English as a Medium of Instruction on the Arabian Peninsula

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6 Negotiating the Arabic and English Space in UAE Higher Education

The Ownership of English in the English-Medium Instruction Context

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Introduction

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has a unique multilingual landscape due to the variation of its demography and the languages that are used by its residents. Among its population, which is nearly ten million, 59.4% are South Asians, while the locals constitute 11.6% of the total population (The World Factbook, 2021). This variation in nationalities is accompanied by diversity in the number of languages that are used in the UAE. More than 100 languages are considered the first languages (L1s) of its population, while Arabic is the official language that is used in its Standard Arabic form in all its formal settings such as TV news, printed material, and books. The UAE puts a tremendous amount of effort into protecting the Arabic language and reinforcing its position as the language of the country's constitution and national identity (Cook, 2017; Salama, 2018). In that respect, the Arabic Language Charter was created as a policy and legal frame of reference to preserve and promote Arabic as the language of everyday life through a broad community project involving educational institutions and multiple initiatives (Arabic Language Charter, 2017; Taha-Thomure, 2019).

However, another common language in the UAE is English, which is the preferred lingua franca for communication among virtually all residents regardless of their first language or ethnicity (Zoghbor, 2014, 2018a). English has a dominant position over the other languages, including Arabic, as argued by scholars who shed light on the conflicting relationship between the two languages (Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011; Hopkyns et al., 2021; Kennetz & Carroll, 2018; Siemund et al., 2021). Indeed, beyond the UAE, English has been resisted in several countries in the Middle East to reduce cultural and linguistic insecurity (Zoghbor, 2018a). The dichotomy between Arabic and English is claimed to be perhaps nowhere else in the world as apparent as in the Gulf States (Macaro, 2018; Siemund et al., 2021). The country's higher education system is built on English-medium instruction (EMI), which, alongside the worldwide adherence to native-like norms that accompany English as a global language (Zoghbor, 2014, 2018b),

appears to reduce the opportunities for Arab students to take ownership of English by appropriating it for themselves.

It has been argued that using EMI in UAE higher education has caused a noticeable decline in Arabic language literacy among young Emirati Arabic speakers (Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011, 2022). The desire to ensure proficiency in English seems to outweigh the desire to maintain the study of Arabic across university subjects (Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011; Hussein & Gitsaki, 2018). Arabic is, worryingly, being replaced by English, which is adopted in UAE universities as the medium of instruction (MOI) and one of the most important requirements in the labour market (Al Suwaidi, 2018. English is also necessary in higher education enrolment in the UAE where not only is English the main tool for teaching academic courses throughout students' baccalaureate programmes, but students are also expected to perform all manner of formal and informal communication in English, or so it has been claimed (Al-Bataineh, 2021). Although studies by Graham et al. (2021) and Hopkyns et al. (2018, 2021) have found that students have the choice of which language they prefer to use in communication *beyond* though not *within* classroom settings and that there are no restrictions on which one to use, English is commonly employed among these students. Moreover, the Arabic that is used in the EMI context reflects translanguaging and thus hybrid variations of Arabic, which might suggest that the role of Arabic is shrinking within the domain.

This chapter focuses on the negotiable space between the two languages in the UAE EMI context. Following this section, the chapter introduces the background of an empirical study. This study explores the benefits that English, rather than any other language, can bring to its users as the MOI, and the conflicting situation that can arise related to calls to *de*-nationalise English as the world lingua franca, given its dominance in the EMI context. After introducing qualitative tools of data collection (self-reflection of 30 students and semi-structured interviews with four Mathematics and Information Technology [IT] instructors), I will introduce and interpret the findings. Conclusions will be drawn about how Arabic and English can co-exist to complement, rather than compete against, one another to maximise the potential benefits that students might gain if multilingual competencies are promoted and ownership over English can be claimed.

Literature Review

EMI in UAE Higher Education: Position and Perceived Benefits

There are several benefits which English, rather than any other language, can bring to its learners in the EMI higher education context. Having English as the main MOI increases the amount of exposure to the language, ultimately improving the learners' level of English proficiency. In other words, with English as the MOI, the language and content can be learnt at the same time (Dalton-Puffer, 2011; Macaro, 2018). This integration between language and content comes at the heart of the time-on-task theory – the more time learners dedicate to

learning a second language, the more proficient they become in that language (Al-Bataineh, 2021; Rossell & Baker, 1996). However, Macaro (2018) has argued against the idea that an EMI policy reduces the time needed to learn a language, considering that the language used in the EMI context is more likely to be found in specialised courses of English, that is, in English for Specific Purposes (ESP); such courses are less likely to provide the sufficient exposure that a learner might need to master a language. Additionally, if language is improved, it is more likely to be at the cost of sacrificing understanding of the subject content, as there is also evidence that students learn course content better in their L1s (see Bradley et al., Chapter 12, for a similar discussion). So, to fully support understanding, instructors will need to spend a longer time in their crowded syllabi to explain the content than they would if the learners' L1s were used.

