CULTURAL IDENTITY AND TRANSLITERATION IN THE UAE

EDUCATIONAL CURRICULUM

by

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the
American University of Sharjah
College of Arts and Sciences
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Arts in
English/Arabic/English Translation and Interpreting (MATI)

Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

May 2015

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines whether transliteration is the most appropriate strategy to preserve Emirati cultural identity when local cultural elements are transferred into English in educational curricula. Cultural elements require more attention through translation to establish intercultural communication. To this end, the thesis reviews four case studies that are relevant to its topic. This is further supported by data collected through a survey about transliteration and the National Studies curriculum for public and private schools in the United Arab Emirates education system. The case studies and the survey results overall support the use of transliteration of cultural terms to support the preservation of cultural identity, particularly in the education sector.

Search Terms: cultural identity, transliteration, translation, UAE, bilingualism, education.

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Chapter One: Introduction

As a state, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has opened its arms to many cultures, languages, and people from both the East and the West. The UAE has sought to learn from the experiences and initiatives of others to create its own unique models of success that can ultimately supersede others. In our over-globalized world, the first step for an emerging state that opens its borders might be to preserve its language and culture, since these two elements correlate and reflect the thought and identity of the nation. With a rich cultural heritage, the UAE is no different, since it seeks to preserve its language, history and heritage for many generations to come. The sense of nationalism in some cultures, symbolizes heritage as an element of cultural development, therefore programs are usually established to preserve the language and cultural identity in the nation.

In terms of its linguistic map, The UAE has its Emirati dialect, a branch of Khaleeji Arabic dialect[1], as a unique container of its culture. Thus, cultural identity is nurtured and passed down from generation to generation through oral folktales, proverbs, and daily communication. To record its history and heritage, the UAE has created, since its establishment as a federal state in 1971, a national studies curriculum to be taught for all pupils in primary and secondary schools. To achieve such a goal effectively, the UAE has made the Emirati National Studies a compulsory subject in both public and private schools, but the curriculum was only designed to be taught in the Standard Arabic language. The Department of curricula at the Ministry of Education suggested the translation of cultural references into English for bilingual students to enable such students to understand and relate to other cultural references in their own cultural background; for easier intercultural communication with non-Emiratis.

Cultural identity is important in any society because it reflects how an individual defines the self and its role in a community. Some countries set policies and employ tools of cultural practices in daily life to preserve its unique culture, whether material or mental. The importance of this area of research lies in adding

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[1] Khaleeji Arabic: a dialect of Classic Arabic language that is widely spoken in the Arab states of the Gulf region and has six branches which are Emirati, Omani, Saudi, Qatari, Kuwaiti and Bahraini. It is spoken widely in some parts of Eastern and Western Iraq as well.

more aspects of knowledge to intercultural communication, translation studies, and allied social sciences topics.

Nationalism and cultural identity have been strongly emphasized, particularly after the political events in the Middle East and North Africa region known as the Arab Spring. Emirati cultural studies emerged in the 1970s, but it was refined recently to become National Education following the resolution issued by the Council of Ministers for Services no. 2/1X/2 of 2013 to fulfill the UAE Strategy of 2021 (available at http://www.vision2021.ae/en/national-priority-areas). This resolution was issued to ratify the developed national mandate for the national studies curriculum designed by the Ministry of Education for both public and private schools, and which covers all levels of education, from kindergarten to high schools.

The Ministry of Education has sought to develop other curricula as well, such as general compulsory subjects, including Arabic language and Islamic Studies. The ministry developed the Arabic language curriculum to prevent the loss of language usage among Emirati youth and to reduce the gap between generations caused by an apparent lack of intralingual communication. The development of Islamic studies, on the other hand, was launched for religious and political purposes, but although it is related to cultural identity, the topic is not part of the aim of this thesis.

The development of the national studies and Arabic language curricula came along together because Arabic (standard) is the official language of the UAE and is considered to be the medium of cultural transfer across Emirati between generations. Translation into other languages is implemented as well for the national studies curriculum for private schools in the UAE. However, transliteration is considered to be the most appropriate strategy here since it would preserve cultural elements and facilitate communication between Emiratis and non-Emiratis studying in the UAE.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine whether the transliteration of terms or elements of documented cultural identity from the source language (Arabic) to the target language (English) in a multicultural society might maintain their uniqueness and that of national Emirati identity. The thesis investigates why such a process is applicable to the UAE educational curriculum of National Studies for public and private schools. The main hypothesis underlying this thesis is to examine whether transliteration is the most appropriate method to translate Emirati cultural elements and aspects in education. To test this hypothesis, interviews regarding the adopted

practices of translating the national studies curriculum designed by the Ministry of education were conducted and similar case-studies of other countries were assessed.

In addition, this thesis takes into consideration many variables. It explores differences in teaching methods of the same curriculum in public and private schools. It also takes on board the differences in cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and social settings. Thousands of nationals from other countries and diverse backgrounds live in the UAE, and their children follow their education in private or public school systems. As such almost all get to learn about Emirati culture, but in different ways. The effect of cultural differences works both ways; it affects Emiratis as well as foreigners living and studying in the UAE.

The research data collection also included carrying out interviews with officials, social and cultural researchers, and reviewing official documents, books and other relevant case studies. Overall, the data collected for this thesis support the hypothesis set above. The data is analyzed in relation to cultural, translation, educational, and social studies when feasible and required.

In terms of structure and in addition to this introductory chapter, the thesis includes the following chapters. Chapter two outlines the education system in the UAE. It examines the development of curricula, the emphasis on cultural identity, and the difference between cultural identity and national identity. This chapter illustrates the emergence of educational curricula translation, the scope of translation theories, and their practical applications in this domain.

Chapter three discusses transliteration approaches and how to maintain cultural significance of the distinctiveness of Emirati terms. It also examines the emphasis on Arabic language quality in education, how the Arabic language is substituted by English in higher and professional education, and the objectives behind this strategy. This chapter explores the link between nationalism and political ideology with regards to policy making and how it affects the social environment and the cultural awareness of the community.

Chapter four reviews relevant case studies on cultural identity and transliteration in education. In addition, the structure of the interviews and the selection of the participants are provided along with professional opinions by interviewed scholars and experts in the fields of education, translation, and cultural identity. It also presents the data analysis, case studies and the interviews. Based on the analysis, the chapter suggests applicable solutions with regards to the design of

curricula, and some practical considerations. It also explores the development of new cultural aspects in education and includes a reflection of the bilingual national cultural identity in the UAE. This chapter brings together recent approaches applied to cover the gap of cultural translation in the educational curriculum of national studies.

The final chapter, chapter five, concludes the thesis and presents suggestions for future research regarding the curricula in the UAE and the use of transliteration.

Chapter Two: Education in the UAE

This chapter examines the history of education in the UAE and how it has developed. Education in the Arabian Gulf region, in general, had depended on informal learning where people mostly relied on previous experiences of the elderly and related cultural practices. It was only after the 1950s, when most people of the Gulf had received formal systematic schooling and higher education after exposure to foreign oil expeditions, that modern education began. Unfortunately, there are no reliable records of the number of people who received such education, since there was no body responsible for collating statistical information for this purpose. This chapter reviews the history, background and development of the education system in the UAE with a particular emphasis on cultural identity in the national studies curriculum.

2.1 Education in the UAE

According to the Ministry of Education, prior to the official initiation of the State in 1971, education in the UAE was basic and simple. It has gone through four major phases: Informal, non-systematic, vocational, systematic schooling, and accredited educational systems. During the first phase, education depended on informal methods of learning, where people mostly relied on previous experiences of the elderly and related cultural practices. The children of financially capable families were sent to religious schools to learn the recitation of the Holy Quran under the supervision of the *Mutawa*[2] or the *Mutawa'a,* who assumed the role of the teacher in local neighborhoods. Some religious teachers with a futuristic vision sought to teach the children basic reading and writing skills of the Arabic language.

In the second phase, education developed to form non-systematic circles of education. These circles were formed by Imams and religious preachers, who taught Arabic, religious studies and some Arabic literature. Students who received such schooling were able to read, write and speak Classic Arabic and related religious terms on a daily basis. Later on, these students mostly worked as clerks at local courts, commercial records and trade agencies because of communication skills they gained, but still not up to required professional standards.

