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Language choice in expressing anger among Arab-English Londoners[1]

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Abstract
The aim of the present study is to partially replicate the study in Dewaele (2013). We want to determine whether the independent variables linked to the preference of the first (L1) or second language (L2) for the communication of anger among a large heterogeneous group of long-time multilinguals from all over the world (Dewaele 2013) have similar effects in one relatively homogeneous linguistic and cultural group, namely 110 English-speaking Arabs living in London (UK). The analysis of quantitative and qualitative data showed that, in line with the findings in Dewaele (2013), L1 Arabic was preferred over L2 English for expressing anger at oneself, family, friends and at strangers. However, English was preferred to express anger in writing and occasionally in instances of divergence with Arabic-speaking interlocutors (Sachdev, Giles & Pauwels 2013). Frequency of use of English for anger was linked to lower age of onset of L2 learning, naturalistic or mixed L2 learning context, frequency of general use of the L2 and degree of L2 socialization and higher perceived emotionality of English. Gender, age and education were also linked to language choices. Participants explained how their religious beliefs, their cultural and ideological background affect their choice of language for expressing anger.
Keywords
Expression of anger, inter-individual variation, multilingualism, perception of emotionality.

Introduction

"I do not know why I chose English to argue in" was the answer the second author got from two of her cousins, May and Ahmad, about the reason behind their choice of English when they were arguing with other cousins. May, Ahmad, Rashid and Assad, all born and bred in London, UK, had a lively and impassioned conversation at a family meeting about same-sex marriage in England and Wales. The tension in the room increased to the point where Assad, who was arguing in Arabic against the idea, switched to English when May and Ahmad challenged his opinion and called him 'old fashioned' and 'close-minded'. The fact that code-switching happened defined as "changes from one language to another in the course of conversation") (Li Wei 2007: 14) is not strange in itself, as Arab-English Londoners live in a highly multilingual environment where code-switching is the norm rather than the exception (Sachdev, Giles & Pauwels 2013). However, the choice of English (the second language – L2) was unusual in an interaction at home with family members with whom Arabic is the preferred language. This episode is a classic illustration of the fact that languages and languages choices are not just "neutral means' of communication" (Sachdev et al.

2013: 393). As the authors point out: "Which language(s) is/are used, when, why, and by whom are important questions" (p. 393). Assad's switching to English created a psychological distance between the controversial topic at hand (i.e., homosexuality) and conservative Middle Eastern cultural values to which the speaker is accustomed. This type of code-switching is at the heart of Communication Accommodation Theory, which integrates micro-individual with macro-collective perspectives on multilingual communication (p. 393). Two strategies are usually distinguished in Communication Accommodation Theory: 1) *convergence* "whereby individuals adapt their communicative behaviour in terms of a wide range of linguistic (…), paralinguistic (…), and non-verbal features (...) in such a way as to become more similar to their interlocutor's behavior" (p. 394); and *divergence* which "leads to an accentuation of language and cultural differences" (p. 395). Assad's sudden switch to English could be interpreted as a sudden drop measured on the barometer of the level of social distance between the participants (p. 394). The family members had been using Arabic as usual, the "we-code" within this family network, before the sudden divergence.

Ritchie and Bhatia (2013) noted that code-switching is linked to social roles and relationships between participants but that message-intrinsic factors and language attitudes can also play a role (p. 378). Heightened emotionality in the verbal exchanges has also been linked to increased frequency of code-switching (Dewaele 2013).

   The increasing frustration that preceded the code-switch was probably linked to the different connections that participants had with their social worlds (Mesquita 2010: 83). We adopt the view that emotions are social phenomena (Mesquita 2010: 84). It is likely that May, Ahmad, Rashid and Assad varied in their emotional acculturation, namely the shift in emotional patterns in response to changes in sociocultural context (De Leersnyder, Mesquita & Kim 2011).   Indeed, emotions are "ongoing, dynamic, and interactive processes that are socially constructed" (Boiger & Mesquita 2012: 221).

   Recent statistics suggest that there are 240.000 Arabs in the UK, of whom 110.000 live in London (2011 Census). It is a vibrant and long-established community, and includes recent immigrants and students mainly from Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, Somalia, Morocco, Palestine and Lebanon (Miladi 2006). Arab-English Londoners are thus an ideal group to investigate inter-individual variation in language choices.

   The present study answers two separate calls. The first one was issued by Porte (2012), who pointed out that replication research is essential, yet under-developed, in applied linguistics. Only through repetition, exact or approximate, can reliability and generalizability of original findings be tested. The second one was formulated in Dewaele (2013), calling for more research on language choice for the expression of anger in specific immigrant communities. His research was based on decontextualized data collected from long-time users of multiple languages, including a small number of Arabic first language (L1) users. Interviews with Arabic speakers who lived in the UK revealed that these multilinguals reported code-switching to English to express anger and to swear, in order to overcome social constraints.

   The purpose of the study is to find out whether the independent variables (linguistic history, current linguistic practices, sociobiographical variables) that have been linked to language choice to express anger in Dewaele (2013) also emerge within this specific London-based Arab community.

Literature review

The use of the L1 or a foreign language (LX) to express emotion can be a strategic decision of the multilingual. Bond and Lai (1986) reported that Chinese English learners used English most of the time when they were asked to talk about embarrassing and personal topics. Participants used their L1, Cantonese, most of the time when they were asked to discuss two neutral topics. However, English was used to "distance themselves from the embarrassing topics" (p. 200). Dewaele and Costa (2013) found that multilinguals in interactions with their multilingual psychotherapist enjoy the ability to switch languages when discussing highly emotional episodes because it allows them to create proximity or distance according to their need. However, not all language switches are strategic: intense anger, for example, can provoke unplanned limbic vocalizations (Van Lancker & Cummings, 1999). These sudden outbursts can be uttered in a different language than that used in the rest of the interaction (Dewaele 2004a).

