

English as a Medium of Instruction on the Arabian Peninsula

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4 Language Policies and Ideologies in Qatar

Is Resistance to English-Medium
Instruction the Right Resistance?

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Introduction

Neoliberalism, globalisation, and English-language hegemony have contributed to the adoption of Western “travelling policies” (Phan, 2017, p. 12), such as building knowledge-based economies and the implementation of English-medium instruction (EMI) in schools and universities across the Arab Gulf states (Barnawi, 2018). In Qatar, as well as other Arab Gulf states like the United Arab Emirates (UAE), this has led to ideologies of EMI and Arabic-medium instruction (AMI) being in competition with each other (Graham et al., 2021; Hillman, 2019; Hopkyns, 2020). There are concerns about the impact of EMI and English-language hegemony on Arabic language attrition and on cultural and linguistic identities in the region (Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011; Hopkyns, 2020; Mahboob & Elyas, 2017). The result of these ideological tensions in Qatar has been several abrupt shifts between EMI and AMI in language policies for government schools and the leading public university, and other broader efforts to preserve and promote the Arabic language. However, there has simultaneously been a continued growth of EMI options in the form of private schools, private universities, and international branch campuses and cross-border partnerships. In this chapter, I first provide an overview of the macro-sociolinguistic situation and the roles, status, and functions of English in Qatar. I then describe the shifts between EMI and AMI in language policies and consider implications for cultural and linguistic identities in Qatar. Finally, I reflect on Qatar’s strong resistance to EMI among the Arab Gulf states and the future of English-medium instruction and Arabic-medium instruction in the country.

The Roles, Status, and Functions of English in Qatar

Although Qatar was a British protectorate from 1916 to 1971, the country is considered part of the “Expanding Circle of English” (Kachru, 1985) since the English language never had an official status and still does not today. Yet, English is ubiquitous in Qatar and is arguably no longer a “foreign” language in the country (Nebel, 2017). Arabic may be the only official language of Qatar, but English is used as a language in healthcare, business, commerce, and administration; as

a language of signage in the linguistic landscape of Qatar (see Figure 4.1); as a lingua franca between Qatar's diverse residents with different mother tongues; as a subject taught in government schools; and as a medium of instruction in many private schools and universities. Al-Buainain et al. (2010) observed over a decade ago that "English is widely used in different sectors in Qatar. The need for English is clear" (p. 18). Similarly, in analysing the status and function of the English language in Qatar, as revealed through an analysis of cartoons published in local newspapers, Alkhatib (2017, p. 44) shows how "English has occupied an influential role in Qatari society" in most domains, particularly in workplaces, the educational system, healthcare, dining, and shopping. Alkhatib provides examples of how Arabic-speaking individuals in Qatar must often use English when trying to explain their health problems to a foreign doctor or nurse in public hospitals or when out dining or shopping. English is also part of the linguistic repertoires and identities of younger Qatari nationals (Hillman & Ocampo, 2018). For non-Arabic-speaking expatriates, most aspects of daily life can be accomplished in English, though not always efficiently. As Hillman and Ocampo Eibenschutz (2018, p. 5) point out, "Arabic is the language of *wasta* or influence/clout and getting stuff done efficiently, especially government-related, in Qatar".

Qatar's current demographics are unusual outside the context of the Arab states of the Gulf and are an important reason why English has become so prevalent



Figure 4.1 Signage in Arabic and English for a local grocery store.