One way of using the learners' first language in EMI contexts (along with English) is through *translanguaging*, which Garcia (2009) defined as:

> The act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages, in order to maximize communicative potential.
>
> (p. 140)

Translanguaging has been taken up by various EMI scholars in the region (as evident in discussion elsewhere in this volume; see El Gamal, Chapter 3; Gallagher & Jones, Chapter 2; Hopkyns, Chapter 5; Wyatt, Chapter 1). Nevertheless, it is difficult for some teachers and students to accept it fully (García & Kleyn, 2016). Indeed, Palfreyman and Al-Bataineh (2018) revealed negative attitudes towards translanguaging practices among university students in UAE higher education. Carroll (2022) attributed this negative attitude to the idea that educators themselves in the UAE and other Gulf States experienced formal education and training to teach in one language, despite the wide variation of languages in the community they live in. Carroll (2022) introduced five main strategies describing what implementing translanguaging in EMI looks like: a) assigning reading in one language and using another language in discussion; b) encouraging and allowing students to ask and answer questions in their first language (or a language which is not the language of instruction); c) incorporating learners' language, culture and background; d) promoting students' engagement with multimedia to complete tasks; and e) code-switching and translating. Nevertheless, it is unclear how much uptake there is of translanguaging in the UAE.

Meanwhile, the English language is in high demand in industry. It is a "passport to a global world," "a key to success" (Dearden & Macaro, 2016; Macaro, 2018), and "an Aladdin's lamp" (or *misbah Aala' Aldiyn*) that can help students achieve their dreams and secure a white-collar job. Having English as the MOI makes students more competitive in the market. The idea that English is the language in which most scientific research is written means students under the EMI scheme are expected, by default, to have been exposed to a larger body of updated and significant knowledge. This could help EMI universities with

the recruitment of students and with producing qualified graduates who are expected to contribute to the knowledge-based economy and to knowledge production in various fields (Al-Bataineh, 2021). The value of English in the UAE market was revealed in a report published by the British Council in 2018. This shows that 61% of the employers in the UAE thought that English-language proficiency is extremely important, and 22% reported that it is somewhat important, which is 83% of the total responses. Meanwhile, only 1% thought that it is not important at all.

Another benefit, which is also linked to the dominance and worldwide spread of English, is the *harmonisation* that English can create in EMI between the existing written material and scientific research and the language used in teaching (Dearden & Macaro, 2016). The inexorable trend towards the use of English in research publications, particularly in the fields of Science and Mathematics, makes the use of English in reading and then in teaching easier than introducing students to material written in other languages. Harmonising the internal talk with the external meridian, along with the availability of content material in English, leads teachers to see EMI as beneficial (Macaro, 2018).

While English is well-known globally for its great value in making communication possible among individuals who come from different backgrounds and do not share a first language, this role is becoming critical in some UAE higher education institutions where English is the only common language of communication, along with being the official language of instruction. This is exemplified in the multilingual and multicultural distribution of Zayed University (ZU) faculty members (Zayed University Fact Book, 2019–2020). Among 709 faculty members in 2021, 238 came from Arabic-speaking countries (33.6% of the total number of faculty), and the remaining 471 came from non-Arab countries (66.4%). Given these figures, English is clearly needed as the main tool of communication among the faculty and with students, both in teaching and beyond classroom communication (Zayed University Fact Book, 2019–2020).

While the English language facilitates communication among many nationalities, using English in a context where Arabic is the first language does not fail to cause inconvenience in communication. One reason for that is the differences in the writing systems of the two languages. An example of this issue is the difficulty of looking for Arabic names written in the ZU address book, which exists only in Roman script. Common Arabic names like <محمد> are written in only one way in Arabic. However, in English, this name is written in the ZU record as *Mohamad*, *Muhamad*, *Mohammed*, or *Muhammed*. The common girl's name of <فاطمة> has to be searched for with several spelling possibilities, such as *Fatima*, *Fatema*, *Fatme*, *Fatma*, *Fatmea*, and *Fatmah*. The Arabic language uses diacritics that play the role of short vowels in English. When these proper names are written in English and short vowels are inserted as letters, all the variations in spelling appear, according to how these short vowels are pronounced. It is understandable that such disagreement between Arabic and English forms in the ZU address book (which can be searched only in English) leads to inconvenience in finding names and titles.