Multilinguals typically prefer their L1 to express strong emotions such as anger, especially those who remain dominant in their L1 (Dewaele 2004a, b, 2006, 2013; Pavlenko 2005, 2012). Multilingual speakers often choose the L1 to argue in, as it feels more pleasing and "natural" (Pavlenko 2005; Dewaele 2006). The L2 is often experienced as being more detached than the L1, a phenomenon that has also been highlighted by bilingual authors such as Nancy Huston (English L1, French L2) who declared that compared to her L1, her L2 was less burdened with emotion and less dangerous. Although she lives in Paris and uses French for her academic activities, she described French as cold, uniform, smooth and neutral. When she was interviewed on French radio about language preferences to express unexpected strong emotions, she answered that English was her preferred language. However, when the journalist then asked her what she would say when facing sudden danger on the road. Nancy answered: "Je dis Christ fucking shit merde!" (I say Christ fucking shit merde! ("merde" meaning 'shit', is a high-frequency French swearword). She was obviously surprised at the unexpected appearance of the French swearword (Dewaele 2010: 596) and seemed to realize that her emotional language preferences had slightly shifted and that some French words had gained emotional resonance.

While many researchers agree that the L1 is typically the language of the heart for multilinguals, Pavlenko (2005) argues that there may be exceptions, as multilinguals "may use these languages to index a variety of affective stances, and they may also mix two or more languages to convey emotional meanings" (p. 131). Pavlenko (2012) pointed out that affective processing in the L1 is more automatic and multilinguals display heightened electrodermal reactivity to L1 emotion-laden words and expressions. Because of lower levels of automaticity in affective processing in the L2, there are fewer interference effects and less electrodermal reactivity to negative or taboo emotional stimuli. Pavlenko suggests that for some late bilinguals and LX users, languages may be differentially embodied, with LXs learnt later in life processed semantically but not affectively.

Pavlenko (2004) looked at self-reported code-switching between 141 multilingual parents and their children in emotional exchanges. L1-dominant parents preferred the L1 in communication with the children while those who were dominant in a LX were less likely to use their L1 (2004: 186). Positive and negative emotions were linked to different language choices. Finally, Pavlenko found that perceived language emotionality played a role in language choice and use in parent/child communication (p. 185).

Dewaele (2013) has examined language preferences of 1576 long-time users and learners of multiple languages to express of anger in five different situations using the Bilingualism and Emotion Questionnaire (BEQ) (Dewaele & Pavlenko 2001-2003). The analysis of the data showed that the L1 was preferred to express anger in all situations, and that languages acquired later in life were used gradually less frequently. Different factors were found to affect language choice in the expression of anger. Among these factors were: (1) history of learning, (2) context of acquisition, (3) general frequency of use, (4) network of interlocutors, (5) total language knowledge, (6) degree of socialization in the L2, (7) gender, age and level of education. Participants who had learned an LX through classroom instruction but had also used that LX in authentic interactions outside the classroom, and participants who had an early start in the acquisition of the LX tended to use that language more frequently for swearing than participants who had purely formal instruction and were later starters. General frequency of use of the LX showed a highly significant positive relationship with the use of that LX for swearing. Frequency of language choice for swearing was positively linked with perceived emotional force of swearwords in that language, in other words, emotional strength matched frequency of use. Perceived language emotionality also played a significant role in language choice for emotional expression (Dewaele 2013).

Dewaele (2010, 2011) focused on 386 multilinguals from the BEQ who said to be equally proficient in their L1 and L2, and used both languages constantly. Despite their maximal proficiency in both languages, participants significantly preferred the L1 for communicating feelings or anger. The analysis of an interview corpus confirmed the finding that the L1 was usually felt to be more powerful than the L2, but this did not preclude the use of the L2 (Dewaele 2011). L2 acculturation was linked to a gradual shift in language preferences and perceptions where the L2 started to match the L1 in users' hearts and minds. Participants who had socialized into their L2 culture reported picking up local linguistic practices (including swearing). Japanese, Chinese and Arabic participants explained that swearing in L2 English permitted them to circumvent the social prohibition of swearing in their L1, which carries strong social stigma. One Chinese participant living in London reported using euphemisms rather than the actual English swearwords ('sugar' rather than 'shit'), and she was aware of the fact that her L1 monolingual peers might disapprove of that practice (Dewaele 2010). Another participant, Layla (Arabic L1, English L2, having lived in the UK for 5 years) explained: "I never swear in Arabic (…) but in English (…) sometimes I use some swearwords, but I'm not really aware (…) of how immense those words are" (Dewaele 2013: 125).

Self-reported code-switching was found to be much more frequent when talking about more emotional topics with familiar interlocutors compared to neutral topics (Dewaele 2013). Some participants reported switching from the L2 to their L1 when experiencing a burst of strong anger and swearing in the L1 even though their interlocutor did not understand that language (Dewaele 2013).

The differences uncovered in the BEQ database between Asian, Arab and Western participants have been linked to Markus and Kitayama's (1991) work on cultural differences in the display of emotions, often linked to different views of the self. The self is viewed as independent in the West, while it is considered interdependent in Asian, African, Latin-American and many southern European cultures (Markus & Kitayama, 1991: 225). While Westerners are thus more likely express their emotions freely and frequently because their own goals and desires are the priority, the latter will show more emotional restraint in order to maintain social

cohesion. However, it is important to avoid essentializing cultures. Within the same culture, individuals will display a wide range of variation in emotional restraint and emotional behavior. As Wierzbicka and Hawkins (2001) pointed out, individuals from a similar cultural background may have very different perceptions of what is appropriate. Even the same person might react differently at a different point in time. While individuals may vary in their display of emotions at any time, long-term exposure to an LX culture can lead to "emotional acculturation" among immigrants (De Leersnyder, Mesquita & Kim 2011). The authors argued that the emotional experiences of people who live together (families, groups, cultures) tend to be similar and that immigrants start approximating host culture patterns of emotional experience. The authors found that immigrants' exposure to and engagement in the host culture predicted emotional acculturation (p. 460). The longer immigrants had lived in the host country, the more emotionally acculturated they had become as a result of intercultural interactions and relationships (p. 461). Moreover, immigrants' personality traits shift as a result of active participation in the host culture (Güngör et al. 2013).