Source: Photograph by the author.

in the country, especially in the public sphere. While Qatar is a small country – a peninsula bordering only Saudi Arabia by land – its population has rapidly grown, and it hosts one of the most urbanised societies in the world, with most residents living in the capital of Doha. It also consistently ranks as one of the richest countries in the world, in terms of GDP per capita (World Atlas, 2019) and has “geopolitical importance as the world’s premier exporter of liquefied natural gas” (Hillman & Ocampo Eibenschutz, 2018, p. 1). It also maintains strong ties to the United States and has hosted the largest US military base in the Middle East since the early 2000s. While the current population of Qatar is approximately 2.8 million, only 333,000 or approximately 10.5% of the population are Qatari nationals (Snoj, 2019). Foreign nationals in Qatar constitute the other 89.5% of the population. Qatar currently has the highest proportion of expatriates compared to its total population among the Arab Gulf states, with the UAE a close second in terms of its expatriate versus national ratio. South/Southeast Asian expatriate workers, predominantly from India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Philippines, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, constitute around 65% of the total population of Qatar. Around 90 other nationalities are also present, with the largest population of Arabic-speakers coming from Egypt and constituting around 10% of the population (Ahmad & Hillman, 2021; Snoj, 2019).

This odd phenomenon, in which the citizens have become the minority in size but not necessarily in power or privilege, is due to an influx of expatriate workers over the past two decades. They have been recruited to work in energy, education, and healthcare sectors, and especially infrastructure projects, such as the stadiums for the 2022 FIFA World Cup that Qatar is hosting. The result is that English has become a necessary lingua franca, or a common language between people in Qatar who are educated and do not share the same first language. Hindi, Urdu, Malayalam, and Tagalog, among other languages, are also commonly used due to the composition of the expatriate population, but do not carry the same prestige as English (Hillman, 2019). Belkhiria et al. (2021, p. 126) note that Qatar’s demographic imbalance contributes to “real and imagined threats” to Qatari citizens’ national identity and Arabic language.

English has become a de facto second official language in Qatar not only due to its demographics, but also to its sociopolitical, cultural, and economic structures. Mustafawi and Shaaban (2019) describe how, prior to 2019, many public functions and services were conducted in English alone or in combination with Arabic. Nevertheless, the new Arabic Language Protection Law of 2019 (Amiri Diwan, 2019) has required that state legislations, official documents, and other means of communications be published in Arabic, although translation or summaries in English are still provided for many official documents written in Arabic. In addition, public signage around the country must be in Arabic, but usually includes English as well. The height and size of the font for Arabic and English is also supposed to be balanced.

Given Qatar’s demographics, English is important in many workplaces. Al-Buainain’s (2010) study, though now dated, found that English was needed for work in both government and private institutions. The results of her survey,

collected from 644 employees who were graduates of Qatar University, revealed that more than 77% of the participants needed to use English in the workplace and only 21.6% stated that they seldom or never used English at work. Similarly, Alkhatib (2017), discussing the status of the English language in Qatar's workplaces, explains how being able to use English is perceived as one of the main criteria for employment in Qatari society.

While many Qatari national families are resistant to the English language entering the domain of their homes and *majlis* (a private space where Qataris receive and entertain guests) (Hillman, 2022a), many families do hire domestic employees such as nannies or drivers who may speak basic English with their children. Al-Najjar (2013) discusses concerns about the influence of foreign labour on the Arabic language and identity in Qatar and the Gulf region, due to the hiring of non-Arabic-speaking nannies and household workers. As one example, a Qatari national academic wrote in a local newspaper in 2019 about how some Qatari children may spend seven or eight hours a day studying in private English-medium instruction schools, then go home and continue to use English to communicate with their foreign nanny and watch TV programmes and play games in English. Thus, for some Qatari children, most of their day may be spent using English (Abdulmalik, 2019).

English also continues to play a significant role in education; I describe this issue in more detail in the next section. Under the present *Emir* (monarch), Qatar has aggressively pursued building an indigenous knowledge economy, or a "post-carbon" economy, undertaking major reforms in education, as well as in other areas of economic and social development. As part of the goal of human development in Qatar's National Vision 2030, Qatar "aims to develop a world-class educational system that encourages analytical and critical thinking, creativity, and innovation in preparation for a complex twenty-first-century workplace" (Ally et al., 2016, p. 111). Much of this education is aimed at preparing male and female Qatari nationals for professional jobs and increasing their presence in private and public sectors, as part of the government's initiative of "Qatarisation" and moving from dependence on hydrocarbons. In better preparing Qataris to enter the workforce, Qatar has made education one of its highest priorities and invested millions in both reforming the flagship national public university, Qatar University (QU), and in establishing Qatar Foundation's Education City. EMI has been intricately linked to this education priority. At the same time, while Qatar's National Vision 2030 does not specifically discuss language policy, it mentions preserving and enhancing "Arab and Islamic values and identity" (General Secretariat for Development Planning, 2008), for which the Arabic language no doubt plays a crucial role.

