Exploring the Role of Arabic in Promoting the National Identity in the United Arab Emirates and Its Social Impacts Under the UAE Centennial Plan 2071: An Analytical Field Study

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Abstract

According to the slogan of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, "The Arabic language is the basic component of the national identity." The present study investigates the influence of language on the promotion of the Emirati national identity and its social consequences within the framework of the UAE Centenary Plan 2071. Cultural pluralism theory serves as the theoretical foundation for this research. The study employed random sampling to collect quantitative data from 200 respondents through a survey questionnaire. The data was then analysed using descriptive methods. The results indicate that language plays a crucial role in enhancing the national identity of the UAE. It achieves this by fostering a sense of belonging, preserving societal unity, promoting respect for social values, and contributing to the spirit of cooperation among members of society. The UAE

government should continue to promote language as a symbol of national identity, recognising its crucial role in preserving cultural heritage and enhancing societal cohesion. This study concludes by discussing the implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Introduction

The role of language in promoting and maintaining national diversity is significant. The preservation of cultural heritage within a nation is essential for maintaining societal cohesion. Communication in native languages fosters a sense of belonging and identity, contributing to the cultural fabric of a nation. Linguistic diversity enhances societal richness and facilitates the sharing of ideas, perspectives, and traditions among individuals (Kadarisman & Williams, 2009). Korneeva et al. (2019) propose that language serves as a means for passing knowledge and wisdom from one generation to another. Language serves as the medium through which mythology, customs, and historical narratives are transmitted, ensuring the continuity of a nation's collective memory over time. The preservation of distinct ethnic and cultural groups is facilitated by an oral and written tradition that is rooted in diverse linguistic expressions. Zainab (2021) argues that language is crucial for fostering inclusivity and equitable participation in a nation. Offering education and public services in multiple languages ensures equal access to opportunities and resources for diverse linguistic communities. The promotion of inclusivity helps to reduce the risk of marginalisation and foster a sense of unity among diverse linguistic groups. Language diversity enhances a nation's global position. A society that is multilingual is more equipped to interact with the international community, promoting diplomacy, trade, and cultural exchange. The ability to speak multiple languages enhances a nation's capacity to establish stronger international relationships and engage more efficiently in global affairs.

Language plays a vital part in representing the distinct cultural expressions of diverse communities and facilitating the transmission of knowledge across generations. Furthermore, it promotes inclusivity by guaranteeing equitable access to opportunities and resources for all individuals. Language diversity enhances a nation's global presence and facilitates meaningful engagement with the international community. The United Arab

Emirates (UAE) is currently home to a diverse population with varying languages, religions, races, and national and cultural identities. Baycar (2023) contends that individuals who do not possess UAE citizenship can still exhibit Emirati characteristics in their daily activities, regardless of their non-Arab nationality. The UAE's official position advocates for an Arab and Islamic Emirati identity, which encompasses non-Emirati Arabs. Non-nationals in the UAE share social spaces with Emiratis, emphasising cultural diversity and promoting stronger cultural and social bonds among themselves (Garces-Bacsal et al., 2021). This demonstrates the inclusion of non-nationals in the country. As a result, the current states of social progress and cohesion can be attributed to cultural pluralism, which involves the acceptance of diverse language, cultural norms, and traditions. Deveaux (2000) has associated this acceptance with the theoretical and ideological concept of cultural pluralism. The United Arab Emirates exhibits a dominant cultural pluralism, evident through the acceptance of cultural diversity, the growing importance of multiculturalism, and efforts to promote language and acceptance of the local culture among expatriates.

Study Background

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) was established in 1971 and consists of seven Emirates: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras Al Khaimah, Sharjah, and Umm al Quwain. Abu Dhabi serves as the capital city. The UAE has experienced significant progress and development since its establishment as a federal state, particularly in the past three decades. The UAE is widely recognised for its economic prosperity and social progress. The oil industry has significantly increased capital income and has played a major role in the ongoing transformation of the UAE into a prosperous and cosmopolitan nation (Epps & Demangeot, 2013). The United Arab Emirates has a diverse population, largely due to its rapid economic growth resulting from the discovery and export of oil (Epps et al., 2013). This growth has led to a large and continuously expanding expatriate population, as well as significant wealth generated from oil production and sales. English is commonly used as a lingua franca in the UAE (Bakali & Memon, 2021). The UAE government has implemented policies and initiatives to encourage Emiratis to join the workforce and promote Arabic usage in the country. They have also funded projects to improve the well-being of Emiratis and strengthen the Arabic language, despite the increasing influence of

English (Manurung, 2018). The UAE government has made efforts to promote the Emirati identity and Arabic culture (AlMazrouei & Pech, 2015). The government is increasingly prioritising education and the social well-being of Emirati society, with a particular focus on Emirati youth as the future of the UAE (Epps et al., 2013).

