

# Generation Z Linguistic Behavior in the UAE: A Threat to Emirati Arabic?

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## Abstract

This research analyzes the characteristics of Emirati Generation Z, millennials, and baby boomers, and the influence of social media to explain linguistic changes in the UAE. To do so, we administered a questionnaire containing 100 English words commonly used in Emirati Arabic; We have classified the types of English words and expressions used by the three generation cohorts. Participants also responded to a qualitative questionnaire, concerning the role that English played during the pandemic, Emiratis' behavior towards social media, and their viewpoint regarding the influence of English in Emirati Arabic. Results showed that Generation Z uses more English words and expressions than the other two generations. Generation Z attended bilingual education in English and Arabic since primary school whereas most millennials and all baby boomers attended school exclusively in Arabic. We have examined that social media contributed to more English words in Emirati Arabic and determined the reasons why Generation Z prefers to use English on social media and in their daily lives. We could conclude that Generation Z and most millennials see English positively and as inevitable progress in a globalized world while baby boomers see it as a threat to their language and culture. Generation Z also outperformed the other two generations regarding the pronunciation of words in English when speaking Emirati Arabic.

**Keywords:** Emirati Arabic, Gulf Arabic, Gen Z, millennials, baby boomers, English, social media, code-mixing, code-switching, multilingualism, linguistic diversity.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

People throughout the world are affected by technology's quick development, particularly those who belong to generation Z (from now on Gen Z), born between 1997 and 2013 (Dolot, 2018). Gen Z was born in the digital era and it is impossible for them to function without modern technologies (Ivanova and Smrikarov, 2009; Tarihoran and Sumirat, 2022). Since Gen Z is the first genuinely digital generation to have grown up with technology and cell phones, they like social media for communication and other purposes. According to Morning Consult's survey (Briggs, 2022), YouTube is the most-used platform for Gen Z — with 88% spending their time on the app followed by Instagram (76%), TikTok (68%), and Snapchat (67%). They have access to mobile gadgets, digital devices, and the internet, which has a significant impact on them (Tarihoran and Sumirat, 2022). They like communicating through social media rather than conventional ways of communication such as SMS and phone calls (Murray and Waller, 2007; Tarihoran and Sumirat, 2022). Furthermore, the literature shows that English is the language that dominates social media (Tarihoran and Sumirat, 2022).

Social media gives people access to a globalized world, and connects Western and Arab identities, particularly throughout adolescence and the early years of adulthood. As a result, we want to investigate if this transition poses a risk to linguistic stability and how the self-definition of young people in the UAE may be replicated via the use of communication technology, particularly by engaging with the social media ecosystem. To do this, we will analyze the sociolinguistic behaviors of Gen Z, marked by complexity and contradictions, and situated in a culture that is basically characterized by a dynamic clash between tradition and modernity. In addition, we will also analyze two previous generations - millennials and baby boomers - and compare the number of English words they use in Emirati Arabic with Gen Z.

Regarding language use in the UAE, it is important to note that except for court documents (Dorsey, 2018), all other documents are available in English (in most banks, hospitals, and universities) or they may be solely in English as is the case with bank documents for expats, who make up for 90% of the

population (Ribeiro Daquila, 2020, p.1; GMI, 2023). It is essential to understand the distinctions between Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and Emirati Arabic to completely understand this research. The dialectal Arabic spoken in the UAE is known as Emirati Arabic. The formal and official language used in the Arab World, Modern Standard Arabic, is the language used in the Arab world for formal speeches, publications, and news broadcasts (Ribeiro Daquila, 2020, 2021, 2022). However, to perform daily tasks like ordering food, eating at restaurants, or buying clothes in shopping malls in big cities like Dubai and Abu Dhabi, Emiratis are forced to speak in English. (Ribeiro Daquila, 2020, p. 1). Alenazi (2023, p.3) identified the same phenomenon in Saudi Arabia. This study added to the list of situations in which Saudi locals use English on social media platforms, such as Snapchat and X. According to a survey conducted by Al-Hussien and Belhiah (2016) with Emirati Gen Z students aged 12 to 17, these participants primarily speak their dialect at home with their family and among their Emirati friends, but 98% of them prefer to use English when using the internet. Additionally, 85% would rather read in English than Arabic. Although Emirati Arabic is the preferred language at home, the literature reveals that there has been an increase in English in Emirati residences (O'Neill, 2017; Kennetz and Carroll, 2018, p. 175). Arab native speakers rarely use MSA to communicate with other natives. Instead, they use their dialects. Emirati Arabic is full of English words and verbs; therefore, this study will analyze the impact of English on Emirati Arabic in the three aforementioned generations. Emirati official policies favor English over other languages – like Hindi, for instance, which is spoken by 28% of the population in the UAE – since it is the lingua franca. Government-funded schools have progressively embraced a bilingual curriculum in order to give the majority of Emiratis a similar educational experience to wealthy Emiratis and migrant students, who attend English-medium private schools (Kennetz and Carroll, 2018, p. 180). These funded and private schools in primary and secondary school (K-12) in Dubai cater to 90% of all school students. This change to a bilingual curriculum led Emirati students to bilingualism. However, English proficiency was acquired at the expense of Arabic (Ziad, 2019, p. 143).

In the UAE, in Formal contexts such as educational institutes, code-mixing [<sup>1</sup>] between MSA and English is prohibited (Cummins, 2007; Hopkyns *et al.*, 2021, Carroll and van den Hoven, 2017; Hopkyns *et al.*, 2021). These researchers say that such rules cause young Emiratis to assume that 'double monolingualism' (Al-Bataineh and Gallagher, 2018) is preferable to

linguistic mixing in formal contexts. In addition to speaking Emirati Arabic with family and friends, according to Hopkyn *et al.*, (2021) and Ribeiro Daquila (2020, 2021, 2022), Gen Z in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is heavily influenced by the English language. This study will analyze to what extent English words and expressions are being used in Emirati Arabic. We consider English and Emirati Arabic the most used language for communication among Emiratis in the everyday context, instead of MSA (Kennetz and Carroll, 2018; Ribeiro Daquila, 2020, 2021; Hopkyn *et al.*, 2021).

## 1.2. Motivation

Being a translator and editor of Emirati Arabic books at Alramsa Institute [<sup>2</sup>], I have always encountered so many English words in Emirati Arabic that I started to do research on this phenomenon in 2018. Previous research (Ribeiro Daquila, 2022, p. 328-331) revealed that Gen Z has a predilection for using more English words when speaking Emirati Arabic than older Emiratis. The previous questionnaire included only 30 English words used in Emirati Arabic (Ribeiro Daquila, 2022, p. 338) and participants suggested others that were included in this study. Therefore, this study looks into how English is being used in Emirati Arabic by three different generations; we intend to broaden the academic knowledge of the lexicon of English words used in Emirati Arabic.

## 1.3. Research Question

Regarding Emirati Gen Z and the use of words and expressions in English, the following research questions were posed:

Regarding the 100-English-word questionnaire (Appendix B):

1. Are there phonetical and/or grammar differences in the incorporation of English words and expressions in the three groups?
2. Is the influence of English greater in the present Gen Z group aged 15-16, when compared to our previous Gen Z aged 17-18 surveyed three years ago?
3. How much English is used in Emirati Arabic by Gen Z when compared with older Emiratis (60 and over)?

Regarding the qualitative questionnaire (Appendix C):

4. Does social media have an impact on the increase in English words and expressions in Emirati Gen Z speech?
5. Can English be considered a threat to the endurance of Emirati Arabic?

of which are textbooks for expats and even for Emiratis who want to dive into their own dialect. Alramsa is an institute specialized in teaching Emirati Arabic. I have been working as a translator, proofreader, and editor for Alramsa since June 2018.

<sup>1</sup>Mixing two languages in a sentence. For the full definition of code-mixing, see section 2.1.5.

<sup>2</sup>Alramsa Institute was founded in Dubai by Ms. Hanan Al-Fardan and Mr. Abdulla Alkaabi, more than 25 books have been published in the Emirati dialect, most

## 2. Characteristics of Each Generation Cohort

For decades, Pew Research Center has been measuring public attitudes on key issues and documenting differences in those attitudes across demographic groups (Parker, 2022). Researchers divide modern generations into 6 groups:

- The Silent Generation: Born 1928-1945
- Baby Boomers: Born 1946-1964
- Generation X: Born 1965-1980
- Millennials: Born 1981-1996
- Generation Z: Born 1997-2010
- Generation Alpha: Born 2010-2025



Image generated by fotor, (2023) [3]

Our study compares the use of English words in Emirati Arabic among Gen Zeers, millennials, and baby boomers. As Pew Research Center (Pekerti and Denni, 2017) reminds us, Stereotypes and oversimplification are sometimes caused by generational designations. Just as not all Southerners, Catholics, or Black Americans are the same, not all millennials or baby boomers are either. Shared identities and experiences should be acknowledged since they may be inspiring when done well, but uniqueness shouldn't be sacrificed in the process. We decided to leave out Generation X to keep the focus on the three generations researched in our previous study (Ribeiro Daquila, 2022), and to have a generation gap that allows us to compare two younger generations (Gen Z and millennials) with an older one (baby boomers).

### 2.1. Generation Cohorts

Inglehart initially presented the generational cohort theory in 1977 to segment a population. Accordingly, the lifespan of a generational cohort may be 20–25 or even more years long, depending on the average amount of time for a particular birth group in a given country to go from conception to childbearing (Strauss and Howe, 1991; Meredith and Schewe, 2004). The early adult years (ages 17 to 24) of each generation are often characterized by shared experiences and socially significant events.

### 2.1.2. Generation Z

Gen Z is defined as those who were born in the 1990s and reared in the 2000s through the most significant changes of the century and who live in a world with the web, internet, smartphones, laptops, freely accessible networks, and digital media (Dangmei and Amarendra, 2016; Ribeiro Daquila, 2023a). The social web has been a part of Gen Z's upbringing, and the digital world is important to their identity. Their existence is more closely tied to technology and the digital world than any prior generation since they were born and nurtured in it. The most racially and technologically diverse generation is Gen Z, according to Dangmei and Amarendra (2016). Social networking is a crucial aspect of Gen Z's existence, and they have a casual, direct, and distinctive communication style. Gen Zeers are considered digitally self-taught and they turn to YouTube to learn something new (Ameen and Anand, 2020, p. 184). According to research (Schawbel, 2014; Dangmei and Amarendra, 2016), Gen Z is less driven by money than Millennials and is more entrepreneurial, trustworthy, tolerant, and open-minded.

