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Pathways to Paradigm Change: Critical Examinations of Prevailing Discourses and Ideologies in Second Language Education

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Chapter 5

Reframing Monolingual Ideologies in the Language Classroom: Evidence from Arabic Study Abroad and Telecollaboration

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Introduction

Language programs typically imagine classroom learning as a bridge to more authentic interactions with target language speakers, whether these occur through physical mobility (e.g., study abroad) or virtual mobility (e.g., telecollaboration). Yet, while program directors focus on the logistics and materials of classroom practices that best prepare students to engage outside of the classroom, there is little attention to the ways language ideologies shape expectations for these encounters.

This chapter addresses the role of language ideologies in shaping the experiences of study abroad and telecollaboration by analyzing data from 65 U.S. learners of Arabic. I demonstrate that student expectations for study abroad and telecollaboration are framed by monolingual ideologies of language originating with the European nation-state (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015; May, 2014). However, examining students' actual experiences of physical and virtual mobility demonstrates the highly plurilingual nature of these spaces. Framing these plurilingual encounters with monolingual ideologies of language creates tensions that limit students' language learning. For this reason, I propose adopting pedagogies informed by plurilingual language ideologies in language classrooms (García & Li, 2014; Makalela, 2017; Piccardo, 2017).

Literature Review

Monolingual Ideologies of Language

Monolingual ideologies of language have their origins in the European nation-state, where language and national boundaries were imagined as distinct and mutually reinforcing (Beacco & Byram, 2007; Cenoz & Gorter, 2015; May, 2014).

Colonialism spread these ideologies to other locations, particularly in academic settings (Makalela, 2015; Makoni & Pennycook, 2005, 2012). Colonialism also employed the concept of distinct linguistic boundaries to construct racial boundaries and enact racial hierarchies (Rosa & Flores, 2017). Monolingual ideologies of language remain a prominent influence on research and practice in applied linguistics (Canagarajah & Liyanage, 2012; Makalela, 2015; Makoni & Pennycook, 2012), and they are particularly apparent in the context of teaching languages other than English in the United States (Anya, 2017; Kramsch & Huffmaster, 2015; Levine, 2011).

In the language classroom, the assumption that language boundaries are distinct and associated with similarly bounded nations and cultures has several implications. These include the view that monolingual native speakers represent “ideal” linguistic behavior, that knowledge of other dialects and languages can interfere with the acquisition of new ones, and that classrooms that operate only in the target language are the ideal learning environment. Generalized and/or decontextualized proficiency assessments and cultural comparisons mapped to nation-states are also hallmarks of monolingual ideologies of language (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015; Ortega, 2013).

Plurilingual Ideologies of Language

Plurilingual ideologies of language have their origins in pre- and postcolonial contexts (Canagarajah & Liyanage, 2012; Makalela, 2015) and highly multilingual urban centers (García & Li, 2014), generally outside of academic settings (Makoni & Pennycook, 2005, 2012). Plurilingual ideologies of language recognize that language boundaries are fluid and emphasize the social, rather than linguistic, construction of these boundaries (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015; Mazak, 2017; Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2015). Each individual has a unique plurilingual repertoire from which he or she draws strategically to communicate in specific contexts (Otheguy et al., 2015; Piccardo, 2013). The linguistic elements in the repertoire may be associated with different social varieties referred to as “named” languages or dialects, a term that emphasizes their social construction, rather than normalizing their existence as distinct linguistic objects (Otheguy et al., 2015). Plurilingual ideologies also emphasize the connections that exist between all elements in the repertoire (Piccardo, 2013). An individual’s plurilingual repertoire shifts over time and through lived experiences (Lüdi & Py, 2009). As such, linguistic competence is contextualized and created in interaction, rather than measured against externally prescribed proficiency standards (Canagarajah & Liyanage, 2012). Finally, translanguaging is a normal and strategic practice within a plurilingual view of language use (García & Li, 2014; Otheguy et al., 2015).

Translanguaging is a term originally developed in Wales and expanded to describe the language practices of plurilingual communities from a plurilingual perspective (García and Li, 2018). Translanguaging practices can take a variety of forms, such as displaying information in English while speaking in both English and Spanish to teach a science lesson (Mazak, Mendoza, & Pérez Mangonéz, 2017) or using linguistic forms socially ascribed to different language varieties in the same conversation (Li, 2018). Using multiple languages in one interaction has also been described as codeswitching. However, describing practices as translanguaging, rather than codeswitching, indicates a key theoretical difference. A codeswitching perspective normalizes the existence of separate linguistic codes onto which linguistic elements in an utterance can be mapped (e.g., this word is Spanish, this one is English). In contrast, a translanguaging perspective emphasizes the unity of an individual's linguistic repertoire and how they draw linguistic elements from this repertoire to communicate in specific contexts. Thus, the emphasis is on the unity of the individual's repertoire rather than linguistic codes as distinct objects (Otheguy et al., 2015). Furthermore, translanguaging speakers can use their creativity and criticality to create identities and social practices that transcend those available in monolingual spaces (García & Li, 2014).

Classrooms taking a plurilingual perspective recognize the unique plurilingual repertoires and rich linguistic practices of all learners not just those who best conform to a monolingual standard. In these classrooms, prior knowledge of dialects and languages becomes a resource for expanding students' linguistic repertoires to include new ones. However, translanguaging is not simply a scaffold to monolingual production, where learners initially translanguage (e.g., switching to English because they don't know a vocabulary word in the target language) but eventually conform to a monolingual standard. While learners may choose to express themselves monolingually in certain contexts, they also develop their translanguaging skills to engage in interactions that transcend these contexts and allow them to express their full social identities (Celice & Seltzer, 2013; García & Li, 2014). Furthermore, learning and assessment practices are tied to specific, action-oriented contexts and encourage reflection and metalinguistic awareness (Piccardo, 2017).

