Research Paper

The Implementation of Music in Teaching Persian Heritage Speaking Students in International Schools: The Case of Persian Students in Dubai

Fatemeh Farougi[1], Ilona Dabney-Fekete[2], Foroozan Hajian[3]

Abstract

It is widely acknowledged that music plays an important role in education as a powerful tool for identity formation. Within the educational sphere, there is limited empirical evidence to show how heritage language learners do engage with music as a resource for learning and to maintain linguistic knowledge. This research is a step towards achieving a deeper understanding of how Persian students residing in the United Arab Emirates connect with their mother tongue in the multicultural society of the country. The aim is to investigate whether integration of music into the Persian literature classroom of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme can enhance the students' comprehension and cultural understanding among Persian students. Therefore, the study addresses three central questions: (1) Does using music in the classroom improve students' understanding of classic Persian literature? (2) How does using music affect their motivation and emotional engagement if used in the classroom? (3) What impact does using music have on students staying connected to their heritage language and culture? This study was conducted in 2023 in the UAE and using a two-phase within-subject design. There were twelve IBDP students between 16 to 19 years old participating in the research answering questionnaires after reading ghazals by Rumi and again after listening to the musical adaptations of the same poems. A Google Form was used to analyse the data through descriptive statistics and thematic coding. Findings show that listening to music significantly improved understanding Persian poetry and detecting literary devices and comprehension was easier.

Keywords: education; international students; high school students

Introduction

It is universally agreed that education is an important part of human life. Mostly, education is considered an essential human virtue that facilitates effective interaction in society and creates a basis of good life for future generations to come. The hope of providing a decent education for children is at the forefront of every parent's mind. The belief, and hope, is that with a good education, today's young minds will grow to become successful individuals and perter parents to their own children in the future. In the hopes of not only having a platform to success but also knowledge of social conduct, strength, self-respect, character and a bright future, modern day parents in the UAE increasingly look to International Schools (IS). This is partly due to the effect of globalization through the advancement of technology and partly because of English being used as lingua franca around the world today, specifically in multicultural societies such as the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E). according to Carder (2007), as an international language, English is the preferred medium of communication in international communities such as business, science, cultural interaction and intellectual life of the community members. This claim clearly leads those involved in the educational sciences to agree that today's youth are

---

[1] Doctoral Program on Educational Sciences, University of Debrecen, Debrecen, Hungary; fatemeh.faroughi@gmail.com (corresponding author)
[2] Institute of Educational Studies and Cultural Management, University of Debrecen, Debrecen, Hungary
[3] Doctoral Program on Educational Sciences, University of Debrecen, Debrecen, Hungary

growing towards bilingualism which illustrates the importance of English as a second language, leading parents to desire native level competency in English for their children. In most Asian and Middle Eastern countries, the primary purpose for learning English is to join international academic and professional communities, while educating young people and giving them an idealized native competency.

The educational system of the U.A.E, specifically its famous city and economic hub of Dubai, is based on private and international schools for expatriates from all around living in the country. Their children cannot attend the national schooling system which is free as it is for national Arab children. However, the educational system in the U.A.E supports a wide variety of schooling systems such as English, American, Australian, German, Chinese, French, Iranian, Indian, and the hybrid of the first two, just to name a few. Amongst this wide variety of international schools and their associated curricula, the International Baccalaureate (IB) is indeed a preferred schooling system, a favorite of parents and students alike. IB schools follow a unified international system where children are trained to live in an international society and a global world. IB's language of instruction is English, and children go through different states to complete their twelve-year diploma. The first stage is the Primary Year Program (PYP), where children aged three to twelve are enrolled. The Middle Year Program (MYP) focuses on children from twelve to sixteen years of age, and finally the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP), where students sixteen to nineteen years of age continue their education. Within these IB operating schools, and specifically the diploma program, there exists the option of a second/foreign language topic. At this stage students are required to sit an examination where they are expected to study nine literary works that cover three different eras, three works in translation and at least five works in their mother/heritage language. However, according to IB Organization (IBO), the number of sources to be studied will change to seven for students sitting DP for the 2026 academic year. There are also different genres to choose from, for example, poetry, drama, biography, autobiography, collection of letters, etc. Most teachers working with the second language examination of the IBDP system encourage students to make good use of their mother/heritage language knowledge. This is due to the fact that, at least in Dubai, a generation of bilinguals has been raised up where their English language competency is native like, but their knowledge of their mother/heritage language is that of a second language with varied proficiency and literacy. This phenomenon, has been documented little, thus demanding further research. Hopkyns (2020), argues that a number of researchers working in the educational system of the U.A.E have come to the conclusion that this lack of knowledge towards the mother tongue can be considered a new disability. The teaching method applied in these schools, in both English and the mother/heritage tongue, is the conventional and traditional teaching style. Herein, the child is exposed to the grammar, vocabulary and the literature. It is widely believed that students will benefit most through memorizing these elements of language and the lessons.