Additionally, Government policies that align with this agenda provide opportunities for professionals in the Arabic language field to take advantage of the government's initiatives and projects (Hopkyns & Van Den Hoven, 2022). The UAE is committed to raising awareness about the importance of individual and institutional efforts to enhance and broaden the use of the Arabic language. The UAE achieves this through various means, such as translating books from various fields into Arabic and developing innovative teaching methods and approaches for Arabic (Epps et al., 2013). Moreover, the UAE plays a significant role in familiarising people from different nations with the rich Arabic cultural and scientific achievements (Al Majali & AlKhaaldi, 2020). This study thoroughly examined all the factors and efforts, which were then applied to a sample of youth in the Emirates. This particular group plays a crucial role in achieving the UAE Centenary Plan.

Study Objectives and Significance

In lieu of the above discussion, the present study aimed to explore the significance of language in fostering the Emirati national identity and its societal effects. This research study holds great importance in illuminating the intricate connection between language and national identity, along with its profound social implications. After conducting a thorough analysis, this study revealed the viewpoints of Emirati young people regarding the significant impact of the Arabic language on their sense of national identity. Furthermore, it emphasised the crucial role that the government plays in shaping and unifying national identity through a range of projects and initiatives aimed at improving and safeguarding the national language. Through a comprehensive analysis of these crucial elements, the research offers a thorough comprehension of the extensive effects and scope of the UAE Centenary Plan 2071 on society and the overall development of the country. The UAE highly values and prioritises the role of the Arabic language in Emirati society (Siemund et al., 2021).

The UAE actively promotes the use of the Arabic language in both formal and informal settings, recognising its significance in keeping up with modern technical and

scientific advancements. The country's cultural pluralism aligns with various initiatives and awards that underscore the significance of the Arabic language. The study focused on examining the UAE's approach over the past two decades to enhance the connection between the Arabic language and Emirati identity. This segment delved into the initiatives, policies, and projects spearheaded by the UAE government as well as nonprofit organisations. This section further exemplified the robust correlations between language, culture, and identity, as acknowledged by other scholars (Hopkyns, 2014; Lorenz, 2022), and has been equally emphasised by the UAE. Secondly, the study utilised a descriptive approach to analyse the feedback of 200 Emirati youth, monitoring their perspectives and opinions on the significance of the Arabic language and Emirati identity. In addition, the study examined the links between the study findings and the current Centenary Plan of the UAE, highlighting the interdependencies of the Arabic language and identity within Emirati society. Therefore, this study is guided by three fundamental questions.

RQ1: How have government initiatives in the UAE over the last two decades emphasized the role of the Arabic language within the United Arab Emirates and the overall social well-being of Emiratis?

RQ2: What attitudes towards the Arabic language as part of the national identity of Emiratis are expressed by Emirati youth?

RQ3: How does the impact of Arabic as an Emirati national lingua franca affect the identity of Emirati youth in lieu of the UAE Centennial Plan 2071?

Literature Review

This section offers an overview of the existing literature that reflects insights on the significance of diversity within the context of the current research study. The literature cited also offers a wider perspective on choosing the methodological approaches to achieve the study objectives.

Cultural Diversity Under UAE Centennial Plan 2071

One notable initiative is the UAE Centennial Plan 2071. Introduced in March 2021 by H. H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, the UAE Centennial Plan is a comprehensive long-term

strategy aimed at strengthening the country's reputation and promoting social and economic well-being. Spanning five decades beyond 2021, this plan maps out the government's initiatives and goals. The objectives of the Centenary plan focus on nurturing the upcoming generations of Emiratis in the UAE and equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the increasingly interconnected world. The plan has four major pillars; a future-focused government; excellent education; a diversified knowledge economy; and a happy and cohesive society (Al Arabiya, 2022). The UAE has long been known for its rich cultural diversity, but the implementation of the UAE Centurial Plan has brought about even more significant changes. Today, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) boasts an impressive cultural diversity, with a wide range of ethnicities, nationalities, and customs harmoniously coexisting within its borders. This diverse blend of cultures is primarily connected to the nation's advantageous position as a worldwide centre for trade, business, and tourism. The UAE's open-door policy and economic progress have led to a significant influx of expatriates from various parts of the globe. As per the UAE's Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority, the population in 2020 is predominantly made up of expatriates, with over 80% belonging to various nationalities such as Indians, Pakistanis, Filipinos, and Western expatriates. The diverse mix of cultures in this society has not only created a vibrant blend of traditions but has also fostered an inclusive community that embraces a wide range of perspectives and lifestyles (Dines et al., 2021).