In recent years, researchers critiquing the dominance of monolingual language ideologies have called for new approaches, including multilingual orientations (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014; Ortega, 2013), translanguaging theory (García & Li, 2014; Li, 2018), and plurilingualism (Beacco & Byram, 2007; Piccardo, 2013). In this chapter, I use the term plurilingualism to distinguish this approach from a perspective that uses the term multilingual but is informed by monolingual ideologies (i.e., multilingualism as multiple monolingualisms) and to avoid confusion between translanguaging as a practice and theory. It is also

crucial to realize that the historical dominance of monolingual language ideologies in applied linguistics is one reason for the current proliferation of terms for plurilingual perspectives. However, these perspectives and practices have long existed in pre- and postcolonial locations marginalized by a focus on modern North American and European contexts (Canagarajah & Liyanage, 2012). For example, South African teachers in Makalela's (2017) study referred to translanguaging as "the way we talk *ko kasi* [in the location]" (i.e., in black townships outside of academic settings), indicating that translanguaging perspectives and practices were not new experiences for them.

Although critiques of monolingual ideologies have gained strength in applied linguistics, the role of language ideologies in the contexts of English-speaking students learning other languages in the United States has received little attention, although such learning contexts are by definition plurilingual contexts that include English and at least one other language (Levine, 2011). At the university level, Kramsch and Huffmaster (2015) explain that "foreign" language departments face a tension between their origins in modern nationalism, where they have been tasked with teaching a national language, literature, and culture, and the current era of globalization that disputes the sanctity of national boundaries and nationalism. However, students' use of the target language outside of the classroom is likely to be in plurilingual rather than monolingual contexts. For example, although study abroad is often presented as monolingual "immersion," research consistently demonstrates the plurilingual nature of these contexts (Tullock & Ortega, 2017).

This raises the question of whether classroom practices rooted in monolingual language ideologies effectively prepare students to engage in plurilingual environments, whether in the context of study abroad or in virtually mediated conversations. Mori and Sanuth (2018) detail the experiences of U.S. students studying Yoruba in Nigeria and demonstrate how some students' frustration with their inability to find monolingual Yoruba immersion prevented them from developing the translanguaging practices necessary to engage in their local environment. By contrast, Anya (2017) demonstrates how two students studying Portuguese in Brazil were able to successfully engage with locals through translanguaging practices but were consistently reprimanded by program staff and participants for their inability to remain monolingual in Portuguese in an academic environment.

This chapter takes up this intersection between ideologies and practices by focusing on U.S. learners of Arabic engaging in telecollaboration and study abroad. I demonstrate that while monolingual ideologies of language shaped students' expectations for engagement in both spaces, translanguaging practices were the norm in these plurilingual environments. I argue that reframing language learning in U.S. classrooms according to plurilingual ideologies will better prepare students to engage with the plurilingual world beyond them.

Method

The data in this chapter come from three different research projects focused on the Arabic language learning of U.S. students in study abroad and telecollaboration¹. The data were reanalyzed as one dataset. The research questions were as follows:

- 1) What language ideologies do participants express in these contexts?
- 2) What are participants' linguistic practices in these contexts?

Settings and Participants

Semester(s) abroad in Egypt.

The Egypt study took place from 2009 to 2011 and included 51 U.S. students of Arabic and 23 local roommates, host mothers, friends, and teachers. The students were enrolled in three programs: a study abroad program at an English-medium university (SA, $n = 19$), an intensive Arabic program at the same university (IA, $n = 10$), and an intensive Arabic program with a language pledge at an Arabic-medium university (LP, $n = 22$). Students in the SA program took Arabic classes in addition to other courses in English, whereas students in the IA and LP programs took only Arabic classes for 20 hours a week. Students in the LP program, in addition to a language pledge, had substantial amounts of extracurricular activities arranged by the program, including host families and roommates bound by the pledge.

The data analyzed consist of interview, social media, and participant observation data. Student participants were interviewed in Arabic at the beginning and end of their period abroad and in their choice of English or Arabic at the midpoint. Hosts were interviewed about their experiences working with study abroad

¹ Data from the Egypt dataset is also analyzed in the following works:

Diao, W., & Trentman, E. (2016). Politicizing study abroad: Learning Arabic in Egypt and Mandarin in China. *L2 Journal*, 8, 31–50. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/90g8r79m>

Trentman, E. (2013). Arabic and English during study abroad in Cairo, Egypt: Issues of access and use. *Modern Language Journal*, 97, 457–473. doi:10.1111/modl.v97.2

Trentman, E. (2013). Imagined communities and language learning during study abroad: Arabic learners in Egypt. *Foreign Language Annals*, 46, 545–564. doi:10.1111/flan.v46.4

Trentman, E. (2015). Negotiating gendered identities and access to social networks during study abroad in Egypt. In R. Mitchell, K. McManus, & N. Tracy-Ventura (Eds.), *Social interaction, identity and language learning during residence abroad* (pp. 263–280). Retrieved from <http://www.eurosla.org/monographs/EM04/EM04tot.pdf#page=263>

Trentman, E. (2015). Arabic heritage learners abroad: Language use and identity negotiation. *Al-Arabiyya*, 48, 141–156.

Trentman, E. (2017). Oral fluency, sociolinguistic competence, and language contact: Arabic learners studying abroad in Egypt. *System*, 69, 54–64. doi:10.1016/j.system.2017.08.007

Trentman, E., & Diao, W. (2017). The American gaze east: Discourses and destinations of US study abroad. *Study Abroad Research in Second Language Acquisition and International Education*, 2, 175–205. doi:10.1075/sar.16001.tre

students. Of the student participants, 28 consented to my following them on social media (blogs and/or Facebook), and 10 consented to researcher observations of their activities at scheduled times throughout the semester. I also spent several days each week conducting general observations of public spaces on the campuses. I was a graduate student at the time and was not formally affiliated with any of the programs abroad.

Telecollaboration and short-term study abroad in Jordan.

The Jordan study took place in 2016 and included eight U.S. students of Arabic participating in a two-week faculty-led study abroad program preceded by an eight-week telecollaboration with 11 language partners from Jordan. I was the faculty leader. During the telecollaboration, students completed synchronous and asynchronous assignments with their partners, intercultural reflection assignments, and training in ethnographic methods for study abroad (see Jackson, 2006; Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan, & Street, 2001). During the study abroad portion, students had a two-hour class focused on simulating (or role-playing) a particular language task (such as giving directions, chatting with the driver, and negotiating payment in a taxi), which they had to record themselves completing for homework (e.g., while actually riding in a taxi). They also engaged in daily cultural activities with their language partners (such as visiting a historical site) and collected interview and observation data for their study abroad project. Most students conducted their formal interview with their language partners, and they conducted observations in places readily accessible to them, such as cafés and university campuses. Upon their return, they wrote a paper as their final assignment for the study abroad project. This paper drew upon their interview and observational data collected abroad to discuss their particular topic of interest (such as café life). The data analyzed consist of students' assignments for the course, interviews with students and partners following the program, and participant observations.