Dewaele and Li Wei (2014a) found that participants' linguistic history and current use of languages determined their self-reported frequency of CS, but also Extraversion and Cognitive Empathy were linked to significantly more CS. Dewaele and Li Wei (2014a). In a study on attitudes towards CS, Dewaele and Li Wei (2014b) found that participants scoring higher on Tolerance of Ambiguity, Cognitive Empathy and Emotional Stability had significantly more positive attitudes towards CS. Dewaele and Zeckel (to appear) analysed self-reported CS from 300 multilinguals and found it varies significantly according to the type of interlocutor (more CS in interaction with friends). A high level of multilingualism, early onset of bilingualism, Openmindedness and low levels of Flexibility were linked with significantly more CS.

To sum up, studies reported that bi- and multilingual speakers generally prefer to use their L1 to express deep feelings. However, as a result of naturalistic exposure, L2 socialization and emotional acculturation, the L2 can become the more emotional language and preferred to express emotion (De Leersnyder, Mesquita & Kim 2011; Dewaele 2013; Pavlenko 2005, 2012).

Rationale for the present study

Previous research studies that looked at the expression of anger have covered a wide diversity of first languages, but few included L1 Arabic speakers. Therefore, this study answers the call by Porte (2012) and aims to partially replicate Dewaele (2013) by focusing on English-speaking Arabs. This is an interesting group to investigate given its strong emotional attachment towards Arabic because of its association with Islamic religion (Othman 2006).

Method

Participants

Participants were 110 English-speaking Arabs (50 males, 60 females) living in Greater London and had been living there for a period ranging from 2 to 60 years. The age of participants ranged from 18 to over 65, with education ranging from primary education to PhD. The majority of the population were originally from 20 Arabic countries, the largest groups were Jordanians (n =16), Syrians (n =14) and Iraqis (n = 10), followed (in decreasing numbers) by Egyptians, Lebanese, UAE, Algerians, Saudi, Sudanese, Bahraini, Yemeni, Omani, Tunisians, Kuwaiti,

Mauritanians, Qatari, Moroccans, Somali, Libyans and Djibouti. There were 99 bilingual speakers (L1 Arabic and L2 English) and 11 trilingual speakers (L1 Arabic, L2 English and L3 French). More than half of the participants reported themselves to be dominant in the L1 Arabic ($n =72$); a smaller proportion declared to be dominant in both L1 Arabic and L2 English ($n =22$); and 16 reported to be dominant in L2 English. However, the majority of respondents (83.6%) declared themselves to be fully proficient in English.

Instrument

The data were elicited from the second author's social network and were gathered through a questionnaire with closed and open-ended questions, adapted from the BEQ (Dewaele & Pavlenko 2001-2003). The questionnaire was distributed using various methods. Some copies were distributed directly to people, while the rest were distributed through email and post. This allowed us to reach people from different age groups, social classes and educational backgrounds. Several participants did not have access to the internet and some were not skilled enough to use a computer. Therefore, they filled in the printed version of the questionnaire. The data were collected in 2013. The research design and questionnaire obtained approval from the Ethics Committee. The following sociobiographical information was collected: age, gender, level of education, country of origin, occupation, languages known to the participant, chronological order of language acquisition, dominant languages, context of acquisition, general frequency of use and typical network of interlocutors. Participants also filled out questions on self-rated proficiency scores in their different languages along with perceived emotionality of L1 and L2. They provided information on their frequency of use of L1 Arabic and L2 English in the expression of anger in five different situations.

The first part of the questionnaire consisted of close-ended questions with Likert scales and the second part consisted of open-ended questions inviting participants to write comments. Traditionally, questionnaires with Likert scales responses have been discursively used and tested in socio-psychological research as they increase the validity of the research (Dörnyei & Taguchi 2009). However, Dewaele (2013), Pavlenko (2005) and Wierzbicka and Hawkins (2001) have pointed to the importance of linking the subjective experiences of participants with more objective evidence in order to provide good understanding. Our instrument allowed us to elicit objective evidence as well as subjective experiences.

The open-ended question asked for examples of language choices in situations where the participant had experienced strong emotions. This material (around 20,000 words) is mostly in English and will be used to illustrate the quantitative findings.

Independent variables

A total of eight independent variables have been considered (Dewaele 2013).
(1) Age of onset of acquisition of English. The information has been elicited by the following question: "at what age did you start learning L2 English?" Possible answers on 5-point Likert scale included: age 0-2 = 1, age 3-7 = 2, age 8-12 = 3, age 13-18 = 4, age 19+ = 5. Participants were spread out evenly over the different groups: $n =11$ in group 1, $n =32$ in group 2, $n =16$ in group 3, $n =28$ in group 4 and $n =23$ in group 5.
(2) Context of acquisition where English was first learned. Participants were presented with the choice between three contexts: naturalistic context (outside of

school) (n =11), instructed context (at school only) (n = 64), or mixed context (both classroom contact and naturalistic contact) (n =35).

(3) General frequency of use. This information was elicited by the question: "How frequently do you use Arabic/English?" Possible answers on the 5-point Likert scale included for Arabic: yearly or less = 1 (n =1), monthly = 2 (n =2), weekly = 3 (n =11), daily = 4 (n =30), all day = 5 (n =66). And for English: yearly or less = 1 (n =0), monthly = 2 (n =3), weekly = 3 (n =9), daily = 4 (n =25), all day = 5 (n =73).

(4) Degree of L2 socialization: This variable is a second-order variable based on the difference of general frequency of use of L1 Arabic and L2 English. The value was calculated by subtracting the score for the general frequency of use of the L2 from the score for the L1. Somebody who reported using the L1 all day (score 5) and the L2 all day (score 5) would have a L2 socialization score of 0, indicating a moderate degree of socialization. If a participant reported a monthly use of the L1 (score 2) and a daily use of the L2 (score 5), the L2 socialization will be score -3, indicating a very strong degree of socialization. After regrouping values, we had the following groups: very weak (n =6), weak (n =18), moderate (n =59) and strong (n =27).