Four out of five of their favorite brands are technology companies. They're abandoning traditional corporate jobs in favor of content creation, and they've even devised a new vocabulary inspired by algorithmic guidelines (Briggs, 2022).

The influence of English in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has been significant, particularly among

<sup>3</sup>Fotor, 2023 <https://www.fotor.com/images/create>

Gen Z (Ribeiro Daquila, 2022, p. 328-331). Arab countries are diverse in terms of culture, language, and demographics, so it's important to recognize that experiences may vary across different countries within the Arab world. There are a lot of foreigners living and working in the UAE, who come from many different nations (Onley, 2009). These various communities communicate in English as a common language. Emiratis use their dialect except for the interaction with other Emiratis or with other Arabs. We must keep in mind that Emiratis and Arabs account for only 15% of the population in the UAE (GMI, 2023). Since they were raised in such a diverse setting, Emirati Gen Zeers have naturally adopted English as a way of communication (GMI, 2023; Ribeiro Daquila, 2021, p.5). As the language of global business and commerce, English proficiency is highly prized in the UAE employment market. Gen Z prioritizes studying and using English because they are aware of how important it is for job growth and access to global possibilities (Ribeiro Daquila, 2020, p. 3). The UAE is a popular tourist destination and receives millions of visitors annually. English is the business standard for tourism and hospitality, enabling Gen Z to communicate effectively with tourists and participate in the growing tourism sector (Ameen and Anand, 2020 p.182).

### 2.1.3. Generation Z and COVID-19

Learning at home was more challenging for kids who lacked motivation when COVID-19 divided homes from one another and parents and guardians were worried about their financial future (Daniel, 2020; Wan Pa *et al.*, 2021). Depending on their level, topic of study, and program of study, the COVID-19 pandemic had a substantial influence on students' lives in several ways. In addition, many students discovered that they were unable to finish their university coursework and tests on time, and in many cases, they had been abruptly excluded from their social group. In these situations, social media was essential as a medium for communication and information dissemination. People regularly turned to the media in response to hardship and ordinary annoyances (Wan Pa *et al.*, 2021). Literature (Zhao and Zhou, 2021; Wan Pa *et al.*, 2021) found that people tended to use social media for problem-focused activities, such as looking up health-related information and emotion-focused coping, when faced with COVID-19 problems, such as expressing emotions for mood management or joining online communities for social support.

Despite the clear advantages of social media during emergencies like COVID-19, more frequent usage of the platform is likely to lead to social media addiction (Kashif, *et al.*, 2020; Zhao and Zhou, 2021), which may be caused by the government's policy to stay at home and the abundance of free time. Many people became agitated and afraid if they did not use it during the coronavirus lockdown. According to Wan Pa *et al.*, (2021) whose study included 96 Gen Zeers, 57.6% of

respondents' academic performance was considerably impacted by social media addiction. Our research question 4 will analyze if there was an increase in the use of English words in Emirati Arabic due to social media in the UAE as well as if there was a rise in the use of social media during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 2.1.4. Millennials (less commonly Gen Y)

People who were born between 1981 and 1996 are referred to as millennials, also known as Generation Y or Gen Y, while the exact dates might vary by one or two years depending on the source. William Strauss and Neil Howe initially adopted it in their 1991 book *Generations* because they thought it was a fitting moniker for the first generation of adults born in the new century. Between Generation X (Gen X; defined as those born between 1965 and 1980) and Gen Z is the group known as millennials (Zelazko, 2023). Millennials came of age during an era of major technological shifts, especially those associated with the rise in the use of the Internet. Yet millennials don't merely use technology in a passive way. They are a few of its primary motivators. Over the course of ten years, Mark Zuckerberg—possibly one of the most well-known millennials—grew Facebook from a student directory into a potent and significant social networking platform. The creators of Instagram, Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, as well as the creator of TikTok, Zhang Yiming, are other millennial innovators (Zelazko, 2023). Millennials are also considered the most educated generation.

Hopykns *et al.*, (2021) research concentrates on Emirati millennials in the educational setting. This study concluded that the idea of 'language purity' is unsustainable and undesirable in today's globalized world. Both English and Arabic are often used. Arabic is more common at home, but English is more common in public settings, internet, and academic settings (Hopykns *et al.*, 2021, p. 187-189). Moreover, this generation has earned considerable attention in the literature, particularly regarding human resources in the workplace (Alaleeli and Alnajjar, 2019).

### 2.1.5. Generation Z's and Millennials' linguistic behavior

Gen Z and millennials share some common linguistic traits in regions or countries in which English functions as lingua franca such as the Gulf Countries (Hopkyns *et al.*, 2021 p. 177; Ribeiro Daquila, 2022, p. 337-338) or even where it is the co-official language, in the Philippines for instance (Sales, 2022, p. 43). In cosmopolitan cities such as Dubai and Abu Dhabi, Emirati Gen Z and Millennials have developed a strong proficiency in English, enabling them to carry out daily activities like ordering meals, dining at restaurants, and purchasing at shopping malls. Other traits are code-mixing. Code-switching is a common term for alternate use of two (or more) languages, or varieties of languages in the execution of a speech act. In other words, code-mixing is intrasentential while code-switching is



intersentential. Some scholars maintain that there is no sharp distinction between code-mixing and code-switching (Ritchie & Bhatia, 2013, p. 337, Tarihoran and Sumirat, 2022).

Code-switching is also used to emphasize or clarify a sentence. Even if a non-Arab individual is proficient in Arabic, the Arab native speaker shifts to English to ensure that he is understood (Hopkyns *et al.*, 2021 p. 178; Ribeiro Daquila, 2022, p. 319-320). Code-mixing, the mixing of expressions, phrases, or words of the grammar of two languages within a sentence—in this case, Gen Z and millennials switch between Emirati Arabic and English words, depending on the context and the people they are communicating with (Hopkyns *et al.*, 2021, p. 178-180; Ribeiro Daquila, 2022, p. 319-320, Alenazi, 2023, p. 7-8). An example of code-mixing identified in our study in the UAE was:

1. *khalni a post b a picture c*  
*Let me a post b a picture c*  
 Let me post a picture.

Al-Hussien and Belhiah's (2016) study in Abu Dhabi supports this convergence, revealing Emirati Gen Z's preference for English in reading, writing, and online communication, reserving Arabic primarily for close social circles (54% with friends, 90.7% with family). To delve deeper, our research employs a questionnaire (Appendix B) featuring 100 English words to analyze their integration within Emirati Arabic across three generations.

### 2.1.6. Baby Boomers

Baby boomers are the group born in the years immediately after World War II, when birth rates spiked significantly in several nations, including the USA, Canada, Australia, Norway, and France. No one component can fully explain each boom (Bump, 2023). The fact that they identify as "digital immigrants" does not imply that they utilize digital media for everyday communication. They have significant purchasing power, and they place a high priority on their health, particularly women (Saucedo Soto *et al.*, 2018; Carrillo-Durán *et al.*, 2022), who are worried about the financial security of their families, want to support their community, want to maintain their youth, and want to be fully integrated into society and context (Carrillo-Durán *et al.*, 2022).

No other generation group has increased their presence on social media platforms as much as baby boomers, who went from using it at a rate of 24% in 2016 to 48% in 2017, according to research from the Coolhunting Group (2017, p. 20-26). 91% of baby boomers use one or more social media networks. Additionally, baby boomers are more dependable in the digital environment, more inclined to get better material, read more, and spend more time on company websites.

Additionally, almost 70% of people love viewing videos (Coolhunting Group, 2017, p. 20-26).

#### 2.1.6.1. Baby Boomers' Linguistic Behavior

There is little literature on baby boomer's linguistic behavior in the UAE. In a previous study (Ribeiro Daquila, 2022, p. 329-330), Baby boomers demonstrated to be more loyal to MSA when compared to the younger generations Gen Z and millennials. They rarely use verbs in English when speaking Emirati Arabic, such as check, download, and cancel. Nevertheless, these verbs are commonly used among the younger Emirati generations. One study carried out in the UAE (Al-Shibami and Khan, 2020, p.6128) concluded that baby boomers might have difficulties with technological advancements and they would rather learn content through an instructor rather than learning from the internet.

### 2.2. Early connections between the Emirates and English

Only diachronically can English progress in the UAE be understood. From 1809 to 1966, the UAE experienced the foundation phase or the start of the English language (Ribeiro Daquila, 2021 p.3; Schneider, 2007) occurred when Britain dispatched expeditions to a few Qasimi ports in the regions of Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah, two of the Emirates that make up the UAE. During this time, locals made their first interactions with English. The ties between the UAE and England deepened in 1820 when England implemented the General Treaty in the area.

The second phase, also known as the exonormative stabilization (Schneider, 2007), lasted from 1966 to 2004 and saw the adoption of English as the bureaucratic language and the language of instruction at schools (Boyle, 2012; Ribeiro Daquila, 2021, p.4).

The third and last phase is the nativization phase, which began in 2004 and continues today (Schneider, 2007). This time is still developing; therefore, it cannot yet be fully described. Karmani (2005) asserts that the UAE government rapidly modernized and westernized the educational system, abandoning an antiquated memorization-based educational system in the process.

## 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A short questionnaire was made (see Appendix A) to select participants for this study to find out their age, gender, level of education, place of residence, and of work when applicable.

A quantitative questionnaire containing 100 words in English that are often used in Emirati Arabic was made specifically for this study (see Appendix B). This questionnaire was initially a 30-English-word questionnaire used in Emirati Arabic extracted from Ribeiro Daquila's study (2022, p.337-338). In the study

in 2022, other twenty-five English words used in Emirati Arabic were suggested by Emirati participants and these words were added to our present questionnaire. Finally, we interviewed Emirati teachers at Alramsa Institute in Dubai who helped us complete our 100-item questionnaire. The data were collected from November 2022 to January 2023. All respondents lived mostly in Dubai, however, in the baby boomers' group, there were 8 respondents from Sharjah; in the millennials, there were two participants from Sharjah who work in Dubai and two male participants from Abu Dhabi. The questionnaires were administered at Alramsa Institute in Dubai. Some Emirati friends and teachers at Alramsa Institute also participated as respondents and collaborated to find the most participants for the research; 10 questionnaires were administered in Dubai Mall and Mall of the Emirates.

