processes of coding biological information, open-response questionnaire data and focus group data were explained, along with images of each stage of data analysis for greater clarity. The validity of the qualitative data was then explored by considering credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability. Finally, the chapter provided an overview of the thematic structure used for the presentation of the findings. The following chapter will present the findings from the study.

## **Chapter 6) Findings**

### **6.1) Introduction**

As discussed in Chapter 4, the data collected for this study was almost entirely qualitative. However, parts of the open response questionnaire data were easily quantified, which helped to gain an understanding of how prevalent certain views were. As the purpose of the study was very much to hear the voices of the participants in their own words, a priority has been placed on providing original quotes from the questionnaires and focus group transcripts. As Holliday (2007, p. 107) states, when presenting the findings, considering the positioning of one's own voice in talking about the data is necessary as well as adopting a strategy of being as non-interventionist as possible. This was achieved by allowing for longer strings of data to be shown while also being careful not to leave the reader 'stranded' without knowledge of my interpretation. For each quote given, a pseudonym has been used, and potentially identifying details have been omitted or modified to protect participants' identities. Participant groups are stated (e.g. G2 signifies Group 2) as well as the research tool used (e.g. QR signifies Questionnaire Response, and FG signifies Focus Group). Each participant also has a number which is placed after their pseudonym for easy cross-referencing (e.g. QR5 signifies Questionnaire respondent 5 and FG1 signifies Focus Group 1). The findings are divided into four main sections:

- How English and Arabic are represented
- Attitudes towards English and Arabic
- Effects of English on layers of cultural identity
- Future developments of English teaching in the UAE

### **6.2) How English and Arabic are represented**

The first section of the questionnaires and focus groups (Appendix 3) aimed to establish the linguistic history of participants and in which areas the languages they speak are used in order to assess how far-reaching English was in lives of the Emirati participants and the role of Arabic in the expatriate participants lives. Perspectives were then gained

from all participants on how the languages English and Arabic are viewed and what they represent.

### **6.2.1) Language use**

In terms of languages spoken by the Emirati participants, English was by far the most dominant second language. All the undergraduate university students named Arabic as their first language and 96% named English as their second. Only 13% of the undergraduate students spoke an additional language (Turkish (4%), Indian/Hindi (4%), Korean (3%), Spanish (1%) and French (1%)). Only four of the male undergraduate students stated they did not have a second or other language. Similar to the Emirati university students, all the Emirati primary school teachers named Arabic as their first language and English as their second, which testifies to the dominance of English as a second language in the region.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the most common areas in which the Emirati participants use English are in public life, for entertainment and communication when travelling, in malls and hospitals, while using the Internet and watching movies, and emailing/texting. The least common areas to use English were at home and with friends as can be seen from Table 6.1. It should be noted that the Emirati primary school teachers' questionnaire, due to fact that it was administered at an earlier time (as explained in Chapter 4), varied slightly for this question. The Emirati primary school teachers were not given 'malls and hospitals' as choices for areas in which they used English. They were given space to add areas though, and many added 'hospitals and malls' in this space. The other most common additional areas in which the participants use English included *while driving, restaurants, cafes, while reading books, speaking with other nationalities* (Group 1) and *jobs/ in the classroom / teaching, restaurants, malls, with my kids, reading newspapers, hospitals* (Group 2).

**Table 6.1: Areas in which Emirati participants use English**

Category	Group 1 (university students)	Group 2 (Primary teachers)
For travelling	98	100
In malls	97	-----
In hospitals	97	-----
Internet	91	100
Movies	90	75
Email/texting	73	83
Music	61	25
Outside class time at university	60	50
With friends	34	33
At home	33	33

It was also important to find out the linguistic background of the expatriate English teachers (Group 3), especially with regard to Arabic. When asked about first language, 90% of the expatriate university English teachers named English, with the exception of the five teachers from Tunisia, Belgium, Romania, Turkey and Mexico, who named Arabic, Flemish, Romanian, Turkish and Spanish as their first languages respectively. Languages spoken as a second or other language included a range of 20 different languages. The six most common second languages were the European languages: French, Spanish, German and Italian, and the Asian languages: Japanese and Korean. Following this were the Middle Eastern languages: Turkish and Arabic.

**Table 6.2: Second or other languages spoken by Group 3 participants**

<b>1</b>	French (40%)	<b>6</b>	Korean (10%)
<b>2</b>	Spanish (37%)	<b>7</b>	Turkish (8%)
<b>3</b>	German (17%)	<b>8</b>	Arabic (8%)
<b>4</b>	Japanese (15%)	<b>9</b>	<b>Other:</b> English, Greek, Russian, Portuguese, Swahili, Loa, Hebrew, Mandarin, Cantonese, Chinese, Dutch, Polish, Thai (each language
<b>5</b>	Italian (12%)		

			between 2% and 6%)
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It is revealing to see that only four of the fifty-two teachers named Arabic as a second or other language (8%). Interestingly, two teachers, Emily (New Zealand) and Thomas (Canada/UK), chose to comment on barriers they had experienced when learning Arabic. Emily's first word associated with Arabic was 'failure'. She explained a lack of enthusiasm for the language and lack of accessibility not previously experienced with language learning.

**Emily**  
**(G3- QR20)** Failure. This is the first language I've given up on. I've learnt loads of languages over the years and enjoyed the access to the cultures I've lived in that the language gave me. For some reason I couldn't master any enthusiasm for Arabic at all. I find this strange and a bit distressing.

Thomas mentioned the diglossic nature of Arabic acting as a barrier to learning.

**Thomas**  
**(G3-QR12)** I actually tried learning Arabic but was put off by all the different versions, and the fact my students laughed at me when I used Egyptian Arabic. After that I put the books down.

### 6.2.2) Words associated with English

After discussing language use, the way the languages English and Arabic were represented was explored. All three groups of participants were asked to name five words that they associated with English. They were then asked to do the same for Arabic. This provided a strong picture of what the languages represented to the participants. In the focus groups, participants were also asked to discuss words that they associated with the languages. In some cases this led to more detailed discussions on what the languages symbolized, especially in the case of the expatriate university teachers.

When asked to name five words associated with English, as can be seen in Table 6.3, there were several predominant and overlapping word associations across the groups. The most frequently mentioned five words for each group represent a mixture of

abstract associations (ideas, adjectives) and concrete or practical associations (areas English is needed / used). The five most commonly associated words across the groups include *Global /International, Education /Jobs, Internet/Entertainment, Communication, Travel, Public life (hospitals, shops, restaurants), Western/ British /American /Western places or artifacts* and *Useful / necessary / powerful*.

Other common word associations for Group 1 participants included *future/ development*, positive adjectives such as *easy/interesting/enjoyable* and also *imposed /affect society /influence*. Perhaps to be expected, the expatriate university English teachers (Group 3) also felt ownership of the language with 33% associating English with *mother tongue /language*. Other common words mentioned by Group 3 participants related to the spread of English and the politics of language, including words such as *evolving/hybrid/dynamic/varieties* as well as positive adjectives such as *trendy/lucky/exciting*.

**Table 6.3: Words associated with English**

	<b>Group 1</b>	<b>Group 2</b>	<b>Group 3</b>
<b>1</b>	Education / university / studying / teaching/ school (83%)	Internet (100%)	Global/international/ lingua-franca/ widespread/ everywhere (73%)
<b>2</b>	Global/ International / everywhere/ world (76%)	Jobs/career/studies/ teaching (92%)	Jobs/work/study/business/ teaching (68%)
<b>3</b>	Communication/ connection/ interaction (60%)	Travel (83%)	Western/UK/USA/cultural artifacts associated with the west (tea, green fields) (58%)
<b>4</b>	Foreign/British/ American/ blonde /Christianity (45%)	Public life (hospitals, cafes, restaurants, shopping) (58%)	Useful/necessary/ flexible/powerful/dominant/ important/ needed (48%)
<b>5</b>	Public places (hospitals, malls, shopping, restaurants, daily life) (32%)	Entertainment (Movies, books, emails, phone) (50%)	Entertainment (TV, Internet, books, literature) (48%)
<b>Other common words</b>	Future / development (27%), jobs/ careers (24%), positive adjectives (24%), affect /imposed/influence (17%)	Communication /other cultures (42%), global /international (17%)	Language / mother tongue (33%), evolving /hybrid/ varieties (28%) positive adjectives (28%)



In addition to the commonly mentioned word associations seen in Table 6.3, unique responses or word associations mentioned by smaller percentages of participants included: *disinterest, spelling mistakes, difficulties, ambition, dream, icons, independence, opinion, formal, extra, networking* (Group 1), *menu, coffee, non-Arabic Muslims* (Group 2) and *conquer, colonialism, spelling, irregular, rich, illogical, versatile* and *achievement* (Group 3).

A visual representation of all the English word associations can be seen in Word Cloud 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3. As explained in Chapter 5 the online software ‘Wordle’ ([www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net)) allowed for the creation of these visual representations by showing the words size in proportion to how often it was mentioned. Through this form of ‘code landscaping’ the dominant words become very clear as they almost leap out from the page. As the word clouds show every word stated rather than the researcher grouping words into themes as seen in Table 6.3, the most prominent words in the word clouds may not match the most popular themes in Table 6.3. However, together they clearly build a picture of what both languages represent to each participant group. We can summarize that for the Emirati university students (Group 1) English is primarily associated with *Global, International, Communication, Travel* and *University*. For the Emirati primary school teachers (Group 2) *Internet, Travel* and *Studying* dominate. Finally, the expatriate university English teachers’ (Group 3) word cloud supports the former two with *Global, International, Business* and *Communication* being amongst the most dominant words. English could therefore be said to encompass multiple major domains including the larger world (Global business, travel and communication), education, jobs, information, media and entertainment.



### Word Cloud 6.1 – Emirati university students' word associations with English



### Word Cloud 6.2 – Emirati primary school teachers' word associations with English



**Word Cloud 6.3 – Expatriate university English teachers' word associations with English**

During the focus group sessions participants were also asked to name words they associated with ‘English’. Focus group participants quickly moved from naming single words to delving deeper into the background and issues surrounding these words. This led to rich and revealing discussions. Key themes discussed included English as the language of communication, power and prestige, English as a life skill and the ‘racialization of English language speakers’ (Aneja, 2016, p. 581). These key themes are explored in the following sections.

#### **6.2.2.1.) English as a language of communication**

The Emirati undergraduates discussed the dominance of English and the importance of English for communication in the UAE. Lubna, Oshba and Lamya’s comments demonstrate this.

- |                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Lamya</b><br/>(G2-FG2-<br/>L33-34)</p> | <p>For the products that we buy from the shop. All the products, most of them, the instructions are written in English. Sometimes we find them in English without Arabic.</p>                                                                                                           |
| <p><b>Oshba</b><br/>(G2-FG1-<br/>L38-41)</p> | <p>For me, I find it in the hospitals, the latest research on different things, the medical maybe the education, and you find it in English, only English. If you want to work in Arabic it’s rarely to have an article or study or survey in Arabic and I find it in the Internet.</p> |
| <p><b>Lubna</b><br/>(G2-FG1-<br/>L43-44)</p> | <p>They use the English language for everything, even teaching. When we search for a worksheet or a video.</p>                                                                                                                                                                          |

#### **6.2.2.2) English as a language of power and prestige**

English was also associated with power, prestige and future success in the eyes of expatriate university English teachers. Richard (Ireland) talks of how parents often feel their children must study English, if they are to have a bright future. Joe (Canada) talks of how English is connected to holding a privileged position in the world.

**Richard**  
(G3-FG2-  
L137-140)

Kids are being invested in by their parents and these poor kids are sent to school from 4 o'clock to 6 o'clock when they should really be playing because the parents say 'Oh, my God, that's the future' so they all go off to International House or something and they do these games and things in English.

**Joe**  
(G3-FG2-  
L25-28)

English is ...an ideology and a position, a privileged position in the world, that evolved historically and is still maintained today and that's why we can make money off it because it has a value that's attached to a certain position.

This was also discussed in the Group 1 focus group participants as demonstrated by university student, Hamdan's (G1-FG3-L23) powerful comment, 'I think you can't develop without English'.

### **6.2.2.3) English as a life skill**

The two focus group sessions with the expatriate university English teachers resulted in particularly rich and in-depth discussions over whether English was truly global (a life skill not attached to any particular country) or whether it was still associated with Britain, America and other English-speaking countries. Tabitha (UK), Richard (Ireland) and James (Australia) argued that English has become detached from countries and is now considered a life skill by most.

**Tabitha**  
(G3-FG1-  
L98-99)

It's become a life-skill rather than a, I mean it still has, it's still part of the identity of English native speakers but it's more than that.

**Richard**  
(G3-FG2-  
L37-47)

Most students have no interest whatsoever in England. They kind of follow maybe Manchester United but they couldn't find Manchester on a map because I've asked them to find Liverpool and different clubs that they said they were following (laughs) and they had great difficulty in just relating them to a place and it's the same with the language. It's all on the internet, they are all chatting to their own generation and they've got no clue about the actual cultural origins of English and why should they? But it enables

them, just like you said, to communicate and create new networks, new friends, new jobs, new possibilities

**James** It's just the thing you need. It's like a passport in some respects. A linguistic  
**(G3-FG2-** passport.  
**L55-56)**

#### **6.2.2.4) English as white**

Other focus group members, conversely, felt that English is still very much attached to the countries in which it originated. Word associations such as 'Anglo Saxon' (Graeme, UK, FG2, L18) 'Imperialism' (Joe, Canada, FG2, L10) 'still attached to countries' (Douglas, USA, FG2, L17) and 'America or the UK' (Richard, Ireland, FG2, L15) indicate English is still not entirely neutral, in that it still connects, in the minds of many, to native English-speaking countries and even the race of the people traditionally from those countries (white). As seen in Table 6.3, 45% of the Emirati university students felt this association too, when naming words such as 'Foreign / British / American / blonde and Christianity' (Table 6.3). University teachers Yonka (Turkey) and Joe (Canada) explain the connection they make between English and Caucasians.

**Yonka** White. Very white..... When I first started learning the language, that was  
**(G3-FG1-** the thing, I would look at the name of the author and that was always male  
**L22-27)** to begin with and they were always white. Of course it has changed a lot  
but still I cannot associate English with other with, and they were, races to  
this day. Even now.

**Joe** This current era of globalization, capitalism grew out of imperialism and I  
**(G3-FG2-** mean that's a historical connection that is often not ignored but just not  
**L127-130)** dealt the current era and I think that whole white male Western privilege  
thing comes from with imperialism. It's still very much embedded in the  
English language teaching and learning around the world I feel.

### 6.2.3) Word associations with Arabic

Just as they had done for ‘English’, questionnaire participants were asked to name five words they associated with ‘Arabic’. Focus group participants were also asked to comment on word associations, which led to further more detailed discussions on what Arabic represented. The most common five word associations with Arabic were remarkably similar across the groups but very different indeed from the words connected with English, as can be seen in Table 6.4.

**Table 6.4: Words associated with Arabic**

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<b>1</b>	Religion/Quran/Islam/Muslim/pray/mosque/Prophet (106%)	Religion/Quran/Islam/Prophet Mohamed (158%)	Islam/Quran/Religion/Muslim/ Mecca/Prophet Mohamed/prayer (85%)
<b>2</b>	Culture/tradition/customs/heritage/history/old (89%)	Communication with family/friends/home/daily usage (83%)	Middle East/Gulf/UAE/Arabic speaking countries/desert (60%)
<b>3</b>	Home/family/community/gathering/friends/ancestors (64%)	Culture /tradition/customs/heritage (58%)	Language/script/calligraphy/ poetry/ alphabet/regional dialect (58%)
<b>4</b>	First language/mother-tongue (51%)	Entertainment (music, poetry, reading, TV, apps) (50%)	Tradition/culture/classical/ancient/ history (48%)
<b>5</b>	Gulf/UAE/ Middle East/ nationality (20%)	My language/first language (33%)	Arabic words (e.g. haram, sushma) (40%)
<b>Other common words</b>	Grammar (8%), poetry (8%), beautiful (7%)	Teaching our kids (17%)	Difficult / complex (33%), positive adjectives (18%), guttural (13%), people/students (13%)

For all three groups, *Religion* was the strongest association with Arabic. All the Emirati participants in Group 1 and Group 2 mentioned *religion* as at least one of the five words they connected with Arabic, with many mentioning multiple religious associations such as ‘*Religion, Quran, Islam, Muslim, pray, Mosque, Prophet Mohamed, Mecca*’. The second most common word connection across the groups was *culture / tradition /*

*customs / history / heritage*. For Group 1 and 2, Arabic was associated with *family / friends / home*, as well as a sense of ownership demonstrated by the responses ‘*my / first / mother-tongue language*’. Arabic was also connected with the *Middle East* or *Gulf* as a region, or the *desert* in the case of Group 3. The expatriate English university teachers also reflected on Arabic as a language and associated it with common Arabic words (e.g. *haram*, meaning ‘forbidden’ or *sushma*, meaning ‘what’s it called?’) as well as its script / calligraphy and local dialect, Khaleeji. Only one word association overlap between Arabic and English could be seen from the Emirati primary school teachers, who mentioned entertainment in connection with both languages. However, the forms of entertainment varied. Whereas English was connected with more the modern forms of entertainment *movies* and *the Internet*, Arabic was associated with the more traditional *poetry* and *music*.

Other unique or less common word associations (less than 4% of participants) included: *oil, easy life, scorching, disappearance, undeveloped, comfortable, has meaning, rich, special, honour, influence, adore, responsibility, power, elegant, civilization, wisdom* and *proud* (Group 1), *Like pearls in the sea* (Group 2) and *endangered, don’t hear it enough, necessary, barrier* (Group 3). Word clouds 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6 allow all the word associations to be seen, and clearly the main words to jump out from the page are *religion, Quran, family, culture, tradition, mother tongue, difficult, Middle East, Islam*.



**World cloud 6.4– Emirati university students’ word associations with Arabic**



**Word Cloud 6.5 – Emirati primary school teachers' word associations with Arabic**



### Word Cloud 6.6 – Expatriate university English teachers' word associations with Arabic

Not surprisingly, similar associations were mentioned and discussed in the focus groups. The four main themes emerging from the focus groups were: religion, terrorism, difficulty, and beauty.

### 6.2.3.1) Arabic as a language of religion

Participants felt that religion was implicitly tied to Arabic through the importance of the Holy Quran. Emirati primary school teachers, Shaikha and Lubna voiced this important connection.



**Shaikha** Our culture, our customs. Also the Holy Quran. All this keep us to  
**(G2-FG1-** encourage us to speak Arabic.  
**L5-6)**

**Lubna** Religion, Islam and home because all of us in our home talk in Arabic  
**(G2-FG1-** language.  
**L7)**

University teacher Rachel (UK) also discusses the use of ‘Allah Lexicon’ (religious vocabulary containing the word ‘Allah’) in everyday Emirati life. Words such as ‘Inshallah’ (God Willing / maybe / we’ll see), ‘Alhamdulillah’ (Praise be to God / thank God) and ‘Wallah’ (I promise to God / I swear to God) are heard throughout the day in the UAE and it is almost impossible for expatriates not to adopt these expressions and use them subconsciously in their own conversations.

**Rachel** It is so routed in religion, so many people, and so many of the phrases that  
**(G3-FG1-** you pick up quickly as a foreigner living here are connected to religion.  
**L220-223)** Insh ‘allah, you know, in God’s will. Ma’allah, may God protect you, you know this kind of thing.

### **6.2.3.2) Arabic as a language of terrorism**

Perhaps not wanting to commit it to paper, Arabic’s association with terrorism was not seen in the questionnaire responses. In both expatriate teacher focus groups, however, participants candidly discussed this association, as seen by James (Australia), Richard (Ireland) and Graeme’s (UK) comments.

**James** Let’s be really honest about it, terrorism. The reason why terrorism jumped  
**(G3-FG2-** into my head is that there has been that linking of a language and a religion  
**L174-221)** and a culture that the West believes that Arabic is, they’re all the same, they’re all tarred with the same terrorist brush.

**Richard** Any time an act of terrorism is committed, you hear an Arabic word, in  
**(G3-FG2-** praise of God, you know, there’s that association.  
**L222-223)**

**Graeme**  
(G3-FG1-  
L212-218) I suppose it could have very negative associations with many people because it's very politicized. Like Ahmed the terrorist, and also 'haram', we all know that word, don't we?... And all of the names of the terrorist groups are in Arabic. So a lot of people who, especially who don't live here, will have a very negative probably view of, if you just say Arabic, they go 'ughhhh' (gasp).

The focus group members went on to say, however, that this connection was not as 'real' as some people believe it to be. For this reason, a key word associated with Arabic, participants felt, was *misunderstood*.

**Joe**  
(G3-FG2-  
L207-213) In Canada and the US maybe there's Fox News, that's right wing journalism. It does create a negative perception, maybe not Arabic language but Middle Eastern culture in general. And I think it's a misperception or a myopic view of that, that they present on purpose but that's I think my first feeling of Arabic but then I mean that's an emotional reaction it's not a logical understanding. Once I actually think about it I know that that's a misperception but that media influence has been salient for me. It's affected me.

**Richard**  
(G3-FG2-  
L242-248) I had a couple of Canadian friends here last week and we were wandering around the malls and they were saying 'oh my God, I wish the people back home could see this, they'd just shut their mouths about all the negative stuff that comes out, you know'. All the stereotypes disappear that they are fed by the media.

### 6.2.3.3) Arabic as difficult and complex

A further negative association with Arabic, which was also present in the questionnaire data, was Arabic being 'difficult / hard / complex to learn'. This was mostly attributed to diglossia in Arabic as described in Chapter 1. It was pointed out that local spoken Arabic, Khaleeji, is quite different from written Arabic (Modern Standard Arabic), to the point where one could consider them almost different languages. This makes it

particularly challenging to learn. Tabitha (UK) and Yonka (Turkey) share their frustrating experiences when trying to learn Arabic.

**Tabitha** When I first moved to Oman, I had studied Arabic at university and had  
(G3-FG1- never got fluent at speaking because I had never spent time abroad, I  
L182-186) dropped out before that, but I thought ‘oh great I’m going to Oman I’m  
finally going to be able to speak Arabic and use all the knowledge that I  
have from before’, and you just can’t, in the Gulf, it’s just impossible

**Yonka** I’m actually thinking of going to an Arab country like Egypt next summer  
(G3-FG1- to learn the language. It’s interesting that I cannot learn the language here,  
L179-181) it’s so frustrating.

#### **6.2.3.4) Arabic as mesmerizing, classic and beautiful**

Positive associations with Arabic were also put forward, including feelings from the Emirati participants of pride in Arabic in that it was seen as a valuable language with a great history. This was voiced by Hessa. There is, however, a detectable note of nostalgia in Hessa’s words, as if the image of Arabic she describes is one of the past rather than the present.

**Hessa** (Arabic) looks like the pearls in the sea....because it’s a valuable language  
(G2-FG2- and it’s full of strong expressions and strong structures also. Reminds us  
L12-17) with our great history and with the famous science too.

The expatriate university English teachers also discussed positive associations, seeing the romantic side to Arabic, stating that it is a beautiful-sounding, classic, pure, and mesmerizing. Graeme (UK), Christina (Mexico) and Sebastian (UK) share their thoughts on this.

**Graeme** Isn’t Arabic well known as being a fantastic language to express poetry?  
(G3-FG1- It’s beautiful-sounding. Like when you’re on the Etihad flight and there’s  
L248-255) the ...but if you don’t understand, it does sound very mesmerizing and  
very beautiful. So, there’s another side to Arabic as well.

**Christina (G3-FG2-L192-195)** I'm studying Arabic at the moment and I'm finding it really really, how can I say, amazing. I'm in love with Arabic..... It's a beautiful-sounding language and a beautiful script.

**Sebastian (G3-FG2-L229-235)** I just think of my son. He's seven and he's studying Arabic now and he loves, he loves everything about this place and he's interested in Arabic culture and he's interested in Arabic words and, as I say, he sees it as a very pure thing he's learning and for us we've been affected by what we read in the media and you our own experiences I guess but when I see my son and the way he always asks me questions about this region and he's only seven and that's the reality of it. I mean that's the context.

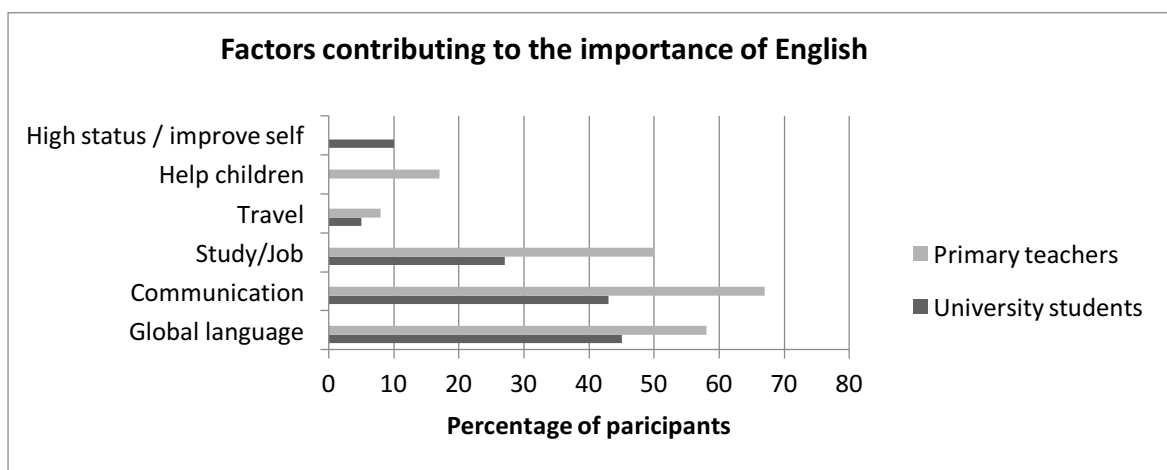
Sebastian's comment highlights the contrast between how a child can see Arabic as a foreign language from a fresh perspective as opposed to adults who may be influenced by negative political worldviews and media images.

### **6.3) Feelings towards English as a global language**

After reflecting on what the two languages represented, the participants were asked specifically to comment on the importance of English in the UAE (6.3.1) as well as their feelings towards English as a global language (6.3.2 and 6.3.3). In addition, the connection between English and Western culture was debated (6.3.4).

#### **6.3.1) The importance of English – it's everywhere**

The importance of English was an area explored in Part 3, Question 1 of the questionnaire with the Emirati cohort (Group 1 and 2). For the undergraduates (Group 1), 97% stated that English was important. For the Emirati primary school teachers (Group 2), all stated that 'yes', English was important to them. The most common reasons for the importance of English can be seen in Figure 6.1. The same question was asked to the expatriate university English teachers during the focus group sessions and it was agreed that English was indeed important, with participants saying 'Undoubtedly' (Graeme, UK, FG1, L264) and 'In every area' (Tabitha, UK, FG1, L266).



**Figure 6.1:** factors contributing to the importance of English from the Emirati cohort’s perspective.

The fact that English is everywhere makes it an important language in the eyes of the Emirati participants as demonstrated by Eiman, Shatha, Iptisam, Bashayer, Shaikha and Rawda’s comments.

**Eiman (G1-QR5)** At this time, it is important for me and everyone. The reason is I can’t complete my education, and even my appointments, without it. It has become global.

**Shatha (G1 – QR77)** We can’t complete our life without English, so it’s important to interact and communicate with others.

**Iptisam (G2-QR7)** English is a crucial language because I need it for work and communicating with others. Without English you may feel useless because almost everywhere you need to talk English. For example, in hospitals or in shopping malls, you need to know the language to communicate.

**Bashayer (G2 – QR11)** It’s usable everywhere and everything in our life.

**Shaikha (G2 – QR5)** It's very important for me as a teacher and as a mother. Everywhere you can see English signs and when you travel you also need a language to contact people.

**Rawda (G2- FG2- L47-49)** I use it with my kids as they are in international schools. Also we use it outside the house when we go anywhere. English has become a global language, we can use it and communicate with others from different nationalities.

In support of the Emirati cohort's responses, the expatriate university teachers felt English was important as a language used online, as seen by Christina's comment.

**Christina (G3- FG2- L323-326)** I was curious about what happens on Instagram because students are always on Instagram so I created a special account. I was really surprised to see how much English they use there. A lot of their comments were in English.

It was also seen as an important lingua franca and in terms of being competitive in the job market as can be seen by Graeme (UK) and Samuel's (USA) comments.

**Graeme (G3 – FG1 – L268-271)** If you go to a mall, you're going to hear everybody, basically, you're going to hear English because the Filipinos and the Indians and the English and the French and the Emiratis, that's the one language that they have in common.

**Samuel (G3- FG1- L275-276)** (English is important because) it seems that the goal is for the students to be competitive on the international market place. To be employable by an international company.

English was seen as necessary for future jobs by the Emirati cohort too, as reflected in undergraduate student Jawahir's comment.

**Jawahir (G1- QR64)** If I don't know English, no one will employ me because English has become a basic language in the work or job.

The Emirati primary school teachers especially emphasized how vital English was professionally. Without good English (IELTS 6.5), they are in danger of losing their teaching positions, as Shaikha and Hessa point out.

**Shaikha** (English is important) for teaching, because the curriculum in our country  
(G2, FG1 – has changed from Arabic to English and we have to teach our students  
L54-57) three subjects, English, Maths and Science in English. That’s why we come to the university to improve our language skill so we know how to teach them in English.

**Hessa** Professional is very important because we get our salary from our jobs.  
(G2-FG2 – Otherwise if we do not develop our language, maybe we will lose our job  
L58-59) so no salary for us.

English being ‘the language of the future’ also added to its importance as Atheya (Group 1) comments. Being able to use English as a tool to communicate globally, especially in order to explain Emirati culture to foreigners was a further reason for the importance of English discussed by the Emirati university students.

**Atheya** Well, English is the best language to communicate and to be the global  
(G1-QR50) language and international language because it is so easy to be learnt and full of fun and enjoyment. It’s also definitely the language of the future.

**Reem** Yes. Anyone from another country, I can explain my culture for them  
(G1-FG1- with English language. They will understand.  
L58-59)

English was also deemed important in the UAE due to it being seen as prestigious or attached to worldliness or a high status. Rachel’s (UK) comment reflects this.

**Rachel** There’s a definite status associated with English, which I’ve noticed in  
(G3 – FG1- other countries as well in this region. Where command over English  
L298-301) indicates a higher level of education.

Other focus group members, however, questioned the prestige of English pointing out that it may in fact be seen by some as a ‘service’ language (for maids, nannies, drivers, retail workers), whereas Arabic is seen as a ‘cultural language’. This is demonstrated in Joe’s (Canada) comment.

<b>Joe</b> <b>(G3- FG2- L268-271)</b>	I wonder about the prestige of English here because it does seem to be a service language to an extent whereas I think Arabic the more, for local people and other Arabic speakers who live here, is the cultural language..... I wonder if Arabic is more prestigious and English is more of a functional language.
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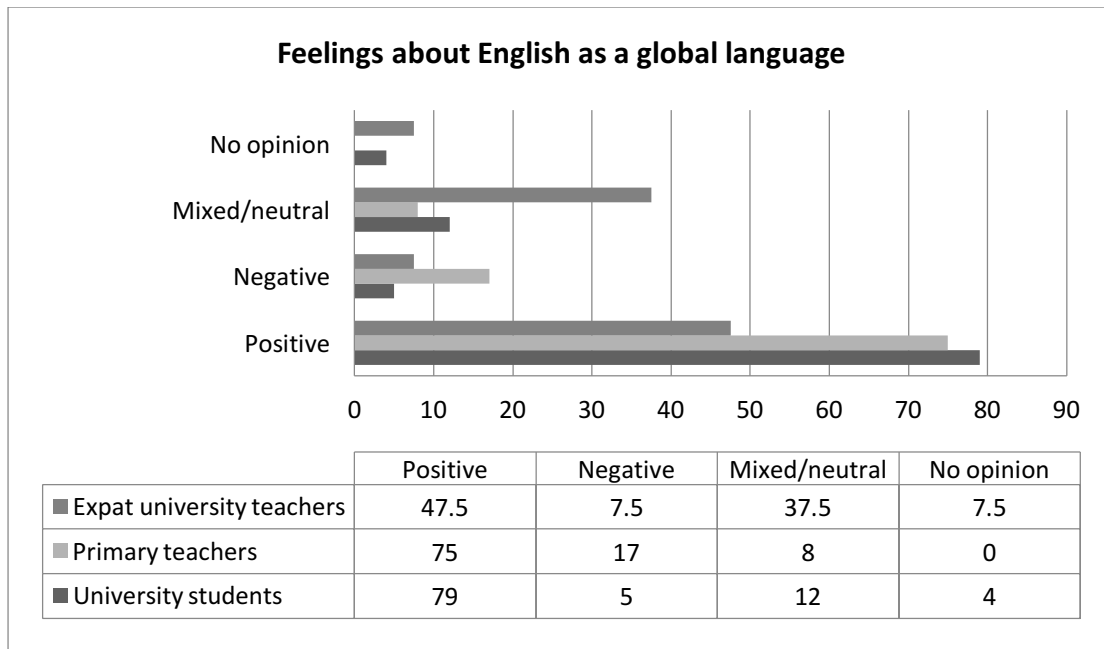
James (Australia) argued that rather than any one language being more prestigious than the other, bilingualism perhaps holds the most prestige.

<b>James</b> <b>(G3- FG2- L286-292)</b>	I think the prestige is bilingualism. I think the people who are really schmick (smart / stylish) are the people who say I know good Arabic and I know good English. I’ve been educated in both of these languages because I think it represents what the society wants to ultimately be.
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### **6.3.2) Participant views on global English**

After reflecting on the importance of English, participants were then asked to comment on their feelings with regard to global English. Figure 6.2 shows a summary of the questionnaire respondents’ responses. As can be seen, the majority of Emirati undergraduates (79%) and Emirati primary teachers (75%) had positive feelings towards English as a global language. For the expatriate English university teachers, however, the number of positive responses was under half (47.5%), with far more mixed or neutral responses (37.5%). Detailed reasons for these responses are provided in the following sections.





**Figure 6.2: Questionnaire respondents' feelings towards English**

### 6.3.2.1) Positive views on global English

The most common reasons for welcoming English as a global language were similar across the groups. As can be seen in Table 6.5, positive attitudes towards English were mainly attributed to its usefulness and importance, it being seen as a 'good', 'beautiful' and a generally positive language, it being easy to learn, and its ability to connect people. For the expatriate university English teachers (Group 3), 30% also voiced feelings of gratitude or feeling 'lucky' or 'privileged' to be native speakers of the global language, especially in terms of more job prospects and opportunities.

**Table 6.5: Questionnaire respondents' positive feelings about English**

Positive feelings about global English	University students	Primary teachers	Expatriate university teachers
<b>Important</b> , useful, global language, sign of development, success, pride	32%	33%	15%
<b>Generally positive</b> , very happy, beautiful, nice, fun, perfect, amazing, interesting, grateful, good	48%	25%	10%
<b>Easy</b> to learn, everyone can speak it, easier than other languages	16%	17%	2.5%

<b>Connect</b> with others	46%	58%	12.5%
<b>Bilingual</b> - English and Arabic are both mother tongues	2%	0%	0%
<b>Lucky</b> – first language, easy to get work	0%	0%	30%

Comments relating to usefulness and importance as well as English leading to success or development were given by university students Muzoun and Tahani.

**Muzoun**  
(G1-QR58) I feel about English being a global language interesting and I should learn about that language to communicate with other cultures. Also, I should learn English language to be a successful person to achieve in my community and take a part in my community to help developing my country.

**Tahani**  
(G1-FG2  
L110-111) When I study English, I feel every level I am being more successful if I have English.

Generally positive attitudes, including feelings of love and pride, were also mentioned by the Emirati cohort as demonstrated by Sharifa and Hamad's comments.

**Sharifa**  
(G1-QR54) In my personal opinion, I am in love with this language. I feel proud when I know or speak this language.

**Hamad**  
(G1-QR99) Beautiful language, easy to learn. You get a strange feeling when you use a foreign language.

Global English as a tool for communicating was seen in a positive light as voiced by Emirati primary school teachers, Shaikha and Oshba, as well as by American university English teacher, Alice. Oshba makes reference to Prophet Mohamed's teachings to strengthen her view.

- Shaikha (G2-QR5)** It's really nice to be part of conversation everywhere, especially on the internet and media and sometimes when you have to say something for studying or teaching.
- Oshba (G2-FG1-L393-394)** Our Prophet Mohamed is pushing us to learn the other languages because it is easier to communicate. You can't live isolated in this world.
- Alice (G3-QR15)** I think it's a fantastic tool to enable the world to become smaller. It allows us to share ideas and influence each other in ways we were never able to in the past. We can have a global conversation about issues that affect us all.

Finally, New Zealander Emily's comment is typical of those teachers feeling lucky that their native language is the global language in the world today.

- Emily (G3-QR20)** (I feel) lucky to be a native speaker of it. That it is so global as a result of happy circumstance: right place, right time.

#### **6.3.2.2) Neutral and negative views on global English**

Although participants mainly voiced positive feelings towards global English, a significant number of mixed and negative attitudes could be seen too, especially in the focus group sessions. English's connection to linguistic imperialism was the most mentioned negative aspect across the groups, as can be seen in Table 6.6. This was closely followed by concerns over the dominance of English and its effect on the Arabic language. Further negative feelings were that English was 'difficult' and seen as a 'necessary evil'. Finally, Group 3 participants commented on how English's status in the world today has made native English speakers lazy and superior. This was voiced by Emirati participants too in the focus groups, when questioning why so few expatriates living in the UAE spoke even basic Arabic.

**Table 6.6: Questionnaire respondents' negative feelings about English**

<b>Negative feelings about global English</b>	<b>University students</b>	<b>Primary teachers</b>	<b>Expatriate university teachers</b>
<b>Linguistic Imperialism</b> - imposed, controls society, homogenization, resentment, loss of ownership for native speakers.	5%	17%	20%
<b>Arabic loss</b> , loss of identity, foreigners should learn Arabic	4%	17%	0%
<b>Difficult</b> language	2%	17%	10%
<b>A necessary evil</b>	0%	0%	2.5%
<b>Laziness</b> in native-speakers, feeling of superiority	0%	0%	5%
<b>General negative</b>	1%	0%	0%

Concerns over the effects of ‘linguistic imperialism’ (in the words of the expatriate university English teachers) or ‘English controlling society’ (in the words of the Emirati participants) were articulated by Alanood, Layla, Alia (Group 1) and Khadija (Group 2). As seen by their comments, it was felt that although English has many benefits, there is also a sense that English is imposed on Emiratis and the amount of English, especially in education, leads to concerns over English controlling society. As Khadija’s comment shows, not being able to *choose* to learn English, but rather being *made* to learn it, is a negative effect of global English.

**Alanood**                      It’s good, but it shouldn’t be controller to other society.  
(G1-QR1)

**Layla**                         I feel that if the English language was not imposed on us in education  
(G1-Q42)                      and other things, I think I was better in it.

**Alia**                            I don’t like it because it is imposed on us.  
(G1- QR48)

**Khadija (G2-FG1 – L86-93)** Concerning me, I have mixed feeling. You know, as I said before it's very necessary to learn English as a global language and as a language of science and everything but I feel we don't need to teach in English especially the kids because I think it threatens identity, it threatens the language, so no need at all and if you ask me if you are happy if you are here, I said 'why not'. But not really too much because I am here because I am obliged, I don't have any the choice, nobody asked me whether you want to come here or not, you know. I'm happy to be here to study and develop my language but I have to choose.

Similarly, some participants who generally viewed English positively, also communicated concerns over the effects of English on their native tongue, Arabic. Majed and Sarah (Group 1), Khadija, Salwa and Hessa (Group 2) and Brad (Group 3) articulate these concerns.

**Majed (G1- QR96)** It's good that the world speaks one language but because I'm Arabic I prefer that Arabic become a global language. This is just my opinion ☺

**Sarah (G1-QR24)** I feel good about it. We can communicate and connect with others. BUT people must not forget their mother language or else they will forget their identity and nationality.

**Khadija (G2-QR2)** From my point of view, once any nation becomes weak, no one will consider its culture or language. Thus, Arabic language becomes less important within Arabic countries and that refers to the superiority of the Western over the Arab world.

**Salwa (G2-QR6)** Recently, I started to feel that we should minimize using English because it affects our language and it may weaken our language.

**Hessa (G2-FG2 –L78-85)** To be honest, sometimes you feel negative in that I can't go anywhere without using English. In my country I'm supposed to talk in my first language, which is Arabic. You know like, for example in hospitals sometimes when I see people they need translators and they need somebody to help them, I feel pity because it's our country. Everybody

should be comfortable using their first language, not using their second language, which is English.

**Brad**  
**(G3-QR31)** It's good in that it can bridge the cultural/linguistic divide, but it also means that fewer children in the world are learning to read and write the language of their parents and grandparents.

Feelings that English makes native English speakers lazy and gives them a false sense of superiority were illustrated by Emily and Abigail's comments.

**Emily**  
**(G3-QR20)** It tends to promote a sense of linguistic superiority among native English speakers who don't always see the purpose in learning other languages and as a result perhaps view other cultures and languages with suspicion/fear.

**Abigail**  
**(G3-QR40)** It has been very convenient for me to travel and work. The disadvantage is that I'm lazier in terms of learning local languages.

Nada and Hamda also comment on the laziness of native English speakers and the need for expatriates living in the UAE to learn the language of the country rather than relying only on English.

**Nada**  
**(G1 - QR59)** I don't know but if foreigners are living in our country, they should learn our language also because the Arabic language of Islam and Quran and people of paradise.

**Hamda (G1-  
FG2- L104-  
106)** Sometimes I think why they (expatriates) didn't speak our language but because now it's the most thing that we have to, yeah, it's the global language so we have to work with it.

Very few Emirati participants felt ambivalent or neutral towards global English, as was seen in Figure 6.2. In the case of the expatriate university teachers (Group 3), the main reason for neutral feelings was the feeling of inevitability, that the world needs a common language and it just happened to be English. Many made reference to other

global languages in the past such as French, Latin and Esperanto. Joanna (USA) and Heidi (Australia) and Lisa's (New Zealand) responses illustrate this view.

**Joanna**                      This is the way it is. I suppose as we become globally orientated, one  
(G3- QR22)                      language will be chosen, and English is spoken in more places, so why not?

**Heidi**                      Neutral – it just is, through historical and economical reasons...and rather  
(G3 – QR38)                      happy the global language it isn't another more difficult one like Mandarin!

**Lisa**                      There have been different global languages over time; it's English's turn  
(G3 – QR16)                      now.

### **6.3.3) University English teachers' perceptions of students' attitudes towards English**

As well as sharing their own perspectives on global English, as seen in Section 6.3.2, the expatriate university teachers were also asked to give their perceptions of students' attitudes towards English. Interesting findings were revealed. Whereas the majority of Emirati students displayed positive attitudes towards English (79%, as seen in Figure 6.2), the expatriate university English teachers perceived their students' attitudes to be mostly negative. As can be seen in Table 6.7, the most common reason given for perceived negative attitudes was that students viewed English as a chore, a necessary evil, a struggle or an imposition, resulting in a lack of intrinsic motivation and enjoyment of the language. It was also felt that students saw English as difficult and would rather not study it academically. Furthermore, the expatriate teachers saw English's connection to the West / linguistic imperialism as a deterrent for students. Most expatriate teachers did, however, feel that students recognized the importance of English in terms of future job prospects and higher status in society.

**Table 6.7. Expatriate university English teachers' perceptions of students' attitudes towards English.**

Theme	Expatriate university teachers
<b>Negative</b>	
Not enjoyable / it's a chore / necessary evil / struggle/lack of intrinsic motivation / not interested in it / resent gateway status / imposition / obstacle / hurdle	57.5%
Difficult / hard work / a challenge	12.5%
Threat to cultural identity / connected to the West	12.5%
Don't like academic English	10%
<b>Neutral / mixed</b>	
Ambivalent / indifferent / resigned to it	7.5%
Mixed (some love it, some resent it, some are indifferent)	7.5%
<b>Positive</b>	
Status symbol / leads to a better job	32.5%
Generally positive	7.5%
Cool – pop culture/ movies / social media / fashion	5%
Way of communicating with the world	5%

### 6.3.3.1) Complex attitudes

It was recognized that students' attitudes towards English were multidimensional and complex. Maria (Romania) articulates this complexity when explaining her perceptions of students' attitudes.

**Maria** The students have a positive attitude towards English in general.  
**(G3-QR1)** Theoretically, they all know it is the way to get some (financial) independence because knowledge of English allows them to get jobs. Most of them do not particularly enjoy learning it and treat it as a chore (which they would rather delegate). It is like a necessary evil, like a bitter medicine that will eventually make them stronger. The problem is not simply learning English, but English for academic purposes. I do not think they would not enjoy learning English, if it were just for chatting and meeting their basic



needs. It is their perceived difficulty of having to learn/discover concepts they did not learn in primary and secondary school through English. For most of them, this doubles the difficulty and puts them off. It is as if they discovered the big wide world through English and for them it is too much in a short time span. Western ways of thinking comes through English, and this is culturally difficult for them to grasp.

Trevor (UK), Alice (USA), Vincent (UK), Emily (New Zealand), Alan (UK) and Mary (Australia) comment on how English is often seen as a ‘double-edged sword’ in that it is necessary, valued and associated with modern pop culture, but also imposed in education and resented.

- Trevor (G3-QR13)** I think they can see its value for work and communication but rightly resent its gateway status in their own educational development
- Alice (G3-QR15)** English is ‘cool’ and it’s a language they associate with pop culture – movies, music, fashion. They also have negative associations though as it is something that they must learn in school.
- Vincent (G3-QR26)** I think they see it as a means to an end. Not many of my students are Anglophiles – many of them would understandably rather study in Arabic.
- Emily (G3-QR20)** That it’s a necessary evil. It’s just there as a means to get an education and to be employable, but it’s not a language they enjoy learning. It’s a chore to get through.
- Alan (G3-QR32)** The majority seem to view it as a necessary hurdle to their progress through the university and are lacking intrinsic motivation to learn.
- Mary (G3-QR18)** My Arabic-speaking students seem to see it as a necessary evil or a means to an end in gaining an education. I feel there is often an element of resentment at this imposition within their country. I don’t feel they are very interested or engaged language learners and so they need to be cajoled/motivated to learn and/or complete the necessary work to pass to the next level. Only a few in any class seem genuinely interested in the English language – mostly for distant (employment) goals.

### 6.3.3.2) English as a gatekeeper

English was also seen as a gatekeeper or barrier to student success. The expatriate university English teachers perceived their students to have feelings of resentment and lack of motivation, as well as complex and mixed attitudes towards English. Anna's (USA) shares an experience where English can be a barrier to success.

<b>Anna</b> <b>(G3 -FG1- L401-410)</b>	I've noticed also for some of them, English is actually an obstacle to what they actually want to do in the future. For example, their minds might not be wired for English or language but they are very mathematical or very scientific. I discovered that in one of my classes a student who was completely shut off and as far as I was concerned, very low level of English but when it got to the ISP (Integrated Skills Project) designed this car wash and was really into the, the physics behind it and it was something I never really knew about her but she has to learn English. I mean that's her interest but our university is English so she may be strong in science but her English-speaking language skills are not good but she needs that in order to study science or study what she wants to study in the future. So for her, it's kind of an obstacle.
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### 6.3.3.3) English as a liberating language

Some focus group members conversely felt that English could be viewed as a positive liberating language, which students can use to 'escape' traditional Emirati life.

English as a liberating tool was seen to be especially valued by those who were seen as 'different' in Arabian society, based on ethnicity, unusual interests etc.

<b>Tabitha</b> <b>(G3 -FG1- L442-445)</b>	I had a student last semester who does not fit in with the other guys.... so for him, English is far preferable than Arabic. Yes, he uses Arabic but you can see that it's kind of liberating to use English and he can access so many things online through English. I've known that before with other female students who perhaps have slightly strange interests or something like that.
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<b>Rachel</b> <b>(G3-FG1-</b> <b>L450-452)</b>	I've heard of students who keep diaries in English because it gives them privacy from other members of the family and it's a way that they can sort of note down their deeper feelings and maintain some sort of distance so it can liberate in that way, can't it?
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This notion supports Johannsen's (1996) notion of English being used as a 'secret language', as described in Chapter 2.

### **6.3.4) Connections between English and Western culture**

Emerging briefly as a topic during the expatriate university teachers' focus group sessions when asked to comment on what English represented, as seen in Section 6.2.2, the connections between English and 'Western' culture were explored further in Part 3 of the expatriate teacher questionnaires and focus groups (Part 2). The expatriate university teachers (Group 3) were also asked to reflect, on a more personal level, on their own cultural presence in the classroom. Although not asked directly, the topic of teachers' 'cultural baggage' was a naturally emerging topic in the Emirati cohort's focus group sessions too.