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[2] Mutawa': the religious figure in a small village or a neighborhood who opened his home to teach the children living in the neighborhood in exchange for a fee or an agreed method of payment between him and the parents. The female figure who assumed the role of Mutawa' is called Mutawa'a.

In the third phase, the vocational learning emerged between 1920s-1930s until the 1950s. Many semi-systematic schools that were established were financed by local pearl merchants to spread education and awareness among the people of the UAE, such as Al Mahmoudia in Sharjah, Alahmadeya in Dubai and Al Otaiba School in Abu Dhabi. The most notable evolution in semi-systematic education was the establishment of Al Qassemeyah School in Sharjah, which followed a systematic process of student registration, and adopted non-local curricula for teaching through the use of Egyptian or Lebanese education books and teachers. In 1936, the Knowledge Department in Dubai was established by Sheikh Manea Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, which was the first of its kind in the UAE; it helped develop the teaching and learning process and encouraged the spread of education and awareness of its importance among the youth. All these schools attracted local male students, regardless of their age with the aim of providing them with better opportunities. After graduation, most students worked as secretaries, administrative officers, commercial attachés, and State representatives.

The last and most modern phase of education emerged by the end of the 1950s onwards. It initiated a remarkable educational revolution in the UAE. It started with Al Qassemeyah School in 1953, marking the first ever proper academic year in the Emirate of Sharjah along an organized testing system and certification. Afterwards, a systematic modern schooling system was adopted by knowledge departments and local governments in each Emirate. This process continued until the establishment of the Federation of the United Arab Emirates on December 2nd, 1971. After the official establishment of the State, the Federal Ministry of Education and Youth managed existing schools and built new modern public schools. It also adopted a modern educational system with accredited curricula of various subjects starting with grade 1 for students at the age of 6 and ending with a comprehensive examination for the general secondary certificate after grade 12 for 17 or 18-year-old students.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Youth, currently the Ministry of Education, designed one general or public education system supported by the State. This system is called the public sector schooling system. Meanwhile, private schools adopted their own curricula after obtaining a license from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs to operate as private schools. The public sector schooling system decreased the illiteracy rate in the UAE and spread awareness among families about the importance of education. In 1985, the illiteracy rate was

27.7% among the population of the UAE, but public sector schools were responsible for eliminating illiteracy in 25 years. The system of public schooling was divided into 5 stages:

Kindergarten (students between 3-5 years)

Primary Elementary (students between 5-8 years)

Higher elementary (students between 8-11 years)

Preparatory (students between 11-15 years)

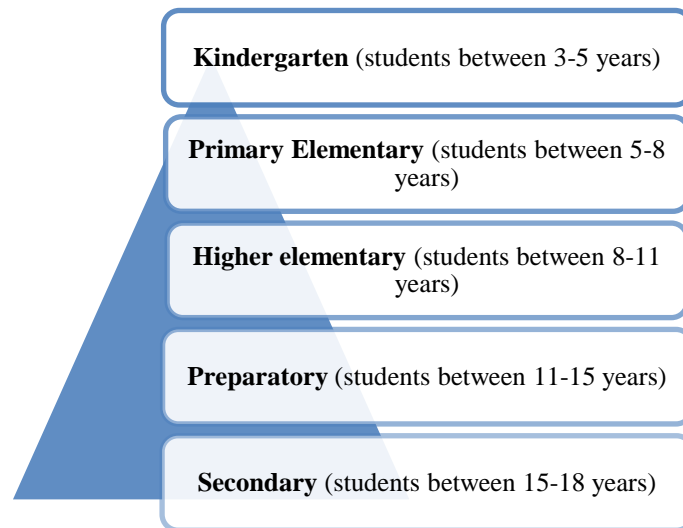**Secondary** (students between 15-18 years)

Figure 1: School Education System in the UAE Prior to 2005

In general, these were the stages of education in the UAE for both public and private school systems until 2005. Currently, the system includes 4 stages as represented by figure 2 below:

Kindergarten (students between 3-5 years)

Elementary (students between 6-11 years)

Intermediate (students between 12-14 years)
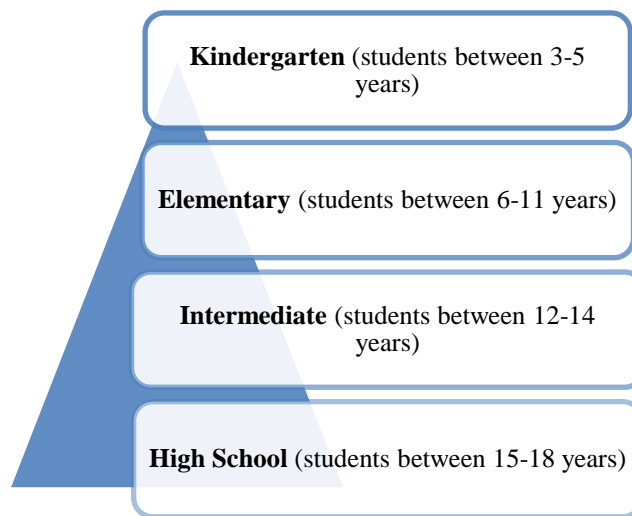
High School (students between 15-18 years)

Figure 2: School Education System in the UAE After 2005

Furthermore, since 1972 education in the UAE has been offered to males and females, UAE nationals and expatriates, in both public and private sectors, but tuition fees are waived for UAE nationals in public schools. However, co-education is only practiced in the private sector, while public schools follow gender segregation until graduation from high school. The Ministry of Education has continued developing the curricula of many subjects to keep education subject materials up-to-date. It has established regular strategic objectives to provide better education, such as promoting cultural identity and preserving social values of the UAE.

The curricula in the UAE include compulsory academic subjects for students in both public and private sectors, namely Arabic Language, English Language, Islamic Studies (for Muslims only), Mathematics, Sciences and National Studies. There are also other recreational and practical studies related to craftsmanship, artistry and physical education (music, fine arts, house management skills, and sports). Some private schools, however, include extra academic subjects that are tailored according to the foreign curricula adopted by each school, such as foreign languages and extensive specific studies as well as extracurricular activities.

Since the creation of the UAE modern educational system in the 1970s, the curricula subject materials have been changed and modified to keep each generation up-to-date with contemporary events and general knowledge of the time. Some

subjects have been added to the curricula, only to be removed later, such as housekeeping skills, music and fine arts. Housekeeping Skills, for example, was only offered in girls' schools as a compulsory subject, where female students used to learn sewing, cleaning and cooking, but it removed from secondary school education in 1998. Similarly, music and fine arts subjects were marginalized and became extracurricular activities in public schools.

In their 16th policy brief, the Dubai School of Government included a research paper by Farah and Ridge titled "*Challenges to Curriculum Development in the UAE*" which was a concise eight-page study on the curriculum of the UAE and relative percentages on its progress (Farah & Ridge, 2009). Generally, the curriculum is defined by Farah & Ridge to "encompass the principles, underlying educational philosophy, goals, content and concrete functioning on the instructional program in the classroom, as well as the written and other materials needed to support the educational system" (2009, p.1).

According to Farah and Ridge, the curriculum is divided into three categories: implemented curriculum, intended curriculum and attained curriculum. In their definitions of the curriculum categories, the attained curriculum is "what students actually learn in their classroom, what skills and values they pick up, and what content they absorb and retain"; implemented curriculum is "activities happening in the classroom and how effectively can teachers present the material and what do they rely on to deliver the educational content"; and intended curriculum which is implemented in the UAE public schools, includes "guiding documents produced by the Ministry of Education or education authorities who assign how much, how often and what should be taught in schools." (Farah & Ridge, 2009, p.1)

Although the Ministry of Education has changed its scope regarding public school education every five years, the serious dramatic change came in 2008. Then, it shifted its goals and strategies and changed the way the curricula were delivered to include not only intended curriculum, but also the attained and implemented curriculum education (Farah & Ridge, 2009, p.2). The Department of Curriculum Creation and Design in the Ministry of Education was forced to change old methods of designing educational systems, to address problems and to deliver modern education curricula. The department of curriculum was influenced by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research as well as Abu Dhabi Education Council to set the standards for the new established curricula (Farah & Ridge, 2009, p.3).