English-Medium Instruction Versus Arabic-Medium Instruction in Qatar

While English has been taught as a subject in schools in Qatar for around 70 years (Brewer & Goldman, 2009), a significant expansion of EMI for schools and higher education began in the early 2000s as part of the journey of establishing

a knowledge-based economy in the country. English was perceived as a key component of building this economy. As AlKhatib (2017) mentions, this impetus gave greater priority to English language in Qatari society. Alkhateeb et al. (2020, p. 3) argue that “interest in the English language became ‘economic’ rather than ‘scholarly’” and the “discourse of internationalization, globalization, and marketization were the main driving force behind the growing role of English as a medium of instruction”. Brewer and Goldman (2009, p. 100) further explain that “English was deemed important for use in the labour market and to prepare students for postsecondary education abroad”. Implementing EMI in education was meant to enhance national competitiveness and to increase the numbers of Qataris in the workforce (Hillman & Ocampo Eibenschutz, 2018).

Other global, regional, and national forces of the early 2000s related to the War on Terror (see Barnawi, 2018) also led Qatar to invite the Western-based RAND Corporation to evaluate the country’s K–12 public education system in 2001, and the result was a shift away from Arabic and religious classes towards English and technical and scientific subjects (Bashshur, 2010). Under a policy entitled “Education for a New Era”, EMI was implemented for grades K–3 and for Mathematics and Science in grades 4–12 in Qatar’s government schools from 2002 until 2012; however, it was often only the “texts, tests, and terminology” or the “3Ts” that were delivered in English (Kane, 2014, p. 96). This decision to use EMI was also applied in QU for most majors. Mustafawi and Shaaban (2019, p. 218) explain how “English was at the height of its prestige, not only in the K–12 educational system, but also in the country as a whole” during this time. However, due to low results on international standardised tests, concerns about the marginalisation of Arabic language in the country, and other social tensions with Qatari parents expressing unease about neoliberal globalised education (Barnawi, 2018), the public school system abruptly switched back to AMI for all subjects in 2012 and has remained in Arabic since.

QU also abruptly shifted from using EMI to AMI in 2012 (see Figure 4.2) for programmes in Law, International Affairs, Business and Economics, and Journalism and Mass Communication (Alkhateeb et al., 2020). However, EMI has remained for other programmes such as Natural Sciences and Engineering programmes, which are considered important for the local market. This is significant given that QU is Qatar’s flagship public research university and is its primary institution of higher education with a current student body of around 23,000 students, which is roughly 70% of all students attending higher education programmes in Qatar. Additionally, the university has a reputation for maintaining traditional Qatari values, with separate campuses for men and women; all undergraduate classrooms and facilities, as well as many extracurricular activities, continue to be gender segregated. It is viewed as the central institution for “training the workforce and preserving cultural traditions and heritage” (Crist, 2015, p. 93).

