



INFLUENCES OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY, BILINGUAL SOCIALIZATION, AND URBAN YOUTH IDENTITIES ON PRODUCING DIFFERENT ARABIC-ENGLISH VOICES IN AUSTRALIA

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Abstract: This paper argues against a single Arabic-background ethnolect of Australian-English, claiming that there are differently motivated language patterns, connected with how and when young people learned English, or their need to express certain identities. A lightly nuanced way of speaking Australia-English is shared by many Australians of Arabic-descent with similar early bilingual socialization. This emerging type of Australian-English is not the same as accented 'learners' English', most typically spoken by late learners. The social varieties are Arabizi, a playful code-switching displaying a modern bilingual/bicultural youth identity, and Lebspeak, which adds global hip-hop and Arabic highlights to an English matrix. Rather than being mainstream-oppositional, Lebspeak is shown to express a niche Australian identity. Survey results indicate that gender is more relevant than religion for using Lebspeak, and that people who use Lebspeak have a positive impression of their status in the eyes of the Australian mainstream. The findings can inform English language teaching and assessment, forensic linguistics, and subject sampling in language and society research.

Keywords: urban youth, language change, Australian-English, identity

Özet: Bu makale, Avustralya İngilizcesinde tek bir Arapça altyapılı etnik lehçenin varlığına karşı çıkararak, gençlerin İngilizceyi nasıl ve ne zaman öğrendiklerine veya belli kimlikleri ifade etme gereksinimlerine bağlı olarak çeşitli sebeplerle oluşan dil kalıplarının bulunduğunu iddia etmektedir. Arap kökenli olan ve benzer çift anadil sosyalizasyon sürecinden geçmiş birçok Avustralyalı, konuşma dilinde Avustralya İngilizcesini diğerlerinden farklı olarak küçük değişikliklerle kullanmaktadırlar. Bu kullanım, ileri yaşlarda İngilizce öğrenen öğrencilerin sahip olduğu aksandan çok farklıdır. Ayrıca, sosyal değişkenlere göre Arabizi ve Lebspeak olarak iki grupta sınıflandırılabilir. Arabizi çift dilliliğin ve çift kültürlülüğün gençler arasında bir göstergesi olarak, konuşma sırasında düzenek kaydırmadır (dil geçişidir). Lebspeak de İngilizceye küresel hip-hop kültürünün yansıması ve Arap etkilerini içeren, belli bir topluluğa ait Avustralya kimliğinin göstergesidir. Araştırma sonuçları göstermektedir ki, Lebspeak kullanımı bölgeden çok cinsiyete ait bir tercihtir ve Lebspeak kullanan kişiler Avusturyalıların gözünde olumlu bir izlenim bırakmaktadırlar. Çalışmanın bulguları İngilizce öğretimi, ölçme ve değerlendirme, adli dilbilim, dil ve toplum araştırmalarında kişi örneklemeleri açısından önem taşımaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: şehir gençliği, dil değişimi, Avustralya İngilizcesi, kimlik

1. INTRODUCTION

Although Arabic-heritage Australian youths have heterogeneous origins and experiences, recent global interest in terrorism has stereotyped them as part of a high-profile visible minority that is now characterized as 'the enemy within' (Hage, 2002, p. 243). This distinguishes them from the children of migrants from other communities, so it is unsurprising that their unique circumstances have led to Arabic-related ways of speaking English, some expressing merged identities.

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The classic sociophonetic reference for ethnicity and Australian English (AusE) is Horvath (1985) whose urban dialect study of Australian migrant families' speech identified *inter alia* that Ethnic Broad and Ethnic influenced the use of Broad, General and Cultivated AusE by Italian, Greek and Anglo-Celtic background youths (see also Bernard, 1989, for a description of Cultivated and Broad AusE). Kiesling (2001) considers the links between ethnicity and two linguistic variables of AusE for speakers from different first language groups and found that there is neither homogenization nor specific 'ethnolects' for the ethnic groups studied. Later he identifies phonetic elements of migrant-heritage speakers in Australia and discusses their spread (Kiesling, 2005). Warren (1999) reports on 'Wogspeak': the English of Turkish, 'Yugoslav', Greek, and Italian second-generation Australians that converges toward a single variety. Leitner (2004) provides important insights into the place of minority languages and minority varieties of English in Australian society. Clyne (2003, p. 48), explains that community relations can have different effects on language shift and maintenance, and that 'hostility from the mainstream to a language or culture can lead to assimilation or a more defensive attitude to maintain them'. Lastly, Cox and Palethorpe (2005) investigated the phonetics of AusE pronunciation from speakers from a range of backgrounds, including Lebanese-Australians.

This present study is within the field of sociolinguistic research on ethnolects and certainly relies on these earlier findings, but the concept of 'ethnicity' is not fully relevant as it is ambiguous (used to mean 'non-mainstream', being a euphemism for 'race', and connoting the exotic), and is an unreliable term for the diverse national, geographical, religious, and political backgrounds of Arabic-heritage-Australians.ⁱ

2. METHOD

2.1. Participants

The English speech data is audio-taped material from 18 to 30 years old Arabic first language speakers (1) over 200 hours of natural spontaneous talk by people born in Australia or visitors to Australia who had learned English as a foreign language in the Middle East; (2) audio-taped guided map task data from 10 pairs of 18 to 30 years old Arabic/English bilingual Australiansⁱⁱ, and (3) parallel data from 3 pairs of adult visitors to Australia who had learned English as a foreign language. The survey on language use, language attitudes, and inter-group perceptions so far has 56 respondents, 18-30 years old, literate, born in Australia of Arabic-descent.