These influences enriched the subject of English language and introduced Mathematics and Sciences through the medium of the English language instead of Arabic. Instead of creating new curricula, the Ministry of Education imported curricula from abroad by borrowing experts from the US and Australia to update the current curricula and introduce best practices in designing curricula in the future. Therefore, they introduced a reformed version of each subject with western cultural values and delivered in the English language as well. The capacity of the department of the curriculum to develop and gain expertise is relatively limited, and this resulted in producing modern subjects that lacked cultural compatibility and authenticity with the local culture (Farah & Ridge, 2009, p.6).

Furthermore, when the Ministry of Education sensed the inability to create updated original curricula, it signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the UAE National Archives (formerly the National Center for Documentation and Research) in February 2013, with the aim of "developing the curricula for national and social studies in schools, in order to familiarize students with the history of the UAE leading up to the current modernized state, as well as teaching students about their forefathers and the nation's founding fathers" ("أكثر من 400 طالب وطالبة يزورون الأرشيف الوطني", 2014).
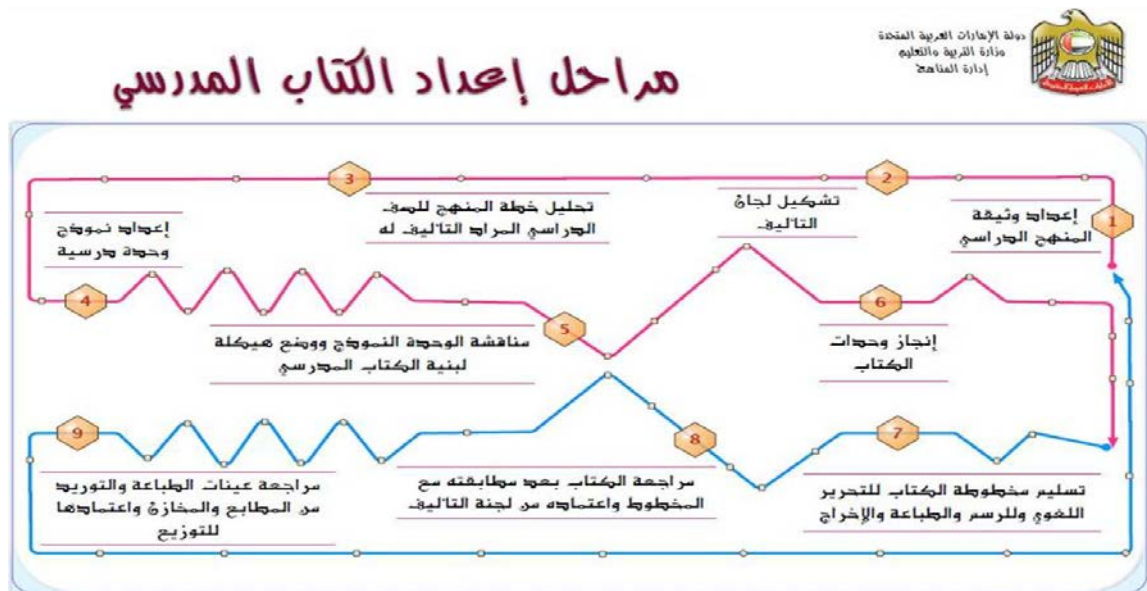

Figure 3: Stages of School Book Curriculum Design in 2008

مراحل مواءمة السلاسل العالمية

Figure 4: Stages of Curriculum Affiliation with Best Global Practices

2.2 The Emphasis on Cultural Identity

The founding father and late president of the UAE, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, may Allah rest his soul in peace, took an active role in outlining Emirati belonging and the cultural identity of the nation. Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan emphasized the notion of cultural identity through his famous saying that "those who don't have a past will not be able to leave a legacy." To cater for this need, a national studies curriculum was designed to be taught in all elementary public schools. The implementation included students receiving 2 hours per week of national studies education during a regular academic year[3]. Afterwards, a National Studies curriculum was designed to be taught in in preparatory schools alongside the subject of history, for one hour per week in a regular academic year.

National Studies is a subject, which includes the history, culture and heritage of the UAE. This academic subject was carefully designed to cover facts about and the ideology of the State. The subject explains historical events of how and when the federation was created and the founding fathers of the Union of the Emirates that

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[3] Until 2011, a regular academic year in the UAE had two semesters, where each semester was almost four months long.

federation was created and the founding fathers of the Union of the Emirates that transformed separate entities into a great nation. It also includes material and non-material cultural aspects, values, traditions, social, and political ties with the rest of the Arab states, particularly those of the Arabian Gulf. The curriculum aims to inform students, citizens and residents alike, about the UAE.

The focus on developing the curriculum of national studies is still ongoing. The Ministry of Education supervises the curriculum closely and reviews it every year to include recent national events and achievements. This is reflected in its strategic objectives and aims in the ten-year plan of education that was launched in 2010 (available at www.moe.gov.ae). The Ministry launched its 2010-2020 strategy with ten main objectives, where the seventh objective specifically focuses on citizenship and nationalism. The seventh objective stresses national identity and the sense of belonging in the Emirati community (see Figure 5 below). The seventh strategic goal is listed with four initiatives that are planned for implementation by 2020 to ultimately achieve its four possible outcomes that would benefit students, teachers, parents and the Emirati community at large (see Figures 6, 7 and 8 below).
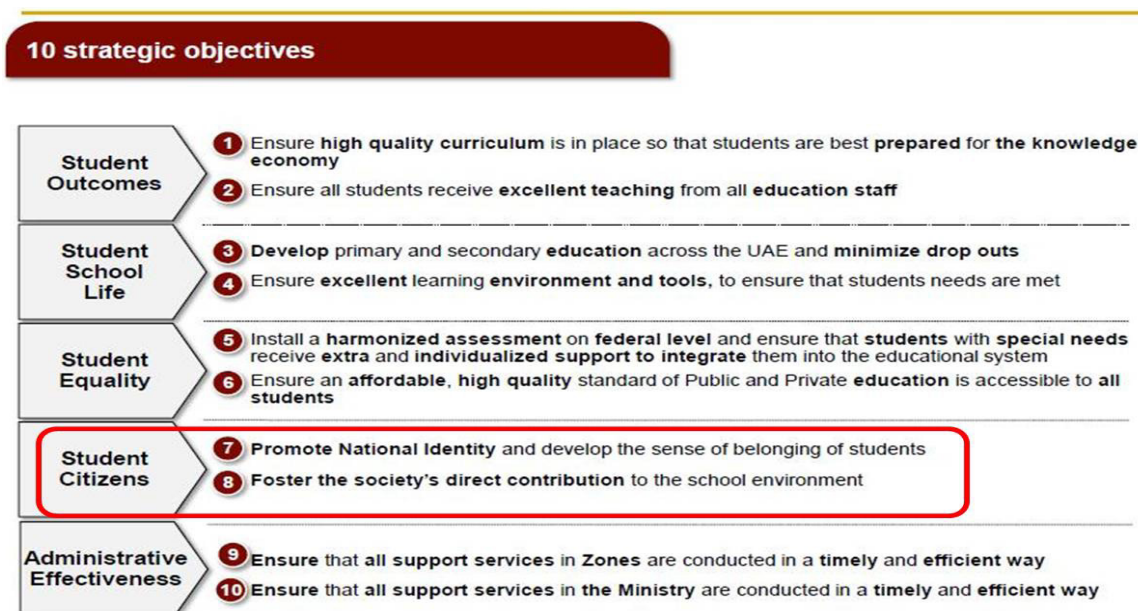

Figure 5: UAE Ministry of Education 2010-2020 (Strategic Objectives)

Comprehensive initiatives were developed through national workshops and public feedback (1/2)
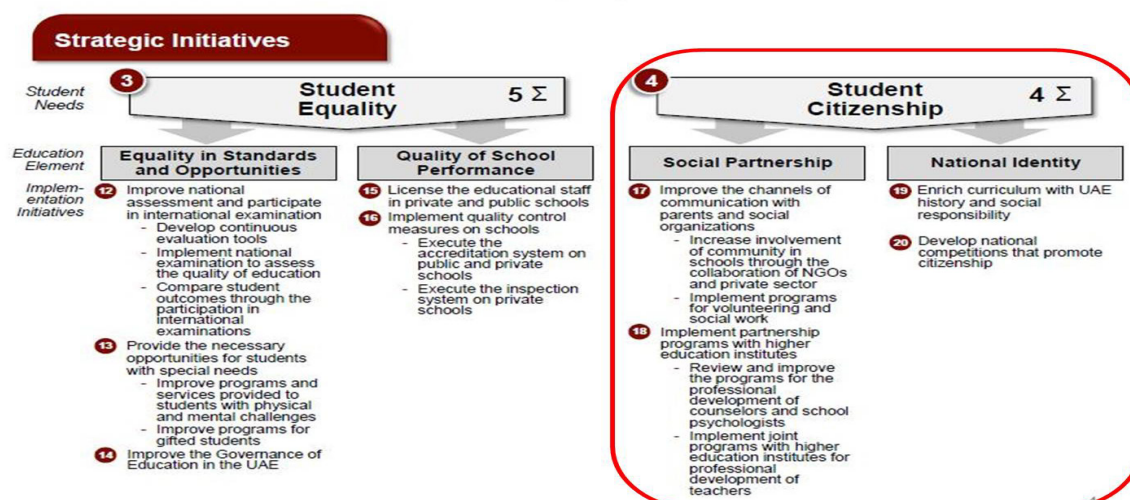
Strategic Initiatives