On the one hand, the shift in medium of instruction described above made it easier to attract Qatari nationals and for them to gain acceptance at QU since the previous English language prerequisites kept many from applying (Alkhateeb et al., 2020; Belkhiria et al., 2021). QU accommodates most Qatari secondary



Figure 4.2 Local newspaper headlines about the switch from English-medium instruction to Arabic-medium instruction at Qatar University.

school graduates who seek higher education but either do not have sufficient academic or English language qualifications or choose not to study abroad or attend one of the international branch campuses (IBCs) in Qatar. On the other hand, many students who are taught in Arabic in public schools are not prepared for QU's scientific programmes in EMI. Barnawi (2018, p. 104) describes how "the tension around securing a place to study engineering, medicine or business at QU is always high". To address this tension, QU's Foundation Program helps prepare students going into the Science and English tracks and offers Qatari national students who are primarily coming from AMI schools a way to access EMI higher education (Al-Hendawi et al., 2018). Additionally, the Community College of Qatar, established in 2010, provides two-year academic programmes to help prepare Qatari students to enter four-year universities like QU. Belkhiria et al. (2021, p. 126) argue that the split of EMI and AMI programmes has resulted in "two separate and distinct pedagogical spheres of knowledge and cultural modes of production".

While AMI is used in Qatar's government schools, EMI continues to be used in numerous private schools. Many parents still prefer to send their children to EMI private schools, "believing that English is related to their children's ability to be accepted into a prestigious university in Qatar or abroad and successfully integrate into a globalized workforce" (Hillman & Ocampo Eibenschutz, 2018, p. 10). For higher education, EMI is used in the numerous IBCs in Qatar as well as most private universities. Qatar Foundation's Education City has hosted six prestigious American IBCs, as well as one French and one British IBC, all delivering degrees through EMI. EMI options for higher education in Qatar continue to expand as the country opens more private universities and cross-border

partnerships. The IBCs in Education City have no stated English-language-related learning outcomes, and they confer the same degree in Qatar as a student would receive if they studied at the home campus. They are advertised as offering a unique experience for Qatari national students studying degree programmes in English alongside international students while living at home with their families. Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, chair of the Qatar Foundation, has celebrated the outcomes, declaring that “QF graduates are contributing to driving the development of the nation forward” (Barnawi, 2018, p. 104). Commenting on this idea, Kane (2014, p. 95) describes how “the Qatar Foundation’s ubiquitous claim to be preparing its citizenry ‘to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world’” seems to include the adoption of English language in order to open up participation in its growing knowledge economy.

Qatari nationals make up somewhere between 35% to 80% of the student body population of individual IBCs in Education City, and there is pressure from the Qatar Foundation to continue to increase the overall percentage of Qataris. However, the English-medium environment of the IBCs provides some challenges for Qataris coming from Arabic-medium government schools, who may meet the university admission requirements for IBCs, except when it comes to their English proficiency scores. Students must score high enough on standardised English tests such as IELTS, ACT, SAT, or TOEFL to be admitted. This was why QF founded the Academic Bridge Program (ABP) in Education City in 2001, so that high-achieving Qatari students who might be weak in academic English could take a pre-university programme to be accepted into an IBC. The ABP also focuses on preparing students in Science, Mathematics, computer literacy, and critical thinking and problem-solving skills and has helped to increase the percentage of Qatari national students studying in the IBCs. In addition to the ABP, some of the IBCs such as Texas A&M University and Weill Cornell have their own foundation courses in English and Mathematics. At Texas A&M University, students who only score a combined average of 5.5 to 6.5 on all four skills on their IELTS proficiency test may spend from one to three semesters in English foundation courses before they can enrol in most of the required courses for their Engineering majors. This may extend their four-year course of study to five or six years. While there is pressure to accept more Qatari students, there is also pressure to ensure that these students can graduate in four to five years and enter the workplace with strong English language communication skills.

Additionally, there are often tensions between the environment of IBCs and local cultural and religious practices. Crist (2015) lists one of the common concerns about QF’s IBCs as “the erosion of cultural values, norms, and language that is thought to be caused by foreign institutions, either directly or indirectly” (p. 114). For example, the fact that the IBCs allow for gender integration has given Education City a local reputation of being “Sin City” since Qatari women’s morality is perceived to be under threat due to mixed-gender interactions (Vora, 2019, p. 167). EMI institutions are thus often juxtaposed against QU and found lacking in terms of upholding local cultural and social mores.

