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Civic Nationalism and Language-in-Education Policies in the United Arab Emirates

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At the onset of the twenty-first century, a new form of nationalism has surged, one with different agents and target audiences, and with a rein-vigorated persona represented by the prefix *neo-* in its title. Politicians like Donald Trump, Marine Le Pen, Boris Johnson and Viktor Orbán, along with the many far-right parties in different countries, are some of the most visible agents of neo-nationalism, but this phenomenon is by no means restricted to western countries, as we can witness similar trends in China, India, and Myanmar, to name a few. Islamophobia, Hispanophobia, anti-Semitism, and other xenophobic sentiments have become distinctive features of neo-nationalist rhetoric. While some might downplay such features by referring to Islamophobia as "anti-Islamic activism," for example, or trying to justify such sentiments as being grounded in "empirical evidence" (see Sedgwick, 2013), fear,

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racism, and inadequate governmental responses to transnational capitalism and the socioeconomic problems it has created remain the major drivers of neo-nationalism in its extreme form. This is one reason why, in its most vicious manifestations, neo-nationalism primarily targets refugees and immigrants, and sometimes even residents or citizens who may be perceived as such, in an attempt to limit their numbers and access to jobs, benefits, and resources.

Sedgwick (2013) called neo-nationalism "a response to threats posed by globalization at the levels of sovereignty, identity, and economics" (p. 211). Similarly, Eger and Valdez (2015) attributed this phenomenon to "sociocultural issues" and "national identity," which are perceived to be threatened as a result of changing demographics (p. 117). In its most popular forms, neo-nationalism triggers fear of a reality in which non-whites, who have been historically colonized, demeaned, and often demonized, move to so-called "white areas," along with their unique ethnic and religious practices, traditions, cultures, and languages. They become a "national emergency," as is the case in the United States today (Baker, 2019), or a threat to "national sovereignty" in western Europe (Eger & Valdez, 2015, p. 127), among other labels.

Neo-nationalism is not only directed at other ethnicities and religions. It can also affect people of similar backgrounds. This was the case with international students in higher education in South Africa and South Korea, who experienced discrimination from locals, even though they were of the same race and shared cultural values (Lee, 2017; Lee, Jon, & Byun, 2016). It is also the case of some countries in the Middle East, such as in Lebanon, where Palestinian and Syrian refugees are discriminated against by right-wing groups. Due to shifting economic and political grounds, supporters of neo-nationalism often channel their frustrations towards refugees and minorities because they are viewed as threats to the social, economic, and political welfare of the country, instead of directing their frustrations toward the real agents of political and economic corruption.

Another form of nationalism, which can be labeled as "civic," attempts to focus on the positive outcomes of a changing world order. Civic nationalism is characterized by superdiverse communities that aim to be non-confrontational to other ethnic and religious groups, especially

Table 4.1 Population of GCC countries in 2019

Gulf State	Population	Citizens (%)	Non-Citizens (%)
Bahrain	1,505,003	46	54
Kuwait	2,993,706	30.4	69.6
Qatar	2,444,174	11.6	88.4
Oman	5,664,844	54	45
The UAE	9,992,083	11.6	88.4
Saudi Arabia	34,173,498	61.7	38.3

in countries that are home to many immigrants, foreign workers, or expatriates. In a civic nation, people do not have to "be unified by commonalities of language or culture" and anyone can be a member, including immigrants, so long as they support political institutions and "accept the liberal principles on which they are based" (Stilz, 2009, p. 257). Whether liberal principles are actually applied in such countries is beyond the scope of this chapter.

In the case of the Gulf states, specific policies and procedures exist to regulate the presence of non-citizens, including refugees or asylum seekers who up till now have only been permitted to enter as residents on a case-by-case basis (Day, 2019). They also have rules that govern the limited channels that expatriates must follow in order to set foot into a specific Gulf state. Despite these policies, the number of non-residents in some cases far outweighs that of the local population, creating national concerns related to identity, language, and cultural practices. In fact, out of the six Arab countries that constitute the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC), three have resident populations that are greater than that of the local populations (Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait), two have expatriate populations closer to 50% (Bahrain and Oman), and one (Saudi Arabia) is 38% non-Saudi. Table 4.1 presents aggregated data of the percentages of locals and non-locals, with the United Arab Emirates and Qatar as the most extreme cases with local populations that are in the minority.