Student Needs	③ Student Equality 5 Σ		④ Student Citizenship 4 Σ	
Education Element	**Equality in Standards and Opportunities**	**Quality of School Performance**	**Social Partnership**	**National Identity**
Implem-entation Initiatives	⑫ Improve national assessment and participate in international examination - Develop continuous evaluation tools - Implement national examination to assess the quality of education - Compare student outcomes through the participation in international examinations ⑬ Provide the necessary opportunities for students with special needs - Improve programs and services provided to students with physical and mental challenges - Improve programs for gifted students ⑭ Improve the Governance of Education in the UAE	⑮ License the educational staff in private and public schools ⑯ Implement quality control measures on schools - Execute the accreditation system on public and private schools - Execute the inspection system on private schools	⑰ Improve the channels of communication with parents and social organizations - Increase involvement of community in schools through the collaboration of NGOs and private sector - Implement programs for volunteering and social work ⑱ Implement partnership programs with higher education institutes - Review and improve the programs for the professional development of counselors and school psychologists - Implement joint programs with higher education institutes for professional development of teachers	⑲ Enrich curriculum with UAE history and social responsibility ⑳ Develop national competitions that promote citizenship

Figure 6: UAE Ministry of Education 2010-2020 (Strategic Initiatives)

Desired outcomes of the 2010 – 2020 strategy

Students

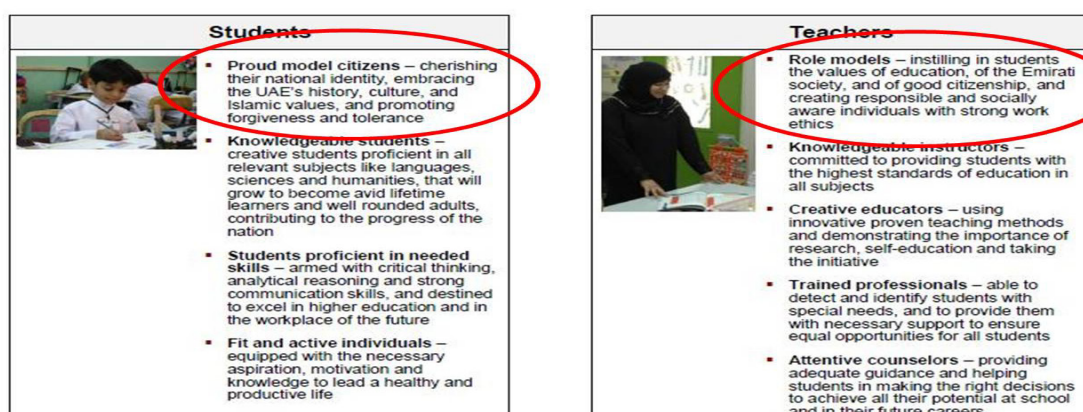- **Proud model citizens** – cherishing their national identity, embracing the UAE's history, culture, and Islamic values, and promoting forgiveness and tolerance
- **Knowledgeable students** – creative students proficient in all relevant subjects like languages, sciences and humanities, that will grow to become avid lifetime learners and well rounded adults, contributing to the progress of the nation
- **Students proficient in needed skills** – armed with critical thinking, analytical reasoning and strong communication skills, and destined to excel in higher education and in the workplace of the future
- **Fit and active individuals** – equipped with the necessary aspiration, motivation and knowledge to lead a healthy and productive life

Teachers

- **Role models** – instilling in students the values of education, of the Emirati society, and of good citizenship, and creating responsible and socially aware individuals with strong work ethics
- **Knowledgeable instructors** – committed to providing students with the highest standards of education in all subjects
- **Creative educators** – using innovative proven teaching methods and demonstrating the importance of research, self-education and taking the initiative
- **Trained professionals** – able to detect and identify students with special needs, and to provide them with necessary support to ensure equal opportunities for all students
- **Attentive counselors** – providing adequate guidance and helping students in making the right decisions to achieve all their potential at school and in their future careers

Figure 7: UAE Ministry of Education 2010-2020 (Students and Teachers)

Figure 8: UAE Ministry of Education 2010-2020 (Parents and Community)

Since the preservation of national identity is extremely important for the UAE, the focus on the Emirati culture is inevitable. Heritage is what represents people's history, religion, language, and traditions; matters that are difficult to maintain and sustain in modern times because of globalization and its effects on the whole world. The focus of national studies to preserve national identity and culture of the UAE has included language to describe terms of material culture and some traditional characteristics. The local terms in the Emirati dialect were added to define objects, costumes, and other traditional processes such as pouring Arabic coffee in a tiny cup for guests.

In general, the emphasis on material cultural items is the basis for recording heritage and traditional meanings, and it could only be transmitted through its own language. According to Samovar and Porter, "language can serve two cultural functions. First it is the means of preserving culture; and, second, it is the medium of transmitting culture to new generations" (2004, p.139). Examples of material culture and how they assist in preserving national identity are explained in chapter 3.

2.3 The Emergence of the Translation of Educational Curricula

The translation of the curricula emerged in the UAE for private schools by the end of the 1990s. The curricula were offered only in Arabic or English in most private schools for the children of expatriates living and working in the UAE. Private schools

sought the approval of the Ministry of Education to use academic books for the Arabic language, Islamic studies and national studies. Other subjects in private schools were offered according to the academic curriculum they adopted and in accordance with the standards followed in the country the school is affiliated with, UK, US or Australia, for example.

When the national studies books were translated, literal translation was the only method used to describe the culture and national identity of the UAE. The lack of background knowledge about the Emirati culture that expatriate translators residing in the UAE had and the fact that the Ministry of Education curricula review board did not pay attention to this field, resulted in the delivery of often inappropriate and quasi-translation of terms. The terms did not reflect the appropriate meaning and failed to achieve the cultural exchange and the provision of information about the Emirati national identity hoped for in the design of the subject curriculum. Since most of translators were non-Emirati and could not understand the meaning and origin of terms, some terms were simply omitted. It is a bitter thing to admit that the Ministry of Education, at that time, lacked the necessary resources to effectively translate the academic subject, perhaps because of the view that the need for it was minimal and most expatriate students end up going back to their home countries to seek higher education or start a career after graduation from schools in the UAE. However, in 2008, the Ministry of Education decided to change its whole strategy, including the method of translating cultural terms. Thus, it allowed literal translation of terms with the correct pronunciation and usage and associated cultural meanings with the aim of reaching out to as many students, expatriate, as possible.

This chapter has provided a brief review of the history, background, and development of the education system in the UAE. It has highlighted the influence of cultural identity and nationalism in the development of the curricula, and the relationship between language and culture and how they are reflected in the Emirati educational system.

Chapter Three: Transliteration, Identity and Education

This chapter examines transliteration approaches and how they are utilized in translating the curriculum of National Studies of the UAE education system. The Arabic language is the official language for around 22 states spread all over the Middle East and North Africa. As an independent state, the UAE overlooks the Arabian Gulf with other neighbor states, shares a very significant Arabic dialect that is widely recognized in the Arab world, but yet remains difficult to be understood by many Arabs. Many Emirati language scholars claim that the Khaleeji dialect spoken in the Arab states of the Arabian Gulf region; is the dialect which is said to the closest dialect to classical Arabic (AlMuhairi, ''بعض الخليجيين يعجبون من رمستنا!", 2014). The reason for using pure Arabic terms in the Khaleeji dialect is perhaps due to the geographic location of the Gulf region in the Arabian Peninsula, where the land of Yemen, is said to be the assumed birth place of the Arabic language (Ali, 1974, vol.8, p.538).