2.2. Data Analyses

Traditional linguistic descriptive methods were used to analyze the vocabulary, morphology, and syntax; and non-instrumental auditory analysis to identify pronunciation elements. Non-standard-AusE elements were identified and sorted into native-like (non-standard) or non-native-like (non-native). Native-like elements were sorted according to whether they appeared to belong to regional and social varieties of English. Non-native elements were tested for possible link to transfer from Arabic due to cross-linguistic differences. Patterns were identified within and across speakers to find shared and idiosyncratic elements. The survey data were analyzed with cross tabulations using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

3. FINDINGS

3. 1. Social and linguistic background of Arabic background Australians

There have been waves of arrival and settlement from Arabic speaking countries to Australia for economic and political reasons, subsequently paralleled by chained family reunion migration (Batrouney, 2002). Some impression of the number of Arabic-heritage Australians can be gained from the 2001 Australian Census that found 162,283 (0.8%) Australians were born in Arab League nations and another 120,000 Australians had a parent born in an Arab country. It is a young population sub-group, with three quarters of those born in Australia with an Arab parent being 24 years or younger, and a further 14% aged 25-34. Around 210,000 people claimed to speak Arabic at home, with 87,276 of these born in Australia. Visitors and people who speak Arabic away from home are not included, so the actual numbers would be larger.

Australians who speak Arabic at home are concentrated in urban rather than regional and rural areas, and the largest group is found in Sydney - 142,453. This is an increase from 36,110 in 1976 and contrasts with Melbourne's lesser concentration of 45,736 (Leitner, 2004, p.170). Arabic is the main non-English language used in the Sydney Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Auburn, Canterbury, Bankstown, Holroyd, Liverpool, Parramatta, and Campbelltown (see Table 1), and it is one of the three main community languages of other Southern, Western and North-Western areas.

Table 1: Arabic Speakers by LGA

LGA	No of Arabic speakers	% of LGA
Bankstown	26,719	16
Canterbury	18,819	15
Parramatta	14,420	10
Liverpool	9,785	6
Holroyd	9,145	11
Fairfield	8,794	5
Blacktown	7,339	3
Rockdale	7,319	8

(Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2001)

Arabic speakers comprised only 1.1% of the total population in the 2001 census, but this figure hides the educational, social, cultural, and economic significance of high concentrations of Arabic speakers at the local level where people play out their everyday lives and community relations are crucial (see Table 2).

Table 2: Arabic Speakers by Region

Regions	Number of speakers of Arabic at home	Total population for region	% of Arabic speakers in total population of region
Punchbowl	3,004	6,727	44.7%
Bankstown City	26,719	164,841	16.2%
Sydney Statistical Division	142,453	3,948,015	3.6%
NSW	145,629	6,311,168	2.3%
Australia	109,372	18,769,249	1.1%

(Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2001)

The perceived trespass of Middle-Eastern background Australians on the southern beach areas of Sydney, characterized by the press as integral to the ‘Cronulla Race Riots’ in December 2005 (see Poynting, 2006, for an social account of the ‘ethnic demonizing’ of youths of Arabic-descent (p. 90)), highlights the significance of the link between the physical, social, and metaphorical place for different groups in Australia.

Community relations Middle-Eastern-ancestry immigrants have the largest citizenship take-up rate of any immigrant group in Australia, but this has not led to widespread acceptance (Batrouney, 2002). The reasons are complex and different at different times, but overall it is because of what Birrell and Healy (2000) observe as a perceived contrast with the Australian mainstream. Any positive identities previously held by Arab/Middle Eastern background communities in Australia have been damaged by public stereotypes of Arabs as the “bad guys’ of international politics’ (Humphrey, 2002, p. 221), after 9/11. The backlash includes the hardening of long held prejudices against Arabs, increased instances of interracial violence, and diminished human rights from new anti-terrorist legislation (Hage, 2002). Since 2002, stereotypes have been reinforced by saturation media coverage of Sydney gang rape trials involving Lebanese and Pakistani Muslims; the ‘December 2005 ‘Cronulla Race Riots’; and ‘ethnic gang’ involvement in shootings and drugs. Anti-social and criminal stereotypes persist despite the many high-profile Arab-Australians in politics, the arts, education, and business.

The reality of diverse ancestry, normal everyday lives, and positive social contribution is overlooked, and negative myths about Arabs and Middle Easterners prevail. Words like ‘Arab’, ‘Middle Eastern’, ‘Lebanese’, ‘Lebs’, ‘Muslim’, ‘terrorist’, ‘criminal’, and ‘racist’ have now become interchangeable in many public Australian domains. In addition, Armenians, Kurds, Turks, Berbers, and Iranians are popularly classed as ‘Arabs’ and anyone from an Arab League country is assumed to be a Muslim.