Therefore, this paper is based on a pilot study where it is argued that the Persian students who choose the Persian language and literature as their second language learn it more effectively using an innovative method, such as music. Those teachers following the traditional teaching method, however, usually face numerous issues. Some are common to every classroom, such as how to make the lessons more interesting, and why students are not interested in their mother/heritage language. This paper proposes that in order to attract the students to Persian as their mother/heritage language, the use of music and songs play an important role. This is especially true in acknowledging to the challenge of focusing the attention of uninterested students and encouraging them to interact with a millennium's worth of old Persian literature.

In this study twelve IB students participated, who went through the IBDP already or are in the process of completing their diploma. In the first stage, they were asked to read two poems of the famous Persian poet Molavi Jalal al-Din Rumi, reflecting on them and trying to understand their meaning. The next stage asked the same students to watch a music video/song version of the poem, filling out the questionnaire, comparing and contrasting their reactions to the poem when they read it with when they listened to it. The aim was to examine their response and evaluate whether the traditional teaching method via memorizing grammar, literary devices and vocabulary would work better or whether using music would make the entire process of teaching and learning a more memorable and production experience. The reason for choosing Rumi's poem for this study was that these poems are highly musical with an intrinsic rhythm and rhyming system, therefore even when reading the poem, the students could understand their rhythmical essence. On the other hand, understanding Rumi's poetry was not without difficulties, as it is a highly mystical work, and the students were less interested in his poetry at first. However, recently in Iran and elsewhere in the world, numerous artists have started working on Rumi's poetry, and students are familiar with these poems without knowing whose composition they are listening to. It is also believed, and also was confirmed by this research, that by focusing on this type of poetry, the fear of the unknown can turn into the joy of understanding, regardless of how little the

improvement might be. It is important to note that in order for the research to have a valid outcome, more schools, students, and teachers need to be involved in research like this.

The structure of the paper is as follows: the literature review leads out, investigating the history of music and how it has been employed by different sciences, followed by the introduction of international schools, and, finally, the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program. The paper will then elaborate on the educational system in the U.A.E and the focus will entirely be on the emirate of Dubai, due to the fact that the schools concerned in this paper are situated in that city. This is followed by the Iranian international schools in Dubai, and an attempt is made to understand why parents prefer to send their children to these Iranian international schools. Finally, teaching Persian literature using an innovative method will be scrutinized, along with the methodology used. The last two sections will present the results, the outcome of the research, and the conclusion.

The aim of this research is to examine how integrating music into Persian literature classroom for bilingual International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme could enhance student language comprehension and if it has a motivating effect as well as cultural engagement opportunities for Persian heritage students who are enrolled in these schools in Dubai. Specifically, this study investigates whether the use of musical adaptations of classical Persian poetry, specifically poems, or as they are known: ghazals, of Rumi, can support deeper understanding of literary content, facilitate emotional connection with these heritage speakers, or perhaps improve mother tongue retention among bilingual students for whom Persian is a secondary or heritage language.

To achieve the aims of this research, the paper is guided by the following research questions:

How does using Persian Music in literature classes affect heritage students' comprehension of classical poetry compared to the traditional text-based teaching method?

In what ways does music influence students to become motivated and emotionally more engaged in learning their heritage language?

How might incorporating music into teaching strategies shape students' sense of belonging and cultural identity as well as connection to Persian literary traditions?

These questions are designed to provide a framework from which to explore the pedagogical value of music as an innovative instructional tool within education and more specifically in heritage language education. It also seeks to find ways to improve education in multicultural and multilingual international schooling systems in culturally diverse societies such as the United Arab Emirates.