Classroom telecollaboration project.

The classroom telecollaboration project took place in spring 2017 and included six learners in a U.S. intermediate Arabic class and five language partners. I was the instructor. As part of their class, students completed three half-hour conversations with Arabic-speaking partners on the TalkAbroad platform. Students had to prepare questions for their partners in advance and complete a reflection assignment analyzing the conversation. The data consist of students' preparation, recorded conversation, and reflection assignments.

Role of the Researcher

While collecting the Egypt data, I was a graduate student unaffiliated with the programs; for the other two projects, I was the classroom teacher. This shift

in position with the participants in the study did not seem to impact the data selected for analysis. One reason may be that, although I am now an Arabic professor, I have been an Arabic learner for my entire adult life. I grew up in the United States and studied abroad in Egypt three different times before conducting research there and thus share many of the students' lived experiences abroad, particularly with those students whose race and gender overlap with mine (White female). While I did not participate in classroom telecollaboration projects as a student, I have arranged these projects for five years as a classroom teacher.

Analysis

The data from these three projects were analyzed using the MAXQDA qualitative data analysis software. Through a recursive and iterative process, I identified the parts of the data that related to language ideologies and practices and coded these parts of the data with codes such as "linguistic practices," "translanguaging," "expectations," and "English as a resource." I also wrote memos summarizing trends I saw across the data or within a particular piece of data, such as an interaction or interview. The coded data and memos were placed onto a conceptual map, which I used to develop the thematic analysis presented in this chapter. I chose the quotes for presentation later in the chapter for their clarity as examples of the overall theme.

Findings

My findings show that participants expressed monolingual ideologies of language, which shaped their expectations for language learning in the contexts of study abroad and telecollaboration. At the same time, their linguistic practices were consistently plurilingual, across a wide variety of social contexts.

Expectations Shaped by Monolingual Ideologies of Language

In all of these contexts, it was clear that monolingual ideologies of language shaped students' expectations for their engagement with Arabic speakers in virtual and physical environments. Monolingual ideologies of language have their origins in the nation-state, particularly the mapping of language boundaries to national ones. This mapping ensures that languages and nations are perceived as separate and distinct, with mutually reinforcing boundaries. This ideology surfaced in the data as participants mapped Arabic to geographic spaces belonging to Arab nations (as in study abroad) or virtual spaces focused on Arabic learning (as in classroom telecollaboration projects) and expected monolingual Arabic immersion in these environments. Second, this association between nation and language included the people imagined as belonging to that nation, such that participants

tended to view Arabs as Arabic speakers and fellow U.S. study abroad students as English speakers, again matching language and nationality. This included racial mappings, where white skin was associated with English and the United States while darker skin was associated with Arabic and Arab nations. The influence of monolingual ideologies of language on student expectations was also widespread, appearing to some degree in the data of each student participant.

Expectations of monolingual immersion.

In the telecollaboration spaces, expectations of monolingual immersion were most apparent in the website of the TalkAbroad program, students' feelings of success when they used mostly Arabic, and participants' demarcation between "on topic" conversation (in Arabic) and "off topic" conversation in other languages.

On the TalkAbroad website, the platform is described as an "immersion" experience meant as an affordable alternative to the assumed monolingual immersion of study abroad, as stated on the "About us" page:

We believe in providing a great language immersion experience.

Many students experience the real joy of language learning during their first study abroad program. It becomes a fun and exciting challenge to communicate with the native speakers they encounter.

Unfortunately study abroad programs are expensive and a big commitment. Not everyone can do it. It's our hope that TalkAbroad can provide short and affordable "immersion experiences" to students unable to leave their home country. (www.talkabroad.com, August 22, 2018)

Expectations of a monolingual environment also surfaced in reflection assignments, where students tended to evaluate the success of their experiences on the extent to which they were able to use as much Arabic and as little English as possible. For example, Jennie (all names are pseudonyms) reported in one of her reflection assignments: "I felt very confident! I'd say it was the most Arabic I've spoken in a talk abroad session w/no English! :-)"

At the same time, it was also clear that this expectation for monolingual immersion in Arabic only applied to conversations the participants deemed part of the assignment. For example, when there were technical issues, both students and partners tended to switch to English, even though the language needed to discuss technical issues was not necessarily more complicated than that needed to discuss the assigned topics. Table 5.1 illustrates a situation in which Mariana was unable to hear her language partner Amal and immediately switched to English, even though the phrase "I didn't hear anything" is one she could have said in Arabic.

Table 5.1 “I Didn’t Hear Anything”

Speaker	Original	Translation
Amal (partner)	نكون صائمين في الصبح وفجأة السحور لم نأكل السحور	We’re fasting in the morning, and suddenly, suHoor*, we didn’t eat suHoor
Mariana (student)	Oh, um, the video froze, I didn’t hear anything	Oh, um, the video froze, I didn’t hear anything

Note: *suHoor is the pre-dawn meal in Ramadan.

Another example of switching to English for an “off-topic” conversation occurred in a conversation between Sally and her partner, Amina, when Sally told Amina that a different partner had contacted her through social media. Amina switched to English to express concern and surprise at this event, since it violated the partner rules. Yet, after expressing her concern, Amina noted, “we are speaking English now, and I am not allowed to do it.” Sally and Amina proceeded to switch back to Arabic to continue their conversation on social media use. These examples demonstrate the clear expectation of monolingual Arabic immersion, at least for the parts of the conversation deemed “on-topic,” a pattern that also appears in structured conversations during study abroad (Al Masaeed, 2016).

During study abroad, expectations of monolingual immersion arose in students imagining that they would speak “only Arabic” abroad, their disappointment when this did not happen, and their valuing of the language pledge as a way to create monolingual immersion in a plurilingual environment.