EMI: Stretching between Denationalisation and Predominance of English

When Larry Smith introduced the notion of English as an international language (EIL) in 1976, he asserted that English should be *denationalised*, in the sense that all boundaries between its speakers' ethnicities should vanish, and all should consider it their own language, regardless of their mother tongues (Smith, 1976). Hence, the differences between their own varieties and those used by native speakers (NSs) are not considered mistakes or improper usage, and this has several implications for teaching and learning (Jenkins, 2005; Walker, 2010; Walker & Zoghbor, 2015; Zoghbor, 2018b). Despite that argument, EMI continues to indirectly support the concept of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992). In this scenario, students' grade point averages (GPA) at university are influenced by studying courses such as Mathematics and IT in a language other than their first language. English-language proficiency is correlated with academic success (Al-Bataineh, 2021), where strong English proficiency will help the students to progress with their education; conversely, students who have low English competency might have difficulty performing in the EMI context (Hapsari et al., 2017). Since English is the main MOI, learners have to demonstrate appropriate levels of English that can allow them to study their courses in English. They need to do this through achieving certain scores in international native-speaker standardised tests such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), despite its biases against the learners' culture in the Gulf (Freimuth, 2022). Nevertheless, higher education entry exams in the UAE have recently adopted a national standardised computer-based testing system called the Emirates Standardized Test (EmSAT), which can also be used as a prerequisite for admission to university from high school and an alternative option to IELTS and TOEFL (Freimuth, 2022; Ministry of Education – United Arab Emirates, 2022), but which is only valid in the UAE.

Despite such an innovation that might shift power away from "native-speaking" countries to some extent, these countries remain norm-providing in the UAE. They achieve this through providing the physical presence of educational institutions in the UAE and through providing accreditation bodies for federal educational institutions. Indeed, EMI is the agent of internationalisation in higher education in the UAE, through foreign (mainly UK) transnational education and international accreditation of existing UAE universities. The UAE has 42 foreign higher education institutions with a physical presence in the country from 13 providing countries, most of which are from native-speaking countries of English: 13 universities from the UK, 6 universities from the US, 4 universities from Australia, and 1 university from Ireland (The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2017). In terms of accreditation, federal institutions have accreditation from two systems, one of which is the National Accreditation by the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) of the Ministry of Education in the United Arab Emirates, and the second of which is international accreditation by entities that are, in most cases, located in the US. This is the case of the United

Arab Emirates University (UAEU) (UAEU, 2019) and Zayed University (Zayed University Fact Book, 2019–2020). However, while this all might suggest that the linguistic imperialism that exists through EMI perpetuates inequalities, it is important to point out that in "internationalised" higher education, the Western system is not copied on foreign soil, so the outcome should not be expected to be identical to the accredited Western institutions whose system was adopted. Students should not be expected to fit into a system that was originally designed for a home-grown student body (Bailey, 2012; Jenkins, 2019). An additional point is that accreditation obtained from native-speaker countries does not dictate the variety of English to adopt, nor does it demand conformance to native-like performance: "It is well known, while the internationalization of HE is being achieved primarily in English, there is no desire (and often no awareness of the need) to consider what kind of English this is or should be" (Jenkins, 2019, p. 15).

University-wise, Zayed University Learning Outcomes (ZULOs) focus more on targeting learners' skills than on emphasising English native-speaker norms. ZU reinforces its mission to encourage multilingual competence to master both Arabic and English (Zayed University Fact Book, 2019–2020). Tikly (2018) argued that not only is proficiency in both the mother tongue and a global language an important outcome, but the "English-only" MOI often impacts learners' development of linguistic capabilities negatively, and this, in turn, has a detrimental impact on other learning outcomes, including basic literacy and numeracy. Moreover, despite promoting the necessity for non-adherence to NS norms, tolerance towards the learners' production is not generated from a lingua franca perspective. The instructors who demonstrate tolerance still often refer to students' non-conformance to native-like norms as "incorrect" English (Jenkins, 2019). In such situations, tolerance of non-native norms is not equivalent to ownership of English being acknowledged.

Glorifying English, in the form of EMI, is marginalising learners' L1s in favour of English, excluding all the values that L1 can bring to students' education (Al-Bataineh, 2021). This marginalisation creates the sense of a good–bad language divide that eventually contributes to the perpetuation of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) and evokes discrimination against non-native speakers' English in favour of "native-speaker norms". Exercising ownership of English in the EMI context depends upon a balanced relationship between English and Arabic and support for bilingual competency. Instead of generating an either/or language policy and discourse, it is proposed that the outcomes of bilingual education be evaluated against bilingual inputs provided for each language (Al-Bataineh, 2021). Figure 6.1 visualises the relationship between Arabic and English in UAE higher education, which exists on a continuum with two extremes: at one extreme, Shape 1 reflects a parallel-lines relationship for the two languages as they exist and function independently and never meet. At the other extreme, Shape 4 shows an ideal DNA-shaped relationship where the two languages interact and each one progresses depending on how the other one is functioning. Shape 3 shows that the languages might be used in the same instances at some points. Shape 2 reflects a relationship based on domination by one language
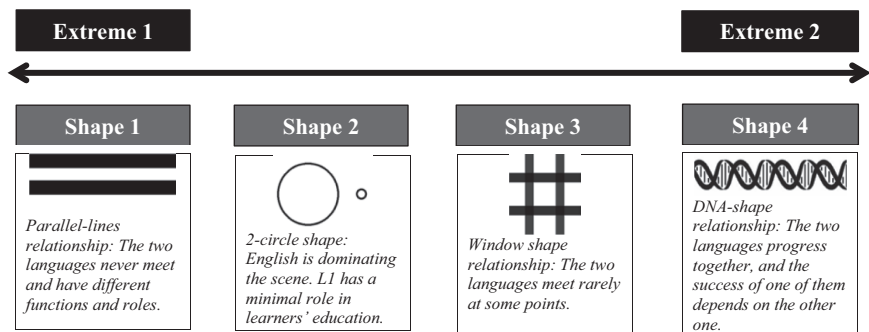
Extreme 1			Extreme 2