This chapter focuses on nationalism and language-in-education policies in the United Arab Emirates (hereafter UAE). It argues that, while the policies and practices that have been set to safeguard the interests of the local Emirati population might look neo- or ethno-nationalist,

nationalism in the UAE takes a more civic form, albeit broadly defined. In contrast to many western countries where neo-nationalist sentiments are manipulated to instigate fear and hatred of other cultures or ethnicities, the UAE has been working towards a more tolerant society where people from all backgrounds are welcomed and can feel at home. In essence, the UAE government promotes the image of a unified country that not only transcends ethnic and cultural differences but also celebrates them. This is achieved by forging a new brand for national and cultural identity rooted in traditions, diffusing conflict through the use of soft power and diplomacy, promoting diversity and tolerance, and trying to preserve Arabic as the native language. The chapter also argues that clearer language policies that take into account language(s) as a right and a resource must be instated to further enhance national and social cohesion.

This chapter begins by providing brief historical background of the different factors that have shaped the UAE into what it is today, focusing on select areas where nationalism can be observed. The second section presents a critical examination of major scholarship on the country's language-in-education policies with a focus on English and Arabic. The chapter concludes with implications for language-in-education policy and national identity.

Description of Context

The UAE is situated on the eastern side of the Arabian Peninsula. It is bordered by Saudi Arabia to the south and west, the Arabian Gulf to the north, and Oman to the east. Formed in 1971, the UAE is a federation of seven emirates: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Fujairah, Ras al Khaimah, and Um al Quwain. Before the mid nineteenth century, the UAE was inhabited by nomadic families with frequent tribal clashes amongst them, as well as clashes with the British Empire that culminated in the latter destroying all major ports in 1819 and controlling Gulf waters (National Archives, 2019). Subsequent truces that safeguarded maritime peace were signed and renewed up until 1853, when naval aggression ceased. As a consequence, the area became known as the

"Trucial Coast," which included present-day UAE and Oman. With the rise of Ottoman, French, and Persian interests in the Gulf, the British signed an exclusive agreement with the Gulf sheikhs, whereby the former vowed to defend the UAE against all enemies. Thus, the UAE became a British "protectorate," a euphemism for imperialism. This treaty established British supremacy in the Gulf until their withdrawal in 1971 (National Archives, 2019). After independence, nationalism manifested itself through different policies and practices, some of which will be addressed in the following section.

Citizenship Laws

Since the formation of the UAE in 1971, strict policies have been enacted regarding who can become a citizen. With the exception of the children of Emirati women married to foreigners, who can now become citizens when they turn 18 (Issa, 2011), expatriates who were born and who have spent all of their lives in the country have no legal channel to become citizens, and therefore must remain on sponsored visas. This could be partly explained by the demographic imbalance; with an estimated population of about 10 million, the number of expatriate residents far outweighs the number of UAE nationals who constitute only about 11% of the population (United Arab Emirates' Government Portal, 2019b). This population is concentrated in the emirates of Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Thus, Emiratis are a minority in their own country. This demographic imbalance "has posed security, economic, social and cultural threats to the local population" (Kapiszewski, 2006, p. 4). For this reason, prioritizing nationals' access to resources and benefits, as well as preserving their cultural and linguistic identity, have become more urgent than naturalizing the growing number of expatriates, which could threaten the rights of the local population. This reasoning, however, is questioned by some scholars who cast doubt on the Emirati or Arabs' sense of belonging and collective identity. Stephenson and Rajendram (2018), for example, depict Arabs as a population who had "little sense of collective identity" up until the 1830s with the booming of the pearling industry, and who had only engrained their "narrative of belonging" with the oil

discovery in the 1930s (p. 893). The authors are of the view that with-holding citizenship from expatriates will eventually jeopardize stability and "reinforce ethnic division" in the UAE (p. 901).

In contrast, the National Archives (2019) present the UAE as a civilization that dates back to prehistoric times, with evidence from archaeological excavations. It does not present itself as a land where various civilizations have existed, but rather as a single continuous civilization, thus extending the Emirati roots to centuries before the booms of the pearling and oil industries. To an outsider, such a narrative, along with the fear for the loss of Emirati identity and rights, may not appear civic in nature since in a civic nation, "it is not the role of the state to privilege or endorse one national culture over others" (Stilz, 2009, p. 258). Rather, they might appear to be ethno-nationalist (Koch, 2016, p. 52) or neo-nationalist in an extreme form that supports "the mainte-nance of social insurance, with preferences for protecting or increasing benefits to ethno-nationals, while cutting benefits to out-groups" (Eger & Valdez, 2015, p. 127). This would be the case, especially when considering how naturalization is possible and legally regulated in other countries. However, from the UAE's point of view, the unemployment rate among Emiratis, along with other social and cultural factors, warrant restrictive citizenship laws, at least for the time being.