This study recognizes that wider community issues about Arabs and Muslims have intruded to different extents on the lives of Arab Australians. However, the results of this study do not indicate that the emergence of Arabic inflected social varieties is an oppositional reflex of social pressures and inter group conflict. Instead, *Arabizi* and *Lebspeak* appear to be subtle and

powerful ways of marking complex, positive identities that highlight in-group solidarity rather than distance from any other group.

3.2. Arabic-related varieties of English in Australia

Language contact consequences for Arabic heritage communities in Australia include diaspora versions of Arabic as well as new ways of speaking English.ⁱⁱⁱ Although this paper does not focus on this aspect of language contact and language change, it is important to acknowledge that its presence as an ambient language in the early socialization of Australians of Arabic descent is responsible for some of the nuances of Arabic-heritage-AusE.

Before explaining the characteristic patterns of linguistic elements in Arabic-heritage-English and in Arabic-heritage AusE, it is crucial to also note that the range of possible non-native/non-standard elements in the English spoken by people with Arabic as their first language is greater than any one speaker could produce. This is because different regional and social vernaculars of Arabic produce different kinds of transfer. For example, the phonotactic rules across regional dialects of Arabic generate different types of epenthesis (insertion of vowels in illegitimate clusters) in the English of people from these regions (see Broselow, 1992). Elements of Modern Standard Arabic and the vernaculars may influence learner's English (Mahmoud, 2000).

This study tested the hypothesis that none of the kinds of English spoken by Australians of Arabic descent is the same as 'Wogspeak', a convergence variety comprising aspects of Southern-European accented AusE (Warren, 1999), and found them socially and linguistically distinct. The social conditions from which they arose differ and 'Wogspeak' has features (including frequent epenthesis, stretched vowel in 'mate', 'top' as an intensifier; and ING pronounced as /ɪŋk/ - the stereotyped Greek-heritage pronunciation) that do not occur in Arabic-influenced English. The remainder of Section 2 describes and explains (1) the opposite ends of the accented English continuum, that is, ways of speaking English related to the method of English acquisition (called here Arabic-heritage-English and Arabic-heritage-AusE); and (2) the two social varieties, *Arabizi* and *Lebspeak*.

3.3. Arabic-heritage-English: 'Learners' English'.

This is accented English marked by many non-native elements and few noticeably AusE elements. Language learners may produce non-native elements for a range of reasons, including: transfer from the first language (L1);^{iv} expectations about the second language (L2); characteristics of L2; or the developmental stage of the learner. Arabic-heritage-English is used by late learners (either newcomers, or Australians whose English learning has fossilized at an early stage), and proficiency levels determine the concentration of non-native elements in a person's English. In this study, non-native elements could be attributed to Arabic phonemic inventories; rules of syllable structure;^v word and sentence stress constraints; syntax; morphology and pragmatics.

Table 3: Possible Influence of Arabic Phonemic Inventories and Prosodic Contours

Arabic feature	Effect on English if transferred
Fewer vowels in Arabic than English. [Different across Arabic dialects, but minimal eight (/ɪ/ /i/ /æ/ /a/ /ʊ/ /u/ plus two diphthongs (in some vernaculars long monophthongs), plus environmentally conditioned vowel allophones]	monophthongization e.g.. /æɪ/ and /ɒʊ/ or /æʊ/ → /ɒ/ as in, e.g. ‘I’, ‘right’, ‘like’, ‘time’ and ‘go’, ‘so’, ‘follow’, and ‘don’t’; /æɪ/ → /ɛ:/ ‘day’ ‘playground’, ‘they’, and ‘straight’; /ʊə/ → /ʊ/ ‘tour’; and /ɪə/ → /ɪ/ ‘here’ ‘severely’ Heavier phonemic load for fewer vowels (particularly mid to low vowels), e.g. / / for English /ʌ/ and /ɔ/.
[v], [ŋ], [p] allophones in Arabic	May not be discriminated or produced in English, e.g. ; /liv/ → /lif/ ‘leave’; /pɛpsi/ → /bɛpsi/ or /bɛbzi/ ‘Pepsi’
Arabic alveolar fricatives and stops more forward	/d/, /t/, /s/, /z/ more strident
Arabic rhotic tapped (single), trilled (double)	Tapped or trilled rhotic
Arabic WH-question has falling intonation contour	Interpretable as a demand or a command rather than a request.

Table 4: Arabic Stress and Syllable Structure Constraints that May Influence English

Arabic feature	Effect on English if transferred
Unstressed vowels not reduced to schwa	No schwa e.g. /tɪkət/ → /tɪkɪt/ ‘ticket’
Only one long vowel in a word (including (perceived) compounds).	Stress change e.g. /'gʌm 'tri/ → / gʌm 'tri/ ‘gum tree’.
CVC syllable structure	Glottal inserted initially with a word beginning with a vowel {at the start of sentence or phrase)
Allophone [ŋ] cannot occur word finally	English /ɪŋ/ → /ɪŋg/ e.g. /stændɪŋ ʌp/ → /stɛndɪŋg ʌp/ ‘standing up’.
Restriction on initial consonant clusters, and two elements maximum in medial or final cluster.	Consonant cluster reduction, as in, for example /wad wɪs/ for ‘wild west’, /smɪŋ/ ‘something’, and /stas/ ‘starts’; and epenthesis as in e.g. /fɪɪm/.