Language Diversity and Its Impacts

Lo Bianco (2010) asserts that language plays a crucial role in conveying the core aspects of a culture. It serves as a medium for exchanging the values, beliefs, and customs that characterise a society, while also fostering a sense of shared identity and cohesion. The close relationship between language and culture is evident in how they have evolved together. Language, along with literature, has a significant impact on expressing and preserving cultural traditions throughout time. Evans and Levinson (2009) stated that fibs serve as a coded representation of a society's values and norms within the linguistic code. As society evolves and adapts over time and in different regions, its language also undergoes changes. Language plays a crucial role in safeguarding and honouring the diverse array of cultural variations. Language provides a unique insight into the values and

lifestyle of a particular society, allowing us to gain a broader understanding of its overall cultural context. The significant influence of societal progress is widely recognised in maintaining cultural diversity, promoting intercultural exchange, and ensuring universal access to quality education. The platform promotes collaboration, fosters inclusive knowledge-sharing, and preserves cultural heritage. A specific language symbolises the diverse cultures of a particular social group (Ahmad, 2017). Giunchiglia et al. (2017) argue that acquiring a new language involves more than just learning its alphabet, semantics, and grammatical structures. It also requires familiarising oneself with the behavioural norms and cultural mores of the society in which the language is spoken. In their study, Fletcher-Chen (2015) investigated the effects of language diversity and social interaction on porous ability and communication for knowledge transfer in France. Cultural diversity is inherent within a MNC, but the choice of language for communication is a crucial factor. Team-level social interaction in MNCs is influenced by both physical proximity and computer-mediated communication (CMC) channels, despite their geographical dispersion. The results of the study provided support for the proposed conceptual model, demonstrating the influence of language diversity and social interaction on knowledge transfer. Additionally, the findings highlighted the significant impact of language diversity.

Cultural Pluralism- Language Diversity Perspective

This study is grounded in the ideological and theoretical concepts of cultural pluralism. Cultural pluralism is a social theory that promotes the recognition and coexistence of diverse cultural groups in a society. The argument posits that a society can achieve success and prosperity by allowing diverse cultural communities to maintain their unique identities, customs, and languages. This concept emphasises the importance of valuing and respecting the unique perspectives and contributions of different cultural groups, fostering an inclusive and harmonious social environment (Babalola, 2016). The current research study suggests that language pluralism is closely linked to cultural pluralism, which refers to the presence of multiple languages within a society. Each language serves as a means to describe the culture, values, and traditions of its respective community. In a culturally pluralistic society, language diversity is both accepted and honoured. This inclusivity allows for the use of native languages, creating an environment

where individuals can communicate and express themselves in their own languages. Consequently, there is a prevalent sense of belonging and cultural pride among diverse linguistic communities (Little et al., 2013). Nettle (1996) argues that language diversity in society promotes social cohesion and unity by providing a platform for different cultural groups to coexist harmoniously. The promotion of mutual respect and compassion fosters unity and reduces the likelihood of division or conflict. Language pluralism enhances the cultural landscape by fostering a diverse amalgamation of customs, art forms, and culinary experiences. The cultural richness contributes to a dynamic and inclusive social fabric. Ozer and Kamran (2023) argue that language pluralism enhances creativity and innovation within the framework of cultural pluralism theory. When individuals are motivated to represent themselves within their cultural and linguistic contexts, it results in a wider range of perspectives and ideas. Language diversity can foster innovation in various domains, including the arts, sciences, and technology. A culturally and linguistically pluralistic society is more equipped to engage with the global community. It facilitates cross-cultural communication and cooperation, fostering international collaboration in areas such as business and cultural relations.