As can be seen in Table 6.8, the vast majority (97.5%) of Group 3 participants mention various connections between English and western culture. However, 57.5% of participants felt that this connection was becoming less and less prominent due to English's increasingly global identity, non-native speakers having greater ownership rights and the effects of the area in which English is learnt. Only 5% of the participants felt English and Western culture were not particularly related, seeing English as reflecting 'the culture of its day' (Scott, UK, G3, QR24) or the current cultural climate rather than native-speaker countries' cultures. Please note that the percentages in Table 6.8. do not add up to 100% as often the teachers gave complex responses where they felt for example that English was very much connected to Western culture (coded as 'yes') but this connection was stronger in certain contexts (coded as 'partly').

**Table 6.8: Expatriate university English teachers' opinions on the connection between English and Western culture.**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Group 3 %</b>
<b>Yes</b>	97.5
100%/very much/heavily connected/intrinsically connected	65
Especially in media / movies / Internet / books	25
Attached to colonialism / imperialism / carries cultural baggage	7.5
<b>Partly</b>	57.5
Not so much now. English is global. People make it their own / NNSs use it with each other	32.5
Western culture can be associated with NNS countries too (Europe). English has borrowed words from other cultures	7.5
Depends on where you learn it / what type of English	17.5
<b>No</b>	5
Connected to modernity / English reflects the culture of its day	5

Concerning their own cultural presence in the classroom, the teachers were divided, as can be seen from Table 6.9. Approximately half mentioned the difficulty in separating culture from language and at the same time 60% of the teachers felt that in their roles as teachers they were able to teach 'neutrally' or in some cases, they felt culturally detached from their country, culturally neutral or culturally diverse due to their backgrounds and life as expatriates.

**Table 6.9. Expatriate university English teachers' views on representing their nationality in the classroom.**

<b>Group 3 perspectives on whether they represent their nationality in the classroom.</b>	<b>Expatriate university teachers</b>
<b>Yes</b>	55
Represent values of my culture (humane, educated, democracy, equality, individual, freedom, cynicism, tolerance) / represent a team of international educators	22.5
Everyone is judged on where they are from	27.5
Represent unique NNS teacher view (passionate about the language and want to pass that on)	5
<b>Partly</b>	15
Sometimes / in a way / a bit	2.5

In the eyes of the students, yes	12.5
<b>No opinion</b>	2.5
Haven't thought about it	2.5
<b>No</b>	60
Generally no	25
It's not about me, it's about the students. I teach what they want to learn. They are more interested in their own culture	20
Global citizen / feel international / have mixed background/ have lived abroad for so long	15

The perspectives outlined in Table 6.8 and Table 6.9 are expanded upon in the participants' own words in the following sections.

#### 6.3.4.1. Strong connection between English and Western culture

The most common reason given for English's connection to Western culture was the feeling that language and culture could not be separated and therefore they were intrinsically joined. This can be seen in Youseff (Tunisa), Dylan (USA), Ronald (USA), Alice (USA) and Mary (Australia) responses.

- Youseff**  
(G3-QR6) 100%. Learning a language is by definition internalizing the Western culture. People get to understand the way Westerners look at things so in this way it brings the Western and the non-western cultures closer. Arabs who are too Westernized are criticized as those people who take the bad aspects of the Western culture like drinking etc.
- Dylan**  
(G3-QR9) They are strongly connected. You can't separate language and culture. Also English can be a way that Western culture is transmitted.
- Ronald**  
(G3-QR14) English is a product OF western culture. It encompasses the culture, the result of the culture.
- Alice**  
(G3-QR15) Hugely so. I think culture and language are inseparable and as the "home" of English native speaker monolinguals are Western countries, they are one and the same.
- Mary** Intrinsically. The way we 'language' and our perceptions of how things

**(G3-QR18)** are said (and done) are directly related to our cultural formations. English is a WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) language in terms of thinking styles, semantic relations and discourse.

Views of this nature were also voiced by the Emirati university students when asked to comment on whether certain countries were associated with English, as seen in Hamdan's comment.

**Hamdan** (English is connected to Western native-speaker countries) because the  
**(G1-FG3- L207-212)** original language is from there. It's their own language so not about Malaysia, when you think of Malaysia you think of the Malaysian language. If the American people learn the Arabic language, their ways of thinking, they just think of Arab people

The expatriate teacher participants also commented on English still being connected to colonialism and imperialism rather than being equally owned by all its speakers, as can be seen in Bella (USA) and Heidi's (Belgian/Australian) comments.

**Bella** Very much, despite it being used all over the world and being at least a  
**(G3-QR3)** secondary official language in parts of Asia and Africa, etc. It carries with it the baggage of Colonialism and Imperialism.

**Heidi** Since English originated within a western cultural setting I think they are  
**(G3-QR38)** very connected. British colonialism and American superpower status did the rest.

The transmission of western culture through English by the media, movies, the Internet and books was also stressed by Zoe (USA), Scott (UK) and Alan (UK).

**Zoe** It (English) is strongly connected to Western culture but it's also a  
**(G3-QR17)** language that borrows words freely. Culture includes Hollywood, TV shows, media and education.

**Scott** A lot. From Chaucer to Fast & Furious 7  
**(G3-QR24)**

**Alan** I think the two (English and Western culture) are inseparable, especially  
**(G3-QR32)** with the rise of the internet, and the fact that so much information is presented in English, and student interest in Western culture.

This connection was also commented on by the Emirati primary school teachers during the focus group sessions as can be seen by Lamya and Salwa's comments.

**Lamya** (English culture is transmitted) through movies, books we can  
**(G2-FG2-** understand how they think and how they.....  
**L158)**

**Salwa** Other culture, manners, behave, it will influence this type of culture,  
**(G2-FG1-** especially I think for young people or teenagers. They have a lot of  
**L113-116)** medias, technology, it's contact in English language all the time. It's easy to transfer behaves, traditions, manners to them.

#### **6.3.4.2) Teachers represent their countries**

Regarding teachers carrying 'cultural baggage' in the classroom, many felt that rather than representing a specific country, they represented positive values of the West such as freedom, cynicism of authority, equality, democracy, tolerance and value of education. These views are reflected in Russell (Australia), Lisa (New Zealand), Mary (Australia), Grant (UK), Joanna (USA) and Scott's (UK) comments.

**Russell (G3-** Yes. I think this is inevitable in the students' eyes, on many levels. In my  
**QR10)** own mind, I think I represent the "values" of my background – partly influenced by my country.

**Lisa** I think I represent the west more than my country. I am a single  
**(G3-QR16)** independent woman who is completely at ease with not being married and not having children. That embodies the freedoms available to women in the west.

**Mary** Yes, I do. I think people cannot help but view me as another of the few  
**(G3-QR18)** exemplars of my country's 'type.' Because my country seems so remote

and is so distant from here, I believe it is viewed stereotypically and I'm always conscious of being perceived in a stereotypical manner and I try to 'represent' myself and my country as being more multi-faceted and varied than this and try to relate instead as humane, female, educated and global.

**Grant** (I represent) basic values such as a belief in democracy, equality, individual  
(G3-QR19) freedom, cynicism of authority etc. Value education, tolerance etc.

**Joanna** I hope that I represent its best parts as a well-travelled, tolerant, educated,  
(G3-QR22) patient person. Specially here, I feel a bit restricted in my representation.

**Scott** Yes. I identify my country with positive values such as fairness, freedom of  
(G3-QR24) thought and individuality. I try to promote these in the learning environment.

The Emirati primary school teachers also felt that Western teachers were not neutral posits of English. It was commented on that they carried a culture, which influenced learners.

**Khadija** I think, it depends on who teaches the children English and how they learn  
(G2-FG1- English. For example, all my children, or any children, when they learn,  
L169-174) they learn English or taught English by Arab teachers, I think no problem. But nowadays when foreign teacher teach them I think this teacher is a culture, it's a, herself is a culture and everything. And when they learn English by movies, it's a culture, it's not a language, it's not only a language.

**Khadija & Khadija:** Yes, she is a culture

**Oshba (G2- Oshba:** Her clothes, it's not a direct instruction that she gives to us.

**FG1, L178- Khadija:** Yes. This is what I mean.  
180)

### 6.3.4.3) English belongs to the world

In contrast to viewing English as intrinsically connected to Western culture, several participants felt that English, due to its global nature, was beginning to change in



nature and now increasingly belongs to the world, rather than the countries in which it originated. This can be seen in Rose (UK), Trevor (UK) and Carl's (UK) comments.

**Rose (G3-QR2)** I think this was more so in the past – now, it's more global, even course books are taking a more 'global' approach. There are so many varieties of English in the world today, it's becoming less 'western' I think. Also, here in the UAE English is used so much in daily life, as well as business and education. A lot of this English is Asian – shops, service industry etc.

**Trevor (G3-QR13)** It is the source and medium of aspects of Western culture but it is a uniquely flexible language and quickly becomes owned by non-western users. To this extent, English is a misnomer – there are Englishes.

**Carl (G3-QR35)** There are so many different types of English around the world that do not pertain to Western cultures for example you have what I would call Abu Dhabi English – a certain way of speaking English which is common to many people from the developing world who reside in Abu Dhabi.

In the Emirati university student focus groups, English was very much seen as a global language by some as opposed to being connected to Western culture, as indicated by Marwa and Alya's comments.

**Marwa (G1-FG1-L73-74)** Yes, now it is world language, not specific for US and United States. It's for all countries.

**Alya (G1-FG1-L176-177)** Maybe in the past it's connected to specific countries but nowadays it's an international language and you can use it anywhere.

Other expatriate teacher participants from Group 3 commented that English was only connected to Western culture in Western environments, as seen by Philip (Canada) and Alexander's (UK) comments.

**Philip (G3-QR8)** (It) depends on what kind of English is being used. English for business is very different from British Council. EFL s different from ESL. Both the latters are culture-bound.

**Alexander (G3-QR29)** It depends where you learn it. If you are learning it in the UK, yes. If you're learning it outside the UK, especially in a mono-cultural class, not much. It becomes a vehicle to express your ideas about your own culture.

#### **6.3.4.4) Teachers are detached from their country of origin**

Teachers who felt they did not represent their nationality in the classroom, explained that their nationality was separate from their role as a teacher, and in numerous cases the teacher felt they were not typical examples of their nationality, either because they had been abroad for so long and felt like truly global citizens, or had mixed backgrounds. These perspectives were voiced by Abdullah (Canada), Vincent (UK), Brad (USA) and Rose (UK).

**Abdullah (G3-QR21)** I don't believe I have a country to represent, so the answer is 'no'. I look Indian, I have an Arabic/Muslim name (but don't speak Arabic). I was born in South Africa, but have a Canadian accent, and have lived most of my adult life in New Zealand and the UAE.

**Vincent (G3-QR26)** In the sense of my religion and my values I think I represent my country but since I haven't lived in the UK permanently for over 25 years I am not a typical Brit.

**Brad (G3-QR31)** I feel that I've lost touch with the cultural mindset of the majority of Americans especially after having lived so many years abroad. However, I do try to represent 'the westerner' or English speaker, as a teacher.

**Rose (G3-QR2)** I've lived outside my country for over 30 years, so actually feel more 'international' than 'British' or 'English'. I can obviously relate to the country and give information about it, but I don't feel I 'represent' it.

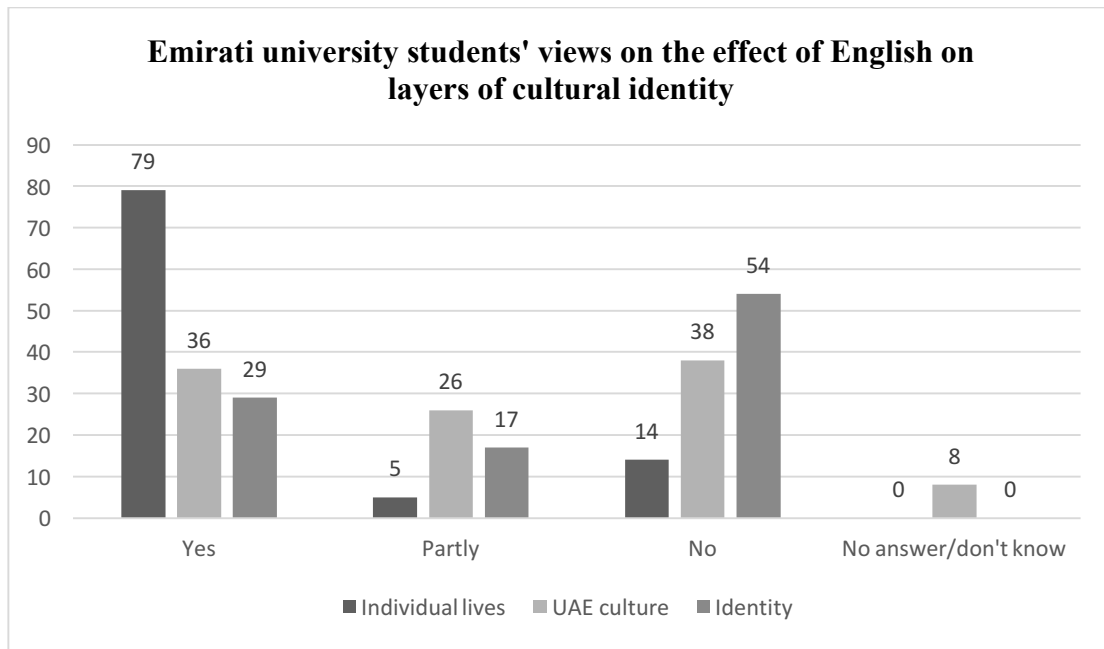
#### **6.4) The effects of English on layers of cultural identity**

Moving further into the study, participants were asked to comment on the effects of English on various layers of cultural identity. In the questionnaire and focus group schedule, these layers of cultural identity were divided into three categories: the effects of English on *individual participants' lives*, the effect of English on *culture in the UAE* and the effect of English on *identities or ways of thinking*.

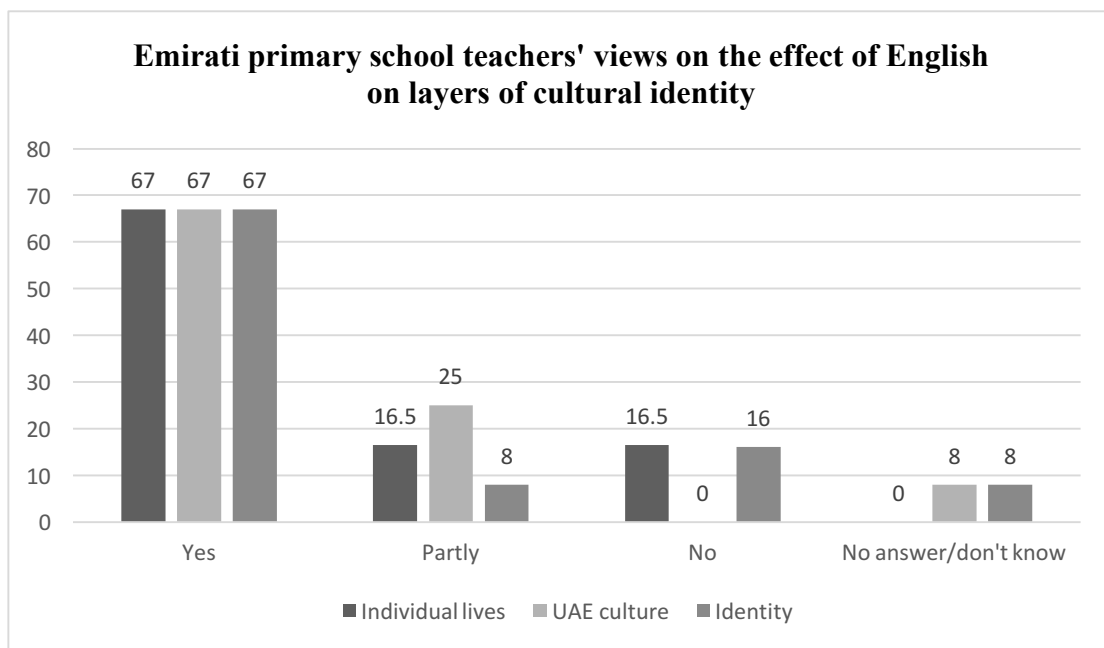
Dividing the layers in such a way made it possible to quantify the data for each category and gain an overall assessment of how these three layers of cultural identity were affected. However, moving past initial responses of 'yes', 'no' or 'partly', participants gave detailed reasons for their views in both the open-response questionnaires and the focus groups. Here, there was considerable overlap and blurring of the categories and similar themes arose across the layers. For example, participants shared personal accounts of English changing relationships between family members and generations with reference to both culture in the UAE and personal identity.

As seen in Chapter 3, cultural identity is a complex, multidimensional and ever-changing concept, which is difficult, nor desirable, to keep within rigid boundaries. For this reason, this section has been organized around common and reoccurring themes which were discussed across the layers of cultural identity. These themes have been placed into the larger categories of positive effects, negative effects, and ambivalence or resistance to the effects of English on cultural identity. The expatriate English teachers' views are presented separately at the end of the section due to the 'observational' perspective they have rather than direct experience of the issues.

Figure 6.3 and 6.4 show Emirati university students (Group 1) and Emirati primary school teachers' (Group 2) responses to whether English has changed their lives personally, culture in the UAE, and their ways of thinking or identity.



**Figure 6.3: Group 1 views on the effects of English on layers of cultural identity**



**Figure 6.4: Group 2 views on the effects of English on layers of cultural identity**

As can be seen from Figure 6.3 and Figure 6.4, the majority of participants in both groups felt their individual lives had been affected by English (Group 1: 79% and Group 2: 67%). Others felt their lives had changed a little or in some ways (partly) and a minority felt their lives had not changed (Group 1: 14% and Group 2: 16.5%). When asked about changes to Emirati culture, participants' responses varied, especially when

comparing the two groups of Emirati participants as a whole. As can be seen from Figure 6.4, the vast majority (92%) of the Emirati primary school teachers felt that cultural changes had taken place to some degree, whereas the Emirati undergraduate students were more divided, as can be seen in Figure 6.3. Those who felt Emirati culture had changed due to English often wrote 'partly' or 'slightly' or 'maybe' instead of a firm 'yes'. Still, the majority of the undergraduates (62%) did comment on substantial or partial cultural changes.

When asked about the impact of English on their identities (defined by the researcher as how you see yourself in the world and how you think) the Emirati participants' answers were also divided. As was the case with perceived cultural changes, the majority of Group 2 participants (75%) felt their identities had changed or partly changed due to English while the Group 1 participants had mixed views. For Group 1 participants, just under half (46%) felt their identities had changed as a result of English. When discussing deeper concepts such as identity, one should always be aware that a self-preservation instinct may influence responses. For example, it may have been difficult for participants to make comments on certain changes which might be viewed as disloyal to their Emirati identities.

Overall, the changes to cultural identity were seen as in some ways positive and in some ways negative. For changes to individual lives and identity, changes brought about by English tended to be viewed positively. On the other hand, changes to culture in the UAE were mainly seen as negative. These views are expressed in the participants' words in the following sections.

#### **6.4.1) Positive effects of English on cultural identity**

Positive changes commented on were mainly associated with individual lives and identities. The most common changes English brought were increased confidence, a more open-minded and flexible mindset, pride in gaining a new skill and knowledge, and being able to help others.

#### **6.4.1.1) Increased confidence**

Participants commented on how English had changed their lives for the better in terms of increased confidence, and, in the case of the Emirati primary teachers, being able to help their children. This can be seen by Atheya, Kulaitham, Iptisam, Hessa and Abdul's comments.

**Atheya  
(G1-QR50)** Yes, it made my life better. My self-confidence is much higher than it was before and I have best opportunities in everything.

**Kulaitham  
(G1- QR53)** Yes, now I can ask my question for my doctor. Now I can be a cultivated person.

**Iptisam  
(G2-QR7)** Yes. It made me confident while talking with non-Arabic people. Also, I needed the language in my work in order to teach my students. I know how to teach my kids and I can travel without any worry of how to communicate with others.

**Hessa  
(G2-FG2-  
L137-140)** I feel learning English makes me more confident, to be honest. Like, I feel more confident that I can go everywhere and talk and express myself freely but on the other hand if I didn't have the language, I'd be less confident and I would be really afraid of going to some places that didn't have Arabic.

**Abdul  
(G1-FG3-  
L384-387)** I do feel different from other people. For example, once I was in a restaurant and a guy only speaks English, the waiters, and the guy who wants to order, he doesn't know English so he called me and I started translating, that's the moment when I feel different than, because I have studied English.

#### **6.4.1.2) Positive changes in mindset and thinking**

Participants also felt English had changed ways of thinking by making them more open-minded, open to different ideas and flexible. This was articulated by Shouq, Taif, Sultan, Lubna, Shaikha and Naeema.

<b>Shouq</b> <b>(G1-QR9)</b>	Sometimes. When I think about something in English it's opening and okay but in Arabic it's hard because our religion stop something that the English thing it's allowed.
<b>Taif</b> <b>(G1-QR47)</b>	Yes, you start thinking out of the circle and start knowing new stuff.
<b>Sultan</b> <b>(G1-QR81)</b>	Yes. It affects the way I think. English language makes me happy when I use it. It makes me confident. Its words has like magic it goes to center of my heart and brings beautiful moments to me.
<b>Lubna</b> <b>(G2-QR1)</b>	Yes, it affected my way of thinking. I am more open-minded, outgoing, change my views of thinking about others who live in this world (stereotypes etc.)
<b>Shaikha</b> <b>(G2-QR5)</b>	English influences me by taking a chance to read and watch more cultures. I mean it gives me a lot of information that improves my vision in the life and do not be limited in mind.
<b>Naeema</b> <b>(G2-QR12)</b>	Yes. Sometimes I stop thinking in traditional way and be flexible to let it go some of the old fashioned behavior.

Some participants even commented that they thought in English rather than Arabic as can be seen by Eiman, Noura and Hajar's comments.

<b>Eiman</b> <b>(G1-QR5)</b>	I find myself more interested in English songs, shows, and movies. I have forgotten how to write Arabic and even how to use it in public places.
<b>Noura</b> <b>(G1-QR15)</b>	Sometimes I think in English, although my first language is Arabic.
<b>Hajar</b> <b>(G1-QR57)</b>	When I think now, I think in English.

### 6.4.1.3) Pride in English

Participants also felt their identities had changed for the better in terms of feeling more educated and competent. Others expressed pride in representing their country or Arabs in this way, as can be seen by Hajar, Reem, Ghareeba and Fakhera's comments.

**Hajar**  
(G1-QR56) English affects the way I think, it makes me more attractive and helps me learn more English because in today's society need to know English.

**Reem**  
(G1-FG1-L195-196) People will feel proud of me. They will say, she is Emirati but she can talk good in English.

**Ghareeba**  
(G1-FG1-L198-203) In the past, we travel in the past they don't know from where I am from and they think oh she is Arabic woman, they don't know an Emirati woman. But nowadays, they know I'm Emirati and I know how to speak English well.

**Fakhera**  
(G1-QR6) It has made me an educated person in society, so in the future I could get my dream job and I hope so.

In some cases, this sense of pride in English was seen as a negative change to identity as discussed in the Group 1 male focus group by Fahad and Abdul. Please note, as mentioned in Section 5.4.1, the highlighted parts were originally spoken in Arabic.

**Fahad**  
(G1-FG3-L107-117) When a person uses English, his personality changes. He expresses different views, a different side of himself. Some people, when they start using English, think that anyone who only uses Arabic is ignorant. Sometimes.

**Abdul (G1-FG3-L131-135)** Some people speaks English just for show off. Oh, look at me, I know English, oh...



## 6.4.2) Negative effects of English on cultural identity

Participants commented on negative changes mainly in relation to the impact of English on culture in the UAE. The main negative cultural changes commented on were Arabic loss, family divisions and tension caused by English, the gate-keeper status of English, seeing it as all-powerful and holding a similar weight to *Wasta* (as mentioned in Chapter 2) and Arabs copying the West in terms of lifestyle, dress and entertainment. These views are explored in depth below.

### 6.4.2.1) Arabic loss and Linguistic changes

Regarding Arabic loss, which was the most commented on change in the questionnaire responses, concerns were raised that Arabic was a ‘dying’ language which is slowly ‘vanishing’ or being ‘deleted’, as seen by Sumeya, Maitha, Hind and Jawahir’s comments.

<b>Sumeya</b> (G1-QR18)	Yes, in some people. They prefer English in everywhere. They delete Arabic language. They speak 24 hour English.
<b>Maitha</b> (G1-QR43)	I think it has changed the culture because Arabic language slowly gets vanished and banned.
<b>Hind</b> (G1-QR51)	Yes, nowadays more and more people can’t speak the real Arabic and it’s sad to me that the Arabic language is dying, even me, my Arabic now is really bad, it’s like some Indian trying to speak Arabic!!
<b>Jawahir</b> (G1-QR64)	Maybe yes, because a lot of boys and girls nowadays they don’t speak Arabic and they forget the basic rules in Arabic because they speak English all the time.

Participants commented on feeling ‘hurt’ by this reality, as seen in Rajwa’s comment, and feeling ‘sorry for’ Arabic as a language these days, as stated by Khadija.

**Rajwa (G1-QR16)** I think yes because there are some Emirati people don't speak Arabic and that hurt me a lot.

**Khadija (G2-FG1-L12-16)** I sometimes feel sorry for when I hear the word Arabic nowadays, you know. I feel that Arabic, you know, become weak more and more because of many other aspects or, especially in the teaching, I feel that Arabic should not be the language of speaking of tradition or any other thing, if should be the language of everything.

The use of English in education and even in the home, at the expense of Arabic was also seen as negatively affecting cultural identity, as seen in Dalal, Amna, Nadia and Rahmas's comments.

**Dalal (G1-QR63)** Yes, I think that because here in the UAE you can find English being used everywhere and the people prefer to speak with others by English more than Arabic. Also, our children start to lose the Arabic because our education focus on English than Arabic.

**Amna (G1-QR74)** Yes, nowadays all Emirati girls and boys use English even with their families or their friends and this also affects our mother language by avoid using it with our family.

**Nadia (G1-FG2-L459-464)** At school now they speak in English, all of the subjects are in English now, so I think in the future it will affect our language. For us we learned Arabic more than English and now we are learning more but to them, they only speak, or learn English, more than Arabic. So I think, we will not feel it now, the effect will not be nowadays.

**Rahma (G1-FG2-L502-503)** I go to their class, maybe five or six Emiratis kids and all from the other countries. That's why they will talk Arabic with whom? Like even the teacher is English.

Rahma specifically makes reference to Emiratis being surrounded by English in international schools to the point where English was the only option to communicate

with classmates and teachers. This description supports the observations made at the researcher's son's international school, as mentioned in Chapter 2.

Other focus group members commented on how the expatriate community's lack of Arabic and their expectations of an English-speaking environment in the UAE has exacerbated the problem of Arabic loss. Nadia's two comments at different points during her focus group discussion demonstrate this.

**Nadia**  
**(G1-FG2-L283-291)** A lot of visitors come here because they use English so everyone comes here.....because they know that they can speak English here. If they didn't speak English here maybe no one would come. If the visitors come here they want to read something in the malls, everything about English so they can come here. In some countries they have strict rules that if you go to their country you have to speak their language. Here in the UAE, no, there is no.

**Nadia (G1-FG2-L80-82)** They (expatriates) have to know more. They have to study Arabic because they are in an Arabic country so even if the English is most, the language here, they have to talk Arabic because we need to share Arabic in the whole country

The emergence of the hybrid language 'Arabizi', discussed in Chapter 1, was seen as a further negative effect of English, as seen by Lubna, Salwa and Naeema's comments.

**Lubna**  
**(G2-FG1-L117-129)** The teenager here in our culture create a new language. It's not exactly English. This language, nobody understand this language, not even they. They understand the new words but native English, they can't understand these words. So, it effects the Arabic language and English language. Like, 'delete'. They didn't say 'delete', they say '*deloot*' or '*delooted*', like that. New phrase. Something new. They know it, they understand. Also, they do it in chatting. Also, the message when they do broadcast, they send a message and they understand it but other people they can't understand it.

**Salwa (G1-FG2-L130)** They also have a new alphabet like ah 3. *Marah* (Female Arabic name) with they write *ma3* (3 represents the Arabic letter ‘ع’)

**Naeema (G2-QR12)** The local language reduced and lots of words transform or replaced with new ones.

Despite participants viewing Arabizi as a negative result of English, many scholars, including the researcher, would argue such hybridity is not necessarily a negative development but rather a sign of creativity and making English their own. This will be discussed further in the following chapter.

#### 6.4.2.2) Family divisions and tension

English was also viewed as affecting the younger generations the most, as well as causing tension between generations and within families. Emirati school teachers Lamya and Oshba shared their feelings regarding Arabic loss amongst the younger generations, referring to English-speaking teens as ‘annoying to sit with’ and even ‘freak people’ and ‘aliens’ whom they find it hard to identify with. Oshba explains how it hurts to see young Emiratis favouring English and feeling shame in relation to their own language and culture.

**Lamya (G2-FG2-L204-209)** Some of them (younger generation) they can communicate with each other in English most of the time, for example in my case I find that my cousins, all of them they speak in English. Because they get used to it in school and with their friends so they continue doing it and sometimes I feel it’s annoying sitting with them. All the time you hear English.

**Oshba (G2-FG1-L156-162)** When I see them (younger Emiratis) I see like, **how can I say**, what do you call it in English? Without, freak people, like an alien. They look like Arabs but they talk a different language and they generate new language which Salwa said and you feel ‘who are they?’ And you feel that you don’t want to communicate with them. I’ll stay back, you know. It’s not the way that I’m not inflexible to change or to accept the way that they live but it’s not, I don’t feel comfortable to see them or communicate with them.

Oshba used the metaphors of climbing stairs to describe the effects English has, step by step, on layers of cultural identity. This perception relates to the interrelated nature of language, culture and identity, described by the researcher in Chapter 3 as the ‘domino effect’.

**Oshba**  
**(G2-FG1-L143-154)** Learning the language, I saw it as stairs. The first step is to have the vocabulary of the language. Then you said, ‘I will change my way of, uh, wearing my clothes to be like the foreign people’ or the stereotype that you have about the same language that you are learning. So you will change your clothes, then you will change your lifestyle, then you will change your attitude towards your old language because you see the new life. Then you will change step by step and you will lose you identity..... and your language in general and you will not be able to go back to it because you will feel strange about your main identity. And what hurts nowadays we saw our, not me, I mean in general, I mean the teenagers, the flexible people who are able to acquire a new language and lifestyle, they saw it as a shame to stay in their culture and their identity. They would like to change.

As well as commenting on general perceptions of English causing generational rifts, specific personal examples were candidly shared by Lamya, Oshba, Sara and Alya. In these situations, usually parents or one parent is unable to communicate freely with the family due to language barriers.

**Lamya**  
**(G2-FG2-L143-150)** As an English teacher I would be teaching my kids at home and my husband would come home and he would say everyone speaks English except him. Yeah, like I would be teaching them Math, English and Science and he will start to fight with us, you know, arguing. So this is what I feel, to be honest. Because he’s like, ‘you have to teach them in Arabic’ and I am like ‘yes, but this is English. This is what our, you know, government asks in the schools. This is what they need’. This is the new generation.

- Oshba (FG1-G2-L304-314)** One day I was in the car with my husband and my kids. He is in KG2 (second year of Kindergarten), he talk with me in English and the father like mute. He's not there, somebody is driving the car, it is not his father (laughs). And the conversation was there and we were talking and he asked his father 'isn't it like this?' and his father didn't answer, so I feel like yes, we are in the car but we are in danger, we are like isolated our father from dealing with us or join us in our conversation about...so I taught the children the Arabic language at home and when my child start to talk in English, I answer him in Arabic to erm, to ask his father to join us, you know, because it's scary because I need this relationship between us.
- Sara (G1-FG2-L57-59)** Yes, like in malls. My mum can't speak English well so when she go alone, she cannot deal with people in the shop to her so I have to go with her or my sister has to go with her to speak, to get the information that she wants.
- Alya (G1-FG1-L115-123)** **Alya:** My grandmother take me to hospital. She has appointment because, **how do you say it**, nothing Arabic in the hospital.  
**Researcher:** So she needs you because you speak English.  
**Alya:** A little. Yes. I help her.  
**Researcher:** How do you feel about that? Do you feel happy to help?  
**Alya:** Happy, yeah for me but bad for her because Arabic people they will help her also.

Participants also gave personal accounts of the younger generation being more comfortable using English than Arabic, or in some cases not being able to use Arabic. This situation is demonstrated by Lamya, Nadia and Tahani's comments.

- Lamya (G2-FG2-L131-135)** I will also give you an example for my daughter. Once she went to the shop with her grandmother and grandfather. She (grandmother) didn't know how to read so she (grandmother) said, 'can you read it in Arabic?' and she said (daughter), 'I can't read it for you, I can read it for you in English. Then I will translate it for you'. First, she reads it in English and then translate it in Arabic.

**Nadia (G1-FG2-L472-480)** My brother he don't know how to write in Arabic, so he's lost that. (He's) seven. He just writes in English. But he speaks Arabic but he don't know how to write in Arabic. He don't know the letters. When my mother teaches him, she feels she will die. She wants to kill him (laughs).

**Tahani (G1-FG2-L138-151)** It has a lot of disadvantage about this because they will see their children, the children, now my brother, my baby brother, he all the time speak English, even in the home. I tell him, no, now you have to speak Arabic, you have to know that in school you will know how to speak English but in here in our home you will speak just Arabic. So he said no, I want to know, I love to speak English. I said okay but in my home you have to speak Arabic. So I think in school they all so focus on English.

Not only language rifts but cultural rifts in families were also commented on. Primary school teachers Rawda and Hessa's discussion demonstrates this.

**Rawda & Hessa (G2-FG2-L118-129)**

**Researcher:** Do you think it affects family life then?

**Rawda:** Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. I'll give you an example. When I had my third baby recently my son refused to go out with us. He says, 'I feel shy because we became a big family now' (laughs) and he's in Year 3 only so (God almighty) and he doesn't want me to come to the school with the baby.

**Hessa:** Did you tell him it's normal for Arab families?

**Rawda:** Yes, I told him but you know humm ...

**Hessa:** He's affected by....

**Rawda:** He's affected by uh...

**Hessa:** His peers

**Researcher:** Umhum

**Rawda:** He says why do my friends all have small families? Why he's the awkward one.

Above, Rawda talks of her son's embarrassment over the size of his family compared to his western classmates. Family size in the UAE is typically large, where having nine or ten siblings is the norm.

### 6.4.2.3) English as all-powerful or the new *Wasta*

After Arabic loss and family tension, the next most common negative cultural change commented on, in both the questionnaires and focus groups, was the overwhelming presence of English in daily life and the ‘super power’ status given to English. This became especially apparent for participant after trips abroad. Marwa and Lubna’s comments testify to this.

**Marwa (G1-FG1-L104-111)** Yes, because when I travel to China, they have, **how do you say it**, China word and English word, here in the UAE, not Arabic. Just English, English, English. In all malls, hospitals everything. If they put both for foreign people and for Emirates people it would be good but they just put English. Some of them they have just English, English, English. If they put both maybe it would be good.

**Lubna (G2-FG2-L170-171)** Even the signs on the streets and our hospital signs. Our buildings. Everything has changed, right?

Alanood also comments on cultural changes that have taken place due to the increasing importance of English in modern Emirati society, particularly in education. She equates English to *Wasta*, which, as mentioned in Chapter 2, is a traditional form of social capital, where based on one’s nationality and family name, certain advantages are granted. English, like *Wasta*, is seen to hold a special inflated power that allows its speakers to access advantages over those who do not speak it or do not speak it well.

**Alanood (G1-QR1)** Yes, there are many people nowadays who forget Arabic. They all talk English. Now this world is all about English, especially universities. Students can’t pass and graduate from universities or schools without learning English and have to get IELTS to pass levels and go to general or majors. And that’s not fair. People stopped university because they didn’t bring IELTS. Some of them go straight get a job with *wasta* and some stay at home without job or continuing their education.

Seeta also recognizes the power or ‘*Wasta*-like status’ English has gained in terms of the job market.



**Seeta** Yes, of course. Before if someone applied for any job they didn't ask 100 percent you must know English. But nowadays the first thing that they are asking you is do you have English, do you know how to speak English? If you don't, you don't know, they say we won't take you, even if you have a diploma in any subject, they won't take you.

**(G2-FG2-L165-169)**

#### 6.4.2.4) Copying the West

The fourth most common cultural change associated with English was a perception that some Emiratis have changed their lifestyles in order to be like 'English-speaking cultures'. Celebration of Western holidays, changes to ways of dressing, and choosing English movies/ TV/ music and greetings over Arabic ones were all discussed. The Emirati cohort commented on changes brought about by exposure to English and Western culture, as seen by Ghanem, Lubna, Oshba and Naeema's comments.

**Ghanem** Yes. Some people follow the customs of the West and neglect the customs of the UAE. They don't care about them.

**(G1-QR87)**

**Lubna** Yes, I believe so. You can see it in our home, our style of living changed a lot. People are more open about things. Ex. The way they dress, live, even our houses.

**(G2-QR1)**

**Oshba** Yes, to some extent, especially between the teenagers or the locals who graduated from private schools. They used to chat or deal with their friends in English and they like to listen to English music instead of Arabic.

**(G2-QR3)**

**Naeema** The people have stereotype that knowing English makes you English so they start to act, wear, live, and talk like English people (who are in the movies) no matter who they are.

**(G2-QR12)**

Anood, Marwa and Nadia comment specifically on cultural changes related to ways of dressing. Generally, these changes were seen as negative, apart from welcome changes to wedding attire, as Marwa's comment indicates.

**Anood (G2-FG1-L260-266)** If we talk about the culture in the UAE, urm, in my opinion I think, I see it effect on teenagers more because when we go to malls or centers, we see many teenager they aren't, they don't wear kandura (long white robe), they wear suits or jeans or T-shirts and sometimes I don't know they are locals, just I see in the first time I think they're not from the country but when they speak I kind of find them .....they ignore the Kandura, they buy the foreign jeans and suits, even the girls, they change.

**Marwa (G1-FG1-L170-174)** In the old the bride wear a **yura**, the kandura for the green one. Now they wear white dress like English people. This one is good.

**Nadia (G1-FG2- L303-309)** Maybe there's, **be quiet** (said to another focus group member), negative thing like uhhh (laughs), **what's it called...**.. the style the American. Then at the mall they talk like English, like 'Hi', that's nothing like learning, that's the effect. They forget about Kandura and **Agai** (headwear). They forget about the culture.

Primary school teacher Oshba takes this reaction to cultural change further by predicting that in the future, national clothes will be restricted to special holidays such as National day on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. She even implies a move towards this situation has already started.

**Oshba (G2-FG1- L267-273)** Even before, when I was in the elementary stages we've had it come, like the generation talking different language, wearing European clothes, I rarely see the Dishdasha or Kandura (white robe worn by men), the tradition clothes and we said that we will have a time that we only celebrate the national day and be culture on that, **you know**, around two days or three days later and we will go back to our normal life. We've had it come, we see it. So now we are living it. Hala, it's there.

In the Emirati university student male focus group, it was not only the words of the participants, but also the clothes they were wearing which significantly reflected cultural change regarding ways of dressing. Unlike the female participants comments

above, the males were happy to change traditional ways of dressing due to increased comfort and feeling more attractive in Western clothing. It was also stated that traditional clothes were already only worn by some on special occasions such as ‘Eid’ and at Mosques. Samples of the discussion related to this can be seen below.

- Malik & Abdul (G1-FG3-L275-284)**      **Researcher:** Do you think that (English being used as a lingua franca between the UAE’s multicultural population) has an effect on Emirati culture? For example, ways of dressing.  
**Malik:** Maybe, dressing. Here’s an example (points to group Hamdan and Mansoor in T-shirts and jeans) (laughter)  
**Translator:** A perfect example  
**Researcher:** Yes. That’s true, yes.  
**Abdul:** I only wear this (kandura) in uni  
**Translator:** And you’re not wearing anything on your head
- Mansoor, Malik, Omar & Abdul (G1-FG3-L301-313)**      **Translator:** How do you feel about wearing, you know, more Western casual clothes?  
**Mansoor:** Very comfortable  
**Translator:** Yes, you’re comfortable  
**Mansoor:** Also, it’s different, just a change for me.  
**Malik:** Because he was telling me that he was not comfortable and he was wearing kandura, he was uncomfortable.  
**Omar:** For example, for me outside uni I never ever wear this (kandura).  
**Researcher:** Really?  
**Omar:** Yes  
**Abdul:** Just for Mosque.  
**Researcher:** So why not?  
**Abdul:** Just for Mosque or wedding.
- Hamdan (G1-FG3- L320)**      I also think I look more handsome in Western clothing.
- Mansoor (G1-FG3- L329-333)**      I don’t like traditional clothes – kandura. During Eid only. Even celebrations, I don’t wear kandura.

Finally, cultural changes brought about by English in terms of celebrations and music, were commented on by Anood and Malik.

**Anood (G2-FG1-L248-252)** Even if you talk about occasions, I, in the recent decades we don't have cakes, we didn't celebrate birthdays, or anniversary or valentines. Nowadays our children push us to make a birthday for them or, because they see this one in the movies or in cartoons and most of their movies in English and they push their parents to celebrate their birthday.

**Malik (G1-FG3-L418-427)** Some guys only use English with each other, not Arabic. The music they listen to – Western. ... And they say that they are doing it to be like others in the West.

#### **6.4.3) Ambivalence or resistance to the effects of English on cultural identity**

As seen in Figure 6.4, only 16 % of the Emirati school teachers (Group 2) felt their personal lives and identities were unaffected by English and none felt culture in the UAE was unaffected. For the Emirati university students, the 38% who felt culture had not changed and their identities had not changed due to English, mainly answered with a simple 'no' and did not provide reasons.

For those who gave a reason, the most common response was that nothing could affect Emirati culture as it is deep in their hearts. English was also seen by some as additive rather than subtractive, and it was felt by others that as English was only used outside the home it did not affect culture inside the home. Some participants also stated that the government works hard to preserve Arabic culture, and learning English can be used as a way of informing and sharing Emirati culture with foreigners, rather than the other way around. Finally, some argued that Arabic culture could not be affected by English due to its strong connection with Islam and the fact the Quran is, and will always be, in Arabic. These reasons are given in the participants' own words below.

### 6.4.3.1 Arabic in our hearts

Despite the majority of participants in both Emirati groups feeling changes to cultural identity had taken place, others felt their cultural identity had remained ‘strong’ and ‘unchangeable’. The reason these participants felt English had not changed their cultural identity was the feeling of pride they have in their Arab identity and the need to be faithful to this. Participants made references to Arabic and local culture being in their hearts and minds, as seen in Amal, Reem and Shatha’s comments.

<b>Amal</b> <b>(G1-QR2)</b>	No, we believe in our culture and it stays in our hearts and English developed us and didn’t change our belonging or feeling of our culture.
<b>Reem</b> <b>(G1-FG1-L130-131)</b>	No. Our culture will stay in our heads, nothing will change. English will improve us and develop us but we will not forget our culture.
<b>Shatha</b> <b>(G1-QR77)</b>	No, the Emirati culture will never change because it grow from our deep heart so if we learn English it means we develop our education and self and it never means that we will change our Emirati culture.

Pride and love felt for Arabic and local culture as well as a determination to resist cultural change was another key feeling expressed, as seen by Hajar, Arwa, Mazoun, Faris and Iptisam’s comments.

<b>Hajar</b> <b>(G1-QR57)</b>	No, English hasn’t changed my Emirati culture. We love Emirati culture and we proud of it.
<b>Muzoun</b> <b>(G1-QR58)</b>	No, English hasn’t changed Emirati culture because Emirati people are traditionalist and they didn’t want their tradition or their culture to loss. Also, they want to keep their identity in the world.
<b>Arwa (G1-QR67)</b>	No, I’m not one of these people who affect by the West. I have strong behavior.

**Faris (G1-QR86)** No. I am not convinced, persuaded or affected by Western ways of thinking because the Arab way of thinking is not like the Western way of thinking.

**Iptisam (G2-FG2-L190-193)** According to me, no, not for me because, **praise be to God**, I am confident in myself and I am proud of being Arabic and Muslim.

Being able to separate culture from the English language was a further reason for stating Emirati culture had not been affected by English, as seen by Fatima, Marwa and Ghazlan's comments.

**Fatima (G1-QR7)** For me, no, but for the other people, yes, because I see that many people didn't know about their nationality everything they know that English language is everything, but for me I separate my Arabic language from English everything has its own time.

**Marwa (G1-FG1, L191-194)** I think it add something in me but it doesn't change a person. Like a skill, new language it's a benefit to me to speak to other people and interact. But not in my personality. It doesn't affect on my personality.

**Ghazlan (G1-QR8)** English doesn't influence my way of thinking because it is only a language I am learning for my future.

#### **6.4.3.2 Cultural Supermarket: English as additive, not subtractive**

It was acknowledged by many of the participants that the effects of English on cultural identity were complex. Many participants saw cultural changes as being partly positive and partly negative, as demonstrated by Alya's comment.

**Alya (G1-FG1-L87-91)** For me it helps me to communicate with other people and uhh for travel or something but to have bad, not bad, just one point, children now forget their language, forget their own Arabic language, they cannot write in Arabic. All study now is English, English, English. It's good, it helps us but it have, **how do you say it**, if they study both, it will be good. English, English only it's difficult for us.

This comment reflects a 'conflict of desires', often felt in relation to the effects of English. Other participants felt they could take 'the best of the West' and reject undesirable aspects of Western culture and English. This connects with the concept of interculturality and specifically the notion of 'shopping in a cultural supermarket', described in Chapter 3, where shoppers can 'pick and choose' certain parts of English, and Western culture. Salwa and Shaikha articulate this phenomenon.

**Salwa (G2-FG1-L134-141)** All cultures have positives and have negatives. We have to make sure for languages for us transfer the good thing.

**Shaikha (G2-FG1-L279-282)** I think, as Emiratis, when we think there is something good, or we take the good thing from other as a kind of model, we will save our identity, but if we take it as a dress or hairstyle or something, it's something else. It will be something disturb or interfere our identity.

Comments relating to English being additive rather than subtractive, are voiced by Emarat and Sultan. English was also viewed positively as a way in which to communicate Emirati culture to others, as voiced by Kulaitham.

**Emarat (G1-QR40)** English is a language that can develop us not rewind our culture and Emirati culture never change.

**Sultan (G1-QR81)** English never change Emirati culture but it change ways that we contact other to better communication with other nationalities. It add something nice to our culture or Emirati culture.

**Kulaitham (G1-Q53)** Nowadays UAE became a famous country. The Emirati culture now become known around the world. It didn't affect or change our culture but it helps to make UAE culture known.

As well as resisting cultural change in minds and hearts, it was felt that individual families, the government, and schools try hard to prevent cultural change by actively promoting Emirati culture and language through festivals, events and the strengthening the Arabic curriculum in schools. Alya, Hamda, Hafsa and Lamya comment on this.

**Alya (G1-FG1-L141-142)** In our family, we used to speak Arabic in home but also we used to speak English but we speak English outside but in my home we should speak Arabic, only Arabic.

**Hamda (G1-FG2-L311-315)** Here in the UAE we do a lot of heritage about our traditions. We do here also for the festival, for the visitors to know more about our culture.

**Hafsa (G1-QR20)** No, for me, I don't think so because UAE try so hard to keep our culture and our identity more important than anything.

**Lamya (G2-FG2-L181-187)** If we focus on the Arabic curriculum at school for Grade 2 it's very strong. They start to read long passages in Arabic with not easy words and not easy structure also. So I think umm the government encourages us to learn English and at the same time they support the Arabic language.

#### **6.4.4) Expatriate University English teachers' perceptions of cultural identity in the UAE**

As longstanding observers of Emirati society, socially and professionally, and many having lived in the Gulf for longer than the university students have been teens, the expatriate university English teacher's perspectives on the effects of English on local cultural identity were also seen as valuable. In the questionnaires (Part 3, Question 4) and focus group sessions (Part 3, Questions 3 and 4), the expatriate university English



teachers were asked to comment on the effects of English on culture in the UAE in general, and their perceptions of students' cultural identity. Rich discussions took place in both focus groups which echoed the findings from the Emirati cohort, demonstrating that the expatriate university teachers were very much aware of the issues, and hence provided accurate insights from an 'outsider' perspective.

The main themes discussed included: A perception of Emirati students' possessing a strong cultural identity made stronger still by feelings of being a 'besieged culture', the influence of Western English-speaking cultures on local cultural, the cultural supermarket phenomenon, Arabic loss, modern and global identities, and conflicting and manufactured cultural identities. Detailed views in the participants' own words are shared in the following sections.

#### **6.4.4.1) Besieged culture mentality**

In the eyes of many of the expatriate university English teachers, Emiratis appear to have a strong sense of cultural identity, which is shown by conforming to and celebrating cultural and religious norms, ways of dressing, food, music, and the importance of family. This can be seen by Emily (New Zealand), Alina (UK), Brad (USA) and Abigail's (Australia) comments.