In addition, there may be a need to understand the context of the UAE "beyond the predominantly rights-based framework of citizenship studies" and look at how expatriates may "embrace the hegemonic or mainstream identities promoted in their new homelands" (Koch, 2016, p. 52). The government seems to be aware that changes need to happen, which is one reason why, in 2019, it became possible for foreigners to own property in perpetuity, rather than for a fixed term as before, in investment areas (United Arab Emirates' Government Portal, 2020b). This law is likely to increase long-term investment, bolster a non-oil economy, and enhance the sense of security among expatriates and foreign investors.

National and Cultural Identity

Another factor related to the current citizenship law is the feeling among many Emiratis that their cultural and national identity might be threatened as a result of the demographic imbalance. Hopkyns (2014) describes the situation as "cultural fragility," where nationals are uncertain over their past, present, and future (p. 3). The debate on UAE national identity culminated in declaring 2008 as the National Identity Year, and in organizing a conference to discuss issues of concern. One study found that 60% of Emiratis "felt a sense of isolation as their cultural identity became increasingly diluted" due to demographic imbalance (Richardson, 2008, para. 2), which was also perceived as a threat to the stability of Emirati society (Al-Kitbi, 2008). Challenges that ranged from "losing our country" (El Sawy, 2008) to "losing our identity, heritage, and language" (Mohammed, 2008) have all been expressed by Emiratis in various venues. Such attitudes, Koch (2016) believes, are primarily expressed by the "conservative elites," who are anxious about policies that favor expats (p. 50). Since then, the UAE has set its National Agenda, which aims at achieving six national priorities by 2021, the year that marks the 50th Emirati National Day. One of the six priorities is achieving a cohesive society and preserving national identity. In order to accomplish this herculean task, the UAE has launched a number of indexes such as the National Identity Index, which measures the sense of belonging and national identity of citizens and which currently stands at 96.93% (Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development, 2018), and the Social Cohesion Index, which investigates people's sense of equality, education, culture, and national belonging, among other themes, and which stands at 86% (Ministry of Community Development, 2018). The UAE has also established a number of government entities tasked with preserving national identity such as the Federal Demographic Council (FDC) and the Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development (MCKD). The FDC is responsible for rebalancing the population "while strengthening the loyalty of the UAE's citizens to their leadership and homeland" (United Arab Emirates' Government Portal, 2019c). MCKD works on preserving national identity

while enhancing cross-cultural communication. According to an official government website:

> The ministry defines national identity a system of social and moral values associated with the lifestyle of the people in the past, present and future. This system is founded on the essence of the people's existence and their survival in the face of the challenges of dispersion, extinction, disintegration and demise. (United Arab Emirates' Government Portal, 2019c)

The Ministry strives to counter such challenges by boosting the Emiratis' sense of citizenship and belonging, supporting their talents, and enhancing their work ethics. This is achieved via the various initiatives and projects, such as the Best Youth Initiative for Community Development Award, UAE's Flag day launched in 2013, and UAE Commemoration Day launched in 2015 (Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development, 2019; United Arab Emirates' Government Portal, 2019d). The UAE National Day, which is celebrated on December 2nd, plays a major role in promoting civic nationalism. The day is used to establish a state-based sense of belonging among both expats and locals, or the "dissenting [Emirati] elites," who are also "being targeted by recent efforts to imbue National Day celebrations with a civic nationalist spirit" (Koch, 2016, p. 51). Although such attempts are not meant to establish equality between Emiratis and expats, they do create a shared sense of "nationalist pride" and demonstrate that nationalism is not just for nationals (pp. 51–52). Another area that boosts national identity and preserves traditions is changing long-established elite sports into "heritage sports," including camel racing, falconry, saluki racing, and dhow racing, to name a few (Yaqoob, 2016). These heritage sports serve to connect tribalism and modernism, promoting a modern identity that is rooted in history. Such demarcation of sports as distinctly elitist and heritage-bound, however, may institutionalize differences related to the status quo and further reinforce divisions among Emiratis and expatriates that other events aspire to bridge.