Methodology

Approach of the Study

The current research utilised analytical and descriptive approaches. According to Bilal Zakarneh et al. (2021), the descriptive approach enables the analysis of phenomena and their effects. Supporting this perspective, Ferreira (2020) stated that the main objective of descriptive research is to analyse phenomena and their distinct characteristics. By emphasising the individual as the primary source of interpretation, Kemp et al. (2018) propose the development and distribution of a set of survey questions to collect descriptive data from research participants. Accordingly, in this study, a questionnaire was distributed to a randomly selected group of research participants from the Emirates. The survey included questions about the participants' demographics and explored the significance of language in shaping the national identity and social influence of the UAE. It is worth mentioning that the survey instrument was created by incorporating measurement

constructs and items from existing literature. The comprehensive survey instrument can be found in Appendix A of the study.

Table 1: Details of Survey Questionnaire.

Constructs	Sources	Number of Items
Arabic Language Use	(Sha & Gabel, 2020)	07
Arabic Language Usefulness	(Aizpurua, 2020)	06
Role of UAE Centennial Plan 2071	(Siemund et al., 2021)	08
Promoting Arabic Language	(Atallah & Omar, 2008; Morrow & Castleton, 2007)	08

Study Population and Sample

The study included 200 Emirati youths who were randomly selected from different sectors of UAE society in the Emirate of Ajman. The study included adult participants from various sectors in the United Arab Emirates, such as education, government, and the private sector. The utilisation of a random sample ensured the reliability and generalizability of the results to the Emirati population, thus ensuring an unbiased conclusion. The use of random sampling allows researchers to draw conclusions from field-collected results based on the assumptions of statistical theory (Acharya et al., 2013). The response rate remained 100% as all respondents provided their responses appropriately and in a timely manner. The descriptive analysis of the respondents revealed that the majority of the respondents were males (54.5%) and females accounted for 45.5%. The majority of respondents (31.5%) were aged 31-40, while 22.5% were aged 41-50 and another 22.5% were aged 61 years or above. The data indicated that 35.5% of respondents held GCC nationality, 31.5% held Emirati nationality, and 25.5% were categorised as "others" (Indians, Pakistanis, Afghan, Chinese, Malaysians and others). Concerning the language, 73.0% marked "others" (Hindi, Persian, Urdu, Malawi etc.), 58.5% selected "Arabic" and 14.5% marked "English" as their first language. The majority of respondents (34.0%) indicated "Other" as their qualification, which may include professional diplomas, certifications, and other relevant courses. 29.5% of individuals had completed their graduation, while 23.5% were in the process of completing their undergraduate degree. The distribution of respondents was as follows: 84.5% lived in urbanised areas, 10.0% lived in nomadic regions, and 5.5% were from rural areas. The detailed results of respondents' demographics are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographics of Study Respondents.

Variables	Constructs	N	%
Gender	Male	109	54.5
	Female	91	45.5
	Less than 20	12	6.0%
	31-40	63	31.5%
Age	41-50	45	22.5%
	51-60	35	17.5%
	61 or above	45	22.5%
	Emirati	63	31.5%
	GCC	71	35.5%
Nationality	Western (UK, USA)	15	7.5%
	Other	51	25.5%
	English	29	14.5%
Language	Arabic	117	58.5%
	Other	146	73.0%
	Under graduation	47	23.5%
	Graduation	59	29.5%
Qualification	Post Graduation/Doctorate	26	13.0%
	Other	68	34.0%
	Urban	169	84.5%
Locality	Rural	11	5.5%
	Nomadic	20	10.0%

Data Gathering and Analysis

The researchers employed survey questionnaires to collect data, specifically targeting information on language diversity and its social impact. The survey distribution ensured representation across various linguistic communities, providing a comprehensive perspective on the linguistic diversity of the UAE. After completing the data collection, the subsequent phase involved applying statistical tools for analysis. Particularly, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilised, as it is a widely recognised software in the field of social research. The process was facilitated by SPSS, which accurately analysed the collected data, extracting significant insights and perceptive patterns. The researchers drew substantiated conclusions regarding the social effects of language diversity through persistent evaluation.

Ethical Considerations

This research has been approved by the Research and Ethics Committee at Ajman

University in the United Arab Emirates. The research process began with a formal request and obtaining permission from the study respondents. The surveys were distributed to participants through online resources, such as emails, after they agreed to participate. The respondents provided informed consent as an ethical consideration Golder et al. (2017); (Zakarneh et al., 2021). In addition, the residents were guaranteed the confidentiality of their data and the researchers pledged not to use it for commercial purposes. The data gathering was performed under this ethical consideration.

Data Analysis and Findings

This research is based on a descriptive analytical design. This section presents the details of the responses collected from the surveys. The results are interpreted and represented using data tables for enhanced comprehension.