EMI Education and Identity in Qatar

With the increasing dominance of English in Qatar, one of the predominant concerns is that EMI might be contributing to a loss of Arabic literacy skills and Qatari linguistic and cultural identity (Pessoa & Rajakumar, 2011). Ahmad and Hillman (2020, p. 8) describe how “the unprecedented economic boom in the GCC over the last two decades and a spike in the number of different ethnicities and languages due to guest workers has led to dramatic social, economic, demographic, and psychological changes which have created fears and concerns about preservation of Arabic language and identity”. Alkhatib (2017, p. 66) comments on the “feeling of estrangement” among “Arabic native residents” of the country and an “out-of-space experience” or “discomfort” with the English language. EMI education and IBCs have been problematised for creating social and linguistic divisions in Qatari society (Graham et al., 2021; Vora, 2019). Vora (2019) explains this further:

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

(p. 45)

While an outcome of building Qatar’s knowledge-based economy may be to naturalise English language in society, this is not without repercussions on the micro-level (Alkhatib, 2017). For example, in survey and interview data collected from 102 young Qatari-national IBC students, Hillman (2019a) found that more students selected Qatari Arabic dialect and English language as important to their identity, rather than Qatari Arabic dialect and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). This may not be surprising for EMI students, given that spoken Arabic varieties or dialects are learned from birth and used for everyday communication, while MSA is mostly learned through formal education and is a register used for literacy purposes and other kinds of formal or professional writing and speaking. However, MSA is also used heavily in the media and in children’s cartoons (especially those produced in the Arab states of the Gulf to enhance children’s exposure to and knowledge of MSA), and MSA is also the closest register to the classical Arabic of the holy book of Islam, the Qu’ran (Hillman, 2019b). Belkhiria et al. (2021) argue that the threat to Arabic “is not its endurance and resilience in everyday life but is rather to its employment in the academic spheres of knowledge production and knowledge transfer” (p. 128). This is what is being lost through EMI.

Hillman (2019, p. 182–183) describes how “language policies are always projects that reflect language ideologies and English and Arabic are often viewed

in competition with one another”. Relatedly, debates around national cultural identity in Qatar have juxtaposed English against an increased promotion of Arabic language and Arabisation. Arabisation can be understood as “the association of national identity with ideas of ethnic Arab purity and lineage” (Exell, 2018, p. 24). To counteract English hegemony, Qatar has engaged in several Arabisation policies, including promoting Arabic language (largely understood as MSA) in Qatari society. In addition to the shifts to AMI education in 2012 in public schools and QU, an Emiri decree from Qatar’s current ruler – Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani – also made Arabic mandatory on all public signs in 2012, although the additional use of other languages like English is permitted. In 2016, it became mandatory for businesses in Qatar to use Arabic as the main language for product labels, service lists, issuing receipts, and call centre services for customers. Businesses were also required to have at least one Arabic-speaking employee to manage these services. As mentioned previously, the 2019 Arabic Language Protection Law (Amiri Diwan, 2019) has been the most comprehensive in promoting the Arabic language by requiring, among other measures, that ministries, government agencies, and public entities and institutions use Arabic as the primary language in all their functions. Furthermore, some advocate for policies mandating that non-Arabic-speaking expatriates learn the Arabic language. Zahirovic (2021, p. 1) argues that “increased use of Arabic by non-Arab residents would positively contribute to the preservation of Qatar’s Arab and Islamic values and identity”. Recently, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Qatar made Arabic, Islamic Education, and Qatari History compulsory subjects, even in EMI private schools (*The Peninsula*, 2021). Qatar Foundation has also announced a “commitment to preserving and celebrating the richness of the Arabic language and promoting its enduring relevance to the world” (Qatar Foundation, 2020, para. 3) through the launching of initiatives such as TEDinArabic, a platform for TED talks in Arabic, and other flagship initiatives for QF students.