Perhaps one of the most important areas where national identity is exhibited to the world is in the two flag carriers of the UAE: Al Eltihad

Airways, based in Abu Dhabi; and Emirates Airlines in Dubai. Not only do these airlines promote national identity through the various iconographies displayed on their aircrafts, but they have also managed to expand internationally through their use of luxury aircrafts, thus competing with long-established western carriers. They promote their nation's brand by using internationally acclaimed celebrities in advertisements, displaying the carriers' names on billboards in prestigious stadiums, and sponsoring various sporting teams and art events. This success has triggered backlash from U.S. carriers like Delta, American, and United, who accuse Emirati and Qatari airlines of receiving government subsidies, which have enabled them to lower airfares and put their American rivals at a disadvantage (Nunes, 2018). This culminated in a xenophobic comment by former Delta CEO, Richard Anderson in 2015, who essentially blamed the Arabian Peninsula for the 9/11 terrorist attacks and for his company's 2005 bankruptcy ("Emirates Rejects Delta Apology," 2015). Thus, as the UAE attempts to shatter stereotypes and to project the image of a strong modern economy with national pride at its center, there are efforts by neo-nationalists in the west to vilify such gains.

Divisions Across Ethnicities and Nationalities

Nationalism is manifested in the clear division of labor among ethnic groups and nationalities in the UAE. This is seen in the disparities of salaries among ethnic groups, as well as the preferences for certain nationalities when it comes to specific jobs. In the private sector, where the workforce is primarily expatriate (98%), Tong and Al Awad (2014) found that there is a "high level of wage inequality" and "a hierarchical ordering of workers' pay along nationalities" (p. 59). Thus, nationals from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) are at the top of the pyramid with the highest earnings, followed by Emiratis, then Arabs, and finally at the bottom, East and South Asians who constitute the largest group of workers in the country. Burton (2012) presented a similar division but with the first two swapped. Burton's division, however, takes a chauvinistic twist in labeling Emiratis as "the *bank* at the top," followed by "Arabian, Iranian, and

Western expats" who are labeled "the brains" (p. 73), as though Emiratis do not have the intellectual capacity to be anything other than the "brainless rich." Although the most recent annual salary survey administered by the magazine *Gulf Business* showed that the salary gap among the different ethnicities is slowly closing, especially between Westerners and Arabs (Anderson, 2018), other factors need to be taken into account before drawing any conclusions. With the absence of specific laws, it is yet to be seen how this disparity will change in the future.

The second manifestation of nationalism in the labor market is the preference for certain nationalities in some occupations. Ten years ago, this preference was clearly stated in job advertisements, especially ones for teaching English, which used to list the specific nationalities required: "native speakers" from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, or New Zealand. Some ads specified "passport holders" from the previously listed countries. In fact, "the most lucrative sectors of the ELT industry [were] wrested and set aside for the 'native speaker'" (Karmani, 2005, p. 93). Karmani described the situation as "linguistic apartheid" constructed upon "social privileges," including "native speaker privilege, White privilege, American privilege, British privilege, etc." (p. 93). Nowadays, this preference is not explicitly listed due to the 2015 anti-discrimination law (discussed below), but one can still find plenty of job advertisements on popular UAE websites, such as Naukri Gulf and Dubizzle, where nationality is explicitly stated.

In addition, preferences can be listed indirectly, with many institutions requiring a degree from a western university, the ability to teach English as a first language, and/or evidence of work experience in western countries. Applicants who manage to pass through the initial round of application reviews might get filtered out once paperwork is submitted since disclosing nationality, religion, and denomination are required to get the security clearance needed to work in the UAE. Nationality preferences can be seen in other domains as well. Sequeira (2015) found that 30.5% of the job ads sampled had a direct explicit nationality bias favoring non-Arabs (at 23%), compared to 13.5% that had indirect explicit nationality bias with preference given to non-Emiratis. The latter finding is not surprising, considering that Emiratis have their own online portal for finding jobs and exclusive job fairs. Interestingly, the

study also found that "jobs with higher socioeconomic status [were] less likely to include any type of explicit nationality bias" (p. 12), suggesting that qualifications and credentials take precedence over national origins for certain jobs.