Table 5: Arabic Syntactic and Morphological Features that May Influence English

Arabic feature	Effect on English if transferred
Prosodic marking of Yes/No Questions	No DO support, e.g. ‘You have ‘Dingo’?’ No Subject-AUX inversion, e.g. ‘I should go around it?’
Demonstrative as dummy pronoun.	General anaphoric use of demonstratives (not intended as emphatic) e.g. ‘I’m gonna start that now’.
Noun-adjective agreement.	plural adjectives: e.g. ‘bigs trees’
Different rules for use of determiner	Determiners omitted or added wrongly to a noun phrase

d. Arabic semantic features that may influence English

Different semantic scope → English translation equivalents but not semantic/pragmatic equivalents, for example, the scope of /*ktir*/ ‘very’ ‘much’ ‘many’ ‘a lot’ ‘so’, ‘too’ → English ‘too’ as an intensifier like ‘very’), without realizing that it means ‘in excess’, for example, ‘he works too hard’ (intending ‘very hard’) or ‘she gives too much’ (intending ‘gives a lot’). Idioms may also be literally translated (Mahmoud, 2002).

e. Common non-standard features not apparently related to Arabic

Word (or syllable) final consonant or consonant cluster is replaced with a glottal in, for example, ‘that’, ‘got’, ‘it’, ‘said’, ‘should’, ‘would’, ‘alright’, ‘forget’, ‘don’t’ and ‘lighthouse’. Uncontracted BE is used atypically, that is, unstressed pragmatically but misinterpreted as emphatic, as in, for example, ‘It is a bit on the right.’, ‘That is right!’, and ‘What was the name?’ Identity display. This variety has little potential to be a mechanism for identity display. However, learners may have minimal control over identity display by using avoidance strategies to de-emphasize the ‘foreignness’ of their speech or emphasizing a learner’s feature to stress the identity regularly associated with that way of speaking or for humour. From another perspective, production errors can become stereotypes used by out-group members to characterize someone as ‘foreign’.

3.4. Arabic-heritage-AusE

Arabic-heritage-AusE is spoken by some Arabic-heritage Australians and is similar in kind to ethnolects of children of migrants from stable Greek, Italian, German or Jewish communities in Australia (Leitner, 2004). It is distinct from Arabic-heritage-English because (1) it is noticeably AusE, as this was one of the ambient languages in the speakers’ early socialization; (2) some non-native elements differ from those of Arabic-Heritage-English because speakers learned diaspora Arabic; and (3) only a few apparent non-AusE elements occur in any one speaker’s English.

Arabic-heritage-AusE is best characterized as a pattern of mainly local AusE with some anomalies rather than rigidly defined by one constellation of elements. A reasonable explanation for variation between speakers in which AusE elements and which non-AusE elements are used lies in each person’s early bilingual experiences. The family’s social and professional networks will influence how much Arabic and English is spoken by the young child and in which domains;

what kinds of English they heard regularly; and the incidence of exposure to a range of lifestyles and ways of speaking English. If accented English was part of the child's early socialization, some adapted elements of Arabic-heritage-English may occur.

AusE features include palatalization of alveolar fricatives in words like 'tissue', 'straight', and 'consumer'; /l/ → /w/, as in, 'pole', 'told', and 'angle'; and intervocalic voicing of voiceless stops in words like 'centimetre' and 'bottom'. Local non-standard AusE forms may occur at all linguistic levels, including 'h' dropping; /θ/ → /f/, as in 'North', 'think', 'thirds', 'nothing', 'through', and 'underneath'; /ð/ → /d/, in, e.g. 'that', 'the', and 'there'; and past participle for simple past e.g. 'I done'.

Common Arabic-related features include consonant cluster reduction, glottal stop before a phrase or sentence beginning with a vowel; voiced stops becoming voiceless word finally; and monophthongized AusE diphthongs in, for example, /εə/ → /ɪ/ in 'mess' and /æə/ → /ε/ in 'crash' and 'Man'. Some monophthongization, for example, /aɪ/ → /ε/ as in 'Crane Bay', creates words that sound more like cultivated AusE because of their closer onset, contrasting with same-speaker same-utterance use of, say, the broader /ɒɪ/ as in 'right'. Phrases like 'in my map', and 'on top' for 'above' derive from semantic scope difference between English and Arabic prepositions.