Shape 1	Shape 2	Shape 3	Shape 4
Parallel-lines relationship: The two languages never meet and have different functions and roles.	*2-circle shape: English is dominating the scene. L1 has a minimal role in learners' education.*	*Window shape relationship: The two languages meet rarely at some points.*	*DNA-shape relationship: The two languages progress together, and the success of one of them depends on the other one.*

Figure 6.1 Visualising the relationship between Arabic and English in the UAE EMI higher education context.

(English) of the other (Arabic) in a very unequal balance. Among the four shapes, 1 and 4 reflect two extremes that are less likely to exist. Shape 3 might exist on occasions where learners' L1 is used. Shape 2 is also common where the focus is more on English than on Arabic.

The above sections shed light on the conflicting space that Arabic and English have in UAE higher education by focusing on the strengths each language might bring to the context where it is used and its potential impact. While English brings benefits to its learners, Arabic can contribute to their understanding of the subject matter, but contextual factors impede its presence in some UAE institutions, such as ZU, where most faculty come from non-Arab countries. EMI demands adopting entry exams such as IELTS, although, as noted above, the UAE also has its equivalent national entry exam, the EmSAT. While international US accreditation of federal institutions, such as ZU and the UAEU, does not suggest any variety of English to be adopted, more than 50% of the foreign universities that have a physical presence in the UAE are from the UK and the US, where English is also the MOI, implying a link between EMI and native-speaking countries as norm-providing entities. To explore the Arabic–English relationship further, learners' and faculty members' perceptions at one EMI university in the UAE were explored. This will be the focus of the rest of this chapter.

Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative approach that drew data from two main resources. The first was self-reflection by 30 students (coded below S1 – S30); there were 10 males and 20 females. All the participants were Emirati undergraduates, who ranged from 19 to 25 years old and majored in Technological Innovation, International Studies, Accounting, Health and Natural Sciences, or Interior Design. They were all studying courses in Mathematics and IT as general requirements for all university students across all colleges. The students were encouraged to

reflect on their experience of studying Mathematics and IT courses in English as the main MOI at ZU by responding to the prompt (Figure 6.2), which was given to the students in English; they were told that they could respond in the language they prefer (either Arabic or English).

The second tool comprised semi-structured interviews with four instructors, two of whom were teaching Mathematics and two who were teaching IT. (See Table 6.1 below.). Semi-structured interviews were used to explore the faculty members' practices in using EMI in teaching Arab learners. This type of interview was used due to its flexibility and adaptability (Appendix A).

Thematic analysis was used in analysing the qualitative data, which were coded considering two main resources: the themes that were encountered in the literature and the themes that emerged during the interviews. This method of analysis allowed implementing a holistic and systematic approach to analysing the self-reflection and interview data. In addition to generating themes, analysis included searching for the frequency of key words that were found in the students' self-reflections and that spoke to the study's focus. For example, looking for the frequency of words such as *Islam* requires also looking for words that are generated from it such as *Islamic* and *Muslims*.

Write a 300-word reflection about Studying Math and IT General Education courses in English focusing on the following:
- *Description of your experience*
- *Which language do you prefer to use in studying these courses, Arabic or English? Explain/justify your point of view.*
- *In your opinion, what might be the influence of using English in studying these courses in learner identity.*

Figure 6.2 Prompt used.

Table 6.1 Profile of Mathematics and IT instructors.

Participant	Nationality	Education	First language	Other languages	No of years in the UAE	No. of years in ZU
Mathematics Instructor 1 (MI1)	Lebanese	MSC	Arabic	English & French	11	10
Mathematics Instructor 2 (MI2)	Indian	MSC	Hindi	English	15	10
IT Instructor 1 (ITI1)	Jordanian	MSC	Arabic	English	19	15
IT Instructor 2 (ITI2)	Canadian	MSC	Urdu	English	6	5

Findings

Student Self-Reflection

Five main themes emerged from the students' self-reflections. Table 6.2 shows that the themes that were mentioned most frequently were the worldwide dominance of the English language and the inspiring relationship between the Arabic language and national identity and culture (F=23); prioritising understanding the subject matter through L1 (F=22); the position of Arabic as the language of the Quran, the Holy Book of Islam (F=21); and the worldwide role of English as the lingua franca for cross-cultural communication (F=16). In looking at the representation of these themes, the frequencies of the keywords that are used in reporting the themes were explored (Table 6.3). The link between language and religion was prominent, with the word 'Islam' occurring most (F=40), followed by the word '*understand*' regarding the subject matter in the courses where EMI is used (F=37), and then the word '*identity*', showing the link between national identity and the Arabic language (F=23).