State of the art in music and education

Music plays an important role in our daily life; it also has a positive effect on our mental health (Silverman, 2022). The wide variety of music that exists on the market today is proof of how important its role is in our lives. Looking at the human life span, the first experience an infant has with music oftentimes is the song of a mother's lullaby, where words in a rhythmical fashion are sung. This tradition of singing songs to babies is further carried on in nurseries, where nursery teachers use music to not only teach the topic of the day but also to create a pleasant atmosphere for young children who may not be used to being separated from their parents. Therefore, withing the educational system of each country, the use of music in pre-primary education is stressed and considered a norm. Ehrlin and Gustavsson (2015) further elaborate that in the educational system of Sweden since 1998, subject areas such as mathematics technology, science, and language development are focused on, and within language development, areas such as pictures, songs, music, drama, rhythm, dance and movement are deemed a very important area of education in preschool studies. Within primary education research conducted by Torass Vila (2021) looks into a music program named "movement and music in English" and the benefits of employing music to teach English as a foreign language in Spanish primary schools is discussed in this research. Here, Torass Vila, focusing on the importance of English, claims that although there is a vast number of studies done on the relationships between music and language, employing music in primary education to teach English is innovative and inspirational in Spanish primary schools.

In another attempt Anderson and Fuller (2010) have studied how listening to popular lyrical music can affect junior high school children's functionality while they are concurrently performing a cognitively complex task. They also give further reports on how some educators and concerned parents are opposed to the idea of using music in teaching, and how they believe listening to music might be distracting for students and interfere with their learning process. At the university level, extensive research has been conducted on this topic over a prolonged period of time. According to Dethier (1991), employing music as a second language helps

understanding the topic, where the teacher with the help of popular music like blues, jazz and rock can exemplify ideas, process those ideas, situations, or perhaps emotions. The author also believes that using music to introduce different concepts such as artistic influence, irony or perhaps the appropriation of cultural material, could be a logical way for interested students and help them make a sufficient connection and also to understand the new material quickly, efficiently and without getting bored. Some researchers such as Tinary and Khandke (2000), have gone even a step further and used music to teach economy, where the authors assert that up to the time of the research conducted by them, the use of music as a vehicle in teaching economy and as a pedagogical tool had not been examined. In another example, Elterman (1983) uses music to teach sociology and quotes Harburg that "the great lyricist of Broadway and Hollywood observed that: words make you think, music makes you feel and songs make you feel thoughts". The idea proposed by Elterman is that by employing popular songs to assist with teaching sociology, one can facilitate the identification, and definition, and can also analyze the sociological concepts that is provided by the lyrics of selected songs, which could in return be considered as relevant examples of certain perspectives and specific topics. In another study Albers and Bach (2003) decided to teach sociological concepts by starting and concluding each lecture with music. The authors believed that in an attempt to make a connection with students and to create a memorable teaching session for both the teacher and students sociology teachers need to experiment a variety of non-traditional teaching techniques and tools. Within global education, Rogers (1990) believes that the study of the origins of popular musical instruments, can help students learn about the different waves of immigration, as well as trade routes and cultural borrowing that is significantly visible in America for example.

In language teaching and learning a wide variety of research has been conducted where different researchers have focused on various uses of employing music in teaching a language. Be it a second or foreign language. Li and Brand (2009) argue that the use of songs in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms is generally endorsed by teachers. However, they also stress the fact that there should be more research conducted on this idea and its effectiveness within ESL classrooms. This is particularly important as the aim of any successful language learning is not only to be able to speak the language, but also to prepare the learners to interact with other native speakers who most likely are from different cultural backgrounds. According to Li and Brand (2009) there are several reasons why using songs, specifically pop music could help the second language learner. First, according to them, popular songs employ the most commonly used words and phrases in that given language. Second, the repetition and rhythm of the songs can help with the memorizing process and also introduces the learner to new vocabulary. Third, it is also believed that the language of the songs is speech like, it is sung at a slower speed with more pauses between utterances that eventually help the learner. And lastly the beat of the music makes the learning process more enjoyable.