Prior to going abroad, Bella (Jordan program) described her goals as follows: “Make friends, speak only Arabic, make lots of mistakes (the master has failed more times than the beginner has tried) and drink a ton of coffee.” This expectation of “only Arabic” also surfaced in the disappointment of students already abroad who discovered that the environment was not as monolingual as they had previously imagined. For example, Arianna (SA program) explained:

It’s so easy to not use Arabic, like it’s, I mean obviously you have to usually you have to for taxis and things like that so I know like very basic like survival skills in Arabic, but like it’s so easy for me to like switch back into English and speak to Egyptians, especially at [university], in English, that I’m not necessarily learning like as much as I thought I would learn here in a sense. Like I thought I would come here and my Arabic would be like so good and I’d be speaking Arabic all the time and that’s definitely not the case. (Interview)

Students in the LP program emphasized the value of the pledge for “forcing” them to use Arabic, drawing upon monolingual ideologies of language to paint monolingualism as a solution to the problem of a plurilingual environment.

Table 5.2 Language Pledge

Speaker	Original	Translation
Carol	والفرق واحد مع (برنامج التعهد اللغوي) كان إنجليزي ممنوع، فأنا فكرت دا حاجة واحدة مختلفة، أنا عايزة دا، والنسبة لي دا بيمنع، حاجة مهمة عشان أنا عارفة أشخاص في (برامج أخرى) دالوقتي، ويعني اللغة بتاعتي ممكن أحسن، خاصة بالعامة، بس أسهل أتكلّم يعني، من غير، أكيد أنا أعمل غلط على طول، بس يعني أنا مش، أنا مش أتجرم من الإنجليزي إلى العربي، يعني أحياناً بس معظم الوقت أنا بس بأتكلّم، وأنا عارفة دا عشان ال language pledge	The only difference with (the LP program) was English was forbidden, so I thought this is one thing that's different, I want this, for me this is sufficient, an important thing because I know people in (other programs) right now, and my language is maybe better, especially Egyptian dialect, but it's easier for me to talk you know, without, of course I make mistakes all the time, but like I don't, I don't translate from English to Arabic, like sometimes, but most of the time I just talk, and I know that's because of the <i>language pledge</i>
Emma	التعهد اللغوي حاجة كويسة؟	The language pledge is a good thing?
Carol	أهم حاجة في البرنامج	The most important thing in the program

Note: Italics in the translation represent English in the original.

This was frequently characterized as “forbidding English” rather than “using only Arabic,” as in Carol’s description of why she chose the LP program (see Table 5.2). Even in this exchange, the plurilingual environment is clear, as Carol used the term “language pledge” in English, a common practice among both students and Egyptians in the program despite the existence of a program-specific translation I used in my reply.

Linking race, nation, and language.

The second way in which monolingual ideologies of language informed expectations for study abroad and telecollaboration was in the linking of language, nation, and race, viewing (White) U.S. learners as English speakers and Arabs (or potentially non-White students) as Arabic speakers.

In the classroom telecollaboration project, Damian reported using “50% English and 50% Arabic with a Jordanian friend.” His partner, Yara, urged him to “speak Arabic all the time,” focusing on the friend as an Arabic speaker and using only Arabic as the best way to learn Arabic. However, by viewing the friend simply as an Arabic speaker with whom Damian could accomplish his language learning goals, Yara ignored the friend’s English skills and reasons why he might want to use English in conversations with Damian (e.g., to practice English, or establish his bilingual identity, or ensure that Damian does not misunderstand important cultural information). This view erases the friend’s identity as an English speaker, limiting him to an identity as an Arabic speaker (see Table 5.3).

Table 5.3 “50% Arabic, 50% English”

Speaker	Original	Translation
Damian	الآن اه عندي اه صديق جديد في الحقيقية، هو، هو من، من الأردن. وأتكلّم الآن مثل 50% في لغة العربية و 50% في لغة الإنجليزية	Now I actually have a new friend, he, he's from, from Jordan and I speak now like 50% in Arabic and 50% in English
Yara	هو في نيو مكسيكو؟	He's in New Mexico?
Damian	mmhmm. الآن. Yeah	<i>Yeab</i> , now, <i>mmbmm</i>
Yara	كويس، كويس.	Good, good
Damian	هو يدرس ام الهندسة الآن.	He studies, um, engineering now
Yara	ممم، كويس، اه هذا، احكي، احكي معاه عربي دايمًا.	Good, ah, this speak, speak Arabic with him always
Damian	Yeah, yeah (يضحك) أسهل، أسهل الآن لأفهم كل شيء.	<i>Yeab</i> , <i>Yeab</i> (laughs) it's easier—easier now to understand everything

Note: Italics in the translation represent English in the original.

During study abroad, White students in particular found their expectations of monolingual immersion thwarted by racialized expectations of using English with foreigners. For example, Billy, a White student, explained that he felt his physical appearance made it more difficult for him to use Arabic while studying in the SA program, as people automatically spoke to him in English rather than Arabic:

I mean sometimes, people would obviously rather practice their English with you if you look European, or if you look American so their first inclination is to speak English too, so I mean it does to an extent, I mean if I was, if I looked like an Arab, obviously I think it would be a lot easier to speak Arabic, to engage in a conversation where that was the language. (Interview)

Notable here is the link between race, nation, and language where Billy uses “look European or American” to mean White. After all, U.S. students of color (and those of Arab descent) were often expected to speak Arabic until speaking it revealed they were not fluent. Pearl, a Mexican-American student in the SA program, described this experience, noting that it was “kind of frustrating” when locals would not continue speaking Arabic with her:

They usually assume that I'm Egyptian, and so when I start speaking it's clear that I'm not Egyptian, and they're like oh, and then they try to speak to me in English, and then I'm always like, no I'll try Arabic, and then they're like, ah, I speak English ... so that's actually been kind of frustrating ... (Interview)

She also found it frustrating that, although she was cast as an English speaker, she was not recognized as fully American, due to racialized links among Whiteness, English, and U.S. nationality upheld by some Egyptians she encountered. She explained that when locals realized she was not Egyptian:

Usually the conversation, it's pretty standard, goes, oh, you're not Egyptian and I say no, I'm not, I'm American, and they say, but no you're not, like your coloring is not American, and I'm like nope, I'm American, through and through, I'm American, and they're like no, but really, what are you, and I'm like okay, well, my dad's family is Mexican, and they're like oh, so you're Mexican, and I'm like no, I'm American, I promise I'm not lying, and that's like kind of frustrating because everyone has this mentality that like Americans are all white, and that's just like not true. (Interview)

For students like Billy and Pearl, their inability to engage monolingually in Arabic with people they viewed as Arabic speakers (despite these interlocutors' clear abilities in English as well) was a source of frustration and one that they felt impacted their language learning. Yet, at the same time, U.S. students tended not to view each other as Arabic speakers without a program-enforced language pledge.