A second qualitative questionnaire was created to find out Emiratis' language preferences when they are on social media and if social media led them to use more English words in their speech (see Appendix C). We also enquired about the amount of English they use when they talk in Emirati Arabic and their fears or expectations regarding such practice. Both questionnaires (Appendix B and C) lasted around 12 minutes. AI was used in this article to assist in the improvement of grammar accuracy and connectors, and to generate the image in the previous section.

### 3.1. Participants

Both questionnaires were administered in Dubai to 150 participants:

50 generation-Z respondents born in 2007 and 2008 – 24 females and 26 males. All of whom go to high school in Dubai and have never lived in an English-speaking country.

50 millennial respondents born between 1978 and 1983 – 25 females and 25 males all from Dubai except for two male participants from Abu Dhabi. They have never lived in an English-speaking country.

50 Baby Boomers born between 1946 and 1964 – 24 females and 26 males.

### 3.2. Procedures

After signing the consent form, participants received a laminated copy of the questionnaire in Appendix B. Consequently, they were instructed that they were supposed to pronounce the 100 English words (see Appendix B) in the way they pronounce them when speaking Emirati Arabic if they ever use them. For each word they should express the frequency they use it when speaking Emirati Arabic: always, almost always, sometimes, rarely, or never. Next, the interviewer explained to participants that they should form sentences from verbs 1, 4, 6, and the adverb 66 *already*, which were highlighted in yellow in their laminated version of the questionnaire.

Finally, the interview started. After asking about the frequency with which they used the first word on the list in Appendix B — the verb *to cancel* — participants were asked in Emirati Arabic: 'Could you provide a sentence with this verb?' One example was the following:

2. *Ana a bakansil b il-party c*  
*I a will cancel b the party c*  
*I will cancel the party.*

Asking these initial questions in Emirati Arabic - their first language (L1) makes participants focus on their L1. In addition, the Arabization of these verbs and the use of the adverb *already* were analyzed.

We would have liked to analyze more words in context, but as the questionnaire was long, we did not want to demotivate participants. We video-recorded three and audio-recorded five of the interviews (Appendix B) to be able to observe more in depth how these English elements are being pronounced in Emirati Arabic. We did not record more because some participants did not give consent to be recorded. We used a cell phone Samsung S22 to record the participants. Apart from marking the frequency for each word (always, almost always, sometimes, rarely, and never), the interviewer took notes manually of the pronunciation of some words which were highlighted in green. He also took notes of other words whenever it was considered relevant. The technique employed was simple:

Marking the letter 'A' for the pronunciation of a word with a typical Arabic accent, for instance: if participants pronounced 'bark' instead of 'park'. The letter 'G.' was marked in front of the words meaning good pronunciation, that is, the user pronounced the word close to English, for instance, they pronounced 'park', but without making the puff of air in the phoneme [p] which is typical in English. The letter 'N' stood for native-like pronunciation whenever participants changed the pronunciation of the sentence, going from Arabic pronunciation to English pronunciation when they used an English word or expression. Besides, 'Am' was used for American or Canadian native-like pronunciation. Just 'N' implied British native-like pronunciation. For example, one female Gen Zeer while answering question 8.c. (Appendix C) 'Can you name some words you use in English when you are speaking Emirati Arabic because of social media?' gave an example in a sentence:

3. *khalni a post b a picture c*  
*Let me a post b a picture c*  
 Let me post a picture.

When she said '*khalni*', meaning 'let me' she used Arabic pronunciation, as the sentence follows 'post a picture' she used perfect American English pronunciation. So, the interviewer underlined 'post a picture' and marked 'Am' after it.

The interviewer encouraged participants to use Arabic, for instance, by asking for confirmation using Arabic instead of English:

Interviewer: *y3ni, abadan?* ‘You mean, never?’

Gen Zeer: *Yes, abadan.* ‘Yes, never.’

Interviewer: *wa il-kalima althania?* ‘And the next word?’

The pronunciation of the following words was analyzed. They were highlighted in green (see Appendix B) in all the questionnaires that were exclusively filled in by the interviewer. The analyzed phonemes were identified in a previous study as difficult sounds for Emirati speakers to pronounce (Ribeiro Daquila, 2023b). In verb 4. *park* and in the word 19. *computer* the phoneme [p] was analyzed, as most Arabs tend to pronounce it [b] (Ribeiro Daquila, 2023b, p. 4, 6-7). The phoneme [æ] as in ‘cat’ /kæt/ was analyzed in words 1. *cancel*, 20. *laptop*. The pronunciation of the letter *r* was analyzed in the words 48. *glittler* and 66. *already*. As shown in Ribeiro Daquila (2023b, p.9), the ‘Standard’ English *r*: postalveolar approximant in English is absent in Arabic. If participants “flapped” or “tapped” the letter *r* (one single alveolar flap [ɾ]) as in Scottish, in Welsh, and northern England English, it was considered ‘N’. This single flap is also present in Arabic. Arabic speakers also perform the multiple alveolar vibrating sound or trilled *r* [r], as in Spanish, Italian, and Catalan in the word *burro* (meaning ‘donkey’ in Spanish and Catalan; and ‘butter’ in Italian). The trilled *r* sound is absent in English.” and was marked as ‘A’ (typical Arabic sound). And finally, we analyzed the sound *l* in the word ‘*hospital*’.

After completing the 100-English-word questionnaire in Appendix B, respondents were asked eleven qualitative questions in Appendix C. Participants

were asked if they knew the equivalent of each word in MSA. In case they did not, it might indicate that the word is disseminated in English and not in the official language. When asked if they know the equivalent words in MSA, participants tend to say ‘yes’. The interviewer asked participants to go through the pages of the 100-English-word questionnaire. This second questionnaire was available in English and in Emirati Arabic (see Appendix D) when participants had difficulty understanding English. 16 baby boomers answered it in Arabic. The majority responded to questionnaire C orally in the presence of the interviewer while some took them home and handed them in later.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We will present the results obtained from both questionnaires in order to find out how English and social media have been affecting Emirati Arabic in the three generations in this study. In the 100-English-word questionnaire, we will present how these English words are pronounced in Emirati Arabic by the three different generations, as well as a grammatical analysis of English verbs and the adverb ‘already’ in Emirati Arabic.

### 4.1. Questionnaire with 100 words, verbs, and expressions in English

Regarding the 100 English items used in Emirati Arabic (see Appendix B), we divided them into verbs, technology, food and food establishments, medicine, cosmetics, means of transportation and car vocabulary, and miscellaneous. We only added to the graphs the vocabulary that is always or almost always used by the respondents, for instance, if a participant sometimes or rarely uses the word *enjoy*, we did not add this data to the graphs.

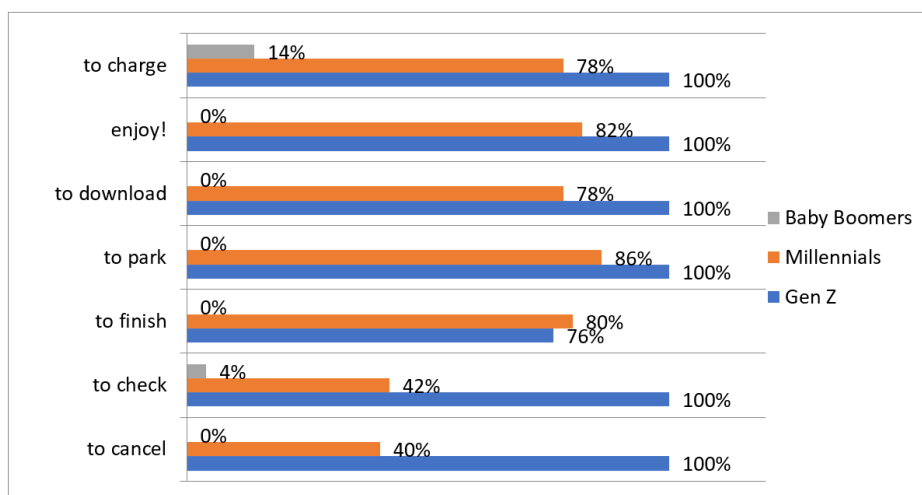


Figure 1: Verbs in English when speaking Emirati Arabic

With regard to the participants in Gen Z, totaling 50 young Emiratis, all of them always or almost always use the English verbs *to charge*, *to download*, *to park*, *to check*, *to cancel*, and *enjoy*—only used in the

imperative form—when talking in Emirati Arabic, as we can observe in Figure 1. The only verb that Gen Z does not use exclusively in English is the verb ‘*to finish*’, meaning ‘to quit or be dismissed from work’ in Emirati

Arabic; this may be because this verb is related to the labor market, and Gen Z participants are still students. Gen Z's mean for verbs used in English is 96.6%, while the millennials' mean is 69.4%. On the other hand, 14% of baby boomers use the verb *to charge* and ignore most of the other verbs. Baby boomers' mean is 2.57%. We can observe that the younger the generation, the more verbs in English they employ in Emirati Arabic. These results are in keeping with our previous study (Ribeiro Daquila, 2022). With regard to the verb *to download*, 78% of millennials in this study always or almost always use this verb, while in our previous study, 60% of millennials used it. Therefore, there was an 18% increase

in the use of the verb *to download* in the present study regarding millennials.

Concerning the pronunciation of the verb *to park*, five male and two female Gen Zeers pronounced it as 'bark'. This means 86% of Gen Z had correct pronunciation. Although 86% of millennials use the verb *to park*, only six participants (12%)— five females, and one male—pronounce the phoneme [p] correctly, and the remaining participants pronounce it as *bark*. All baby boomers pronounced it as 'bark'. This is due to the fact that the sound [p] is non-existent in Arabic, and most Arabs replace [p] with [b].