Table 3: Survey Responses.

Constructs	Sources	Number of Items
Role of Arabic language	(Sha et al., 2020)	07
Emiratis' Attitudes towards Arabic Language	(Aizpurua, 2020)	06
Effect of Arabic as Lingua Franca under Centennial Plan 2017	(Siemund et al., 2021; Atallah, 2008; Morrow et al., 2007)	16

Arabic Language Use

The findings in Table 1 suggest that in the past twenty years, the government initiatives in the UAE have prioritised the importance of the Arabic language and the overall social welfare of Emiratis (The Government of UAE, 2022). The data indicates that over 50% of participants (46.8% strongly agree and 24.8% agree) believe that the Arabic language enhances their sense of belonging to the Arab World. The Arabic language is seen as a unifying force in Emirati society, with 47.7% strongly agreeing and 29.4% agreeing. The majority of participants strongly agreed (46.8%) or agreed (27.5%) that the Arabic language promotes respect for social values, supporting this perspective; the Arabic language plays a significant role in fostering cooperation among members of society, with 45.0% strongly agreeing and 25.7% agreeing. Additionally, it contributes to maintaining the stability of the country, with 42.2% strongly agreeing and 29.4% agreeing.

The majority of participants (70.6%) agree that the Arabic language facilitates compliance with societal regulations and respect for its laws.

Table 4: Role of Arabic Language Within the United Arab Emirates and Emiratis' Social Well-Being.

Statements (Arabic Language Use)	Responses				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Arabic language helps enhance the sense of belonging to the Arab World	18.3%	4.6%	5.5%	24.8%	46.8%
Arabic language preserves unity in society	13.8%	4.6%	4.6%	29.4%	47.7%
Arabic language promotes respect for social values	14.7%	5.5%	5.5%	27.5%	46.8%
Arabic language contributes to the consolidation of the spirit of cooperation between the members of society	14.7%	2.8%	11.9%	25.7%	45.0%
Arabic language maintains the stability of the country	12.8%	5.5%	10.1%	29.4%	42.2%
Arabic language helps citizens abide by the regulations of society and respect its laws	12.8%	6.4%	7.3%	28.4%	45.0%
The use of Arabic language encourages youth to participate in community service	16.5%	3.7%	9.2%	31.2%	39.4%

Emiratis' Attitudes towards Arabic Language

The data from Table 2 indicates that Emiratis have a favourable view of the Arabic language, considering it an integral part of their national identity, as expressed by Emirati youth. A majority of respondents (68.9%) strongly agree or agree that learning Arabic is essential and imperative. A significant majority of Emiratis (76.2%) strongly agree or agree that learning Arabic enhances their understanding of the language's significance and preserves Emirati cultural heritage. The respondents strongly agree (45.0%) and agree (28.4%) that Emiratis' knowledge of Arabic enhances respect for the heritage of Emirati society. The majority of Emiratis strongly agree (45.0%) or agree (30.3%) that the practice of Arabic language by Emiratis contributes to the development of social customs and values in Emirati society. Additionally, a significant proportion

of Emiratis strongly agree (45.9%) or agree (25.7%) that Emiratis' adherence to the Arabic language strengthens the spirit of social participation. Moreover, Emiratis believe that their dedication to Arabic language enhances their sense of social responsibility, with 43.1% strongly agreeing and 31.2% agreeing.

Table 5: Emiratis' Attitudes Towards Arabic Language as Part of the National Identity of Emiratis.

Statements (Arabic Language Usefulness)	Responses				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
For Emiratis, learning Arabic is essential and imperative	15.6%	6.4%	9.2%	23.9%	45.0%
Learning Arabic raises awareness of the importance of Arabic language among Emiratis and contributes to the traditions of the Emirati society	11.9%	4.6%	7.3%	30.3%	45.9%
Emiratis' knowledge of Arabic enhances respect for the heritage of the Emirati society	11.0%	4.6%	11.0%	28.4%	45.0%
Emiratis' practice of Arabic develops the social customs and values of the Emirati society	11.0%	3.7%	10.1%	30.3%	45.0%
Emiratis' adherence to the Arabic language reinforces the spirit of social participation	10.1%	5.5%	12.8%	25.7%	45.9%
Emiratis' commitment to Arabic increases their sense of social responsibility	12.8%	3.7%	9.2%	31.2%	43.1%