Plurilingual Realities

Central themes related to the plurilingual experience included using English as a resource to learn Arabic, mapping certain languages to certain social functions or topics, and the prevalence of translanguaging practices.

Multilingual spaces and backgrounds.

Although English and Arabic were the most salient languages in the data, the participants' plurilingual repertoires extended far beyond these two named languages. All 65 Arabic students had learned at least one language other than Arabic or English, and many of the language partners also knew other languages. Both discussion and use of other languages surfaced in the study abroad and telecollaboration experiences.

In the telecollaboration experience, multilingualism was a frequent topic of conversation, ranging from the languages the students and partners had studied to discussions about how in locations such as Tunisia it was normal for people to speak three to four languages. Sometimes, use of these languages also surfaced in the conversation, particularly in "off-topic" segments. As illustrated in Table 5.4, after running out of questions to ask his partner, Nathan stated "there is the end" in Arabic and then switched to French.

Table 5.4 “It’s a Pleasure”

Speaker	Original	Translation
Nathan	um, well	Um, <i>well</i>
Amina	bon	Good
Nathan	um, ah, هناك النهاية, (laughs) comme toujours	Um, ah, there is the end (laughs), as always
Amina	c’est un plaisir	It’s a pleasure
Nathan	c’est un plaisir	It’s a pleasure
Amina	d’accord	Okay
Nathan	donc, uh, uh	So, uh, uh
Amina	à la prochaine	Until next time
Nathan	à la prochaine	Until next time
Amina	(unclear) on dit au revoir مع السلامة	(Unclear) we say good-bye, bye, bye
Nathan	مع السلامة	bye

Note: Italics in the translation represent English in the original, bold represents French.

Languages other than English and Arabic also surfaced in study abroad. For example, Mita, who was not ethnically Thai but emigrated from Thailand to the United States as a child, explained her use of multiple varieties of Arabic, Thai, and English within her friendship group while studying in the SA program:

فيه بنت من البحرين وأحياناً أنا، وهي بتتكلم العامية المصرية وأنا بأتكلم بالفصحى والعامية شوية معها ولكن مع أصدقائي من تايلاند أنا أتكلم في تايلاندي معهم عشان ممكن أتدرب ومش أنسى اللغة ول، ولكلهم أنا بأتكلم بالإنجليزي معظم الوقت بالإنجليزي

[There’s a girl from Bahrain and sometimes I, and she speaks Egyptian dialect, and I speak in Modern Standard Arabic and Egyptian dialect a little with her, but with my friends from Thailand I speak Thai so I can practice and not forget the language, and to all of them I speak English, most of the time in English.] (Interview)

Using existing linguistic resources to access new ones.

In both virtual and physical environments, the multilingual environment meant that learners were able to leverage their existing linguistic resources to gain access to new ones, although they did not necessarily view it this way. In the telecollaboration environment, the most common example was the students’ reliance on their partners’ knowledge of English to learn new vocabulary. If they did not know a word in Arabic, they would simply say it in English and their partner would provide it in Arabic, as in the exchange between Jennie and Amina in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 Candles

Speaker	Original	Translation
Jennie	أنا، أنا أشرب بييرة كثيرا، في هاناكا أيضا um أشرب بييرة كثيرا (تضحك) وام وال ال أنا uhhh candles	I, I drink beer a lot, during Hanukkah too I drink beer a lot (laugh) and um, and the the, um, uhhhh, <i>candles</i> , I
Amina	الشموع؟ الشموع؟	The candles? The candles?
Jennie	نعم الشموع	Yes, the candles

Note: Italics in the translation represent English in the original.

Students in the study abroad environment also reported asking local friends for specific vocabulary. They further leveraged their linguistic resources by using English as a means to gain access to local social networks, a practice also reported by study abroad students in Dewey, Ring, Gardner, and Belnap (2013) and Mitchell, Tracy-Ventura, and McManus (2017). A common practice among the students in Egypt was to volunteer as an English teacher, a position gained through their native speaker status rather than their teaching expertise (another connection to monolingual ideologies of language). Rashid (IA program) described how teaching English allowed him to develop his Arabic:

It's completely Arabic, it's like the alphabet, starting with alphabet, and then it's hard because it's like the teaching part and then the administrative stuff because I have to figure out which kids are at the right level, because it's like a lot of the kids, it's an anti-illiteracy program, so a lot of the kids can't read or write Arabic either so I have to identify which ones can do that, with the teachers help, make sure I'm not a disruption to that as well, so it's like administrative stuff, education stuff, and then also it's like they love talking to me about like random things, like it's a full on barrage of عامية [Egyptian dialect]. (Interview)

Mapping language and social function.

Another common theme that emerged in both the settings was the mapping of certain languages to particular social functions. In the telecollaboration setting, this occurred when the “on-topic” conversations were conducted in Arabic, but discussions of technical or personal issues, or interactions at the margins of the conversations, showed the use of other languages.

In the study abroad context, a common theme was the use of English for establishing friendships and Arabic with strangers in service encounters, a pattern also reported by Levine (2015) for students studying in Germany. Rob (SA program) distinguished between using “codeswitching” with “native Arabic

speakers” and “only Arabic” with “native Arabic speakers who are Egyptian who are not my friends”:

I use, I use English with native English speakers and very rarely if ever speak Arabic to native English speakers who are learning Arabic, that being said I speak, I use, I guess what you linguists call codeswitching. It's, yeah I used codeswitching to speak to either people who are native Arabic speakers or I use codeswitching with dominant English, so English is mostly it, but then I'll say things in Arabic, and with native Arabic speakers who are Egyptian who are not my friends, who are maybe I'm interacting with in the coffee shop, I speak only in Arabic, even if it's something as simple as, if I want to say I want a Coca-Cola, I would say *لو سمحت ممكن كوكا كولا* (Interview)

Although Rob was describing and engaging in translanguaging practices, monolingual ideologies of language surfaced in his reflection in that he linked languages with “native” speakers of that language. Rob did not consider using Arabic or codeswitching with “native English speakers” as an option, although he did translanguague with me when describing what he would say to order Coca-Cola.