Due to its location between the East and the West, the Gulf region was a trade exchange hub for centuries. As such, its dialect (Khaleeji) includes mixed Arabic and foreign terms as well. According to the Cultural Consultant at Dubai Government, His Excellency Jamal Bin Huwaireb Al Muhairi, the Arabic dialect emerged when Arabs started to ignore the grammar rules of the standard (pure) Arabic language, whereby the slang became the daily language of conversation. With the advent of Islam and its Holy Quran in the Arabian Peninsula, standard Arabic remained the language of everyday life for centuries. His Excellency Mr. Jamal Bin Huwaireb Al Muhairi also argues that his research shows that contrary to the views of some, many words used in the Emirati dialect originate from standard Arabic origins.

3.1 Transliteration Approaches to Maintain Cultural Significance

Transliteration is transforming words from a language to another as they are, regardless of the meaning, phonetics and syntax. It is a branch of the literal translation model. For example, Arabization is a form of transliteration. Transliteration theory covers a number of concepts and approaches. Depending on the terminology, context and the socio-cultural frame of a nation or ethnic group, the source text could remain

effective or lose its originality to the target culture. Most cultural translations often follow the theory of *Equivalence* especially what Eugene Nida calls "*Formal Equivalence*" (Hatim, 2001, p.22). According to Nida, formal equivalence is "an orientation to translation which focuses on the message itself, in both form and content" (Nida, 1964, p.159). Thus, formal equivalence fragments the linguistic features of the source culture and brings the text closer to the target culture. This is emphasized by Nida and Taber as they argue that "formal equivalence often 'distorts the grammatical and stylistic patterns of the receptor language" (Nida & Tareb, 1969, p.201). Other major approaches focus on domestication and foreignisation, construction and deconstruction, and literal and dynamic translation, etc.

The fall of the Ottoman Empire and the end of the *Khedaiwi*[4] dynasty in Egypt in the 1950s sparked drastic political changes in the Arab world. The Arabic language has been a unifying factor for the Arab masses across the Middle East and North Africa. According to Holt, language is not a choice since "once it is introduced and accepted in a given country, a standard language will usually come to be seen by the mass of the population as right and natural even if it usually originates in an elite dialect" (Suleiman, 1996, p.11).

Although there are cultural differences and despite the existence of many Arabic dialects, language remains the main element that Arabs turn to when calls for unity political awakening emerge. Gregg explains how Arabs transformed their societies from simple tribal communities to modernized ones (2005, p.47). The shift in political awareness and socio-cultural beliefs changed the psychological make-up of Arabs in the past 50 years. Gregg argues that the psychological make-up of the Arab-Muslim world was heavily influenced by the revolution in information technology and modern innovations (Gregg, 2005, p.77). He also cites the role that foreignisation had played in shaping the politics of the modern Arab world to counter Pan-Arabism. The impact of such a strategy affected the socio-cultural fabric more than policy making. The result of such a psychology drove Arab communities even further to hold-on to their language, religion and cultural beliefs.

Any culture is preserved not only by folklore and customs, but also by its language. Many school education systems that include a curriculum on nationalism, culture or identity focus heavily on preserving the native language. States such as

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[4] Khedaiwi: A branch of the Ottoman royal family which assumed the rule over the Province of Egypt and seceded from the Ottoman Empire in the 18th century.

France, United Kingdom, Russia, Germany, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of Morocco and many others, focus on preserving the native language through many educational initiatives. A number of countries went to the extent of domesticating foreign texts to comply with cultural values and norms and to avoid distorting their linguistic and cultural features. Babaci-Wilhite argues that "if the local language is the language of instruction, it improves students' abilities to think critically about their own conditions and the world, which would provide a sustainable benefit for the country" (2013, p.122).

In the Arab world, the focus on Arabic followed the so-called Arab awakening that appeared in the shadow of the nationalist movement in Egypt in the 1950s. In order to shift from the foreignisation of the Arab states that had happened during the European occupation, all academic curricula were produced in Arabic to emphasize the Arab national identity. This phenomenon did not affect education only, but also politics and the socio-economic fabric of the Arab world. This socio-political movement is known as Pan-Arabism.

The translation of foreign books, articles, magazines, and bulletins was just the beginning. This translation movement mostly used literal translation and mutated similar versions of the original, where format and writing style remained the same. According to Sayyid, the introduction of new linguistic elements to the Arabic language "would stretch its lexical and stylistic resources beyond their present limits" (cited in Suleiman, 1996, p.29). However, this resulted in the production of what may be called a malfunctioning and distorted Arabic language where language rules were bent to suit the source language style. When Arabic language scholars realized this pattern, they started to warn against what they called the westernization of the Arabic language, and particularly in media, leading to what Faiq highlights as "the interdependence of cultural manifestations in post-colonial contexts….[that became] the interplay of cross-cultural pride and prejudice" (Faiq, 2004, p.11).

3.2 Political Ideology and Social Environment

Political ideology of the Arab world has shifted since the 1990s. Today, it involves "*soft power*" and economic influence (Nye, 2011, p.10). For many political reasons, most Arab states became rather nation-state oriented rather than pan-Arab. These reasons include the failure to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Gulf wars

and the diminishing position of Egypt as a major military force in the region during Hosni Mubarak's presidency. Instead of pursuing post-colonial projects, Arabs more or less reverted back to the West through a wholesale import of its knowledge and technology. In some Arab countries, Western culture was embraced and cultural texts were translated into and out of Arabic to minimize the differences in cultural perspectives between their culture and that of the West.

Pym points out that "Instead of looking for differentiated or distilled cultural essences, it could be fruitful to look at translations themselves in order to see what they have to say about cultural frontiers" (Pym, 2010, p.25). Translations can explain cultural perspectives through the choice of words, or the subject of the text produced. In the Arab World, many texts that were translated were either disregarded or mis-translated resulting in cultural misunderstandings, if understood at all by the target text reader. Fawcett (1997, p.107) argues that "we are always required when translating to "take a position" relative to other cultures and languages, we must as well remain ever vigilant as to the nature of the position assumed."

Education policy making, however, supports nationalistic views of the hegemonic culture. Therefore, Arab governments have worked on raising the level of education and literacy to score higher points in development reports. When translating from Arabic, many governments distributed good quality translated books for local readers for free, but almost all such books support their domestic politics. According to Hermans, translation involves policy making that serves the local ideology, if the translation produced is meant to be used in the community that which created the source text (2001, p.156). Elsewhere, he also points out that

> Translation involves a process of decision making which takes place in a communicative context, the activity is governed by norms. Norms may be regarded as social regulation mechanisms which make certain choices and decisions by the translator more likely than others. They consist of two parts: a directive aspect which exerts pressure on members of a community to behave in certain ways, and a 'content', which is an intersubjective notion of correctness, i.e. a notion of what is proper or correct in particular situation that are derived from values and attitudes that make up the correctness notions. (Hermans, 2001, p156)

Although most Arab states have generally focused on their own citizens, the UAE government took a different approach. It has launched many initiatives to spread literacy within its borders, the Arab world and beyond.

The UAE launched a series of education and awareness campaigns domestically and abroad by Emirati organizations such as Dubai Cares, the UAE Red Crescent, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Humanitarian Association, and Kalimat initiatives. The UAE also includes educational initiatives in its human relief programs in foreign countries. Aware of its diverse community, the UAE has endeavored to help its residents, Emiratis or non-Emiratis, to achieve their best by treating them equally in educational aspects as well as social welfare (UAEinteract, "2014 UN Human Development Index", 2014). Far from philanthropic activities, the UAE Vision for 2021, which is the national agenda of the country, states that no one is above the law, human dignity must be untouchable, and all residents will be living safely and in peace (available at http://www.vision2021.ae/en/national-priority-areas).

To achieve this vision, the UAE government started to implement many processes to guarantee the success of the strategy. The governament realized that if national identity is to remain intact, people should be aware of its uniqueness. In addition, the government has noticed the sharp decline in the number of Emirati students enrolled in public schools, and their weakness in Emirati sense of belonging, as well as weakness in Arabic language. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Community Development have discussed this decline and decided to set a strategy to preserve and diffuse the local culture of the UAE.