Thus, there has been a push and pull when it comes to English in Qatar. English is both desired and seen as necessary. However, the use of English, especially between Qatari nationals, also violates aspects of local solidarity and identity and gives rise to concerns about loss of linguistic and cultural identity. Hillman and Ocampo Eibenschutz (2018, p. 15) highlight that English has been “neither demonized nor welcomed uncritically”. English is desired for its mobility and the prospects it offers for personal status and employment. It is also understood as necessary to enable communication with non-Arabic-speaking expatriates in the country. However, its use can also cause linguistic shaming for Qataris if used in private domains, such as home and the *majlis*. Al-Thani (2008) found that IBC students prefer English for academic uses but Qatari Arabic dialect when communicating with family. Using English can be perceived as showing off and “projecting an out-group identity in violation of local solidarity and shame of abandoning the heritage language for gaining a powerful new language” (Liyanage & Canagarajah, 2019, p. 7). Qatar has tried to carefully balance promoting the utility of English while also elevating the Arabic language.

Qatar's Resistance to EMI Among the Arab Gulf States and the Future

In writing about Qatar's shift from EMI back to AMI in 2012 in public schools and QU, Hopkyns (2020, p. 62) refers to it as "one of the strongest forms of resistance in the region [to EMI]" and highlights how "this momentous decision served to open dialogue on this possibility in other GCC nations". There are many parallels between Qatar and its Gulf neighbours, especially the UAE, when it comes to tensions regarding English and EMI policies. English is also a lingua franca in multiple domains in the UAE due to having similar patterns of growth and demographics as Qatar, with a large non-Arabic-speaking expatriate population (Hopkyns, 2020; Chapter 5). Like Qatar, the UAE also pushed EMI and internationalisation policies in the early 2000s in schools and federal higher education (Gallagher & Jones, Chapter 2). However, unlike Qatar, the UAE has not shifted back to AMI in schools for teaching Science and Mathematics and continues not to offer options for higher education degrees with AMI, outside of Arabic language and Islamic studies. Hopkyns (2020, p. 63) writes, "Unlike other countries where EMI is a choice, in the UAE such a choice is not available, thus making the stakes higher in terms of the level of English proficiency needed for academic success". Troudi and Jendli (2011, p. 41) refer to this as the "choiceless choice". Thus, many talented Emirati students may be held back from pursuing majors due to their English proficiency levels. This is despite concerns about the dominance of English and loss of Arabic. Al-Bataineh (2021, p. 227) describes how "the UAE provides no alternatives to studying via the medium of English" for higher education, and this "forces UAE nationals to study in an underdeveloped second language, and, in the process, offers them little choice to learn in their L1". Al-Bataineh also describes how there are limited resources for enhancing teaching and learning in Arabic in higher education and how the current policy leads to more inequality between Emiratis who come from Dubai, who often have higher English proficiency levels, and Emiratis from other regions. Thus, while there are many parallels between Qatar and the UAE, these countries have taken different paths so far when it comes to EMI, and it may be too soon to know where either path will lead for its citizens.

Although Qatar seems to have settled for now on keeping AMI at public schools and at QU, language policy in Qatar continues to be discussed and debated. The relationship between university institutions and the job market is an integral one, and thus more EMI undergraduate options continue to be launched and lauded, even as Arabic language is promoted more in the country. While Qatari students may have a choice of EMI or AMI for higher education, there is still what Barnawi (2018) refers to as "inverted realities" in Qatar. Barnawi explains how "upward social mobility and choices of Arabic-medium instruction have become available for all Qataris . . . but expectations and access to better education and jobs are continued [sic] to be conditioned by the market forces, which value the English language over Arabic" (p. 171). Students in Qatar can receive degrees conferred through AMI, and proficiency in English is not the only criterion that determines

access to higher education. But are students who are receiving degrees via AMI valued in the neoliberal globalised economy? EMI is still linked with access to higher status, education options, and jobs. This weighs on many students' minds, as described by a Qatari national student when asked why he decided to apply to attend an IBC over Qatar University:

Well, Qatar University was my first choice, but then like I said to myself, would companies want me to go to Arabic university because, for example, if I attend a meeting there, we're going to be speaking with people from, like different cultures, different nations, different languages. So, their main language talking, to use, is going to be in English. So, let's go to Texas [Texas A&M University at Qatar] because it's a college based in English, everything in English, not Arabic whatsoever. That's why I chose it.