Students also expressed shame, frustration, and regret with their perceived choice between practicing Arabic and developing their friendships. Mariam (IA program) explained:

I do find that like if I can come up with it fast enough in Arabic, I do, but like I allow, and I regret it, but I do allow myself to like respond in English if I can't come up with it in Arabic quick enough, just because like, it's so, it's so hard to be an actual part of the conversation if you like, if I tell myself I can only speak in Arabic, I limit myself so much, and it's to my ability also to like really engage with them as people, like if I was only allowed to speak in Arabic to like my really close friends, I still, we still would be really close, but like I wouldn't be able to express myself as well, and it's so frustrating, and like I said, I'm annoyed at myself that I like allow myself to do it, because like I do feel like I would be better at speaking Arabic, if I told them, had a strict rule, instead I was never allowed to speak English, so that irritates me, but that is kind of the truth. (Interview)

Although the 22 students in the language pledge program who had a “strict rule” did use primarily Arabic with each other, they mostly befriended locals who were part of the program and also bound by the language pledge. Outside of program friendships, they used Arabic primarily in service encounters. Some of them reported breaking off friendships that required too much English. For example, Sam felt that one group of friends was “almost America,” so he stopped hanging out with them:

بس كان تقريبا أمريكا، ما كانش زي تجربة مصرية وعشان كده، يعني، بعد دا، يعني، ما عملتش حاجات كثير أكثر معهم

[It was almost America, it wasn't like a real Egyptian experience and so because of that, like, after like, like, I didn't do a lot more things with them.] (Interview)

However, despite the language pledge, the LP students did engage in a variety of plurilingual practices, including breaking the pledge, reading news and novels in English, and making creative plurilingual jokes. Yet, these practices went largely unrecognized by the LP program participants in their focus on using Arabic and forbidding English, especially in conversation.

Mapping language to topic.

Language was also mapped to topic, as in the case of the “on-topic” and “off-topic” conversations in the telecollaboration setting. During study abroad, some students were eager to discuss topics beyond their Arabic proficiency level with locals. For example, Steve (SA program) emphasized his desire to hear Egyptian opinions, even if it was “just like speaking in English with them”:

I really like hanging out with Egyptians and hearing their opinion on stuff, even if it's just like speaking in English with them about things, just to get like a better understanding of their actual opinion on things, like political and religious feelings. (Interview)

Justin (Jordan program) shared an interest in political science with his partner and thus reported that he would ask questions that “I really had no idea how to say in Arabic.”

Um, but even when I was with Nadeem, I don't necessarily think, um, we spoke as much Arabic as we could, and that was probably my fault more so than him, because, um, I would often ask him questions [about politics] that, um, I really had no idea how to say in Arabic. (Interview)

While these language practices allowed students to discuss topics of interest to them, students also expressed regret that they did not remain in a monolingual mode in Arabic.

Translanguaging practices.

Across all contexts, translanguaging practices were the norm. In the telecollaboration, as described earlier, students could rely upon their partner's knowledge of English when they were unsure of a particular vocabulary item in Arabic, or they could switch to other languages when they deemed the conversation “off-topic.” However, translanguaging practices were not simply a scaffold to transition to monolingual conversations. In a classroom telecollaboration conversation, both Ahlam and Kyla used English words they also knew in Arabic (no and okay). While it is difficult to say exactly what motivated these choices, it seems to relate to their

pragmatic management of the conversation and the negotiation of understanding the word إظهار (advertising). For example, Kyla said “no” to identify that she did not understand the word, and Ahlam used “okay” to signal a transition into how she is going to help Kyla understand it (by writing it in the chat box). Furthermore, during the 12 seconds of silence after Ahlam wrote the word for Kyla, it is likely that Kyla was using plurilingual resources by entering it into an online translator before confirming comprehension (see Table 5.6).

In contrast to the idea of mapping languages to social practices, translanguaging practices were also used to develop friendships. In a telecollaboration conversation prior to the Jordan study abroad, Andy and his partner Moataz translanguaged to discuss action films in the telecollaboration project preceding the Jordan study abroad program. At the end, Moataz commented, “there is no difference between talking to you and one of my friends.” While this evaluation could stem from the language, the topic, or a combination thereof, Moataz also translanguaged with his Jordanian friends (see Table 5.7).

In the study abroad setting, translanguaging practices were common in student interactions with each other as well as with locals who were both friends and strangers. Kala (IA program) explained that when she was talking with her study abroad friends:

It’s kind of a mix, it’s pretty even, what I use, um, honestly I don’t have conversations in Arabic with friends, but like you have like, go back and forth, and there are words ... like خلاص [that’s it], like stuff like that, or like colloquial idioms. (Interview)

Although here Kala referred back to the language/friendship mapping by stating “I don’t have conversations in Arabic with friends,” it is notable that the conversational practices she described in fact depended on her friends’ knowledge of Arabic and English.

Table 5.6 Advertising

Speaker	Original	Translation
Ahlam	فاتواصل الاجتماعي مهم جدا في الإظهار. تعرفين إظهار؟	So social media is very important in advertising. Do you know advertising?
Kyla	إظهار؟ أم ممم، ممم، ممكن no لا، لا أعرف (تضحك)	Advertising? Um, mmm, mmm, maybe, no no, I don’t know (laughs)
Ahlam	لحظة أنا أكتبها لك. إظهار Okay	Okay, one moment, I’ll write it for you. Advertising
Kyla	إظهار. اهههه، (١٢ ثانية من الصمت). نعم	Advertising, ahhh. (12 seconds silence) Yes
Ahlam	نعم. Okay.	Yes. Okay

Note: Italics in the translation represent English in the original.