In 2015, the UAE introduced Law No. 2 "On Combating Discrimination and Hatred" against all forms of prejudice based on "religion, creed, doctrine, sect, caste, race, colour or ethnic origin" (Federal Decree Law, 2015, p. 1). The law encompasses workplace prejudice, including salary discrepancies and nationality preferences. Most recently, the UAE Labor Ministry condemned discrimination based on national origin in job advertisements and warned that penalties would be incurred (Duncan & Ryan, 2018); however, such laws are still not strictly enforced. It is also worth noting that advertisements targeting UAE nationals are exempt from this penalty since it is considered "positive discrimination." Such an exemption might be understandable given that UAE nationals hold less than 10% of public jobs and less than 1.3% of private jobs (Tong & Al Awad, 2014). In addition, the UAE has recently introduced laws and policies that prohibit discrimination against domestic helpers (Federal Law No. 10, 2017) and people with disabilities (Government of Dubai Media Office, 2018), and that establish equal pay for men and women ("Mohammed bin Rashid Approves," 2018). Such laws increase the likelihood of future resolutions that will end all discrimination in the workplace, including pay gaps and nationality preferences.

Emiratization

Another manifestation of nationalism in the UAE is presented through the different programs and initiatives launched by the federal government to empower Emiratis, such as TANMIA, Tawteen, and Absher, to name a few. Discussing all of these programs is beyond the scope of this chapter; however, one of them can help to shed light on how such initiatives are viewed positively from a minority perspective. The Tawteen program, or Emiratization, is an initiative launched to "overcome the structural division in the labor market" by mandating "the inclusion of Emiratis in the job sector, particularly in the private sector" (United Arab

Emirates' Government Portal, 2019a). The federal government encourages the private sector to implement Tawteen through incentives, quotas, and the foundation of the UAE Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization. Eventually, the UAE would like to reduce its dependence on expatriates (Al-Waqfi & Forstenlechner, 2014).

Tawteen arose partly to resist the negative consequences of the spread of English in the emirates (Hopkyns, 2014), and partly due to the unemployment rate among Emirati citizens. While unemployment rate in the UAE is one of the lowest in the world, currently stands at 5.2% in Abu Dhabi and 0.5% in Dubai (Statistical Yearbook of Abu Dhabi, 2019, p. 202), it does not consider unemployment among Emiratis, which was estimated at 14% (Nasir, 2017). This is why 2013 was named Emiratization Year with the aim to bring down unemployment among Emiratis to less than 1% by 2021. This goal was perhaps overly ambitious, as unemployment is on the rise. In Dubai, Emirati unemployment rose to 4% in 2018 (Webster, 2019). This can be partly attributed to the reluctance of the private sector to hire Emiratis due to their perceived low skill standards, higher salary requirements, and reluctance to work longer hours (Aljanahi, 2017; Thompson & Wissink, 2016). Other barriers to Emiratization include differences in cultural norms, work ethics, and legal frameworks that do not provide companies with power over Emiratis (Al-Waqfi & Forstenlechner, 2014), which is why some companies resort to fake naturalization employment, with "ghost" employees are put on the payroll but asked not to show up (Aljanahi, 2017; Riyami, et al., 2015). Such barriers to hiring Emiratis demonstrate "a colonial modality of thinking in a labor market that is based on racial social hierarchy" where "coloniality and negative racial stereotypes are constitutively two sides of the same coin in the UAE" (Thompson & Wissink, 2016, pp. 6–7). In essence, the private sector's reluctance to hire Emiratis and to train them shows a lack of understanding of the spirit of Tawteen: to diversity the workforce and preserve national and cultural identity through the integration of nationals. It also shows a lack of understanding of "the transitional nature of the UAE society" that requires patience and the initiation of HR programs aimed "at upgrading the overall quality of the local stock of human capital" (Al-Waqfi & Forstenlechner, 2014, p. 184). Achieving such a holistic understanding can only be achieved

with a joint effort with all the parties involved: the government, Emiratis, and the private sector.

By establishing such governmental entities, projects, and initiatives, the UAE demonstrates a proactive response to global challenges related to changing demographics and assumes responsibility for expanding opportunities. Instead of being reductive of other races and ethnicities, as is the case in many of western countries where neo-nationalism thrives, the UAE is embracing diversity while being cognizant of how that might affect its citizens. It promotes a rhetoric that is focused on what the UAE can offer to its population and to the world, and it tries to soften the consequences of changing demographics by implementing specific projects so that none of its citizens fall behind and are left vulnerable to neo-nationalism in its extreme form.

Civic Nationalism and Education

Unlike countries where neo-nationalists promote campaigns, like the "English-only" movement in the United States, which is intended to limit the use of Spanish (see Meadows, Chapter 2 in this volume), the UAE has set a precedent in its official acceptance of other languages, particularly English, although in practice this might not always be the case. The following section provides a brief overview of the education system in the UAE, focusing on ethnic and linguistic segregation in higher education. It also addresses the relationship between nationalism and language teaching.