(Hillman, 2022b, n.p.)

Value in an AMI education such as that offered at QU is weakened by the lure of prestigious jobs in the country. However, given that the Qatari government sector and state-owned companies like Qatar Energy are now supposed to be promoting Arabic and using it for most functions, this creates a further disjointedness between praise of the "world-class institutions" in Education City and workplace language policies. While most Qatari national students can converse fluently in Qatari Arabic dialect, they do not develop professional skills for presenting and writing in MSA at many of the IBCs and private universities. Continuing to require more Arabic in language policies while at the same time investing in more higher education EMI programmes in Qatar only creates further identity tensions and inverted realities for students.

Whether students receive their degrees through EMI or AMI, they may still not graduate with the language skills they need for working and living in such a multicultural and multilingual country as Qatar. Qatari national students who do not qualify or do not make EMI undergraduate education choices in Qatar may become marginalised in the job market, at least the private sector. But students who do attend EMI universities may face marginalisation within their communities and may be lacking in certain professional Arabic skills they will need for work in Qatar, especially if Arabisation and Qatarisation policies continue to increase. Al-Bataineh (2021, pp. 216–217), within the context of the UAE, has called for bilingual policies that are not "either/or" language policies, where Arabic and English language are viewed in isolation of the other, but policies that are supportive of academic and professional proficiency in both languages and allocate equal resources and attention to both languages. Barnawi (2018, p. 110) writes that "educators need to critically project the 'inverted realities' produced by the hegemonic formulations of neoliberalism in order to explore an alternative discourse that promotes social coherence and unity". He argues that tensions will continue to rise in terms of linguistic and cultural identities. However, an alternative discourse could move away from monolingual English versus monolingual Arabic assumptions and models and focus on supporting and implementing

bilingual or translanguaging approaches from K–12 through university. Additionally, a focus on forms of knowledge and practices that are appropriate for the local context may help alleviate some of the identity tensions facing Qatari national students.

Recently, more scholars have called for collaboration instead of competition between English and Arabic (Alkhateeb et al., 2020; Hillman et al., 2021; Mustafawi et al. 2021; Reynolds, 2019) in language policy in Qatar. For the QU context, Alkhateeb et al. (2020, p. 14) argue that “neither Arabic medium for all nor English medium for a few is a desirable educational language policy” in calling for a more “harmonious existence between local and global language(s)” and a parallel language policy. Likewise, Mustafawi et al. (2021, n. p.) state that “there is no reason to not develop a bilingual program that will ensure the first language development, English development, and academic development”. In IBCs, scholars have also called for policies that move away from monolingual and monocultural norms when interpreting the “E” in EMI and allow space for Arabic and other local languages (Graham et al., 2021; Hillman et al., 2021; Nebel, 2017; Pessoa & Rajakumar, 2011). Perhaps the right form of resistance is not simply a return to AMI but a resistance against neoliberalism and monolingual ideologies of competition between languages. This work has already been promoted by many scholars in the Arab Gulf states (e.g., Graham et al., 2021; Hillman et al., 2019; Hopkyns, 2020), but a vision for this at the level of a ministry of education has not yet fully developed. Curricula often still reinforce monolingual ideologies and do not work to expand students’ multilingual capabilities. Neoliberal English education policy agendas such as EMI must be re-examined, but a switch back to AMI is not necessarily the solution or a way to harmonise with the forces of a globalised economy. It is hoped that these bottom-up approaches for re-envisioning EMI *versus* AMI and enacting bilingual solutions will begin to impact top-down policies when it comes to educational language policy in Qatar, the UAE, and beyond.

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