Effect of Arabic as Lingua Franca under Centennial Plan 2017

According to the survey questionnaire, Emiratis have expressed that the use of Arabic as a national lingua franca has an impact on the identity of Emirati youth, in relation to the UAE Centennial Plan 2071 (Lorenz, 2022) (Table 6). A significant majority of young people in the UAE express their support for the UAE Centenary Plan 2071. They believe that the plan effectively invests in the youth, providing them with a wide range of skills and knowledge. Furthermore, they appreciate the plan's focus on developing a national strategy to promote youth development and its commitment to upholding UAE ethical values. Likewise, a significant number of Emirati youth support UAE's Centenary Plan 2071, recognising its efforts to promote social cohesion, uphold social welfare, raise professionalism among the youth, and foster the national economy to become a global leader.

Table 6: Effect of Arabic as an Emirati national lingua franca on the identity of Emirati youth in lieu of the UAE Centennial Plan 2071.

Statements	Responses				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
UAE Centennial Plan 2071 invests in UAE youth	18.3%	3.7%	10.1%	25.7%	42.2%
The UAE Centennial Plan 2071 equips young people with diverse skills and knowledge	11.9%	5.5%	9.2%	33.9%	39.4%
UAE Centennial Plan 2071 develops national strategy to promote development among the youth	11.9%	7.3%	12.8%	30.3%	37.6%
UAE Centennial Plan 2071 adopts UAE ethical values	11.1%	5.6%	12.0%	30.6%	40.7%
UAE Centennial Plan 2071 promotes social cohesion	13.0%	5.6%	12.0%	29.6%	39.8%
UAE Centennial Plan 2071 seeks to uphold social welfare	13.9%	2.8%	12.0%	29.6%	41.7%
UAE Centennial Plan 2071 raises the level of professionalism among the Emirati youth	13.0%	4.6%	13.9%	28.7%	39.8%
UAE Centennial Plan 2071 fosters the national economy to become the best in the world	12.1%	5.6%	7.5%	29.9%	44.9%

Effect of Arabic as Lingua Franca under Centennial Plan 2017

The impact of Arabic as an Emirati national lingua franca on Emirati identity is multifaceted. The promotion of Arabic language among Emiratis is believed to enhance social well-being (strongly agree-43.1%, agree-27.5%). Emiratis strongly agree (45.9%) and agree (29.4%) that Arabic language fosters respect and acceptance of others. Additionally, Arabic language is strongly agreed (42.2%) and agreed (30.0%) to contribute to Emiratis' sense of home. Governmental initiatives to promote Arabic language create opportunities for volunteer work among Emiratis, with a combined agreement rate of 70.4%. Adequate government initiatives engage Emiratis through activities and events that promote the Arabic language, with a combined agreement rate of 73.4%. Emiratis expressed approval for governmental initiatives that promote loyalty and belonging to the Arab nation by promoting the Arabic language (strongly agree-42.6% and agree-33.3%) and provide websites that promote Arabic (strongly agree-38.5% and agree-32.1%). They also supported Emiratis participating in field visits through government initiatives to promote the Arabic language (strongly

agree-40.7% and agree-33.3%).

Table 7: Effect of Arabic as an Emirati national lingua franca on the identity of Emirati youth in lieu of the UAE Centennial Plan 2071.

Questions	Responses				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Promoting Arabic among Emiratis contributes to social well-being	12.8%	6.4%	10.1%	27.5%	43.1%
Arabic language promotes the spirit of respect and acceptance of the other among Emiratis	8.3%	4.6%	11.9%	29.4%	45.9%
The Arabic language contributes to the Emiratis' sense of home	9.2%	6.4%	9.2%	33.0%	42.2%
Governmental initiatives for promoting Arabic creates opportunities for volunteer work amongst Emiratis	10.2%	7.4%	12.0%	30.6%	39.8%
There are enough government initiatives that engage Emiratis through activities and events that promote Arabic language	11.0%	3.7%	11.9%	33.0%	40.4%
Governmental initiatives promote feelings of loyalty and belonging to the Arab nation by promoting Arabic language	7.4%	5.6%	11.1%	33.3%	42.6%
Governmental initiatives offer websites that promote Arabic	11.9%	4.6%	12.8%	32.1%	38.5%
Emiratis participate in field visits through government initiatives to promote Arabic language	12.0%	5.6%	8.3%	33.3%	40.7%