- |                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Emily (G3-QR20)</b> | Here, it feels very closely linked to their religious identity, which could be considered their cultural identity, as they seem so closely related. Pride in their country, government, which is expressed frequently and genuinely.                                                                                             |
| <b>Alina (G3-QR30)</b> | Emirati students – particularly male Emiratis, have a very strong cultural identity. This is evident in their dress, religious beliefs and conduct, and their adherence to traditions and customs. They are very proud of being Emirati and will not tolerate any form of behavior which disrespects their culture and identity. |
| <b>Brad (G3-QR31)</b>  | Yes. It's apparent in what they wear, what music they listen to, what foods they eat, how they interact with others etc. ex. abaya/ kandura,                                                                                                                                                                                     |

classical Arabic music, biryani, better yet, the traditional foods they eat during the various religious holidays. No physical contact between men and women.

**Abigail (G3-QR40)** Sense of being part of a group rather than an individual. Attitudes to study. Sense of entitlement e.g. hard work not connected to success.

It was voiced by some participants that the diverse demographics of the UAE served to create a ‘besieged culture mentality’, similar to French-speaking Quebec, in mainly English-speaking Canada (Joe, Canada, G3-FG2-L758-759), which made Emiratis more protective of traditional culture, serving to strengthen a distinct sense of cultural identity. This can be seen in Rose (UK), Carl (UK) and Richard’s (Ireland) comments.

**Rose (G3-QR2)** They’re living in a multilingual, multicultural society, which perhaps makes their own feeling of cultural identity stronger – a stronger need to reinforce their traditions and customs, to reinforce their cultural identity.

**Carl (G3-QR35)** My students are always speaking about their culture, and the importance of preserving it in the face of what they perceive as an all pervading foreign influence.

**Richard (G3-FG2-L753-756)** I think because they are a minority as well. If you’re a besieged culture you, most of us don’t think about our identity from day to day, we are just who we are. But if you are a minority in your own country of course your cultural identity becomes even stronger because it’s reactive.

#### **6.4.4.2) Outside influences on culture**

Despite the ‘besieged culture mentality’ in some ways serving to strengthen local cultural identity, influences from outside were also discussed at length. These influences included: Western English-speaking culture and global cultures from other Arab nations, India and Korea.

It was agreed that the influence of both English-speaking cultures from the west and other global influences were heavily imbedded in Emirati society. These influences included cityscape, dress, traditions and artifacts, as demonstrated by Graeme (UK), Tabitha (UK), Joe (Canada) and Sebastian's (UK) comments.

- |                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Graeme</b><br><b>(G3- FG1-</b><br><b>L636-642)</b>     | It's very Americanized. Just the whole, I mean look at Dubai, it's a mini New York..... you've got big skyscrapers and here you've got the grid system.... because of highways. Big cars.                                                                                         |
| <b>Tabitha</b><br><b>(G3-FG1-</b><br><b>L650-653)</b>     | But there's lots of influence from Britain here too. From further back, like the design of the buildings, you see some of the villas, they're all very British.                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Joe</b><br><b>(G3-FG2-</b><br><b>L565-569)</b>         | (It) links to the imperial history of British influence in the area, I mean that must continue. Roundabouts, I don't know. No, these are concrete things that are built into the country that link back to an imperial relationship. Anyway, so yes, culture has been influenced. |
| <b>Sebastian (G3-</b><br><b>FG2- L560-</b><br><b>562)</b> | The way they dress, a lot of them who come through, IELTS, come with baseball caps. And you can see their attitudes are completely Westernized, I don't know. And the way they dress and the way they talk to you is definitely influenced by the Western music.                  |
| <b>Joe (G3-FG2-</b><br><b>L556-559)</b>                   | The marching band ..... and there's bagpipes in the Emirati military marching band.                                                                                                                                                                                               |

Joe's (Canada) mention of the obviously British tradition of bagpipes being part of the National Day parades can be seen in Figure 6.5 which shows the 2013 National day event at the university in which the study takes place.



**Figure 6.5: Bagpipes at an Emirati National Day Event, December 2013.**

It was recognized by the expatriate university English teachers that the influence of Western English-speaking culture varied in strength depending on the emirate, with western influence being far more noticeable in cities such as Abu Dhabi and Dubai than, for example, the northern Emirate of Ras Al Khaima (RAK). Richard (Ireland), and James' (Australia) comments sum up the importance of recognizing regional differences in countries, including the UAE.

**Richard (G3-FG2- L595-606)** Well it depends where you are. If you're in Abu Dhabi, the capital, then it's all that you say it is, if you go to Ras Al Khaima (RAK), where I spent twelve and a half years, then there's a lot of mountainy men in mountainy villages who've got no contact whatsoever with English and no interest in English except maybe their son is going to the college or something like that and there's a strong tradition of everything of weddings and language and doing their banking business and everything else in Arabic.

**James (G3-FG2- L607-609)** It's that classic, Sydney is not Australia..... New York is not America.

As was discussed by the Emirati cohort, language planning in the UAE seems to favour the promotion of English over Arabic. On a personal level, the expatriate university English teachers, however, commented on resistance to English and Western culture that they saw in their students, as seen by Tabitha (UK) and Richard's (Ireland) comments.

**Tabitha (G3-FG1- L666-672)** I do (think there is resistance to cultural change) from things that students say for example, 'well, we, in our culture' you know bringing me back on track and reminding me that it's different in their culture or, that's at the forefront of their minds. That's the feeling I have. They are in a group and to that group they have to present a certain face and if they're stepping out of what is the expected norm in front of that group then that's quite a big message or statement.

**Richard (G3-FG2- L704-708)** When this campus opened five or six years ago, I mean I only read about it in the newspaper in the Gulf News, it was originally conceived as a co-educational institute, where there would be free co-educational use of

libraries and facilities, not times for girls and times for men and women and within three weeks that had to change..... Because of public protest.... Really against a new culture they were trying to create here that was different from the other ones.

This resistance to cultural changes was seen as being related to the notion of Emiratis being able to ‘shop in a cultural supermarket’ or being able to select ‘the best of the west’ which was also mentioned by the Emirati cohort. Graeme (UK) and Carl (UK) explain this perception.

**Graeme (G3- FG1-L704-710)** You also can also pick and choose what they decide to assimilate, not just from the American culture, there are a lot of things from the Indian culture that they have assimilated, big time. I mean look at the films and the biryani, the food. The language. I think quite honestly they are quite lucky in that respect, they can say ‘I’ll have a bit of this and a bit of that, I reject that’.

**Carl (G3-QR35)** I think they tend to ‘pick and choose’ in terms of what they take from the ‘foreign culture’. They also have a very negative attitude to what is developing countries’ cultures, and fearful of the influence of these cultures.

Douglas’ (USA) comment supports the notion of the UAE being not only a western-English-speaking cultural supermarket but also a global one.

**Douglas (G3-FG2-L624-641)** Here there has been an explosion of global culture. This could be one of the most globalized places in the world.

#### **6.4.4.3) A generation of non-native speakers**

Similar to the Emirati participant concerns, expatriate university teachers also commented on the effects of English on the Arabic language. Rachel (UK) went so far as to state that there is now ‘a whole generation of non-native speakers’ in the UAE, as she explains in further depth below.

**Rachel**  
(G3- FG1-L324-329) I feel there is a whole generation of non-native speakers in this country now. I mean they're not fluent in either language and I think that's such a danger...and it has real implications academically because it's really bad for you, I mean how do you come across to people if you can't communicate effectively in either one of your languages.

Tabitha (UK) and Youseff (Tunisia) also question Emiratis' Arabic proficiency.

**Tabitha**  
(G3-FG1-L345-348) Arabic-speaking kids are growing up speaking an English of its own which probably has lots of Arabic words in it. Maybe there's going to be a complete mix like in countries like Kenya where people don't speak either Swahili or English. They are constantly switching.

**Youseff (G3-QR6)** Yes, especially boys. I heard them complaining so many times about the necessity of being good at English in order to do well in schools. English has put off so many of my Emirati students from pursuing their studies. Most Emirati students are not good at Arabic either (so I don't know who is to blame?). The impact is huge as creativity and research is very challenging in a foreign language.

On the other hand, Joe (Canada) and Sebastian (UK) commented on bilingualism and fluent code-switching being a source of pride, which is fast becoming part of a new Emirati cultural identity.

**Joe**  
(G3- FG2 – L294-302) I've noticed the code-switching for educated people is there. I remember one thing. I was at a coffee shop, a Tim Horton's, a Canadian restaurant, (group laughs) anyway, I only mention that because perhaps the people were there because it was Western, I don't know, but anyway, I think they were students, young females and they were switching between Arabic and English (clicks fingers three times) fluently and it seemed, I didn't understand what they were saying in Arabic but I wondered why they switched. Did they switch for certain topics or why did they switch? But it

was very bilingual. They could easily communicate with each other in both languages and chose in the course of one dialogue to use both languages.

**Sebastian**  
**(G3- FG2- L273-282)** Often, you'll be walking along and there are these two Arabic people speaking and they'll often go into English when I'm walking past or, and even yesterday we were in the supermarket, we were in the front entertainment section in the mall and this Arabic woman was with her kid and I was with mine and she was desperate to show that she knows English. And I thought there's definitely something there, she doesn't need to use English. She's not using it to communicate, she's trying to show that 'I can use English as well'.

Rachel (UK) commented that although students at the university are often aware of their low Arabic proficiency, there is a reluctance to address this issue. She made reference to the posters around campus reading 'Meet the mother language, Arabic', as shown in Chapter 2 (Figure 2.4). She explained how these posters demonstrated an awareness that Arabic needs to be preserved but in reality English is often the primary focus.

**Rachel**  
**(G3-FG1- L304-311)** These posters are up all over campus now, aren't they? Saying 'preserve your first language, preserve Arabic. Arabic is endangered'. They (my students) were saying 'yes, yes', a couple of people were saying, 'Yes. Yes. We do need to work harder'. But so many students on this campus don't. We hear them in the coffee shops, they're speaking English to each other out of choice.

#### **6.4.4.4) Modern cultural identity: different but no less Emirati**

Recognised as complex, it was commented on frequently by the expatriate university teachers that Emirati cultural identity is transitioning into a mix of traditional and modern. Money, status and work ethic were mentioned as areas that affected modern Emirati cultural identity, as seen by Grant (UK) and James' (Australia) comments.

**Grant (G3-QR19)** Yes. Very proud of their country. Love of their leaders – flag. Their cultural identity is a mixture of folk culture – their traditions, religion but also modern popular culture – shops, brands, malls, cars, etc. Having money – in contrast to people who live here and don't have money – Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Filipinos etc.

**(James, Australia, FG2, L738-743)** (They are) no less Emirati but new young Emiratis. 'We do speak English and we do use Instagram.... and women are starting to drive cars and that's because that's what we're making our country'. I think there is a real sense of 'we are really proud of Sheik Zayed and the opportunities that he gave us' and I think that they are really kind of thrilled in a way, certainly the ones we teach anyway, are excited about the country and what they are becoming. They are very proud of themselves.

The UAE was seen as 'forward-looking' and in many ways embracing some cultural changes in terms of greater freedom, work opportunities and new ways of behaving. This can be seen in Graeme (UK), Richard (Ireland), James (Australia) and Yonka's (Turkey) comments.

**Graeme (G3-FG1-L784-786)** Tradition is starting to change because as we say, this is a country that wants to, it's very forward looking

**Richard (G3- FG2-L689-693)** Here they are pretty much open to, there are eighteen year old girls getting a driver's license, being independent, making their own choices about all kinds of things they never made before like a husband sometimes, you know, when they tell you stories about what their engagement party was like you know, choices they were allowed to make, I think those things are changing quite a lot.

**James (G3- FG2-L694-696)** In the three years I've been here, I've got five girls in my class who are all thinking of getting a summer job because evidently you can do volunteer work in hospitals during the summer.

**Yonka (G3- FG1, L789-793)** When you want to, when we go to weddings I feel like, it's just like that white (wedding) the way it's done, not at all Emirati but it is Emirati. So to us there's an Emirati wedding dress and.....But it's not theirs. For some, their parents or grandparents never got married that way.



The mix of old and new can be seen through traditional practices being continued through new mediums (technology and transport) as commented on by Richard (Ireland) and Rachel (UK).

**(Richard, G2-FG2, L760-769)** I remember driving back late at night from Ras Al Khaima to Abu Dhabi and on the side of the road, on the Emirates road which is very deserty up around there you know there's miles and miles of absolutely nothing except sand. These guys had driven out on their Nisan Patrols or whatever, their huge big cars, you know, and they'd parked them on the side of the road, built a fire and were sitting around doing things that probably their grandfathers had done. I mean they had arrived there in a completely different way and they were dressed in a completely different way but they were still like dudes their age in another country and they all had coffee pots by the way. Not whiskey, not beer, not wine. They weren't getting plastered out of their mind in the city center on a Saturday night. They were doing things culturally right.

**Rachel (G3- FG1-L673-681)** When you look at what they (students) are posting (on Snapchat), they're things that celebrate their culture. It's campfires in the desert with the relatives. It's like, I don't know, it's a bit of a cliché but a hennaed hand. But it is that kind of thing, yes there might be a Starbucks coffee in there but it's their daily experiences and often that's very reflective of Emirati culture, I think. If you look at that.

#### **6.4.4.5) Superficial and manufactured cultural identity**

Although some expatriate university English teachers felt a move towards a new modern Emirati cultural identity was organic and positive, others commented on modern Emirati cultural identity being 'manufactured' and 'superficial' going so far as to describe Emirati students as 'culturally adrift' and 'tourists in their own culture'. Simon (USA) and Heidi (Australia) comment on the superficiality or thinness associated with local cultural identity.

**Simon (G3-QR25)** Compared to other nationalities that I've taught, Emirati cultural identity seems to be extraordinarily thin. They have very little connection to their

past. Beyond a few generic cultural symbols, Emiratis seems culturally adrift.

**Heidi (G3-QR38)** No, they don't. They have a very superficial idea of what their cultural identity is. They have no in depth understanding of their (oh so short) history and they certainly don't understand how their cultural values are manipulated.

Duncan (USA), Trevor (UK), and Sebastian's (UK) comments explain a perception of manufactured cultural identity.

**Duncan (G3-QR4)** The government does a good job of trying to give students information about their culture through museums, TV programs, events, etc. but most of the students here do not seem to have any direct connection to their past beyond the last 30 years or so.

**Trevor (G3-QR13)** No. They have a very strong social religious identity but to some extent they are as much tourists in their own culture as we are as it is being manufactured for them.

**Sebastian (FG2-L657-658)** They always promote it (Emirati culture) don't they, you know the rich Emirati culture, don't they, but I'm not that convinced by the region.

#### **6.4.4.6) Conflicting cultural identities**

Finally, the expatriate university English teachers commented on a perceived 'conflict of desires' as mentioned in Chapter 2. In this sense, they observed students embracing and rejecting English at the same time, being torn between different directions. This is indicated by Abdulla (Canada) and Jim's (USA) comments.

**Abdulla (G3-QR21)** I think they believe they do (have a strong cultural identity), but in fact I think most of them don't. They often confuse religion with culture. When I ask for their favourite traditional food, for example, I often get 'Biriyani' (Indian dish) as the answer. As such a young country, so close

in location to other Gulf states, yet so radically different in some ways (e.g. women's rights), as well as being a nationality in their own country, I think it's very hard to have a strong cultural identity.

**Jim (G3-QR36)** Yes, I think they do (have strong cultural identity) – but it is getting harder. An example of how it's getting harder is that younger brothers and sisters want to go to the movies and eat KFC on Fridays – not sit around with the family.

It was also remarked upon that mixed messages were given regarding how much cultural change was acceptable, leading to confusion and uncertainty about which path to take as demonstrated by Lisa (New Zealand), Zoe (USA) and Rachel's (UK) comments.

**Lisa (G3-QR16)** Very much so, but it's in transition. The cultural identity here is inextricably linked to religion, tribe and family, which are strong factors that are not changing so much. However, they are being pulled two ways now with the ever-increasing exposure to western ideals through media and the Internet.

**Zoe (G3-QR17)** Yes, they seem very proud of their culture and religion. Most wear traditional dress, they are respectful of their leaders and their history. However, some of them are blending their culture with modern global culture. They like western movies (and Korean) and buy Western clothes to wear under their abayas.

**Rachel (G3-FG1-L748-783)** Identity is always shifting and I think at this moment, this is the big issue for Emiratis, that identities are shifting and changing and moving and I think quite a few of them probably do feel insecure because I think they think how can I be modern and progressive and educated and, you know, a high achiever and keep my identity but at the same time embrace what is new and at the same time balance and juggle and I think particularly for girls.

Rachel (UK) went on to give a personal example of a student experiencing mixed messages and feeling torn between tradition and modernity.

**Rachel (G3-FG1- L555-564)** Yesterday, I had a student come to see me who was very very strong, really good, you know, really really motivated, brilliant student and you know she's doing, I don't know, some essay about how inspiring Sheikha Lubna is comparing her to someone else. Sheikha Lubna's followed Sheikh Zayed's footsteps, get women out there, get them in education, get them in the workplace, move the country forward, women are the future of the UAE. She's got her ambition. Dad has said, you will never work in a mixed environment. You know, and it's like, here she is bright, brainy, the future of her country. I think this is a real issue in Emirati society, there are so many families that are mixed. And there's this whole sort of issue around how open and mixed can we publically be or do we need to just kind of really toe the line and conform. And be very sort of I don't know, publically Emirati.

In addition to Rachel's comment above, further examples of conflicting cultural identities were given by Tabitha (UK) and Bella (USA), in relation to the increase of mixed-nationality families.

**Bella (G3-QR3)** They (Emirati students) identify with the local culture, but some of them also have non-local mothers or grandparents or their family has only gotten local citizenship from being here in the last 50 or so years. Often this non-local side is ignored, at least publicly, but sometimes not.

**Tabitha (G3-FG1, - L580-587)** (When I first started teaching at the university), you had to have an Emirati father in order to study at the university, which means you're Emirati. I remember when that came in. There were mums, mumeratis they called them, they started accepting, must have been in 2010 or something, they started accepting Emirati students who weren't really Emirati but their mother was Emirati. There's a taboo around that because I've noticed for IELTS they have to say their student number and some of them when it's M (Students with a foreign father have ID numbers starting with 'M') they go a bit - they don't want to share. I've got one in my class, he's Yemeni and he never, he doesn't mix with the other guys and he's very kind of, 'you don't talk about that', being Yemeni.

## 6.5) Future developments of English teaching in the UAE

The final section of the questionnaire and focus group aimed to determine thoughts and perspectives on English education in the UAE and preferences for future development. Issues such as the preferred nationality of English teachers, the content of English courses and the most desirable medium of instruction for university education were explored.

### 6.5.1) English teacher nationality

The Emirati cohort (Group 1 and 2) were asked in the questionnaire if they had preferences regarding the nationality of their English teachers (Part 4, Question 1). Participants were given a choice from a range of nationalities, including English native-speaker nationalities, their own nationality, other Arabic-speaking nationalities and other European and Asian nations. There was also a space for students to include other choices. Table 6.10 shows preferences for various nationalities.

**Table 6.10: Emirati preferences for the nationality of English teachers**

Nationality	Group 1 %	Group 2 %	Combined Group 1 & 2 %
USA	78	42	74
UK	74	50	71
Canada	62	58	62
Australia	40	25	38
UAE	38	33	37.5
Germany	24	0	21
China	4	0	4
India	2	0	2
Egypt	2	0	2
<b>Other answers:</b> Group 1 -Russia, South Africa, anywhere, Africa (6%), Group 2 -In general any person who has English as a second language (8%)			

As can be seen in Table 6.10, there was a strong preference for English native-speaker teachers especially from the BANA countries UK, USA, Canada and Australia. Interestingly enough, the fifth most popular choice was Emirati teachers. German teachers came next with India, China and Egypt being relative unpopular choices. In

the focus group, students were asked the same question. With similar preferences emerging, the students were able to elaborate on reasons for these choices. The following two sections show the reasons for certain preferences regarding the preferred nationality of English teachers.

#### **6.5.1.1) Emirati preference for NS English teachers**

Similar to the questionnaire data, the majority of focus group participants preferred native-speaker teachers. They started by giving firm but general responses such as, ‘For me only UK or USA’ (Fahad, G1-FG3- L477). When probed for reasons, the most popular responses centered around the belief that NS teachers have the ‘original language’ and the ‘right accent’, as seen in comments from primary school teacher Salwa and university student Reem.

**Salwa (G2-FG1-L415-416)** Most of foreign people in our school now are from Canada and British. They are the most perfect English teacher because they talk the original language.

**Reem (G1- FG1, L217)** It should be original English you know

In the questionnaire responses, participants particularly commented on wanting their teachers to have a British accent, and wanting to speak with a British accent themselves.

**Alyaziah (G1-QR28)** Especially British. I love to learn British accent.

**Bushra (G1-QR12)** It will help me in my future. I prefer to study by British teacher because I like their accent.

**Amira (G1-QR38)** I’ve been going to other courses for British accent.

**Arwa (G1-QR67)** I love the way how British talk <3 <3! \*

The focus group participants were most animated when discussing what they did not want in an English teacher, namely a teacher with a non-native accent. It was voiced that non-native speaker teachers, especially from India, Egypt and China, were undesirable due to accent, mainly. Problems with Arabic-speaking teachers were that they would be tempted to use Arabic more than English and would not be challenged enough. This can be seen in Shaikha, Tahani, Nejood, Nadia, Omar, Fahad, Abdul and Reem's comments.

- |                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Shaikha (G2-FG1-L417-419)</b>                      | Other teachers from Africa or India, I think they have the language better than us but not like the original so the students will learn more better from the British and Canadian, better than African people.                                                                              |
| <b>Tahani, Nejood &amp; Nadia (G1- FG2- L528-530)</b> | <p><b>Tahani:</b> They (non-native-speaker teachers) will not speak English well</p> <p><b>Nejood:</b> The accent</p> <p><b>Nadia:</b> For example from India, no not India, oh my God.</p>                                                                                                 |
| <b>Omar, Fahad &amp; Abdul (G1-FG3-L498-501)</b>      | <p><b>Omar:</b> If you bring in an Indian guy or even an Egyptian...</p> <p><b>Fahad:</b> You can understand more from the American, not from the....</p> <p><b>Abdul:</b> For example some Egyptian guys say instead of 'the', 'ze'. So when it is in you mind it's all 'ze' not 'the'</p> |
| <b>Nejood (G1-FG2-L536-539)</b>                       | <p><b>Nejood:</b> And if they are from Chinese, they eat some letters.</p> <p><b>Group:</b> (Lots of laughter)</p> <p><b>Translator:</b> That's a direct translation</p> <p><b>Group:</b> (extended laughter)</p>                                                                           |
| <b>(Reem, FG1, L220-224)</b>                          | Because maybe if it's from China the accent will be difficult for us to understand and also if she is Arabic maybe sometimes she will talk Arabic with us and we will talk also Arabic, you know. And we should speak English. No Arabic.                                                   |

Race was not mentioned as a factor when it came to preferences for English teacher nationality amongst the Emirati cohort. However, the fact that there was a far stronger preference for teachers from Germany than other NNS countries such as India, Egypt and China, indicated perhaps an association made between ‘whiteness’ and English. Without probing further, however, one cannot be sure this was the case. From the perspective of the expatriate English teachers, however, English tended to be strongly connected to a certain ‘image’ which includes being Caucasian. For example, Joe (Canada) commented on how when teaching in Asia he and his Canadian wife, who is of African descent, were treated very differently in their role as English teachers due to race.

<b>Joe</b> <b>(G3-FG2-</b> <b>L102-115)</b>	In Asia, I thought in particular there was, English was American and English was seen as white and male and... and my wife who was also born in Canada and went to high school in the States. Not white, not male. Their perception of her as a conduit of English.... We have the exact same background. We just have different genetics. I think they considered my language better. No, they preferred me as a teacher because I was white and because I was male.
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Tabitha (UK) and Anna (USA) shared similar experiences in the UAE and Asia.

<b>Tabitha</b> <b>(G3-FG1-</b> <b>L67-72)</b>	I had a similar situation where there was a Nigerian lady who trained on the CELTA at the Council when she was with us and then when she started teaching, the students were up in arms. Because A) she’s black and B) she’s not British, her accent is not British. Or not American or whatever.
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<b>Anna</b> <b>(G3-FG1-</b> <b>L80-82)</b>	In Korea, they would complain, you know there were a lot of complaints if you weren’t from the United States, Australia or the UK and you didn’t look the part.
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The preference for native-speaker accents voiced in the Emirati focus groups and questionnaires was also discussed by the expatriate university English teachers. Tabitha (UK) and Anna (USA) comments support this notion, as based on observations, often Emirati students particularly aspire to acquire American or British accents.



**Tabitha (G3-FG1-L126-128)** Even the young people, nowadays, suddenly sounding very old (laughs), teenagers when they speak English, like our students do sometimes, they interrupt in English or kids from international schools or stuff, they sound quite American, don't they?

**Anna (G3-FG1-L138-141)** Interesting, when I go to Starbucks sometimes and I listen to some students, students we don't see but students in the majors and I'll think, oh she sounds American or I'll think, oh, she has a British accent when they are talking kind of fluently actually, with each other, so it's sometimes kind of hard to pinpoint.

### **6.5.1.2) Benefits of Arabic-speaking English teachers**

Although only a minority of Emirati participants stated a preference for Arabic-speaking English teachers in the questionnaires, when asked about the benefits of Arabic-speaking English teachers during the focus groups, the participants were able to provide numerous strengths including better understanding, and cultural awareness, as demonstrated by Alya, Omar and Reem's comments.

**Alya (G1-FG1-L242)** Maybe if I have something difficult, she will help me with Arabic language.

**Omar (G1-FG3-L472-473)** If there's a word I didn't understand, he can translate for me in Arabic, so I can understand better.

**Reem (G1-FG1-L244-245)** Also, she know my culture and can I act. Maybe she will, if I make something wrong she will forget but if another, I should explain.

The Emirati primary school teachers had high expectations for the next generation of Emirati teachers. It was hoped that future Emirati teachers would have excellent English, presumably due to the NSM running its course, thus being able to replace expatriate native-speaker English teachers. Lubna's comment demonstrates this view.

**Lubna (G2- FG1-L420-430)** I think also our generation depends on the new generation. The new generation is fluent talking in English and excellent and everything, and academic words they have it already. I think most of Emiratis, the new generation, their goals or objectives are more than bachelors. It's in Masters also and PhD at the moment so I think they have a confidence to teach English in the future more than us as we are not established in a new technology and new media so they contact easily in English. The accent they have everything that qualify them to teach English in the future. Because actually, you don't need the accent, why I need the American accent or the English accent, just I need the language to communicate.

A further group discussion between primary teachers Anood, Lubna, Khadija, Salwa and Oshba (G2-FG1, L467-490) also concluded that Emirati teachers would be the most desirable due to greater cultural understanding and their ability to act as role models for the students.

**Anood:** At least we can save our culture. Just we can get the language. If it is an Emirati teacher, the students will err....

**Lubna:** She's attractive for the students.

**Khadija:** Not only the culture, the subject itself.

**Researcher:** Do you think she'd be a role model?

**Oshba:** A role model

**Khadija:** But we don't have too much.

**Lubna:** I have an Emirati English teacher in my friend's school, all of the teachers are from foreign countries. Just one Emirati, she teaching maths, English and science. She's a role model for Emirati teachers, teaching English and teaching math and science also. For example, when the visitors come to the school, the principle is American she takes the visitors to this class because it's a model class. It's showing the school as a model school. When you saw other classes it's just foreign people teaching English.

**Khadija:** Exactly

**Salwa:** They didn't have the teaching techniques. They have the language.

**Oshba:** We're talking about the teacher who present as I said the Holy Quran, the culture, as I said the language is okay. So, it's not only a person or a device

or the medium to talk in English it's a whole person itself so I prefer to be totally Emirati.

**Researcher:** Umhum. In the future, that is the goal?

**Group:** Yes.

From the questionnaire responses (Table 6.10), it is clear that the native-speaker fallacy is thriving in the UAE. However, from the primary school teacher focus groups, future goals seem to be focused on moving away from this, with the hiring of bilingual Emirati English teachers.

### 6.5.1.3) The effects of nationality on teaching experience

The expatriate university English teachers were also asked to discuss teacher nationality. Specifically, they were asked to comment on whether their nationality had been an advantage or disadvantage when teaching Emirati students. As can be seen from Table 6.11, the majority of NS teachers (62.5%) commented on the advantages they had experienced. A minority of NS teachers (27.5%) commented on negative aspects such as being an outsider and being monolingual / a non-Arabic speaker. A sizable portion (42.5%) of participants felt nationality was not important to their teaching experiences in the UAE. Non-native speaker teachers (only 3 questionnaire respondents) commented on the positive aspects of being bilingual/bicultural. The following sections will explore these perspectives in the words of the participants.

**Table 6.11: Group 3 participants' perspectives on whether their nationality had been an advantage or disadvantage in the classroom**

Theme	Expatriate university teachers
<b>NS Advantage</b>	62.5
Viewed as a NS expert	25
High esteem for Westerners	15
Outside perspective (more to share)	12.5
NS accents	7.5
Strong role model	2.5
<b>NS Disadvantage</b>	27.5
Students may prefer Arabic-speaking teacher	17.5
Feel like an 'outsider'	10
<b>NS neither advantage nor disadvantage</b>	42.5
No influence	27.5
Both	15

Personality is more important	2.5
<b>NNS Advantage</b>	<b>7.5</b>
Teacher must be bilingual	2.5
Have learned the language	2.5
Have mixed culture	2.5

#### 6.5.1.3.1) Positive NS teacher experiences

The most common benefit of the NS experience commented on was the respect students appear to have for NS knowledge of the language. Russell (Australia), Henry (USA), Mary (New Zealand) and Grace's (UK) comments demonstrate this.

- Russell (G3-QR10)** As a native speaker, I have the advantage of being / appearing an expert.
- Henry (G3-QR11)** I think it has been an advantage. Emirati students seem to respect and listen and want to learn from American or Western English speaking teachers in general.
- Mary (G3-QR18)** Advantage as a representative culture for English-speakers and therefore with some 'authority' when it comes to language teaching.
- Grace (G3-QR28)** Students respect my knowledge of grammar and pronunciation.

Having an BANA accent was also seen as being an advantage by the native-speaker teachers. This was something they were told often by students, as reflected in Ronald (USA) and Carl's (UK) comments.

- Ronald (G3-QR14)** Most Emiratis seem to prefer either UK or US styles of English. Those who are more relaxed seem to prefer American or Canadian in my opinion. Those from higher "Wasta" seem to prefer UK.

**Carl (G3-QR35)** I think it has been an advantage in terms of how we are perceived by Emirati students. It is the one field in which they feel Emiratisation would not work! They want to have native English teachers teaching them, and many young Emiratis students have often mentioned the value of acquiring a British/ USA etc. like accent.

The perceptions made above were supported by the findings from the Emirati cohort. The expatriate teachers were also aware of the students' attitudes towards NNS teachers. Joe's experience supports the findings from the Emirati focus groups, where often non-native-speaker accents are ridiculed openly, in sharp contrast to the desirable British and North American accents.

**Joe (G3-FG2-L952-958)** There was this video my students **loved** to show me of an Egyptian teaching English and they thought it was hilarious and they were making fun of the Egyptian English accent and I think it was supposed to be in Saudi, it was a cartoon and they thought it was absolutely hilarious. Teacher, teacher look and basically the gag was how these Egyptian English teachers are terrible because they have this particular accent and students thought it was funny. So there is a perception among students that the accent matters.

In contrast to the Emirati school teachers' comments regarding Emirati English teachers being the best role models for students, the expatriate university teachers felt Emirati students preferred to have teachers from outside the region due to exposure to an outside perspective and high esteem for Westerners.

**Joanna (G3-QR22)** I think it's good for them to have daily positive interaction with people outside their culture and I am a good role model. I think it's good for them to see an American who isn't racist, intolerant, or completely wild with no common value system.

**Anthony (G3-QR27)** Being English has a cultural identity that is considered more worthy of respect (in the UAE) than some other Asian nationalities. So, yes, it is an advantage here as it is in other countries.

**Jim (G3-QR36)** I think Emiratis, especially boys, like American things, cars, movies, food – many travel there – advantage!

Several teachers spoke of the presence of the native speaker fallacy, where native speakers are automatically seen as better language teachers. This was seen as very much ‘in their heads’ and difficult to shift. Yonka (Turkey) and Tabitha (UK) stated this was strengthened by unfavourable images of local teachers, whose manner was strict and teaching methods old fashioned.

**Sebastian (G3-FG2-L894)** If they have choices (NS vs NNS teachers), they will choose those (NS teachers) because it’s in their heads

**Yonka & Tabitha (G3-FG1-L856-864)**

**Yonka:** I would love to work with an Emirati who teaches English.

**Tabitha:** But Emirati teachers here are...I remember a colleague telling me about one whose in the Colloquy, you know, English department and the students don’t like her. They don’t want to be taught by an Emirati.

**Yonka:** It’s again another association of Emirati teachers having a stick in their hands and you know, their understanding of Emirati teachers is different.

Not only did the native-speaker teachers feel favoured in terms of student preferences, which is supported by the Emirati cohort data (Section 6.5.1.), they also recognized a larger favouritism in place with regard to hiring practices and society at large. Trevor (UK) went so far as to say being a native-speaker was not just an advantage in the region, it was ‘a prerequisite’ (G3-QR13). Joe acknowledged the fact those in education know the merits of bilingual language teachers but ‘institutionally at a macro level there is still a preference for Western’ (Joe, Canada, G3-FG2-L883-885). He goes on to give the example of the unjust mass replacement of regional teachers with Western native-

speaker teachers in 2010 accompanying the implementation of the NSM (as explained in Chapter 2). Richard agreed with the injustice of the native speaker fallacy.

**Joe (G3-FG2-L799-813)** I think that (Western NS teacher favouritism) is salient here and I think I can point to an actual institutional national policy which came in since I came here. A lot of the Egyptian and other Arab teachers who were teaching English in the public schools in about 2010/2011 were, their contacts weren't renewed and ADEC started bringing Western teachers over, and this was part of the New School Model of having the bilingual education but there's no reason why it couldn't have been bilingual education with other teachers from the region. In many ways the teachers from the region were English second language teachers and were much more equipped to teach in this context than the Western teachers they brought over who were Western, who were trained to teach in a single-language native speaker children, who were brought over here to teach English to second language learners but they're not as equipped. I think there was a perception in the government that was brought into effect that teachers from Canada, US, UK, Australia, New Zealand....Ireland, umm, were better teachers by virtue of their nationality.

**Richard & Joe (G3-FG2-L917-924)** **Richard:** But that's just administrators (making decisions to hire Western teachers). They've got no concept of education

**Joe:** Yes

**Richard:** And they are in charge of managing a university but it could have been a company of any other kind as well so they're not making pedagogical decisions anyway

**Joe:** That's right. Because they are making these broad choices they are making very simplistic distinctions, we want Western teachers not Arabic speaking teachers.

### 6.5.1.3.2) Negative NS teacher experiences

Far fewer university teachers commented on the negative aspects of being an English native-speaker teacher in the UAE. These negative aspects included lack of Arabic as demonstrated by Russell (Australia) and Joanna's (USA) comments.

**Russell (G3-QR10)** This (being a non-Arabic speaker) limits my ability to explain things at times.

**Joanna (G3-QR22)** Not knowing much Arabic makes me a bit less effective when teaching to a class who all share the same L1.

Negative experiences also included feelings of being an ‘outsider’ or ‘just the hired help’, and there being an ‘us and them’ feeling culturally. This can be seen in Mary (Australia), Vincent (UK) and Lisa’s (New Zealand) comments.

**Mary (G3-QR18)** (I feel) disadvantaged as a non-Arabic ‘outsider’ who is less accepted, doesn’t belong and hasn’t a real stake in this country: just the ‘hired help.’

**Vincent (G3-QR26)** When I teach female students I often feel there is a ‘him and us’ feeling in the class, a wall between the students and me. I think a female native Arabic speaker, preferably Emirati, would be able to get closer to the students than I can.

**Lisa (G3-QR16)** Sometimes a distinct disadvantage. Not knowing their culture means I have made plenty of gaffes, and assumed things that might be true in my culture that are not actually true here.

Even as a non-native-speaker Muslim, Yonka (Turkey) comments on the cultural gap experienced between herself and her Emirati students.

**Yonka (G3-FG1-L812-814)** I’m a Turk and Muslim, married to a ‘halalajjd’, which is a foreigner, a Christian. I’m not wearing a shacla (head covering) so therefore.....they are very sad for me

On the other hand a minority of teachers commented that the fact Emiratis are surrounded by foreigners in daily life meant the ‘outsider/insider’ divide was far less noticeable in their view, as seen by Wendy’s (USA) comment.



**Wendy (G3-QR7)** In some ways, it's an advantage. In other ways, it's neutral because our students are used to foreigners being a part of every aspect of their lives.

Finally, some were keen to point out that teaching was more important than nationality, as seen by Alina's (UK) comment.

**Alina (G3-QR30)** I don't think that my nationality has particularly been an advantage. I think Emirati students attach more importance to a teacher's personality, enthusiasm, and ability to build a positive learning environment.

### **6.5.1.3.3) NNS teacher experiences**

As recognized in the focus group discussions noted earlier, being successful language learners and being bilingual (especially English-Arabic) were the most commented on advantages for non-native speaking teachers as seen by Maria (Romania), Youseff (Tunisa) and Christina's (Mexico) comments. This was also supported by the Emirati data as seen in Section 6.5.1.2.

**Maria (G3-QR1)** Being from a culture at the border between the West and the East has worked to my own advantage. A strong European education, knowledge of English and a semi Balkan (Eastern) cultural background helps me act as a bridge between the subject and the Emirati students. I can empathize with them to a point and this helps me lead them (or most of them) through the learning labyrinth.

**Youseff (G3-QR6)** I think being a native-speaker of Arabic can help teach certain things better. I think a language teacher **MUST** be bilingual.

**Christina (G3-FG2- L856-874)** For my students, what really helps me is the fact that I'm a non-native speaker. Because students can relate. I always tell them how I learnt English, how hard it was for me. How I had to be like them in the classroom with the teacher trying to learn, how it was

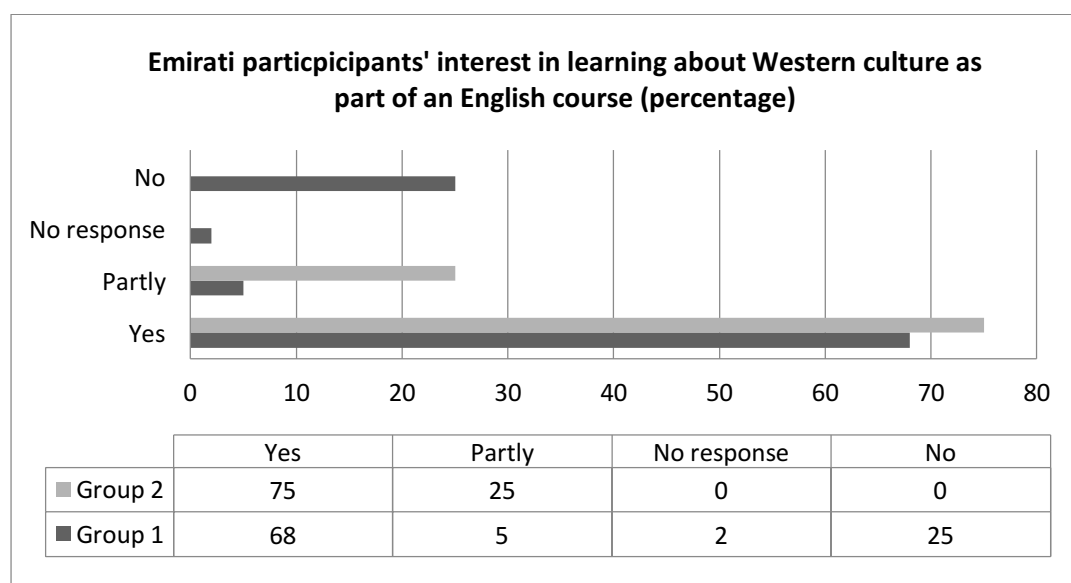
imposed somehow onto me because there was no choice, I mean I had to study it.

## 6.5.2) Cultural content of English courses

After having discussed views on English teacher nationality, both Emirati and expatriate cohorts were asked to comment on preferences concerning the cultural content of English lessons. The Emirati university students and Emirati primary school teachers were first asked about their interest in learning about Western culture as part of an English course. The expatriate university teachers were also asked about their perceptions of students' interest in Western culture. Participants were also asked to comment on preferences regarding local and global topics as part of English courses.

### 6.5.2.1) Emirati interest in Western culture as part of an English course

When asked if they were interested in learning about Western culture as part of an English course, the vast majority of Emirati participants stated that they were interested or partly interested, as can be seen in Figure 6.6.



**Figure 6.6.** Emirati cohort's interest in learning about Western culture as part of an English course.

### 6.5.2.1.1) Respect and choice

Being generally interested in new cultures/traditions/world history etc., wanting to know how best to deal with Westerners, and improving themselves in terms of gaining extra knowledge and ideas to help their country were the most common reasons for being interested in Western culture as part of an English course. These reasons can be seen in the participants' own words through Naeema, Shamma and Hafsa's responses.

**Naeema (G2-QR12)** It will help me to interpret their action, life style and it will help me to put a frame for their culture.

**Shamma (G1-QR17)** When you know their culture, you know how to deal with them.

**Hafsa (G1-QR20)** Why not? It's interesting! Because I want to know more about how they think.

Other participants felt it was primarily important to show an interest in Western culture or the culture of their teacher in order to be respectful and make their teacher feel happy, as seen by Reem's comment.

**Reem (G1-FG1-L257)** They will be happy also, and if they are happy, I will be happy for them

Other participants were keen to point out that they were happy to learn about Western culture if this were a choice, but not by force, as demonstrated by Tahani and Sultan's comments.

**Hamda & Tahani (G1-FG2-L574-578)**

**Hamda:** We have to respect them

**Tahani:** Just respect them and they have to respect us (laughter). It's all about the respect

**Hamda:** We have Eid, Al Adha, they have to respect us and we have to respect them, to respect what they have

**Tahani:** Their culture, but not by force

**Sultan (G1-QR81)** It's okay for me but I prefer to make choice so if I want to learn about British or American culture, better give students choice if we like we will learn, if not, so we have a choice.

Masood also commented that learning about culture should not be one-sided but rather reciprocal.

**Masood (G1-QR100)** It's better if they (expatriate teachers) also learn the Arabic language.

#### **6.5.2.1.2) Intercultural pragmatics**

The Emirati primary school teachers discussed the importance of intercultural pragmatics when learning a language, which refers to, the way language is used in social encounters between people with different first languages who communicate in a common language, and usually represent different cultures (Kecskes, 2014, p. 15). It was deemed important by group members to understand English native-speaker culture in order to show respect and understanding to cultural differences. Lamya and Rawda give examples.

**Lamya (G2-FG2-L252-256)** Respect, for example. How they show respect, for example. What specific phrases to use. For example, if I have to write a formal letter, for example apologize, we have to know what words they use. Maybe if I translate it from my own language word by word, it will be incorrect but if I know what they say and what's the proper way of saying or apologizing or saying thank you for example, that would help me

**Rawda (G2-FG2-L265-273)** Like we cannot to travel without a male, like a father or a brother or a husband. If you are a Western woman she can go anywhere by herself. They are more open than us. They can sit with a big group of males but in our culture we cannot.....In her culture that's fine but in my country it's not appropriate so my way of seeing her will not be negative, I will

respect what she is doing and know that in her society that's fine, so it will be fine.

#### **6.5.2.2) Expatriate teachers' perception of students' interest in Western culture**

In contrast to the findings shown in Figure 6.6, the majority of expatriate university English teachers felt their students were decidedly uninterested in learning about Western culture as part of an English course. This was discussed in the focus group sessions, as seen by James (Australia) and Sebastian (UK) comments.

**James (G3-FG2-L1015-1019)**      **Researcher:** Do you find that students are interested in your culture or your country voluntarily?

**James:** Wow, no, no, no.

**Sebastian (G3-L1061-1062)**      Not really, I think, I imagine, I'm probably wrong but I always imagine that there's some pressure, that they don't want to talk about some religious events.

#### **6.5.2.2.1) Polite interest**

If interest was perceived, it was viewed as 'polite interest' which was more of a 'nicety' rather than genuine interest. James (Australia) and Sebastian's (UK) comments reflect this view.

**James (G3-FG2-L1054-1061)**      I think they need to be quite prompted in some respects. I have no problem talking about religion or anything in my classes to be honest with you. But they won't off their own bat.

**Sebastian (G3-FG2-L1079-1083)**      I think some of the nice students I have might say, 'have a nice Christmas' as they are going out of the room but it's not like they are saying 'oooo what are you going to do', it's like they want to say it, they want you to have a nice time. It's not like they want to know exactly what I'm doing because I'll say to them, 'Eid Mubarak' and stuff like that. So maybe, you know it's an extension.

#### 6.5.2.2.2) Interest in the negatives

Rather than showing curiosity about holidays, focus group members Joe (Canada), Sebastian (UK), Christina (Mexico), Richard (Ireland) and Graeme (UK) discuss personal accounts of students showing curiosity about the negative and controversial cultural topics, or ‘the decadence’ (James, FG2, L1036) of Western culture. For example, Joe spoke of Emirati high school students he taught previously asking about drug addiction and Christina (Mexico) commented on students’ curiosity regarding ‘Day of the Dead’.

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|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Joe (G3-FG2-L1037-1045)</b>       | Yeah, it’s the negatives of Western culture which they were curious about. They asked about drug use which they’d seen in movies in the West and I don’t know, they don’t understand the difference between socioeconomic classes and all that kind of stuff. So, there’re like ‘ohh, yeah’, so they’ve asked me about those kinds of things.                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Christina (G3-FG2-L1046-1053)</b> | Recently I think because of this movie, I don’t know if any of you have seen it, about the ‘Day of the Dead’. The Book of Life or something like that. So, some students watched it, so they asked me about it to tell them and I was reluctant because it’s all about religion here but I started telling them, you know this is what people in Mexico believe, this is totally different so I’ll tell you, and I told the whole class and they were quite interested but they asked me because they had watched this movie. |

Sebastian pointed out that although students may appear uninterested in Western culture, in general, if the topic has to do with the teacher’s specific experience, interest is higher. He gave a personal account of such an instance.

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| <b>Sebastian (G3-FG2-L838-836)</b> | Suicide came up once and there’s a place where I’m from in Eastbourne where basically, Bidgy Head, a lot of people jump off. And the word just happened to come up and I said well this is where I’m from and they were really interested in it and I don’t know, it wasn’t so much that it was that it was England, I think it was the concept at the time and because it relates to <b>me</b> as well. |
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### 6.5.2.2.3) Interest in other less threatening cultures

Some Emirati students stated a preference for learning about Korean or Chinese culture over British or American. As was mentioned in Chapter 1, the current trend for all things Korean, was evident in the data as seen by Hind's comment.

**Hind (G1-QR51)** I don't have interest to American or British culture, and I don't think there's an American/British culture that people will get interested about but I will love to learn Chinese or Korean culture.

Teachers were aware of this, feeling that interest in Western culture was perhaps low due to students perceiving it as threatening, as seen by Tabitha (UK) and Rachel (UK).

**Tabitha (G3-FG1-L468-469)** I think they feel that they need, maybe not all of them but a lot of them identify strongly with their own culture and they don't want to have influences on in.

**Rachel (G3-FG1-L470-472)** Also probably subliminally that message has been passed through throughout their childhood that it's very important to keep their culture distinct and separate and not to be influenced by cultures which are non-Islamic.

Such a feeling was thought to contribute to a greater interest in cultures seen as neutral or non-threatening instead, as discussed by Rachel (UK) and Yonka (Turkey).

**Rachel (G3-FG1-L515-520)** It's interesting because some other cultures are promoted in the university. I mean there's been a big focus on Korea. And, even China as well, hasn't there? There've been various exhibitions downstairs and you know and language classes offered for free and come and learn about Korean culture and whatever else, and I think that's kind of interesting.

**Yonka (G3-FG1-L525-527)** The West and how it is seen here is very different from, and I mean Korea might be more Catholic than the pope, some Koreans, but still,

they don't get that, they think the values and morals in Korea are similar to their values if that makes sense.

Finally, the minority of Emirati undergraduate students who were uninterested in learning about Western culture as part of an English course felt they knew about Western culture through movies and media, and they only wanted English for a future job. Expatriate English university teachers also could understand this view, stating that there were more important aspects of English courses, such as skills development, especially in an academic setting.

### **6.5.2.3) Local versus Global course content**

After discussing interest in western culture as part of an English course, participants were asked to comment on course content with regard to local versus global topics. The majority (60%) of expatriate university English teachers' felt English should be taught through a mixture of local and global topics. Many stated that it was better to start with local topics and expand to global topics as students' level of English improved. This was voiced by Joe (Canada) and Grace (UK).