(5) Degree of perceived emotionality of English. The information was obtained through the question: To what extent do you agree with the statement "English is emotional"? Possible answers on 5-point Likert scale included: not at all = 1 (n =0), somewhat = 2 (n =1), more or less = 3 (n =13), to a large extent = 4 (n =51), absolutely = 5 (n =45).

(6) Gender, age, and level of education. The latter variable included the following categories: 6 participants had primary level education, 46 had finished their secondary education, 39 had a Bachelors degree, 17 a Masters degree, and 2 had obtained a PhD. Twenty-three participants were aged between 18 and 24, 33 participants were aged between 25 and 34, 23 participants were aged between 35 and 44, 10 participants were aged between 45 and 54), 11 participants were aged between 55 and 64) with the final 10 participants being 65 or older.

Dependent variable

Data were obtained about the frequency with which the participants use their L1 and L2 for the expression of anger in five different situations: anger directed at oneself, at family, at strangers and in letters or emails. The question was formulated as follows: "If you are angry, what language do you typically use to express your anger?" Feedback was elicited through a five-point Likert scale, possible answers were: never = 1, rarely = 2, sometimes = 3, frequently = 4, all the time = 5.

The information was collected separately for L1 Arabic and L2 English.

Cronbach alpha analyses revealed that internal consistency reliability was high for the five-item language choice for anger scales in the L1 (alpha = 0.71), L2 (alpha = 0.78). A series of Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests revealed that the values are not normally distributed. (K-S Z values vary between 2.9 and 3.9, all $p < 0.001$). Therefore, Kruskal–Wallis tests were used as non-parametric equivalents to one-way ANOVAs and Mann-Whitney tests were used instead of t-tests. It also means we could not use multiple regression tests.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were based on findings reported in the literature review:

H1: The participants will prefer to use Arabic to express their anger.

H2: Participants who started learning English at a younger age will use it more frequently in expressing anger than participants who started learning it later.

H3: Participants who learned English in a mixed context (both classroom contact and naturalistic contact) will use it more frequently to express anger than participants who learned it in an formal instruction setting (classroom contact only) or a naturalistic environment (outside school).

H4: Participants who use English more frequently overall will prefer English for expressing anger.

H5: Participants with stronger English socialization will prefer English to express anger.

H6: Participants who perceive English as highly emotional will prefer it to express anger.

H7. The participants' education level, age and gender could affect their language choice for the expression of anger.

Results

Language choice for expressing anger in five situations

A series of Mann-Whitney tests revealed significant differences in frequency of language choice to express anger between L1 and L2 (table 1). Participants' use of L1 is, on average, 'frequently' to express anger (means range between 2.4 and 4.3 for the different situations). The L2 is used, on average, between 'rarely' and 'sometimes' (with means ranging between 1.7 and 3.2).

INSERT TABLE 1

Figure 1 shows that Arabic is used significantly more frequently than English to express anger at oneself, at friends, at parents, and at strangers. However, English is preferred to express anger in letters.

INSERT FIGURE 1

A typical comment is that of Fatima, a 25-year-old female teacher (Arabic L1, English L2), originally from Bahrain, who has lived in London for 23 years, dominant in both Arabic and English. She reported her preference for Arabic in oral argument and English to express anger in writing:

> The argument sounds more natural in Arabic so I use it to argue with family and friends but in writing I prefer to use English as it is more official and direct. The lack of using classic Arabic in my daily conversation makes it hard for me to use it in writing. Plus, I use English more frequently at work, therefore it is easier for me to express anger in English by writing.

Abdu (70-year-old, male, retired engineer, Arabic L1, English L2, originally from Jordan, living in London for 40 years, dominant in Arabic) offered his typical Arabic view that anger should not be shown to others. However, he chooses Arabic when he is really angry.

> It's rare for me to show my frustration or anger to other people as I believe in this phrase, khaliha balqlab tjrah wla ttla3 la bara w tfduah خليها بالقلب تجرح ولا تطلع برا وتفضح), which means it is better to keep the anger inside rather than say it in the open. People would not understand and they would probably make fun of me behind my back. However, when I get really angry I use Arabic to show the other person how angry I am. It also helps me express myself more than English. As in Arabic I can use popular proverbs that are so powerful and meaningful which can save me time arguing.

Dodo (a 25-year-old, female student, originally from Libya and now living in London for about 5 years, dominant in Arabic) reported her preference for Arabic to express anger because of the perceived emotional strength of Arabic, linked to her cultural and religious background.

I can use both languages, but I prefer to use Arabic to express deep emotions such as anger. Because Arabic comes from the heart, therefore it sounds more natural than English. Plus, many Arabic vocabularies and phrases that we normally use came from the Arabic culture and our religion, which increases the value of these words as it is full of meanings. I can critically argue and convince others with my opinions by simply using the Arabic language as I can use religious phrases from the Qur'an which stops them from arguing with me. For example, if someone hurts my feelings and I want to reply all I need to do is simply say what you did was Haram, which in English means sinful. This normally makes the other person feel really bad and ask for God's forgiveness.

The effect of age of onset (AoA) of learning the L2

The Kruskall-Wallis tests revealed that AoA has a highly significant effect on the frequency of use of the L2 for anger expression in the five situations (see table 2 and figure 2). Younger starters use the L2 significantly more frequently to express anger than later starters.
INSERT TABLE 2
INSERT FIGURE 2
An interesting comment by Noora (a 30-years old female, babysitter, originally from Algeria, living in London, dominant in Arabic, with French as a L3) mentioned the difficulty that late L2 learners face when arguing in the L2:

It is a bit difficult to express anger in English. Even if I try to argue in English I get too worried about my pronunciation. My pronunciation is not as good as in Arabic, as I was 19 years old when I first learnt English.

The effect of L2 context of acquisition

The Kruskall–Wallis tests revealed highly significant effects of context of acquisition in all situations. Participants who learned the L2 in a mixed context (classroom contact and naturalistic contact) use the L2 more frequently for the expression of anger in all 5 situations than those who learned the L2 only through formal instruction or through naturalistic learning (see table 2 and figure 3).