Table 6.2 Themes that emerged from the self-reflections.

Theme	Frequency (F) of occurrence
Dominance of English (in teaching material and science)	23
National identity and culture	23
Understanding the subject matter is a priority	22
Arabic language link to religion and Islam's Holy Book	21
Communication in English internationally	16
Future business and jobs	5
Native-speaker norms	2
UAE and the university multilingual community in the UAE	2

Table 6.3 Frequency of words from self-reflections.

Word	Frequency (F) of occurring words*	Linked themes
Islamic/Islam	40	The value of the Arabic language and its link to religion.
Understand *[the subject matter]*	37	Prioritising understanding of the subject matter and the benefits of using Arabic.
Identity	23	The link between the Arabic language and national identity, and the effect of over-reliance on English.
Jobs	17	The dominance of English in the UAE's industry for securing jobs.

(*Continued*)

Table 6.3 (Continued)

Word	Frequency (F) of occurring words*	Linked themes
International/ global language	16	The spread of the language.
Arabic instructors/ teachers	15	Preference for bilingual classrooms where Arabic and English can co-exist.
Technology	12	Dominance of English in technology.
Business	9	The dominance of English in the UAE's industry for initiating business.
Science	9	Dominance of English in science and research.
Teaching material	8	The dominance of English in the teaching material in science.
Nationalities	2	The multilingualism of the UAE and ZU, which increases the need for English.
Native speakers	2	Communication in English.

*Some words are repeated in the same reflection several times.

The dominance of the English language

Students' reflections about the use of English as an MOI were affected by its dominance and global spread. The students believed that using English in learning Mathematics and IT courses provided them with several opportunities, including exposure to technology and the body of knowledge that was written in English, meeting the demands of the UAE's industry, and communicating within and across multilingual communities:

> English is the language of science, computers, diplomacy, etc. You can easily find many articles in English. [The] English language gives you access to multiple [kinds of] knowledge. Hence, studying English can help you [get] a good job in different companies. (S15)
>
> English gives me access to information and resources that may not be available in [an]other language. This access to knowledge has the power to alter a person's worldview, as it introduces its speakers to the wider world. (S5)
>
> Through English we will be able to deal with different people from different countries; this will help [us] to access many cultures. Also, English is the language of technology, which takes [up] half of our live[s] nowadays. (S10)
>
> English makes you have a higher chance of getting a job or studying abroad. If you are going to open your own business, you need to learn English to communicate with your suppliers, workers, etc. So, I think that learning the majority [of] our courses in English is a good thing and is an advantage for us. (S16)

Prioritising Understanding of Subject Matter

Despite the participants' preference to study in English and their recognition of its value within their courses and beyond, understanding the subject matter was a priority to them. The importance of understanding over other matters took form as two main themes: providing instruction in Arabic (the learners' L1) and the role of the instructors who share the learners' L1:

> Sometimes I need help to understand things such as projects and what we should do exactly. I need an Arabic instructor to help me in Arabic when I need [it]. There are heavy words or completely new words to me; here I need to understand the course in Arabic.
>
> (S9)

> I prefer to have instruction in English and Arabic because many of us [students] don't understand some words in English, but if the instructor talks a bit in Arabic, this makes us understand way better. For me, when the instructor talks in Arabic [a] little and English a bit, I feel that I understand better.
>
> (S17)

> We have students that do not understand well in English, but that is not a problem with Arab teachers. If a student does not understand anything in English, he can ask the teacher to explain [it] in Arabic to help us understand.
>
> (S18)

EMI and National Identity

Opinions about the perceived influence of EMI on learners' L1 and identity were polarised. Some believed that this influence was a myth considering that EMI has limitations as the language of teaching and instruction, despite its importance:

> A course or a subject does not identify you nor your identity, because you as a person reflect your own identity and own morals, not the language you speak in university. Identity is your birth language you are born with, and it is the language of the Holy Book, which is [the] Quran. You should know Arabic as well to read the Holy Book and to do your rituals, so I do not think studying those [General Ed.] courses in English has a huge impact on the national identity. You still must know the language so you could communicate with you[r] fellow classmates and practise your religion.
>
> (S22)

Other students believed that the unbalanced use of English and Arabic during the working day reduced their feelings of comfort and confidence using Arabic.

It also promoted the habit of using English more than Arabic beyond classrooms and the university:

> The students in the university will use their first language less than English. Communication in the mother tongue will become hard for them in their houses because usually, students spend more than half their time in the university.
>
> (S8)

> Many students do not understand Arabic because they are talking only in English although they are Arab students. I think having courses in two languages is a fair and a better idea.
>
> (S25)

Faculty Interviews

Through the coding and the analysis of the interviews with four Mathematics and IT instructors, the following themes emerged:

- Why English?
- L1 vs L2
- Native vs non-native instructor
- Strategies for using L1

Why English?