Discussion

Hopkyns et al. (2022) state that Arabic is the official language of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and serves as a widely used common language and medium of communication at various levels. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) possesses a diverse linguistic heritage and encompasses a multitude of dialects, with more than 100 different languages being spoken within its territorial boundaries. In addition, various dialects exist alongside the diglossic Arabic language. The linguistic diversity is a result of approximately 90% of the population consisting of foreign residents. The nation still relies on foreign skilled and unskilled labour to

support its ambitious development plan, which is propelled by various robust economic development programmes. Individuals are drawn to the UAE due to the potential for higher salaries and attractive employment opportunities, particularly those with international connections. Arabic is the dominant language in society, as evidenced by its widespread use in public discourse, education, communication, and technology. This study aims to examine the role of language diversity in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and its impact on the country's national identity and society. Specifically, it focuses on the relationship between language and the UAE's centenary plan for 2071. Evidence supports the emphasis placed by the UAE government on the Arabic language and the social well-being of Emiratis in the country over the past twenty years. Minister Sheikh Abdullah has urged universities and schools to adopt and encourage national identity (Allaq, 2014).

The National Studies curriculum at the preparatory school level in the UAE focuses on capturing the country's culture, heritage, and history of the UAE federation. The findings align with Siemund et al. (2021) perspective that language functions as a symbol of social identity and serves as a unifying force and rallying point for governments. Hopkyns et al. (2021) argue that language can serve as both an identity marker and a symbol for a particular group. Language, as a product of society and culture, can lead to paradigm shifts in ethnicity, identity, and nationalism. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the UAE government's use of language to promote the national identity of the country has been successful. Participants in the study agreed that the Arabic language plays a crucial role in maintaining social unity, fostering a sense of belonging to the Arab World, and encouraging respect for social values. Furthermore, it was widely agreed upon that the Arabic language plays a crucial role in fostering cooperation among members of society, ensuring the stability of the nation, and promoting adherence to societal regulations and respect for its laws. The study demonstrates that the UAE government's focus on the Arabic language has had a positive effect on Emirates' attitudes towards it. The government's initiative to foster national unity through language has led Emiratis to perceive the acquisition of Arabic as crucial and indispensable, as it contributes to the cultural heritage of Emirati society.

Furthermore, it fosters appreciation for the cultural heritage of Emirati society and facilitates the advancement of social norms and values within the community. The results contradict the findings of Calafato and Tang (2019), who found that Emiratis consider the Arabic language to be essential for national identity. This is evident from the high ratings given to the Arabic language for its role in cultural identity. These findings support the results reported by Garces-Bacsal et al. (2021) regarding the unifying role of Arabic as the national language among Emiratis. According to Alhosani (2022), Standard Arabic has a communicative and instrumental role in the national identities of Arabs. It also has a symbolic function as it shapes the ideologies and beliefs of Emiratis towards their national collective identity. This, in turn, affects the language's policies and practices. The study findings indicate that the use of Arabic as a national lingua franca in the UAE has an impact on the identity of Emirati youth, as evidenced by the UAE Centenary Plan 2071. The impact of Arabic as a national lingua franca on the identity of Emirati youth includes its contribution to social well-being, promotion of respect and acceptance of others among Emiratis, enhancement of the Emiratis' sense of home, and facilitation of volunteer opportunities for Emiratis. This initiative also fosters a sense of loyalty and belonging to the Arab nation by providing websites that promote the Arabic language and facilitating Emiratis' participation in field visits through government initiatives aimed at promoting the Arabic language (Sasikumar, 2022).

Theoretical Implications

This research has primary theoretical implications based on the Cultural Pluralism theory. This study emphasises that cultural diversity, particularly in terms of language, is not an obstacle to national unity but rather a valuable resource. This research aligns with the principles of cultural pluralism by recognising and valuing the Arabic language as a crucial component of Emirati national identity. The presence of Arabic in a diverse linguistic landscape contributes to a more inclusive national identity that accommodates various linguistic backgrounds. The study highlights the government's active role in promoting cultural pluralism through language policies and efforts. The government demonstrates its commitment to promoting cultural

diversity by supporting projects that aim to conserve and promote the Arabic language. This is consistent with the cultural pluralism theory, which advocates for policies that promote the coexistence and prosperity of diverse cultural expressions. This study reflects the viewpoints of Emirati youth regarding their national identity. Their acknowledgment of the Arabic language's key role signifies recognition of cultural heritage and a willingness to engage with diverse linguistic identities. This aligns with the concept of cultural pluralism, which posits that individuals can maintain their unique cultural identities while also participating in the broader national community. The analysis of the UAE Centenary Plan 2071 offers insights into the country's long-term vision for cultural pluralism. The plan's emphasis on language as a basis for national identity demonstrates a progressive approach that prioritises cultural diversity. The statement demonstrates a deliberate attempt to maintain linguistic diversity as a vital aspect of the UAE's society.