- 1 **Innovations** Some aspects are distinct from the local AusE and not apparently linked to the speech of the Arabic varieties, including young males' higher pitch and tendency to giggle, and the same atypical contractions or non-contractions of BE noted for Arabic-heritage-English. Future research by phoneticians may also show vowel shapes distinct from AusE and Arabic.
- 2 **Within-speaker variation** Linguistic environment conditions some within-speaker variation, for example, the variation of /aɪ/ → /ɒ/ or /ɒɪ/ can be explained in terms of length and syllable stress, with the monophthong occurring in unstressed hence short syllables. The alternation of long and short high front vowels /ɪ/ and /i/ can most reasonably be explained in terms of transfer of the complex word and sentence stress rules of Arabic. For example, because one can have only one long vowel in a word, 'field' is pronounced /fiɪ/ in 'cottonfield' and 'beam' is pronounced /bɪm/ in 'sunbeam' although they are pronounced with /i/ when uncompounded.
- 3 **Variation between speakers** Many speakers use elements like the glottal at the beginning of a phrase or sentence beginning with a vowel; vowel shortening in, say, 'you' /jʊ/ and 'I' /ɒ/; and the glottal instead of 't' word finally. However, speakers vary in their degree of noticeable accent. Contributing factors for a higher concentration than usual of transfer features could be late English learning or late arrival, although Flege, Frieda, and Nozawa (1997) explain that a more noticeable foreign accent may relate to how much a person uses a minority language rather than length of stay.
- 4 **Identity display** Arabic-heritage-AusE arises from involuntary socialization within a bilingual environment, so this way of speaking may not be readily available as a resource

for transient identity display. However, as code switching may be identity-display driven, further study is needed to examine whether context conditions use of more or fewer mainstream elements.

Despite between-speaker variation, these participants speak more like each other than like members of other groups, perhaps because they were all surrounded by Diaspora Arabic, which would have led to similar transfer patterns, and to Accented English. So like the second generation Italians in New York (Labov, 2006) or Hispanic background-Americans (Brennan and Brennan, 1981), Arabic-Heritage-Australians speak an urban sociolect of English related to minority group socialization in an English-host country.

3.5. *Arabizi* (*ʃæɾæbɪʒjæ* ‘Arabic’ and *ʔɪŋglɪzɪ* ‘English’)

This is virtuosic code-switching found in web talk, text messaging, and speech. The types used in Jordan and elsewhere do not metaphorically nor formally match *Arabizi* in Australia, simply because the relative status hence social significance of Arabic and English differs between countries.

In spoken *Arabizi*, the pronunciation of each language stays within that language’s parameters, so it is easy to see that these are not loans, but switches. However, the occurrence in matrix English talk of single Arabic words like */jælla/* ‘come on’, */ʔmshæʔællah/* ‘God willing/I hope’, and */hæbibɪ/* ‘dear/darling/mate/friend’ pronounced with an English pronunciation are loans, so they are part of *Lebspeak* and not part of *Arabizi*.

The examples at (1) show the nature and use of *Arabizi* (a) in Jordan, (b-e) in Australia, and (f, g) in non-Australian web posts.^{vi}

- (1) a. (Jordan: SMS text)
- | | | | | |
|----|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| A: | <i>ana kteer</i> | stressed. | <i>alwad</i> | miserable |
| | I very | | the situation | |
| | <i>bidik</i> | <i>truhi</i> | shobing | <i>bukra?</i> |
| | want-2fs | 2-go-f | | tomorrow |
| B: | <i>fi: maHal jadeed</i> | <i>sahbu</i> | <i>kteer</i> | genteel. |
| | There’s shop | new | owner-3MS | very’ |
- A: ‘I’m really stressed - the situation is miserable. Do you want to go shopping tomorrow?’
- B: ‘There’s a new shop and the owner’s a real gentleman.’
- b. (Australia: spoken)
- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| <i>fæqæt</i> | <i>ræqm</i> | <i>æt</i> -tape |
| only | number | the-tape’ |
| ‘only the tape’s number’ | | |
- c. (Australia: spoken.)
- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>‘m-n-ruh</i> | <i>ʃæl</i> -Bankstown.’ |
| INDIC-1PL-go | to- |
| ‘Let’s go to Bankstown.’ | |

- (d) (Australia spoken)
wæ-l class *rah* *jkun* *ktir* interesting.
 and the it is going it will be very
 ‘The class will be very interesting.’
- (e) (Australia spoken)
1. *næfs æf-fi* It’s exactly the same
 reflex the-thing
 2. *mæʃ nass ʔusturalɪʒɪ mɪn* Anglo-Saxon background.
 with people Australian from.
 ‘It’s the same. It’s exactly the same with Australians from an Anglo-Saxon background.’
- (f) Webpost:
www.beirut-online.net/v2/viewtopic.php?t=2283&postdays=0&postorder=asc&start=0&sid=84c2b5
w el forum rah eykon kteer active.
 and the is going to be very
 ‘and the forum is going to be very active.’
- (g) Adapted from web post at
<http://www.onelebanon.com/forum/showthread.php?t=4902&page=3> posted
 5/2/2005)
1. Not like that. They talk three languages. *kteer* class.
 very
 2. A: *Bonjour* Good morning
 3. B: hello *keef-ik?*
 how-2FS
 4. A: *ca va,* *int-i_?*
 as it goes you-FS
 5. B: *mesh il 7al* thanks.
 walks the-state
1. ‘Not like that...they talk 3 languages. Very classy.
 2. A: (Fr) Hello.
 3. B: (Eng/Ar) Hello, how are you?
 4. A: (Fr/Ar) OK. You?
 5. B: (Ar/Eng) Not bad, thanks.’