The instructors did not oppose allowing students to use Arabic in their classes, but they had strong opinions about the necessity of strengthening the use of English, even in cases where the instructor shares the learners' L1. They held this position due to English's worldwide dominance in the job market and course assessments and teaching material. They believed that Arabic might be less helpful to the students than English, as Arabic interference with English would reduce the opportunities to get used to the key terminology and concepts in their course or exams. The interviewees, as instructors, felt responsible for forming students' habits in using English and helping them become comfortable using it for different purposes. They felt that providing sufficient language practice through EMI could secure for the students these opportunities:

> Why should we limit the students [to] a certain corner and not use an existing universal language? If the universal language is Chinese, we should teach in Chinese, so it is not the matter of English specifically, but it is teaching students through a universal language. . . . Using Arabic solely or most of the time will affect the students negatively in assessments. It is true that they might understand everything in the class, but then in the exam when they find the terminologies or keywords in English and if they haven't got used to the scenarios in English, they will find difficulties in the exams, which might harm rather than benefit them.
>
> (MI1)

When students are learning IT in English, they are also learning the language. If they are searching [on] the web about, let us say, artificial intelligence, they might find [a] few articles in Arabic, but the majority of the IT material [is] in English, and they will read articles in English. In that way, through their assignment, their English improves.

(ITI2)

L1 vs L2

The interviewees reported their tolerance towards the learners' inaccuracy in using English in class discussions and during exams:

I always ignore the mistakes that are made in English during the exam. If a student misspells the word 'usual' I know what he means. I know that English is not his mother language, and this is not an English course.

(ITI1)

The instructors also considered their own experience in learning the subject matter in English rather than their L1s, which made them formulate expectations about the extent to which their students could also succeed and cope with EMI:

English is not my first language, and nobody translated IT terminologies for me into Urdu, and I am not sure if there are Urdu terms for the IT terms that I learned over the years. . . . If somebody [had] translated it for me in Urdu, I might have done it for my students in Arabic. I do not think that there are translations, or maybe there are but I have not searched for [them].

(ITI2)

Native vs Non-native Instructor

For the interviewees, being non-native speakers was seen as an advantage. They felt they could utilise their experience of having been English-language learners, for example, in their way of speaking clearly to students, as they shared the students' background of acquiring and using English as a foreign language:

As you can see, English is my second language, and when I speak, I am clearly pronouncing the words. . . . I never thought about the type of English I use in class. I just focus on the contents. My pronunciation can be clearer to the students since English is my second, not mother, language.

(MI1)

There are terms that the students should learn by heart. For example, I want them to learn the word 'exponential', and for that, we need to break it down like 'ex-po-nen-tial' to make sure that they remember the spelling and the term itself and they can pronounce it appropriately. Of course, we slow

down when speaking and using important terms like 'ex-po-nen-tial' and I repeat it and write it down.

<div align="right">(ITI2)</div>

Strategies for Using L1

The interviewees reported several strategies for using Arabic in their Mathematics and IT classes. Their ways of integrating Arabic varied considering the nature of their course, but they all reported that understanding the content was a priority:

> I never stop students from using Arabic when they are talking in their groups. When I am moving from one group to another, I find a few students speaking in English but most of the students in groups are discussing the questions in Arabic. . . . I interfere in the group discussions only if the students are not talking, but if they are talking and there is discussion going on, it means that they are on track, and I allow them to speak in Arabic.

<div align="right">(ITI2)</div>

MI2 reported her positive experience with students interacting in Arabic in her Mathematics class. Although she did not share their L1, she noticed that students' performance quality and engagement increased in the presence of Arabic:

> I generally ask the students to explain a certain concept or tell how to solve problems in Arabic. . . . I noticed that they interact so nicely in Arabic. Even students who are shy . . . come up and ask about something or say something in Arabic, and the other students explain and respond to them. I could see that they feel comfortable, and it accelerate[s] a successful approach. Using Arabic is a way [to involve] them in the class. When I let them explain in Arabic, two or three students speak to explain together. When students did not get a concept, other students help in Arabic, and they don't mind coming to the board and saying, 'look, do this and that'. I do not mind doing all of this in Arabic; they are enjoying the whole place together. Using their first language, I have a good experience with that.

<div align="right">(MI2)</div>

MI1, who was an Arab, reported that she inserted the translation of some words to ensure students' understanding by trying to have them remember the Arabic translation along with the English word (Figure 6.3).

ITI1 demonstrated three strategies that he used to explain three types of content in IT courses. The first was allowing discussion in Arabic among students to ensure understanding of key concepts. He said, "I don't mind if the students speak in Arabic in my class. Some concepts are critical, so it is necessary that the student understands these appropriately" (ITI1). The second strategy was providing a live demonstration during IT lab work without using learners' L1. ITI1 said, "I usually point at it" (talking about the parts of the PC during lab work) (Figure 6.4).