INSERT FIGURE 3

Some participants link their preference for the expression of emotions in the L2 to good education. Asma (25-year-old, female, student, originally from UAE, living in London for about 4 years, dominant in Arabic) explained:

I can easily express emotions in English language as I went to private English school to learn English. All my teachers were highly qualified and native English teachers. So they taught me how to express emotions and discuss different topics using English language only. Therefore, I find it easy to express emotions, including anger, or make a critical argument with somebody.

The effect of general frequency of use of L2

The Kruskall–Wallis tests revealed that the general frequency of use of English has a significant positive effect on the frequency of use of English to express anger in five situations (see table 2). Figure 4 shows that participants who use the L2 all day use it more frequently to express anger in all situations.

INSERT FIGURE 4

Amira (a 35-year-old female, originally from Jordan, lawyer, a Londoner for 20 years, dominant in English) explained that she uses English in arguments as part of her daily job, and that this influences her language choice when arguing with other bilingual speakers.

> Because I am a lawyer, I use English most of the time in arguing. Therefore, I find it easier to argue in English. English is the official language of the law. I can critically argue in English as I think English is more official and people take me seriously.

The effect of L2 socialization

The Kruskall–Wallis tests revealed that the degree of L2 socialization has a highly significant effect on frequency of use of the L2 to express their anger in all situations see table 2 and figure 5.
INSERT FIGURE 5
Mo (a 55-year-old male, business man, Syrian, a Londoner for 40 years and still dominant in Arabic) belongs to the "moderate" L2 socialization group. He explained how he uses English and Arabic at home and at work where he prefers Arabic to express anger.

> I can use both languages to express emotion. However, I use English with my partner who speaks Arabic as her second language. English is the spoken language at home, therefore I find it easy to use English to express emotion with my family. Nevertheless, I use Arabic more at work because I run a small business that deals with Arab customers. Therefore, I use mostly Arabic with my employees when I get really angry with them. However, I feel that I can express myself more freely in Arabic by using short famous poems.

The effect of perceived emotionality of L2

The Kruskal-Wallis tests reveal highly significant effects of perceived language emotionality of English on the frequency of use of English to express anger for all situations (see table 2 and figure 6). There is a steady increase in the frequency of use the L2 to express anger for participants who perceive the L2 to be more emotional.
INSERT FIGURE 6
Most of the participants reported that English has emotional resonance for them. For example, Basil (a 38-year-old male, accountant, originally from Iraq, a Londoner for 18 years, dominant in Arabic) answered that both languages have their own emotionality.

> Yes, Arabic represents my culture and religion. I can express myself and talk about emotional topics better in Arabic. However, English is also an emotional language as I can use it to go straight to the point especially when writing. English is rich and useful as much as Arabic. However, the richness of Arabic language comes from our culture.

Some participants believe that both languages share similar emotional significance. However, each language is used in a particular situation for particular reason. For example, Arabic, mainly colloquial Arabic, is used in oral emotional expressions to sound more natural. English is used for emotional e-mails and Facebook.

The effects of age, gender and education level

A series of Mann-Whitney tests reveal non-significant gender differences in 4 situations (alone, friends, parents, and strangers). However, females were significantly

more likely to choose English to express anger (*Mean* =3.6) by letter than men (*Mean* =2.7) (*Mann-Whitney* = 807.5, *Z* = 4.3, *p* < .0001).

Age was found to have a stronger effect on frequency of use of the L2 (English) to express anger in the L2 in 4 situations (alone, letters, friends, and strangers) but had no significant effect when facing parents in anger. Younger participants use English more frequently in anger at oneself, at friends, at strangers and in letters compared to older participants (see table 3 and figure 7).

INSERT TABLE 3

INSERT FIGURE 7

The Kruskal-Wallis tests showed a significant effect of education level on the frequency of use of English to express anger in three situations (alone, letters, and friends) (see table 3). But the effect was not significant in interactions with parents and strangers. Participants with bachelors or masters degrees used the L2 more frequently to express anger in the first three situations (alone, letters, and friends – with mean values over 3) compared to participants with primary or secondary education (with mean values below 3 for the use of English).

Discussion

This study examined seven hypotheses linked to the effect of L2 English learning history, current language use, perception of English and sociobiographical variables. The first hypothesis was largely confirmed, our participants preferred to use L1 Arabic to express their anger when alone, at friends, at parents and at strangers. However, they preferred English to express their anger in writing. This last result was unexpected, as Dewaele (2013) found that L1 was used more frequently by his multilinguals in expressing anger in all different situations, including letter writing.

Our participants used their Arabic more frequently than English with their parents to express anger. A number of participants reported that Arabic is the preferred language to express anger and endearment within the family. This finding reflects Dewaele's (2006) finding that the L1 is the preferred language for anger within the family (p. 135). Most of our participants explained that they preferred Arabic because it is strongly attached to Arabic culture, family values and Islamic religion. Pavlenko (2004) argues that the preference for the L1 is not surprising "as this is the language in which they have the best command of multiple linguistic repertoires and do not have to stop to think about word choices (thus losing face at a crucial moment in the interaction)" (p. 199).

Our second hypothesis, namely that participants who started learning English at a younger age would use it more frequently to express anger than participants who started learning it later, was confirmed. This pattern reflects the finding in Dewaele (2013) where early starters in an LX were found to be much more likely to use the LX to express various emotions, to perceive the LX to be more emotional and to report lower level of Foreign Language Anxiety. One possible explanation for this is that early acquisition of the L2 means that the language is acquired when the limbic system is active, providing rich emotional associations, and leading to both semantic and affective processing of the L2 (Pavlenko 2012).

Our third hypothesis, namely that participants who learned English in a mixed context (both classroom contact and naturalistic contact) would use it more frequently to express anger than participants who learned it in a purely instructed setting (classroom contact only) or in a naturalistic environment (outside school) is also supported. Participants who learned English in a mixed environment used L2 for expressing anger more frequently than those who learned L2 in naturalistic

environment. Dewaele (2013) also found that instructed learners of an LX were less likely to express anger in the LX than mixed and naturalistic learners – the difference between these two groups was very small. One possible explanation for this is that foreign language classrooms are typically not environments where emotion scripts are discussed or used. Only authentic communication outside the classroom allows learners to engage in emotional interactions. Yet, naturalistic learners often lack self-confidence in the LX and tend to use it less frequently for emotion (Dewaele 2013).