Table 5.7 Explosions

Speaker	Original	Translation
Moataz	أنا بحب ال action heroes كمان ارنولد , سيلفستر ستالون, ارنولد.	I like the <i>action heroes</i> too, Arnold, Sylvester Stallone, Arnold
Andy	اممم	Mnhmm
Moataz	Yeah, بس هم مش ممتازين في التمثيل بس هم كويس في action, وال-	<i>Yeah</i> , but they aren't great at acting, but they are good at, <i>you know, action</i> , and the
Andy	نعم.	Yes
Moataz	نعم.	Yes
Andy	وال explosions كبير (يضحك)	and the <i>explosions</i> are big (laughs)
Moataz	اه explosions, bullets flying everywhere	ah, <i>explosions, bullets flying everywhere</i>
Andy	أيوه أيوه.	Yes, yes
Moataz	explosions by the way is انفجار.	<i>explosions by the way is explosion</i>
Andy	ان-انفجار؟	in-infijaar?
Moataz	انفجار is explosions	explosion <i>is explosions</i>
Andy	انفجار؟	explosion?
Moataz	Yeah, explosion, yeah	<i>Yeah, explosion, yeah</i>
Andy	و fire, نار	and <i>fire, fire?</i>
Moataz	نار yeah	fire, <i>yeah</i>
Andy	Learning a little bit شوية.	<i>Learning a little bit</i> a little
Moataz	... لا ممتاز difference between talking to you and one of my friends	No, great ... <i>there is no difference between talking to you and one of my friends</i> I understood the Arabic, everything was great
Andy	أنا فهمت العربي, ممتاز كل شيء. شكرًا, شكرًا	Thank you, thank you

Note: Italics in the translation represent English in the original.

Similarly, while encounters with strangers were typically referenced as Arabic practice, recordings of service encounters from the Jordan program reveal the frequency of translanguaging practices, as in the conversation between Peter and a taxi driver shown in Table 5.8. In this conversation, the driver said, "Welcome to Jordan" in English as Peter responded to this greeting in Arabic, demonstrating his comprehension. When Peter responded to the English phrase, although he continued to speak Arabic, he said "thank you," the expected English response, rather than the Arabic one he said previously.

Overall, both the telecollaboration and study abroad environments were clearly plurilingual spaces. Although students described mapping certain languages to particular social situations or topics, translanguaging practices were the norm.

Table 5.8 Welcome to Jordan

Speaker	Original	Translation
Peter	كيف حالك؟	How are you?
Driver	تمام، كيف حالك إنت الحمد لله	Good, how are you?
Peter	تمام الحمد لله	Good
Driver	أهلا وسهلا بكم في الأردن	Welcome to Jordan
Peter	اه أهلا فيك	Thank you (welcome to you)
Driver	Welcome to Jordan	<i>Welcome to Jordan</i>
Peter	شكرا شكرا	Thank you, thank you
Driver	اميركا	America?
Peter	اه اه	Yes, yes
Driver	very nice	<i>Very nice</i>
Peter	وإنت	And you
Driver	very nice	<i>Very nice</i>
Peter	وإنت من وين؟	Where are you from?
Driver	أنا من الاردن	I'm from Jordan
Peter	اه، ممتاز	Oh, great

Note: Italics in the translation represent English in the original.

Discussion

Analyzing the experiences of these U.S.-Arabic learners in both virtual and physical environments demonstrates how expectations of monolingual immersion and language–nation–person mappings rooted in monolingual ideologies of language did not match the plurilingual realities of these spaces. Although translanguaging practices were the norm in all situations, these practices were frequently interpreted through a monolingual perspective, such that participants separated their use of Arabic and English according to factors such as interlocutor, topic, or social context.

This monolingual framing of plurilingual realities has numerous implications for students' interpretations of their experiences and their language learning. In describing their plurilingual experiences, students used words like “frustration” and “regret” at their failure to meet an albeit unrealistic monolingual standard. They also explained that they needed a monolingual environment (or a language pledge) to be “forced” to use Arabic, and when this did not exist, they felt the need to choose between what they saw as equally important goals of developing friendships or discussing certain topics and practicing Arabic. They also reproduced problematic mappings among language, race, and nation in their expectations about which languages should be used with which interlocutors. Despite their use of translanguaging practices to expand their linguistic repertoires and social networks, they were not always aware of the full potential of these practices. In short,

their framing of plurilingual practices with monolingual ideologies of language meant that they were not in fact prepared to maximize their language learning in plurilingual environments. These findings point to several potential implications for language instructors.

Plurilingual Pedagogies

Plurilingual pedagogies, also called translanguaging pedagogies, offer the possibility of addressing this mismatch by drawing upon plurilingual language ideologies to inform classroom practice (García & Li, 2014; Piccardo, 2017). Plurilingual pedagogies recognize the value of all of the linguistic resources in an individual's linguistic repertoire and the ways in which individuals can actively, intentionally, and creatively draw from their full repertoires to participate in transformative translanguaging spaces, continue to expand their linguistic repertoires, and develop a critical awareness of connections between language and structures of power in the world (García & Li, 2014; Piccardo, 2017). This is a nuanced and highly intentional approach that recognizes the plurilingual realities of our language learning spaces inside and outside of the classroom. While it does not forbid the use of certain codes, it also does not result in random language use or a return to the grammar-translation method (Celic & Seltzer, 2013; Makalela, 2017).

Reframing existing practices.

In the U.S. language classroom, adopting plurilingual pedagogies is in some ways more of a shift in perspective than practice, as classrooms are inherently plurilingual environments where translanguaging practices are the norm (Levine, 2011). The prevalent view of these practices, rooted in monolingual language ideologies, views these practices as a binary choice between the target language or English and assumes that the target language is the natural choice of the “best” teachers, students, and programs. In contrast, plurilingual pedagogies emphasize deliberately choosing and making connections between elements from learners' full linguistic repertoires to support their language learning in a given situation. The linguistic features selected for communication in a given context (such as a classroom task) include not only those socially assigned to the target language and English but also any other socially designated languages or dialects in the learners' repertoires. This pedagogical perspective requires shifting our focus from *which* language is being used to *how* students and teachers are using language to expand our linguistic repertoires.