Like English which is considered as lingua franca in the twenty first century, music too can be considered a universal and mediator language. One can claim that listening to music can soothe emotions as well as introduce the second/foreign language learner to the cultural specification o f that language. Students usually learn through rhythm, melody and music more effectively in pre-primary years. Therefore, it could be the case that in higher grades too, some form of music could be added to the classroom activities to enhance the cognition of learners and offer effective and rather joyful experience during reading. This use of music to teach literature is further supported by the fact that both language and music are closely tied, they are different forms of interaction while the goal remains the same.

International Schools and Heritage Language

Heritage Language

Most researchers working on languages argue that there is not a unified definition for a phenomenon known as heritage language. Finding solid ground among educators and researchers since the mid-nineteen seventies in Canada with the inception of heritage languages programs in Ontario, it took over a decade to find its rightful place in academia and among scholars in the U.S.A and in the context of language policy (Cummins, 2005). Among all the different definitions provided for the term heritage language, Park (2013) elaborates that heritage language could be defined as all languages brought to host societies by immigrants except for aboriginal languages. To answer who can be considered a heritage language learner, Sedighi (2010) claims that a heritage language is a kind of language that the learner is exposed to at home but it may or may not be the mother tongue of the speaker. Therefore, there is no real opportunity for development for these heritage speakers due to the fact that the dominant language of the environment is different than that of the speaker, and the family's

vocabulary is restricted too. Also, it occurs often that speakers code-switch to the dominant language if they are in a situation where they cannot find the right word. What is more, within the same conversation the speaker may switch from one language to the other and back to the first language in order to complete his conversation. Valdes (2005) gives a rather broad and ambiguous specification for heritage language learners by claiming that heritage language has been used broadly to refer to non-majority or non-societal language that is spoken by groups or linguistic minorities. Such minorities include populations who might be indigenous to a particular region of a present-day nation-state e.g. aborigines in Australia, and Kurds in Turkey, Iran and Iraq. Trentman (2015), however, argues that it is not sufficient to categorize learners with ancestral ties to a certain language as these learners may not identify themselves as heritage learners of that language. Valdes (2005), in contrast, considers a heritage speaker in the U.S. the child of families that have native American background, or those foreign born children of immigrants who came to the U.S. at a young age, as well as those native-born children of foreign immigrants and at times even native-born children of native-born parents with immigrant backgrounds. With regards to the Persian language, Sedighi (2010) posits that heritage learners are children who have been exposed to the Persian language either at home, and within extended family or in the Persian community they belong to.

However, what these studies fail to clearly indicate is that although it is accepted that a heritage language could be the mother tongue of a person who is in contact with that language at home, and in some cases within their communities, limiting the dominant language to English seems to be inappropriate. As one can argue, although English is the lingua franca, it is not the only language around the world that is spoken widely. There are still countries where non-English languages are used as the standard, and within those countries there are minorities who speak a language other than the official one of their countries. For instance, a Kurd child born and growing up in Iran's capital city of Tehran can be considered a heritage speaker of Kurdish with a very limited knowledge of the mother/heritage language. Therefore, it is not plausible to limit heritage language speakers to those who have received their education in English and possess a mother of ancestral language as a heritage language. Since there is an argument about the term and the specification of heritage language and how a person can be defined as a heritage speaker, Montrul's (2010) definition of heritage language seems the most accurate for the purpose of this study. According to Montrul heritage speaker are children or adult members of a language minority who are exposed to both their home language and the majority language of the society they live in. The author continues to argue that the common characteristics of these heritage speakers is that their knowledge of the family language is partial, which is short of native speakers back home or even their parents knowledge. According to this definition, heritage language learners are a unique case of bilingualism where the level of proficiency varies considerably from one speaker to another as they do not have access to education in the heritage language rather than the majority language.