Our fourth hypothesis, namely that frequency of use of English would be linked to frequency of use of that language for communicating anger, is fully supported in all situations. Participants who use the English all day use it more frequently to express anger in all situations. Similar patterns were found for various emotions in the LX (Dewaele, 2006, 2008, 2013).

Our fifth hypothesis, namely that higher levels of L2 socialization would be linked to more frequent use of English to express anger, is fully supported in all situations. Using the L2 more frequently than the L1 implies a wider variety of social situations in which anger would have to be expressed or experienced (Dewaele, 2006, 2013).

Our sixth hypothesis, namely that participants who perceive English as being more emotional would prefer it to express anger, is fully supported in all situations. Some participants explained that they use English because it is suitable for their anger, particularly in writing. Dewaele (2013) and Pavlenko (2004) reported similar patterns with multilingual parents: those who perceived their L2 as highly emotional, would use it more frequently for disciplining and praising their children (2004: 187).

Our final hypothesis namely that participants' education level, age and gender could affect language choice for the expression of anger, is partially confirmed. Female participants were more likely to choose English to express anger by letter than male participants. Dewaele (2013) also found that his female participants used the L2 significantly more than male participants to express anger. Younger participants reported more frequent use of English in anger at oneself, at friends, at strangers and in letters compared to older participants. This could be linked to a higher level of emotional acculturation in the English culture of the younger generation (De Leersnyder et al., 2011). No clear patterns emerged in Dewaele (2013) between language choices for anger and age nor education levels.

The most surprising result in our study was the preference for English in expressing anger in letters. Some participants reported that they find it is easier to express anger in written form in English than using the modern standard Arabic form of writing. Our participants use English and Colloquial Arabic more frequently than the modern standard Arabic. Therefore, this might result in difficulty in writing using the classic Arabic and Modern standard Arabic. A number of the participants also explained that they have achieved a high level in English writing through education and therefore preferred writing in English rather in than in modern standard Arabic. They also linked their preference for English to the frequent use of English in social media.

It thus seems that the patterns linked to language preference for expressing anger among English-speaking Arabs who live in London are broadly similar to those uncovered in the large-scale investigation about multilinguals worldwide (Dewaele, 2013). The qualitative data added an insight in the possible causes of the language choices, and these included a variety of personal, religious, sociocultural and linguistic reasons.

There are obviously factors that affect language choice to express anger that were not included in the present research design. Some of these could be stable, such as identification with Arabic culture and religion, where Arabic is the "we-code" conveying "in-group membership, informality and intimacy" (Ritchie & Bathia, 2013: 381). Arabic might thus be preferred to argue in favor of traditional Arabic cultural values, while English, the "they-code" - but increasingly also the "us too-code" - would be used to create distance, assert authority, express objectivity, suppress the tabooness of the interaction (p. 381). English would thus be the logical choice for those arguing in favor of English cultural values, as it would be a highly salient instance of divergence with an Arabic-speaking interlocutor (Sachdev et al., 2013). While some of these code-switches could be strategic, others could be largely unconscious, and these could include the sudden appearance of a colloquial expression in either language.

Conclusion

We started this paper with the anecdote about a group of Arab-English Londoners, May, Rashid, Ahmad and Assad in a heated discussion in the family home on same-sex marriage. Assad, who was opposed to this argued in Arabic against the idea, then switched to English to swear when May and Ahmad challenged him in English, despite the fact that they usually use Arabic at home. Asked why they diverged from Arabic, they answered that they had no idea. The language choices in this particular episode are atypical, considering our quantitative findings and the studies reporting a preference for the L1 to express emotions. However, Dewaele (2013) found evidence of this atypical direction of code-switching among his Asian and Arabic participants who explained that in exceptional cases swearing in English L2 allowed them to escape L1 social-cultural constraints.

Our investigation revealed that the independent variables that Dewaele (2013) identified as having an effect on the choice of the L2 among a large heterogeneous group of multilinguals had similar effects in our sample of 110 Arab-English Londoners. Arabic was preferred to express anger when alone, with friends, parents and strangers but English was preferred to express anger in letters. The choice of English for the expression of anger was linked to a lower AoA, naturalistic or mixed L2 learning context rather than purely formal instruction, frequency of general use of the L2, the degree of L2 socialization and higher perceived emotionality of English. Sociobiographical variables also had an effect on language choice, with female participants being more likely to use English to express anger in letters, younger participants expressing their anger in English more frequently when alone, with friends, strangers and in letters. The effect of education level was significant for anger expressed alone, with friends and in letters. Participants with lower levels of education reported using English less frequently than those with bachelor degrees, who also used is slightly more than those with masters and PhDs.

To conclude, early participation in authentic interactions in English and a moderate degree of L2 socialization, probably accompanied by L2 emotional acculturation, allows our Arab-English Londoners to express their anger in Arabic or in English according to the situation and the interlocutor. While Arabic is usually the preferred language to express anger, switching to English in angry exchanges with Arab-English interlocutors can happen. It can then be interpreted as accommodation, more specifically *divergence* to reject the Arabic in-group values and edge closer to English cultural values, or *convergence* to express anger in the L1 of the English-speaking interlocutor (Sachdev et al., 2013).