Accordingly, the government decided to educate all students in private schools about the Emirati national and cultural identity. In 2013, the Ministry of Education introduced the national studies in Arabic and in English as a compulsory subject for all students enrolled in private schools. This strategic step resulted in the application of the multicultural education approach. The Ministry's decision to teach national studies as a compulsory subject in the private education sector was monitored by regular field visits to ensure that every school grade gets its fair share of the classes. The Ministry also took the initiative of educating students effectively and thoroughly through the use of traditional Emirati terms, performance of traditional dances, and other forms of Emirati folklore.

This policy fits the view of Gorski that "in a diverse society, multicultural educational strategies and approaches must be designed to meet the needs of an ever-changing cultural make-up of students, enabling these students to become productive citizens in a global society" (Gorski, 1999, p.53). On the same point, Blas points out

that "scholars have deemed that multicultural education meets students' cultural learning needs and promotes positive attitudes and interactions towards cultural differences but have debated issues regarding the curricular approaches and strategies" (2011, p.v).

However, Mr. Ali Abdullah Mousa, the General Coordinator at the International Council for the Arabic Language, posits that there is a weakness in educational institutions and organizations, and that it has resulted in students with a considerably weak command of "their mother-tongue," to the point where they cannot think creatively nor "express their thoughts" effectively in standard Arabic.

If Emirati cultural identity is to prosper, it is necessary to implement Arabic language studies, and to revive the Emirati dialect by teaching it through transliteration. But this requires a standardized translation of Emirati terms in records, books and daily interaction. This would create a challenge because the Emirati dialect usually has a synonym or two for one cultural term. According to Lefevere a translation "can only be complete if and when both the communicative value and the time-place-tradition elements of the source text have been replaced by their nearest possible equivalents in the target text" (cited in Broeck & Lefevere, 1979, p.39).

Moreover, the Arabic Language Advisory Council, which was established to work on preserving the Arabic language and the Emirati dialect, is planning to draft a federal law. This law would make Arabic the language of instruction in state schools and, possibly, in government-funded universities, which thus far uses English as the language of instruction (The National. "Law Planned to Preserve Arabic language in the UAE", 2014). The Council might also propose another Federal Law that would require all federal, local and private entities to use spoken and written Arabic in their official correspondence (The National. "Law Planned to Preserve Arabic language in the UAE", 2014).

The UAE community is highly multicultural, but it is also pleasant and safe. The government fosters and endeavors to provide for all residents international quality standards of life, so much so that the UAE model is becoming a benchmark. Consisting of over 1 million UAE nationals, the Emirati community remains remarkably friendly and welcoming. Emiratis treat expatriates living in the UAE with respect and see them as their guests. In 2014, the UAE ranked 28th compared with the

33th position the previous year, in the global prosperity index report by Legatum Institute (2014, p.3).

Emiratis are aware of the deterioration of their dialect. Some blame the education system and some blame globalization and multiculturalism. According to the Minister of Education, H.E. Humaid Al Qatami[5], the main reason behind such a situation could be the "poor-quality teachers who let pupils down by their lack of knowledge of the Arabic language" (The National, "Poor Literacy in Arabic is 'the new disability' in the UAE, FNC told", 2013). For some Emirati families, it is difficult western culture in both public and private schools. Emirati parents find it difficult to visit with their children the elderly members of the family because the children cannot understand most of the conversation taking place around them; they would feel ashamed that their children would to communicate with their children in the Arabic language since their children rely heavily on the English language to express themselves to others. Emirati youth are exposed to the English language and be at a loss regarding "Erramseh"[6].

This chapter has examined the effects of the deterioration of the Arabic language in the UAE. It has discussed the difference between translation and transliteration vis-à-vis the transfer of cultural elements of the language.

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[5] His Excellency Humaid Al Qatami is no longer acts as the Minister of Education since June 2014; the current Minister is H.E. Al Hammadi.
[6] Erramseh: the Emirati local cultural term for the proper way or manner that a language would be spoken in different social settings.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis

This chapter presents the methodology and the analysis of the data used in this thesis. For the purposes of this thesis, the data combine two sources: The first source includes case studies about the same topic and the second source is the information gathered through surveys completed by local experts in the field. There are many case studies about the interconnection between ethnic identity and language.

A considerable amount of research was conducted on this subject to establish the language-culture connection and to explain its relativity to identity characterization and how transliteration of terms helps the preservation of culture. In this chapter, four case studies are reviewed. These case studies illustrate how nationalism, cultural identity and language are interrelated in society, but most importantly, they conclude that transliteration is the most appropriate method to use when transferring elements of cultural identity through language, in native and non-native language settings.

The surveys, which administered in both Arabic and English, aim to explore the views of local experts on the research question of this thesis (see appendix A). The surveys were designed to gather opinions and suggestions in response to the questions.

4.1 Case Studies on Cultural Identity and Transliteration

The major characterization of the four case studies reviewed here is that they all relate to the topic of how transliteration, as an educational method, succeeds in delivering linguistic aspects that signal cultural identity and nationalist belonging for bilingual students. The justification behind the use of these case studies over others lies in their proximity to the UAE in terms of social and linguistic landscape.

The first case study is by Babaci-Wilhite (2013). In this research, the author examines "the relationship of the language of instruction (LoI) to local debates on cultural identity and employment, as well as the influence of global actors and development discourses" (Babaci-Wilhite, 2013, p.121). The author uses research carried out in Tanzania and Zanzibar in 2008, 2009 and 2010 as a basis for the study.

The findings of this case study illustrate how the use of *Kiswahili*[7] as a language of instruction in schools motivated pupils to learn more about their cultural identity. The use of the national language boosted the quality of learning and created a sense of national belonging for the students.

Learning to read and write in a local language improves students' abilities to think critically about their own conditions and about the world. Retaining local languages as a LoI will provide a sustainable benefit for the country, and children of all backgrounds will be able to perform better in school, especially if the same pronunciation in the local language is used to teach bilingual children in primary schools. (Babaci-Wilhite, 2013, p.129).

The second case study is by Al-Azami, Kenner, Ruby and Gregory (2013), which was the result of a research collaborative between Liverpool Hope University and the University of London. Al-Azami et al, 2013, p.683) examine "how transliteration can be used as a bridge to learning for children who are studying in more than one script. By using transliteration as a source for learning Bengali for the British Bangladeshi children aged seven to eleven." The authors conclude that transliteration succeeded in teaching children the linguistic skills necessary to learn their language and grasp the aspects of their culture easily when reading in Bengali. The authors indicate that "transliteration has considerable potential to aid learning, particularly where a language has no written form or where children are unfamiliar with script, transliteration transforms speech into writing, which can be a first step towards learning the script itself and also creates a communicative bridge between children and parents" (Al-Azami et al, 2013, p.696).

The third case study is by Suleiman (1996). Although the author asserts that "the distinctiveness of the Egyptian mind is matched by the distinctiveness of the Arabic language in Egypt which has its own special character and flavor, setting it apart from the Arabics of the other Arabic-speaking peoples," he concludes that "Egyptian nationalism faces the double challenge of forging such a language in functional terms and symbolically endowing it with a set of meanings which makes it truly national" (1996, p.37).

The fourth case study is by Ennaji (2005) about the dilemmas of Arabization in Morocco. The author discusses the introduction of Berber and Arabic languages in

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[7] Kiswahili: an African language which is recognized as one of the national official languages of Tanzania.

higher education instead of French. The author criticizes the use of French instead of local languages, such as Arabic and Berber, in higher education in Morocco, and suggests a curriculum that uses the three languages, namely Arabic, Berber and French. Ennaji concludes that Arabization represents a huge dilemma for Morocco, a historically bilingual and multicultural society. Still, Ennaji concludes by suggesting that Arabization could be achieved through the use of Arabic as the language of instruction in schools to advocate it as the sign of belonging for Moroccans, for whom, "French is synonymous with the Western way of life and modernity, while Arabic is symbolizes the fundamental goal and feature of independent Morocco that has rich culture" (Ennaji, 2005, p.193).

These case studies share the same conclusion that language and culture embed the understanding of national identity and sense of belonging to the homeland. Their conclusions also suggest that the local language should better be transliterated for bilingual students to teach them the 'correct' pronunciation of words and items of material culture, which stand-for the nation. Most importantly, the case studies agree that transliteration is the most appropriate method or strategy to teach students about cultural identity in a multicultural and bilingual society.