<b>Joe (G3-FG2-L1010-1013)</b>	I think the linking is the key. It should be situated in their local context taking into account their lived experience but also not just what we think of as their culture.
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<b>Grace (G3-QR28)</b>	Local topics provide a global springboard to go from familiar (local) to unfamiliar (global). It may lower cognitive load enabling them to focus on their language.
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#### **6.5.2.3.1) Local topics**

The main reasons for including local topics in English courses were a reduced cognitive load, increased relevance and interest level, being able to explain Emirati culture to others in English and the fact many global topics are 'taboo'.



**Brad (G3-QR31)** Most definitely. Teaching Level 040 has allowed me to observe first hand how much of a difference it makes with students when they're presented with topics related to local culture. Our in-house iBook with its focus on Emirati issues really motivated students.

**Carl (G3-QR35)** I think that we are restricted greatly in terms of the topics that can be taught by external factors. Therefore, I think it makes more sense to teach English based on local topics.

From the Emirati cohort, primary school teacher, Lamya's comment during the focus group sessions sums up the helpfulness of using local topics in the English classroom.

**Lamya (G2-FG2-L281-316)** I think that our curriculum in the past, they learn in their textbook, Emirates English, it's their textbook, about the desert about the UAE, different issues about the UAE and they gain a lot of vocabs in English that relate to our culture which is important, really....I think if these things (Eid, National Day) were included in our curriculum and our books it would be more helpful than, for example, we used to teach a unit about birthdays and you know celebrities (celebrations). So I think instead of having birthdays if we have, for example, about National Day and what do we wear and what's the traditional customs, in English, the kids will learn as well as it can be.... They are already learning the word, for example, dress and if it connected with our local dress and the shape of it or...Connecting the information with the real life, this is very helpful. It will be very helpful for the students.

There was also the recognition that the IELTS test, which is prominent in the region, focuses primarily on global topics. The Emirati primary school teachers, who were on a sabbatical to take an intensive IELTS course at the university at the time of the study, expressed wishes that the test be more locally relevant and indicated if this were the case, they would perhaps perform better and feel more comfortable.

**Seeta (G2- FG2- L290-294)** If it (data in IELTS test) is about our country it will be familiar for, with us so we can write about it. But another data maybe we don't have ideas about it. It will help us write.

**Bashayer (G2- FG2- L295-299)** For example, if we talk about Task One (IELTS), it will come in my mind. For example, if it was a process about something related to our culture like making yogurt, for example. Most of us will know the process. We know the equipment, what it is called. It's related and interesting.

### **6.5.2.3.2) Global topics**

The main reasons for including global topics in English courses included the need to use English as a global language, to succeed in international exams such as IELTS and not to heavily rely on Arabic words as tends to be the case when discussing local topics, due to no direct English translation. It was also commented on that local topics had been 'done to death' or 'over-emphasized' at school. University English courses should progress to global topics, it was felt by some.

**Joe (G3-FG2- L992-993)** I think students don't want to learn about kanduras and abayas and local food because they've done that to death in high school.

**Christopher (G3- QR37)** There is a tendency to overdo it (local topics). As they are lacking in world knowledge, broader topics would help more.

**Abdulla (G3- QR21)** Many texts rely heavily on culturally-specific knowledge. For example, I remember one IELTS-type listening text on the topic of Venice sinking. If you've never been to Venice, it would be very difficult to understand, and not just because of the language.

**Rebecca (G3- QR39)** It is necessary to use non-local topics with our students because of IELTS and because we want them to be globally aware.

Emirati participants were aware that global topics were necessary and desired world knowledge and ideas, as seen by Nejoood and Anood's comments.

**Nejoood (G1-FG2-L633)** You don't want to feel stupid when you go outside

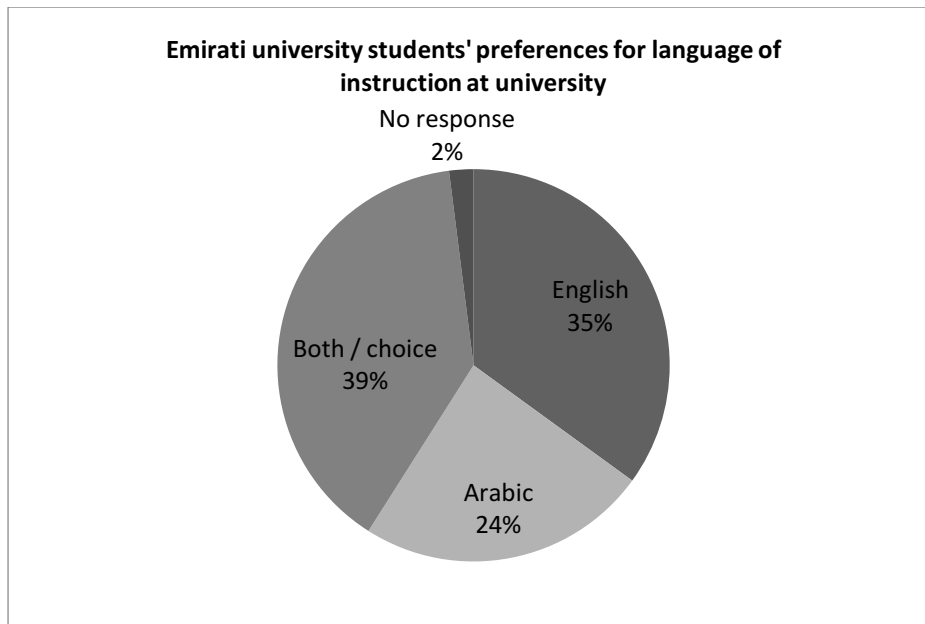
**Anood, (G2-FG1-L505-508)** If you ask about the issues, like vandalism, something that is new to our culture, I never mind to have some idea about this thing. So when I travel, I have background about their culture. But about occasions, I don't think because we have occasions from our culture.

### **6.5.3) English medium versus Arabic medium tertiary education**

The final question in the questionnaires (Part 4, Question 2) and focus group schedules looked at the issue of English Medium Instruction (EMI) in higher education. The Emirati university students were asked whether they would prefer to study their degree in the medium of English (EMI) or Arabic (AMI). The expatriate university English teachers were asked to comment on their feeling about EMI in HE in the UAE. The Emirati primary school teachers were not asked this question as it was added to the questionnaires at a later date (as explained in Chapter 4). The participants' views are explored below.

#### **6.5.3.1) Emirati views on EMI**

As can be seen in Figure 6.7, the Emirati university students' preferred medium of instruction varied, with the most popular options being a choice between EMI and AMI, or just EMI. Only AMI was chosen by less than a quarter of the students.



**Figure 6.7. Emirati university students' preferences regarding medium of instruction.**

#### **6.5.3.1.1) EMI / AMI choice**

Students who wanted a choice or a mixture EMI and AMI most commonly recognized the importance of both languages. However, the languages were deemed important mediums of instruction for different reasons. English was associated with progression and success, whereas concerns about losing Arabic and the fact it was 'easier' were given for wanting Arabic. Some stated a preference for the use of EMI for certain subjects and AMI for others. A desire for both can be seen in Suhaila, Shamma, Hazzaa, Atheya, Amina, and Muzoun's comments.

<b>Suhaila (G1-QR10)</b>	Both to build myself in English and to not forget our language too.
<b>Shamma (G1-QR17)</b>	Mix. For example, Arabic and <i>Islamic</i> in <i>Arabic</i> and others in English.
<b>Hazzaa (G1-QR97)</b>	Both, because when I will work I will work with Arabic people and English people, so I must study in both languages.

- Atheya (G1-QR50)** English and Arabic. English to improve myself and because it's the international language. Arabic, it's more comfortable because it's easier for us.
- Amina (G1-QR37)** Both, because it's our rights.
- Muzoun (G1-QR58)** I think both because Arabic is my first language and I can understand more because it's close to my understanding. However, English is the world or global language and most of the people in the world use it to learn.

A desire for a balance between EMI and AMI can be seen in Alya and Nejood's comments.

- Alya (G1- FG1- L333)** A balance is good. If they have a balance it would be good.
- Nejood (G1-FG2-L242)** I think it would be good if English was equal to Arabic.

Others felt having a choice was key, as demonstrated by Sultan and Ghanem's comments.

- Sultan (G1-QR81)** In my opinion, we should let students to choose if they want to study major in Arabic or English.
- Ghanem (G1-QR87)** I prefer it to be my choice because I see that some people have forgotten Arabic and they can't read it.

#### **6.5.3.1.2) In favour of EMI**

For the students who preferred EMI, the main reasons were its usefulness for future jobs and the fact that it is the global language. For some, it was a matter of being used to EMI and finding it easier than Arabic. A smaller percentage commented on loving the language and the opportunity to work with foreigners.

Muna, Emarat, Sara and Fahad's comments demonstrate the link between EMI and the job market.

<b>Muna (G1-QR14)</b>	English, it's more demanded.
<b>Emarat (G1-QR40)</b>	English. I will learn more skills and vocab for my major and be a successful business woman with every language in my hand.
<b>Sara (G1-FG2-L202-205)</b>	You'll have a job and everyone will, like if you are in a meeting in a job I don't think anyone will talk Arabic, there's Egyptian, there's Indian, there's Emirati, there's Germany, they will not talk Indian, Arabic, they will talk all English.
<b>Fahad (G1-FG3-L577)</b>	Most of the companies, ninety percent of the companies, they need English.

EMI being connected to a more interesting style of studying, foreign teachers, and new thoughts and ideas can be seen in Maitha, Moteah and Masood's comments.

<b>Maitha (G1-QR43)</b>	In English, of course because it helps me get educated and more thoughts and ideas.
<b>Moteah (G1-QR44)</b>	English, because it leads me to work with foreigners as well as know and take from their experiences.
<b>Masood (G1-QR100)</b>	The English way for the major. I think it's better than the Arabic because boring style for the study. The English has some fun and be better thinking.

It was also commented on that due to previous experience of EMI, it was viewed as easier than Arabic and the language of the future. This is indicated in Taif, Sharifa and Hamad's comments.

<b>Taif (G1-QR47)</b>	English. It's much easier. I got used to it since high school. Everything was in English except Arabic and Islamic studies.
<b>Sharifa (G1-QR54)</b>	English, because I am in love with this language and now I prefer to do everything related to English language like study, read or write.
<b>Hamad (G1-QR99)</b>	English, because it is easier. At the same time, English is developing/evolving/progressing.

### **6.5.3.1.3) In favour of AMI**

Although only 38% of the Emirati undergraduate participants chose AMI, reasons given for this choice were strong. These reasons included greater understanding, more confidence and comfort and the ability to be more creative in one's first language, as seen by Yasmeen, Mariam, Nouf, Faiza, Nada, Lateefa and Dalal's comments.

<b>Yasmeen (G1-QR11)</b>	Arabic, because it's our first language which it make our studies more easier and make us feel comfortable.
<b>Mariam (G1-QR13)</b>	Arabic, so I can achieve more.
<b>Nouf (G1-QR23)</b>	I prefer to study in Arabic because I will be creator and not afraid about things, must not be afraid like grammar and vocabulary.
<b>Faiza (G1-QR41)</b>	Arabic, because when you study your subject or major in your own language you will innovate more.
<b>Nada (G1-QR59)</b>	<b>Arabic</b> , I wish because I don't understand a lot of words and I always translate and I forget most words and it's hard to me.

**Lateefa (G1-QR79)** Arabic. We are in the United Arab Emirates ☺ and in the United Arab Emirates we talk Arabic.

**Dalal (G1-QR63)** In Arabic, because it's the mother language. It will be easier and all other countries study by their language, so this will help to be more creative.

It was felt by some that their desire to study in their first language was not as important as the need to develop the country, which meant EMI. Shooq's comment reflects this.

**Shooq (G1-QR60)** I prefer to study in Arabic but we have to study in English in order to develop our country.

#### **6.5.3.1.4) EMI: Too much, too early**

The Emirati primary school teachers discussed English medium in general during the focus group sessions. Key themes that arose were feelings that English medium education starting at kindergarten (KG), when children are only 4 years old, is too early, as demonstrated by Salwa and Lubna's comments.

**Salwa (G2-FG1-L181-188)** One thing I want to add about negative fact in teaching English. They started teaching from the KG and you know from KG, students are still don't know their language, so when they introduce them to teach them English and Arabic in the one time, writing and reading in one time, that affect them in a bad way. Now in our schools, I taught Grade 5, I find that students, my students, wrote English from right side to left side and wrote Arabic from left side. That makes things confused and make the words like a reflection. When you write a word and put it in the mirror, you see the word in the mirror.

**Lubna (G2-FG1-L198-206)** I am now in Finnish school, government school but it's first experience about this Finnish. They told me that in their country they didn't give the students English until Grade 3. Because from Grades 1 and 2 and 3, they learn in their own language. I think it's mistake to give him, big big mistake to give him this English from the start. From KG.



The need to teach children ‘real English’ rather than English from textbooks (native-speaker model) taught by Western teachers, was also discussed as can be seen by Salwa and Khadija’s comments.

**Salwa (G2-FG1-L190-195)** That’s negative in our society, and I want to teach them English, real English. Not teach them in the textbook, especially in KG. They have to learn English in listening only, without writing and reading textbook. This is maybe better for them because as you know the children, when the children grow up, they didn’t use the text book. So here in our culture, they teach them the grammar and vocab, they didn’t know the phrases.

**Khadija (G2-FG1-L207-216)** Good readers in their language, in future they will be good readers in other languages so we have to focus on their own language and also from my own experience, from school now. I attended two classes. One Arabic teacher who teach in English and the other is a foreign teacher, I am talking about the culture and concepts. The other teacher who is a foreign English teacher, I find that students with Arabic teacher much better in science and math, you know. Even she talk all the time in English but I think she is more qualified how to .... to use the information and how to communicate with them. She understand them more than the other teacher.

Expatriate university English teacher participant, Sebastian (UK) supports this point by sharing a language learning experience where he benefited from a bilingual teacher who spoke his own language as well as the target language.

**Sebastian (G3-FG2-L426-431)** I loved French at school and I remember it really annoyed me when we had to go, when we had a teacher who only spoke in French, we had an actual, a proper French teacher. Before we always had an English guy and he taught and spoke French and I really enjoyed it. I was good at it as well and as soon as it went to that I just felt some frustration and a bit of resentment and that was it for me. Then my French just kind of, that was it. I remember thinking to myself, I actually loved it when I felt like I could communicate quickly with my teacher and he could help me.

### 6.5.3.2) Expatriate teachers' views on EMI

As well as commenting on their own experiences with monolingual language teachers, the expatriate university teachers were also asked to reflect on their attitudes towards EMI in the Gulf context. The varied nature of the teachers' responses as well as issues commented on, matched the Emirati cohorts' points to a great extent. Similar to the Emirati undergraduate students', the majority (55%) felt there should either be a mix of EMI and AMI, or a choice. The same number of teachers also commented on the positive aspects of EMI. As was the case with the Emirati undergraduates, a smaller number of teachers (37.5%) commented on the negative aspects of EMI. A sizable proportion (20%) of teachers made neutral comments relating EMI in general, or felt it was an issue they had no control over or no strong feelings about.

#### 6.5.3.2.1) Gatekeeper function of EMI

It was recognized by the teachers that not all students are natural language learners, and English should not be a barrier to success for those who struggle with the language. Bella (UK), Grant (UK), Abigail (Australia) and Janet (UK) articulate this.

- |                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Bella (G3-QR3)</b>    | Because English is the medium of global communication nearly everywhere, it is necessary. However, I don't think learning in a second language is something everyone can do. It acts as a gate-keeper to students who may be bright, but not good language learners. Ideally, there would be other options for these kinds of students. However, if there were a university offering Arabic medium tertiary instruction, then perhaps there would be too few students in the English medium programs currently running, thus putting the country's workforce at a disadvantage globally. |
| <b>Grant (G3-QR19)</b>   | I think there should be more of a mixture of English and Arabic – it is not good if English acts as a hurdle to their subject.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Abigail (G3-QR40)</b> | I think bilingual education is more appropriate as many of the students do not have the linguistic competence in English, but could be                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

successful if they studied in Arabic.

**Janet (G3-QR5)** In my view, many of the students would probably be more successful if they were able to study their courses in Arabic, as this would allow them to focus on new content and ideas without the added challenge of learning about these in a foreign language. I would favour a system that allowed students to choose either an English study track or an Arabic study track at undergraduate level. Those who chose the latter might be able to do an English elective during their degree or in parallel with their degree, so that they could improve their English skills over an extended period of time, without the burden of having to operate beyond their level of linguistic ability.

#### **6.5.3.2.2) Dual stream approach**

Suggestions for a choice, a dual stream approach or certain universities adopting AMI and others remaining EMI, were made by Graeme (UK), Thomas (UK/Canada), Maria (Romania), Youseff (Tunisia) and Grace (UK). Others felt that medium of instruction should depend on the degree program.

**Graeme (G3-FG1- L896)** A choice is always better. Choice.

**Maria (G3-QR1)** The students must have a choice whether to study in English or Arabic in their majors. Most of them said that Standard Arabic, however, is more difficult than English. I truly believe that standard Arabic should be made a priority in all Emirati schools for Emirati nationals so that a strong foundation is created for them to be successful in tertiary education conducted in Arabic. English should be part of their tertiary education as well but just as an optional course provided during their major.

**Youseff (G3-QR6)** I think that English is NOT needed at all in so many subjects / majors, that the foundation should be limited to those who prefer to do their majors in English. If given that option, our classes will be empty.

- Grace (G3-QR28)** I don't believe it is the right option for all students. Some talented mathematicians may be poor linguists.
- Thomas (G3-QR12)** I'd support a dual stream approach so some students could do their degrees in Arabic. However, I think a certain level of English proficiency and possibly instruction would be a good idea for that group too.

American teacher Douglas pointed out that leaders in the UAE looked to Singapore and Hong Kong as models in terms of EMI in education.

- Douglas (G3-FG2- L519-525)** I think the UAE models or would like to model itself on Hong Kong and Singapore which are small wealthy states but whose major universities teach in English. I've heard so much anecdotal evidence that the leaders do look to Singapore especially as some kind of model for education and social development.

However, many teachers doubted the governments' decision to implement such a widespread comprehensive EMI program throughout all levels of education. It was suggested that a more gradual or partial EMI approach would be preferable, looking to European universities as a model. This can be seen in Dylan (USA) and Abdulla's (Canada) comments.

- Dylan (G3-QR9)** The goal of graduating bilingual students is too ambitious. The university should be Arabic with courses in English.
- Abdulla (G3-QR21)** I don't think it was a wise decision for the government to make. It has unnecessarily burdened students with years of extra study, and they end up being less literate in English and Arabic as a result.

#### **6.5.3.2.3) Cause of suffering**

Teachers commented on students' poor English skills and their struggle to follow degree programs in English, as can be seen by Wendy (USA) and Simon's (USA) comments.

**Wendy (G3-QR7)** (EMI is) unnecessary and possibly imperialistic. It causes the students untold suffering.

**Simon (G3-QR25)** I wish our students were given more opportunities to study in Arabic. Many of our students have such a poor grasp of English that they leave university without having learned much of anything. It's a shame.

James pointed out that even in their mother tongue, Arabic, students may struggle due to diglossia, stating there was no easy solution.

**James (G3- FG2, L438-444)** A couple of things that come to mind for me is that I don't know how good their Arabic is? I mean we've all heard anecdotally and through you know, looking at our students, do they even have the Arabic ability to study? If we changed everything to Arabic at our university, would they have the Arabic academic skills?

#### **6.5.3.2.4) A necessary evil**

Despite the difficulty students face, many teachers pointed out that EMI was a 'necessary evil' or stated there was 'little alternative', as seen by Alice (USA), Mary (Australia), Alexander (UK) and Alina's (UK) comments. Others, selfishly, felt it provided jobs for native-speaker teachers, and it was 'too late' to turn back, as seen in Duncan's (USA) comment.

**Alice (G3-QR15)** I think it's a necessary 'evil' if UAE truly wants to develop and train professionals in different fields. English is the language of professional publications, textbooks, work environments, etc.. If Emiratis want to be a part of this 'world', they, like every other country these days, require English as a tool.

**Mary (G3-QR18)** It seems a necessity since it has been one of the main drivers for economic success on an international scale for the countries in the Gulf. It also seems to be a good way to achieve peace and or cross-

cultural understanding between two disparate cultures – it's less likely for the reverse situation to occur.

**Alexander (G3-QR29)** There's little alternative. Arabic medium education cannot offer anything like a comparable body of literature and is not suited to a number of disciplines like Business. The nature of private institutes in the Gulf, whereby English is the medium of communication even among Arabic speakers, also means education has to be in English. It's a pity there's such a disconnect between the level they need to be at and where they are when they enter tertiary education.

**Alina (G3-QR30)** Although I think students should be given the choice to study in Arabic if they wish to, I believe that studying in English-medium universities will give them a distinct advantage over those who don't.

**Duncan (G3-QR4)** It gives me a job...so, I'm ok with it. That said, it's too late to turn back now.

Ronald (USA) commented on the difficulty in achieving 'the best of the west', as discussed in Chapter 2.

**Ronald (G3-QR14)** I think it is accomplishing a goal of generally increasing education standards in the UAE. I think tertiary education should be redefined to reflect UAE culture, though, not Western culture with convoluted "elitist" standards such as exist with big names in education such as 'Ivy League' or 'Cambridge'.

Similar to the discussions that took place amongst the Emirati primary school teachers' focus groups, some expatriate university English teachers questioned the overall logic of the UAE governments' decision to implement EMI in education, especially at tertiary level. This can be seen in Tabitha (UK), Douglas' (USA) comments.

**Douglas (G3-FG2-L411-415)** English is important. Emiratis should speak in English now for international business communication but I wonder about the whole project about giving them tertiary education in a language other than their own. I question the wisdom of that.

**Tabitha (G3-FG1-L894, L437-440)** I think it's crazy that they do their degree in English, I do.....  
I don't know why the UAE decided to do that in the face of evidence to the contrary. I mean some consultant comes in and says, 'let's change everything'.

Richard (Ireland) added that although students have been 'conditioned from their earliest years into thinking English is the way' (FG2, L384-400), once entering careers in the UAE, often they lack technical language in Arabic, such as pharmacological terms. In this case, they are unable to adequately help Arabic speakers.

## 6.6) Conclusion

This chapter has reported on the findings of the study. The first section examined attitudes towards the languages English and Arabic in terms of language use, associations, and feelings regarding the global status of English. This was followed by an analysis of the effects of English on multiple layers of cultural identity: individual lives, culture in the UAE and identities or ways of thinking. The final section of the chapter examined preferences regarding future developments of English teaching in the UAE with regard to teacher nationality, course content and medium of instruction. The findings revealed greatly differing views of English and Arabic. English was seen as hugely important in terms of development and global communication, with native-speakers being the preferred teachers of English, while Arabic was associated with religion, family life and traditions. Although English was mainly viewed as enabling and necessary, concerns were raised throughout the study over the dominance of English and its effects on the Arabic language and local culture, especially for the next generation. Emirati cultural identities were therefore found to be complex, multidimensional and at times conflicting. Going forward, a choice or combination of EMI and AMI in HE was desired by the majority of participants. The following chapter will discuss and critically evaluate the findings in relation to the literature.

## **Chapter 7: Discussion**

### **7.1) Introduction**

Whereas the previous chapter presented the findings from the study with a priority given to including as many of the participant views in their own words as possible, this chapter will briefly summarize and critically discuss the major findings, considering the wider implications of the study in relation to existing research in the literature. This chapter is organized around the four research questions, and findings themes, shown earlier in the thesis, which are: what Arabic and English represent to the participants in the study; attitudes to English as a global language; the impact of English on cultural identity; and the teaching preferences of the Emirati participants.

Based on the findings, this chapter will argue that there is currently a wide gap between English, Arabic and other peripheral languages in the UAE in terms of power. While English is undoubtedly deemed important to Emiratis, Arabic is viewed as mainly unnecessary to expatriates living in the UAE. This reality is exacerbated by the current divisive way in which English and Arabic are viewed, with English representing the wider world, education and progression and Arabic representing religion, home life (friends and family) and tradition. It is argued that based on the findings, various layers of local cultural identity are affected by English, both positively and negatively, leading to complex linguistic and cultural identities where ‘a conflict of desires’ or a ‘want-hate’ relationship with English is often found. The findings revealed that new, bilingual or hybrid linguistic and cultural identities are emerging, not without challenges. Finally, regarding teaching preferences, this chapter argues that rather than valuing bilingualism in the classroom, the native speaker fallacy is very much alive in the region. The lack of choice regarding medium of instruction was also found to be problematic, leading to a range of unsettling feelings, including resentment.

Recommendations based on the discussion of the key findings above include the need to challenge contrasting views of English and Arabic, the need to promote Arabic and local culture in education, the need for a greater acceptance of hybridity over purity and the need for a choice to be provided regarding medium of instruction. These recommendations will be explained in detail in Chapter 8.



## **7.2.) Binary representation of English and Arabic**

### **7.2.1) English and Arabic use**

Firstly, when looking at language use, as seen in the findings, English was by far the most dominant second language used amongst the Emirati participants, especially in public domains, for entertainment, communication and when travelling. This was at the expense of any other languages. Given the UAE's multilingual environment of over 200 nationalities speaking approximately one hundred languages, one might expect a wider range of languages to be mentioned. As well as Arabic and English, Malayalam is spoken widely in the Malayali community – the largest Indian community in the UAE. Hindi, Urdu and Tagalog are also widely spoken, reflecting the multiculturalism of the UAE (Baker, 2017, p. 280). Van den Hoven and Carroll (2016) speak of Abu Dhabi's 'rich linguistic context' (p. 37) stating that the Emirati pre-service teacher participants in their study recognized English and Arabic as the primary languages but also spoke of using four peripheral languages: 'Indian', 'Persian', 'Filipino' and 'Korean'. In the present study, however, only 13% of the university students mentioned a language other than English as a 'second or other' language (Turkish, Indian/Hindi, Korean, Spanish, French), demonstrating the wide gap in terms of scope and power between English and the 'peripheral languages'.

In contrast, the expatriate university English teachers spoke a range over 20 different second or other languages. What was surprising, however, was that despite a combined total of 508.5 years living in the Gulf (an average of just under 10 years per teacher), only 8 of the 52 expatriate university teachers mentioned Arabic as a second or other language. A reason contributing to this could be that in the university's 'English only' classrooms the use of Arabic is neither expected nor encouraged. Burkett's study (2016, p. 10) supports these findings as low levels or nonexistent Arabic language skills were also found in his expatriate university English teacher participants. Outside the university too, there are limited opportunities to learn Arabic in terms of 'naturally picking it up' or formally attending language classes. One has to be quite proactive, determined and resourceful to effectively learn Arabic in the Gulf, where English is the lingua franca and Arabic language schools are few and far between. As Randall and Samimi (2010) confirm, 'Professional institutions specializing in teaching Arabic to

adult non-native speakers of Arabic are a rarity' (p. 45). Supporting this linguistic reality further, in a recent *Time Out Abu Dhabi* (August 10-16, 2016) article called 'Me, myself and Abu Dhabi', it is written "Let's face it, many people in Abu Dhabi can barely even garble a 'marhaba' (hello)" (Neveling & Wilson, 2016, p. 17). The article goes on to suggest expatriates try and find Arabic-speaking language buddies. This is far from easy, however, due to rigid social stratification (as mentioned in Chapter 2) and the dominance of English in public domains. In the study, expatriate university teachers spoke of the difficulties experienced when learning Arabic due to diglossia (Thomas) and lack of Arabic spoken in public in the Gulf (Tabitha). Statements by expatriate participants proclaiming that in order to learn Arabic it was necessary to leave the Gulf testify to this notion. Al-Shamsi (2009) confirms that due to the dominance of English in the Gulf, 'an attempt to speak proper Arabic is futile since most of the workers who work in various stores and companies and the domestic workers either speak English or flawed Arabic' (p.2). Overall, regarding language use, it can be seen that English is by far the most common second or other language for Emiratis whereas the same cannot be said of Arabic for the expatriate participants, despite all living and working in the Arabian Gulf.

### **7.2.2) Arabic in the heart, English in the mind**

Regarding how the languages English and Arabic are seen or represented, in the eyes of the participants, it is clear that there is very little overlap. In fact, it could be argued that the two languages represent opposite worlds. When looking at the most commonly associated words for each language as groups, English is connected with the wider world, education and communication whereas Arabic is connected with local culture and tradition, friends and family, religion and the past. This supports Findlow's theory that distinct worldviews exist with relation to the two languages. For Arabic, these views are connected with 'cultural authenticity, localism, tradition, emotions and religion' and for English 'modernity, internationalism, business, material status and secularism' are strong (Findlow, 2006, p. 25). Troudi and Jendli (2011, p. 26) also state in relation to their study looking specifically at Emirati university students' attitudes towards EMI in HE, that English in education represents 'power and success, modernism, liberalism, freedom, and equality'. It could be said, therefore, that as

summarized by Abdel-Jawad and Radwan (2011), ‘Arabic is in the heart while English is in the mind’ (p. 147). In this sense, the languages represent very different spheres.

This binary way of viewing the languages may have serious effects on the future, with Arabic being defined by what English is not, and vice versa. For instance, if English is viewed as the language of the future and of the world, Al-Issa and Dahan (2011) warn Arabic, conversely, could be viewed as:

*‘something old-fashioned which does not merit their attention because, after all, what they are taught and continually reminded of, by everything and everyone surrounding them, is that English is the global language. English is the language of technology, business, medicine, and education – therefore it must be more important than Arabic because it does so much more for them than Arabic ever has the opportunity to’* (p. 14).

This divisive way of viewing languages also occurs in other multilingual contexts. For instance, Selleck’s (2016, p. 559) study at a Welsh bilingual school found that pupils associated, the less dominant, Welsh language with ‘old, local, rural, heritage culture’ as opposed to the ‘urban, new culture’ they associated with English. This led pupils to contest their institutionally salient identities in favour of aligning ‘themselves with “modern” media and its use of English’ (p. 560).

In the Gulf, Findlow (2006) warns of a similar predicament where Arabic is relegated as ‘non-useful’ and Arabic culture is cast as ‘other’. It is true to say that when English is dominant in every public domain from business and education to hospitals, shopping and technology, its importance and superiority as a language cannot help but be stressed. As Sperrazza (2012) states:

*‘The predominance of English in UAE schools, as well as in the overall workforce, has practically demoted Arabic to the role of a second-class citizen in its own country. Also, the predominance of guest workers from formally colonized countries adds to a colonial linguistic hierarchy that places English first, then Arabic, with all other languages tailing behind’* (p. 299)

This was the dominant view in the findings with Emirati participants giving numerous

examples of areas in which English dominates from hospital settings, to educational resources and research, and even to instructions on products in shops. A further polarizing factor is the separation of English and Islam in TESOL. As Karmani (2005a) states:

*‘In the mainstream arena of TESOL – certainly in many Arab and Muslim contexts – we continue to peddle on the one hand the notion of English as a purely neutral linguistic ‘tool’ that opens doors to vast riches (let alone closes others) and, on the other, of Islam as little more than an arcane series of beliefs, rituals, and behaviours whose sole orbit of relevance is in the mosque and family’ (p. 743)*

It is true to say that at the region’s main conference, TESOL Arabia, there is seldom mention of how English and Islam could interact.

### **7.2.3) Arabic as distanced and impractical**

From the perspective of the expatriate university English teachers, English was also associated with the wider world and primarily practical areas of life. On the other hand, Arabic was disassociated with key areas of modern life such as jobs, entertainment, technology, education or global communication. Instead, the most common associations named by the expatriate teachers were with the region of the Middle East rather than the world, a religion they did not share, a language / script the vast majority had not learnt, and tradition rather than modernity. Other words associated with Arabic were abstract and particularly ‘distancing’ and ‘otherworldly’, relating to a romanticized view of Arabic as mesmerizingly beautiful but difficult to learn due to its guttural sounds and many forms. This regional and abstract view of Arabic by foreigners was also found in a previous study by Kramersch (2009), who investigated subjective representations of languages with various language learners. Those studying Arabic, romantically described the language as ‘beautiful’, ‘elegant’ and ‘distinguished’. It was also associated with the region and landscape of Arabia with participants naming words such as ‘deserts, the sea, waves rolling and retreating, music, beautiful architecture, Arabian nights’ (Kramersch, 2009, p. 59). Very few participants in the study, or in Kramersch’s study for that matter, associated Arabic with the wider

world. The way a language is viewed by its speakers and others may well have implications for its future, which once established, can be difficult to shift. Finally, Arabic was also seen to have a menacing connection with terrorism. This is recognized in the literature to be an image pushed deeper into people's minds by the media. As Karmani (2005a, p. 743) states, 'the relentless media imagery of Muslims and Arabs as blood-thirsty terrorists, hijackers, kidnappers, and suicide bombers only bolsters this symbolism.'

### **7.3) Attitudes towards global English**

#### **7.3.1) English, air and water**

It is clear from the study that English is incredibly important in the Emirati students' and teachers' lives, with all but three university student participants stating this to be the case. The main reason in both groups was that English is used throughout Emirati society and the world and is needed for communication inside and outside the UAE. This strongly testifies to the power of English's global nature. Answers such as needing English to progress in studies and careers, helping their children in the case of the primary teachers, and enjoying English entertainment in the case of the students, also point to the all-encompassing nature of English in the region. For the Emirati primary teachers, especially, the very fact that keeping their jobs and future teaching careers rests on their ability to score Band 6.5 in the IELTS test, further exemplifies the extreme 'wasta-like' power of English in the UAE. English was described as 'crucial', 'useable everywhere and for everything' and 'the language of the future'. It was even said that, life could not be completed without English, essentially putting English on the same level as air or water. This view of English is supported by findings from the pilot phase of the present study where similarly strongly-worded comments were seen in response to being asked about the importance of English, including the comment 'English is everything' (Hopkins, 2016, p.98). A particularly potent headline in *The National* newspaper sums up the edge English seems to have over Arabic stating 'Arabic is precious, but the English language is essential' (Al Ameri, 2013, p. 1). Findings from Al-Jarf's (2008) study with 470 Saudi Arabian undergraduates further support this view in that 96% of the participants considered English, 'a superior language, being an international language, and the language of science and technology, research, electronic databases and technical terminology' (p. 193). Further existing studies also testify to

the view that Gulf nationals see English as both dominant and essential (Ahmed, 2011; Al Allaq, 2014; Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011; Al-Jarf, 2008; Badry & Willoughby, 2016; Hopkyns, 2014, 2015, 2016; Mahboob & Elyas, 2014; Sandiford, 2013; Solloway, 2016). The expatriate university English teachers' feelings supported the Emirati cohort's views with comments that English was 'undoubtedly' important 'in every area'.

### **7.3.2) Enabling power of English**

Viewing a language as important, however, does not necessarily equate to the language being viewed in a positive light. In the case of the Emirati cohort, however, the vast majority of participants (79% of university students and 75% of primary teachers) also held positive attitudes towards global English. Previous studies in the region, as discussed in Chapter 3, also found a majority of positive attitudes towards English (Alkaff, 2013; Findlow, 2006; Hagler, 2014; Hopkyns 2014, 2015, 2016; Morrow and Castleton, 2011; Randall and Samimi, 2010). These participants recognized the enabling power of English allowing for greater progression and communication, and also displayed feelings of pride in being able to use it. This 'progressive politico-pragmatic' (Baker, 2017, p. 283) view of English acquisition is one that embraces a 'discourse of opportunity' (Tollefson and Tsui, 2004).

Unlike the mainly positive attitudes towards global English expressed by the Emirati participants, the expatriate university teachers had mixed attitudes. Those with positive attitudes felt similarly that English was 'a fantastic tool to enable the world to become smaller'. They also felt a great deal of luck, being born English-speakers and benefiting from its status without the struggle of having to learn it. This feeling of luck, and perhaps smugness, is not uncommon in native English speakers with many feeling relieved to be spared the time, effort and expense of endless hours of language-learning and exams. There was, however, also an awareness of global English promoting a sense of linguistic superiority amongst native speakers and expatriate teachers commented on being 'lazier in terms of learning local languages', which seemed to arouse feelings of guilt and unease.

### 7.3.3) Feelings of resentment

For the remaining participants, who had negative feelings towards English, comments indicated concerns that Arabic was being pushed aside or weakened, and questions were raised as to why expatriates were not expected to learn the official language of the country they chose to inhabit. Emirati participants voiced strongly-worded concerns over the negative effects of English on the Arabic language and the effects of linguistic imperialism, with comments relating to feelings that English is imposed, and controls society.

A feeling of resentment was dominant amongst these participants, with some blaming themselves or their own country for their own 'linguistic suicide' (Spolsky, 2004, p. 216) by allowing English to 'take over', rather than blaming English itself. Comparisons were drawn between other countries' more protective language policies, such as China, to those of the UAE, which focused on 'just English, English, English'.

Findings from the pilot phase of the study supported this feeling with Emirati university student focus group members giving numerous examples of countries which protect their native languages, wishing the UAE could follow suit. Reem's comment below from the pilot phase of the study (Hopkyns, 2015, p. 22) indicates this.

*'It's possible to go to a hotel or somewhere and there are no Arabic speakers there. It affects us. We should be proud and introduce our language to the outside world. Like Germany, if you went to Germany, France, Turkey, they speak in Turkish and they want you to know their language, but in the UAE, they don't. They are covering their own language, they are always showing their English'*

These feelings of resentment are recognized in the literature as being common in response to globalization and all its implications, including English as a global language. Resentment often comes from doing something not of one's choosing, and in the case of English, in Chinua Achebe's words (Cited in Qiang & Wolff, 2005, p.57) this means having to learn 'the world language which history has forced down our throats'. There is an uneasy feeling that English is 'forced' and 'invasive' rather than there being an element of choice involved. Comparing globalization and global English to an invasion, Olssen, O'Neill and Codd (2004) state 'Globalization has made the possibility of invading an entire nation possible without the need to occupy its land'.

Similarly, Al Allaq (2014) emphasizes the parallels between colonialism and globalization, albeit the latter being more subtle, when stating, ‘Colonization today has taken a more subtle and discreet form; globalization, westernization and secularization have been viewed as synonyms to the new colonization concept’ (p. 115). As well as Emirati participants commenting on feelings of resentment, expatriate university teachers also commented on English carrying the baggage of colonialism and imperialism.

Globalization and English were also seen to be a threat to cultural diversity leading to ‘cultural dominance and cultural homogenization’ (Holton, 1998, p. 163). In the study both Emirati participants and expatriate university English teachers raised this concern at various points of the data collection period. This view is also supported by previous research such as Ashencaen Crabtree’s study (2010) with Emirati university students, where participants spoke of the perils of multiculturalism. First year university student, Fatima’s comment is given as an example, ‘I don’t want to enforce one culture over the others like what’s happening now! You can clearly see the American way of living is spreading and taking over other cultures’ (p. 91). These feelings of resentment were expanded upon further when participants were asked to comment on the effects of English on cultural identity, and will therefore be revisited, in further detail in the following section.

#### **7.4) Two sides to the English coin: mixed effects on cultural identity**

The area of the study which induced the most detailed and passionate responses from participants was the section exploring the effects of English on various layers of cultural identity. As seen in the Findings chapter, it was voiced that English has indeed had a significant impact on cultural identity in the UAE. This impact was seen as partially positive and partially negative, seldom simple but rather often extremely complex.

As seen in the Findings chapter, the changes brought about by English varied across the three layers of cultural identity. These layers of cultural identity included *individual lives*, *culture in the UAE* and *identity* (defined as how one sees one’s self in the world and how one thinks). The majority of Emirati participants felt changes to their



individual lives were mainly positive in terms of greater self-confidence, open-mindedness and knowledge. They also felt pleased to be able to communicate with other nationalities, especially in terms of dealing with the majority expatriate community in the UAE. Mainly positive changes were seen to have occurred for the category of identity too, with similar reasons given. Regarding cultural changes in Emirati society, the majority in Emirati both groups felt mainly negative changes had taken place such as Arabic loss, changes to dress and lifestyle and rifts being caused between families and generations.

#### **7.4.1) Interculturality in relation to the findings**

As mentioned above, the two Emirati participant groups were in general agreement over changes to individual lives and culture in the UAE, with most feeling these areas had been affected by English. The only category in which participants were divided regarding changes brought about by English, was identity. The Emirati primary school teachers' answers replicated their answers for perceived changes to culture despite a clear distinction between the two concepts being made in the questionnaire (Appendix 1). This perhaps indicates that Emirati culture is very much part of their identity to the point where the two are inseparable. The interrelated nature of language, culture and identity is highlighted here. As Dahan (2013, p. 48) states, in the Arab world, 'the connection between language and identity has evolved into an indivisible partnership, which some are unwilling to let go of.'

For the university students, however, responses were very different. They were divided when it came to whether English had affected their identities; some felt their identities had changed as a result of learning English and others felt they had not. This may indicate that in the case of the students, identity is harder to influence than other categories due to its stronger connection to personal choice. As Norton states (2000), 'investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner's own identity, an identity which is constantly changing across time and space' (p. 11). In this sense, we can see in the Emirati university students' identity construction the importance of reflective-positioning, agency and the notion of being able to pick and choose how far one invests oneself in English, and the culture it represents. As Joseph (2004) states, identities 'are not natural facts about us, but are things we construct' (p. 6), also

stressing the element of choice involved in identity construction. The self-determined nature of certain aspects of identity, allow participants to decide how invested they choose to become as English-users. In this sense, individuals to some degree can decide how far they let English become a valued part of 'who they are'. In addition to the greater element of choice or agency associated with identity construction, it should also be recognized that when discussing deeper concepts such as identity, one should always be aware that a self-preservation instinct may influence responses. For example, it may have been difficult for participants to make comments on certain changes which might be viewed as disloyal to their Emirati identities. The self-preservation instinct may have been stronger in the university students due perhaps to age, levels of self-assurance and insecurity.

The mixed nature of responses with regard to the effects of English on culture and identity, both within the groups and between the groups clearly support the concept of 'small culture formation' in that rather than a whole nation sharing one culture and members of that nationality thinking in the same way, smaller social groupings such as contemporaries, families or work/study groups often form cultures of their own. As Holliday (2013) states, small culture formations happen all the time and are the 'basic essence of being human' (p. 3). We can see this, perhaps most glaringly, in the two groups' responses to how their identities are affected by English. The students, who were divided on the influence of English on their identities, chose to see language as either a major part of who they were or a minor part. This highlights that there are undoubtedly multiple factors which contribute to a person's notion of culture and identity. Almost all the teachers, on the other hand, indicated that English had a major influence on identity. Being older, working in the field of education, being mothers and playing a more prominent role in society are examples of small cultures to which the Emirati primary school teachers may belong. The existence of these small cultures could very well play a role in how the teachers feel their identities have been shaped with regard to the English language. Indeed, the fact that they are required to teach in English in order to keep their jobs, added to the possibility that they may feel a great responsibility for encouraging their children to use English, could explain the greater impact English has on their identities. It is certainly clear that ways of viewing global English and its effects on cultural identity in the UAE are far from homogeneous.

### **7.4.2) The positive side of the English coin**

The findings revealed a great deal of positivity surrounding English when it came to the impact it has had on individual lives and ways of thinking, in particular. Emirati participants often spoke of English bringing increased confidence, pride and knowledge, which related to how they saw themselves in the world (reflective positioning), but also how they felt others perceived them (interactive positioning).

Furthermore, some participants felt that rather than English affecting local cultural identities, there was an opportunity for the reverse to happen. By knowing English, they could share aspects of their culture with others, and even change negative views of Muslims, in some cases. This view was also expressed in previous studies. For example, Clarke (2006, p. 229) found that English was viewed as a tool for ‘talking back’. His Emirati B.Ed. participants stated a reason for becoming English teachers was to teach their students to tell others that Emiratis are good human beings, and to communicate ideas and culture. As one key word linked to Arabic mentioned by the expatriate university English teachers was ‘terrorism’ and on deeper reflection ‘misunderstood’ (Section 6.2.3.2), this desire to use English as a way to ‘talk back’, ‘defend one’s self’ or ‘educate others’ seems valid.

English was also seen as liberating by some Emirati participants. The expatriate teachers too, saw English in some cases as a liberating tool, mentioning students who were ‘different’ in some way using English as a way to escape from conventions, or being able to write deeper personal thoughts in English in a diary, in order to have privacy from some family members. Seeing English as bringing positive additional aspects to cultural identities as described above, matches Garcia’s (2009, p. 142) definition of additional bilingualism, where English adds ( $L1+L2=L1+L2$ ) rather than takes away ( $L1 + L2 - L1 = L2$ ).

### **7.4.3) The negative side of the English coin**

Whereas changes related to personal lives and identity were mainly seen as positive in terms of increased confidence, greater independence and ability to communicate with

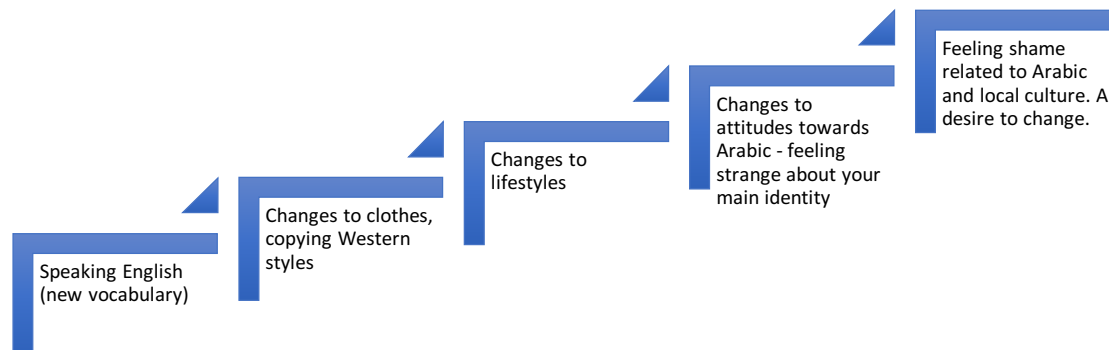
a wide variety of people, changes to culture in the UAE were mainly viewed as negative in terms of ‘Arabic loss’, ‘rifts caused between generations and families’ ‘clothing changes’ and ‘desires to be like English native-speakers’. These concerns are critically discussed with reference to relevant literature in the following sections.

#### **7.4.3.1) The marginalization of Arabic**

The most mentioned negative effect of English on cultural identity was the marginalization of Arabic, which was mentioned at numerous points in the study. A genuine fear was expressed that English is increasingly, and at a burgeoning pace, causing Arabic to be ‘marginalized and pushed to the periphery on (its) own soil’ (Ahmed, 2014, p. 104). These concerns ranged in depth from mild irritation to extreme predictions concerning the future of local culture and the Arabic language. Irritated participants spoke of English being a language used to ‘show off’ leading to changes in personality. It was commented on that those choosing to speak English felt superior, earning them the local nickname ‘Bresteej boy’ meaning ‘prestigious guy’ (Seymour, 2016, p.8), and they tended to look down on Arabic speakers as ignorant. Others felt much more than annoyance or irritation, going so far as to call English-speaking Emiratis ‘freak people’ or ‘aliens’, stating they found it difficult to recognize or relate to them. Partly they were viewed as aliens due to the amount of English they used and lack of Arabic. In addition to this, the use of the hybrid language (Arabizi) made older primary school teachers feel uncomfortable, leading to the question, ‘who are they?’. Similar feelings of alienation from younger generations choosing to use English, over their L1, can be seen in Giampapa’s (2004, p. 199) study, set in the multilingual context of Toronto, Canada, where Italian-Canadian teenagers using predominantly English or frequently code-switching are nicknamed the ‘Armani generation’ (Chianello, 1995) or ‘cakerized’ (Giampapa, 2004) as they are seen to have undergone the process of ‘ethnic dilution’. While in the Canadian context this was an identity position that in the past was imposed through assimilating forces of the center, it had become a contested position and a way of marking *italianita* (Italian character) through its denial. Similarly, the use of English and Arabizi, can be seen as a conscious identity choice for young Emiratis in certain spaces, despite some disapproval from older generations.

Participants in the study commented on the interrelated nature of language, culture and

identity. For example, Oshba, an Emirati primary school teacher, gave the analogy of ‘stairs’ to demonstrate the process of language changing one’s cultural identity (Figure 7.1).



**Figure 7.1: Emirati primary school teacher, Oshba’s ‘stairs’ analogy.**

This resonates with Ahmed’s (2014, p. 105) claim that ‘many fear the loss of Arabic language and by extension the Arabic culture’.

It was put forward by some Emirati participants that Arabic and local culture are currently being marginalized to the point that soon they will be restricted to special days such as National Day, and then forgotten about until the following year’s event. Parallels can be drawn between Oshba’s stairs analogy (Figure 7.1), and Kramsch’s (1993) description of cultures being reduced to ‘surface cultures’ portrayed merely by ‘the four F’s: *food, festivals, fashion and folklore*’ (Rubdy, 2016) and celebrated superficially on a country’s ‘national’ or ‘international day’ before everything returns to normal.