Schools in the UAE are either public or private. Public schools are free for locals and gender-segregated; they use the Ministry of Education (MOE) curriculum, Arabic as the primary medium of instruction, English to teach science, and require students to pass a test in Arabic in order to enroll (United Arab Emirates' Government Portal, 2020a). Private schools, on the other hand, can be very expensive; they are mostly co-educational, use more than 15 different curriculums, mostly with English as the medium of instruction (EMI), and teach Arabic and other languages as subjects. Such differences may partly explain why the number of private schools has been growing at the expense of public

schools. In 2010–2011, 60.5% of schools were public, but by 2019–2020, that number decreased to 49% (Ministry of Education, 2010, 2019b). The same applies for the number of students, which decreased from 33% to 26% for the same academic years. In fact, more than half of Emirati students now opt to enroll in private schools due to the use of EMI and the perceived presitigious status and curricular rigor, which is considered superior to public schools (Government of Dubai Knowledge and Human Development Authority, 2011). The same applies to many wealthy expatriates. Moreover, parents are forced to choose one type of school over another based on "the family's ethnicity, language, and socioeconomic status" (Stephenson & Rajendram, 2018, p. 895), with the result that many schools end up being ethnically, linguistically, and socioeconomically segregated.

Civic Nationalism and Higher Education

There are more than 100 institutions of higher education in the UAE. Seventy-six of these are accredited, but only three are state-sponsored (Ministry of Education, 2019a): UAE University (UAEU), Zayed University, and Higher Colleges of Technology; these are restricted to Emirati nationals (United Arab Emirates' Government Portal, 2018) and are perceived to be the most prestigious and elite institutions due to their outstanding government funding (Stephenson & Rajendram, 2018). UAEU, ranked as the country's top university in 2019 ("UAE University"), was also the country's first national university, founded in 1976 following independence from Britain. As with universities in other Arab countries post-independence, UAEU was founded to play an active role in nation-building and to help shape national identity. Stephenson and Rajendram (2018) have argued that the European-style university, which was adopted by many newly founded nation-states, used to play a significant role in identity formation, but does not anymore in this globalized era (p. 890). Such a belief only holds true because language is a major component of identity formation, and when a language is not promoted in education, it sends the wrong signal to the users of that language.

In the UAE, English is the medium of instruction in all three types of institutions of higher education, not Arabic. This is not limited to the UAE, as many Arab states have adopted EMI for higher education (and some K-12 schools). Such policies and practices deviate from recommendations of both language research and the Arab League, whose 1946 Cultural Treaty declares that member states "will work to make the Arabic language convey all expressions of thought and modern science, and to make of it the language of instruction in all subjects and in all educational stages in the Arab countries" (Arab News Bulletin, 1947, p. 208). Thus, the message imparted to students as a result of such policies is that, at the very least, Arabic is not as important as English, and that to have access to education and better economic opportunities one must learn English. In the long run, Al-Issa and Dahan (2011) warned that the "gradual loss of Arabic could lead to a lessening of unity" between Emiratis and other Arab countries (p. 4).

Other factors that weakens the state university's role in identity formation are the rise of the Western-style models of education, the emergence of "a managerial model tailored to the global markets" that emphasizes "corporate alliances" (Stephenson & Rajendram, 2018, p. 891), and the assumption that anything "western" is superior. Currently, the UAE has the second largest concentration of international branch campuses (IBCs) in the world (WENR, 2019). American liberal higher education in particular is often perceived as superior. This perception has been promoted through the locals' preference for western or western-educated expats. It is also promoted through the literature which assumes "superiority" (Koch & Vora, 2019, p. 553) and "builds (upon) a geopolitical imaginary of American exceptionalism, largely through Orientalist representations" (p. 554). This erroneous perception is not limited to the UAE, as we see traces of it in other Arab countries; in Lebanon, for example, English is associated with tolerance and liberalism (Esseili, 2017). Ethnic background also plays a major role in choosing an institute of higher education. A recent study showed that, even when it comes to group work in IBCs with diverse populations, students "self-select those from their ethnic group or their language of comfort" (Stephenson & Rajendram, 2018, p. 897). Language policies and segregation at the school level contribute to a lack of integration in the UAE's greater

community. In the long run, such factors might play a role in harnessing negative neo-national rather than civic sentiments among the less fortunate, especially those who feel disadvantaged as a result of inequitable language preferences.