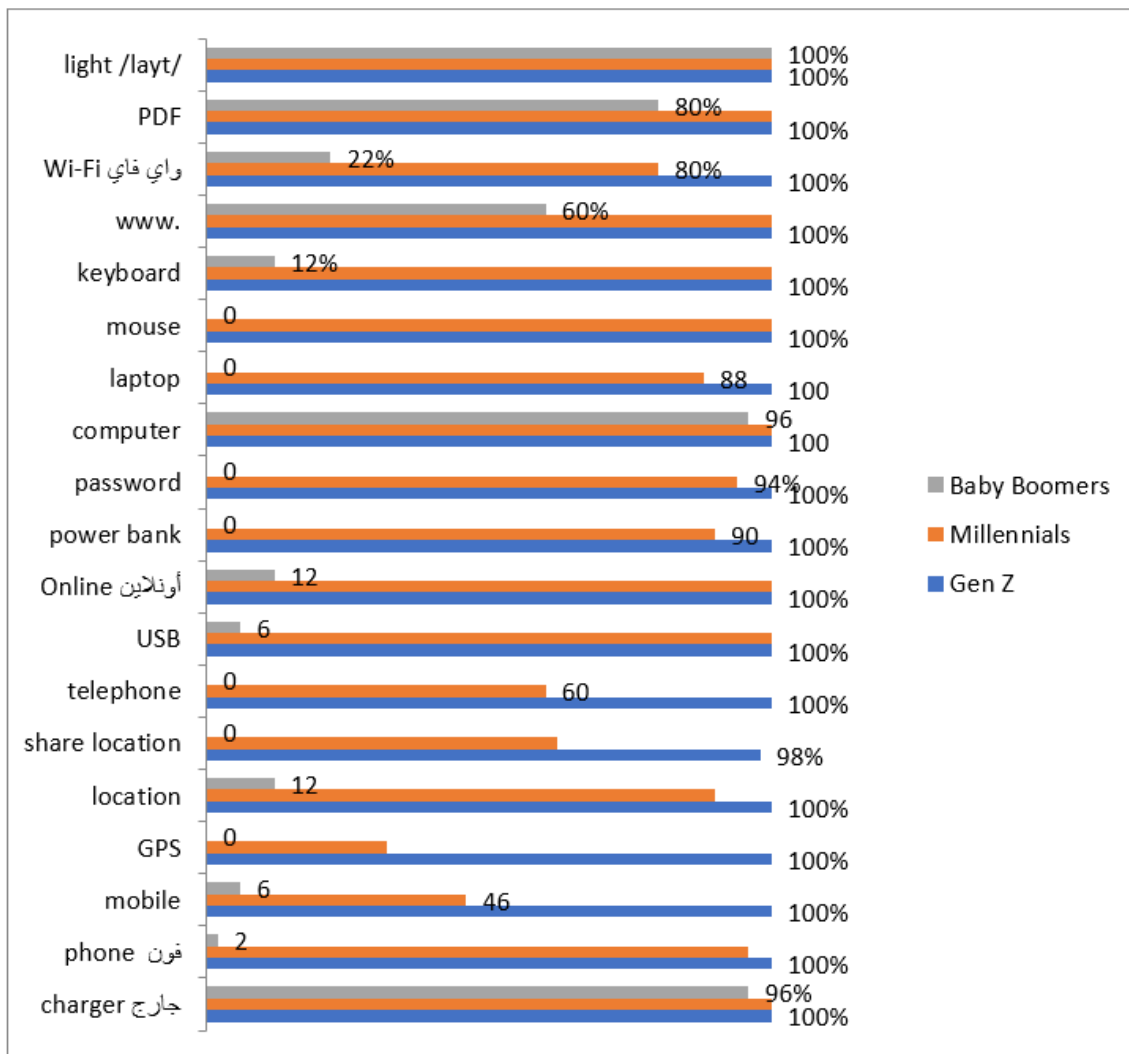


Figure 2: Technology

Regarding the words related to technology in Figure 2, the word *light* is the only one used 100% in the three groups. This word was introduced in the Emirates, more specifically in Dubai, by an Indian businessman in 1957 (D'Mello, 1919; Ribeiro Daquila, 2022). As India was an English colony until 1947, many English words entered the Emirates straight in English. Some of these words suffered phonological changes in India before entering the UAE (Al Fardan & Al Abdulla 2014;

Ribeiro Daquila 2022, p. 320). Regarding the pronunciation of the word *PDF*, all participants in the three generations pronounce it in English either /pi di ef/ or /bi di ef/.

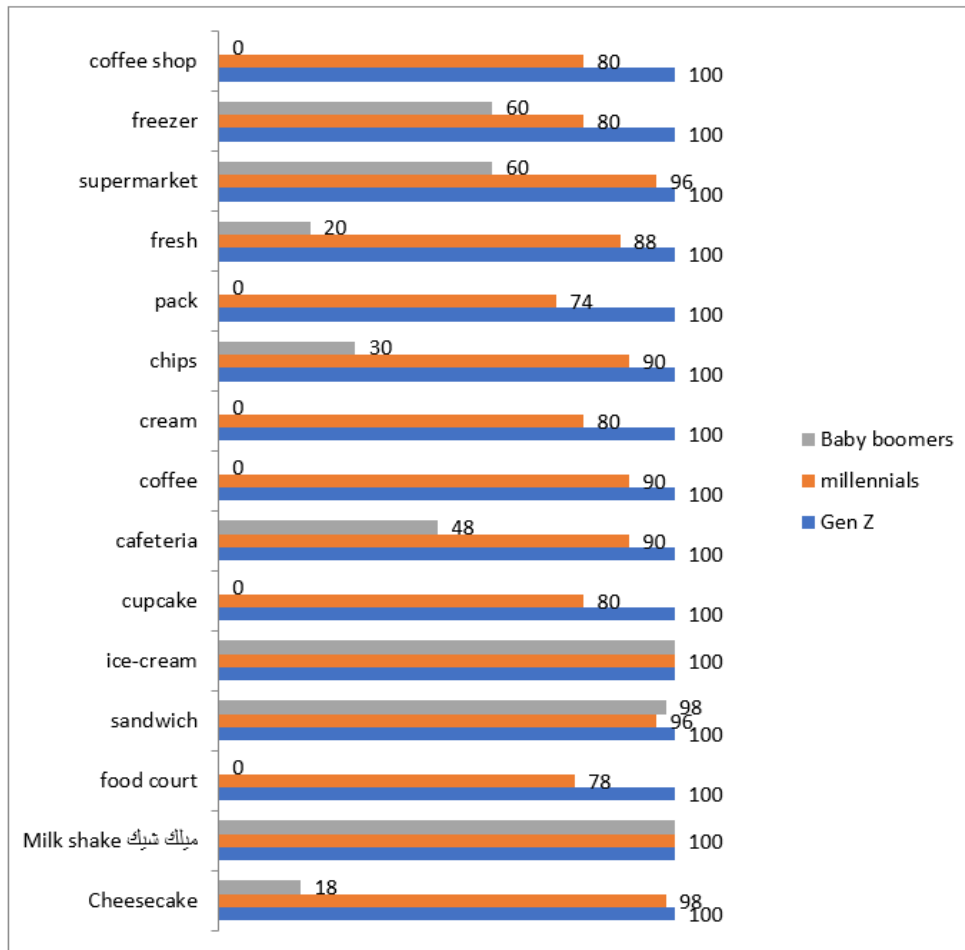
As we can observe, many technological words are not commonly used among baby boomers, such as *GPS*, *telephone*, *USB*, *power bank*, *laptop*, and *www*. When asked what they call a *laptop*, baby boomers



answered ‘computer’ and regarding *www.*, they said that it is not important to say it out loud when you see a webpage; another participant said that when he sends a link, he just copies and pastes the address without the need to say it. One participant answered: “I have seen ‘waw, waw, waw’ (referring to the consonant *waw* in Arabic), but I think it is not MSA.”

Millennials always or almost always use technological words more than 60% when compared to baby boomers. Gen Zeers, the ‘technology generation’, proved why they are called so, as Generation Z’s mean for the words related to technology is 99.89%.

Baby boomers’ mean for the words related to technology is 21.47%; millennials’ mean is 86%.



**Figure 3: Food and Food Establishments**

With regard to food and food establishments in Figure 3, we can observe that some words belong to the first linguistic phase, or the foundation phase (1809 - 1966) (Ribeiro Daquila, 2021, p. 3; Schneider, 2007), such as *milkshake*, *sandwich*, and *ice-cream*, which Emiratis do not know an equivalent in MSA; therefore, they are used by the three generations. On the other hand, some modern words are only used by Gen Z and millennials, such as *pack*, *coffee shop*, and *food court*. Emiratis only experienced the concept of a food court after the opening of the first shopping mall in the mid-80s (Nair, 2002), that is, in the second linguistic phase of Schneider (1966-2004).

We can conclude that, regarding food and food establishments, millennials and Gen Zeers use more words in English than baby boomers. Gen Z’s mean is 100%, while the millennials’ is 88, and the baby boomers’ mean is 28.93%. Concerning the word *milkshake* among millennials, the mean rose from 86% in our previous study (Ribeiro Daquila, 2022) to 100%. In our previous study, there were only two participants in the millennials who did not use the word *milkshake*. One participant was from Al-Ain, a city not so influenced by English, where 35% of the population consists of Emiratis, while the other participant worked for the government and confessed to avoiding using foreign words. It is important to notice that Emiratis also use the word *coffee* as a synonym for *coffee shop*.

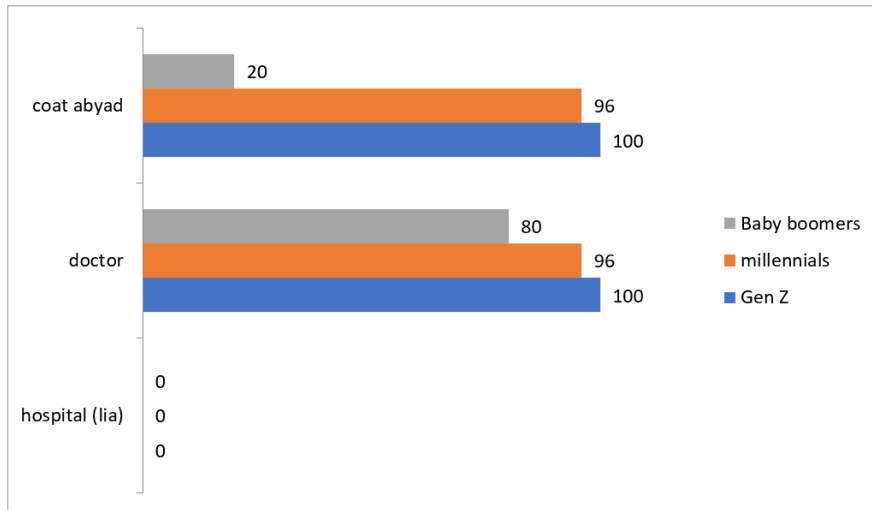


Figure 4: Medicine

Concerning the medicine vocabulary in Figure 4, we can see that *doctor* is the preferred word by Emiratis to mean doctor, instead of the MSA word *'tabib'*, 32% of baby boomers pronounce it as *dakhtoor*. One female baby boomer also said that she might say: *'baseer dakhtoor'* or *'baseer dakhtar'* meaning *'I'm going to the doctor'* or *'I am going to the hospital'*. Interviewer: *Same same?* meaning *'the same thing?'* Baby boomer: *Same same!* meaning *'the same thing.'*

100% of Gen Z would not always/almost always use the word *hospitalia*. But four girls said they could sometimes use the word *hospital*. When the interviewer asked one of them why she uses the word *hospital*, she said that it was too sound 'cool' with her girlfriends. Instead of using the regular plural suffix for borrowed words -at *hospitalat*, she would say *hospitals*. There are only 12% of baby boomers who sometimes say

*hospital* pronounced *'ospital'*, 80% rarely use the word *hospital* and prefer the MSA word *Moustashfa* or the Emirati variant *dakhtar*. These percentages for the word *hospital* are not present in our graph, as we only added words that are always or almost always used by Emiratis. Another important observation is that 76% of Gen Z and 8% of the millennials pronounced the word *hospital* with a perfect English velar *l* sound (dark *l* [ɫ]), while most speakers belonging to millennials and all participants in baby boomers pronounced the typical Arabic *l* sound (light *l* [l]).