International Schools

The term "International School", like heritage language, is widely debated amongst researchers of the field, as there is no simple and universal, agreed upon definition. For example, the question has been asked, whether having an "international" population of students and teachers is enough to consider a school an international institution, or if fundamental commitments to principles and philosophies also apply. In answer to that, it seems that initially, international schools were created for expatriate families residing outside of their country of origin, and throughout the years, local well-to-do parents decided to send their children to these schools as well. Carder (2007) states that after the second World War, businessmen, artists, diplomat and expatriates in general, who were usually from economically advanced countries were sent abroad temporarily. The author continues to explain that it was then that these schools were created modeled after national schools, mostly founded by private initiatives so the education of the expatriate children would not be interrupted during their stay in the host country. However, at some point the number of locals wishing to enroll their children in these schools increased, as many of them considered the knowledge of English as a foreign language necessary. This increase in the national demand for international schools resulted in the expansion of the schooling system, and a new and global understanding of education as a whole. It is believed that the greatest pioneer international schools could be British and American, as these schools focus not only on promoting the excellent learning of English but also the dissemination of their values abroad. Although the aim of establishing international schools grew with the demand of proper education for travelling diplomats and entrepreneurs, somewhere around the 1960s, excessive migration as the result of globalization trends had increased the demand for international schools to encompass the growing population of students that were interested in pursuing their education in an

international school. According to Hayden and Thompson (1998), the advancement of technology as well as the increased growth of international companies and organizations around the world has given rise to an increasing number of mobile, expatriate professionals and their families. Other sources of immigration too have had an impact on the high demand of attending international schools. Families can now easily relocate in search of a better quality of life and financial prospects. Thus, it is expected that with the growth of intercontinental migration, the effects of international organizations' and globalization's continued expansion will cause a huge increase in the number of students joining international schools. Since these schools are privately owned, fees charged can be extremely high, as they are usually paid by the company or the organization of which one of the parents is an employee. However, there are also cases where the locals who are willing to pay the high fees send their children to such schools, to receive an education in English. According to Savva (2013), in the "ISC Research" conducted in 2012, it has been indicated that the number of international students increased from 1 million in 2002 to over 2 million in 2012, and it can be predicted that the number will reach 5 million by early 2020. Although this claim is in dire need of an update now that 2025 is around the corner, it could also be an indication that international school market is growing rapidly, which could also be the result of positive rapport among local and international communities, and the favoring of international schools over national ones.

According to Carder (2005), the earliest international school dates back to 1924 and the "International School of Geneva". Assuming the international school of Geneva was in fact the first international school by today's norms, the increase in the number of such schools worldwide since then is easily detected. In 1951 the International Schools Association (ISA) was founded in Switzerland (International School Association, n.d.). This organization created the "International Baccalaureate Diploma Program" in 1964 (International baccalaureate®, n.d.) and consequently established the "International Baccalaureate Organization" (IBO) in 1968 (International baccalaureate®, n.d.) Dolby and Rahman (2008), claim that the purpose of the international baccalaureate organization was to provide an international education and curriculum that would be accepted by institutions and higher education organizations around the world, where the IBDP served as secondary second-level curriculum. As for Dolby and Rahman's research is concerned, the number of schools that offer IB curriculum was around 2,220 schools in 125 countries. Then in the 1990s IB expanded its educational system to include the early and middle years as well. According the IB official website, today there are over 5,800 IB schools worldwide offering three levels of education with 1,950,000 students attending in 162 countries around the world.

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Program

The "International Baccalaureate Diploma Program" which is for students aged sixteen to nineteen, covers two final years of secondary school that leads to a final examination and a diploma that is recognized by universities around the world, hence the parental desire to send their children to IB schools. It is believed that the "IB curriculum" represents the best teaching method. Rather than exporting a specific national system to another country, e.g. – the British or American curriculum, the many teaching methods of multiple countries are combined into one. Moreover, the IBDP focuses on training young adults to be critical thinkers to teach them how to learn and how to have an international mindset. In order for the student to have this mindset, the "IB program" allows the students to develop an understanding of their national identity and culture. This is done through a second language program available to all IB students with the aim of providing students with essential tools for living and working with others abroad. All of these are achieved through the medium of the English language, the students are provided the necessary language skills and intercultural understanding, enabling them to interact successfully with others in an environment where culturally diverse individuals can converse using the common language they have learnt. The IBDP also allows the students to choose their mother tongue as a second language. Giving students whose native tongue is not English a chance to learn their mother tongue provides them a sense of belonging, linking them to their roots in the form of school supported self-taught language or SSST. The diploma has six academic areas enclosing a central core. Students can choose to study modern languages, humanities or social science subjects, an experimental science, mathematics and one of the creative arts. They will need to take a theory of knowledge (TOK) course that covers critical thinking and inquiry into the process of acquiring knowledge rather than just memorizing a topic. At the heart of the IB system is a course known as CAS or creativity, activity, and service, which enables students to learn their role in society. In relation to others, they will be educated to develop skills and attitudes through individual or group activities and experiences. And finally, their academic proficiency is evaluated by producing a written work in

the form of an extended essay, where they have the chance to investigate a topic of their choice as an independent research form.