Translating Phrases to Algebraic Expressions

Addition +	Subtraction −	Multiplication ×	Division ÷
مجموع Sum	الفرق Difference of	Product	Quotient
Plus	Minus	Times	Divide
Added to	Subtracted from	Multiply	Into
More than	Less than	Twice 2x	Ratio
Increased by	Decreased by	Of	Per
حجموع Total	Less		

Percent Increase

Situations in which the *new value becomes more* include **increase,
tax, tip, mark up, commission,** and interest.
مضريبة   عمولة

Example: A store buys a printer for AED 700, then it **increases** its price by 5%.

Two steps	**One step**
a) Increase in AED:	
b) New price after increase:	

Figure 6.3 Samples of learners' L1 use in a Mathematics course.

Figure 6.4 ITI1 providing a live demonstration instead of using L1 during lab work.

The third strategy was discussing abstract concepts in the IT course curriculum, such as 'monoculturalism' under the topic 'does IT lead to monoculturalism?' The Arabic translation of this concept can be 'أحادية الثقافة' (*Ohadiyyat Althaqafa*), but even in Arabic, the concept needs interpretation and further explanation. With such concepts, ITI1 adopts alternative strategies beyond using L1 in the EMI context by providing real-life examples referring to the learners' culture and background:

> Sometimes we teach concepts in IT. One of the things that we discuss . . . in IT is if IT leads to monoculturalism – yes or no. So, the students should understand first what 'monoculture' is before they think if IT leads to it or not. I use real-life examples to deliver its meaning to students. For example, at some points, China banned all posts that were not written in Chinese. France banned all tweets written in English [on] Twitter in France, as all tweets should be in French. Why is that? to protect its culture and language. To make the students understand 'monoculturalism', I should share with them articles about this topic. . . . So, how do we solve this issue? We must highlight local culture. 'UmKhammas' is one example [of] how we can preserve our local culture among the young generation through popular shows. So, monoculturalism is linked with IT, especially with social media, which is part of the curriculum we teach to students.
>
> (ITI1)

In explaining the concept of 'monoculturalism', ITI1 provides sample articles linked with this concept (Figure 6.5).

ITI1 then refers to the learners' culture, using a popular example among students (a cartoon episode about *UmKhammas*) and local newspaper articles about the role of education in preserving the UAE's culture (Figure 6.6).

Discussion

The findings of this study mirror earlier studies such as Dalton-Puffer (2011), Dearden and Macaro (2016), and Macaro (2018), which examined the benefits that English might bring to students when it is used as the main MOI. As reported in the students' self-reflections and the interviews with Mathematics and IT instructors, teaching through English allows learners to benefit from the existing body of knowledge, which can later allow them to become competitive in industry, opening a gateway for the graduates to secure white-collar jobs. The findings also revealed the instructors' belief that while learners are studying the subject material in English, they are also acquiring the English language (Al-Bataineh, 2021; Macaro, 2018; Rossell & Baker, 1996). Overall, using English as the main MOI harmonises with the entire system of which the students are part throughout their education.

The interviewees revealed perceived advantages of being non-native speakers teaching in EMI contexts and sharing with their learners the experience of having

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China bans English words in media

China has banned newspapers, publishers and website-owners from using foreign words - particularly English ones.

China's state press and publishing body said such words were sullying the purity of the Chinese language.

It said standardised Chinese should be the norm: the press should avoid foreign abbreviations and acronyms, as well as "Chinglish" - which is a mix of English and Chinese.

China's state press and publishing body says the use of foreign words is eroding the purity of Chinese

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France Bans The Hashtag

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#RIP the hashtag. It had a good run, August 2007 – January 2013. At least it's still alive and respected in every other country apart from France.

It's a dark day for the Gallic Internet, as the French Government drive to preserve their language by altering the settled will of the online community. The hashtag will no longer be used in official

Chris Messina, #godfather of 'the hashtag' (Photo credit: NEXT Berlin)

Figure 6.5 Strategies for explaining 'monoculturalism' used by ITI1 in the EMI context – using global issues.

learned and used English as a foreign or second language, believing this positively impacted the clarity of their speech; clarity is a feature of non-native speakers' communication in English as a lingua franca (Walker, 2010; Walker & Zogh-bor, 2015). The interviewees also revealed tolerant attitudes towards learners' production, prioritising students' demonstration of understanding of the subject matter in the classroom over adherence to native-like linguistic performance, in

Figure 6.6 Strategies for explaining 'monoculturalism' used by ITI1 in the EMI context – referring to learners' culture.

line with Jenkins (2019). However, this might not be based on a lingua franca perspective since they were tolerating "mistakes" rather than perceiving differences from native-speaker norms as variations.

The interviewees shared examples of translanguaging strategies (Carroll, 2022). Most instructors reported that they allow, and encourage, the learners to use their L1 in group discussion and in interaction with their classmates. Another strategy that the instructors used was translating key terms in the course, either by providing the translation in the teaching material itself, as in the case of an Arab Mathematics instructor, or by asking students to translate for each other during the class in the case of non-Arab teachers. The third strategy was incorporating learners' culture and background, which comes at the heart of *glocalising* topics by describing a global phenomenon (e.g., monoculturalism) through local examples to enhance understanding of the subject matter. This included bringing in a cartoon episode (*UmKhammas*) and a newspaper article about UAE education, as shown in Figure 6.6. This study contradicts the findings of other studies in the same context, for example, Palfreyman and Al-Bataineh (2018), which reported the negative attitude of university students towards translanguaging practices. This study found that the learners welcomed the presence of Arabic in the class in different formats that could eventually enhance their understanding of the subject matter.