3.5.1. Identity display

Web articles and chat prompted by the Jordanian showing of the film ‘Arabizi’ (in e.g. Villelabeitia, 2005) indicate that in Jordan and other Arab countries, this code-switching is used by the elite and seen as stylish and chic. Australian interviewees and survey respondents also reported that *Arabizi* is used by people who are stylish, modern and progressive.

3.6. *Lebspeak*

This is an urban youth ‘street slang’^{vii} that blends elements of Arabic-heritage-AusE, global hip-hop formulae and stances, and Arabic words (see Table 6). *Lebspeak* expresses solidarity and integrity as does the Black Patois of Caribbean-heritage youths in London (described in Edwards, 1997), but an important survey finding was that it marked a merged Australian identity rather than a minority group language of protest.

Table 6: Markers of *Lebspeak* by Origin

	From Arabic	From Global Rap/hip hop culture note: also used in other AusE groups)	From AusE slang
Address	<i>ja</i> [vocative particle before address term] <i>fæbab</i> ‘boys’ <i>ħæbibɪ</i> ‘[Darling] mate/friend’	‘yo’ ‘Dude’ ‘Man’ Bro	
Reference	<i>æxɪ</i> ‘brother’	‘peeps’ [people] ‘Bro’ ‘Sis’ ‘Kuz’ ‘bitch’ ‘ho’ [whore]	‘Skips’ ‘Aussies’ ‘mate’ ‘Lebs’ ‘Leboz’
Openers/Greetings and responses	<i>kif-æk</i> ‘How are you?’ <i>wæm-æk?</i> ‘Where are you?’ <i>fu b-æk?</i> ‘What’s up (with you)?’ <i>fu s ʿar?</i> ‘What’s happened?’	‘Wassup?’ ‘Wass down?’ goin’	‘yo’ ‘g’day’
Closers	<i>mæfɪ l-ħal</i> ‘[walks the state] Not bad!’ <i>jælla</i> bye’ ‘[come on, goodbye] ‘OK bye’		
Expressives	<i>kif</i> ‘What!’ <i>fu?</i> “What!” <i>wæ ħæjæɪt ællah</i> ‘I swear’ <i>ħæram</i> ‘Shame!’ <i>wæ l-æxiræn</i> ‘at last!’		
Intensifiers	<i>mɪjæ bɪ-l-mɪjæ</i> ‘100%’	‘fo shor’ [for sure] ‘fully’ ‘way’ ‘massive’	
Discourse Markers	<i>wæ læɪk</i> ‘[and to you] Look!’ <i>jæ ʃɪnɪ</i> ‘well, like, um’	‘Cool.’ ‘Like.’	

The result is a complex blend of international and local group memberships. That incidentally resonates with the hip-hop inflections of many other Sydney youth groups.

Speakers. The survey results show *Lebspeak* is spoken by youths of a range of Middle Eastern heritages (see Table 7).

Table 7: Father's country of origin * Speak *Lebspeak*

Father's country of origin (number)	Speak <i>Lebspeak</i>	
	YES %	NO %
Brazil (1)	100	0
Iraq (2)	50	50
Jordan (7)	72	28
Lebanon (38)	58	42
Palestine (2)	50	50
Syria (1)	0	100
Turkey (1)	100	100
Yemen (2)	0	100

Lebspeak does not appear to have initially developed within groups in which the members come from diverse language backgrounds, as has 'Wogspeak' (Warren, 1999) or Rinkeby Swedish (Kotsinas, 1988). However, in areas in Sydney with low numbers of people of Arabic descent, *Lebspeak* is used by mixed groups of young boys from a range of heritages, particularly Iranian, Armenian, and Italian (Robert Mannell, personal communication, 20th October, 2006). Survey respondents mentioned that *Lebspeak* may be one of the school playground varieties; and that in fast food outlets in areas with a high concentrations of Arabic speakers, *Lebspeak* is the language of the workplace, irrespective of the workers' origins.

Group membership alone does not predict that someone will use minority language elements, and Baugh and Cable (2002) observe that an intricate network of motivations predicts whether individuals adopt minority language features of the host language. The survey data on whether or not people spoke *Lebspeak* was examined by social, cultural, and language dimensions, and the results show that gender and not religion is relevant for whether one speaks *Lebspeak*, with over two thirds of males and just under a third of females reporting they used *Lebspeak* (see Table 8). Thus far, the number of respondents without tertiary education is small, but education may also be important, with a lesser percentage of the tertiary educated than the secondary educated respondents claiming to speak *Lebspeak* (see Table 8)

Table 8: Gender / Religion / Education level / * Speak *Lebspeak*?

		Speak <i>Lebspeak</i> ?				Total
		yes	%	no	%	
Gender	Male (N=27)	70		30		100
	Female (N=29)	41		59		100
Religion	Muslim (N=25)	52		48		100
	Non-Muslim (N=31)	58		42		100
Education	Secondary (N=16)	75		25		100
Attitudes	Tertiary (N=35)	49		51		100

As Table 9 shows, nearly all speakers said it was important to speak Arabic and AusE, and AusE, but a higher proportion of males than females, and of *Lebspeak*-ers than Non-*Lebspeak*-ers said it was important to speak *Lebspeak*. All Non-*Lebspeak*-ers thought it was important to speak English and Arabic - more than for *Lebspeak*-ers, whose response was nevertheless more than 90% positive

Table 9: Gender / Speak *Lebspeak*? * yes, it is important to speak X?