Baby boomers' mean concerning medical terms is 33.3%; millennials' is 64%, while Gen Z' mean is 66.6%. While millennials obtained the same mean for the word *coat abyad* 'white coat' in our previous study, Gen Z increased it from 96% to 100%.

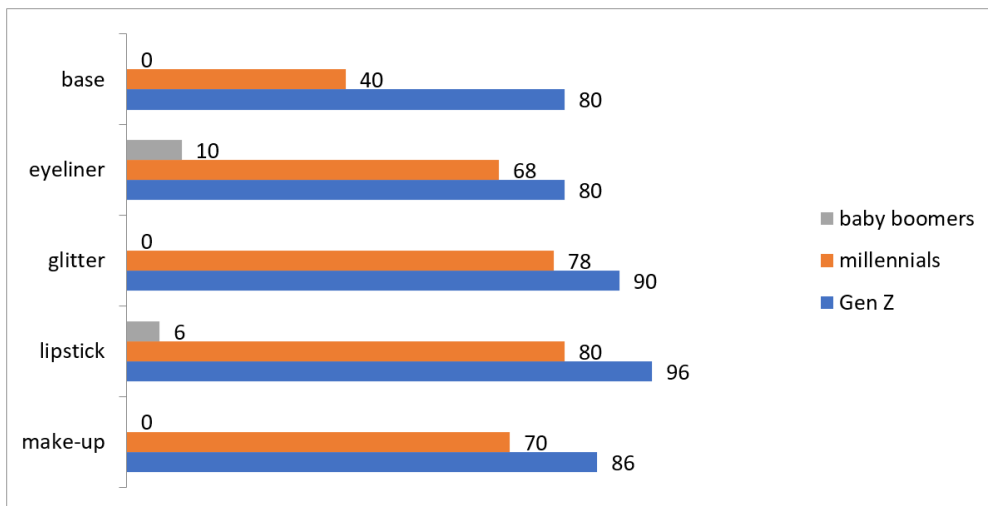


Figure 5: Cosmetics

As we can observe in Figure 5, make-up items are new in the Arab cultures, as baby boomers only put on mainly eyeliners, or in Arabic, *kohl*, a type of coal

used by queens of ancient Egypt and still worn by Bedouin men (Bateman, 2020). All female Gen Zeers, 24 out of 50 participants, use cosmetics vocabulary

exclusively in English, and they do not know the equivalents of *glitter*, *base*, and *lipstick* in MSA. Regarding boys, although they do not put make-up on, when asked ‘would you call it a lipstick or do you know another name for that?’ Some of the answers were: ‘My sister says it’, ‘I hear it on Snapchat/Instagram’. If boys did not know another word for the item, then we considered it valid; in other words, we counted it as always/almost always.

Regarding pronunciation, all female and three male Gen Zeers pronounced *glitter* either with the final [ɪ] sound as in American, Canadian, and Irish English (retroflex) /'glɪ.əɪ/, or non-Rhotic (typical British pronunciation) /'glɪ.ə/. Eight female millennials were marked with the letter ‘N’, meaning ‘British pronunciation’, as they flapped the final *r* only once.

Almost all men in the millennials and all participants in the baby boomers pronounced it with the trilled *r* [r], the typical *r* sound in Arabic.

Baby boomers’ mean of words related to cosmetics is 0%, while millennials’ mean is 67.2%, and Gen Z’s mean is 86.4%. We can conclude that globalization brought new cosmetic items into Emirati culture. All these cosmetics given in English were mentioned in our previous study (Ribeiro Daquila, 2022) by female participants belonging to the Gen Z group as examples of words they used in Emirati Arabic. Regarding the word *lipstick*, the alternative word is not the Arabic word *ahmar alshifah* lit. ‘red of the lips’, but the French word *rouge* meaning ‘red’, as the clipped form for the full form *rouge à lèvres*, lit. ‘red for the lips’.

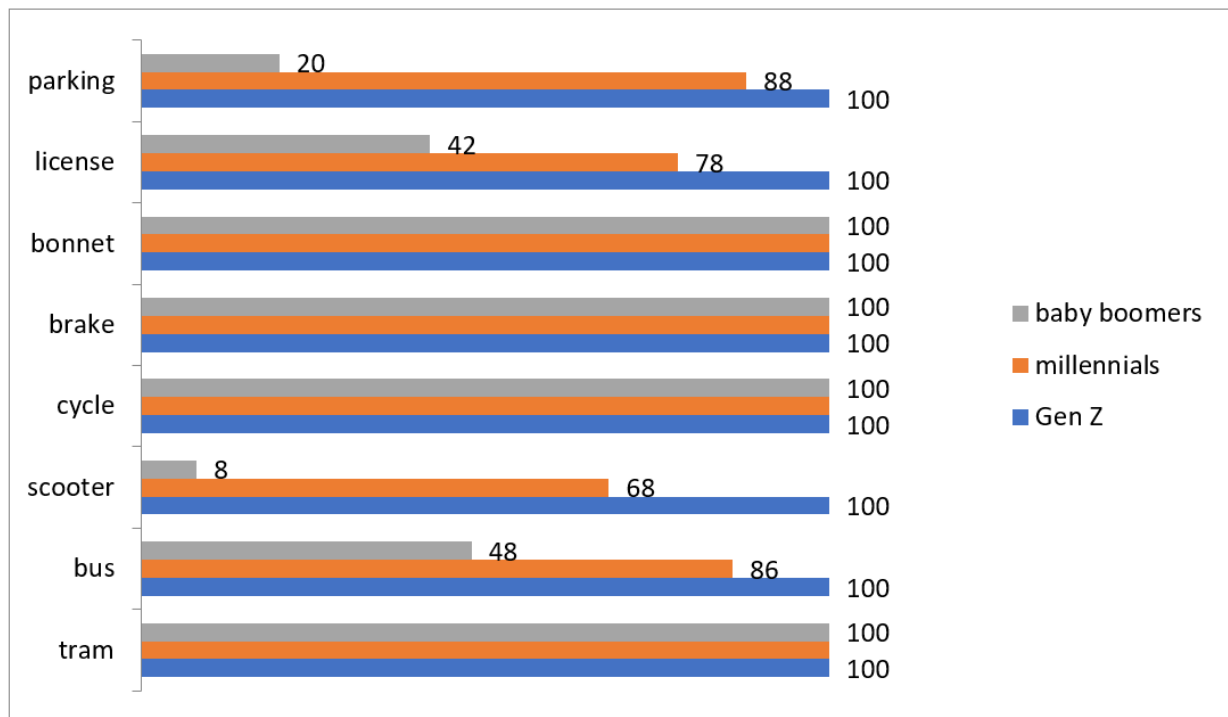


Figure 6: Means of transportation and car vocabulary

In Figure 6, The words *tram*, *cycle* (meaning bicycle), *brake*, and *bonnet* are always used in Emirati Arabic by the three generations. Regarding the word *bus*, the first minibuses were introduced in Dubai in 1968 by

the Indian Tata Motors group (Gokulan, 2015), and since then it has been called *bus*. The mean of Gen Z is 100%; millennials’ is 90%, and baby boomers’ is 64.75%.