Civic Nationalism and Language Teaching

English was introduced to the UAE with the signing of oil concessions in the late 1930s. Hutchinson and Waters (1987, as cited in Karmani, 2005, p. 92) identified the aftermath of the OPEC oil embargo in the 1970s as the period when ELT became a big business in the Gulf region. The industry resembled "that of an oil cartel than an educational service provider" (Karmani, 2005, p. 93), with a centralized western core that determined the best methods and textbooks while subtly discrediting "non-native" English teachers. Since then, the presence of English in the UAE has expanded to almost all functional domains, including institutions of higher education, the retail industry, food service, the private sector, and the public domain (Nickerson & Crawford, 2013; Randall & Samimi, 2010). English can be found in national airports and airlines, advertisements and billboards, restaurants and coffee shops, mass media, and street signs (Thomas, 2016). English is used as a lingua franca at all levels of the society and "is replacing Arabic" in Dubai (Randall & Samimi, 2010, p. 43).

In fact, the spread of English in the UAE prompted the government in 2008 to declare Arabic as the official language of the country in all federal institutes (Al Baik, 2008). It also triggered a number of scholars to sound the alarm on the dangers awaiting Arabic and national identity (cf, Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011; Hopkyns, 2014; Raddawi & Moslem, 2015; Randall & Samimi, 2010). Disagreement over the labeling for this language change is evident in the literature; however, the feeling that Arabic is losing ground to English is widespread. In contrast to these voices trying to raise awareness, others have dismissed arguments that blame English for language loss in the Arab world and believe that such rhetoric manipulates "nationalist and Islamist discourse" to indicate that English presence is "a continuation of Western colonialism and imperialism" (Alzaben, Omar, & Kassem, 2019, p. 386). Instead, English

is not considered a threat to identity and Arabic in the GCC region, and Arabic's resistance to language change and its inability to address the needs of its users is to blame for any decline. Despite the fact that the Gulf region has provided fertile ground for ELT to flourish, English spread is not neutral, and it contributes to promoting inequalities and the marginalization of local populations if not properly regulated (Pennycook, 2003). In addition, while the idea of blaming English for language loss is not convincing without first examining the practices of the local population, as well as government policies and the ELT industry, taking it for granted that English should be the lingua franca in the Gulf region and that population figures alone are not enough to sound the alarm (Alzaben et al., 2019, p. 387) is also unconvincing. Population figures might not be important when there are clear policies that regulate the use of languages in the country's different functional domains, particularly the regulative and instrumental functions (Esseili, 2017). Likewise, multilingualism is important and should not be considered a threat to national identity when users of major languages in a given context are granted their linguistic rights, including the right to use their first language as a language of instruction. Arabs in general, and Emiratis in particular, have the right to use Arabic for education.

To complicate the issue further, research on the spread of English in Arabic speaking countries reveals that code-mixing and code-switching (i.e., using Arabizi or Arabish and, in some instances, English as the primary mode of communication) are on the rise (cf, Al Haq & Smadi, 1996; Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011; Allehaiby, 2013; Esseili, 2017; Mahboob & Elyas, 2014; Pessoa & Rajakumar, 2011; Randall & Samimi, 2010). Such practices call for legitimate inquiry into the leading causes of these trends rather than frantic calls for abolishing English or a total dismissal of such warnings as conspiracy theories, or framing the discussion as either for or against Arabic/English. Karmani (2005), for example, classified the responses of the Muslim Arab world to the spread of English into two camps: The modernist position, which embraces ELT and stresses emulating the west in various domains; and the Islamist response characterized by a rejection of "Western-style modernization and by extension the current prominence of English" (p. 99). Likewise, Mohd-Asraf (2005) presented a dichotomous response, wherein English is

depicted as the language of opportunity, but at the same time "a carrier of Judo-Christian cultural values" and "Western civilization" with both positive and negative connotations (p. 104).

There is no doubt that English can be a double-edge sword, but there is also a need to move past such binary oppositions and divisive language to determine future directions. A third response could be described as one that accepts multilingualism as an asset, acknowledges the ensuing challenges, endorses language rights, initiates clear and informed language planning and policies, and works on strengthening the native language, among other national areas, in order to redress any shortcomings. Such a response has been recognized and adopted in the UAE, but it has not been entirely successful in addressing some of the challenges due to a lack of clarity regarding language policy and planning initiatives.