	Yes, it is important to speak...			
	AusE	%	Arabic	<i>Lebspeak</i>
Male (N=25)	96		96	21
Female (N=24)	96		95	8
<i>Lebspeak</i> -er (N=25)	92		92	24
Non- <i>Lebspeak</i> -er (N=24)	100		100	4

Arabic-influenced varieties of English are viewed negatively by some members of Arabic speaking communities, reflecting perhaps the tendency discussed by Liebkind (1999) that ‘the dominant group frequently imposes its own language as the only legitimate one’ (p. 145). Common responses from the survey were that ‘uneducated’, ‘stupid’, or ‘lower class’ people speak *Lebspeak*. There were also positive attributions, with *Lebspeak*-ers saying *Lebspeak* is

used to entertain, ‘have fun with your friends’ when you are ‘hanging’, or to ‘tell jokes’, ‘muck around’, or ‘tease’.

Responses to questions about whether the ambient languages (Standard Arabic, AusE, Vernacular Arabic and *Lebspeak*) were ‘pleasing to the ear’, ‘useful,’ and ‘stylish’ indicated that all respondents thought AusE was useful. *Lebspeak*-ers were positive about AusE and Arabic (though minimally less so than Non-*Lebspeak*-ers), and more positive to *Lebspeak* than were Non-*Lebspeak*-ers. A much higher proportion of *Lebspeak*-ers than of Non-*Lebspeak*-ers answered ‘yes’ for *Lebspeak* being ‘pleasing’, ‘useful, or ‘stylish’.

Table 10: Attitudes to *Lebspeak* * Speak *Lebspeak*?

	‘Yes- <i>Lebspeak</i> is Pleasing’	‘Yes <i>Lebspeak</i> is Useful’	‘Yes <i>Lebspeak</i> is Stylish’
L-speak-ers N30	40%	50%	29%
Non-L-speak-ers N20	10%	15%	15%

Interestingly, *Lebspeak*-ers also had a more positive impression than did Non-*Lebspeak*-ers of their minority status in the eyes of the mainstream. While there was little difference by ‘Speak *Lebspeak*?’ in positive responses to a blended and Australian identity, just over half of the *Lebspeak*-ers compared to the lesser amount of just over a third of Non-*Lebspeak*-ers responded ‘yes’ to the survey question about being respected by mainstream Australians.

Table 11: ‘Cultural Attitudes’ by ‘Speak *Lebspeak*?’

	% responded “Yes” to “Do European-heritage Australians respect Arabic background Australians?”	% responded “Yes” to “Is it good to be an Arabic Australian?”	% responded “Yes” to “Is it good to be an Australian?”
<i>Lebspeak</i>-er	55%	87%	90%
Non-<i>Lebspeak</i>-er	36%	84%	80%

It is possible to infer from this that some Arabic-heritage Australians may consciously avoid using *Lebspeak* because they perceive that it marks the speaker as being part of a minority group that is viewed negatively by mainstream society, that is, it is stigmatized.

3.7. PRAGMATICS OF *LEBSPEAK*

The nature of *Lebspeak* can be further explained by examining it in action. The natural talk and the paired map-task speech data show that *Lebspeak* occurs within a matrix of either Arabic-heritage-AusE or local AusE to achieve immediate interactional and social goals.

Extract (2) from the audio-recorded map-task of two bilingual Australians of Arabic descent is representative of how a shift to *Lebspeak* is a response to local events in the interaction and is used strategically. The shift occurs at line 68, and introduces hip-hop stances, Arabic words, and more emphatic and frequent use of densely marked items from Arabic-heritage-English. These include ‘got’ (more strident ‘g’ and replacement of final voiceless stop with a glottal); ‘alright’ (with /l/→/w/ change, monophthongization, and replacement of final stop with a glottal); ‘I’ and ‘you’ (/ʋ/ and /jʊ/); and /ʋ/ for /aʊ/ in e.g. ‘go’ and ‘no’.

(2) [Map task A: guide; B: follower.]

63. A: gʋʊ nɔf nɔf wɛst (.)
 go north-north-west
64. sʋ prɪ mʌtʃ nɔf wɛs
 so pretty much north west
65. bʌʔ mʋ twɔts ðɛ nɔf
 but more towards the north
66. jə nʋ wʋʔ ʋ min
 you know what I mean?
67. (pause of 2 seconds)
68. **kʋm ʋn brʋʊ.**
 Come on Bro.
69. **ʋ dʌn gɪʋgræfɪ.**
 I done geography.
70. ðæs wʋɪ
 That's why.
71. j ʋ gʋnə mɪs wɪf dɛ rʋŋ blʋʊʔ.
 You're gonna mess with the wrong bloke.
72. B: **ʋʊ ʋ θɪŋk (.) nʋʊ nʋʊ (.) /hællæʔ/**
 Oh I think, no no. [Now].
73. **mɔɪ stʌf ʋ dɪfrənt tɪɔz Mæn**
 My stuff are different to yours, Man.
74. A: hæv jʊ gʋʔ ə lʋɪn ʋn ɪʔ
 Have you got a line on it?
75. B: nʌ
 No.
76. A: ʔʋrɪʔ
 Alright.
77. ʋw fʋgeʔ tɔkɪŋ əbæʊʔ ðɛ lænmaks
 I'll forget talking about the landmarks.
78. ʋw dʒʌs tɛl ju hæʊtə drɔ və lɔɪn
 I'll just tell you how to draw the line.
79. wədʒ rɛkən
 What do you reckon?