Although the prospect of Emirati culture being celebrated only as a novelty on National Day and the Arabic language morphing into a heritage language may seem extreme, this has happened historically in numerous regions at different points in time around the world. For example, worldwide, a number of cultures have lost a distinct identity originating from an ancestral language as a result of English, such as the Celtic languages which were once thriving but are now, ‘little more, in most places, than a curiosity’ (Modiano, 2001, p. 343). In the early 1900s, for example, Breton children were forced to wear a piece of wood around their neck as a punishment if caught speaking Breton inside the school gates. Similarly, Welsh children caught speaking

Welsh, faced a similar punishment (Jones & Singh, 2005, p.83). Jones and Singh (2005, p. 83) point out that these ‘target language only’ policies portrayed a strong message that these children’s mother-tongue languages were inadequate for leaning purposes, for communicating, understanding the world or expressing identity. In Wales now, ‘less than 20 percent of the population can speak Welsh in addition to English’ (Crystal, 1997, p. 40).

The findings showed a genuine fear from some participants that a similar outcome could become a reality for Arabic. Similar concerns have been expressed in the Gulf in previous studies. For example, participants in Troudi and Jendli’s study (2011, p. 42) expressed:

*‘major concerns about the constant onslaught of English and its potential disastrous effects on Arabic as a language and cultural symbol. While acknowledging the major role English plays in helping them secure employment and a career, they were aware that this is taking place at the expense of the status of Arabic’*

The study’s findings support Morrow and Castleton’s statement that ‘it has become less and less impossible to envision an Arab World without Arabic’ (2007, p. 210). This loss is perhaps felt more deeply due to the contrast between Arabic and English in terms of what the languages represent, as seen in Section 7.2.2. Mohd-Asraf (2005) states that Islam is ‘a way of life, with its own worldview; a way of looking at the world that is different- on some fundamental issues- from that of the Western world’ (p. 104). In this sense, much more than the Arabic language is vulnerable.

#### **7.4.3.2) The next generation**

The findings revealed that a major concern regarding the negative effects of English on cultural identity was for the next generation. Comments on generational rifts caused by English were supported by findings in Ashencaen Crabtree’s study (2010, p. 92) where Emirati university students commented on this issue, as seen by first-year student, Muna’s comment, ‘Our new generation is very westernized and the elderly hate it. If this keeps on going we will forget about our past and culture, the whole world will live in one culture in the same way.’ Rather than giving general comments about society at

large, such as Muna's comment above, the participants in the present study spoke at length during the focus group sessions, giving personal accounts of how English impacted on their individual families with a focus on generational rifts. The most striking of personal accounts came from the Emirati primary school teachers who spoke of their school-age children using English so comfortably and naturally at home that certain family members were excluded from conversations. Powerful descriptions of non-English-speaking older family members as 'mute' and 'isolated' indicated serious divisions caused by the dominance of English. Previous studies in multilingual settings have revealed similar family tensions. For example, Mills' (2004) study investigating language attitudes of Pakistani-UK bilingual mothers and children living in the West Midlands revealed considerable tensions surrounding issues such as language ideologies, bilingual language practices and cultural inheritance. Similarly, in Giampapa's (2004, p. 201) study, Italian-Canadian participant, Tania, explained her discomfort in using her 'mother tongue' at a family event.

*'(An) aunt was speaking to me and I tried to respond in dialect. But I could barely put a sentence together and I didn't feel like myself while speaking it, I thought 'what are these strange sounds coming out of my mouth? ...Actually, I ended up speaking more English than anything'*

Further personal accounts in the findings described mothers and grandmothers needing to bring daughters or granddaughters on shopping trips and to hospital appointments due to not being able to get by without English. In this situation, one would expect feelings of resentment (why can't I speak my own language in my own country?), low self-worth and lack of independence and freedom (reliant on others). One cannot help but feel that while this level of linguistic frustration may be expected and normal for those holidaying abroad, it seems unjust and intolerable as a daily occurrence in one's own country.

Perhaps more disturbing still were the accounts of Emirati children being unable to read Arabic, much to their grandparents' dismay. This situation was recognized by expatriate university teacher participants and led to an observation that there is now 'a whole generation of non-native speakers'. Such accounts are indeed concerning, especially as examples of inadequate levels of both Arabic and English amongst young

Emiratis proved commonplace. Previous studies in the Gulf have presented similar accounts. For example, after multiple interviews with Emiratis as part of her research for a recent podcast on the status of Arabic in the UAE, Porzucki (2016), posed the question, ‘is the new Emirati identity an English-speaking Arab?’ One of many interviews with Emirati citizens was with a young woman named Dina who had attended an international school in the UAE. Dina explained that she grew up speaking English both at school and at home, and therefore felt ‘Arabic was not a priority’. She commented that when her parents tried to encourage her to speak Arabic it was similar to when other people’s parents say, ‘you should eat your vegetables’. She felt, ‘great, but no thanks’. This demonstrates Findlow’s (2006) fear, as stated in Section 7.2.2., of Arabic being relegated as ‘non-useful’ and Arabic culture being cast as ‘other’.

Participants in the present study spoke not only of the marginalization of Arabic, but also of the effects of English on identity and pride. A potent example seen in the findings was Emirati primary school teacher Rawda’s son being ashamed of his traditionally large Emirati family, compared to his English-speaking international school friends who all had small families. Similar accounts of the dominance and normalcy of English resulting in embarrassment over L1 and traditional culture can also be seen in other multilingual settings. In Mills’ study (2004, p. 178), for example, British-Pakistani participant, Rabia, spoke of her son’s embarrassment over her speaking Punjabi in the English-dominated setting of the UK.

*‘we were walking through the park and I was telling him something and he said, ‘Be quiet’ and I went, ‘Why?’ and he went, ‘Look, you’re speaking different and all these people are looking at me’. And I actually, I sat him down, and I said, ‘you must never ever feel like that.’ I said, ‘You’ve got to be proud of who you are what you speak. You can’t say, “be quiet because everyone else is listening”’.*

Accounts such as these demonstrate a feeling of shame related to the L1 and local culture, and a desire to change, thus representing the final stair in Oshba’s analogy (Figure 7.1).



#### 7.4.4) Complexity of English and cultural identity

Whereas responses from the Emirati participants could quite easily be divided into ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ effects of English on cultural identity, with many responses including both, the expatriate university teachers’ perceptions of Emirati cultural identity, from an outsider position were ‘messier’ in nature. From the perspective of the expatriate university English teachers, cultural identity in the UAE, above all else, was seen as complex and multidimensional.

Many of the expatriate university English teachers gave an affirmative first response to the question, ‘do you feel your students have a strong sense of cultural identity?’, providing a list of all the Emirati cultural practices they frequently observe. These included traditional dress (*Abayas* and *Kandouras*), food, henna at weddings, faith, respect for their leadership, separation of the sexes, and the importance of family values. This initial response was then expanded upon by many, taking them down numerous paths. It was felt by some that the factors explained in Chapter 2, such as the amount of English in public spheres, private spheres, education as well as the demographics, threatened cultural stability in the region. As a response to this cultural fragility, it was felt Emiratis adopted a ‘besieged culture mentality’ and became reactive, in that they worked harder to maintain a traditional sense of cultural identity and, in some cases to create a modern Emirati identity. Such reactivity involved utilizing Matthews’ (2000) concept of the ‘cultural supermarket’, as explained in Chapter 3, by individuals choosing certain areas of English and Western culture and rejecting others. It also involved the mixing of old and new to create a modern sense of cultural identity, making locals ‘no less Emirati’ but rather ‘new young Emiratis’ who were excited about the country and what they were becoming. Examples of this ‘new Emirati identity’ came in the form of mixing old and new, such as drinking coffee in the desert on a Friday night, but arriving by Nisan Patrols, not by camel, as mentioned in the Findings chapter. Such hybridity could be viewed as a counter-discourse to the identities and expectations imposed at the university and at home. Arabizi and code-switching could also be seen as a unifying identity position among young Emiratis, in that they are creating something special that is ‘just for them’. Such a notion was found to be the case in the multilingual Canadian context of Giampapa’s study (2004, p. 214),

where young Italian-Canadians often used code-switching as a way to connect with some and exclude others. This is demonstrated in study participant, Marco's, comment, where hybridity creates its own sense of belonging and its own 'in-group'.

*'We throw in Italian words and stuff, I mean it's very, very, it's our own language. Sometimes I wish Stewart (Anglo-Canadian friend) could understand but I don't think he could. At the same time there's a part of me that doesn't want him to 'cause that's mine, you know, this is how we talk'*

In contrast to this view, other expatriate university teacher participants' perspectives echoed concerns voiced by Emirati participants over the negative effects of English on cultural identity. It was felt by some that modern cultural identity was 'extraordinarily thin' and 'superficial' produced by the government in the form of museums, TV programs and events. It was felt this manufactured culture made Emiratis 'tourists in their own country'. In this sense, Clarke (2006) points out the superficial mix of reproduced tradition and modernity that can be seen all over the UAE in the form of 'urban sculptures of coffee pots, pearl shells and sailing dhows, and traditional Bedouin 'tents' located in the marbled atria of hotels and shopping malls' (p. 227). On the outside, this may appear to represent a nation with a strong sense of cultural identity. However, some question to what extent this is authentic, and how much is reproduced for tourists.

Overall, it was felt by most that modern Emirati cultural identities varied and were complex. These complexities often involved being pulled in two different directions. Having to decide on the value of certain aspects of cultural identity individually is challenging, but it is equally challenging to receive mixed messages from society about the direction one should follow. Expatriate teacher, Rachel, shared personal accounts of such challenges, when female students have dreams of a certain career, only to be told that working in a mixed environment is culturally inappropriate. In the literature, Martin (2003) acknowledges this difficulty too, by commenting on the 'mixed message that (Emirati) students received from their culture about furthering their education and pursuing a career' (p. 52). Managing multiple identities can be challenging, as was found in Mills' (2004, p. 171) study where British-Pakistani participant, Rabia, spoke of living two lives when stating, 'You lived the life of the school, where you were a

student and you were doing well....and then you went home and you lived the life that your parents wanted you to live.’ Other participants spoke of the conflict between their public, apparently westernized, self and their private, family, Muslim self, hidden from common view. Bridging divisions, and accepting hybridity over purity are useful ways forward in this situation, as will be explained in depth in Chapter 8.

## **7.5) Future developments of English teaching in the UAE**

### **7.5.1) Native speaker fallacy**

Shaped by the dominant ideology of monolingualism (Kinger, 2004, p. 222) and the globally-entrenched ‘native speaker fallacy’ (Phillipson, 1992), which results in the belief that monolingual NSs intrinsically make the best language teachers, the findings showed an overwhelming preference for native-speaker (NS) teachers from Britain, Australia and North America (BANA). There is still a preference for ‘exonormative models’(models from outside) as opposed to ‘endo-normative’ models from within (D’Angelo, 2014, p. 222) due to the perception that BANA teachers speak ‘good, exact and right’ English and that ‘original English’ is the best model. In contrast, although some bilingual English-Arabic teachers’ strengths were recognized, they were generally not seen as ‘ideal’ English teachers due partly to a temptation to speak Arabic in the classroom. Although, in focus group settings conversations indicated an openness to moving away from such a notion.

The Emirati cohort’s general preference for NS teachers and NS models, however, is not unique to the area. This is a phenomenon that can be seen worldwide. As Sung (2015, 43) points out, even in Hong Kong, which is known as ‘Asia’s World City’, native-speaker norms are still entrenched in its ELT practices. In Hong Kong’s case this is ‘largely owing to its colonial history’ (Sung, 2015, 43), but in general, preferences for native-speaker teachers may be related to ‘deep-seated stereotypes of non-native varieties of English’, as Lippi-Green (2012) theorizes.

In the study, the expatriate teachers shared numerous experiences of native-speaker favouritism in Asia and the Middle East, describing NNS colleagues and also non-white NS colleagues being discriminated against partly due to a connection made between

English with ‘whiteness’ (Copland, Davis, Garton & Mann, 2016, p. 9; Javier, 2016, p. 233). It was interesting to see in the study that teachers from Germany were favoured (21%) far more than teachers from the other outer circle / expanding circle countries such as Egypt, India and China (3%). As Holliday and Aboshihia (2009, p. 669) point out, ‘a growing number of teachers and researchers claim that there is a hidden racism within TESOL professionalism which is directed at so-called non-native-speaker teachers’. This does not apply to the same extent with European NNS teachers who often get NS jobs due to ‘looking the part’ (Holliday, 2008, p. 122).

The perception that NS and NNS teachers are different species or that ‘native speakers are from Venus (and) non-native speakers are from Mars’ (Selvi, 2016, p. 57) is further exacerbated by the labels ‘NS’ and ‘NNS’ themselves, which despite much criticism, continue to be the most commonly used terms in the field. These divisive terms clearly disempower NNSs by emphasizing what they lack by the use of ‘non’ in the title. This overshadows the many advantages bilingual or multilingual language teachers possess. The ideology of monolingualism can also be seen in various other contexts. For instance, Wong and Lee’s study (2016, p. 225) in Hong Kong revealed that even when NS teachers were able to speak the local language, Cantonese, the policy of ‘linguistic muzzling’ meant these teachers were instructed to keep this ability hidden from their students as they were hired for only their English skills. Being a bilingual or multilingual language teacher in this sense was seen as undesirable, as opposed to NS teachers playing a two-dimensional and limited linguistic role. Although not formalized to the same degree, teachers or students who wish to code-switch, code-merge or utilize full linguistic repertoires in the university in which this study takes place are not encouraged to do so, thus pointing towards similar attitudes.

### **7.5.2) Teachers representing culture**

The findings revealed that although the vast majority (97%) of expatriate university English teachers felt English and Western culture were connected, they had mixed views regarding whether or not they represented their nationality or ‘Western culture’ in the classroom. Many felt they represented the broader values of their culture such as freedom, democracy, equality and tolerance. In all cases these values were seen as having a positive influence on students. Others felt due to being global citizens, having mixed backgrounds or having lived abroad for a long period, they were able to teach

neutrally.

During the focus group discussions, the Emirati primary teachers felt very much that teachers' carried cultures which influenced learners with Khadija going so far as to say, 'this teacher **is** a culture'. It was felt that it was not only direct instruction that teachers gave, other factors such as way of dressing influenced learners. Diallo (2014, p.3) is in agreement with this view, when stating:

*'the imported Western-trained language teachers in the UAE, like any other teachers elsewhere, are far from 'neutral'. They are highly positioned even before they enter local classrooms, given that they embody Western Judeo-Christian epistemologies, liberal views and secular traditions'*

The expatriate university teachers were aware of cultural and linguistic barriers in the classroom being the salient negative aspect of being NS teachers in the UAE. These included feelings of 'us and them' or 'insider/outsider'. As Syed (2003, p. 338-339) states,

*'Although foreign teachers bring diversity into the classroom, and although some use contextually situated pedagogy, there are wide gaps in the expatriate educators' knowledge of local sociocultural communities and languages. Linguistic and cultural distance between learners and teachers is a serious factor in the Gulf EFL classroom'*

Feelings of being treated as 'just the hired help' were also expressed. Martin (2003) had a similar feeling when teaching in UAE HE. She states, 'Accustomed to being spoon-fed, students often treated teachers as paid servants' (p. 52). This could partly be attributed to social stratification and a 'servant culture' in the UAE. It also could be associated with a perceived lack of investment in Emirati education due to cultural and linguistic divisions.

Despite the cultural and bilingual advantages Emirati English teachers may have, teaching as a profession thus far has not been a popular local choice, as explained in Chapter 3. In an attempt to attract more Emiratis to the profession, to presumably replace foreign teachers, local newspaper *the Gulf News* (June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012) recently announced that there would be a salary increase for government teachers 'in recognition

of the critical role played by teachers in a nation's development' (Baker, 2017, p. 291). One wonders, however, how much of an impact this will have in relation to English classes, due to the ingrained current preferences seen in the study for NS teachers.

### **7.5.3) Think globally, teach locally**

Perhaps to be expected from participants who generally favoured NS English teachers, there was a great interest in learning about Western culture as part of an English course with 75 per cent of primary school teachers and 68 percent of university students wanting this. The main reason given was because they wanted to know how to deal with Westerners in order to interpret actions or 'put a frame on their culture', as one participant stated. Many participants gave general reasons such as a desire to learn as much as possible about a variety of topics, rather than specifically wanting to know about Western culture. For example, primary school teacher, Oshba, drew on religion to support her view with reference to Prophet Mohamed's wish for Muslims to learn new languages. Scholars have recognized the effect of religious *hadiths* (words of Islamic Prophet Muhammad) on attitudes towards language learning and gaining of knowledge. For example, Morrow and Castleton (2011, p. 329) point out, the Prophet taught Muslims to 'seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave' and Karmani (2005a, p. 739) points out the importance of the *hadith* 'learn the language of your rivals (or others)'. In fact, Mahboob and Elyas (2014, p.133) states that the similar *hadith*, 'he whoever learns other people's language will be secured from their cunning' is used as a motto by many English language centres in the neighbouring Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) to promote the study of English. In contrast to a general interest in Western culture as part of an English course by Emiratis, the expatriate university English teachers perceived a general lack of interest, feeling that any interest was a 'nicety' rather than genuine, which perhaps, consciously or unconsciously, deepened feelings of 'us and them' in the view of the teachers.

With regard to the cultural content of English courses, Mahboob & Elyas (2014, p.134) recommend teachers, 'think globally and teach locally', which the majority of teachers were in agreement with. Previous studies support the notion that English can effectively be taught through local topics which tend to increase interest, engagement and ownership (Gobert, 2014, p.101). The need for global topics was also recognized by

the Emirati cohort, however, the gatekeeper status of Western-based international exams was criticized and in some cases resented. The ‘*Wasta*-like status given to IELTS and dire consequences of not achieving the required Band 5 for the university students and 6.5 for the primary teachers, has led many to push for an alternative more locally appropriate English test or a choice as to whether to study in an EMI university at all, as will be discussed in the following section. Freimuth (2016, p. 165) argues that the lens that frames IELTS is essentially Western, in that the designers of the exam and the test-writers originate from the West who employ their own Western-dominated perception of literacy to create the exam resulting in a ‘one size fits all’ mentality. According to Freimuth’s study, 65% of locations mentioned in the IELTS tests are situated in the English-speaking West. In addition to this, Western cultural objects and political / historical settings are predominant including Western idioms and cultural references such as *Holy Grail*, *Agatha Christie*, *igloos*, *canary in a mine* and *gone off the boil*. It is true to say that Emirati students often struggle with unknown concepts as well as language. A memorable comment from one of the researchers’ former students was ‘this test is not for us’, which seems to be true on many levels.

#### **7.5.4) EMI in HE**

The findings revealed an overall preference for choice or a combination of English and Arabic (both) regarding medium of instruction. This was also found to be the case in O’Niell’s study (2014) in which the majority of Emirati university students stated a preference for studying in English and Arabic equally (377 respondents, or 60.22%) over any other option’ (p. 11). A move towards bilingualism in higher education was also found to be desirable in Belhiah and Elhami’s study (2015, p. 17), in which 62% of the university students stated a preference for English and Arabic instruction, and only 27% preferred English medium instruction. Troudi and Jendli’s (2011, p. 38) study investigating Emirati students’ experiences of EMI, further supports findings from the present study, in that participants called for dual language education.

A further testament to the power of English in the UAE, is that the second most popular preference was learning solely in English (EMI). Despite the strong personal accounts relating to the fear of society losing the Arabic language, on an individual level, the benefits of EMI seemed to overshadow such concerns. Added to the power, prestige

and usefulness of English, further factors such as negative Arabic learning experiences and the fact the participants had become accustomed to learning in English, added to this preference. In this sense, EMI represents a ‘chicken and egg’ situation. The global status of English encourages more EMI to be used, resulting in greater comfort and confidence using English, which may lead some to prefer EMI over using local languages as the medium of instruction. Coleman (2004, p. 4) names this process, ‘the Microsoft effect: once a medium obtains a dominant market share, it becomes less and less practical to opt for another medium, and the dominance is thus enhanced’. Similarly, Beacco and Byram (2003, p. 52) refer to this as, ‘a self-reinforcing upward spiral’ operating in favour of English in education. The ‘Microsoft effect’ was also evident in previous local studies. For example, in Troudi and Jendli’s study (2011) investigating Emirati experiences of EMI, Emirati student Fatma stated ‘I studied in English my whole life so if I studied these courses in Arabic that will be somehow a challenge’ (p. 32). In this sense, it is as if EMI is a genie who has escaped its bottle and cannot easily be stuffed back inside.

Other participants, pointed out the many drawbacks of the current ‘choiceless choice’ (Troudi & Jendli, 2011, p. 41) of EMI in Emirati HE. The current situation is, as Troudi and Jendli (2011) point out, ‘being a speaker of Arabic, an Emirati has no choice but to study his/her chosen university subjects in English. This is now a taken-for-granted reality and an uncontested practice in many Arab countries’ (p. 41). Expatriate university teachers voiced concerns that EMI had caused ‘untold suffering’ in the form of a host of hurdles and obstacles placed in students’ way. The fact that English uses an entirely different script and does not possess full one-to-one symbol-sound correspondence (Baker, 2017, p. 294) makes it ‘phonologically opaque’ (Cook and Bassetti, 2005, p. 7) and particularly difficult for Arabic learners. This, according to Baker (2017), together with other linguistically distant features, ‘poses an additional load in an already challenging linguistic context for children, and may limit bi-literacy success’ (p. 294). For many Emiratis in the study, there was a feeling that they would be able to achieve more and be more creative through AMI.

Finally, it was felt that the UAE’s policy of EMI starting in kindergarten was ‘too much, too soon’, making it different from successful and established bilingual education



models elsewhere, such as Finland and Canada. As Lin and Man (2009) point out, the NSM is quite different from the prototypical models such as the Canadian school immersion model, where bilingual education is an elective choice made by middle-class parents. It is also unlike the selective approach in Hong Kong where only the academically skilled are selected according to examination results for bilingual education (Lin and Man, 2009). In contrast, all families whose children attend Abu Dhabi state schools do not have the choice of partial immersion (Baker, 2017, p 291). As well as lack of choice, the UAE's approach is also more extreme regarding the age at which EMI is introduced. Malaysia's EMI policy (Swee Heng and Tan, 2006) and Brunei's (Lin and Min, 2009) also teach the 'hard or core subjects' of English, Mathematics and Science in English but starting later in elementary school. In these countries too, English teachers are most often bilingual. However, in the UAE the English-speaking teachers, unless newly qualified Emiratis, are usually not native speakers of Arabic. Further challenges arise for Emirati families who are not always proficient in English as they struggle to support their children in the medium of English at home (Blaik Hourani et al. 2012), which was evident in the personal accounts of family rifts shared in the study. To conclude, the study's findings revealed numerous calls for a greater balance between EMI and AMI in education as well as an element of choice.

It should be noted that although clear patterns emerged from the data, as the study is relatively small in scale, one should be wary of making widespread conclusions regarding the attitudes and beliefs of Emirati university students, Emirati primary school teachers and expatriate university English teachers in general. In addition, as culture and identity are dynamic, fluid and highly changeable in nature, what may be true for participants at the time of the study, may alter with time and experience. We also need to consider the identity of the researcher. For the focus group, in particular, the researcher's background as a British English teacher could have led participants to answer in an English-friendly way, although due to the varied content of the responses this does not seem to have been the case.

## 7.6) Conclusion

This chapter has discussed salient findings in relation to the literature. It has also discussed implications arising from the findings. Considering the issues discussed in this chapter, it is clear that there are two sides to the English coin. Global English could be viewed as ‘an evil we cannot do without’ (Abdel-Jawad and Radwan, 2011, p. 147), in that it is necessary due to its global nature, but resented in some ways due to its growing dominance. We can conclude from the discussion of the findings that whereas the majority of participants felt they benefited personally from English as a global language, they were concerned about the effects on their society as a whole thus causing a ‘double-edged sword phenomena’ or ‘حدين ذو سيف’ (sayf tho hadayn) in Arabic, which, interestingly, is where the term originates (Hopkyns, 2014, p. 2). This could also be described as a classic and distinct ‘conflict of desires’.

Such a conflict of desires is drenched with complexity. It is clear from the findings that Emirati cultural identities are indeed multifaceted, socially-constructed, fluid, dynamic and above all else complex. How Emiratis position themselves and are positioned by others are continually being molded and remolded according to different contexts and interaction. Depending on the context and interaction, certain aspects of identity receive greater levels of acceptance and value. For example, English-speaking aspects of identity are highly valued at university, for access to future jobs and in many public domains. Positioning oneself as a confident English-speaker in such contexts leads to personal pride and acceptance from certain others such as teachers. Similarly, positioning oneself as an Arabic-speaker (Emirati dialect) in other contexts such as the home or with Emirati family and friends leads to great levels of inclusion and acceptance. Tensions arise mainly when reflective positioning is at odds with interactive positioning. For example, young Emiratis feeling confident in speaking English and perhaps dressing in Western clothes at home as well as public places, but being positioned negatively by those seeing this behaviour as a betrayal to what it traditionally means to be Emirati. This view was voiced most prominently in the Emirati primary school teachers’ accounts.

The findings also revealed the dynamic nature of bicultural and bilingual identities. Tensions between self-chosen identities and interactive positioning was shown to lead

to a lack of acceptance in both traditionally Arabic-only contexts (e.g. home) and English-only contexts (e.g. university). What has arisen from such tensions is hybridity where there is a need to create something new that is theirs alone. This can take the form of linguistic hybridity such as code-switching, code-merging and Arabizi, or cultural hybridity where a new twist is added to a tradition (e.g. using social media to show henna designs), as mentioned by multiple participants. How such hybridity is viewed, however, varies according to individuals. For example, the conversation that expatriate teacher Joe described taking place in Tim Horton's coffee shop (see 6.4.4.3) in which two Emirati women code-switched throughout their conversation could be viewed positively as a new generation of confident bi-lingual Emiratis who can switch back and forth using two languages effortlessly, showing pride in this ability. Others, especially the primary school teacher participant group, tend to fear such hybridity, questioning why two Arabic speakers cannot communicate in their mother tongue without having to frequently punctuate their discussion with English. After having analysed and discussed key issues arising from the findings, the final chapter of this thesis provides practical suggestions to address such issues.

## **Chapter 8) Conclusion**

### **8.1) Introduction**

Since the formation of the nation in 1971, striking a balance between maintaining traditions and embracing change has been an ongoing challenge for the UAE. Experiencing ‘acute self-consciousness’ (Findlow, 2005, p. 287) in its early years and being torn between looking inward ‘in contemplation of the term “indigenous”’ (Findlow, 2005, p. 287), and outward in terms of dramatic expansion with foreign influence, it is easy to see how mixed feelings over the pace of development and amount of English persist. Kazim (2000, p. 434) names three types of discourses in the present-day UAE: conservative, progressive and moderate. The first one aims to preserve past patterns, the second to embrace globalization and the third to strike a balance between the first two. The results from the study reflect these discourses with an overall dominance for the third discourse involving a balance. The study also shows that this balance, especially in terms of Arabic and English, is not currently being addressed. To focus on key issues arising from the study, four main suggestions are made:

- 1) Challenge contrasting views of English and Arabic.
- 2) Promote Arabic and local culture in education
- 3) Greater acceptance of hybridity over purity
- 4) Choice regarding medium of instruction

The following four sections concentrate on these suggestions. The chapter then goes on to discuss the limitations of the study and suggest areas for further research before ending with a reflection on the doctoral journey and conclusion to the thesis.

### **8.2) Challenging contrasting views of English and Arabic**

In order for Arabic to stay important, valued and dynamic in the future, it is important to challenge the contrasting ways English and Arabic are currently viewed. It is clear that English is not, and cannot be, ‘just a language’ due to its overwhelming presence in multiple spheres of the Emirati participants’ lives. English and its accompanying ‘cultural tsunami’, as Hatherley-Greene (2014, p. 2) powerfully describes it, dominate

multiple domains. As explained in Chapter 2, sipping a coffee in a *Café Nero* or *Costa Coffee* in one of Abu Dhabi's many shopping malls, positioned with a view of the shops, the vast majority of the words one sees are in English. The same can be said when sitting in one of Abu Dhabi or Dubai's many hospital waiting rooms. It is not Arabic that is heard in conversations between doctors, nurses, patients and receptionists, it is English. This is not only an observation of the researcher who could perhaps be said to have 'a special eye or ear' for her own native language, English. Emirati participants commented on the dominance of English in public places throughout the study, which became especially noticeable when travelling to other countries where this was not the case. This sends out a strong message that Arabic is not important or even necessary in public places, as was commented on by multiple participants in the study.

With regard to the image of Arabic and English, it is important for Arabic to be spoken, out of choice and with pride, by role models in the region. As Said (2011) comments with regard to the situation currently:

*'Role models give the overall impression, even if unintentional, that Arabic is not important and neither is learning it. The people feel that using English presents them as sophisticated individuals and that Arabic has a place only in religion and religious discourse and not in everyday 'worldy' life' (p. 203)*

This was commented on, at length, by Emirati participants, especially during the male university student focus group. Having clear role models such as leaders and actors using a high standard of Arabic and choosing to do so over using English would be an effective way to encourage another view of Arabic among the next generation. In the world of literature and research, the same applies. For example, Emirati sci-fi novelist Noura Al Noman sums up the difficulty Arabic writers face by stating, 'Too many young adults are abandoning Arabic literature and exclusively reading English; my six kids and I are a case in point.' For an article in 'the National' (February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014) when asked whether her latest book would be available in English, she honestly responded, 'If an English version is published I suspect no one will bother to read the Arabic.' This worrying situation has to change. Making Arabic the official language in 2008 has had

little effect if everywhere one goes in the UAE speaking English is necessary to survive. In response to this, Said (2011, p. 205) suggests that Arabic needs to be the public language just as English is in multicultural Britain and America. This would certainly pave the way for the desired balance to be achieved. For example, Al-Allaq (2014, p.120) suggests ‘international events which take place in the country should be in Arabic’ and the Arabic language should be promoted as a ‘national treasure’, especially amongst younger generations.

Hand in hand with this comes the need for the promotion of Arabic among the UAE’s expatriate majority population, which would further serve to combat feelings of linguistic and cultural fragility. As Al-Issa and Dahan (2011, p. 18) explain, at present:

*‘The many foreigners who come to the UAE to work, do so based on the knowledge that when they work here the language they will use will be English. Very few, if any, take the time to learn the language of the country: Arabic.’*

This includes the all too often main care-givers of Emirati children, nannies. If not a requirement before gaining work visas, Arabic classes should be built into the working week or at least be provided free of charge to be taken in residents’ free time. Steps such as these are gradually being taken. For example, only last month I was pleased to receive, along with the rest of my university’s mainly non-Arabic speaking faculty, an email announcing the start of free Arabic classes for interested faculty. The advertisement and organization of this had been notably missing until just this year. I do wonder, however, how populated these classes will be when at present Arabic is not needed in the university classrooms or outside. At this stage, its attendance would rely on interest rather than necessity.

Making some level of Arabic a basic requirement for those choosing to live in an Arabic-speaking country would also benefit expatriates themselves in terms of building a deeper connection with the country. At present the expression ‘expat bubble’ is commonplace in the UAE, and relatable for most foreign residents. As Coleman (2006) suggests without knowing and using the language of the country one is inhabiting, one spends this time ‘as tourists, skimming the surface of their host country, without deeper involvement’ (p. 9). Taking small steps may well be the way to start. Burkett (2016, p. 10) suggests simple ‘classroom Arabic’ training for expatriate teachers which would

expose teachers to the language they might hear in the classroom. This would also act as ‘a gateway into further study of Arabic’ (Burkett, 2016, p.10). Emirati participants in the study at various points stressed they would very much welcome their expatriate English teachers taking a step such as this.

### **8.3) Promoting Arabic and local culture in education**

Not only the majority expatriate population, but also Emiratis themselves need to intensify efforts to maintain the Arabic language in the form of concrete action rather than merely ‘policy talk’ (Aydarova, 2012, p. 285). In Mouhanna’s UAE-based study (2016) investigating perspectives of university content teachers on EMI, particularly Arabic-speaking teachers commented on the need ‘to apply real and practical measures, beyond lip service, to the preservation of Arabic in the academic sphere in the UAE’ (p. 204). As seen from the findings of the study, there appears to be a mismatch between ideals and reality. The need to strengthen and preserve the Arabic language was frequently mentioned throughout the study, especially with reference to the next generation, yet when asked about which language they would prefer to be the medium of Emirati tertiary education, Arabic was the least popular choice after ‘both English and Arabic’ and ‘only English’ and when asked about the importance of English the response was unanimously affirmative. A further example of a discrepancy between words and actions relates to clothing choices. Many participants saw western clothes as a negative effect of English or Western culture and indicated it was a cause for concern, yet in the male university student focus group, participants openly discussed their personal preferences for Western clothing while wearing T-shirts with English slogans on. Relating to Arabic loss, Said (2011) stresses the need for actions to match words or sentiments, when stating:

*‘The Gulf Arabs themselves must believe that Arabic as a language is their language and instead of expressing dissatisfaction that they are losing the language, they should make efforts at both individual and group levels to promote the use of Arabic’ (p. 204).*

In order to change attitudes towards Arabic and for it also to be connected with

education and the world, greater effort needs to be channeled into including local culture in education and teaching Arabic well. Ahmed (2011) suggests:

*‘When all that is around one is seemingly foreign, as is increasingly the case in the UAE and many of the Gulf countries, any mention of one’s own culture, no matter how simple, may help to maintain it. Issues such as student vulnerability, personal worth, and alienation need to be examined’* (p. 131)

Currently, there appears to be a disconnect between goals and reality in this area too as often local themes are minimally or superficially present in the curriculum structures. Rather than using excessive censorship to remove Western cultural content which Hudson (2012) warns can result in ‘dull, anodyne lessons that are demotivating for both teachers and students’ (p. 16), adding local cultural content would be preferable. Scotland (2014, p. 36) argues that, ‘English language teaching pedagogy needs to be decentered; it needs to adopt a local approach.’ In this sense, English needs to be modified and used on locals’ own terms and needs. This could be achieved through the use of regionally themed textbooks, which are becoming increasingly popular, and by using local newspapers in lessons, and centering projects around relevant and culturally accessible topics. Steps in this direction are already happening. Just months ago Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) spearheaded the ‘Huweyati program’ (My Identity Program) which covers topics such as culture, society, values, Arabic, citizenship and history. It will be piloted in 50 private schools in Abu Dhabi and if successful, will be introduced in all schools (‘Abu Dhabi World’, 2016, p.9).

Steps also need to be taken to counter the current gate-keeper status of the IELTS exam, which, as discussed in Chapter 7, is viewed by many as culturally inappropriate, and crippling powerful in Emirati society. This is especially true for the vast majority of Emirati female university students, who will not have the opportunity to study abroad where IELTS is a necessary qualification, due to cultural constraints. Freimuth (2016, p. 172) suggests, ‘A better-more local- solution needs to be found to address this dilemma of assessment.’ This could involve, commissioning IELTS to ‘create a localized version of their exam where test-writers collaborate with local education experts to inform them of the topics and skills needed to operate in an academic English-medium learning environment in the UAE’ (Freimuth, 2016, p. 172).



A further area which would boost the status of the Arabic language and culture is addressing the way in which Arabic is taught in schools. Badry (2011) states:

*‘For Arabic to remain part of the identity of young and future generations in the UAE (and elsewhere in the Arab world), the same efforts exerted in teaching English must be brought to bear in improving the teaching of Arabic’ (p. 112)*

Taha-Thomure (2008, p.191) states that often demotivating authoritative and rule-based ways of teaching are found in many Arabic language classrooms. These experiences result in negative stereotypes of Emirati teachers, or Arabic teachers in general, with ‘a stick in hand’ as stated by expatriate university teacher, Yonka.

In addition to improvements to the quality of Arabic teaching in schools, scholars argue that the home environment is also key to fostering strong Arabic language skills through ‘Family Language Planning’ (Seymour, 2016, p. 9). As stated by multiple Emirati participants, this is often a struggle, especially for the younger generation who often prefer to use English over Arabic, even at home. As Taha-Thomure (2008, p. 191) suggests:

*‘Classes in best parenting and communication methods including making parents aware of the importance of using the Arabic language at home with their children are key to redirecting the paths of millions of children in the Arab world’*

Starting early and at home is even more essential given that the main concern shown in the study was not Arabic loss amongst the Emirati participants (aged between 18 and 58) so much as Arabic loss amongst the younger generations. To address this concern in a practical and concrete way involves parents, teachers and society as a whole investing in Arabic as a language of the future.

#### 8.4) Hybridity over purity

It is also important to challenge the perception by some, as seen in the study, that English is subtractive. As English shows no sign of retreating in the Gulf countries due to its gatekeeper status, Belhiah and Elhami (2015, p. 21) stress the importance of Emiratis seeing it as ‘an ally to Arabic’ rather than a competitor. Instead of viewing English as an aggressor, as was seen in the many newspaper headlines at the start of this chapter, scholars such as Pennycook (2010) and Canagarajah (1999) see English as ‘too complicated to be considered benign or evil’ (Block, 2004, p. 76). In this sense, English is viewed as a ‘Hydra-like language’ having many heads, representing diverse cultures and linguistic identities (Kachru, 2006, p. 446). To utilize this characteristic of English, Holliday (2014, p.1) suggests students use their existing cultural experience to ‘stamp their identities on English’ rather than carrying the ‘common anxiety that English represents a culture which is incompatible with their own’.

There are, indeed, concrete and visible signs of this happening in the region, despite the binary positions of English and Arabic promoted by local journalists. Hybridized forms of English and Arabic are being used inside and outside the classroom. For example, it is common to hear ‘Allah Lexicon’ (Morrow & Castleton, 2011, p. 307) punctuating conversations in English. Arabic words such as *Yani* (I mean), *Insh’Allah* (God willing) and *Wallah* (I promise) are very much a feature of local English conversations as well as more substantial code-switching or code-merging. Indeed, numerous examples were given of such hybridity by participants in the study. The creative use of *Arabizi* (as explained in Chapter 1, and by Emirati participants in the study) is also often used, especially for texting where English letters and numbers are used to represent Arabic sounds and words. Lines between the languages are beginning to blur. Distinct linguistic identities are starting to form.

The study showed, however, that attitudes towards such hybridity were often negative, especially in the case of the Emirati primary school teachers. The use of *Arabizi* was viewed as a form of English pollutant to the Arabic language. Contrary to this viewpoint, many scholars (Buckingham, 2015; Davis, 2006; O’Neill, 2016; van den Hoven & Carroll, 2016) argue that celebrating hybridity and diversity over two ‘pure’

and separate languages should be encouraged. In support of this, van den Hoven and Carroll (2016, p. 54) suggest promoting Arabic languages with a focus on linguistic complexities that exist in the UAE. Although Emirati Arabic is spoken by a minority of the population in the UAE, it is less likely to be threatened by English if it is celebrated, and allowed to adapt and change. O'Neill (2016, p. 36) proclaims that 'rather than being a threat to Emirati Arabic, Arabizi may be key to its survival'. Indeed, the primary aim should be to 'encourage avenues of belonging which are not exclusionary or segregated, and the promotion of identity which values hybridity, not purity' (Davis, 2006, p. 1037).

In addition to increased value being placed on hybridity over purity, the native-speaker fallacy, which the study clearly indicates is very much alive, needs to be challenged. Phillipson (1992a) points out, the native-speaker ideal dates 'from a time when language teaching was indistinguishable from culture teaching' (p. 13). The primary reason for learning English was assumed to be familiarizing oneself with the culture that English originated from, being able to read its literature, and preparing for contact of some kind with that culture. However, learning another culture is no longer the prime reason for learning English in today's world. As Bailey (2006) points out, in today's world, English is most often used 'to communicate with other non-native speakers rather than with native speakers' (p. 296). This is certainly the case in the UAE. It therefore makes sense to say that adhering to NS norms is 'no longer valid in light of the current demographics of the world's English-using population' (Lowenberg, 2000, p. 67). In fact, in the recent BBC article (October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016), 'Native English speakers are the world's worst communicators', Jenkins (2016, p. 4) states 'Native speakers are at a disadvantage when in a lingua franca situation' due to being less adaptive to different forms of English and using culture-specific idiomatic and 'flowery' language. These truths are very much recognized in the world of TESOL as was demonstrated by Silvana Richardson's excellent talk on the NS fallacy at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary IATEFL conference in Birmingham (April 2016), as well as in Garton, Copland & Mann's (2016) edited volume which presents a collection of current perspectives on native-speakerism in the final chapter (p. 247-266) from well-known researchers in the field such as Kirkpatrick, Phillipson, Kramsch, Jenkins, Llurda, Mahboob and Pennycook, who each discuss the importance of discrediting the automatic view of the 'ideal NS

teacher'. However, despite such awareness among scholars and researchers, as well as recently-established advocacy groups for NNS teacher rights, universities in the Gulf and worldwide still seem to see NS teachers as a 'better business draw' (Medgyes, 1994, p. 72). This unjust reality was commented on at various points by the expatriate university English teachers in the study. Rather than placing value on, often monolingual, NS teachers, the strengths of bilingual teachers should be given greater recognition. In addition to this, rather than speaking one's mother-tongue in the English language classroom being viewed as 'interference', multilingualism should be viewed as creative and enabling (Rudby, 2016). This was emphasized in Deena Boraie's (2015) plenary speech at the *21st TESOL Arabia Conference*, entitled *Shifting Sands of Teaching and Learning English* when she stressed the need to move away from the traditional 'English only: Arabic forbidden' classroom policy and towards one of choice. This clearly points towards the importance of valuing different languages as a rich resource to be drawn upon in the classroom rather than something to be discouraged.

### **8.5) EMI / AMI choice**

Finally, continuing with the importance of 'choice', allowing university students to decide whether they complete their degree in English or Arabic would further enhance feelings of ownership. This element of choice, described by university student Amina as 'our right', was clearly desired by the majority of participants in the study, and is supported by findings from previous research in the region, as discussed in Chapter 7. As Findlow (2006, p. 21) states, it is not, 'acceptable to force students to study in a foreign language when so much is at stake competitively.' Although, this does not reflect the sentiments of all Emiratis, a choice regarding medium of instruction would overall be welcomed. Numerous alternative suggestions to the current situation were advocated by participants. These were often inspired by looking at other countries' educational policies, and included suggestions of a dual stream approach where students could choose either English or Arabic tracks, English electives running parallel to degree courses in Arabic, and certain degrees being taught in particular mediums. Currently, Troudi & Jendli (2011, p. 41) stress the need for EMI to engage in self-criticism, stating:

*‘Without theorization and without awareness of mother tongue and bilingual education, EMI will continue to alienate the very participants it claims to serve and empower in the first place. These are the students who have no right to choose the language of their instruction. Instead of an over-reliance on received knowledge about the status of English and fashionable trends in international education, educationalists in contexts such as the UAE need to consider the quality of the learning experience of the students’*

The study’s finding certainly support the need for such self-criticism throughout EMI education in the UAE, and particularly in HE, where no choice exists.

## **8.6) Strengths, limitations, and suggestions for further research**

This study is important in highlighting the perspectives of Emirati university students, Emirati primary school teachers and expatriate university English teachers’ perceptions of the effects of global English on layers of cultural identity in the UAE. Emirati and expatriate participants described associations they made with the languages English and Arabic, as well as their feelings towards English as a global language. They described both the positive and negative effects of English on local cultural identity, before discussing preferences for English teaching in higher education, with reference to future educational policy-making. By examining these pertinent topics, the thesis provides an extensive account of attitudes towards global English and EMI, as well as the effects of English on local cultural identity. This study highlights the contrasting way in which English and Arabic are viewed, and the concern participants have regarding the effects of English on cultural identity and the Arabic language in particular.

The main strengths of this study have been the varied perspectives presented from three distinct participant groups, which is a feature previous researchers in the region have called for (Solloway, 2016; Mouhanna, 2016). A further strength of the study is the depth of qualitative data obtained and the number of detailed personal accounts candidly shared, allowing the researcher to delve deeper into issues previously explored on more general or surface level. A final strength of the study was its extensive pilot study which greatly helped shape the main study in terms of the design of the data

collection tools and recognizing the need for bilingual support.

It is also important to recognize the study's limitations. This study was limited by its context-bound nature, its imbalanced number of males and females, and the timing of data collection. Firstly, the current study was conducted only at one state university in Abu Dhabi. As was pointed out by expatriate participants in the study, 'Abu Dhabi is not the UAE'. The university students were also educated in state schools rather than private schools. Findings from this study should therefore not be interpreted as representative of all Emirati university students, all Emirati primary school teachers and all expatriate university English teachers in the UAE. Secondly, the Emirati participants were mainly female reflecting the male/female balance at the university, meaning male views were under-represented. This was difficult to avoid due to low numbers of male students enrolled in the foundation program at the time of the study. Thirdly, as mentioned in Chapter 4, the data collection for the Emirati primary school teacher participants (Group 2) took place a year before the main data-collection period, due to the time available to access this group. This was not ideal as the perspectives they voiced a year before may have since changed or been influenced by changes in media, public and scholarly discourse. However, overall it was felt the time difference of a year was not large enough for this group to be excluded, especially due to the unique and valuable perspectives they added to the study.

Several suggestions for further research can be made based on the study's limitations discussed above. In order to gain a full picture of the phenomenon of English in the Emirates, it would be beneficial to conduct research country-wide. Furthermore, it would be fascinating to gain the perspectives of an even wider sector of Emirati society. This would involve gaining the views of university students' (even number of males and females), university students' parents and grandparents, students and faculty at private universities and also management. Due to the complexity of the topic under investigation there is a sense that there is much, much more to explore.

## **8.7) My Doctoral Journey**

When talking to any number of PhD holders, from my supervisor, to my father, to numerous friends and colleagues at the university in which the study takes place, one thing that will never be heard is that doctoral research is smooth and straight-forward. As I near the end of my doctoral journey, this is something I also cannot say. I have come to view the doctoral experience as the ‘ultramarathon of academia’ due to the continuous focus and dedication needed to sustain enthusiasm, energy and hard work on one research project for an extended period of time. It is understandable that one of the most dominant topics on PhD discussion forums is how to overcome feelings of being swamped or overwhelmed by the scale of the task at hand, especially when managing such large amounts of data.

Despite the challenges of maintaining the willpower needed to complete a project of such magnitude, the doctoral journey for me has been invaluable in terms of skills developed and knowledge gained. While the PhD journey in my mind has parallels with marathon running, in the literature doctoral degrees are most often compared to travelling abroad, in the sense that, ‘researchers-as-voyagers travel from familiar inner and outer landscapes into unknown territories with new horizons’ (Batchelor and Di Napoli, 2006, p. 13). In this sense, through such extensive research one discovers another world and experiences the process of making sense of this world through careful and thorough analysis. Doctoral research can be an exhilarating discovery trail in which one re-emerges as a changed person on many levels. As Batchelor (2006, p.13) states, ‘the process of engaging in research, with its struggles, uncertainties and shifting landmarks, is bound to bring about change.’ For me, this change has involved improved research, analytical and academic writing skills, which have given me a solid foundation for approaching further large-scale research projects. I have also grown significantly in terms of being able to disseminate my findings confidently and effectively through international conferences and publications. The academic discussions I have had with audience members, reviewers and editors have been extremely stimulating and beneficial to me as a researcher, to the point where I have come to realize that the research element of my academic career is one of my greatest passions.

Finally, one of the best moments of the PhD journey was at a conference at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman in late 2016, where a professor informed me that her class of Omani university students were in the audience as they had read one of my book chapters and had identified strongly with the Emirati participants' views. They took the first two rows of seats and nodded in recognition, enthusiastically saying 'yes, yes, that's true' throughout. This confirmed to me that the voices of my participants were indeed representative of a larger body of Gulf students, and these voices which are seldom heard were very much welcomed and in need of being heard. If Gulf students saw their own views being voiced through my research, perhaps necessary changes, as suggested earlier in this chapter will start to take priority.

### **8.8) Conclusion to chapter and thesis**

The concluding chapter of this thesis has made four key suggestions based on the study's findings and discussion of the findings. The four suggestions include challenging contrasting views of English and Arabic, promoting Arabic and local culture in education, a greater acceptance of hybridity over purity, and providing a choice regarding medium of instruction. It is hoped that the perspectives voiced in this study will be heard not only by fellow researchers and students but also by local educational policy-makers and language-planners. As Ahmed (2014, p. 107) points out, it is often the case that various, 'fears and anxieties may continue to be addressed in conferences and research panels and symposiums, (but) if they are not acknowledged and addressed on the political levels and implemented in curriculums, they may result in only heightening awareness of such issues and not much else'. Here the message is a call for action rather than merely academic discussions of such issues.

The issues under investigation were important at the start of the PhD journey and have become even more important with time. As Blommaert (2016) states, in today's superdiverse linguistic landscape, 'language always moves, it is never at rest, it is never ready, it is never standing still'. Likening the dynamic nature of language to a model not sitting still for a painting, Blommaert explains that if the model is constantly moving, it is very hard to paint his/her picture. Similarly, it is often difficult to paint a



picture of language, especially in the UAE's particularly fast-paced environment, when language, and language policy for that matter, never cease to stop moving. From the onset and planning stage of this study four and a half years ago, dramatic changes in the forms of resistance to the effects of English on local cultural identity and promotion of Arabic have taken place (as explained in Chapter 3), with questionable effectiveness. One wonders if the next four and half years will be as eventful, and whether the voices of the stakeholders in this study will be considered in terms of future language and educational policy-making. One certainly hopes this is the case.