The interviewees reported positive experiences and impacts when learners' L1 was used, as it enhanced interaction among students in the class. However, the Arab instructors of Mathematics and IT in this study, who also welcomed Arabic in their EMI classes and implemented some translanguaging strategies such as translation of key terms and using learners' culture in explaining the course contents, reported resisting speaking in Arabic to the students or providing instructions in a language other than English. This inconsistency between attitude and practice has similarly been identified by García and Kleyn (2016), who showed that faculty do not welcome using learners' L1 despite the recognition of its role in their education, and despite the instructors' control of learners' L1. There are reasons for the Arab instructors' position in this study. The first was the harmony that English creates with the entire academic environment when it is used, for example, with exams that are conducted in English, and with the existing teaching material and the body of knowledge accessible to students. The second was the role of English in securing a proper future job, where English is a requirement in industry (British Council Report, 2018). The third is the faculty demography of ZU, where the majority are non-Arabs (Zayed University Fact Book, 2019–2020). As was reported by the Mathematics instructor, getting used to Arabic in the class or expecting it might be more harmful than helpful to the students. This is because the same learners are more likely to be in future classes with instructors who are non-Arab, since this group is in the majority at ZU. While adopting Arabic might seem like claiming ownership of English, there are reasons for reducing the opportunities for integrating Arabic into university courses, even by Arab instructors themselves. In other words, ownership of English might correlate negatively with the presence of learners' L1 in the EMI context.

Using translation of key concepts and linking contexts to learners' cultures were translanguaging strategies implemented by the two Arabic-speaking instructors. In contrast, the non-Arab instructors limited the presence of Arabic in their classes; they allowed students to use it during group work or asked students to translate key ideas into Arabic for their classmates. Carroll (2022) attributed the limited representation of Arabic in EMI contexts to the way the instructors were taught and trained, where they were more likely to have used, or been trained to use, a monolingual approach to learning. This assumption was explicitly revealed by an IT interviewee who reported that if she had had educators who integrated her L1 (which is Urdu) in class while she was learning IT, she would have done it for her students. For her, the limited, or perhaps passive, role of utilising the learners' L1 was inherited, and for her it became the norm.

Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter was to shed light on the negotiable space between Arabic and English in higher education, where English is used as the MOI. On the one hand, English has a dominant position as the international lingua franca that can bring various benefits to the learners in higher education as the MOI, which might not be experienced with other languages. On the other hand, Arabic is the official language of the UAE, and the government puts a tremendous amount of effort into preserving it as the language of national identity and religion. In higher education contexts, Arabic, as the learners' L1, can contribute more effectively to learners' education in relation to English.

This small-scale study adopted a qualitative research design based on self-reflection by 30 UAE students and interviews with four faculty members of Mathematics and IT courses in a higher education institution. While the findings cannot be generalised, the study revealed that despite the recognition of the dominance of English, multilingual competencies in Arabic in addition to English were encouraged. This encouragement is not formally endorsed by the university, and the degree to which it was integrated varied across courses and instructors. Several implications can be drawn from the findings in this study, which can elevate the role of Arabic in EMI UAE higher education and enhance Arab learners' claims to ownership of English:

- Systemize the strategies on how L1 can be utilised by non-Arab faculty and include these strategies in faculty training programmes.
- Build on the learners' and instructors' awareness regarding non-adherence to native-speaker norms from the English as a lingua franca perspective to reinforce the idea that differences from native-speaker performance are variations that should be tolerated rather than mistakes to be corrected.
- Increase the presence of the Arabic language alongside English in teaching materials and exams, which can allow a better understanding of the material while maintaining the presence of English across all the course's relevant documents.

- Adopt glocalising practices by referring to the learners' cultural background while demonstrating concepts that may not have direct translations into learners' L1.

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Appendix A

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1   Do you allow Arabic, in addition to English, to be used in your class? On what occasions is Arabic used in your class?
2   What factors can reduce/increase the use of learners' L1 in your class?
3   Can you give examples where you felt that you had to use Arabic instead of, or in addition to, English in your class?
4   As a non-Arab speaker of English, how do you feel about having the students speaking in Arabic in your class? *(Directed to non-Arab interviewees only)*
5   If Arabic is allowed in your class, what are your strategies for integrating Arabic?
6   Do you feel that you are privileged that you share your learners' L1? (*Directed to Arab interviewees*)

    Do you feel that Arab instructors are more privileged than non-Arab instructors for sharing their learners' L1? *(Directed to non-Arab interviewees)*

7   Do you feel that you are privileged or not because you are not a native speaker of English?