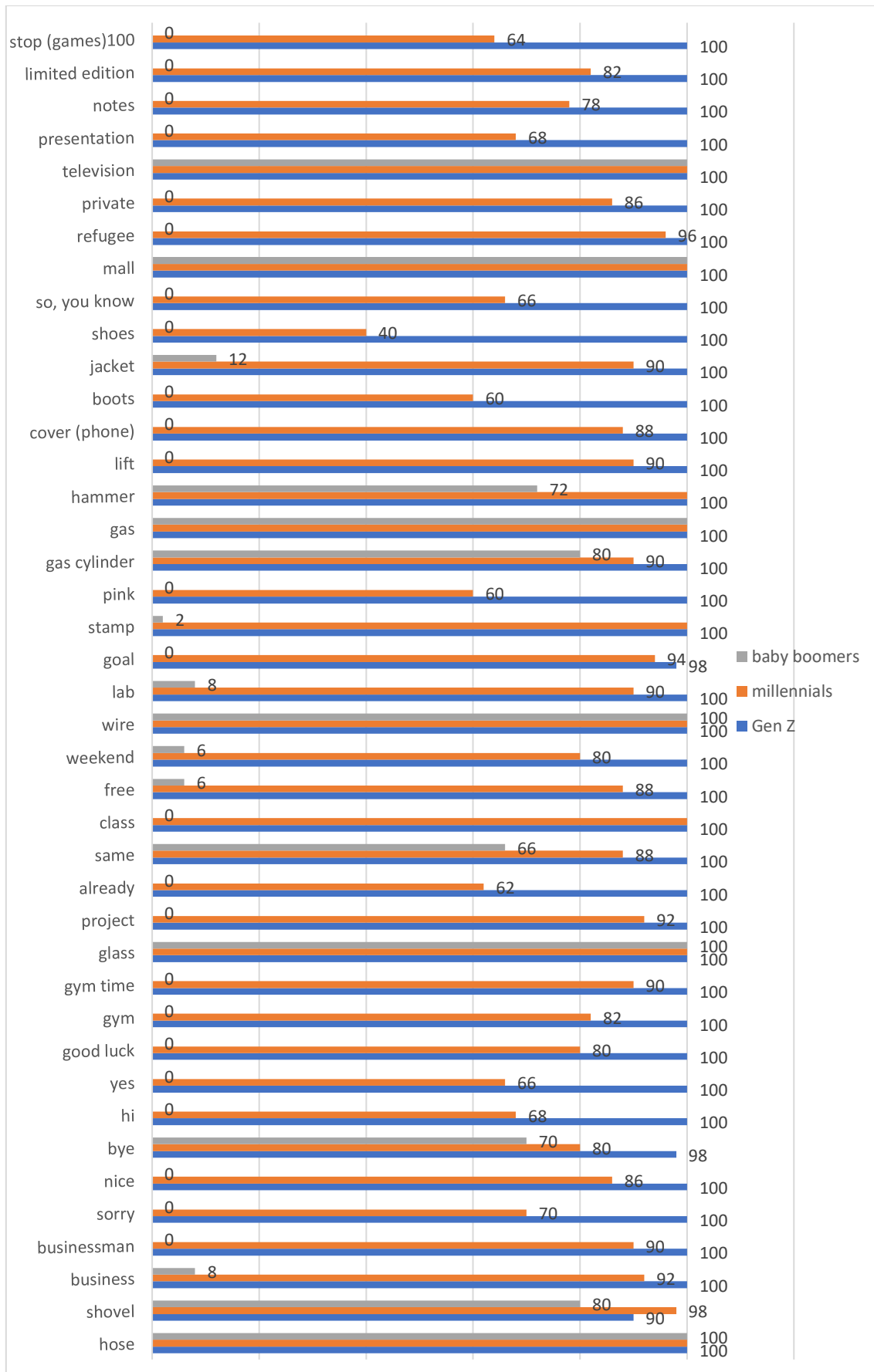


Figure 7: Miscellaneous



Figure 7 shows us miscellaneous words in English used in Emirati Arabic. We can observe Gen Z's proclivity to words and expressions in English, millennials using them more moderately and baby boomers avoiding them. Gen Z's mean for these words is 99.65%. This mean is greater than millennials', which is 84.24%.

Baby boomers' mean is 24.63%. The words used by baby boomers are the ones that were introduced into Emirati Arabic straight from English, like *television*, *wire*, *glass*, *shovel*, and *hose*. The words that are used less than 10% in this group were employed by female speakers, like *weekend*, *lab*, and *free*. Only two male Emiratis always/almost always use the word *businessman* instead of the Arabic word *rajul a'mal*.

All Gen Zeers use the adverb *already*, whereas 62% of millennials use it. When asked to make a sentence with *already*, participants came up with the following sentences:

4. *already a sharabt b gahwa c*  
*already a drank b coffee c*  
*I've already drunk coffee.*
5. *Hanan a already b aklat c*  
*Hanan a already b ate c*  
*Hannan has already eaten.*

As we can see, the adverb *already* when used in Emirati Arabic has a much more flexible position than in English. There was a slight increase in the use of the word *already*, both among millennials and Gen Z, from 60% to 62%, and 98% to 100% respectively.

30% of the Gen Z participants (all of them girls) reported always using the word *good luck*, and 70% said that they almost always employ it. In the millennial group, 16% sometimes use *good luck*, and 4% (all boys) rarely use it and prefer the Arabic form *bi tawfeeq*.

Regarding the word *stamp*, it is important to highlight that in 1941 the British post was inaugurated in Dubai (Onley, 2009; Ribeiro Daquila, 2023b). From 1948 on, all letters sent in the Trucial States used British stamps showing the British monarchy. Therefore, the word *stamp* is common in Emirati Arabic; even 90% of baby boomers sometimes or rarely use this word when speaking Emirati Arabic.

Our first research question poses the question whether there are phonetical and/or grammar differences in the incorporation of English words and expressions in the three groups.

With respect to pronunciation, we can conclude that some words keep the original pronunciation in English, this was the case of the word *PDF*, which was Arabized in more than 50% of the cases to /bi di ef/ or maintained the [p] sound. Baby boomers tend to Arabize

the pronunciation of English words in Emirati Arabic when compared to the younger generations. For instance, the verb *to park*, was pronounced as 'bark' by 100% of baby boomers, while 88% of millennials also Arabized the pronunciation. Only 10% of male and 4% of female Gen Zeers Arabized the word, pronouncing it 'bark' while the remaining 86% pronounced *park* with a [p] sound.

Regarding the word *computer*, the percentage of English-like pronunciation slightly decreased among Gen Zeers and millennials. Nine male and five female Gen Zeers – totaling 28% – Arabized the pronunciation of the word *computer*, pronouncing it as [b] instead of [p]. Only 1 male and 3 female millennials (8%) pronounced a clear [p] sound. All baby boomers pronounced it as [b]. This Arabization may be because the [m] is voiced, and the tendency is to pronounce a voiced sound after it, in this case, [b]. There were nine cases in which the [p] sound in the word *computer* was not clear. A study in a laboratory should be carried out to analyze this phenomenon.

Concerning the sound of the letter *r* in the word *glitter*. All female and 11 male Gen Zeers used either the American retroflex sound [ɹ] or the British non-rhotic *r*. Eight male Gen Zeers who were marked with 'N', pronounced the final *r* with a single flap [ɾ] (the typical Scottish pronunciation). Most male millennials and all participants in the baby boomers pronounced a trilled *r* [r̥]. Eight female millennials were marked with the letter 'N', as they pronounced it with a single flap. Regarding the word 'already' (where [ɹ] is in mid-position), two female Gen Zeers pronounced a single flap *r* which was considered 'N'. In final position in the word 'glitter', this single flap *r* sound did not occur among the female Gen Zeers. One female Gen Zeer also pronounced the trilled *r* [r̥], common in Arabic. Seven female and 4 male millennials pronounced a single flap. The remaining participants pronounced it as a trilled *r* [r̥].

Regarding the letter *l* in final position, 76% of Gen Z (24 females and 14 males) pronounced the word hospital with the English velar *l* sound, or dark *l* [ɫ]. Female Gen Zeers outperformed the male participants. Our findings are in keeping with those of Oga-Baldwin and Nakata (2017), who concluded that, compared to boys, girls exhibit a stronger propensity to engage in language-focused activities, such as learning a foreign language.

8% of the millennials also pronounced it with the English velar *l* sound, while most millennials and all participants in baby boomers pronounced the typical Arabic *l* sound (light *l*).

With regard to the phoneme [æ] as in *cat* /kæt/, it is the most Arabized sound. Participants had to create sentences in Arabic with the verb *cancel* and the word

*laptop*. Only 4 female Gen Zeers pronounced these two words with a perfect [æ] sound.

We can conclude that the younger the generation, the less Arabization of sounds there is.

Concerning grammar, we could observe that all the verbs follow the conjugation of Arabic verbs, except for the verb *enjoy*, which is only used in the imperative form, and the verb *post* and *take*, mentioned by one female Gen Zeer, in the sentence '*khalni post a picture*', meaning 'let me post a picture' and in the expression '*khalna take a selfie*', meaning 'let's take a selfie'. These were the only three verbs that were not Arabized in our study.

The adverb *already* has a flexible position in the verb; however, there are some rules. The following two sentences are correct, for instance:

6. *Hanan a already b aklat c is-simach d*  
*Hanan a already b ate c the fish d*  
*Hannan has already eaten the fish.*

7. *Hannan a aklat b is-simach [4] c already d*  
*Hannan a. ate b the fish c already d*  
*Hannan has already eaten the fish.*

It would be incorrect to start this sentence with *already*. That is, 'already Hanan ate the cake' is incorrect. Nevertheless, it is possible to start a sentence with the adverb *already* when we omit its subject. This is uncommon in English, but it is common in Latin languages and in Arabic. The following sentence is correct:

8. *already a sharab b maai c*  
*already a drank b water c*  
*He has already drunk water.*

This shows that when integrating certain English grammatical categories into Emirati Arabic, their integration follows the grammatical structure of Arabic, not English.

Regarding our second research question 'Is the influence of English in Emirati Arabic greater in the

present Gen Z group aged 15-16, when compared to Gen Zeers aged 17-18 surveyed three years ago (Ribeiro Daquila, 2022)?', a slight increase in the use of English by Gen Zeers in this present study was noticed when compared to our previous study, whose data was collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The word *free* increased from 82% to 100%. However, let us break down this figure: 82% of Gen Zeers always used the word *free* when speaking Emirati Arabic, and 18% sometimes used it. In the present study, we have 86% that always use *free* and 14% that almost always use it. Even though this small increase is not statistically significant, future studies should analyze whether these percentages keep increasing. In other words, it should be analyzed whether Gen Zeers keep increasing the number and frequency of English words in Emirati Arabic.

With regard to our third research question, which analyzes English usage across the three generations, Table 1 reveals a marked increase in English adoption among Gen Z Emiratis compared to Baby Boomers. On average, Gen Z participants used English significantly more frequently across all seven categories examined. The most striking discrepancy appears in technology-related vocabulary, where Gen Z demonstrated near-complete reliance on English (99.89%) compared to a mere 21.47% for Baby Boomers. Furthermore, Gen Z consistently surpassed Millennials in English usage across nearly all categories, suggesting a generational shift towards increasing English integration in everyday communication. Notably, while Baby Boomers rarely used English words for cosmetics (0%), Gen Z embraced it readily (86.4%). This aligns with trends of globalization and digitalization, where English serves as a common language for online interaction and technology consumption. However, while the trend towards English prevalence within Gen Z is evident, the table also highlights variations across categories. In medicine, for example, both Millennials and Gen Z exhibited a decline in English usage compared to Baby Boomers, reflecting the importance of different terminology in healthcare contexts, such as *moustashfa* and *dakhtar*.

**Table 1: The mean of each category for the three generation cohorts**

Categories	Baby boomers	Millennials	Gen Z
Verbs	2.57	69.4	96.6
Tech	21.47	86	99.89
Food	28.93	88	100
Medicine	33.3	64	66.3
Cosmetics	0	67.2	86.4
means of transp.	64.75	90	100
miscellaneous	24.63	84.24	99.65

<sup>4</sup>*Simach* in Emirati Arabic equals to *samak* in MSA, meaning 'fish'.

## 4.2. Second Questionnaire

In this second questionnaire (see Appendix C), we analyzed the influence of social media in the Arabic language, its use during the pandemic, and the linguistics concerns of the three generations regarding the future of Emirati Arabic.

Concerning question one ‘Are there other words you can think of?’, Emirati Gen Zeers suggested the following words in English that they regularly use when speaking Emirati Arabic.