## Appendix 1: Emirati Participant Questionnaire (Groups 1 and 2)

### English as a Global Language and Cultural Identity - Student Questionnaire استبيان الطالب - اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة عالمية والهوية الوطنية

#### Part 1 – Biographic information

القسم الأول: معلومات حول السيرة الشخصية

1) Age: 18-20 21-24 25-30 31-40 41+  
العمر

2) Sex: Male Female  
الجنس

3) Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_  
الجنسية

4) Course Level and section: \_\_\_\_\_  
المستوى الدراسي والشعبة

5) First Language: \_\_\_\_\_  
اللغة الأم

6) Do you speak any other languages? If so, what are they? \_\_\_\_\_  
هل تتحدث أي لغة أخرى ؟ فضلاً حدد اللغات

7) When did you start studying at this university? \_\_\_\_\_  
متى بدأت الدراسة في جامعة زايد ؟

8) How many years have you been studying English? \_\_\_\_\_  
منذ متى وأنت تدرس اللغة الإنجليزية ؟ كم عام ؟

9) What is your planned major? \_\_\_\_\_

ما هو التخصص الذي تود دراسته ؟

10) When do you use English?  
متى تستخدم اللغة الإنجليزية ؟

	✓/ x		✓/ x
Outside class time at University خارج الصف في الجامعة		Internet الانترنت	
With friends مع الأصدقاء		Music موسيقى	
At home في المنزل		Movies أفلام	
For travelling عند السفر		e-mail / texting إرسال الرسائل النصية و الالكترونية	

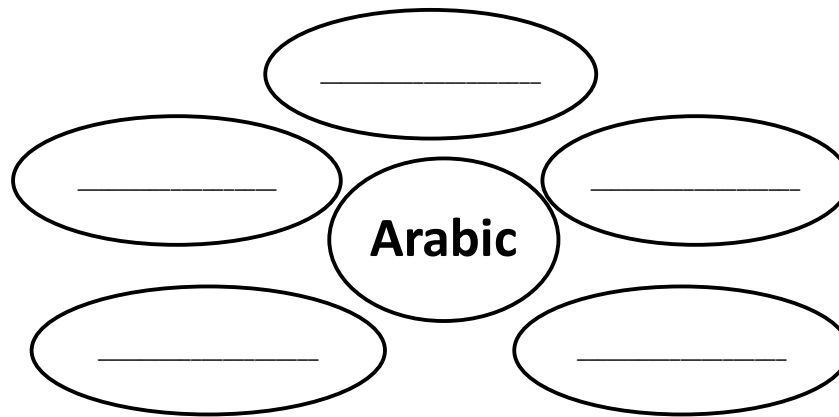
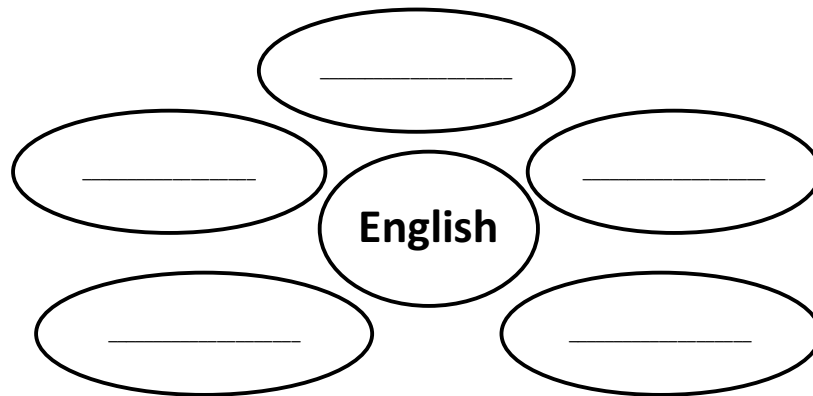
In malls في المول		In hospitals في المستشفى	
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Other (please state) \_\_\_\_\_  
غيرها ( فضلاً حدد )

## Part 2 – Feelings about English and Arabic

القسم الثاني : الشعور حيال اللغة الإنجليزية و اللغة العربية

1) What are five words you connect with English and Arabic?  
ماهي الخمس كلمات الي تصف بها أو تربطها باللغة الإنجليزية و اللغة العربية



2) How do you feel about English being a global language?  
كيف تشعر حيال اللغة الإنجليزية كونها لغة عالمية

### **Part 3 – The effects of English**

القسم الثالث: آثار اللغة الإنجليزية

1) Is English important to you? Why/Why not?

هل تعتبر اللغة الإنجليزية مهمة لك ؟ لماذا؟ لم لا ؟

2) Has English changed your life? If so, how?

هل غيرت اللغة الإنجليزية حياتك ؟ كيف ؟

3) Has English changed Emirati culture? If so, how?

هل غيرت اللغة الإنجليزية الهوية الإماراتية ؟ كيف ؟

4) Does English affect the way you think? Why / why not? Please give examples.

هل تؤثر اللغة الإنجليزية على طريقة تفكيرك ؟ لماذا؟ لم لا؟ فضلاً اكتب أمثلة .

#### **Part 4 – Future developments in English teaching in the UAE**

القسم الرابع: تطور المستقبل في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في الإمارات

1) Where would you like your English teacher to be from?

من أي دولة تود أن يكون مدرسة اللغة الإنجليزية ؟

	✓		✓
USA أمريكا		Germany ألمانيا	
UK الولايات المتحدة		UAE الإمارات العربية المتحدة	
Canada كندا		China الصين	
Australia استراليا		Egypt مصر	
India الهند		Other: غيرها	

2) Are you interested in learning about Western (British/American) culture as part of an English course? Why/Why not?

هل أنت مهتم بدراسة الثقافة الغربية ( البريطانية أو الأمريكية ) كجزء من دراستك للغة الإنجليزية ؟ لماذا ؟ لم لا ؟

3) Would you prefer to study your major in English or Arabic? Why?

هل تفضل دراسة التخصص باللغة العربية أو الإنجليزية؟ ولماذا؟

**Thank you. Your participation in this questionnaire is much appreciated.**

شكراً على مشاركتكم في هذا الاستبيان

## Appendix 2: Expatriate university English teacher Questionnaire

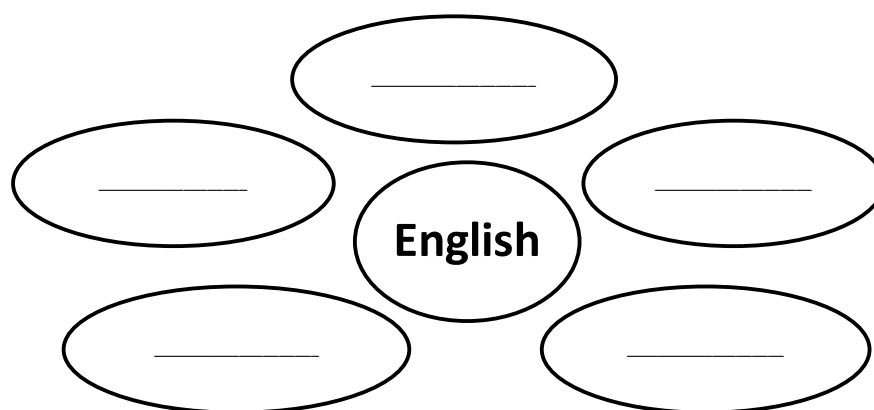
### **English as a Global Language and Cultural Identity** **- Faculty Questionnaire**

#### **Part 1 – Biographic information**

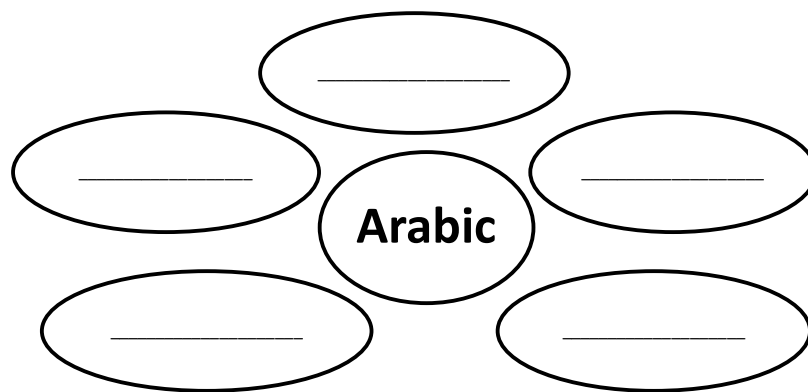
- 1) Age: 21-30   31-40   41-50   51-60   61+
- 2) Sex:   Male       Female
- 3) Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) First Language: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Second Language: \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Do you speak any other languages? If so, what are they? \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) When did you start teaching at this university? \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) How long have you taught in the Gulf? \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) How many years have you been teaching English? \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) Have you taught English in other countries? Which ones? \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Part 2 – Feelings about English and Arabic**

- 1) What are five main words you associate with English?



What are five main words you associate with Arabic?



2) How do you feel about English as a global language?

### **Part 3 – The effects of English**

1) What are your perceptions of students' attitudes to English?

2) To what extent do you think English is connected to Western culture?

3) As a teacher, do you feel you 'represent' your country? If so, how?

4) Do you feel your students have a strong cultural identity? Please give examples.

**Part 4 – Future developments in English teaching in the UAE**

1) Do you feel your nationality has been an advantage or a disadvantage when teaching Emirati students?

2) Do you think Emirati students should be taught English based on local topics? Why/why not?

3) How do you feel about English medium tertiary education in the UAE?

**Thank you. Your participation in this questionnaire is much appreciated.**



### Appendix 3: Focus Group Interview Schedule

Theme	Questions for Emirati participants (Group 1 & 2)	Related part on Questionnaire	Questions for expatriate university teachers (Group 3)	Related part on Questionnaire
1) What English and Arabic represent	1) What words do you connect with 'Arabic', and why?  2) What words do you connect with 'English', and why?	Part 2 (Q1)	1) What words do you associate with 'English', and why?  2) What words do you associate with 'Arabic', and why?	Part 2 (Q1)
2) Attitudes towards English	1) Why are you learning English?  2) How do you feel about learning English?  3) Do you feel English is connected to Western culture or is it a neutral language?	Part 2 (Q2)	1) Do you think English is important in the UAE? Why/Why not?  2) What do you notice about your students' attitudes towards learning English?  3) Do you feel English as a global language is neutral, or does it carry British/American/Western culture with it?	Part 2 (Q2)  Part 3 (Q1, 2)
3) Culture and identity in the UAE	1) How does English affect life in the UAE?  2) Has English changed your life in any way?  3) Do you know more about Western culture because of English as global language?  4) Has UAE culture changed because of English being the global language? If so, how?  5) Has learning English had any effect on your identity? If so, how?	Part 3 (Q1, 2, 3, 4)	1) How does English affect everyday life in the UAE?  2) How familiar do your students seem with Western (e.g. British/American etc.) culture?  3) Do you feel culture in the UAE has been affected by English? If so, how?  4) Do you feel your students have a strong cultural identity? Can you give examples?	Part 3 (Q3, 4)

4) Future developments of English teaching in the UAE	<p>1) Is the nationality of your teacher important?</p> <p>2) Are you interested in learning about native speaker culture?</p> <p>3) Would you prefer to study about local issues when learning English? Why/why not?</p> <p>4) Would you prefer to study your major in Arabic or English? Why?</p>	Part 4 (Q1, 2)	<p>1) Do you feel your nationality has benefited you as an English teacher in the UAE? Why/why not?</p> <p>2) Do your students show an interest in learning about your culture (e.g. traditions, colloquial language)?</p> <p>3) Do you think it is a good idea to teach students English centered based on the local context? Why/why not?</p> <p>4) How do you feel about English medium tertiary education in the UAE?</p>	Part 4 (Q1, 2)
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## Appendix 4: Translated Emirati participant focus group schedule

### **Focus Group Questions**

#### أسئلة حلقة النقاش

	Theme الموضوع	Questions الأسئلة
1	<b>What English and Arabic represent</b> ماذا تمثل اللغة الإنجليزية والعربية	<p>1) What words do you connect with 'Arabic', and why? ماهي الكلمات التي تربط بها اللغة العربية ، ولماذا؟</p> <p>2) What words do you connect with 'English', and why? ماهي الكلمات التي تربط بها اللغة الإنجليزية ، ولماذا؟</p>
2	<b>Attitudes towards English</b> مواقف حول اللغة الإنجليزية	<p>1) Why are you learning English? لماذا تدرس اللغة الإنجليزية ؟</p> <p>2) How do you feel about learning English? كيف تشعر حيال تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية ؟</p> <p>3) Do you feel English is connected to Western culture or is it a neutral language? هل تشعر بان اللغة الإنجليزية مرتبطة بالثقافة الغربية أم هي لغة محايدة ؟</p>
3	<b>Impact of English on lives</b> تأثير اللغة الإنجليزية على الحياة	<p>1) How does English affect life in the UAE? Please give examples. كيف تؤثر اللغة الإنجليزية على الحياة في دولة الإمارات ؟ فضلاً اعط أمثلة.</p> <p>2) Has English changed your life in any way? How? هل غيرت اللغة الإنجليزية حياتك ؟ كيف ؟</p> <p>3) Do you know more about Western culture because of English as global language? Please give examples. هل تعلم المزيد عن الثقافة الغربية كون اللغة الإنجليزية هي لغة عالمية ؟ فضلاً اعط أمثلة.</p>

4	<b>Culture and identity in the UAE</b> الثقافة والهوية في دولة الإمارات	1) Has UAE culture changed because of English being the global language? If so, how? هل تغير المجتمع الإماراتي بسبب اللغة الإنجليزية؟ كيف؟ 2) Has learning English had any effect on your identity? If so, how? هل أثرت اللغة الإنجليزية بأي شكل على هويتك أو طريقة تفكيرك ؟ كيف؟
5	<b>Future developments of English teaching in the UAE</b> كيف يجب أن تُدرس اللغة الإنجليزية في المستقبل	1) Is the nationality of your English teacher important? هل تعتبر جنسية معلمك مهمة ؟ 2) Are you interested in learning about English native-speaker culture? هل أنت مهتم بدراسة ثقافة متحدثي اللغة الإنجليزية الأصليين 3) Would you prefer to study about local issues when learning English? Why/why not? هل تفضل دراسة القضايا المحلية أثناء دراستك للغة الإنجليزية ؟ لماذا ؟ لم لا ؟ 4) Would you prefer to study your major in Arabic or English? Why? هل تفضل دراسة التخصص الذي تريده باللغة العربية أم الإنجليزية ؟ لماذا؟

## Appendix 5: Information sheet for participants

### Participant Information Sheet



**Name of the Project:** English as a global language and its effects on cultural identity in the United Arab Emirates

**Researcher:** Sarah Hopkyns, email: [REDACTED]

**Dear** \_\_\_\_\_,

You are invited to take part in this research study which is part of my PhD at the School of Education, Leicester University, UK. The following explains the purpose of the research and what it will involve.

#### **What is the purpose of the research?**

I would like to investigate the effects of global English on cultural identity in the UAE from multiple perspectives. As well as gaining the perspectives of Emirati university students and Emirati primary school teachers, I am interested in the views of university English teachers.

#### **Why are you being asked to take part?**

You have been invited to take part as you are an English instructor teaching on the Academic Bridge Program at the University in which the research takes place. A range of perspectives are being sought.

#### **What will happen if you decide to take part?**

You will be asked to sign a consent form and complete an open-response questionnaire. Some participants may also be invited to take part in a focus group, which will be audio recorded. You are free to withdraw from this research at any time.

#### **Will the information you provide be kept confidential?**

Your contributions to the questionnaires and focus groups will be treated and stored confidentially, as required by the Research Ethics Code of Leicester University, as well as the participating university and the Data Protection Act. Any publications from this study will protect participants' anonymity.

#### **What are the benefits and costs of taking part?**

Taking part will cost you approximately twenty-minutes to complete the questionnaire and one hour if you participate in a focus group. The research will benefit teachers of English as a foreign language, Emirati university students, Emirati primary school teachers, managers and educational policy-makers. I aim to disseminate the findings from this study at future international conferences and in scholarly publications.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you have any queries please ask for further clarification.

Please sign if you are willing to join the project:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 6: Translated Project information and Consent forms**

### **Main Research Project - Questionnaire**

#### **English as a Global Language and its effect on cultural identity in the UAE.**

Dear participants,

I am conducting a research project for my Doctoral degree into English as a global language and its effect on cultural identity in the UAE.

Through open-response questionnaires and focus groups with 120 Level 040 students in the ABP and 50 ABP instructors, this study seeks to explore attitudes towards English as a global language and perceptions of how English affects cultural identity in the UAE.

I would be grateful if you could spend around twenty minutes of your time to complete the questionnaire. Please be as truthful and as detailed as possible in completing it. You do not need to write your name, and no individuals will be identified or traced from this. Confidentiality and anonymity are assured.

If you wish to discuss any aspects of the document, please do not hesitate to contact me. I hope that you will feel able to take part in this project.

Thank you.



## استبيان- المشروع البحثي الرئيسي

### اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة العالمية وتأثيرها على الهوية الثقافية في الإمارات العربية المتحدة

أعضاء المشاركين،

أنا أقوم بعمل مشروع بحثي لشهادة الدكتوراه في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة عالمية وأثارها على الهوية والثقافة الإماراتية. ستقوم هذه الدراسة باستكشاف المواقف والآراء حول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة عالمية وما مدى تأثيرها على الهوية والثقافة في دولة الإمارات ، وسأقوم بمعرفة الآراء حول ذلك الموضوع من خلال استبيان مفتوح وحلقات مناقشة مع 120 تلميذ في المستوى الثامن من برنامج الإعداد الأكاديمي بالإضافة إلى 50 معلم من البرنامج ذاته .

سأكون ممتنة كثيراً لو قمتم بالإجابة عن الاستبيان الذي سيأخذ حوالي عشرون دقيقة من وقتكم. أرجو الصراحة التامة أثناء الإجابة وكتابة تفاصيل أكثر عن إجاباتكم إن استطعتم. لا يجب عليكم كتابة أسمائكم ولن نقوم بتتبع تفاصيلكم الشخصية من خلال هذا الاستبيان إطلاقاً. الخصوصية والسرية مضمونة. لو أردتم مناقشة أي جوانب من الوثيقة، لا تترددوا في الاتصال بي. أمل أن تشعرون بالقدرة على المشاركة في هذا المشروع.

شكراً.

سارة هوبكنز

جامعة زايد

صندوق بريد: 144534

أبو ظبي

دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة

## **Main Research Project – Focus group**

### **English as a Global Language and its effect on cultural identity in the UAE.**

Dear participants,

I am conducting a research project for my Doctoral degree into English as a global language and its effect on cultural identity in the UAE.

Through open-response questionnaires and focus groups with 120 level 040 students in the ABP and 50 ABP instructors, this study seeks to explore attitudes towards English as a global language and perceptions of how English affects cultural identity in the UAE.

I would be grateful if you could spend around an hour of your time to participate in a focus group. Please be as truthful and as detailed as possible when responding to questions and participating in discussion. No individuals will be identified or traced from this. Confidentiality and anonymity are assured.

I hope that you will feel able to take part in this project.

Thank you.





**حلقة نقاش- المشروع البحثي الرئيسي**  
**اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة عالمية وتأثيرها على الهوية الثقافية**  
**في الإمارات العربية المتحدة**

أعضاء المشاركين،

أنا أقوم بعمل مشروع بحثي لشهادة الدكتوراه في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة عالمية وآثارها على الهوية والثقافة الإماراتية. ستقوم هذه الدراسة باستكشاف المواقف والآراء حول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة عالمية وما مدى تأثيرها على الهوية والثقافة في دولة الإمارات ، وسأقوم بمعرفة الآراء حول ذلك الموضوع من خلال استبيان مفتوح وحلقات مناقشة مع 120 تلميذ في المستوى الثامن من برنامج الإعداد الأكاديمي بالإضافة إلى 50 معلم من البرنامج ذاته.

سأكون ممتنة كثيراً لو قمتم بالمشاركة في حلقة النقاش التي ستأخذ حوالي ساعة من وقتكم. أرجو الصراحة التامة وإعطاء تفاصيل أثناء الإجابة عن الأسئلة والمشاركة في النقاش. لن نقوم بالتعرف على تفاصيلكم الشخصية أو تتبعها بعد هذا النقاش. أمل أن تشعرون بالقدرة على المشاركة في هذا المشروع.

شكراً.

سارة هوبكنز  
جامعة زايد  
صندوق بريد: 144534  
أبوظبي  
دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة

### Questionnaire consent form

- Sarah is an Academic Bridge Program instructor who is doing research for her doctoral degree on the topic of 'English as a global language and its effect on cultural identity in the UAE.
- I will complete this questionnaire in order to help Sarah collect data.
- I can leave the research project at any time.
- My name will not be used in Sarah's writing – I will be anonymous.
- My information is private and confidential.
- My participation in this research project will not affect my grades in any way.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions or concerns please contact:

The Researcher

Sarah Hopkyns

\_\_\_\_\_

■ Ethical Clearance Committee  
Chair

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## استمارة الموافقة على الاستبيان

- سارة هي معلمة في برنامج الإعداد الأكاديمي وهي تقوم بعمل بحث لشهادة الدكتوراة حول موضوع " اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة عالمية ومدى تأثيرها على الهوية الثقافية في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة".
- سوف أكمل هذا الاستبيان لمساعدة سارة في جمع البيانات.
- أستطيع ترك المشروع البحثي في أي وقت.
- لن تقوم سارة باستخدام إسمي في كتاباتها ، سأكون مجهولاً.
- معلوماتي سرية ومحفوظة.
- مشاركتي في هذا المشروع البحثي لن تؤثر على درجاتي بأي شكل من الأشكال .

الإسم \_\_\_\_\_

التوقيع \_\_\_\_\_ التاريخ \_\_\_\_\_

للمزيد من المعلومات أو الاجابة عن الاستفسارات أرجو التواصل مع :

الباحثة

رئيس لجنة الموافقات الأخلاقية بجامعة زايد

سارة هوبكينز

د. مرسيديس شين

### **Focus group consent form**

- Sarah is an Academic Bridge Program instructor who is doing research for her doctoral degree on the topic of 'English as a global language and its effect on cultural identity in the UAE.
- I will take part in this 60-minute focus group in order to help Sarah collect data.
- I can leave the research project at any time.
- My name will not be used in Sarah's writing – I will be anonymous.
- My information is private and confidential.
- My participation in this research project will not affect my grades in any way.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions or concerns please contact:

The Researcher

Sarah Hopkyns

\_\_\_\_\_

■ Ethical Clearance Committee Chair

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## استمارة الموافقة على حلقة النقاش

- سارة هي معلمة في برنامج الإعداد الأكاديمي وهي تقوم بعمل بحث لشهادة الدكتوراة حول موضوع " اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة عالمية ومدى تأثيرها على الهوية الثقافية في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة".
- سوف أشارك في حلقة النقاش لمدة 60 دقيقة لمساعدة سارة في جمع البيانات.
- أستطيع ترك المشروع البحثي في أي وقت.
- لن تقوم سارة باستخدام إسمي في كتاباتها ، سأكون مجهولاً.
- معلوماتي سرية ومحفوظة.
- مشاركتي في هذا المشروع البحثي لن تؤثر على درجاتي بأي شكل من الأشكال .

لإسم \_\_\_\_\_

التوقيع \_\_\_\_\_ التاريخ \_\_\_\_\_

للمزيد من المعلومات أو الاجابة عن الاستفسارات أرجو التواصل مع :

الباحثة

رئيس لجنة الموافقات الأخلاقية بجامعة زايد

سارة هوبكينز

د. مرسيديس شين

## Appendix 7: University of Leicester Ethical Clearance

To: **Sarah Hopkyns**

Subject: Ethical Application Ref: **SLJ23-6fbe**

*(Please quote this ref on all correspondence)*

**23/01/2014 15:03:02**

### **School of Education**

Project Title: **Conflicting Desires; English as a Global Language and its effect on Cultural Identity in the United Arab Emirates.**

Thank you for submitting your application which has been considered.

This study has been given ethical approval, subject to any conditions quoted in the attached notes.

Any significant departure from the programme of research as outlined in the application for research ethics approval (such as changes in methodological approach, large delays in commencement of research, additional forms of data collection or major expansions in sample size) must be reported to your Departmental Research Ethics Officer.

Approval is given on the understanding that the University Research Ethics Code of Practice and other research ethics guidelines and protocols will be compiled with

- ☐ <http://www2.le.ac.uk/institution/committees/research-ethics/code-of-practice>
- ☐ <http://www.le.ac.uk/safety/>

## Appendix 8: Ethical Clearance from the university in which the study takes place



### Research Ethics Committee (REC) Proof of Ethical Clearance

Chair of the Research Ethics Committee

Sarah Hopkyns  
Instructor,

Date	17 <sup>th</sup> Apr. 2014
Ethics Application Number	14_011_F
Research Title	Conflicting Desires; English as a Global Language and its effect on cultural identity in the United Arab Emirates
Submitted Form	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Application for Ethical Clearance <input type="checkbox"/> Exemption from Full Application
Valid until	16 <sup>th</sup> Apr. 2015

Dear Sarah,

Thank you for submitting the above mentioned research proposal to the Research Ethics Committee at [redacted]. The following submitted documents were reviewed:

1. full application for ethical clearance
2. Informed consent form
3. The cover letter

The project was discussed in the Research Ethics Committee's meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> Jan 2014, and I am pleased to advise you that that the Committee has granted

☒ Full Ethical Clearance ☐ Exemption from Full Ethical Clearance

The following Committee members and Office of Research representatives were present at the meeting when your study was discussed:

[redacted] (chair), Assistant Professor, College of Sustainability Sciences and Humanities,  
Department of Natural Science and Public Health  
[redacted], Assistant Provost, Faculty Affairs and Research  
[redacted], Assistant Professor, College of Education  
[redacted], Director, Institute for Community Engagement  
[redacted], Assistant Professor, College of Technological Innovation  
[redacted], Graduate Development Program Associate (Recorder, Office of Research)

Notes from the Committee | The request was approved after making certain amendments

## Appendix 9: Focus group transcriptions (sample from each group)

### Transcription conventions:

IDENTITY	Capitals used for emphasis
[ ]	Researcher's additions (noted in research diary)
[?]	word uncertainty / unclear speech
/	Pause up to five seconds
.....	Stop mid-sentence or sentence trails off
	Yellow highlighting for parts originally spoken in Arabic
	Parts covered for ethical reasons

\*Pseudonyms have been used throughout

### Sample 1: Group 1, Focus Group 3 (G1-FG3) (Emirati male university students)

Time: 37 mins, 51 secs

1. Researcher: Okay so welcome to the focus group and thank you so much for coming.
2. Mansoor: It's a pleasure
3. Researcher: As I haven't met you before, my name is Sarah and this is part of my PhD
4. research. It's going to be a group discussion, so if you could talk to each
5. other, not just to me. If someone says something and you disagree then you
6. disagree or agree and talk with each other. If you want to use Arabic, you can
7. as well because Reida speaks Arabic and she will translate what you have
8. said, but if you want to use English, you can as well. Okay so the first
9. question is, when you think of English and Arabic, which words do you
10. connect with the languages? So, when you think of the word English, which
11. words come to your mind?
12. Mansoor: Universal
13. Malik: ID, identity
14. Researcher: Identity
15. Omar: Global
16. Researcher: Global, umhum
17. Fahad: Education
18. Researcher: Yes
19. Hamdan: Culture
20. Researcher: Okay
21. Hamdan: Increase
22. Researcher: Increase? Why do you say increase?
23. Hamdan: I think you can't develop without, uh, English
24. Researcher: Okay, so it's part of the future, you think?
25. Fahad: Job, career
26. Researcher: Do you think it's important? Do you think it's essential for job, your future job?
27. Fahad: These days, yes.
28. Researcher: Umhum, okay
29. Malik: What does 'mujamala'?



30. Translator: Um, compliments, paying compliments.  
31. Researcher: Oh, interesting  
32. Translator: So, you use English to pay someone a compliment.  
33. Malik: **Westerners always pay compliments.**  
34. Translator: Really and so like can you say something for example, like, 'oh, you're so  
35. sweet', saying things, saying positive things in English?  
36. Malik: Yeah  
37. Translator: In Arabic we don't do that?  
38. Malik: We do. A lot [laughs]  
39. Omar: It's different, it's not, **how do I say**, uhh, formal language **just an expression like**  
40. haaahaahaa.  
41. Translator: So, they pay more compliments in English than they do in Arabic, so it's like a  
42. compliments language.  
43. Researcher: Okay, so why, why do you use more compliments in English?  
44. Malik: **This is what I have noticed, I don't know.**  
45. Translator: Is it the culture? Is it the Western culture, do you think? Versus the Middle  
46. Eastern culture?  
47. Researcher: So, it's more comfortable to use compliments in English, maybe.  
48. Omar: Maybe.  
49. Researcher: Umhum. Interesting.  
50. Translator: And say positive things.  
51. Researcher: Umhum. Okay and when you think of Arabic what words come to your mind?  
52. Malik: In first place, religion.  
53. Abdul: Quran  
54. Omar: Friends  
55. Mansoor: Family  
56. Hamdan: Heritage  
57. Researcher: Umhum. Okay. Yeah.  
58. Abdul: History  
59. Researcher: And so do you associate more with the past than the future? Or do you  
60. associate it with now, or the past or the future?  
61. Abdul: The past and the future  
62. Researcher: Okay. So, everything. Okay, so now we're going to move on to talk about  
63. attitudes towards English. So first, why are you learning English?  
64. Fahad: Because it's necessary to have our.....  
65. Omar: It's a personal qualification  
66. Abdul: It's a worldwide language. It is important to learn English.  
67. Researcher: Okay. And how do you feel about learning English? Are you happy to be  
68. learning English or do you...  
69. Mansoor: Enthusiasm  
70. Researcher: Yeah. Enthusiasm, umhum  
71. Hamdan: For me, I want to know some lyrics in songs and to pass the ABP. This is the  
72. goal.  
73. Translator: Right now.  
74. Hamdan: **Yes.** [laughs] but my big goal in English is I want to speak fluently.  
75. Researcher: Um.  
76. Hamdan: Like a native speaker.  
77. Researcher: Do you want to live abroad? Do you want to live in another country?  
78. Hamdan: Yes, I do. That is interesting.  
79. Researcher: Umhum. Okay. And do you feel that English is connected to Western culture?  
80. So, the culture of America, the culture of England, or do you feel like it is a  
81. neutral language that everybody owns?  
82. Hamdan: Yes  
83. Omar: Yes  
84. Researcher: Which one?  
85. Hamdan: The second one  
86. Researcher: Okay. Tell me why.  
87. Hamdan: Because we have our own culture, we just speak English.  
88. Researcher: Okay  
89. Mansoor: Because it's still spreading around the world so people think it's normal to

90. learn English and everybody know how to speak because it's easy.

91. Researcher: Okay. So it's kind of a tool to use?

92. Fahad: And it's a language you can communicate with any culture in the world

93. because I think in Singapore, Singapore?

94. Researcher: Yeah

95. Fahad: Uhh, there are more than five nationalities or more living there and they

96. speak in one language and it's English. They have Chinese, Indian and

97. Europe and...

98. Researcher: Malaysian

99. Fahad: Maybe, yes, Malaysian

100. Researcher: Umhum, so it's very useful for connecting with people. Umm, Okay let's move

101. on now to talk about the impact of English on our lives. So how do you think

102. English affects life in the UAE? Do you think English affects your lives here

103. in the UAE?

104. Mansoor: Many sides. Yes.

105. Malik: Sometimes

106. Researcher: So, give an example, if you can.

107. Fahad: Umm. **When a person uses English, his personality changes.**

108. Translator: Umm, so when he uses English, he is a different person, he has a different

109. personality. It just changes, he just changes when he uses English versus

110. when you use Arabic. So, like two different people. But how, how? **How does**

111. **he change?**

112. Fahad: Umm. **He expresses different views, a different side of himself.**

113. Translator: Different points of views, yeah, and?

114. Fahad: **Different way of thinking.**

115. Translator: Yeah, different ideas.

116. Fahad: **Some people, when they start using English, think that anyone who only uses**

117. **Arabic is ignorant.** Sometimes.

118. Translator: So, one way to look at this is people who start using English and it becomes a

119. big part of their life, they start looking at people who don't use English and

120. use only Arabic as people who are maybe ignorant or less educated than the

121. are.

122. Researcher: Interesting

123. Translator: So, when they use English they see things differently, they look at people

124. differently. Wow.

125. Hamdan: Based on what you said, maybe only some of the people, not all of the people

126. because for me no matter what language I speak I still have the same

127. personality, the same attitude.

128. Researcher: Um, okay

129. Malik: No, but there are somebody who thinks he is better than the Arabic when he

130. talk English

131. Abdul: And some people speaks English just for show off

132. Researcher: Hum,

133. Malik: Yes, I agree with that

134. Researcher: Hum, interesting. To show off to friends and family and...

135. Abdul: Oh, look at me, I know English, oh...

136. Researcher: Right. Okay

137. Translator: It's a show off language

138. Researcher: Right. So, it's attached to prestige?

139. Group: YES

140. Abdul: Yeah

141. Fahad: Yeah, of course

142. Researcher: Interesting

143. Omar: You got it right there

144. Researcher: Okay. And do you think on a day to day basis, English has changed your life.

145. So, sort of, when you go outside and you're doing things, like normal daily

146. activities, do you think that by speaking English, those activities have

147. changed? Um, for example, when you go shopping in a mall, do you use

148. Arabic or do you use English? And how does that affect the way you feel

149. when you're doing daily things, daily actions?

150. Mansoor: Well if I went to a shop that speaks, they only speak English, then I speak  
151. English. If they speak Arab English then, I just sometimes mix Arabic and  
152. English.

153. Researcher: Okay

154. Abdul: For me it's, now it's important, because in the past when I go to somewhere,  
155. most of the people talk Arabic so I can communicate with anybody but now  
156. if I go maybe to mall or some public place, a lot of them talk English so I  
157. cannot communicate with them because now I don't have, because now I  
158. cannot handle it.

159. Hamdan: Now I can explain what I want for English

160. Researcher: So, you would chose to use English rather than Arabic?

161. Hamdan: Yeah

162. Researcher: Yeah. To practice or to...

163. Hamdan: Yeah, to practice also

164. Researcher: Yeah, okay.

165. Malik: And for me, most of the time outside, I speak English because all of my  
166. friends are foreigners, they're not from here and they speak English. Or even  
167. with my brother, he speaks English.

168. Researcher: Really? But he speaks Arabic too. But you choose to use...

169. Malik: At home we speak Arabic, outside we use English or Arabic English but most  
170. of the time English.

171. Researcher: Okay. So why would you speak to your brother in English, not Arabic?

172. Malik: He wants to speak English, so we speak English because he is used to it. We  
173. studied English, he studied for more than fourteen years, English and I  
174. studied for like twelve years English.

175. Researcher: Okay. So, he enjoys speaking English. And you too?

176. Malik: Yes, and I learn from him English because there are some words I don't  
177. know.

178. Researcher: Um, okay

179. Malik: I think it's an opportunity for me to speak English more.

180. Researcher: Um, umhum.

181. Malik: It's a chance because I don't find people to speak English with so that's an  
182. opportunity.

183. Researcher: Okay. So, you see it as a positive thing.

184. Malik: Yeah

185. Researcher: Yeah. Does anyone see it as a negative thing? Does anyone think, oh why do I  
186. have to speak English, I want to speak Arabic?

187. Malik: No

188. Researcher: No

189. Malik: Maybe some people think this way so they feel they are in their own country  
190. and people don't speak Arabic [Malik coughs]

191. Researcher: Right, some people feel that way, but not you?

192. Malik: No

193. Researcher: No, okay. So, the next question is, do you feel you know more about British  
194. culture and American culture because of English or do you see English just  
195. as a language uhh that is not attached, it's sort of similar to the other  
196. question, but do you feel you know more about Britain and America because of  
197. English?

198. Omar: No, you have to live with them to....

199. Researcher: [Cough, cough]

200. Omar: You don't just judge them based on their language

201. Researcher: Okay

202. Abdul: But I agree with the question because some say that language is one tool to  
203. know the other culture so if you know the language you know a little bit of  
204. this culture.

205. Translator: Do you connect English with India or Malaysia? Or does English connect with  
206. America, England or Australia?

207. Hamdan: Because the original language is from there. It's their own language so not  
208. about Malaysia, when you think of Malaysia you think of the Malaysian  
209. language.

210. Translator: Umm, so the English language connects basically with  
 211. Hamdan: Yes. If the American people learn the Arabic language, their ways of thinking,  
 212. they just think of Arab people  
 213. Translator: So yeah, in a way they do connect it with the US, the UK, Australia, versus  
 214. India for example.  
 215. Researcher: Right  
 216. Translator: Or Malaysia  
 217. Omar: No, I have to live with them so I can know their culture, I don't judge  
 218. them based on their language.  
 219. Translator: So, the language doesn't connect?  
 220. Omar: For me, no.  
 221. Translator: Yeah, with the country.  
 222. Researcher: So, you think every person is different, it doesn't matter which language  
 223. Translator: So that goes back to the first question, so **is English international or neutral**  
 224. **language**, it doesn't really connect to a country, it has become international  
 225. or neutral basically.  
 226. Fahad: For example, all of us, same culture, but we have different personalities,  
 227. different attitudes.  
 228. Researcher: Yeah  
 229. Fahad: So if he speaks Arabic, that doesn't mean we are all the same  
 230. Researcher: Right  
 231. Abdul: So you have to live with them so you can know the true culture  
 232. Malik: And everyone has his own mind.  
 233. Researcher: Right  
 234. Translator: It's independent of the country and the culture  
 235. Researcher: Okay. So we are going to move on to talk about culture and identity now. So  
 236. do you feel the UAE has changed because of the amount of English being  
 237. spoken here?  
 238. Abdul: **Yes, now we have iPhones and iPads and we mostly use English. This has**  
 239. **improved us and developed us.**  
 240. Translator: **So you mean the UAE society has developed,** so one, yeah it's more  
 241. developed, it has improved. We have more progress in terms of technology,  
 242. right?  
 243. Abdul: Education  
 244. Translator: And in education  
 245. Fahad: And because of that the old generation is not like us, if we spoke no English  
 246. we'd be like that because they don't speak English now.  
 247. Researcher: Right  
 248. Fahad: Some of them  
 249. Researcher: Right, how do you feel about that? Do you think that's okay that the older  
 250. generation don't speak it?  
 251. Fahad: In my opinion, it's okay.  
 252. Researcher: Okay  
 253. Omar: It's a difference, it's a difference.  
 254. Researcher: Does it cause any problems in society that some people speak English and  
 255. some people don't, or is it okay?  
 256. Fahad: It's okay  
 257. Translator: For you, it's okay  
 258. Fahad: No  
 259. Researcher: Um, what type of problems?  
 260. Hamdan: Some little ones, literacy  
 261. Researcher: So, no problems? You think it's about literacy. Um, how, so you think it's that  
 262. they didn't have the schooling?  
 263. Hamdan: Yeah, before.  
 264. Mansoor: Actually, it's good because you know another language you can communicate  
 265. and you can know new friends, like that.  
 266. Translator: And as you mentioned earlier English has given you the chance to make  
 267. progress and develop- **development in which areas?**  
 268. Fahad: **Education, culture**  
 269. Translator: Education

270. Omar: Culture  
 271. Researcher: Culture  
 272. Translator: And culture  
 273. Researcher: And as English is very much attached to globalization and so it sort of brings  
 274. other companies here and.....  
 275. Malik: And because of that the UAE becomes more multicultural  
 276. Researcher: Yes, and do you think that has an effect on Emirati culture? For example,  
 277. ways of dressing.  
 278. Malik: Maybe, dressing. Here's an example [ Malik points to Hamdan and Mansoor  
 279. who are wearing T-shirts and jeans]  
 280. Group: [?] [laughter]  
 281. Translator: A perfect example  
 282. Researcher: Yes. That's true, yes.  
 283. Abdul: I only wear this in uni.  
 284. Translator: And you're not wearing anything on your head  
 285. Fahad: Also, English has influenced our economy, like we do business a lot with  
 286. India, so we need English to communicate.  
 287. Translator: The economy. Of course. Two countries speak two different languages. We  
 288. have Arabic and we have Indian or we have Urdu, let's say.  
 289. Fahad: Urdu  
 290. Translator: And a company in the UAE wants to do business with a company in India the  
 291. only language that brings them together is English.  
 292. Researcher: Is English  
 293. Fahad: English  
 294. Translator: And that's the only way they can do business with the world  
 295. Researcher: Right, so it's necessary. Back to the clothing issue which is quite interesting.  
 296. You said you only wear the traditional clothing at university.  
 297. Abdul: Yes.  
 298. Researcher: Why?  
 299. Abdul: Because I'm not used to it since I was a small kid, that's why. So, I grow up  
 300. wearing same as them but here because all of them wear like that.  
 301. Researcher: Right.  
 302. Translator: How do you feel about wearing, you know, more Western casual clothes?  
 303. Mansoor: Very comfortable  
 304. Translator: Yes, you're comfortable  
 305. Mansoor: Also, it's different, just a change for me.  
 306. Malik: Because he was telling me that he was not comfortable and he was wearing  
 307. Kandura [traditional Emirati white robe], he was uncomfortable.  
 308. Omar: For example, for me outside uni I never ever wear this [kandura].  
 309. Researcher: Really?  
 310. Omar: Yes  
 311. Abdul: Just for Mosque.  
 312. Researcher: So why not?  
 313. Abdul: Just for mosque or wedding.  
 314. Researcher: Okay.  
 315. Translator: So, he said comfortable but not different, which I like. Comfortable.  
 316. Researcher: So, you don't want to be different from the majority, or you want to fit in with  
 317. everyone, or...  
 318. Hamdan: Just for comfort.  
 319. Translator: Only comfort. He is more comfortable, that's all. That's all he thinks about it.  
 320. Hamdan: I also think I look more handsome in Western clothing.  
 321. Translator: He thinks he looks more handsome in Western clothes  
 322. Researcher: Really? Yeah.  
 323. Translator: I don't think so by the way [laughter from group]. You should try it one day.  
 324. You'd look great in a thobe [another name for kandura], I think.  
 325. Hamdan: You don't want to see it.  
 326. Translator: No?  
 327. Researcher: How about you?  
 328. Mansoor: I don't like traditional clothes. Kandura.  
 329. Translator: He doesn't like to wear traditional clothing.

330. Researcher: Humm.

331. Mansoor: During Eid only.

332. Translator: Holidays, Eid, celebrations, special celebrations.

333. Mansoor: Even celebrations, I don't wear kandura

334. Translator: Weddings, maybe?

335. Mansoor: No.

336. Researcher: What does the kandura symbolize? Does it symbolize tradition? Is it something very normal?

337.

338. Malik: Normal

339. Translator: It does symbolize our culture, our country. It does symbolize tradition or who they are in the UAE as a culture as a tradition.

340.

341. Malik: More than Saudi Arabia, you know that I am an Emirati person because of my style.

342.

343. Researcher: Right

344. Malik: Wearing a kandura

345. Researcher: Different styles

346. Malik: Saudi Arabian kanduras are different and also the name, they call it thobe in Saudi Arabia, we call it kandura here.

347.

348. Translator: Oh, I say 'tobe', so that's wrong.

349. Malik: You can call it thobe, kandura, dishdasha.

350. Omar: From Kuwait and Qatar is dishdasha.

351. Researcher: In Qatar? Okay, now this is quite a deep question. Do you feel that English, or learning English, has affected your identity? So how you feel about yourself and how you see yourself in the world and how you think?

352.

353.

354. Omar: For me, as I said before it doesn't change anything.

355. Researcher: No.

356. Omar: Just any language that I learn, that's it. It doesn't change anything with my personality.

357.

358. Researcher: Okay

359. Fahad: English made me confident and not afraid to talk to anyone and go anywhere.

360.

361. Translator: Has it changed you as a person, as an Emirati person? So, English has changed him as a person, him as Fahad, he's more outgoing, he's more confident. He's not afraid of talking to people but it hasn't changed him as an Emirati person.

362.

363.

364.

365. Researcher: Right. I see.

366. Translator: In terms of personal qualities

367. Researcher: Has it improved who you are, given you more confidence?

368. Fahad: Yes

369. Researcher: Yes. Do...how do the rest of you feel about that? Do you feel it's given you confidence? Or has it changed you in a positive or negative way, or not at all?

370.

371. Malik: For me, it's positive.

372. Hamdan: For me, I don't feel anything because I've studied since I was small

373. Researcher: So, it's a part of you

374. Hamdan: It's just a part of me that I speak English

375. Researcher: Okay. Do you have any example of moments when you felt, oh I feel different because I'm speaking English or did you have, have you had any moments when you've felt, I feel different or I feel....

376.

377.

378. Mansoor: Like when I was in school and I studied subjects. When I moved from Islamic studies to English I feel it is a new class, I will change to another, you know, just another language from Arabic to English.

379.

380.

381. Researcher: Ummm. So you feel....

382. Mansoor: I feel it inside

383. Researcher: Okay. That's interesting.

384. Abdul: I do feel different from other people. For example, once I was in a restaurant and a guy only speaks English, the waiters, and the guy who wants to order, he doesn't know English so he called me and I started translating, that's the moment when I feel different than, because I have studied English.

385.

386.

387.

388. Researcher: That's different in a good way?

389. Abdul: Yeah

390. Researcher: Yeah, like you could help  
391. Abdul: Yeah  
392. Mansoor: Before, when I went to any restaurant if it empty then okay I order but if it is  
393. not empty  
394. Researcher: Why? You felt...  
395. Mansoor: Because I am awkward.  
396. Researcher: Really? okay  
397. Mansoor: I don't know how I order  
398. Researcher: You felt self-conscious?  
399. Mansoor: Embarrassed  
400. Researcher: Embarrassed? But now  
401. Mansoor: When I start learning English in every way, in school and ABP  
402. Translator: **Did it affect your way of thinking?**  
403. Omar: No  
404. Translator: Identity is also way of thinking, **has English influenced the way you think,**  
405. **your ideas as young Emiratis, as young Emirati men**  
406. Omar: **Not me, but when I look at others, I see change in some people.**  
407. Translator: They haven't changed but they see change  
408. Researcher: Yes. In society. What types of changes do you see?  
409. Omar: **I don't know.**  
410. Translator: **What type of change do you see?**  
411. Fahad: **Kind of music they listen. Rap.**  
412. Translator: **The way they move, gestures?** The way they say hello, the way they greet  
413. each other, they see some changes.  
414. Fahad: **They say 'hi' the American way, not the Emirati way.**  
415. Omar: Culture  
416. Translator: Culture. So, they do the American handshake, yeah. Yes, so some changes  
417. are happening.  
418. Malik: **Some guys only use English with each other, not Arabic.**  
419. Omar: **They seem affected by Western culture.**  
420. Malik: **The music they listen to – Western.**  
421. Translator: Yeah, yeah different. For example, we have one student on roller skates the  
422. whole time. It's not wrong, it's just different. This is something we would not  
423. normally see in this society. It's just different, they are not saying it is wrong.  
424. Researcher: Right.  
425. Translator: It's just not something they are used to  
426. Researcher: Right. So, it has changed but it's not a bad thing necessarily  
427. Malik: **And they say that they are doing it to be like others in the West.**  
428. Translator: And sometimes when asked a question, a simple answer would be 'I'm doing  
429. this like people abroad, or people outside'  
430. Researcher: Right  
431. Translator: Yeah, meaning, he's doing it because others in the West are doing it.  
432. Researcher: Right  
433. Translator: So, they do things just to be like people in the West  
434. Researcher: And is that positive or is it negative?  
435. Translator: Neither  
436. Malik: Positive  
437. Translator: **You said 'normal' not 'positive'**  
438. Researcher: Just normal  
439. Malik: Normal change  
440. Researcher: Ok, uhh, and also, actually, one more question, ways of thinking, because we  
441. talked about ways of acting but umm as far as thoughts, when you look  
442. around society, do you see people thinking in different ways. Sort of, for  
443. example, having different views about uhhh the world. For example, do you  
444. see people's traditional thoughts changing because of English being  
445. everywhere?  
446. Fahad: It's not about the language and it's about culture  
447. Researcher: That English brings with it  
448. Translator: **Traditional thinking, is it changing?**  
449. Fahad: **Like?**



450. Translator: A simple example, if your sister works for a company, is it okay for her to  
 451. have a coffee break at Starbucks with her coworker.  
 452. Fahad: Oh, okay, nowadays, yes.  
 453. Translator: Some ideas, thoughts are changing. I'm just saying think of a simple, simple  
 454. example, if your sister works for a company like Etisalat [local telephone  
 455. company], right and you see her having a coffee break with a colleague of hers,  
 456. a male colleague, has that become acceptable now?  
 457. Researcher: Is that okay now?  
 458. Translator: Is that okay now because we have opened up? That's, you know simple  
 459. things about the way we think traditionally, traditional things.  
 460. Omar: There are some people who accept it, there are some people who doesn't  
 461. accept it.  
 462. Translator: So, some things are okay and some things are not okay, still not okay in the  
 463. way we think traditionally.  
 464. Researcher: Um, okay. So we are going to move on to talk now about the future of  
 465. English. And you're all learning English now. Do you think the nationality of  
 466. your English teacher is important, or not?  
 467. Omar: Not. As long as he or she teaches English good. No.  
 468. Malik: If she can speak in British accent, it's okay  
 469. Translator: British? [laughter from the group]  
 470. Malik: Or American  
 471. Researcher: Okay. Um would you feel okay if you had an English teacher from the UAE?  
 472. Omar: Yes. Of course. Because if there's a word I didn't understand, he can translate  
 473. for me in Arabic, so I can understand better.  
 474. Researcher: Do you think it's better to have a teacher from the UAE who speaks Arabic  
 475. and English?  
 476. Omar: Yes.  
 477. Fahad: For me only UK or USA.  
 478. Omar: Not specifically from the UAE, for me it doesn't specifically have to be from  
 479. the UAE, just speaks Arabic.  
 480. Abdul: From Lebanon, from Lebanon also.  
 481. Researcher: It would be good too  
 482. Translator: I'm here now so he has to say that [translator is Lebanese-Syrian. Group laughs]  
 483. Researcher: But do you think it's good for the teacher to speak Arabic and English, or just  
 484. English, if they are teaching English?  
 485. Fahad: If they are teaching English, they teach in English but if there is someone  
 486. who doesn't understand in English, at that time, they use Arabic but the rest  
 487. of the time she doesn't use Arabic.  
 488. Researcher: Right  
 489. Abdul: It depends on the teacher  
 490. Researcher: Okay. So, it's more about the personality, not the nationality.  
 491. Omar: Yes  
 492. Abdul: No, no, sometimes the nationality is important because some countries, okay  
 493. if he is the teacher when he says some letters, he can't say it correctly.  
 494. Researcher: Right. Yeah.  
 495. Omar: Also accents.  
 496. Hamdan: Accents  
 497. Researcher: Umhum, accent is important?  
 498. Omar: If you bring in an Indian guy or even an Egyptian...  
 499. Fahad: You can understand more from the American, not from the....  
 500. Abdul: For example, some Egyptian guys say instead of 'the', 'ze'. So, when it is in  
 501. you mind it's all 'ze' not 'the'  
 502. Researcher: Right  
 503. Abdul: So, he has to be fluent in English. He doesn't, even whoever doesn't have to  
 504. make mistakes if he wants to teach English.  
 505. Researcher: Okay. And are you interested in learning about local issues when you're  
 506. learning about English, or would you like to learn about global issues?  
 507. Omar: Global what does it mean?  
 508. Translator: Do you prefer to learn a language when you are learning about local or  
 509. global issues?