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TABLES

Table 1: A comparison of frequency of use of L1 and L2 to express anger (Mann-Whitney tests)

Situation	*Mann-Whitney U*	*Z*	*p*
Alone	1839	-9.3	0.000
Letters	3828	-4.8	0.000
Friends	2915	-6.9	0.000
Parents	322	-12.7	0.000
Strangers	3016	-6.8	0.000

Table 2: The effect of AoA, context of acquisition, general frequency of use, degree of socialization and perceived emotionality in the L2 on frequency of use of English to express anger (Kruskall Wallis Chi^2)

Situation	AoA	Context of acquisition	General frequency of use	L2 socialization	L2 emotionality
Alone	54.4***	31.2***	36.3***	46.3***	66.1***
Letters	50.4***	38.3***	21.5***	27.8***	52.4***
Friends	49.9***	22.3***	33.2***	41.7***	59.9***
Parents	40.6***	26.1***	13.4*	37.1***	43.8***
Strangers	21.4***	19.6**	12.9*	26.1***	32.3***

* p < .05, ** p < .001, *** p < .0001

Table 3: The effect of age group and education level on frequency of use of the L2 (English) to express anger in the L2 (Kruskal-Wallis Chi^2)

Anger	Age group	Education level
Alone	12.1*	20.1***
Letters	13.9*	22.9***
Friends	20.0**	16.2*
Parents	9.4	5.1
Strangers	15.6*	7.5

* p < .05, ** p < .001, *** p < .0001

FIGURES

Figure 1: Mean frequency of use of the L1 and L2 to express anger
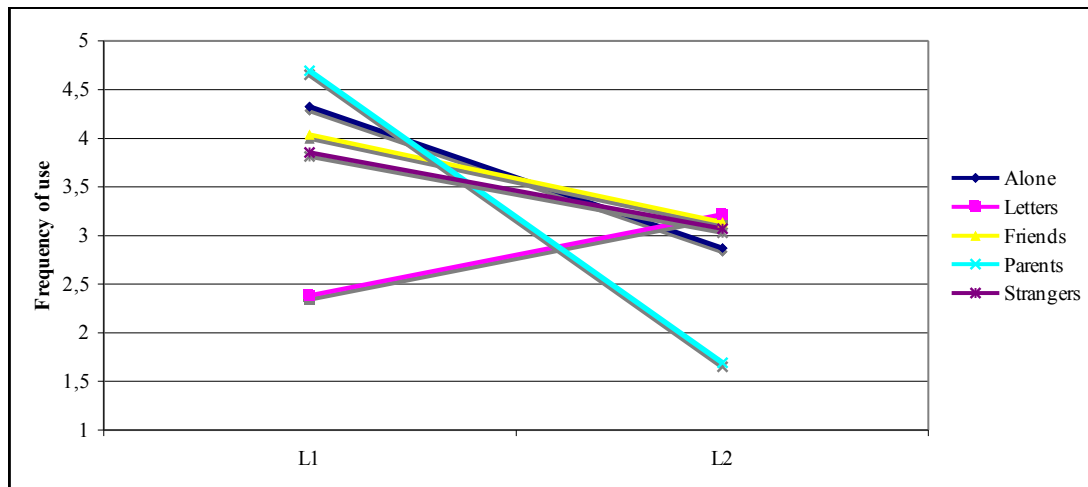

Figure 2: Mean values for frequency of use of the L2 to express anger according to AoA.
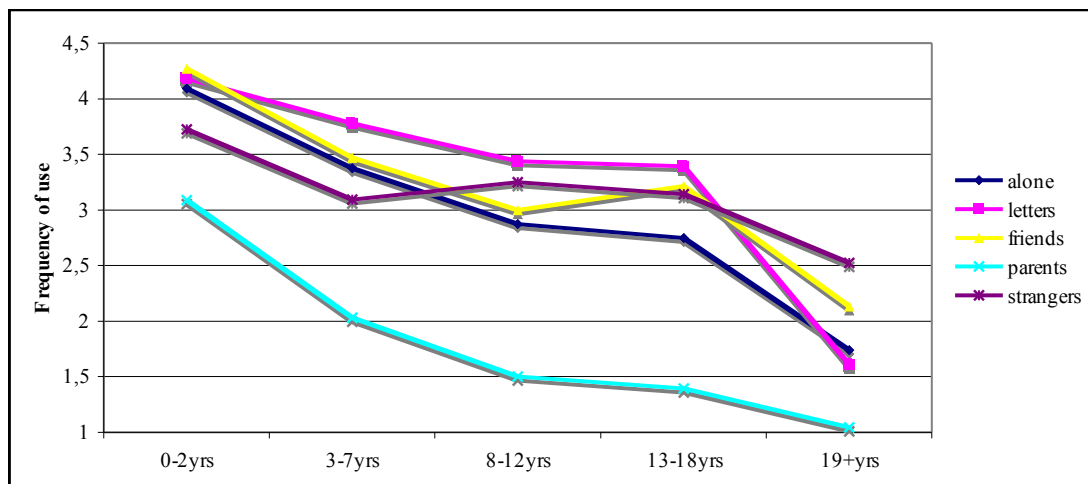
Figure 3: Mean values for frequency of use of the L2 to express anger according to context of L2 acquisition
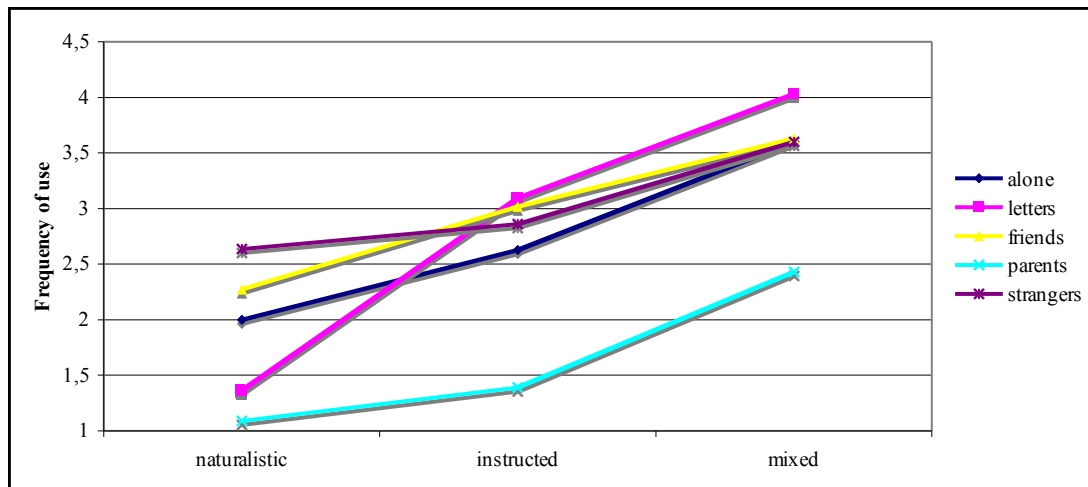