80. B: ʔɒrɒIt.
Alright.

This extract reflects the pattern throughout the interaction data, whereby *Lebspeak* occurs at transitions (openings and closings), as well as points where immediate goals are not being met – that is, at crucial times when an interactor may want to appeal to solidarity. In this example, the shift to *Lebspeak* from the lightly nuanced Arabic-heritage-AusE that both these speakers use can be interpreted as triggered by B's non-response at line 67. At lines 68-73, *Lebspeak* words, non-standard grammar and pronunciation, and mock challenging stances are used till the situation is sorted. A return to normal on-task activity is marked by the AusE question and answer at lines 79-80.

4. CONCLUSION

Community membership constrains the possibility of an individual using an Arabic-related variety of English, and the other factors of socialization, class, locale, life ambitions, and social networks will condition whether the community member uses these non-standard/-native elements. Early or late English learning will also play a role in whether non-native elements occur and to what extent. This study shows that minority group members can use language features to express a non-mainstream identity, or avoid it because they do not want to be associated with that group, prefer to be seen as part of another group, or simply wish to display an individual identity. While there may be an element of oppositional posturing, *Lebspeak* expresses blended or hybrid identities that are benign and inclusive; marking a niche Australian identity rather than a minority group identity. This is somewhat similar to the situation for 'Brasians' (British Asians) explained in Harris (2006), and may also apply to Arabic-heritage-AusE, but further research is needed to establish this.

In some countries, the alienation of Arabic-heritage youths leads to their symbolic borrowing of power through adopting the interaction styles and voices of another protest group. Orlando (2003) says of France that 'the clash of hip-hop modernity and antiquated Islamic belief trap the young people of the *banlieue* in a no-man's land of ambiguous identity'. Mitchell (1998, p.6) similarly observes that Vietnamese-, Chinese- and Arabic-heritage Australian youths are drawn 'to the racially oppositional elements of African American hip-hop and adopt[ed] its forms as markers of their own otherness'. Research on Lebanese and Muslim youths indicates some social disadvantage^{viii}, but Arabic-heritage Australians have diverse lifestyles and opportunities and are differently affected and have individual responses to adverse community relations. Hip-hop and rap may be part of *Lebspeak* because this is a youth style already entrenched in urban youth cultures. It is an accessible stereotype that legitimizes strength in unity. The survey results and the pragmatic analysis of *Lebspeak* supports Noble and Tabar's (2002) conclusions that Australian youths of Arabic descent use hybridity as a strategy of 'increasing their 'cultural resources'' (p. 143) so that they can most positively deal with the difference between parental and wider community demands.

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ⁱ For discussions on the need for careful consideration of different dimensions of ethnicity see, for example, Spira (1999).

ⁱⁱ These are from the corpus collected for Cox and Palethorpe (2005).

ⁱⁱⁱ Australian-Lebanese-Arabic, Australian-Syrian-Arabic, Australian-Egyptian-Arabic, or Australian-Iraqi, for example, blend some elements of the host language with the immigrant language. The original regional variety of Arabic is the matrix and there are fixed linguistic elements from AusE integrated with Arabic phonology, morphology and syntax. It differs from the language used in the home country. Pronunciation and grammar are less native-like, rate of speech is slower, vocabulary is restricted to the domains in which it is used, usually family (which explains the epithet 'kitchen Arabic'), and homeland language innovations are missing.

^{iv} Although Richards (1974) found that a third of errors relate to transfer, work with a diglossic community found that 37% of errors could be attributed to interference from vernacular Arabic and 20% from Modern Standard Arabic (Mahmoud 2000).

^v Other general accounts of speech features of L1Arabic learners of English can be found in, say, *English a New* (1982) and examples of transfer of word order, tense and aspect features of Arabic are found in Mahmoud (2000).

^{vi} The verbatim spelling from the web or SMS sources retain their different kinds of lay transliterations e.g. 'kteer' which contrasts with IPA *ktir*. Transcriptions of speech extracts and Arabic words are represented by IPA symbols.

^{vii} Some outsider groups opposed to multiculturalism in Australia use 'Lebspeak' as a negative characterization of how all Arabic background people speak.

^{viii} School children of Lebanese descent have been classed as being competitive, hard working, and highly ambitious but this does not always lead to positive academic outcomes (Suliman and MacInerney, 2003). Youths of Lebanese and Vietnamese descent have five times the average rate of unemployment of all other (non-indigenous) groups (Collins, Morrissey and Grogan, 1995), and more recently, *Access and equity*, 2005 - an Australian Department of Immigration report - stated that according to the 2001 census, Australian Muslims' workforce participation rate of 50.7% was lower than that of the total Australian population (63%).