*Aksayt* – Derived from the English word ‘excite,’ it is used to express excitement or enthusiasm. For example:

9. *Ana a aksayt b l'il-party c*  
*I a excited b about the party c*  
*I am excited about the party.*

*Baby /Beibi/* – it is commonly used as a term of endearment for a loved one. For example:

10. *Inta a baby b*  
*You a baby b*  
*You are my baby.*

*Joke* – used to refer to a joke, often inserted into Arabic conversations. For instance:

11. *'Andak a joke? b*  
*At you a joke? b*  
*Do you have a joke?*

*Cute* – used to describe something or someone as adorable or charming. For example:

12. *Hatha a baby b cute. c*  
*This a baby b cute. c*  
*This baby is cute.*

*Happy* – for instance:

13. *kul a sana b wa c inta d happy e*  
*every a year. b and c you d happy e*  
*Happy birthday!*

*Selfie* – an example provided by a female Gen Zeer:

14. *khalna a take a selfie b*  
*let us a take a selfie b*  
*Let us take a selfie.*

*Hashtag* – for example:

15. *La a tansa b the hashtags c*  
*Don't a forget b the hashtags c*  
*Don't forget the hashtags.*

The following English words and phrases related to the workplace and professional environments were also suggested by Emirati millennials:

*CV* – for instance,

16. *tarrasht a CV b*  
*I sent a CV b*  
*I sent a CV.*

*Deadline* – for instance,

17. *'andy a deadline b at 3 pm c*  
*At me a deadline b at 3 pm c*  
*I have a deadline at 3 pm.*

*Interview* – for instance:

18. *'andy a interview b alyoum c*  
*At me a interview b today c*  
*I have an interview today.*

We recommend adding these words to future studies in order to build a greater English lexicon in Emirati Arabic.

As regards question two, ‘Is there any word from the list above that you do not know how to say in Modern Standard Arabic?’, baby boomers know all the equivalent words in Arabic. It is also true that there are some words that they did not understand, such as *cupcake*, *power bank*, *share location*, *food court*, *glitter*, and *base*. Millennials, on the other hand, did not know the equivalent in Arabic for some words, such as – *power bank*, *scooter*, *gas cylinder*, *food court*, *glitter*, *base*, and *hose*. The most alarming result is Gen Z’s, who did not know the equivalent in Arabic of 36 words. These are the words that were unknown to more than twenty-five Gen Zeers: those related to cosmetics: *glitter*, *base*, *lipstick*; words related to technology: *Wi-Fi*, *GPS*, *power bank* (some said charger, which is not the same), and *PDF*; food-related vocabulary: *cheesecake* and *milkshake*; and transportation: *scooter*.

In order to answer research question 4, ‘Does social media have an impact on the increase in English words and expressions in Emirati Gen Z speech?’, questions 4 to 10 were created (see Appendix C). Question 3 will be analyzed later in this section.

Concerning question four, ‘During the pandemic, did you increase the use of social media?’ The three generation cohorts confessed to increasing it. However, Gen Zeers were the ones who increased the most, an average of 4 hours and a half more per day, while millennials and baby boomers increased by around 3 hours. Most millennials confessed to teleworking, so they could not spend more time on the phone, whereas baby boomers preferred to spend time with the family and the females also had to take care of the house chores.

Regarding question five, the most used social media for baby boomers were Facebook with 49 users, including Facebook Messenger, and YouTube with 41 users. 13 baby boomers also reported using Instagram. The reasons why these were baby boomers’ favorite platforms were 74% because they could get information about the pandemic; 86% to be in touch with family and friends; and 60% to shop online.

Regarding millennials, 40 participants used YouTube, 37 used Facebook, and 33 used Instagram.

The reasons why these were their favorite platforms in the case of millennials were 62% because they could get information about the pandemic; 82% to be in touch with family and friends; and 64% to shop online.

Concerning Gen Z, 50 Gen Zeers used Instagram, 43 used TikTok, and 39 used Snapchat. 48% of Gen Z preferred Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat to kill time; 68% to follow influencers and brands; and mainly to be in touch with their friends (78%).

These results are not in accordance with Tarihoran and Sumirat's study (2022, p. 61) with Indonesian Gen Zeers, whose favorite platform was Facebook with 43.15%, followed by YouTube with 31.25%.

Regarding the present use of social media – question number 6 – baby boomers use it to be in touch with friends and family (78%), to read the news (38%), and to purchase (34%). 80% of millennials use social media to be in touch with friends; 62% to work, do research, or work-related issues; 60% to make new contacts; 58% to read the news; 56% to purchase items; and 52% to follow brands and celebrities. They use English either because it is trendier or because they have just seen the information in English and retweeted it (in the case of X). Concerning Gen Z, 96% use social media to be in touch with friends; 68% to make new contacts; 64% to see the content of brands; and 60% to follow celebrities.

With respect to question seven, 'When you use social media, which language do you use?', baby boomers post and comment in Emirati Arabic, but more than posting, they use social media to see others' posts. They feel that Arabic is their language; therefore, it should be reflected in their posts. They think that social media is affecting the Arabic language as more and more posts are in English; hence, all of them would like to see more posts in Arabic. Millennials post more than 85% in English as they seek a global reach and consider English the language of social media. On the other hand, Millennials see English as an inevitable consequence of globalization and modernity; 84% do not mind posting/reading posts in English, while 16% would like to see more posts in Arabic. With respect to Gen Z, which is the generation of technology, 96% post exclusively in English. They see English as the international language of communication, and they do not see English as a threat to their Arabic.

With reference to question 8, 'Do you use more English words in Emirati Arabic because of social media?', 82% of baby boomers answered no. Other answers were: 'a little', 'only influencer, haha', 'I don't think so', and 'a couple of words, maybe'. 89% of millennials said yes. The ones who disagreed answered: 'I don't think it is influence; it is globalization', 'I don't see any harm in saying influencer or hashtag'; 'We speak

like the rest of the world'. 88% of Gen Z answered yes. The ones who differed replied: 'The influence is everywhere, social media is just another more', 'Going to a mall makes me speak more English than using Snapchat.' One male Gen Zeer said that he likes to add stories on Snapchat in which he is listening to the Emirati hip-hop singer 'Freek', who sings both in Emirati Arabic, and English. In his case, he prefers to listen to music in Arabic and whenever he comments on a Snap, it depends on the friend, he might use either English or Arabic.

Gen Zeers indicated that they enjoy listening to English-language music, both on TikTok and Instagram; one female participant indicated that the Reels contain mostly songs in English, and another female participant mentioned that the trendy songs on TikTok are always in English, which contributes to more English words and expressions in their vocabulary in Arabic. Two female Gen Zeers confirmed that they use most make-up vocabulary in English because of influencers or make-up tutorials they watch on social media."

The participants use the following social media words when speaking Emirati Arabic:

Baby boomers: Two female participants mentioned the word *hashtag*, 4 participants mentioned *social media*, and 3 females gave the word *influencer* as an example. The majority of participants did not come up with any words.

Millennials: *hashtag* (12 participants), *social media* (3 participants), *selfie* (9 participants), and *swipe* (1 participant).

Gen Z: *block* (4 participants), *selfie* (4 participants), *swipe* (7 participants), *screenshot* (3 participants), *hashtag* (5 participants), *followers* (4 participants), *password* (3 participants), *live* (2 participants), *content* (1 participant), *social media* (2 participants), *post* (2 participants), *location* (1 participant), *take a selfie* and *post a picture* (1 female Gen Zeer).

These results are in line with Alenazi's study (2023, p.20), which demonstrated that social media significantly increased and propagated several English expressions in Saudi culture. Saudis learned various English words through social media apps, and they utilized these phrases in oral and written interactions throughout their everyday lives. Depending on how the Saudis used the English language, this phenomenon was either beneficial or detrimental.

In order to answer our final research question, 'Can English be considered a threat to the endurance of Emirati Arabic?', questions 3, 11, and 12 (see Appendix C) were analyzed. With reference to question three, which enquires about the influence of English on Arabic, 100% of baby boomers are concerned about such influence. 84% of millennials also see English as a threat to Emirati Arabic. These results are in keeping with our study (Ribeiro Daquila, 2020, p. 6-7), in which 84% of



parents, whose mean age was 38, believed that MSA and Emirati Arabic should be the focus at school in lieu of English. Gen Z, on the other hand, sees English proficiency as development and a signal of globalization. One male Gen Zeer answered: 'Dubai is international, you can't do business without English'; 6 male and 4 female Gen Zeers mentioned English as a key to succeeding at university; one male Gen Zeer said: 'We need to pass the English exam to enter university'; 1 female and 6 male Gen Zeers said that they can't have a good salary without English.

Regarding question 11, exclusively to baby boomers and millennials, 'Does the fact that the new generations might speak English instead of Emirati Arabic worry you?' Not only do baby boomers see English as a threat to future generations, but they also consider it a threat to Gen Z at present. They were unanimous in saying that Gen Z overuses English and is losing some Arabic vocabulary.

68% of millennials see the use of English as an inevitable consequence of globalization and modernity, while 32% see the overuse of English as a threat to future generations. Three female millennials also mentioned that future generations might lose Arabic proficiency. One female millennial Expressed: 'The young generation doesn't know Fusha (MSA), and it will be worse in the future, but the dialect will not die, but change.'

Concerning question 12, exclusively to Gen Zeers, 'Are you concerned about the fact that your kids might speak English instead of Emirati Arabic?', the answer was no. Participants were unanimous in saying that they were willing to have bilingual kids and that this would make their kids prepared for the future. Fourteen female Gen Zeers stated that they would speak both Emirati Arabic and English with their kids. Seven female Gen Zeers expressed that they would enroll their kids in international schools, while 4 female participants mentioned bilingual education for their kids. Male Gen Zeers were very succinct, the great majority just answered 'no'.

As the three groups do not see eye to eye on whether English poses a threat to Arabic in the UAE, we suggest further studies to analyze the complex sociolinguistics of the country. The findings regarding our fourth research question are in keeping with Kennetz and Carroll's (2018) study, which concluded that even though English is also perceived as having a detrimental impact on culture and the local language, it nonetheless provides Emiratis with access to education, work, and the global community. They claim that English has undoubtedly established a place in Emirati society, rather than that it is completely displacing native Arabic.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

As we have observed, English words and phrases are being used in the Arabic language in the UAE, particularly among Gen Z, and social media is also responsible for such influence. These results are in line with the studies of Siemund *et al.*, (2020), Carroll *et al.*, (2017), Kennetz and Carroll (2018), and Ribeiro Daquila (2020, 2022) concerning an increase in English words in Emirati Arabic by Gen Z, and are also in keeping with Tarihoran and Sumirat's (2022) and Alenazi's (2023) research regarding the increase of English words in Indonesian and in Saudi Arabic –respectively – due to social media use.

