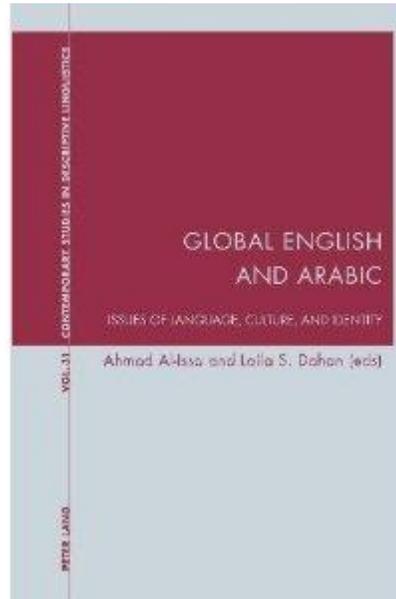Book Review

Editors: Ahmad Al-Issa and Laila S. Dahan
Title of Book: *Global English and Arabic: Issues of Language, Culture, and Identity*
Year of Publication: 2011
Place of Publication: New York
Publisher: Peter Lang
Pages: 366

Global English and Arabic: Issues of Language, Culture, and Identity offers a timely and insightful view of the current state of the Arabic language in the Middle East - North Africa (MENA) region. The book is Volume 31 in a series "Contemporary Studies in Descriptive Linguistics". Divided into twelve chapters, each section highlights a different area of the MENA region by describing various research projects that have investigated issues surrounding the use of Arabic in light of the increasing use of English as the *lingua franca*. While each author comes from a different perspective in a different context, the editors note "the overall message from most of the chapters in this book is that there is greater need for a move towards bilingualism…" (Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011, p. viii).

The authors use both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in their research approaches, which carry sound and clearly explicated research designs. Their work represents the start of a critical investigation in the field of ELT in the Arab world. Current research indicates that the development of a strong L1 is important in the development of a strong L2. Furthermore, bilingualism brings about even greater linguistic, cognitive, and educational

benefits and therefore is a better option for language teaching and development. The authors espouse this view, and suggest the need for educators and policy-makers to reconsider and redesign existing curricula to meet this need.

The scope of this volume is large. In chapter three, Lynne Ronesi discusses her qualitative study investigating female undergraduate students' perspectives as English language writing tutors coming from a native Arabic background. She uses writing samples and interviews as her primary data sources, privileging students' voices and words to explicate their understanding of their own language identity. In contrast, Anissa Daoudi's chapter ten, entitled "Computer-mediated Communication: The Emergence of e-Arabic in the Arab World", delves into a more quantitative study involving millions of words from an internet corpus. In the middle of this spectrum is Pessoa and Rajakumar's chapter "The Impact of English-medium Higher Education: The Case of Qatar", that investigates student populations at two universities through surveys, self-assessments, focus groups, and personal interviews. Despite the wide-ranging topics and methodologies used, the book maintains a thematic focus on the book's subtitle, "Issues of Language, Culture, and Identity." Furthermore, all of the authors' studies have been firmly grounded in solid, background research and appropriate theory current to these interdisciplinary fields of study.

The weakness of this book stems from the fact that it emerges from an exceptionally under-researched area. As the editors acknowledge, this edited collection represents simply an entry point into a much deeper issue: "we hoped it would be a start towards helping educators and policy makers look into the role English has taken on in many of the Arab countries" (Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011, p. ix). Each country's complex political, social, and economic status varies, and therefore approaches to policy-making in each region will vary considerably. Consequently, this book leaves the reader in search of further inquiry into each particular context. Al-Issa and Dahan also stop short of offering any concrete advice or possible solutions to the challenges faced in the Arab world with regard to language policies.   Nonetheless, the publication of this collection represents a groundbreaking move that highlights the dire need for further research both in the long and short-term.

Reviewed by Molly McHarg
Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar

Reference

Al-Issa, A., & Dahan, L. S. (Eds.). (2011). *Global English and Arabic: Issues of Language, Culture, and Identity* (Vol. 31). New York: Peter Lang.

(2007) Arabic language and culture amid the demands of globalization. Abu Dhabi, UAE: The Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research. Ahmed, A. (2010) October6. Being taught in English â€˜undermines local identity.â€™ The National. Retrieved from http:// www .thenational .ae /news /uae -news /education / being -taught -in -english -undermines -local -identity. Al Hinai, M.Â In A. Al-Issa & L. S. Dahan (Eds.), Global English and Arabic: Issues of language, culture, and identity (pp. 1â€"22). Oxford: Peter Lang Publishers. Al Khan, M. N. (2013) May14. Arabic is not dead but teaching must improve, UAE report shows. The National. Retrieved from http:// www .thenational .ae /new /uae -news /arabic -is -not -dead.