510. Omar: International topics or local

511. Translator: Is language a factor when it comes to the nature of the topic discussed. Using

512. English with international topics or Emirati news?

513. Omar: For me it doesn't matter, but if we consider the news for example in

514. newspapers, English used is difficult so I prefer Arabic to read news in

515. general.

516. Translator: All news?

517. Fahad: For me, English is okay with fun topics like...

518. Abdul: But often we 'discover' news in English, but we discuss in Arabic

519. Translator: So, you use English to learn about any topic but Arabic is preferred if the

520. topic is difficult? [cell phone goes off]. So, they use English to discuss, well

521. one for global news, they use English to read about or to hear about the

522. news. Um, to discuss the news, you know, to discuss issues, if the topic is very

523. serious and difficult they prefer Arabic to discuss any topic whether it be

524. local or international especially if it's a heavy, serious topic but for fun

525. topics, they like, they can use English to discuss local issues, international

526. issues, global issues

527. Researcher: Okay, so it doesn't really matter local or international.

528. Translator: It's the NATURE of the issue, maybe.

529. Researcher: Um

530. Translator: It seems like the nature of the issue dictates if they like to use Arabic to

531. discuss it or English.

532. Researcher: Okay. If your teacher is British or American, are you interested in learning

533. about their traditions, for example, Christmas or Easter or other parts of

534. their culture, as part of an English course? Or are you not interested?

535. Malik: Interested.

536. Abdul: For me, yes, because if we want to learn them about Arabic, I am interested

537. in this culture

538. Researcher: So, you would like to learn...

539. Fahad: I would like to learn about his culture because for example, you have a US

540. teacher, if you go to US, you have some background about culture.

541. Researcher: So, it's useful

542. Fahad: Yeah. We don't go there, and we don't know anything about their culture.

543. Researcher: Um, okay.

544. Abdul: In my opinion language makes you understand about the other culture

545. Translator: So, you would ask the teacher questions or you would wait for the teacher to

546. tell you about herself.

547. Abdul: I would as ask

548. Translator: So, you would ask, you are not shy, you can go ahead

549. Researcher: Everybody agrees?

550. Group: Yes

551. Omar: Yeah. I notice that some American and British teachers they have a lot of

552. knowledge about our culture. It is good.

553. Researcher: Umhum. Good. And the last question, um, when you are doing your major,

554. when you are choosing your major, would you prefer to study in Arabic or

555. English?

556. Omar: Both

557. Researcher: Both. Okay

558. Omar: Both, because the company should have a requirement for certificate in both.

559. Translator: Certificate

560. Both: A certificate, an English certificate and if they need Arabic I have, so both of

561. them I have.

562. Researcher: Okay

563. Omar: So, I just don't feel complicated and don't know where to go.

564. Researcher: Okay. So, would you like both languages equally?

565. Omar: Yes

566. Researcher: Yes. What do you think?

567. Malik: Well for me it's because the major I want to study, English is the most, it's

568. English in this major. If I don't know English, I cannot study this major.

569. Researcher: Which major is it?

570. Malik: Uhh, business. Okay, does anyone disagree and would like to study just in  
571. Arabic. No.  
572. Researcher: No. Both or just in English?  
573. Mansoor: Both  
574. Group: Yeah. And...yeah.  
575. Translator: Are we getting both now here?  
576. Malik: No  
577. Fahad: Most of the companies, ninety percent of the companies, they need English.  
578. Translator: How about in school. In business you don't have any courses, right?  
579. Malik: You know, **most companies have foreigners – investment from outside.**  
580. Translator: Investment  
581. Malik: **All speak English.**  
582. Translator: They only require English. But also here, most of the courses are only in  
583. English, **even if they say**, we want to know both for example, Arabic business  
584. Arabic writing, **imagine**, how to write business reports in Arabic, can you do  
585. that? Do you think you can do that? You have the language?  
586. Omar: **For me, I want to work in media, Abu Dhabi TV.**  
587. Translator: **They use Arabic?**  
588. Omar: **Yes, but since I studied here, I will have English.**  
589. Translator: **So, you need more Arabic.** So, you're saying, he wants to study media and his  
590. goal is to work in Abu Dhabi TV, or Abu Dhabi media so it could be  
591. journalism or it could be TV.  
592. Omar: **Not sure yet.**  
593. Translator: And they require Arabic and English, or English and Arabic, I think Arabic  
594. and English, so Arabic is a priority?  
595. Researcher: Okay  
596. Translator: But you need English as well. It depends on the major, right?  
597. Researcher: But in the future you'd prefer to see more Arabic in majors, because now it's  
598. mostly English, isn't it?  
599. Omar: Yeah  
600. Translator: Also, media is all in English, I think at [REDACTED] University you only have, **Islamic**  
601. **Studies** is only in Arabic **different areas or branches**, you study it in English  
602. but you also have Arabic.  
603. Omar: We have both  
604. Translator: Yes, you have both. But in other majors like business you only have English,  
605. media I think you only have English, English courses.  
606. Researcher: So, thank you, that's really interesting. Is there anything else you'd like to  
607. share on the topic?  
608. Fahad: Thank you very much  
609. Researcher: Thank you  
610. Translator: Great ideas  
611. Researcher: Yes, it's really, really interesting.

## Sample 2: Group 2, Focus Group 1 (G2-FG1) (Emirati primary school teachers)

45 minutes

1. Researcher: Okay, so welcome to the focus group. I have a few questions for you regarding English  
2. and Arabic. My first question is, what words do you connect with Arabic? If you think  
3. of Arabic what words come into your mind?  
4. Shaikha: Our culture, our customs. Also, the Holy Quran. All this keep us to encourage us to  
5. speak in Arabic.  
6. Lubna: Yeah. Religion, Islam and home because all of us in our home talk in Arabic language.  
7. Anood: Yeah, the communication between family, or our family and our friends. It's the first  
8. language to deal with our kids also.  
9. Researcher: Umhum, okay. And is that true for all of you, you would speak to your children in  
10. only Arabic?  
11. Khadija: Yeah. Concerning...I have something more. I sometimes, concerning feelings, I

12. sometimes feel sorry for when I hear the word Arabic nowadays, you know. I feel  
 13. that Arabic, you know, become weak more and more because of many other aspects  
 14. or, especially in the teaching, I feel that Arabic should not be the language of  
 15. speaking of tradition or any other thing, if should be the language of everything.
16. Researcher: Um, hum, yes. And do you think that's mainly because of English. English has pushed  
 17. Arabic out?
18. Shaikha: Not English, also now in our country there is a lot of errr...
19. Group: Many nationalities
20. Shaikha: Many nationalities is coming to our culture, that's why we use the English to  
 21. communicate with others. So, English help us to err to translate to the other  
 22. nationalities like Indian or Filipinos, especially also in hospitals when we need to  
 23. asking about the patients or the treatment we have to use English. Better than  
 24. Arabic.
25. Khadija: You know I think Arabic or any language is identity. So, when you talk about your  
 26. identity, and you feel that it is something very dangerous and something that attack  
 27. or destroy, maybe, I don't know whether I have the exact vocab. Your identity, it's a  
 28. very interesting thing. Um, it is not just a language to communicate. It is many things,  
 29. it is to us many things.
30. Researcher: Umhum, umhum. Um, so the identity is the core of who you are so of course it's a very  
 31. important factor. On the other hand, you mentioned words that you connect with  
 32. Arabic, and mainly religion and home and family. When you think of English what  
 33. words come into your mind when you think of English?
34. Salwa: The world language, the faculty, the university, if we want to study, we need to have  
 35. to learn English. If you want to visit other countries or traveling, we have to know  
 36. English.
37. Oshba: For me, I find it in the hospitals, the latest research on different things, the medical  
 38. maybe the education, and you find it in English, only English. If you want to work in  
 39. Arabic it's rarely to have an article or study or survey in Arabic and I find it in the  
 40. Internet.
41. Researcher: Umhum.
42. Lubna: They use the English language for everything, even teaching. When we search for a  
 43. worksheet or...a video.
44. Researcher: Umhum. So, this will have a huge impact on the future as well. When people are  
 45. studying in English.
46. Lubna: In terms of technology also, we see that technology is all in English, not in Arabic.
47. Salwa: I think also English is a global language not only in our country but in all countries.
48. Researcher: All over the world this is happening.
49. Salwa: Yes, all over the world, exactly.
50. Researcher: Okay. And, um, now to turn to look at attitudes towards English, so I just want to ask  
 51. you why are you taking the English classes here? Is it for professional reasons or  
 52. personal reasons or for a mix of the two factors?
53. Shaikha: For teaching, because the curriculum in our country has changed from Arabic to  
 54. English and we have to teach our students three subjects, English, Maths and Science  
 55. in English. That's why we come to the university to improve our language skill so we  
 56. know how to teach them in English.
57. Researcher: Right. And do you feel happy to do that or....what's your attitude being here learning  
 58. English?
59. Shaikha: In my opinion I am happy to be here because I learn a lot from, ah, native English  
 60. teachers. They help me to understand the language originally.
61. Researcher: Uhhuh.
62. Shaikha: But I don't happy to teach English in English because it's not my own language so still  
 63. I have mistakes so how can I teach my students?
64. Oshba: If you are not feeling comfortable to do this.
65. Shaikha: Yes, but I can still teach them science. I am comfortable to teach them science.  
 66. English no.
67. Salwa: Also, sorry, when it comes to learning, it's all for learning, you can't say enough for  
 68. learning. New things, new ideas, to share even the philosophy between other  
 69. teachers and for studying English and even you can't say enough because everyday  
 70. you learn new things.
71. Researcher: Umhum.

72. Salwa: But to teach in English it's again the same, you can do it.
73. Shaikha: I agree because I'm a teacher of math. It's easy for me to teach math in English
74. but especially in English I can't teach English.
75. Researcher: The language itself?
76. Shaikha: Umhum.
77. Salwa: Also, the students copy the mistakes. Students and children, when we teach them
78. wrong thing they will learn the wrong thing. That's what happened for us because
79. when we studied English at school ten years ago, we copied the mistakes from our
80. teachers.
81. Researcher: Umhum
82. Salwa: I don't want to give them the blame because they are not native teachers. So I want...
83. Researcher: Umhum, so you might not teach something because you're scared of making a
84. mistake?
85. Khadija: Concerning me, I have mixed feeling. You know, as I said before it's very necessary to
86. learn English as a global language and as a language of science and everything but I
87. feel we don't need to teach in English especially the kids because I think it threatens
88. identity, it threatens the language so no need at all and if you ask me if you are happy
89. if you are here, I said 'why not'. But not really too much because I am here because I
90. am obliged, I don't have any the choice, nobody asked me whether you want to come
91. here or not, you know. I'm happy to be here to study and develop my language but I
92. have to choose.
93. Oshba: The idea is that to teach this language to the children, you are not sure about that?
94. Khadija: No, I'm not talking about I am not sure or not about my language, I'm talking to
95. transfer this learning to your children in English. Yes? Because from my experience, I
96. know children when they grow up they don't learn English when they are kids they
97. can learn it, they can acquire it when they are adults, no problem. So why I need to
98. teach them math and science and I think there are many researches that are made
99. about two parts of people especially about doctors. One who learn urr his study
100. medicine in Arabic and the other study in French and they found that the one who
101. study medicine in his own language is much better than the other one. He can
102. understand the concepts more...uh....
103. Shaikha: Deeply
104. Khadija: Deeply, yeah. So, I think no need [Khadija laughs]. This is what I feel.
105. Researcher: Okay. That's really interesting so umm, do you think that English is connected with
106. Western culture? So, the culture of America and England or do you feel that English is
107. a neutral language? So, do you feel that when you are learning English, you're also
108. learning about another culture or do you feel that English is just English and it's not
109. about learning another culture?
110. Salwa: I think of course it affects the other cultures because contact with other people of
111. course if I have some tradition I will transfer it in English language to other culture.
112. At the same time the other culture, manners, behave, I will influence this type of
113. culture, especially I think for young people or teenagers. They have a lot of medias,
114. technology, it's contact in English language all the time. It's easy to transfer behaves,
115. traditions, manners to them.
116. Lubna: Also, the teenager here in our culture create a new language. It's not exactly English.
117. Group: [Laughter]
118. Lubna: This language, nobody understand this language, not even they. They understand the
119. new words but native English, they can't understand these words. So, it effect the
120. Arabic language and English language.
121. Researcher: Interesting. And what are some of the words that they create? Can you tell me?
122. Lubna: Like, 'delete'. They didn't say delete, they say deloot or delooted, like that.
123. Researcher: Um
124. Lubna: New phrase. Something new.
125. Researcher: And they all know what it means?
126. Lubna: They know it, they understand. Also, they do it in chatting. Also, the message when
127. they do broadcast, they send a message and they understand it but other people they
128. can't understand it.
129. Salwa: They also have a new alphabet like ah 3. Marah with they write ma3
130. Researcher: Um. So, what does the 3 mean?
131. Khadija: Ain. The letter Ain.

132. Researcher: Okay  
133. Salwa: But, we speak now about the culture. So, there is, all cultures have positives and have  
134. negatives. We have to make sure for languages for us transfer the good thing. So, if we  
135. take for example some behaves from the movie it's different than when you take  
136. from a book and read it about this topic. For example, US they have like multi  
137. international people so if they youngs or others saw the movie they might think that  
138. that is the American style or American behaves. But in reality they could read what  
139. happened in the books for the nations for the natives of America how they are  
140. fighting or how they are works to survive.  
141. Researcher: Umhum  
142. Oshba: And, one more thing I would like to add, um, learning the language, I saw it as stairs.  
143. The first step is to have the vocabulary of the language. Then you said, 'I will change  
144. my way of, uh, wearing my clothes to be like the foreign people' or the stereotype  
145. that you have about the same language that you are learning. So, you will change your  
146. clothes, then you will change your lifestyle, then you will change your attitude  
147. towards your old language because you see the new life. Then you will change step  
148. by step and you will lose your identity as Sheikha said and your language in general,  
149. you will not be able to go back to it because you will feel strange about your main  
150. identity. And what hurts nowadays we saw our, not me, I mean in general, I mean the  
151. teenagers, the flexible people who are able to acquire a new language and lifestyle,  
152. they saw it as a shame to stay in their culture and their identity. They would like to  
153. change.  
154. Lubna: They are proud of their English.  
155. Oshba: Yeah. And they like to communicate with. When I see them I see like [?]  
156. **what is it?** what do you call it in English?' without, freak people, like an alien. They  
157. look like Arabs but they talk a different language and they generate new language  
158. which Salwa said and you feel 'who are they?' And you feel that you don't want to  
159. communicate with them. I'll stay back, you know. It's not the way that I'm not  
160. inflexible to change or to accept the way that they live but it's not, I don't feel  
161. comfortable to see them or communicate with them.  
162. Anood: Because it transfer to a new generation later on.  
163. Lubna: I think it's complex.  
164. Researcher: It is complex.  
165. Shaikha: It's not easy to, it's important thing a parent how to deal with her kids and to give  
166. him a good idea about how to learn English and how to, when to talk, where to talk,  
167. how to talk. It's not easy.  
168. Khadija: I think, it depends on who teach the children English and how they learn English. For  
169. example, all my children, or any children, when they learn, they learn English or  
170. taught English by Arab teachers, I think no problem. But nowadays when foreign  
171. teacher teach them I think this teacher is a culture, it's a, herself is a culture and  
172. everything. And as she said, when they learn English by movies, it's a culture, it's not  
173. a language, it's not only a language.  
174. Oshba: Because, Sheikha, they teach in the ADEC curriculum, you know when a teacher say  
175. there, her way of...  
176. Khadija: Yes, she is a culture  
177. Oshba: Her clothes, it's not a direct instruction that she gives to us.  
178. Khadija: Yes. This is what I mean.  
179. Oshba: Yeah, as a person...  
180. Salwa: One thing I want to add about negative fact in teaching English. They started teaching  
181. from the KG and you know from KG, students are still don't know their language, so  
182. when they introduce them to teach them English and Arabic in the one time, writing  
183. and reading in one time, that affect them in a bad way. Now in our schools, I taught  
184. Grade 5, I find that students, my students, wrote English from right side to left side  
185. and wrote Arabic from left side. That makes things confused and make the words like  
186. a reflection. When you write a word and put it in the mirror, you see the word in the  
187. mirror. They do it in their handwriting so that's...  
188. Researcher: They write backwards.  
189. Salwa: That's negative in our society, and I want to teach them English, real English. Not  
190. teach them in the textbook, especially in KG. They have to learn English in listening  
191. only, without writing and reading textbook. This is maybe better for them because as

192. you know the children, when the children grow up, they didn't use the text book. So  
 193. here in our culture, they teach them the grammar and vocab, they didn't know the  
 194. phrases.  
 195. Researcher: Umhum  
 196. Salwa: That's my opinion.  
 197. Lubna: I agree because I am now in Finnish school, government school but it's first  
 198. experience about this Finnish. They told me that in their country they didn't give the  
 199. students English until Grade 3. Because from Grades 1 and 2 and 3, they learn in  
 200. their own language. I think it's mistake to give him, BIG, big mistake to give him this  
 201. English from the start.  
 202. Researcher: From KG.  
 203. Lubna: Yeah. From KG. Most research... Because this Finnish is the highest  
 204. Researcher: The highest educational system.  
 205. Lubna: Yeah. It's good. I take this idea. Why we didn't....  
 206. Khadija: Good readers in their language, in future they will be good readers in other  
 207. languages so we have to focus on their own language and also from my own  
 208. experience, from school now. I attended two classes. One Arabic teacher who teach  
 209. in English and the other is a foreign teacher, I am talking about the culture and  
 210. concepts. The other teacher who is a foreign English teacher, I find that students with  
 211. Arabic teacher much better in science and math, you know. Even she talk all the time  
 212. in English but I think she is more qualified how to ....  
 213. Salwa: Deal with.....  
 214. Khadija: Yes, to use the information and how to communicate with them. She understand  
 215. them more than the other teacher.  
 216. Researcher: Umhum.  
 217. Anood: Not always.  
 218. Khadija: In maths and science, much better with the students.  
 219. Oshba: That's a good point. When you teach second language, I mean Arabic people teach the  
 220. other Arabic people language. We know our basic in Arabic so when we teach our  
 221. students we will base on this. For example, we say 'the classroom'. In Arabic, we flip  
 222. those. So, if you teach them you say in English, we flip the article with the noun and  
 223. so, you know. So, we will have the same base.  
 224. Researcher: Yes. So, it's easier for them to understand.  
 225. Oshba: Yeah.  
 226. Khadija: Not only math and science but even in English?  
 227. Salwa: Yeah. Arabic is different than English. We have subject verb object. In English it's  
 228. changed.  
 229. Oshba: So, we go back to the logic.  
 230. Salwa: We use the Arabic way and make mistakes, that's why.  
 231. Researcher: So, we're going to move on now to talk about cultural identity in the UAE. So, do you  
 232. think that English as a global language has affected the UAE culture? We've  
 233. touched on this a little bit earlier but do you think that culturally, the UAE is very  
 234. different from how it was because of English?  
 235. Oshba: We can't blame English only. It's the....  
 236. Salwa: It's the most international language now so we have to learn it but I strongly agree  
 237. that we have to learn English because this is help us to enter the universities, to  
 238. communicate with others but we have to save our identity and keep our language,  
 239. and use our language also. And use English in the right way.  
 240. Researcher: Right, so use English for some areas of life and Arabic for others.  
 241. Shaikha: I think especially for kids it will affect, more affect maybe than adults. For adults it  
 242. will not be more affect because they understand the culture but children it effect will  
 243. be more.  
 244. Khadija: We feel unfortunately is affected deeply.  
 245. Researcher: Right. Umhum.  
 246. Khadija: Yes.  
 247. Anood: Even if you talk about occasions, I, in the recent decades we don't have cakes, we  
 248. didn't celebrate birthdays, or anniversary or valentines. Nowadays our children push  
 249. us to make a birthday for them or, because they see this one in the movies or in  
 250. cartoons and most of their movies in English and they push their parents to celebrate  
 251. their birthday.

252. Khadija: Something is not...this is not because of the English. Our society become very open  
 253. and with many many nationalities, hundreds of nationalities live with us.  
 254. Salwa: Most of residents are foreign now in our culture.  
 255. Khadija: This is not a problem for you, no?  
 256. Salwa: The population in Arabic is less than other nationalities  
 257. Researcher: So, you are a minority  
 258. Salwa: That's why we have to know their occasions and respect them also....  
 259. Anood: But if we talk about the culture in the UAE, urm, in my opinion I think, I see it effect  
 260. on teenagers more because when we go to malls or centers, we see many teenager  
 261. they aren't, they don't wear kandura, they wear suits or jeans or T-shirts and  
 262. sometimes I don't know they are locals, just I see in the first time I think they're not  
 263. from the country but when they speak I kind of find them .....they ignore the kandura,  
 264. they buy the foreign jeans and suits, even the girls, they change.  
 265. Salwa: They change. [some background talking]  
 266. Oshba: Sarah, even before, when I was in the elementary stages we've had it come, like the  
 267. generation talking different language, wearing European clothes, I rarely see the  
 268. dishdasha or kandura [two names for white robe worn by men], the tradition  
 269. clothes and we said that we will have a time that we only celebrate the national day  
 270. and be culture on that, **what is it**, around two days or three days later and we will go back  
 271. to our normal life. We've had it come, we see it. So now we are living it. Hala, it's  
 272. there.  
 273. Researcher: Ummmmm. So, do you feel that's the way it is now?  
 274. Oshba: Yes.  
 275. Researcher: That really it's national day when people celebrate Emirati culture but the rest of the  
 276. year....  
 277. Oshba: They live their life, lifestyles.  
 278. Shaikha: I think, as Emiratis, when we think there is something good, or when we take the  
 279. good thing from other as a kind of model, it's er, we will save our identity, but if we  
 280. take it as a dress or hairstyle or something, it's something else. It will be something  
 281. disturb or interfere our identity.  
 282. Anood: Maybe they are copying also sometimes something new in even Western countries  
 283. like new styles. They just see it in the movies, they try to cut their hair in dangerous  
 284. way.  
 285. Researcher: Um, umhum. And, another question related to this, thinking personally about  
 286. yourselves, this is quite a deep question, but do you think that learning English has  
 287. affected your personal identity? So, looking at how you think and how you see  
 288. yourself in the world, do you feel English has made any changes to the way you see  
 289. yourself or the way you think? It's quite a deep question.  
 290. Khadija: Yes. Yes. It's a personal question? I ask you now, when Oshba explain about it, she  
 291. explain about herself or in general?  
 292. Researcher: About yourself. About your personal identity. So, thinking about who you are as a  
 293. person. Do you feel that you have changed because of speaking English? Or the way  
 294. you see yourself in the world?  
 295. Salwa: Maybe not our generation, maybe this coming generation. Maybe this question  
 296. should be for the next generation. About myself, I don't feel it's changed my  
 297. personality, just I want my kids to be better in English, to not umm, urr, **[?]**  
 298. spoken so far in the future, in their studies. I like to speak with them sometimes in  
 299. English and umm their father speak with them in Arabic so when I talk with them in  
 300. English, they reply with me also in English but when in Arabic they also can answer  
 301. in Arabic when their father asks them. But for me, I don't really feel it's changed me in  
 302. anyway, so.  
 303. Oshba: I think the, I have a funny story about English. Ahhh, one day I was in the car with my  
 304. husband and my kids. He is in KG2, he talk with me in English and the father like  
 305. mute. He's not there, somebody is driving the car, it is not his father [laughs]. And the  
 306. conversation was there and we were talking and he asked his father 'isn't it like this?'  
 307. and his father didn't answer, so I feel like yes, we are in the car but we are in danger,  
 308. we are like isolated our father from dealing with us or join us in our conversation  
 309. about...  
 310. Salwa: Because he doesn't know much English?  
 311. Oshba: Yes, so I taught the children the Arabic language at home and when my child start to



312. talk in English, I answer him in Arabic to erm, to ask his father to join us, you know,  
 313. because it's scary because I need this relationship between us.  
 314. Researcher: Absolutely.  
 315. Oshba: And about learning English and my personality, when I learn English, I understand  
 316. their culture and that give me like a reason for their actions. When I see someone  
 317. removing her abaya [black robe], I say ahh she can remove it because she is affected by  
 318. the English, because she is working with them and that give the people reason but  
 319. it's not changing me because I know my identity, I know why I have to stick in my  
 320. culture, **you know**, I know that I don't want to seem like a strange person, Arabic strange  
 321. person, you know? So, I have this language to understand the culture to give  
 322. reason or...  
 323. Researcher: To be open-minded?  
 324. Oshba: Yes, to be open-minded, that's all. To not change myself. And to be honest when I  
 325. travel or communicate with the doctors around the world. I talk with them in  
 326. English, and totally English to make it smoothly and easier for me to communicate  
 327. with them but to change my way of dress and the way to communicate at home, the  
 328. way I eat, it's not but I take some of their lifestyle to make my life better. The good  
 329. thing, we can take the good thing.  
 330. Researcher: So, which aspects of English lifestyle do you adopt? So, what are the good things that  
 331. you would introduce into your life?  
 332. Oshba: Actually, when I start to take it the lifestyle, I realize, yes, we have it in my childhood,  
 333. we have it, my mother do it. Why I see it differently when the people do it, you know,  
 334. it's like a stereotype, I want to be like them, I start to imitate them but then I realize  
 335. that I have it in my culture but I see it differently. I see it from my mother, for me like,  
 336. you have to do it, you know as, but when I see it from far away, you know..  
 337. Researcher: It's more attractive maybe....  
 338. Oshba: Yes, all the things that I learn from them I have it there. Especially in our religion, we  
 339. have, for example, when we talk about to be punctual. We have in our Islam, we have  
 340. our prayer like at 7 o'clock you have to be here, at 6 o'clock you have to do your  
 341. prayer and 12 o'clock. You have to be punctual.  
 342. Salwa: You have to manage your time  
 343. Oshba: Yes, because time is money. And to manage the time, to respect the time.  
 344. Salwa: To respect other people, yes.  
 345. Shaikha: All people.  
 346. Lubna: I have different ideas. About me, English language is only language. It didn't affect my  
 347. culture, it didn't affect my because I believe that parents can do everything like she  
 348. says at home I don't communicate with my kids in English at all. Arabic for me but I  
 349. start to teach them in English. If they need help, I will help. Like put on iPad some  
 350. programs in English so they have to learn because this is the, **you know**, the global  
 351. language. We have to learn it but when they speak with me in English, no, I don't  
 352. agree with that because they will get it at school. English is an easy language, it's not  
 353. a difficult language. When our kids are in KG1 they will learn it I know but the most  
 354. difficult is Arabic. As a language, Arabic is more difficult than English, the basic so I  
 355. try and let them in school. Now, my daughter, she is Grade 2, now she gives me some  
 356. vocabs, some ideas because English it's easier when they will start earlier.  
 357. Khadija: I agree with you, as I told all my children, they didn't, they just went to the  
 358. government school and I don't remember any time in my life when I talk to them in  
 359. English, even one word. Just as a curriculum at school. And now, I told you that my  
 360. daughter she got a Masters with distinction from Leeds with political law, with  
 361. international law so there is no problem with it. All of them, they communicate  
 362. easily, they study easily so I don't think that, English didn't affect them at all. They  
 363. have their own personalities, they are proud of their culture and at the same time  
 364. they can do everything with English so as she said English should be as a language  
 365. only, as a means to communicate and learn, not more than that.  
 366. Shaikha: Yes, I have an experience with my daughter. She's start learn English language at 9,  
 367. and then in the nursery and then in KG1 and KG2. She now has difficulties in Arabic.  
 368. Until Grade 3, I keep her with tutor in Arabic not with English but she's now perfect  
 369. in Arabic. She like Arabic more than English, even she start her first years with  
 370. English. Now she's very good but I didn't copy this experience with other daughter. I  
 371. start with her Arabic and English, we cannot stop the new generation with English,



372. even at home, because all the medias or technology are deal with, I cannot say in  
373. Arabic 'internet' because it's a difficult word for kids. I cannot say for them many  
374. things. Icons, and things in iPad, in movies but at the same time we have to save our  
375. identity, our native language.  
376. Researcher: Umhum.  
377. Khadija: And if we have a look at other nations, great nations like Japan, like Germany they  
378. have their own languages, they didn't, if you go to Germany you have to  
379. communicate in German. You couldn't talk to anyone who can understand English in  
380. their daily life.  
381. Researcher: Ummmm [showing doubt as to whether this is true]  
382. Khadija: So all nations, they can develop themselves, they can.....  
383. Salwa: But if you travel to Germany, you have difficulties there because they didn't  
384. communicate with you  
385. Khadija: In English, this is what I mean, Even in Japan...  
386. Salwa: So that's why  
387. Khadija: Even in everywhere  
388. Anood: But also talking about other cultures, long time ago Germany , it was more difficult  
389. than it was now. They are proficient in the English language. They start to do it...  
390. Group: [A lot of overlapping conversations,unclear]  
391. Researcher: And perhaps the UAE is unique.  
392. Oshba: Another thing, our Prophet Mohamed is pushing us to learn the other languages  
393. because it's easier to communicate. You can't live isolated in this world.  
394. Researcher: Which languages?  
395. Salwa: There was... just other languages, he didn't mention any.  
396. Khadija: Yeah. But the countries that surround the area at that time, which other languages?  
397. Rome?  
398. Oshba: What do you call it?  
399. Khadija: Farsi  
400. Shaikha: British  
401. Khadija: Romanian  
402. Researcher: Romanian, really?  
403. Khadija: Roma, before 1400 years.  
404. Anood: And Prophet Mohamed at the time he was affected by other cultures like Farsi  
405. culture. They took some ideas from one man call [?].  
406. Khadija: As Oshba said, he push us to learn other languages and communicate and exchange  
407. ideas, no problem. But we have to save our culture and identity.  
408. Researcher: Okay, so we are going to move on to the final topic which is looking at how English  
409. should be taught in the future. So, do you think that, we've touched on this topic  
410. before, but when we're looking at the nationality of English teachers, do you think  
411. that nationality is important for English teachers in the UAE? So, for example, should  
412. the English teachers be Emirati or should they be foreign, and from which countries.  
413. What is the ideal English teacher in the UAE in your opinion?  
414. Salwa: Most of foreign people in our school now are from Canada and British. They are the  
415. most perfect English teacher because they talk the original language.  
416. Shaikha: Other teachers from Africa or India, I think they have the language better than us but  
417. not like the original so the students will learn more better from the British and  
418. Canadian, better than African people.  
419. Lubna: I think also our generation depends on the new generation. The new generation is  
420. fluent talking in English and excellent and everything, and academic words they have  
421. it already. I think most of Emiratis, the new generation, their goals or objectives are  
422. more than bachelors. It's in Masters also and PhD at the moment so I think they have  
423. a confidence to teach English in the future more than us as we are not established in  
424. err a new technology and new media so they contact easily in English. The accent  
425. they have everything that qualify them to teach English in the future.  
426. Khadija: You mean the Emirati people?  
427. Researcher: Umhum.  
428. Khadija: Because actually, you don't need the accent, why I need the American accent or the  
429. English accent, just I need the language to communicate.  
430. Oshba: I can get it from anywhere because when we learn English, Grade 1 to 3 it's in basic  
431. Arabic and converted to English from Grade 4 and we have tapes which pronounce

432. the words in British English or American so we can use those media to help us have  
 433. the pronunciation but the basic is how to learn the language in a logic way as I said  
 434. before, it's to flip or to turn the article or the word itself or the noun so...

435. Lubna: I totally agree.

436. Khadija: You are evidence. Who taught you English?

437. Oshba: One of my teachers.

438. Khadija: I know, what is the nationality, I mean?

439. Oshba: Syrian. She is Syrian.

440. Khadija: So, what is the problem with Oshba now?

441. Researcher: Umm

442. Khadija: There is evidence here.

443. Researcher: Yes.

444. Khadija: All teachers before were Arabic teachers. [a lot of people speaking at the same time –  
 445. unclear]

446. Salwa: If we had learned English from native people when we were at school we will be  
 447. better now.

448. Oshba: You will not be yourself.

449. Salwa: I accept. I speak about me, not other subjects, I meant English only. Students now will  
 450. speak better than us. Students now in our school.

451. Khadija: You speak about yourself.

452. Salwa: Yes, this is a language, I like English. I'm in KG, I see only word, I ask my father,  
 453. 'what's this word in English?'

454. Oshba: You were curious?

455. Salwa: I'm in KG, I wrote only word and I told my father 'what's this word I see only in  
 456. English?'

457. Researcher: So, you were curious?

458. Salwa: I like this language. I'm learning maybe early but I stop to learn English maybe 20  
 459. years before. I forget many words and I can't communicate with the other English  
 460. people. But if you like this language you will be, it will easy to learn, not difficult.

461. Resarcher: So, you think it's more about attitude rather than where the teacher is from?

462. Salwa: Yes, it is not a difficult language.

463. Sheikha: Maybe Arabic is difficult to learn, take time to learn. Specific things in Arabic not easy  
 464. to learn quickly but English I think it's not a difficult language.

465. Researcher: Umhum.

466. Khadija: And as I told you from these two classes I attend this year. Every week I attend with  
 467. Arabic teacher and with English teacher. As Lubna said, this Emirati teacher is  
 468. very qualified and she can really make the students more, they can understand easily  
 469. the concepts that she explains and introduce.

470. Anood: At least we can save our culture. Just we can get the language. If it is an Emirati  
 471. teacher, the students will err....

472. Lubna: She's attractive for the students.

473. Khadija: Not only the culture, the subject itself.

474. Researcher: Do you think she'd be a role model?

475. Oshba: A role model

476. Khadija: But we don't have too much.

477. Lubna: I have an Emirati English teacher in my friend's school, all of the teachers are from  
 478. foreign countries. Just one Emirati, she teaching maths, English and science. She's a  
 479. role model for Emirati teachers, teaching English and teaching math and science also.  
 480. For example, when the visitors come to the school, the principle is American she  
 481. takes the visitors to this class because it's a model class. It's showing the school as a  
 482. model school. When you saw other classes it's just foreign people teaching English.

483. Khadija: Exactly

484. Salwa: They didn't have the teaching techniques. They have the language.

485. Oshba: We're talking about the teacher who present as I said the Holy Quran, the culture, as I  
 486. said the language is okay. So, it's not only a person or a device or the medium to talk  
 487. in English it's a whole person itself so I prefer to be totally Emirati.

488. Researcher: Umhum. In the future, that is the goal?

489. Group: Yes.

490. Anood: I will ask you a question, would you prefer if you learn Arabic, do you prefer Arabic  
 491. teacher or English teacher?

492. Researcher: Yeah, it's a difficult question. My instinct would be to say, 'I'd like an Arabic speaking  
493. teacher because I want to learn the language perfectly and have the correct  
494. pronunciation however if the English person teaching Arabic was very good and had  
495. perfect Arabic herself then I'd be happy to learn from her so it's a similar concept. It  
496. depends on the level of Arabic that the person speaks not so much the nationality of  
497. the person. So that's very interesting to hear your views on how you'd like it to be in  
498. the future. Just to end with one last question, when we're talking about English. Would  
499. you prefer to learn about local issues when you're learning English or are you happy  
500. to learn about issues that relate to British culture or American culture? For example,  
501. if you're studying a textbook, would you prefer to see um the themes, themes that  
502. are related to festivals in the west such as Halloween or Christmas or would you  
503. prefer not to see those issues in textbooks?
504. Anood: Occasions, no. But, if you ask about the issues, like vandalism, something that is new  
505. to our culture, I never mind to have some idea about this thing so when I travel, I  
506. have background about their culture. But about occasion, I don't think because we  
507. have occasions from our culture.
508. Khadija: Yes, we will learn it from media.
509. Shaikha: I think it depends.
510. Lubna: If we like something we can take it and adapt it to our celebrations. For example, for  
511. Pinata [Mexican container made of papier-mache holding sweets], we can think with  
512. the local things, we can make an alternative and ur, make for happiness but by  
513. adaptation, not by copying.
514. Researcher: Okay. That's a great point. Okay, we're going to stop there because it is 10 o'clock.  
515. Thank you very much for sharing your views with me.

### **Sample 3: Group 3, Focus Group 1 (G3-FG1) (Expatriate university English teachers)**

1 hour, 2 minutes

1. Yonka: Why am I the only non-native? Because we don't have a lot of non-natives?
2. Researcher: Ummm. It's based on percentages
3. Yonka: I'm not going to take it personally [laughs]
4. Researcher: [laughs]
5. Graeme: You're the token. [laughs]
6. Researcher: Ok. So.
7. Tabitha: I think it was probably random, Tuba. [laughs]
8. Yonka: The name, [REDACTED]
9. Tabitha: [Laughs]
10. Researcher: Welcome to the focus group and thank you for coming. So, the first issue that we're  
11. going to look at is talking about how you feel English and Arabic are represented. So  
12. when you think of the word English, which words pop into your mind, so which words  
13. do you associate with the English language?
14. Tabitha: Generally? As a teacher or as a person?
15. Researcher: Generally. As a person and as teacher. Generally, what do you think, when you think of  
16. English?
17. Tabitha: Global
18. Graeme: Anglo Saxon
19. Tabitha: Umm?
20. Anna: Business communication
21. Researcher: Okay
22. Yonka: WHITE. Very white, male, uhh culture, reading novels.
23. Researcher: Umhm. So you said white and male. Do you think that still applies or...
24. Yonka: It doesn't, but when I first started learning the language, that was the thing, I would  
25. look at the name of the author and that was always male to begin with, and they were

26. white, so..... Of course, it has changed a lot but still I cannot associate English with other  
 27. races to this day. Even now.

28. Tabitha: Um ...interesting.

29. Rachel: As a teacher, I've started to do that and I'm thinking about it a lot more now, about  
 30. Englishes. Umm, different varieties of English and, you know, the difference between,  
 31. you know, what they call RP or whatever and the different of ranges of English  
 32. nowadays, yes.

33. Researcher: Do you think all Englishes are equal? Or are they treated equally?

34. Tabitha: No

35. Samuel: Definitely NOT.

36. Yonka: What do you mean by Englishes?

37. Researcher: For example, Indian English...

38. Yonka: Ah, okay. Mmmmm, uhuh. NO.

39. Samuel: Even within countries, I know when I did the RSA in Tokyo some years back, one of  
 40. the British inspectors was talking about, 'no that person thinks he has RP, but he really  
 41. doesn't'. So even with pronunciation there are certain levels that people will identify.

42. Yonka: But when you look at the British Council, in the past, they wouldn't recruit Americans,  
 43. right?

44. Tabitha: Really?

45. Yonka: Yeah, yeah. Only the British in Turkey. Now it has changed. So, the approach is a little  
 46. bit...

47. Tabitha: There are none natives teaching at the British Council here.

48. Yonka: It would be impossible say 20 years ago in Istanbul. It was VERY British.

49. Tabitha: Well, often that's because of customer perceptions and customer demands, I think.

50. Yonka: That's right.

51. Tabitha: No, because here the British Council, students do complain if the person teaching them  
 52. is not white and not British.

53. Researcher: Do they say that directly?

54. Tabitha: Yes. Because, well, what they say is 'I can't understand her'.

55. Researcher: Ummmm.

56. Yonka: Oh.

57. Rachel: Like, when I worked in the British Council in Cairo, one of our teachers was born and  
 58. bred in the UK but was of Indian origin and was working there, and he was teaching  
 59. young learners and the complaints flooded in.

60. Researcher: Ummmmmm

61. Rachel: And the Council was actually very good. They were very, very good. They were very,  
 62. 'right we are absolutely not taking any of this, we are for equal opportunities. This  
 63. person is a British-born citizen' and they kind of supported him right to the hill BUT  
 64. there was that perception.

65. Tabitha: But that's more to do with the Egyptian cliental, I think.

66. Rachel: Yes.

67. Tabitha: Because I had a similar situation where there was a Nigerian lady who, um, trained on  
 68. the CELTA at the Council when she was with us and then when she started teaching, the  
 69. students were up in arms.

70. Researcher: Umm

71. Tabitha: Because A) she's black and B) she's not British, her accent is not British. Or not  
 72. American or whatever. But you know, she was good, she was fine and so we supported  
 73. her and....

74. Researcher: Did they realize that eventually? Did they realize she's good and it doesn't matter?

75. Tabitha: Yeah, I mean, I think once they saw that we were, I mean we went and observed a  
 76. class, obviously, it was fine and you know showed our support for her and eventually it  
 77. was okay but there was a lot of uproar in the beginning.

78. Anna: I actually encountered, noticed, that when I taught in Korea, you know, here we have  
 79. teachers from India teaching English, teachers from you know, other countries, non-  
 80. native speaker countries, but in Korea, they would complain, you know there were a  
 81. lot of complaints if you weren't from the United States, Australia or the UK and you  
 82. didn't look the part.

83. Researcher: Ummmmmm.

84. Anna: So, my friend who also went over there, was African American, born and raised in the  
 85. United States, but ended up not staying not very long because they were not happy with

86. her, so, yeah, I've encountered that also in another country.

87. Researcher: Ummmhummm.

88. Graeme: I think it also teaches people to be a bit more open-minded about teaching English

89. because it's very easy for people to say... oh no, that's not right because we don't say

90. that in England and then you have to say, well actually, I accept it because it's an

91. American or I accept it because it's used in emails or texting or whatever. So actually, I

92. think it's quite good, the idea of global English because it makes people more flexible

93. and open-minded.

94. Tabitha: And there are far more non-native speakers of English than there are natives, right?

95. Researcher: It's true.

96. Tabitha: So even the argument that of 'that's okay because it's said in America or here, it

97. doesn't really stand up because the ownership of English now should sort of move over

98. to the non-natives in a way'. It's become a life-skill rather than a, I mean it still has, it's

99. still part of the identity of English native speakers but it's more than that.

100. Researcher: When you think of English, somebody mentioned race and do you think of nationality

101. as well, like British, American? Do you think of those countries associated with English

102. or do you think English is more of a neutral language now? Would you say it's more

103. global or more attached to countries?

104. Tabitha: I think it's still attached to countries.

105. Yonka: Are we talking about here or in general?

106. Researcher: In general.

107. Graeme: I think it's still British English, American English. The textbooks are certainly still

108. orientated that way. However, outside the classroom there's still global English because

109. that's what your students are speaking. You're not teaching it.

110. Samuel: I think when we make recommendations to students who want to study abroad or

111. want to accelerate their language learning. Most people I talk to would agree that this

112. environment is one in which language is spoken outside in daily life. So, we, I mean, I, find

113. myself, I readily identify where those countries are, where a student can be in that

114. environment, and those would be the major Western countries.

115. Graeme: I remember as well, a lot of Spanish, when I was living in Spain, a lot of Spanish

116. families sending their kids to, abroad to learn English, and they would send them to

117. Ireland because they'd heard that was where the purist English was spoken.

118. Group: [Laughter]

119. Researcher: Oh, really?

120. Graeme: Well they were interested in the purist English, whether they were right or wrong and

121. where. They said we don't want global, the mixed stuff, we want the pure stuff.

122. Researcher: Ummm, interesting.

123. Graeme: Pure English. Which is why they chose Ireland.

124. Anna: My students also, even outside of class, they're looking at American movies, British

125. movies, and also Indian, so all different kinds of movies.

126. Tabitha: Even the young people, nowadays, she said sounding very old [laughs], teenagers

127. when they speak English, like our students do sometimes, they interrupt in English or

128. kids from international schools or stuff, they sound quite American, don't they?

129. Rachel: They talk about a transatlantic accent and I think that's very much the norm amongst

130. third culture kids.

131. Yonka: So, it's called the transatlantic accent?

132. Rachel: Yeah. It's somewhere between an American and a British accent but it's not distinctly

133. either one of them.

134. Yonka: Which happens only in Iceland, right in the middle [Laughs].

135. Group: [Laughter]

136. Tabitha: I think it's the media that comes out of, particularly the states, isn't there? I suppose

137. they are heavily influenced by that.

138. Anna: It's interesting, when I go to Starbucks sometimes and I listen to some students,

139. students we don't see but students in the majors and I'll think, oh she sounds

140. American or I'll think, oh, she has a British accent when they are talking kind of fluently,

141. actually, with each other so it's sometimes kind of hard to pinpoint.

142. Researcher: Yeah, that's true. So now moving on to Arabic of a language. What words do you

143. associate with Arabic as a language. What words do think of when you think of the

144. word Arabic, or the language.

145. Anna: Difficult. [laughs]

146. Researcher: Difficult?

147. Anna: Yes. My students are often complaining about how difficult the grammar, the Arabic

148. grammar is and how they actually prefer to write in English.

149. Researcher: Ummmmhumm

150. Anna: Some of them have told me, yeah.

151. Researcher: Right.

152. Rachel: I also think of complexity and varieties again because my experience has been moving

153. between countries where there are different varieties of Arabic and my children

154. struggling to get a grip on that.

155. Researcher: Umhum.

156. Tabitha: And also you say they find it difficult to learn the grammar because the grammar of

157. written Arabic is different to the grammar of their spoken form. So, it doesn't come

158. naturally to them in the way that English does, you know writing English comes quite

159. naturally to an English native-speaker even though they may make lots of errors and

160. things but the structure of the sentences is quite, if you can speak English, you can

161. pretty much write it, can't you?

162. Anna: I know, I just can't imagine that what I'm speaking is completely different than what I,

163. you know, what I would have to write in an essay in a formal form.

164. Tabitha: Yeah.

165. Anna: I can't quite relate to that, that must be...

166. Tabitha: Well some would say it's a different language.

167. Anna: Yeah.

168. Tabitha: But that's a political thing, isn't it?

169. Yonka: It's a different language for Anna but English is a different language for....

170. Tabitha: No, no, I mean the spoken and written forms.

171. Yonka: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. It's interesting your perception of your Arabic is so different

172. than mine because in Turkey Arabic has always been associated with religion and you

173. know with the foundation of the republic, secular state and Arabic was always you

174. know kakakaka no you shouldn't even think about Arabic, if you learn how to read and

175. write it means your family is religious and then that's not okay within certain groups or

176. particularly the groups... one of my parents would be in a group where they were

177. secular, non-religious teachers. When we first came here I was like Arabic, no uhhu

178. [disapproving sound] but now but I love it, I love hearing it and I had no idea how

179. DIFFERENT Arabic can be in each country. So, now I'm very much interested in, I'm

180. actually thinking of going to a country like Egypt next summer and learn the language.