Dubai's Educational System

United Arab Emirates, and more specifically for this research, Dubai's educational system, is unique to the country. As the country and within it the city of Dubai is the hosting place for over 200 nationalities living and working there, the educational system is under constant pressure (Ghandi, 2012). Basically, the country has two different schooling systems, the national which is for the Arab locals only and the private and international which is for all other expatriates living in the country. Therefore, based on the population of a certain nationality the demand for an international school that offers a curriculum that is accepted in the home country increases.

Dubai's Schooling System

The U.A.E is located on the shores of the Persian Gulf and consists of seven emirates that include the capital city of Abu Dhabi, the economic hub of Dubai, and five smaller emirates of Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Quwain, Fujairah, and Ras al-Khaimah. The seven emirates under the provision of its founding father Shaikh Zayed Bin Sultan al-Nahyan were united in 1971 and formed a country that is now known as the U.A.E. with a population of over 12 million inhabitants out of which almost 89% are expatriates the country's educational system operates in two separate branches. The first is the government schools specifically for U.A.E national students only, where there are no fees, and the private schools which are fee paying and both national and expatriate students can join. The Ministry of Education (MOE) is the responsible body overseeing educational affairs in the country, while in Dubai the educational affairs are handled by the "Knowledge and Human Development Authority" or KHDA (Knowledge and Human Development Authority, 2025).

Like any other country, in the U.A.E, education is considered one of the priorities of the country in its quest for advancement and finding its place amongst the countries in the region and worldwide. The way the U.A.E's government values education is proven by the improvement and restructuring of the educational system in the country in the last two decades. According to Alhosani (2022), since 24% of the U.A.E population is under the age of 18, the high level of investment and governmental support to improve the educational system has become the core goal of the country. Alhosani stresses that by laying the foundation to work towards the aspired outcome. It is only possible if values of the vision 2021 project introduced by Shaikh Mohammad, are incorporated into the objectives, methods, policies and assessments of teaching and learning. As per vision 2021, the national agenda should emphasize the development of a first-rate educational system and that requires a complete and comprehensive transition of the current educational system that is in place (The Official Portal of the UAE Government, 2024).

Due to the fact that the U.A.E is "home to over 200 nationalities", who are unable to attend national schools and do not have access to the free national education services of the country, parents look to international and private schools, hence the high number of English medium international schools in the U.A.E (Ghandi, 2012). This mushrooming of international schools in the U.A.E has resulted in a rainbow of curricula (Gallagher, 2020). To make things more complicated there are schools functioning in the U.A.E that offer several curricular tracks within one organization. The school curricula include but are not limited to American, Australian, British, Canadian, Chinese, French, German, Iranian, Indian, and Pakistani to name but a few. There are also schools that are hybrids of some of the aforementioned schools. One of the most famous curricula is the IB system. The wide variety of curricula in the educational system of the U.A.E is indeed an indication of the effect of contemporary globalization and neo liberalization of education in the country (Gallagher, 2012). Since this study is concerned with the international schools in Dubai, the table below provides some insight into different schooling system currently functioning in the city of Dubai (Knowledge and Human Development Authority, n.d.).