4.2 Case Study Evaluation

Although the cultures and languages examined by the four case studies reviewed above are different from those of this thesis, the main research questions are similar. In this section, the major differences between the four case studies and this thesis are highlighted. Babaci-Wilhite (2013) examines the link between the language of instruction (LoI) to local debates on cultural identity and employment, and that *Kiswahili* as a language of instruction in schools had motivated pupils to learn more about their cultural identity. The author also points out that the correct pronunciation in a bilingual environment motivated students to learn more about their cultural identity, but did not specifically underline transliteration as a tool for doing so.

Al-Azami et al (2013) examine how transliteration can be used to educate bilingual children. The authors concluded that transliteration succeeded in teaching children the linguistic skills necessary to learn their native language and grasp the aspects of their culture rather easily. However, the authors did not examine the impact of such education across native and non-native language settings. The authors

indicated that the use of transliteration facilitated the cultural understanding in Bengali, but they did not measure the impact of absorbing cultural differences between Britain and Bangladesh. This is what this thesis has set out to examine: To explore the impact of transliterating in both intracultural and intercultural education settings.

Suleiman (1996) is closer to the topic of this thesis. Although written in 1996, the validity of the findings is still current. Suleiman points out how each Arabic dialect is unique, but may not necessarily be a fully Arabic dialect, and that this distinction can be used to establish national identity in a culture.

Although Ennaji (2005) explores issues related to this thesis, but the main theme relates to the introduction of local languages in education in Morocco. The author succeeds in collecting solid information regarding the impact of making Arabic the language of instruction in higher education in Morocco, but there is no mention of how this system could be applied.

4.3 Survey Structure

The survey administered to solicit the opinion of the local experts was structured as an extensive interview-type. The interviewees received the survey link through email and responded to almost all the questions of the survey. The survey was produced in two versions (Arabic and English), but with the same questions. The survey included two sections and 30 questions in total. The first section included general questions about the interviewee, such as gender, area of expertise and age. The second section, with most of the questions, aimed at gathering the views of the local experts regarding the topic of this thesis (see appendix A).

The participants, 18 in total, were selected based on their knowledge in the field and their positions in official institutions. The participants were all Emirati, which may suggest some bias in the results of the survey, but for the purpose of this survey, it was assumed that all participants would be professional about their views. The participants in the survey were translators, educators, social researchers, and cultural counselors in the federal government, the national archives, the government of Dubai, and some non-governmental agencies. The usual standards pertaining to surveys were observed such as confidentiality.

Most field research is governed by moral and ethical rules and regulations or a code of conduct to protect the participants in the research. Therefore, ethical and legal considerations limit it's the scope of this thesis. Since the author could not secure legal permission to administer the survey to a larger group, she had no alternative but to limit the survey to participants who volunteered. As such, the number 18 participants is small to warrant sweeping conclusions. Most participants volunteered to complete the survey, but without disclosing their identity. Another aspect is the code of professional ethics that the participants and the author must follow, each in their own institutional scope. For research purposes, the consent of each participant is needed if a list of names and associated coordinates is to be revealed and used in the analysis.

4.4 Survey Analysis

As mentioned in section 4.3 above, the survey used for this thesis included two sections. It included thirty questions in total. Most of the participants were people with authority in and over education policy, Arabic literature, translation studies, and specialists in Emirati culture and heritage. The questions covered issues of intercultural discourse, national and cultural identity, education policy, and the use of transliteration to reflect culture in the national studies curriculum. The survey was designed with optional, mandatory, open discussion, and multiple choice questions (see appendix A).

The general information regarding the participants in the survey is illustrated in the following charts:
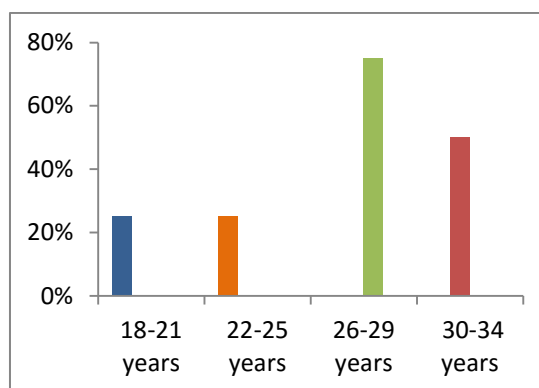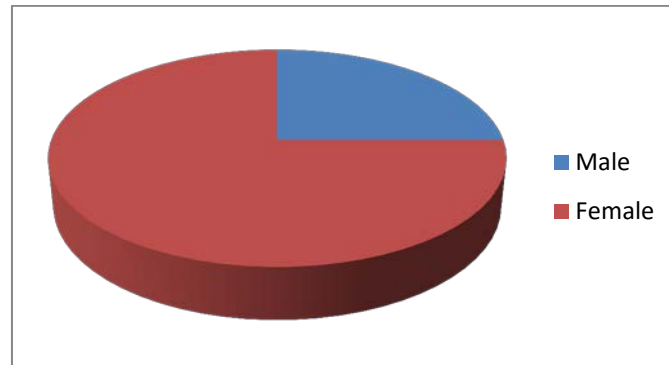

Figure 9: Age of Participants
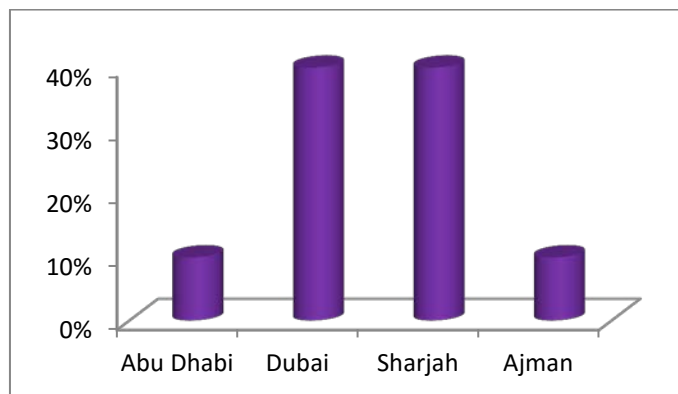
Figure 10: Participant Gender

Figure 11: Place of Residence

The rest of the questions fall into three main categories: The creation of the curricula and translation, cultural identity and national identity, and policy and educational environment. The answers to the questions of each category reflect the opinions of the participants. Most questions are in the form of open-discussion to allow the participants to express their views about the issues.

When asked whether they knew the difference between translation and transliteration, around 75% answered yes and stated that transliteration was one of the tools of translation. Most participants think that using both, literal translation and transliteration, would be a better strategy to transfer Emirati cultural terms to non-Emirati school children. Around 75% of the participants agree that translation in the

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Arab world is not in decline, but rather Arabs' awareness of other languages has increased due to globalization, leading to a slow and limited translation activity in the Arab World.

Regarding the transliteration of the cultural terms عباة as *Abaya* and كندورة as *Dishdasha*, 50% of participants thought that the transliteration did not reflect the material culture of the UAE. To maintain the significance of UAE cultural values and aspects, some participants suggested that cultural and social clubs could be established to implement more cultural awareness programs. Most participants thought the local dialect could preserve cultural identity if it were the language of instruction for the national studies curriculum. Around 90% of the participants said that the transliteration used in the national studies curriculum would minimize cultural differences in the UAE, especially between Emiratis and non-Emiratis. For example, one of the participants wrote: "a workbook must be distributed along with the national studies textbook to test students about what they learned during the semester and describe cultural terms in their own words to ensure full academic understanding of the subject."

Most participants supported the idea that language and culture are different terms that co-exist and collide. The question regarding the definition of cultural identity attracted different answers that covered aspects of nationalism, the public framework that shapes the different behaviors found in a society, the common characteristics of a group of people which distinguish them from other groups and sense of belonging to a particular culture. Around 75% of the participants stated that there is a difference in meaning between cultural identity and national identity. Almost all participants, 98%, believed that the Emirati cultural identity has dramatically changed in the past ten years, specifically in its lifestyle, ethnic diversity, language and gender roles.

Most participants viewed the use of English terms in daily interaction instead of Arabic ones as a serious issue that needs to be addressed immediately by educators as it is causing an identity dilemma for the generation under 25 years of age. One of the participants explained her point by clearly stating in response to the question "there is a serious issue that should be addressed regarding the loss of Arabic language and Emirati culture, both of my nephews can't distinguish between masculine and feminine words in Arabic and have no knowledge what's so ever about

the culture. I was shocked when I discovered that they thought the cultural celebration of the 15th night of the month of Shaa'aban, *min Haq layla*, was the Islamic equivalent of Halloween! I think a serious academic consideration must be taken to explain cultural events and celebrations". Around 50% of participants strongly believe that translating all of the UAE's Ministry of Education curricula will bring a better understanding of the UAE culture and may establish general principles for cultural identity recognition.