181. It's interesting that I cannot learn the language here, it's so frustrating.

182. Tabitha: Yeah, that's really interesting because I mean when I first moved to Oman, I had studied

183. Arabic at university and had never got fluent at speaking because I had never spent the

184. time abroad, I dropped out before that, but I thought oh great I'm going to Oman.

185. I'm finally going to be able to speak Arabic and use all the knowledge that I have from

186. before, and you just can't, in the Gulf, it's just impossible because when you speak

187. Arabic, well uh huh, uh, well unless you're very very good....

188. Yonka: People are very understanding, they switch...

189. Tabitha: And plus it's very different, I learnt Egyptian Arabic which is quite different.

190. Graeme: Neutral Arabic is understood by everybody and not spoken by anybody. The standard

191. Arabic that people learn, nobody speaks [Tabitha started speaking at same time].

192. Tabitha: And that marks you out straight away as a non-Arabic speaker if you start speaking

193. modern standard Arabic because like you say, people don't use it.

194. Rachel: Yeah. It's a very complex issue, I mean Egyptian Arabic is understood everywhere in the

195. Gulf because of the film industry and the media industry, so it is understood but it's

196. kind of treated with a bit of affection and humor, it feels.

197. Yonka: They laugh.

198. Rachel: They laugh. Yeah, the response is one of humor, ahhhh, quite funny.

199. Tabitha: Somebody told me the other day, oh, who was it, it was a few weeks ago, I was talking to

200. someone about, oh it was an Emirati mother of some boys in my daughter's class and

201. she was saying that in daily life in the UAE they actually don't use Khaleeji or Emirati

202. Arabic that much they use a kind of hybrid form which is a kind of mixture of

203. Palestinian, Lebanese, Egyptian.

204. Rachel: Hummm [sounds doubtful]

205. Tabitha: That's not a pure, none of them, but sort of a mix of all of them that everyone uses to get

206. by and that was kind of interesting for me.

207. Graeme: Global Arabic.

208. Rachel: Yeah, there is a global Arabic

209. Yonka: Yeah, regional slash global.

210. Tabitha: She said, you know, that's what she means by speaking Arabic in the UAE, not Khaleeji

211. like the students might speak at home.

212. Graeme: I suppose it could have very negative associations with many people because it's very

213. politicized. Like Ahmed the terrorist [?], and also 'haram' [Arabic word for 'forbidden'],

214. we all know that word, don't we?

215. Group Right.

216. Graeme: And all of the names of the terrorist groups are in Arabic. So, a lot of people who,

217. especially who don't live here, will have a very negative probably view of, if you just say

218. Arabic, they go 'ughhhh' [gasp]

219. Yonka: That part of the world! [said in a dramatic horrified voice].

220. Rachel: And I think as Yonka says, it is so routed in religion, so many people, and so many of the

221. phrases that you pick up quickly as a foreigner living here are connected to religion.

222. Insh 'allah, you know, if God will. Ma'allah, may God protect you, you know this kind

223. of thing. I mean, I travelled to Indonesia and people were fascinated that my husband

224. was Egyptian and spoke Arabic because it's a massive Muslim population and the fact

225. that he knew the language of the Quran was what gave him huge status in Indonesia.

226. And you know a lot of parts of the world where Arabic isn't the mother tongue or the

227. native language but where there's a large Muslim population, it's highly revered.

228. Researcher: Umhum.

229. Tabitha: Because I've met people, Pakistanis who have memorized the entire Quran.

230. Rachel: Yeah. But they don't understand it.

231. Yonka: My grandmother....

232. Tabitha: Really?

233. Yonka: I don't think she has memorized the entire Quran but she does it really well. People are

234. like 'wow'.

235. Tabitha: But does she know what it means?

236. Yonka: Just because she, no, not at all. I mean when people hear her recite, men, women cry

237. because she has a great voice and she taught herself how to read the Quran after like,

238. when she was 40 something. She didn't grow up with it, she became religious later. She

239. has a great voice and she knows how to do it but, ummm, I told her with certain letters

240. she pronounces them incorrectly and she was so upset about that. She doesn't know the

241. 'waa' and 'baa' and those ones and she's like, no, no, no, I'm okay. It's so interesting.

242. That part might be talking about how to divide your will among your children in the

243. Quran but the way she recites is so emotional people will start crying.

244. Anna: Does she know what she's saying?

245. Yonka: No, not at all.

246. Alison: So, she's just. It's like words, like music really.

247. Yonka: Yeah. Exactly.

248. Graeme: But isn't it also, isn't Arabic well known as being a fantastic language to express poetry?

249. Rachel: Ummm.

250. Graeme: It's beautiful sounding.

251. Rachel: Yes

252. Graeme: Like when you're on the Etihad flight and there's the .....

253. Yonka: [Mimics the sound of Arabic]

254. Graeme: Yes. But if you don't understand it, it does sound very mesmerizing and very beautiful.

255. So, there's another side to Arabic as well.

256. Rachel: And there is an Islamic belief that the Quran can only truly be communicated through

257. Arabic, that you cannot communicate the true meaning through another language. It's

258. got to be understood in Arabic, yeah, so.

259. Yonka: Because it's open to interpretation [whispers this, under her breath] [laughs]

260. Researcher: So, moving on now to talk about attitudes towards English, so do you think, obviously

261. we've talked about it already, but do you think that English is very important in the

262. UAE?

263. Anna: Yes

264. Graeme: Undoubtedly.

265. Researcher: In which areas?

266. Tabitha: In every area.

267. Graeme: In the urban situation because that's the common area of everybody here so if you go to

268. a mall, you're going to hear everybody basically, you're going to hear English because

269. the Filipinos and the Indians and the English and the French and the Emiratis, that's

270. the one language that they have in common, even though it might be quite difficult to

271. understand them sometimes.

272. Researcher: And in education too, do you feel it's vital?

273. Tabitha: Well, if they want their students to graduate with a degree in English, then yes, it has to

274. be, doesn't it?

275. Samuel: But also, it seems that the goal is for the students to be competitive on the international

276. market place and so if that's the goal then...

277. Tabitha: In what way though, so you mean, if the country, on behalf of the country, because they

278. don't want each individual student to be traveling or doing much, do they? What do you

279. mean by being competitive in the international market place?

280. Samuel: The international marketplace that exists here in this country.

281. Tabitha: Yeah, okay.

282. Samuel: To be employable by an international company.

283. Tabitha: Do you think that they, I don't know, do you think they are thinking about individual

284. students. I always think of the UAE policy making as a body of Emiratis, like they want

285. certain things to happen, you know, like a vaccination program, it's not to protect your

286. child, it's to protect the community. That kind of thing where they want to have ummm

287. a good level of English and good level of skills to make the country viable on the

288. international stage.

289. Researcher: So, it's looking inward, trying to protect the community rather than sending people out?

290. Tabitha: I don't think they particularly care about each particular graduate or what they are

291. going to achieve individually. I think it's more of a collective.

292. Researcher: Okay.

293. Tabitha: I could be wrong, but...

294. Graeme: I think that all of the kids here, with the Internet, I think they use English a lot. I don't

295. know how much they're using Arabic but I know that they are using English a lot so

296. that's another important area.

297. Anna: Outside the classroom

298. Rachel: There's a definite status associated with English which I've noticed in other countries as

299. well in this region.

300. Group: Yeah.

301. Rachel: Where command over English indicates higher level of education...

302. Graeme: Worldliness.

303. Rachel: Worldliness, status in general. In fact, you know, I was talking to some students the

304. other day because these posters are up all over the campus now aren't they?

305. Researcher: Yes.

306. Rachel: Saying preserve your first language, preserve Arabic, is Arabic endangered? And we

307. were having a little discussion about that in class.

308. Tabitha: So...whose fault is it?

309. Rachel: Yeah... but they were saying 'yes, yes', a couple of people were saying, 'Yes. Yes, we do

310. need to work harder'. But so many students on this campus don't. We hear them in the

311. coffee shops, they're speaking English to each other out of choice.

312. Tabitha: You get a lot of parents speaking, you hear them in the malls, Arabic speaking parents

313. who speak English with their children. IELTS 4 level English [basic English] that they're

314. teaching their children which is, I mean that's.... I mean why...

315. Rachel: WELL they're doing it with the best of intentions [Spoken loudly, with passion], they're

316. thinking if it interests my child, my child will.. and as a result they're losing...

317. Tabitha: And I've noticed through having my own children that it's not simple to be bilingual. I

318. mean I just thought it would be so easy. One parent who speaks Swahili and one parent

319. who speaks English, they're going to grow up speaking both languages, oh no, no, no.

320. It's so much more to do with the environment they're in, and all the other complicating

321. factors that, you know, you are really playing with fire if you're not going to teach

322. the child your own first language, I think that's real mistake. So, then what are they

323. going to grow up with, a second language?

324. Rachel: Well I feel there is a whole generation of non-native speakers in this country now. I

325. mean they're not fluent in either language and I think that's such a danger.



326. Tabitha: That's a worry.  
 327. Rachel: And it has real implications academically because...  
 328. It's really bad for you, I mean how do you come across to people if you can't  
 329. communicate effectively in either one of your languages, I mean that's just...  
 330. Graeme: That's the same in English. You've got 'in'it' [isn't it?] where people are basically saying 'you  
 331. know what I mean?' [laughs] but they probably don't really know what you mean.  
 332. Tabitha: Well it depends on what errr, umm, what your aspirations are I suppose, on what your  
 333. community is and what you need from your language. In some communities in the UK  
 334. for example, people speak English very badly but that's what people all around them  
 335. speak and that's all they need. They don't need to be speaking educated English.  
 336. Graeme: With the Internet, so many people communicate with a very small vocabulary  
 337. and very often with photos to express things whilst before it was very much the written  
 338. word.  
 339. Researcher: Umhum.  
 340. Graeme: And the spoken word, but there's a lot less of that now.  
 341. Researcher: So, you think it's more of a global problem rather than regional.  
 342. Graeme: I think so, yes.  
 343. Tabitha: Talking about global problems, there are smaller Englishes in each country, hundreds of  
 344. Englishes based geography and class and all of that and maybe second language-ish  
 345. English that some of the Arabic-speaking kids are growing up speaking is an English of  
 346. its own which probably has lots of loan words from Arabic words in it. Maybe there's  
 347. going to be a complete mix like there is in a lot of countries like Kenya where people  
 348. don't speak either Swahili or English. They are constantly switching.  
 349. Rachel: Code-switching.  
 350. Tabitha: That in itself is a code. You know, so...  
 351. Graeme: That's happening in many many languages. I know even in Japan there are people who  
 352. have started to complain that there's too many English words in Japanese. That  
 353. happened in Italy as well and in France, the French academy was up in arms. In Spain it  
 354. has happened as well.  
 355. Tabitha: In France they legislate for it, they provide rules. And that's the decision countries have  
 356. to make, do they want to plan the language or do they want to let it evolve and English  
 357. just evolves doesn't it? Nobody puts policies in place to control it, but they do in other  
 358. countries.  
 359. Graeme: Whether it works or not, it's also up to the individual whether they want to  
 360. communicate...  
 361. Tabitha: Well I think it's also to do with the speakers of the language and their ownership and  
 362. identity. Like in Catalonia, Catalan is very strong and it's because, it's political, it's  
 363. because they have a very strong identity in the face of being so close to Spain. Whereas  
 364. if you've got that, that protects the language and you put rules in place, like spelling  
 365. rules then people will follow them because they're proud to be using that language, so.  
 366. Researcher: So, when you are teaching, what do you think about your students' attitudes towards  
 367. English. Do you feel that they're happy to be learning English or do you feel that there is  
 368. some resentment or other feelings?  
 369. Tabitha: Yep. Amongst my class at the moment, for example, my male class, they're not  
 370. interested in English. They're just there because they have to be. And they are  
 371. constantly speaking Arabic and there are just maybe one or two who do try and use  
 372. English but they don't like English.  
 373. Graeme: But also maybe...they are just not very happy about having to be here in the first place  
 374. and maybe if they were learning mathematics they would be baulking at that or in  
 375. geography.  
 376. Rachel: I think the students have very complex attitudes towards English. I don't think it's clear  
 377. cut at all. And I've noticed teaching the general program, Colloquy that actually now  
 378. there's a comparison, writing an essay in English verses writing an essay in Arabic.  
 379. Actually, it's a lot easier in English. Um, so I think it's very complex for them, you know,  
 380. I think ummm because they've been hot-housed in English through something like the  
 381. foundation program, ummm when they reach Colloquy level they're like okay at least  
 382. we know what the expectations are. We've been away from our, you know, our native  
 383. language now for two years, our mother tongue effectively, academically, and now  
 384. we're being plunged back into that and that's really hard work. And umm.  
 385. Tabitha: But that's not their mother tongue either.

386. Rachel: Well, for some maybe, it is but for the majority, no.  
387. Tabitha: The Arabic they use to write essays is not...  
388. Rachel: I know, but they've studied it at school so...  
389. Yonka: For years, and they hated it [laughs]  
390. Group: [laughter]  
391. Rachel: So I think it's very complex. I think it's very very complex. I think you know there is a  
392. resentment. They totally, there is a majority of them that get the fact that they have to  
393. do it and they may resent it at times and at other times find it, you know, I don't know,  
394. an easier option to working in other subject areas.  
395. Tabitha: But you do get some students who love English.  
396. Rachel: Yeah  
397. Graeme: I've got some students who say they prefer English to Arabic and they find English  
398. easier.  
399. Ruth: Yeah  
400. Graeme: So...  
401. Anna: Some of them do, and I've noticed also for some of them, English is actually an obstacle  
402. to what they actually want to do in the future. For example, their minds might not be  
403. wired for English or language but they are very mathematical or very scientific. I  
404. discovered that in one of my classes a student who was completely shut off and as far as  
405. I was concerned, very low level of English but when it got to the ISP [Integrated Skills Project]  
406. designed this car wash and was really into the, the physics behind it and it was something I  
407. never really knew about her but she has to learn English. I mean that's her interest but our  
408. university is English so she may be strong in science but her English-speaking language  
409. skills are not good but she needs that in order to study science or study what she wants  
410. to study.  
411. Researcher: Yeah  
412. Anna: In the future, so for her, it's kind of an obstacle.  
413. Researcher: Right, so it could actually be holding people back.  
414. Yonka: It's a burden, for example.  
415. Researcher: Umm hum.  
416. Yonka: IELTS and...  
417. Rachel: And there's a very strong case for studying higher education in your first language.  
418. Tabitha: Yes.  
419. Rachel: I mean really...  
420. Tabitha: There really is.  
421. Rachel: I mean it's interesting because I saw a talk at TESOL Arabia [local conference] by a Syrian teacher  
422. working in Oman and she'd done a bit of research into it and she said you know if you look  
423. across the Middle East, North Africa, if you look at universities, I don't know, in  
424. Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt etc. Morocco, ummm... students who study in their first  
425. language achieve far greater heights academically, I mean it's without question. I mean  
426. it's fine for them in their final years in their subject area to then do intensive ESP so that  
427. they can cope with, you know, an academic, a career and they can work in different  
428. environments where English is used. I mean they have already mastered enough in  
429. their subject area to get a deep enough comprehension in their first language.  
430. Tabitha: That's the complete opposite of what's happening here isn't it because they're  
431. introducing it from aged 5.  
432. Researcher: Yes  
433. Rachel: They never get mastery and that's the issue, they can't...  
434. Tabitha: They're going to have so many gaps in their knowledge about everything I think if  
435. they're learning in their second language, aren't they?  
436. Rachel: Ummhum.  
437. Tabitha: I don't know why the UAE decided to do that in the face of evidence to the contrary.  
438. Researcher: Yeah, I think it was quite a sudden decision as well, it was quite a dramatic change.  
439. Tabitha: Things like that are, aren't they? I mean some consultant comes in and says, 'let's  
440. change everything'. I've noticed as well, back to students' feelings about English. Some  
441. Students I think feel quite comfortable with English if they are perhaps not comfortable  
442. with the local culture, you know fitting in with their peers. So, I've noticed students like I  
443. had a student last semester who does not fit in with the other guys because [REDACTED]  
444. [REDACTED] so for him, English is far preferable than Arabic. Yes, he uses Arabic  
445. but you can see that it's kind of liberating to use English and he can access so many

446. things online through English.

447. Researcher: He sort of wants to escape by learning English?

448. Tabitha: Yeah. I've known that before with other female students who perhaps have slightly

449. strange interests or something like that.

450. Rachel: I've heard of students that keep diaries in English because it gives them privacy from

451. other members of the family and it's a way that they can sort of note down their deeper

452. feelings and maintain some sort of distance so it can liberate in that way, can't it? Yeah.

453. Tabitha: Umhum, it gives them and outlet.

454. Researcher: Yeah, umm. Do you think that the students are familiar with Western culture, culture

455. from America and England? Do you think they know a lot about Western culture?

456. Anna: Well, I think they assume a lot from what they see, you know, Hollywood movies.

457. Researcher: Right.

458. Graeme: And from what they are looking at on the internet, certain pages. So, they'll see a

459. distorted view perhaps.

460. Researcher: Ummm. Okay.

461. Graeme: But general, but their general cultural awareness might be more lacking than we

462. would think because it's based, as I say, not on first hand experience but second, third,

463. forth, fifth hand experience.

464. Researcher: Umhum, and do you feel students are interested about learning about your culture as a

465. teacher? For example, when you are teaching them, do they ask you questions about...

466. Yonka: Not the culture, about our lives.

467. Researcher: About the individual?

468. Tabitha: I think they feel that they need, maybe not all of them but a lot of them identify strongly

469. with their own culture and they don't want to have influences on in.

470. Rachel: And also probably subliminally that message has been passed through throughout their

471. childhood that it's very important to keep their culture distinct and separate and not to

472. be influenced by cultures which are non-Islamic.

473. Tabitha: And this group, they've grown up in a time when the government has actively been

474. promoting tradition and all of those things which wasn't the case a few years back.

475. Graeme: Yeah, I think, I had one student who was saying that when she went to Switzerland and

476. she said, err, she said, the lions there, they're a lot bigger.

477. Tabitha: The lions? [Laughter from group]

478. Graeme: She went to a zoo and she saw lions and so she thought that Switzerland had lions. So

479. you know it's not culture it's what their understanding of other countries can

480. sometimes be really quite surprising.

481. Researcher: Yeah. Okay. Do students ever ask you, what do you do in America during Christmas time

482. or, no, or how's it done in England or...

483. Anna: No

484. Yonka: No, isn't that interesting, no go ahead...

485. Anna: I was going to say that that really surprises me because when I was here before, I came

486. in 2001, and I left in 2006, I had more of that, students asking me about my culture,

487. about things like Christmas, Halloween and things like that and I thought there would

488. be more of that now, now that students are, you know have their mobile devices and

489. are more exposed to, seem to be more exposed to the internet and movies and things

490. like that but no, that really really surprised me.

491. Tabitha: But they're not learning, studying English, I think if they were studying the language as

492. a degree, they probably would have more interest but it's a tool, isn't it? It's a skill, it's

493. not, they're not really studying it as a language as such.

494. Samuel: I think in my experience teaching in Japan when we had an annual Halloween party and

495. at Christmas time when we'd sing Christmas carols in the classroom as a way to use

496. English and lots of umm integrating of popular music into the curriculum and the

497. course books were very...

498. Tabitha: But where was that, what kind of place was it a language school or a university?

499. Samuel: It was a two-year language school.

500. Tabitha: Because I've found working in language schools, yes, I would do more of, about my

501. culture and stuff, but here in the university I certainly, I'm always aware that this is a

502. government institution and they don't always, it's not really what we're here for. It's

503. like the British Council has that whole element of a cultural ambassadors whereas here

504. it's not really required, it's not really..

505. Researcher: Do you think it's inappropriate?

506. Tabitha: Yeah. Or, I mean if the ask about it certainly it would be, but I would never go into class  
507. around Christmas time and do anything related to Christmas here. It would just seem it  
508. wouldn't really be appropriate.

509. Researcher: Hmmmm. And do you think it would be wrong, essentially or how do you think the  
510. students would feel if you did bring in Christmas chocolates or talk about Christmas?

511. Tabitha: I think they might feel, there's the risk that some of them might feel... I think on the  
512. whole they'd probably be okay with it but you might have the silent few that might  
513. think, you're trying to convert us to your religion or you know, something like that.

514. Anna: Definitely

515. Rachel: It's interesting because some other cultures are promoted in the university, I mean  
516. there's been a big focus on Korea.

517. Group: Yes, yeah

518. Rachel: And, even China as well, hasn't there? There's been various exhibitions downstairs and  
519. you know and language classes offered for free and come and learn about Korean  
520. culture and whatever else, and I think that's kind of interesting.

521. Researcher: So, do you think that's acceptable whereas a British club or an American club might not  
522. be accepted?

523. Yonka: Western...the idea of

524. Rachel: Yeah

525. Yonka: The West and how it is seen here is very different from, and I mean Korea might be  
526. more Catholic than the pope, some Koreans, but still, they don't get that, they think the  
527. values and morals in Korea are similar to their values if that makes sense.

528. Researcher: Hmmmm.

529. Rachel: That's right. And that's fed through the soap operas that are popular and yeah...

530. Yonka: English here by our students, it's not seen as culture, language, it's IELTS, something  
531. that I have to do because I will get a good job and that will pay me a lot of money. That's  
532. it, nothing beyond that. Those whose cannot fit, you know students, with the girls, my  
533. experience has been the very religious ones have been more organized and willing to  
534. experience has been don't know because they have the discipline. Because if you're  
535. really religious, you have to get up early in the morning, you're disciplined. Those who  
536. don't wear their shaylas [headscarf] in class they're the 'whoowhoo' fun ones, you know.

537. Group: [Laughter]

538. Yonka: In between they are average 70, 71% [grade]. I can categorize them, unfortunately I can  
539. [laughs]. Those who are totally covered, 85/90%, their average. The in between 'no shayla'  
540. girls 'heehee hoohoo' you know, with some exceptions definitely.

541. Rachel: I was going to say, there are some exceptions. In my class last semester a girl incredibly  
542. Westernised but had been through a government school but just incredibly confident  
543. and yeah and Abaya [black robe wore over clothes in public] is open, that kind of thing.

544. Tabitha: You can tell someone's religious persuasion just by how they dress.

545. Rachel: Yeah, you can. But anyway, it was really interesting talking.

546. Tabitha: Yeah, I know, and I don't like that. I don't like the fact that you can see someone and  
547. label them.

548. Yonka: But Tabitha, those girls do fast and they do pray.

549. Rachel: They want to be identified.

550. Yonka: I mean it's not that they don't observe the religion. It's very interesting because those  
551. are the ones who fast, those are the ones who pray. It's not that they don't believe.

552. Tabitha: Oh yeah, belief is a different thing.

553. Graeme: Ha? [didn't understand Tabitha's point]

554. Tabitha: Belief is a very different thing but observance of the rules...

555. Rachel: Yeah but the point I was going to make is, I started talking to this girl because she's an  
556. avid reader and loves reading, loves English and bla, bla, bla. And I said it's very  
557. interesting you know and she reads adult native speaker books and she said 'oh, yeah  
558. it's because my grandfather was Moroccan and my other grandfather was Scottish. And  
559. what I wanted to say is I think this is a real issue in Emirati society, there are so many  
560. families that are mixed.

561. Researcher: Umhum, that's true.

562. Rachel: And there's this whole sort of issue around how open and mixed can we publically be or  
563. do we need to just kind of really tow the line and conform. And be very sort of I don't  
564. know, publically Emirati.

565. Tabitha: I think they have to be publically Emirati.

566. Rachel: I mean I've noticed in magazines and newspapers now there are articles about this. I  
567. mean I saw it, maybe in *Abu Dhabi Week* [local magazine] or something a few weeks  
568. ago and it was something like, umm they were interviewing people who were from mixed  
569. families where you know one parent is from Asia and one parent is from elsewhere and I  
570. think that that is an issue now in society.

571. Researcher: Do you think they are proud of that or do you think it's embarrassing for them to admit  
572. that they have relatives from other countries.

573. Rachel: I think it has been embarrassing.

574. Researcher: Umhum.

575. Yonka: Do you think it's changed? I mean those who've been here for, if the number [university  
576. ID number] starts with 'M'.

577. Yonka: It depends on the nationality doesn't it?

578. Anna: When I was here before we didn't have 'M's' before and we didn't have those kind of  
579. students.

580. Tabitha: You had to have an Emirati father in order to study at the university, which means  
581. you're Emirati. I remember when that came in. There were mums, 'mumeratis' they  
582. called them, they started accepting, must have been in 2010 or something, they started  
583. accepting Emirati students who weren't really Emirati but their mother was Emirati.  
584. There's a taboo around that because I've noticed for IELTS they have to say their  
585. student number and some of them when it's 'M' they go a bit, they don't want to share.  
586. I've got one in my class, he's Yemeni and he never, he doesn't mix with the other guys  
587. and he's very kind of 'you don't talk about that', being Yemeni.

588. Researcher: Hmmm, interesting

589. Anna: Last semester I had one student who actually made the comment of being real Emirati  
590. or pure Emirati.

591. Researcher: Hmmm.

592. Tabitha: There are some pure Emiratis.

593. Group: [Chatting that was difficult to hear] Iranian.....

594. Anna: She was saying that she could tell.

595. Tabitha: You can tell by family names, if you're 'Zabi' or whatever' then you're okay.

596. Graeme: Well it's only been a country since 1971, anyway.

597. Tabitha: Well they mean from this land, don't they?

598. Researcher: So, moving on now to talk about culture and identity in the UAE. Do you feel that culture  
599. in the UAE has been affected by English? And that's a big question and we've already  
600. talked about ways it has been affected but can you think of other ways in which Emirati  
601. culture has been affected by English?

602. Group: / [silence of 10 seconds]

603. Yonka: Certain things, I was thinking, certain things, that are, again associated with rules,  
604. English. I was thinking of like seatbelts. Okay. Ummm it's a rule, it's not an English or  
605. Western rule because everybody has to wear a seatbelt. All the cars come with it.

606. Tabitha: It is a western rule though.

607. Yonka: Yeah, it is a Western rule or what do they call it, the child seat, uhhuu. In that sense,  
608. yes they have been.

609. Tabitha: I don't know though because there are so many who don't follow those rules.

610. Yonka: They don't. I'm just wondering, I'm asking a question. Those who put the seat belts on, I  
611. wonder if those are the ones who have gone through English education where English  
612. was the main language. These are the questions that I'm asking. Nothing, no judging, no  
613. like, oh they must have had a different education or can they be labeled that way.

614. Tabitha: I have another mother from another school. She's an Emirati but she's western  
615. educated and she's a child safety, well she's a child development specialist and her area  
616. was safety. And we were talking about this issue of wearing seatbelts and how it's still  
617. really hard to get locals to do that and you know the feeling of 'I don't have to, because  
618. it's God's will', you know that kind of thinking.

619. Graeme: Well, this is imposed upon them from outside.

620. Yonka: Huh, well yeah.

621. Graeme: So, they are 'I'm not going to follow that even if it will save my life'.

622. Tabitha: They believe that the safest place for a baby to be is in its mother's arms. No seatbelt or  
623. car seat can ever replace that which is kind of just obviously crazy but that's just  
624. cultural, that whole idea of the mother being the safest.

625. Rachel: But going back to your question generally, I don't think it's language, I think it's the

626. influx of people.

627. Tabitha: Of colonialism

628. Rachel: From many different cultures living side by side with Emiratis that's had the greatest

629. impact. I don't think that it's the language.

630. Researcher: But I suppose they speak English, don't they?

631. Rachel: It is the lingua franca but it's not the actual language. It's the way, it's the systems. It's

632. the way of doing things, you know, it's having these consultants from overseas who

633. come and set up systems within companies and safety procedures and whatever it is.

634. Tabitha: I think there's resistance to it.

635. Rachel: Yeah, absolutely, absolutely.

636. Graeme: It's very Americanised. Just the whole, I mean look at Dubai, it's a mini New York.

637. Tabitha: In what way?

638. Graeme: Well you've got big skyscrapers and here you've got the grid system.

639. Yonka: I've got no idea about New York [said an exaggerated New York accent]

640. Group [laughter]

641. Researcher: Yeah.

642. Graeme: Because of highways. Big cars.

643. Yonka: Texas rather.

644. Tabitha: But that's because of the amount of space

645. Graeme: Instead of the European thing, there is more of an American influence.

646. Tabitha: But that's to do with the amount of space, surely.

647. Graeme: Yeah.

648. Tabitha: And terrain.

649. Graeme: Yeah, but also to do with the errr well I mean the dirham and the dollar divide.

650. Tabitha: But there's lots of influence from Britain here too

651. Graeme: The early years

652. Tabitha: From further back, like the design of the buildings, you see some of the villas, they're all

653. very British

654. Anna: Roundabouts, we don't have roundabouts.

655. Tabitha: Really?

656. Yonka: It's not an American thing.

657. Rachel: Really? [real surprise]

658. Yonka: Not at all, no.

659. Researcher: And Canada too.

660. Rachel: Really? What do they have?

661. Anna: Junctions, traffic lights.

662. Tabitha: Intersections [laughs]

663. Anna: So, the green arrow to turn left, but we don't have roundabouts.

664. Researcher: Tabitha, something you mentioned was resistance. So, do you feel there is resistance to

665. cultural change?

666. Tabitha: I do from things that students say for example, 'well, we, in our culture' you know

667. bringing me back on track and reminding me that it's different in their culture or, that's

668. at the forefront of their minds. That's the feeling I have.

669. Researcher: Do you think they feel guilty if they're edging towards another way of doing something?

670. Tabitha: Well, certainly amongst, you know, they are in a group and to that group they have to

671. present a certain face and if they're stepping out of what is the expected norm in front

672. of that group then that's quite a big message or statement.

673. Graeme: They have a very strong online culture, not facebook but..

674. Rachel: Snapchat

675. Graeme: Snapchat culture

676. Tabitha: But that's not necessarily to do with English. That's global.

677. Rachel: But when you look at what they're posting, they're things that celebrate their culture.

678. It's campfires in the desert with the relatives. It's like, I don't know, it's a bit of a cliché

679. but a hennaed hand. But it is that kind of thing, yes there might be a Starbucks coffee in

680. there but it's their daily experiences and often that's very reflective of Emirati culture, I

681. think. If you look at that. I think that's one of the things, I mean Arabic is one of the

682. fastest growing languages on the internet, isn't it?

683. Researcher: Yes, it is.

684. Yonka: Would you say males, boys or guys resist more than girls here?

685. Tabitha: I don't know

686. Yonka: Or the other way around?

687. Tabitha: You've taught both as well. It depends.

688. Rachel: I've got very limited experience here. I've got experience in Oman teaching a lot of boys

689. and I've taught a few boys here but in my experience, it's the opposite, that boys are less

690. resistant in general.

691. Tabitha: You've taught boys in Colloquy

692. Rachel: Umm. It's different to the ABP.

693. Tabitha: When they get out of the ABP, it's slightly different. You've weeded out a lot of them.

694. And I think the ones who are weaker in my classes tend to be the ones who have not

695. bought into the cultural aspects of English or are very resistant.

696. Yonka: Well when it comes to getting married I'm sure they will change, when it comes to their

697. own wives and the name of the family

698. Tabitha: They change in what way?

699. Yonka: They wouldn't be as say open as ummm, when they're married the guys tend to change,

700. more protective, more traditional, my family now, my woman, not woman, my wife.

701. Researcher: Ummmm.

702. Tabitha: [laughs] I have a student who's very proud of the fact that he can tell his older sister

703. whether she can go out or not. You know, that's very important to them.

704. Graeme: You also can also pick and choose what they decide to assimilate, not just from the

705. American culture, there are a lot of things from the Indian culture that they have

706. assimilated, big time. I mean look at the films and the biryani, the food.

707. Researcher: That's true.

708. Yonka: Even language has been affected by that.

709. Graeme: The language. I think quite honestly they are quite lucky in that respect, they can say 'I'll

710. have a bit of this and a bit of that, I reject that'

711. Researcher: So, it's a sort of cultural supermarket.

712. Tabitha: Yeah [laughs].

713. Researcher: So, do you think your students have a strong sense of cultural identity? Do you think

714. they're secure in who they are or do you feel they're struggling to find a sense of

715. identity, cultural identity?

716. Tabitha: I think they're fairly sure or it, but you were shaking your head [to Yonka].

717. Yonka: Uhhh, they do, uhhh when you ask them a question about Islam, uhh how many

718. prophets have there been? What is the difference between 'Shiite' and 'Sunni'? Nothing.

719. What is your religion? Islam. I mean if you ask that question to a Turkish Muslim

720. student...

721. Rachel: Yeah, they immediately...

722. Yonka: They would know.

723. Tabitha: They're Muslim by default. They've not chosen that. I mean if you're Turkish, you are

724. secular by default and then you choose to be Muslim, or what? How does it work?

725. Yonka: It is 90 something percent of the country is ummm Muslim.

726. Tabitha: Practicing Muslim?

727. Yonka: Ummmm, it depends on where you are, what class...

728. Tabitha: Because here....

729. Yonka: It's totally different. Yes, but at the same time, they are taught, is that theology or

730. religion? It's taught, it's just the whole education, the way it's done here, it's not really

731. learning.

732. Tabitha: But also some people know about religion and some people don't know very much

733. because you get people, for example my husband's extended family, one of his cousins

734. will sit there during Ramadan and talk about the Quran or particular aspects and

735. everyone is rapt because they don't know this stuff.

736. Researcher: Ummmm.

737. Tabitha: And he's obviously, he's quite learned and so he will ummm you know explain stuff and

738. I think there's a lot to know about Islam and just to be an ordinary Emirati, you

739. basically need to know, you know, the basics but it's perhaps a choice to go deeper into

740. it and be a real Muslim or know that stuff that you're asking that maybe they don't

741. know.

742. Yonka: You see that's interesting to a Turk, not to me, to a Turk, a real Muslim would be what I

743. see here.

744. Tabitha: Yeah but it's all surface, isn't it?

745. Yonka: It's so interesting. So in that sense there is that...identity is what?

746. Tabitha: It's about the identity rather than the religion, as such.  
747. Yonka: Ummm hum.  
748. Rachel: Identity is always shifting and I think at this moment, this is the big issue for Emiratis,  
749. that identities are shifting and changing and moving and I think quite a few of them  
750. probably do feel insecure because I think they think how can I be modern and  
751. progressive and educated and, you know, a high achiever and keep my identity but at  
752. the same time embrace what is new and at the same time balance and juggle and I think  
753. particularly for girls.  
754. Yonka: So sad, so in that sense.  
755. Rachel: So... it's so difficult for girls.  
756. Yonka: So there is no identity.  
757. Graeme: They can't help but be undermined really.  
758. Rachel: It's really difficult.  
759. Graeme: Because there are so many other cultural influences  
760. Tabitha: I mean at the same time.  
761. Rachel: Just an example,  
762. Tabitha: There's a group kind of consensus of what being Emirati is.  
763. Rachel: Exactly, but what I'm saying is for example I mean yesterday I had a student come to see  
764. me who was very very strong, really good, you know, really really motivated, brilliant  
765. student and you know she's doing, I don't know, some essay about you know how  
766. inspiring Sheikha Lubna is comparing her to someone else, bla bla, bla, bla and you  
767. know Sheikha Lubna's followed Sheikh Zayed's footsteps, get women out there, get  
768. them in education, get them in the workplace, move the country forward, women are  
769. the future of the UAE, blaadee blaa dee blaa blaa blaa, she's got her ambition. Dad has  
770. said, you will never work in a mixed environment.  
771. Researcher: Hummmm  
772. Rachel: You know, and it's like, you know here she is bright, brainy the future of her country.  
773. Tabitha: That's part of her identity, no one will tell her what to do [said at same time by Tabitha]  
774. Rachel: And that's what I mean because she's getting a different message here. She's getting a  
775. different message from her teachers. The message from her teachers is, absolutely, we  
776. support you being Emirati but as an Emirati it's your responsibility to move your  
777. country forward to take on a leadership role, to push yourself as far as you can go and  
778. then...  
779. Graeme: Because identity is actually changing, anyway isn't it, as you say moving forward  
780. Rachel: Yeah, it's all about the future in education and so I think it must be so hard for these  
781. women who on the one hand  
782. Yonka: Particularly for women  
783. Rachel: Absolutely, so much harder  
784. Graeme: Did we talk about identity having to do with traditional values or traditional? Tradition  
785. is starting to change because as we say, this is a country that wants to, it's very forward  
786. looking  
787. Yonka: When you want to, when we go to weddings I feel like, it's just like that white dress and  
788. the way it's done, not at all Emirati but it is Emirati. So to us there's an Emirati wedding,  
789. Right?  
790. Tabitha: But it probably comes from lots of other cultures too like..  
791. Yonka: Exactly  
792. Tabitha: Like Lebanese  
793. Yonka: But it's not there, for some their parents or grandparents never got married that way.  
794. Tabitha: But that's because of the wealth, I mean you give people loads of money and they will  
795. do that.  
796. Researcher: Okay, to move on to the final section [Rachel laughs], which is future developments of  
797. English teaching in the UAE. Do you think your nationality has benefited you as an  
798. English teacher in the UAE?  
799. Yonka: In what sense?  
800. Researcher: Umm, for example, if you're from Turkey, do you feel that's been an advantage as a  
801. teacher or not?  
802. Yonka: In the UAE or in my working environment?  
803. Researcher: In the UAE with your Emirati students  
804. Yonka: They're interested in Turkish. They are very interested in Turkish culture, I don't know  
805. why. I think, it's a way, it's still Muslim. Islam is still there but there, this is the kind of



806. life that I would like to be in.

807. Rachel: It's so much more liberal

808. Yonka: Yes, so much more liberal, for girls, boys, I have no idea about. Has it benefited....

809. Rachel: I bet it has. I bet in evaluations you always get very high ratings for your cultural awareness.

810. Yonka: No, that is the lowest one

811. Group: Gosh! Really!

812. Yonka: This is very interesting. I was going to mention that because in end I'm a Turk and

813. Muslim married to an 'halalajjd, which is a foreigner, a Christian. I'm not wearing a

814. shaela [headscarf] so therefore....

815. Tabitha: You don't know what, do you say you are a Muslim?

816. Yonka: I say I grew up, but I never talk about it, but they automatically guess and then.

817. Somebody years ago asked me years ago if I were a Jew or not, or Christian. I said, I

818. don't talk about religion. I think they automatically assume.

819. Tabitha: But most Turks are Muslim?

820. Researcher: That might be why they assume.

821. Yonka: They assume but at the same time they are very sad for me [sounds sad]

822. Rachel: You've lost your way, you've lost your way.

823. Yonka: That cultural part [of evaluations] is always very low, like that's what [Laughs].

824. Tabitha: That's funny, that's interesting.

825. Yonka: Uhhhuu.

826. Rachel: You see, I get really high ratings for that.

827. Yonka: Because it's an advantage.

828. Rachel: And they know that I married a Muslim but I never say I converted, and I haven't.

829. Yonka: But still, you're almost there. Eventually, you'll get there.

830. Rachel: I lie and say I'm a Christian.

831. Yonka: Well this is the thing, what is being a Christian? What is being a Muslim. It's just

832. being.....

833. Graeme: But in what way do you mean how it benefits you?

834. Researcher: Well, I suppose, being British, do you feel the students are happy with your nationality?

835. Graeme: Oh, I see.

836. Rachel: [laughs] I can say this without the Americans being in the room, but I have had a

837. number of comments because when we've had to do spellings and all that, and

838. sometimes I'll put a British spelling on the board without thinking and then I'll catch

839. myself and say look officially at the university, it's American, the English we're using

840. but..

841. Tabitha: Really, I didn't know that.

842. Rachel: Yeah.

843. Tabitha: I always show them both.

844. Rachel: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

845. Tabitha: I didn't know that at all

846. Rachel: So I say, if you're writing an essay, use this spelling and stuff and I've had many times,

847. but teacher I want British English.

848. Yonka: What? Oh yeah they say that.

849. Rachel: Yeah, that's exactly what they say. I want British English.

850. Researcher: So do you feel it's an advantage being a British teacher or...

851. Tabitha: I think in comparison with being a non-native possibly but I can't see how, in particular

852. being British is being an advantage really.

853. Yonka: English is English, come on. But the thing is, in Turkey, 60 to 65% of the staff

854. would be Turkish who've been educated, trained to become language teachers and then

855. they do masters after whatever and the rest would be from England, Ireland. That's

856. what I was hoping when I came here. I would love to work with an Emirati who teaches

857. English.

858. Tabitha: But Emirati teachers here are, I remember a colleague telling me about one who is in the

859. Colloquy, you know, English department and the students don't like her. They don't

860. want to be taught by an Emirati.

861. Researcher: Why is that?

862. Tabitha: I don't know

863. Yonka: It's again another association of Emirati teachers having a stick in their hands and you

864. know, their understanding of Emirati teachers is different.

865. Researcher: Ummmm.

866. Rachel: The Colloquy girls told me yesterday that they prefer male teachers to female teachers.  
867. Researcher: Right, interesting.  
868. Tabitha: Well, they want some men in their lives.  
869. Rachel: I was really interested in that and I was like what's that about.  
870. Researcher: Yeah  
871. Rachel: They were like 'oh not you teacher, you're different'. I was like what's the difference?  
872. What's that about?  
873. Tabitha: Imagine spending your whole life only with women.  
874. Group: Ummm  
875. Tabitha: I'd get really sick of that  
876. Rachel: I suppose at home with brothers and uncles and....  
877. Tabitha: But if you had a female work place, well yeah, I suppose. But you know it's nice to have  
878. a mix of genders and I can see why they would want to.  
879. Rachel: No, they feel that female teachers are stricter. That's what it boiled down to. Yeah. They  
880. make you work harder.  
881. Tabitha: Was that all it is? Because you can get around the male teachers, that's what it is.  
882. Graeme: If they get better marks, we get better marks when we're with a male teacher. That's  
883. what...  
884. Tabitha: We can bat our eyelids  
885. Rachel: Eyelids?  
886. Tabitha: Eyelashes, whatever.  
887. Researcher: A couple more questions. Do you think that it's a good idea for students to study their  
888. major in English or do you think they should be given a choice to study their major in  
889. Arabic?  
890. Yonka: Yeah  
891. Anna: Me too  
892. Researcher: So do you all think that?  
893. Group: Yeah.  
894. Tabitha: I think it's crazy that they do their degree in English, I do.  
895. Yonka: Terminology, they can do that, an hour or two of ESP, they can have.  
896. Graeme: A choice is always better. Choice.  
897. Researcher: Okay, and do you think it's important to teach colloquial language to the students or do  
898. you think that's not relevant because English is a global language and we shouldn't be  
899. teaching specific.  
900. Graeme: They know anyway. They know more colloquial language than we do.  
901. Researcher: Okay.  
902. Graeme: You know, because of the texting language which is, which they're acquainted with and  
903. all of the stuff they're reading on the internet. They are more up with it than I am.  
904. Researcher: Ummm.  
905. Tabitha: We are supposed to be teaching academic English.  
906. Researcher: Right  
907. Graeme: Yes  
908. Tabitha: Even more so than before.  
909. Yonka: Oooooo.  
910. Tabitha: [laughs]  
911. Researcher: The final question...  
912. Graeme: One more thing on colloquial language is that it tends to be very localized so it's not  
913. going to be very useful in terms of global English anyway.  
914. Researcher: Right. Yeah. And the final question, is do you think topics in English courses should be  
915. focused around local issues or global issues?  
916. Rachel: Global  
917. Tabitha: Global  
918. Researcher: Or a mix?  
919. Rachel: Global  
920. Graeme: Mix, mix.  
921. Tabitha: I don't know, I think local has been done to death.  
922. Rachel: I do. By the time they've got out of school and it's all, it's all about, like you were saying,  
923. I remember, we've had this discussion before, it's boring. They know all about the  
924. UAE.  
925. Researcher: You created some materials about bringing local issues in.

926. Rachel: Yes.

927. Researcher: But do you now think that's not a good idea or...

928. Rachel: I think that the goal was to start from a local context so the topic was comfortable and familiar and then broaden out. So I think yes it's like the zone of proximal development

929. idea, the concept is you start with a local idea that they're comfortable with but then,

930. but you know, I think one of the most important things is that these students need to

931. develop is an ability to generate some general knowledge ...

932. Tabitha: They know nothing about the world [said at the same time]

933. Rachel: ...about the world, some general awareness.

934. Graeme: I think they are very happy to do Emirati things because they feel more comfortable

935. with it but I do think it's very important for them to learn more about the world.

936. Tabitha: Because they don't have a basic knowledge about geography.

937. Graeme: No, they don't. They rely on teachers.

938. Researcher: Right, case in point

939. Yonka: Haaaa

940. Researcher: So, okay, that is the end of the focus group. Thanks so much.

941. Graeme: Thank you

942. Tabitha: Thank you.

943.

## Appendix 10 – Sample pages of completed questionnaires

### Group 1 (Emirati university students): G1-Q9, page 4 of the questionnaire

2) Has English changed your life? If so, how?  
هل غيرت اللغة الإنجليزية حياتك؟ كيف؟

Yes, i feel like im smart and know something  
that all people know. Will develop and be together  
in the society.

3) Has English changed Emirati culture? If so, how?  
هل غيرت اللغة الإنجليزية الهوية الإماراتية؟ كيف؟

~~Some~~ Maybe. Some student or some people  
don't like to speak ~~an~~ Arabic and prefer English  
language. Also learn those children the English language  
first and don't take care about our ~~their~~ religion, language  
~~and mother~~

4) Does English affect the way you think? Why / why not? Please give examples.  
هل تؤثر اللغة الإنجليزية على طريقة تفكيرك؟ لماذا؟ أم لا؟ فضلاً اكتب أمثلة.

Sometimes,  
when I think about something ~~I~~ in English  
it's opening and ok but in ~~Arabic~~ arabic it's hard  
because our lexicon stop something that the english  
thing it's almost ~~stayed~~

**Part 4 – Future developments in English teaching in the UAE**

القسم الرابع: تطور المستقبل في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في الإمارات

1) Where would you like your English teacher to be from?

من أي دولة تود أن يكون مدرّس اللغة الإنجليزية ؟

	✓		✓
USA أمريكا	✓	Germany ألمانيا	
UK الولايات المتحدة	✓	UAE الإمارات العربية المتحدة	
Canada كندا	✓	China الصين	
Australia أستراليا		Egypt مصر	
India الهند		Other: غيرها	

2) Are you interested in learning about Western (British/American) culture as part of an English course? Why/Why not?

هل أنت مهتم بدراسة الثقافة الغربية ( البريطانية أو الأمريكية ) كجزء من دراستك للغة الإنجليزية ؟ لماذا ؟ أم لا ؟

No, because maybe it wouldn't be  
interesting to know.

3) Would you prefer to study your major in English or Arabic? Why?

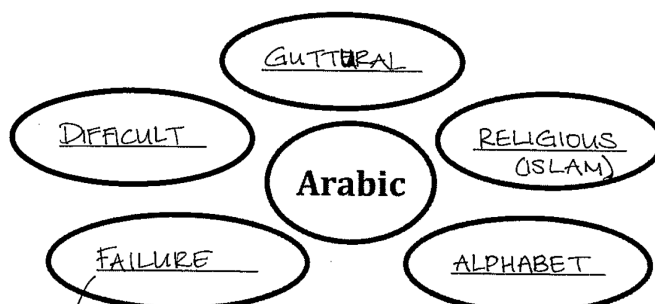
هل تفضل دراسة التخصص باللغة العربية أو الإنجليزية؟ ولماذا؟

Arabic, because it's our first language  
which it make our studies more  
easier and make us feel comfortable.

Thank you. Your participation in this questionnaire is much appreciated.

شكراً على مشاركتكم في هذا الاستبيان

What are five main words you associate with Arabic?



→ this is the first language I've given up on. I've learnt loads of languages over the years & enjoyed the access to the cultures I've lived in that the language gave me. For some reason I couldn't muster any enthusiasm for Arabic at all. I find this strange & a bit distressing.

Lucky to be a native speaker of it. That it is so global as a result of happy circumstance; right place, right time. That it tends to promote a sense of linguistic superiority among native English speakers who don't always see the purpose in learning other languages.

**Part 3 – The effects of English** and as a result perhaps view other cultures + languages with suspicion/fear?

1) What are your perceptions of students' attitudes to English?

That it's a necessary evil. It's just there as a means to get an education & be employable, but it's not a language they enjoy learning. It's a chore to get through.

**Part 4 – Future developments in English teaching in the UAE**

1) Do you feel your nationality has been an advantage or a disadvantage when teaching Emirati students?

It's an advantage for the most part. I get the feeling students prefer having teachers from outside the region, but that may have more to do with teaching style than nationality.

2) Do you think Emirati students should be taught English based on local topics? Why/why not?

I think local topics should be 50% and global or international topics 50%. They can relate to local topics, but they also need a global perspective.

3) How do you feel about English medium tertiary education in the UAE?

I think it should depend on their major. English is useful for some majors, but not all. Or if students are planning to study abroad for graduate level courses, it would also be necessary.

Thank you. Your participation in this questionnaire is much appreciated.

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