Conclusion

This study emphasises the importance of language in fostering the national identity of the United Arab Emirates and its significant social effects, particularly in relation to the UAE Centenary Plan 2071. Language serves as a cohesive element, enhancing the collective identity within the Arab World and promoting social cohesion. Furthermore, it is essential in upholding social values and fostering a sense of belonging among individuals in society. Therefore, it is recommended that the UAE government should persist in its endeavours to promote language as a representation of national identity, recognising its crucial role in preserving cultural heritage and enhancing social unity.

Limitations and Recommendations

This research examines the role of language in fostering national identity in the UAE, but it has some primary limitations. This research primarily utilises a descriptive-analytical approach. Although this approach enables a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, it may not capture the intricacies that a qualitative methodology could uncover. Future research may consider employing a

mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between language and national identity. This research primarily examines the Arabic language within the context of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). However, this narrow emphasis may limit a thorough examination of the influence of other languages on the formation of national identity. Future studies should consider examining various languages spoken in the UAE to understand their respective contributions to the national identity mosaic. This study examined the role of the Arabic language in the UAE, acknowledging that the findings may not be applicable to language dynamics in other regions or countries. Examining diverse socio-linguistic contexts can offer insights into the connection between language and national identity. Future researchers can employ a comparative approach to examine how language contributes to the development of national identity in various regions. This will enhance our understanding of this phenomenon in different contexts.

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Appendix A

Dear Respondents! This study is aimed at examining the impacts of language diversity in UAE under the UAE Centennial 2071. This study is important is nature, as it will help proving insights regarding the cultural and linguistic diversity in the UAE. You need to fill this survey questionnaire by choosing the one least matching answer to each statement. We will not share your personal data for commercial purposes. Also, this research will keep your data anonymous.

Your Gender
1. Male
2. Female

Your Age
1. Less than 20
2. 31-40
3. 41-50
4. 51-60
5. 61 or above

Your Nationality
1. Emirati
2. GCC
3. Western (UK, USA)
4. Other

Your Language
1. English
2. Arabic
3. Other

Your Qualification
1. Under graduation
2. Graduation
3. Post Graduation/Doctorate
4. Other

Your Location
1. Urban
2. Rural
3. Nomadic

Role of Arabic language	Responses				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Arabic language helps enhance the sense of belonging to the Arab World					
Arabic language preserves unity in society					
Arabic language promotes respect for social values					
Arabic language contributes to the consolidation of the spirit of cooperation between the members of society					
Arabic language maintains the stability of the country					
Arabic language helps citizens abide by the regulations of society and respect its laws					
The use of Arabic language encourages youth to participate in community service					
Emiratis' Attitudes towards Arabic Language					
For Emiratis, learning Arabic is essential and imperative					
Learning Arabic raises awareness of the importance of Arabic language among Emiratis and contributes to the traditions of the Emirati society					
Emiratis' knowledge of Arabic enhances respect for the heritage of the Emirati society					
Emiratis' practice of Arabic develops the social customs and values of the Emirati society					
Emiratis' adherence to the Arabic language reinforces the spirit of social participation					
Effect of Arabic as Lingua Franca under Centennial Plan 2017					
UAE Centennial Plan 2071 invests in UAE youth					
The UAE Centennial Plan 2071 equips young people with diverse skills and knowledge					
UAE Centennial Plan 2071 develops national strategy to promote development among the youth					
UAE Centennial Plan 2071 adopts UAE ethical values					
UAE Centennial Plan 2071 promotes social cohesion					
UAE Centennial Plan 2071 seeks to uphold social welfare					
UAE Centennial Plan 2071 raises the level of professionalism among the Emirati youth					
Promoting Arabic among Emiratis contributes to social well-being					
Arabic language promotes the spirit of respect and acceptance of the other among Emiratis					
The Arabic language contributes to the Emiratis' sense of home					
Governmental initiatives for promoting Arabic creates opportunities for volunteer work amongst Emiratis					
There are enough government initiatives that engage Emiratis through activities and events that promote Arabic language					
Governmental initiatives promote feelings of loyalty and belonging to the Arab nation by promoting Arabic language					
Governmental initiatives offer websites that promote Arabic					

Thank You!