Figure 4 Mean values for frequency of use of the L2 to express anger according to general frequency of use of L2
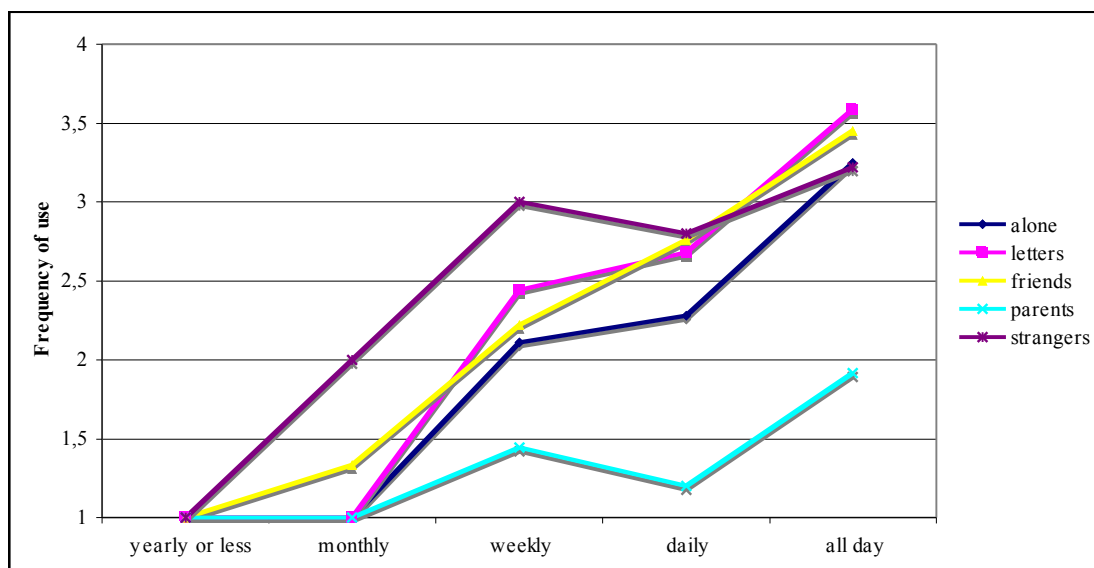
Figure 5 Mean values for frequency of use of the L2 to express anger according to degree of L2 socialization.
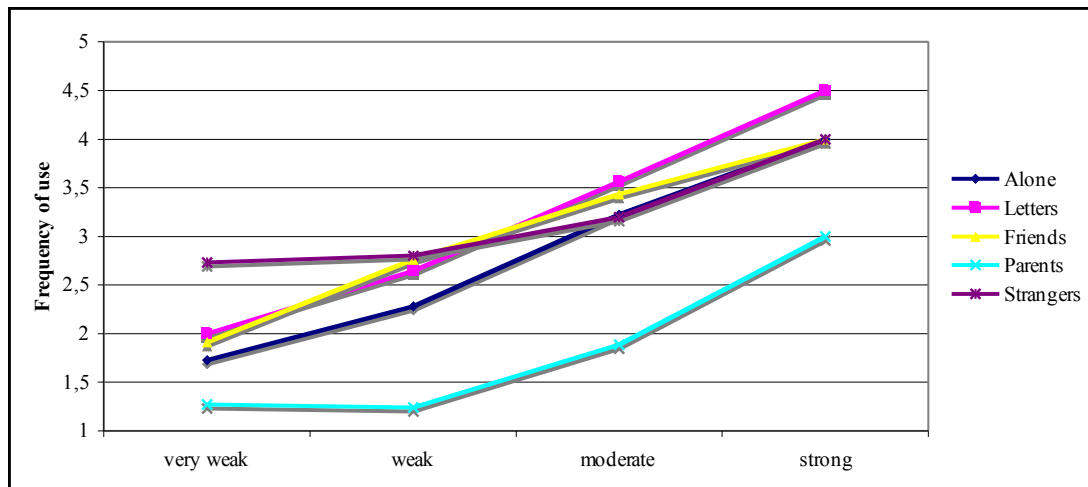
Figure 6 Mean values for frequency of use of the L2 to express anger according to perceived emotionality of the L2
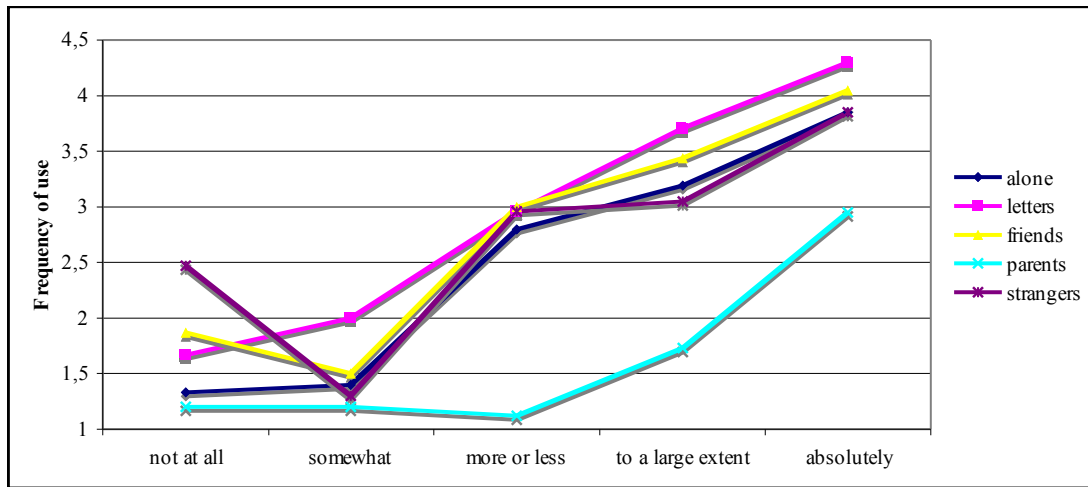

Figure 7 Mean values for frequency of use of English to express anger according to age group.