Most participants agree that the social context, not political ideology, is the main factor affecting the UAE cultural identity. Most participants support the current role of the government regarding cultural awareness campaigns. However, around 68% view the role of the Ministry of Education in supporting the national agenda and promoting cultural awareness to be rather weak and ineffective. Most participants think that the current education approaches and systems in the UAE do not reflect the UAE culture and the quality of public education is declining. They view the difference in educational strategies between schools and higher education institutions as the main factor behind the waste of educational resources, particularly the situation whereby students are taught in their mother-tongue, only to shift to a foreign language (English) later on. Still, all participants emphasize the importance of learning different languages to cope with the requirements of today's globalization.

This chapter has evaluated four case studies that are relevant to the topic of the thesis. It has also presented an analysis of the data collected through a survey about education and national identity in the UAE. The next and final chapter concludes the thesis and offers some recommendations for further research.

Chapter Five: Conclusions

This chapter summarizes the thesis and suggests recommendations for further research. In the process of envisioning a new cultural education through transliteration, many concepts and strategies would emerge. Due to globalization, the development of cultural aspects in education that reflects national and cultural identity needs to be bilingual for it to deliver the desired results of achieving intercultural understanding. Somehow, no development is achievable without the prominent use of the native language of the nation. Due to the implementation of language initiatives and cultural exchanges, the Emirati dialect has been successfully used in reaching out to populations who have become admiring fans, well beyond the Gulf region. Covering the cultural translation gap through education can be also achieved if educational strategies are reviewed to include current social, cultural, economic, and political issues.

When reviewing the UAE national studies curricula, it is necessary that specialists in the Emirati dialect are involved in the process to ensure the effective selection of cultural terms and the most appropriate way of their delivery. This is a generally valid point in translation as Lambert agues: "Among the difficulties in any (scholarly) discourse on "translation" in any cultural environment, one has to take into consideration the exact position and goals of the speaker" (Munoz-Calvo & Buesa-Gomez, 2010, p.33). Along a similar line, Faiq (2009), points out:

> Translation, involving as it does processing, decision-making, problem-solving, and other creative activities, falls outside the mainstream practice of education in most Arab countries. The problems facing translation and the training of people to carry out the work cannot, therefore, be effectively resolved until the problems of education in general are addressed and clear policies for Arabicisation and the social realities of the Arab world are drawn up with sense and sensibility ("What Arabia Lost in Translation", 2009).

It is a statement that I agree with. The whole education process involves many elements other than language delivery. Elements of the Emirati literature, for example, is absent in most Arabic language curricula. There are few mentions of

renowned poets and writers, but the reliance on general Arab literature still dominates these curricula. Including pieces of Emirati literature in each Arabic literature curriculum designed by the UAE Ministry of Education will not require much. The National Archives provides such resources for free. However, any literary texts included need to be reviewed to ensure the outcome of the cultural significance is achieved. Maintaining heritage through language, but mostly through transliteration, will very likely deliver a level of cultural understanding and embed national sense of belonging in the students of both public and private schools in the UAE.

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Appendix A: Survey Questionnaires

Survey

The main objective of this survey is to measure the advantages and disadvantages of transliteration of cultural terms in the UAE's educational curriculum".

This is a questionnaire designed to be conducted through an interview, and it aims to survey the use of transliteration in the National Studies Curriculum taught in public and private schools.

This would help the Ministry of Education to change or modify the translation strategy used for the current curriculum.

All information included and answers provided will be kept confidential and only be used for academic purposes, and thank you for your participation.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZXQW2PJ

Please indicate your personal information:

Name:

Age:

Organization:

Position:

Gender:

E-mail:

Emirate of Residence:

Contact No.:

Referring to your knowledge and expertise, please answer ALL questions below:

1. What is your definition of cultural identity?
2. Is there a difference between cultural identity and national identity?
3. Do you believe that the Emirati cultural identity has changed dramatically in the past 10 years? If yes, in which way?
4. Do you think that *Language* and *Culture* are inseparable or both co-exist and collide?

5.	What is the role of government in realizing the importance of cultural identity? How the government is trying to preserve Emirati cultural identity? How is that working out, in your opinion?
6.	Do you know that the Ministry of Education obligates all schools, public and private, to dedicate a maximum of 2 hours for cultural and national studies per week?
7.	Do you have any idea about the difference between translation and transliteration?
8.	Is transliteration (*writing the term as is it in foreign alphabet*) or translation (*transferring the meaning only*) considered a better strategy to transfer Emirati cultural terms to other languages when educating non-Emiratis about the UAE culture?
9.	What do you think about transliterated terms such as *Abaya* and *Dishdasha*; do these terms reflect the UAE material culture? If not, why?
10.	Maintaining cultural significance is difficult nowadays due to globalization. What are your suggestions for maintaining cultural values and aspects?
11.	What affects cultural identity in the UAE: political ideology or the social context?
12.	As an educational strategy, the Ministry of Education teaches all subjects in Arabic, although the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research obligates all UAE accredited public educational institutions to offer all courses in English. What do you think about this conflict of strategies?
13.	Do you think that local dialect would preserve cultural identity if it was the main language of education? Why or why not?
14.	What do you think about the latest approaches in education and the recent initiatives, such as Horouf initiative supported by Sharjah local government, to preserve the Arabic Language?
15.	Do you think that the importance of translation has declined in the Arab World?
16.	What do you suggest to bridge the translation gap?
17.	Do you think that the educational approaches and systems in the UAE reflect the UAE culture?
18.	What do you think about supporting transliteration of the national studies curriculum for private and public schools in the UAE? Why or why not?
19.	Do you think that transliteration will be a better strategy to preserve cultural elements and facilitates communication between Emiratis and non-Emiratis? Why or why not?
20.	Cultural difference in the UAE affects Emiratis and non-Emiratis. Will transliteration of the national studies curriculum minimize such effect?
21.	Referring to other Arab countries experience in Arabization, such as Algerian (which tries to Arabicize education in the last 50 years) , do you think the UAE suffers from such dilemma, or it will suffer it in the future? Why or why not?
22.	Some students use English in their daily interactions and only consider Arabic when referring to 'cool' terms or for performing Islamic prayers. What do you think about this issue?

23. If scholarships were offered for Arabic language and literature bachelor degrees, do you think high school graduates will seek, or even consider, such scholarships?
24. Is the English language superior to Arabic? Is it is easier to learn and master than Arabic? Why or why not?
25. Do you think that one language of communication in a State is enough?
26. Does the application of one language going to preserve cultural identity?
27. Do you think that the cultural and linguistic mixture in the UAE will drive it forward and establish an international appreciation for the UAE? Why or why not?
28. According to the UAE National Bureau of Statistics, around 37% of all UAE students –Emiratis and expats- are enrolled in public schools in 2012, compared to 53% of all UAE students in 2002. Is that a good indicator to measure the quality of public educational system? Why or why not?
29. Do you think that educational systems applied by private schools are better than the government-supported educational system applied by public schools in the UAE?
30. Do you think that foreign educational systems can replace the educational systems in the UAE to increase the quality of education? Why or why not?
31. Do you think that translating all curricula of the UAE's Ministry of Education will bring better understanding of the UAE culture and establishes general principles for cultural identity recognition? If yes, how?

Vita

Alia Ali Salem Almehairi was born in1985, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. She was educated in UAE local schools and graduated from in 2003. She studied political science and government affairs at the American University of Sharjah, and graduated in 2011 with a B.A. in International Studies, Concentration in International Relations, and a Minor in Translation Studies.

She worked as an International Affairs Research Analyst for one year at the Office of the Minister of State -H.E. Reem Ibrahim Al Hashimi, in Dubai. She then joined the Ministry of Environment and Water, as a translator. She joined the MATI program at the American University of Sharjah in 2012.

Ms. Almehairi is a founding member of the UAE Translators Association (ETA). She is also a member of the Arab Thought Foundation (Fikr), AUS-INSA, International Federation of Translators and the AUS Emirati Cultural Club.