English has ingrained itself into many Gen Z Emiratis' daily lives and identities (Ziad, 2019, Ribeiro Daquila, 2022). The UAE's cosmopolitan atmosphere and willingness to interact with the international community are reflected in the country's bilingualism. This influence is also due to globalization, technology, the widespread use of the internet, the labor market (Ameen and Anand, 2020), and the change in the school curriculum from Arabic to bilingual English and Arabic (Ziad, 2019, Ribeiro Daquila, 2022).

Social media and media in general are responsible for making English more and more popular among Gen Z, who has easy access to English content through social media platforms, streaming services, and internet platforms, English language use is being increasingly supported (Alenazi, 2023, p. 5). Gen Z also stated that they feel comfortable posting in English. The fluency of Generation Z in English is due in part to their early exposure to the language (KHDA, 2011; Ribeiro Daquila, 2020, 2023b).

Emirati Arabic demonstrates some grammatical characteristics in the use of the adverb *already* that has a flexible position and the Arabization of most English verbs, except *enjoy*, which is always used in the imperative form by most users, and *post* and *take*, which were used in the bare infinitive form by a Gen Zeer. More research is needed to analyze the Arabization of verbs in the UAE.

Regarding pronunciation and having Arabic as the matrix language, when Emiratis use some loan words from English in the middle of their speech, Gen Z has a more English-like pronunciation when compared to millennials. Girls in Gen Z and millennials outperformed the boys. Baby boomers use Arabic pronunciation to pronounce words in English, for instance, they pronounce park as 'bark' and computer as 'combuter'. This may be because they went to school in the Arabic curriculum.

It is important to note that the degree of the English language effect on Emirati Gen Z may vary based on elements like urbanization, educational attainment, and exposure to transnational trends. Arabic

continues to be the primary language for formal communication and cultural expression in Arab communities, despite the fact that English phrases have undoubtedly entered the vocabulary of many Gen Z Arabs, as previous studies (Ribeiro Daquila, 2022; Alenazi, 2023) indicated.

We hope to have sparked new scholarly interest in the linguistics and repertoires of Emiratis. Even though the current study could only scratch the surface of the fascinatingly complex linguistic environment of the country, we were able to increase our list of English words, verbs, and expressions used in the UAE compared to our previous study (Ribeiro Daquila 2022). The UAE presents a remarkable situation of language interaction that promises to deepen our understanding of language mixing.

This paper presents a few limitations as well as proposals to be improved in future studies. The major restriction is that the whole set of data is based on subjective responses to the questionnaire in Appendix B, which may not reflect the actual usage of words/expressions in naturally occurring speech. In addition, some words indicated in this 100-word survey are used globally and are not limited to the UAE, e.g. *Wi-Fi*, *CV*, and *PDF*.

Another limitation is regarding the number of participants. Having groups of around twenty-five participants per gender in each group may not be sufficient to test for homogeneity. In future research, an expanded number of participants would surely invigorate the outcomes and, subsequently, the capacity to analyze the findings of the current study more precisely. Another suggestion is to ask for the occupation of participants and if they are bilingual, as there are cases of Emirati children whose mothers are expats. As linguistic changes in the UAE occur at a fast pace, another suggestion is to keep enlarging the list of English words used in the UAE and to administer it in a quinquennial to observe the changes in this period. We also encourage researchers to repeat this study in small towns in which there are fewer expats, resulting in more interactions among natives and less need to use English to communicate.

A long-term goal is to analyze to what extent English will influence the grammar, semantics, pragmatics, and phonology of the UAE.

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## APPENDIX A

### Demographic questionnaire

Age group:  15-16  40-45  60 and over

gender:  male  female

Education level:

none or incomplete

high school ( Arabic curriculum  bilingual English-Arabic)

bachelor's degree  master's degree  PhD

Have you ever lived in an English-speaking country?  yes  no



City of work (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you live?: \_\_\_\_\_


**APPENDIX B**


**100 English words used in Emirati Arabic**

1. Which of the following words do you use when you are speaking Arabic with other Emiratis or Arabic speakers? If so, how often do you use them?

Age range: 15 - 16      40 - 45      60 and over

	Always	almost always	sometimes	rarely	never	alternative word
to cancel						
to check						
to finish (a contract)						
to park						
داونلودto download						
enjoy!						
To charge						
Can you think of more verbs?						
شارجcharger						
فونphone						
mobile						
GPS						
location						
share location						
telephone						
USB (pen drive ) اين درايف						
اونلاينOnline						
power bank						
password						
computer						
 laptop						
 mouse						
 keyboard						
www.						
واي فايWi-Fi						
PDF						
Light /layt/ pl. layat						
cheesecake						
ميلك شيكMilk shake						
food court						
cake						
sandwich						
ice-cream						
cupcake						
cafeteria						
coffee						
cream						

chips						
pack						
Fresh						
supermarket						
freezer						
كوفي شوب Coffe shop						
hospital(ia)						
doctor						
كوت أبيض Coat abyad						
make-up						
Lipstick						
glitter						
eyeliner						
highlighter						
base						
hose						
shovel						
بزنس business						
businessman						
سوري sorry						
nice						
باي bye						
hi						
yes						
good luck						
جيم Gym						
gym time / qa7ua time /3Sir time						
قلاص glass						
project						
already						
سيم Same						
كلاس Class						
فري Free						
weekend						
wire						
lab						
goal						
stamp						
pink						
gas 	cylinder					
gas						
hammer						
ليفث Lift						
stop (playing games)						
cover (telephone)						

						
boots						
jacket						
shoes						
So, you know						
مولMall						
refugee						
private						
television						
presentation						
notes						
limited edition						
tram						
Bus						
scooter						
Cycle						
brake (car)						
bonnet						
license						
باركن 100. parking						

**APPENDIX C**

**Interview with Gen Z, Millennials, and Baby Boomers**

**1. Can you think of other English words that you frequently use in your speech when speaking Emirati Arabic?**

**2. Is there any word from the list above that you do not know how to say in Modern Standard Arabic?**

**3. Is English influencing Emirati Arabic more than it should?**

**4. During the pandemic, did you increase the use of social media?**

**5. Which were the social media you used the most?**

**5.b. Why did you prefer this social media during the pandemic?**

**6. Mark below the main reasons why you use social media.**

To keep in touch with friends \_\_\_

To keep in touch with family \_\_\_

To fill spare time \_\_\_

To read news stories \_\_\_

To find inspiration for things to do and buy \_\_\_

To watch or follow sports \_\_\_

To watch live streams \_\_\_

To see what people are talking about \_\_\_

To make new contacts \_\_\_

To find content (for example, videos, memes) \_\_\_

To work, to research or work-related issues \_\_\_

To see content from brands \_\_\_

To follow celebrities or influencers \_\_\_

**6.b. Can you give other reasons why you use social media?**

**7. When you use social media, which language(s) do you use (to post and comment and read)?**

7.b. Why?

8. Do you use more English words in Emirati Arabic because of social media?

8.b. Why?

8.c. Can you name some words you use in English when you are speaking Emirati Arabic because of social media?

9. Would you like to see more posts in (Emirati) Arabic on social media?

9.b. Why?

10. Would you like to post more in (Emirati) Arabic?

10.b. Why?

Exclusively to millennials and baby boomers:

11. Does the fact that the new generations might speak English instead of Emirati Arabic worry you?

Exclusively to Gen Z:

12. Are you concerned about the fact that your kids might speak English instead of Emirati Arabic?

#### APPENDIX D

##### Interview with Gen Z, Millennials, and Baby Boomers in Emirati Arabic

1. شو الكلمات الانجليزية الثانية اللي تستخدمها دوم يوم ترمس لهجة إماراتية؟

2. اي كلمة من القائمة اللي فوق ما تعرف تقولها بالفصحى؟

3. تعتقد اللغة الانجليزية تؤثر على اللهجة الإماراتية أكثر من اللازم؟

4. خلال الكورونا، استخدمت سوشيل ميديا أكثر من اللازم؟

5. أي سوشال ميديا فضلت في فترة الكورونا؟

ب. ليش؟ 5

6. حظي علامة أدناه على الأسباب الرئيسية اللي تدفعك إلى استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي

\_\_ للتواصل مع الأصدقاء

\_\_ لتواصل مع العائلة

\_\_ لملء وقت الفراغ

\_\_ لقراءة الأخبار

\_\_ للعثور على الإلهام للأشياء التي يمكنك القيام بها وشرانها

\_\_ لمشاهدة أو متابعة الرياضة

\_\_ لمشاهدة البث المباشر

\_\_ لمعرفة ما يتحدث عنه الناس

\_\_ لإجراء اتصالات جديدة

\_\_ للعثور على المحتوى (على سبيل المثال، مقاطع الفيديو والميمات)

\_\_ للعمل أو للبحث أو القضايا المتعلقة بالعمل

\_\_ لرؤية المحتوى من العلامات التجارية

\_\_ لمتابعة المشاهير أو المؤثرين

أ. اي أسباب أخرى لاستخدامك سوشال ميديا؟

7. يوم تستخدم وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، أي اللغة (اللغات) اللي تستخدمها (للنشر والتعليق والقراءة)؟



ب. ليش؟

تستخدم المزيد من الكلمات الإنجليزية في اللهجة الإماراتية بسبب سوشيال ميديا؟ 8.

ب. ليش؟

ج. شو بعض الكلمات اللي تستخدمها في الإنجليزي يوم ترمس اللهجة الإماراتية بسبب وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي؟

تبا تشوف المزيد من المشاركات باللغة العربية (أو باللهجة الإماراتية) على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي؟ 9.

ب. ليش؟

تبا تشوف نشر المزيد باللهجة الإماراتية؟ 10.

ب. ليش؟

**Exclusively to millennials and baby boomers:**

تخاف الشباب بيتكلمون الإنجليزي بدلاً من اللهجة الإماراتية؟ 11.

**Exclusively to Gen Z :**

تخاف عيالك بيتكلمون الإنجليزي بدلاً من اللهجة الإماراتية؟ 12.

**Interview with Gen Z, Millennials, and Baby Boomers in Arabic**