In this regard, a number of scholars have addressed the value of bilingual education, as opposed to shifting entirely to EMI. Despite its massive spread, EMI has not been entirely successful in the UAE. Historically speaking, three key factors could explain this outcome: using alienating and culturally irrelevant content matter, relying on Western ELT specialists who lack the cultural and linguistic background, and failure to invest in developing Arabic as evidenced by the lack of language policy and planning initiatives related to Arabization, translation, and research (Karmani, 2005, p. 95). Changing the language of instruction to English was meant to improve the situation. As seen in the literature, however, such a move, along with the unprecedented spread of English in general, has led to negative consequences, including a decline in the use of Arabic (Raddawi & Moslem, 2015; Ronesi, 2011), the classification of Arabic as a language "at risk" (Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011, p. 3), and a feeling of being "swamped by English" with the introduction of the 'New School Model' in Abu Dhabi, where the language of instruction was changed from Arabic to English in public schools (Hopkyns, 2014, p. 13).

To remedy the situation, instating bilingual programs and slowing down the pace of English spread have been recommended. Ronesi (2011) and Raddawi and Moslem (2015) suggested that dual language or two-way immersion Arabic/English programs could be established

and that the two languages should be celebrated rather than pitted against each other. Such programs can be highly effective in strengthening both languages. In addition, Hopkyns (2014) proposed a gentler approach where students use Arabic in primary school and English immersion in secondary schools. As far as the language of instruction is concerned, the choice of language of instruction should be based on the nature, goals, and context of individual programs of study. Adapting some type of bilingual education program in the UAE is one solution for creating a more equitable learning environment and a fairer labor market. The UAE can also learn a lot from European countries' discourse on parallel language use policy, or *parallellingualism*, wherein the national language is used in addition to other languages so that they complement rather than replace or abolish one another (Hultgren, 2016). While the implementation of this policy is not clearcut and remains open to interpretation, it still offers some insight into possible alternatives.

Since many educational institutions in the UAE are still socioeconomically, ethnically, and linguistically segregated, the country's ultimate vision of strengthening its residents' sense of belonging and building citizenship based on equality remains shaky at best. That is the reason why implementing culturally and linguistically responsive instruction is crucial. One way of doing this is by including content derived directly from the students' environment (see Ahmed, 2011; Esseili, 2019). In addition, including genuine cross-cultural activities, assignments, readings, and events would be an asset to both public and private institutions. Stephenson and Rajendram (2018) recommended that these institutions work together in order to "develop a collective identity that is not marked by divisions in institutional prestige, socioeconomic stratification, or ethnic- and identity-based policies" (p. 901).

Moreover, endorsing language as a right and resource to diminish conflict and enhance social cohesion should be implemented (Esseili, 2011). Examining other Arab contexts, such as Lebanon, reveals the extent of the problems created by associating a foreign language with access to education and the job market. Students with limited proficiency in English who graduate from public schools or who come from disadvantaged or under-resourced backgrounds suffer the most, thus

creating a sense that Arabic is a barrier to success and increasing the social inequality gap (Esseili, 2017). Local students have the right to use their native language for instruction and should be provided with the resources to do so; just like non-citizens have the right to use their languages and to open their own schools in the UAE.

Conclusion

The preservation of national linguistic and cultural identity and the promotion of diversity, tolerance for other cultures, and multiple languages are not mutually exclusive and should be able to coexist in a globalized world. Rather than pitting the two against each other, the UAE has realized that the best strategy to cope with its demographic imbalance is to promote pluralism. It is no wonder then that the UAE launched the post of Minister of State for Tolerance in 2016 to fight against cultural and religious bigotry, which coincidently occurred at the same time as the rise of Trumpism in the United States. The UAE can offer an alternative model for the world by forging an inclusive, pluralistic national identity where divisions among Emiratis and longstanding "expatriates" are diminished.

The country is already a leader in showing the world how nationalism can be harnessed for good. However, in trying to establish and promote its brand of civic nationalism by using soft power and diplomacy, the UAE has not adequately addressed language policy and planning pertaining to the preservation of Arabic. Thus, the policies, practices, and initiatives presented in the first section of this chapter do not align with the shift from Arabic to English as the language of instruction. There is no doubt that proficiency in English is essential, given the UAE's regional and international status as an economic and educational hub. This should not, however, take place at the expense of the national language, Arabic. Students must be functionally immersed in the two languages at an early age. Language-in-education policies at schools and universities should be modified, as well as the practices of families in the home, so that Arabic is valued as much as English.

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