One example of this shift is in our perception of teacher talk, where teachers primarily use the target language to communicate. From a monolingual perspective, this practice is an example of the teacher providing the immersive environment that is best for language learning, and success is measured by the percent of time spent in the target language. In contrast, a plurilingual perspective would

emphasize how the teacher is strategically drawing from their full linguistic repertoire to expand their students' repertoires. For example, using cognates to make target language input comprehensible in fact depends on the teacher's awareness of the ways in which their plurilingual repertoires might overlap with those of their students. This reframing has the added benefit of valuing the plurilingual repertoires of teachers from a variety of linguistic, academic, and cultural backgrounds and the ways in which they can use these repertoires to connect with students rather than ideologies that uphold native speakers from prestigious social and academic backgrounds as the standard.

A second example is the reframing of the common classroom practice in which students translanguage in small group work in order to prepare a monolingual product such as a skit, presentation, or writing assignment. A monolingual perspective on this practice views the translanguaging process as a failure to remain monolingual in the target language, potentially attributable to a lack of proficiency or laziness. Reframing this practice using a plurilingual perspective recognizes that it is the translanguaging during the groupwork that allows for the production of a monolingual product and the expansion of students' linguistic repertoires to include more of the target language.

Another common translanguaging practice in language learning contexts inside and outside of the classroom is for learners to use words in English when they are unable to produce words in the target language. From a monolingual perspective, this indicates a failure on the students' part and potentially an invitation to switch the entire conversation to English. Yet, a plurilingual lens would emphasize the strategic nature of this choice and the way it actually serves to continue using target language resources rather than switching completely to English in difficult moments. Furthermore, another participant in the interaction may supply the word in the target language, expanding the learners' linguistic repertoire through drawing upon their own plurilingual resources.

Making cultural and linguistic comparisons is another common practice in language learning contexts. Monolingual perspectives tend to map these comparisons onto national and/or language borders by drawing comparisons between what is done by "Americans and Egyptians" or in "English and Arabic." Reframing this through plurilingual language perspectives allows us to focus on how interactional patterns "sediment" (Butler, 1999) into associations with specific groups. For example, by looking at examples of people greeting each other in Arabic, learners may see more greeting and "how are you" sequences than they are accustomed to in English, sequences that vary according to contextual, social, and individual features such as the closeness of the relationship, age, and personality. Focusing on how cultural practices are created in interaction helps students understand these practices as negotiated performances rather than static prescriptions with national boundaries.

Finally, a typical view of the language classroom is that it should prepare students to engage in interactions outside of it. From a monolingual perspective, this involves creating a monolingual environment to match the imagined monolingualism outside of the classroom. In contrast, plurilingual pedagogies recognize the plurilingual nature of language learning contexts outside of the classroom, as are evidenced throughout this chapter. These pedagogies can work toward integrating classrooms, community-based learning, telecollaboration, and study abroad in ways that allow students to connect and reflect across these contexts while simultaneously expanding their linguistic repertoires and recognizing the multilingual skills and desires of themselves and their interlocutors.

Creating transformative spaces.

In addition to reframing current practices for expanding students' linguistic repertoires in the U.S. language classroom, taking a plurilingual perspective that normalizes translanguaging practices has the potential to create transformative spaces in these classrooms. After all, translanguaging practices are not a scaffold to monolingual production but a way of transcending the relationships, identities, and opportunities available in monolingual spaces.

For learners such as those described in this chapter, who felt forced to choose between relationships/discussion topics and language practice, recognizing the translanguaging practices (in which they were already engaging) as the norm has the potential to heighten students' awareness of how they can intentionally use these practices to expand both their linguistic repertoires and their relationships. In addition, normalizing translanguaging practices can reduce the shame felt by learners when they feel they have failed to be monolingual.

Taking a plurilingual perspective also engages with global English as a reality rather than a threat to be controlled with a language pledge or seeking study abroad opportunities in ever more remote locations. As the data in this chapter show, students engaged in translanguaging practices that allowed them to use English as a resource to gain linguistic knowledge and entrance into local social networks. There is clear potential for further development of their awareness and abilities to use their knowledge of a global language to expand their linguistic repertoires. Taking a plurilingual approach can also address how these learning contexts can help English-speaking learners expand their linguistic repertoires to include not only elements from the target language but also from local or lingua franca varieties of English. In addition, translanguaging practices make it possible to affirm the desired plurilingual identities and language learning goals of all participants in an interaction rather than creating tensions over which languages to speak and who gets to choose.

Plurilingual pedagogies can also recognize the skills that multilingual and multidialectal students bring to the classroom, even when their languages and dialects are unrelated to the target language. Research on language-minoritized students demonstrates that these students come to the classroom with strong

translanguaging abilities that allow them to adapt their linguistic practices to a variety of social settings (Flores & Rosa, 2015). However, these skills are often not recognized in academic settings, which valorize linguistic practices associated with those of White, upper-middle-class speakers (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Adopting plurilingual pedagogies would recognize the translanguaging strengths and plurilingual competencies of language-minoritized students and help them apply these existing skills to expand their linguistic repertoires to include new languages.

By normalizing the use of translanguaging practices across linguistic and national boundaries, plurilingual pedagogies can also weaken problematic links between race, nation, and language. As the data show, this was a source of frustration for many learners, yet there was little awareness of the colonial origins of these language–race–nation mappings and unequal distributions of linguistic and material resources (Rosa & Flores, 2017). A plurilingual pedagogy that heightens English-speaking learners' critical awareness of the influence of colonialism on both their language learning experiences and global structural inequalities has the potential to connect their language learning with the dismantling of these structures. Although language learning and intercultural contact are frequently framed in media and public discourses as ways of promoting mutual understanding that can overcome geo-political conflict, Wenhao Diao and I have argued elsewhere (Trentman & Diao, 2017) that these discourses obscure the role of global inequities in creating this conflict. While critical awareness alone does not create social change, it can help us avoid reproducing the monolingual language ideologies that support unequal power structures in our language programs.

While structural inequalities extend beyond language programs, it is language programs that are within our sphere of influence as researchers, teachers, and practitioners. Changing the language ideologies that inform our classroom practices, assessments, and program designs in the physical and virtual worlds is certainly a major challenge, particularly as monolingual ideologies of language are pervasive in our larger university and societal settings. However, by becoming aware of what language ideologies we hold, and how they influence our language programs, we can start to shift our ideologies in ways that further our students' language learning and have the potential to support social change.

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