Table 1. Number of fee-paying international schools in Dubai according to Knowledge and Human Development Authority

Curriculum	Number of international schools
British	81
American	40
Indian/Pakistani	31
IB hybrid (American, British, Iranian, Indian)	16
IB	16
Iranian	6
others	28
Total	216

Source: Knowledge and Human Development Authority, 2025

As Table 1. above illustrates, the total number of international schools functioning in Dubai alone was 2016 organizations in the academic year of 2023-2024 (Knowledge and Human Development Authority, 2025), out of which the highest number goes to British curriculum with 81 schools. American curriculum schools in Dubai take second place with 40 schools, followed by Indian/Pakistani curricula taking in third place with 31 schools. There are in total 32 schools with IB curriculum hover, 16 of those schools provide other curricula in addition to the IB (e.g.-British, American, Indian, and Iranian). There are also 28 schools that offer other curricula such as French, German, Russian, Chinese, etc. and the total number of students, both male and female in these 2016 international schools is 326,001 for 2023-2024 academic year (Knowledge and Human Development Authority, 2025). The registration to any international school in the U.A.E and Dubai is a simple process, most of the time the only requirement is not the knowledge of the English language for instance, but the financial ability of the parents to pay a large amount of money to cover the fees, although the educational institutions do not always readily acknowledge this fact (Knowledge and Human Development Authority, 2025). Also, in schools that claim to be British, American, etc., the student and staff population is mainly expatriate workforce residing in the country, as these schools are not affiliated to any organization in the country of origin, they claim to offer their curricula from, and these schools are privately owned and only copy some aspects of these curricula (Ghallagher, 2020). Another important point to mention is that since these institutions are privately owned, the staff population can and is mostly hired local or Middle Eastern nationalities, most of the times Arab teachers from Syria, Jordan, Egypt are hired, and sometimes Indian and Pakistani teachers are selected too. However, there are schools that hire English native speaking teachers, but those schools charge very high fees and not everyone is capable of paying the amount while some IB schools try to hire English native speaker for English, CAS and TOK topics (Ghallagher, 2020).

Iranian Schools in Dubai

The first Iranian school in Dubai was established in the academic year of 1957 with the approval of the late Shaikh Rashid al-Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai at the time (Iranian School Dubai History, n.d.). The institution was a primary school with six grades and in its first year of functioning 210 male and female students were registered in this school. Today the number of Iranian schools has increased to six establishment out of which two schools have the IB system. These schools are under the supervision of the ministry of education in Iran, and the curriculum in all schools including those which offer IB program follow the teaching method that is currently in place in the Iranian education system. However, the two schools that follow IB curriculum, namely "Al Adab International School" and "Towheed Iranian School", offer dual certification upon high school completion (Towheed Iranian School, n.d.; Al Adab International School, n.d.). The official language of these schools is Persian, however, in those schools that offer IB program students are bilinguals of both Persian and English languages. The competency in both languages differs from student to student, as some might be fluent in both languages, and some might have varied competency in one of the two. The staff population in the Iranian IB schools like most schools in Dubai is the mixture of Iranian, Indian, and Pakistanis, but hiring Iranian national teachers are encouraged. Other nationality teachers who are hired in almost every school in Dubai, with a very high percentage going to Indian and Pakistani teachers due to their native like command of the English language. However, one cannot ignore the fact that other issues like accent and the cultural diversity

between the teachers and students in this case are an issue of concern. From financial point of view, hiring a trained native English teacher is not feasible since the salaries for those teachers are quite high, something that is of concern for medium sized institutions like Iranian schools. Both Iranian IB schools are segregated, and boys and girls have different sections of the institution allocated to them, but due to IB requirement for student collaboration regardless of gender mostly in TOK and CAS classes, the year 11 and 12 student meet up in a common classroom and work on their joint projects and essays under the supervision of the topic teacher.

Fear of the unknown, heritage language and the importance of Iranian schools for Persian families in Dubai

Although the official language of the U.A.E is Arabic, the dominance of English in the U.A.E's society and almost all social interaction including the educational system is a well-known fact. Hopkyns (2020) claims that in research conducted by Sheikha al-Ari, a member of Federal National Council, a local governing body in the UAE, the poor literacy in Arabic has been considered as a new disability in the country. The author continues by elaborating that the younger generation of Emaratis prefer using English even at home over Arabic. In the meantime, the U.A.E government's strategic plan of 'vision 2021' was launched by Shaikh Mohammed Bin Maktoum (the Prime Minister of the U.A.E and the Ruler of Dubai) and its main stress in the country's educational system must be on preserving the U.A.E's rich Arabic culture along with plans to improve the educational system to a first rate and exemplary system in the region (The Official Portal of the UAE Government, 2024). In order to preserve the language and the culture, local national students have the advantage of attending national schools where the curriculum is specific for U.A.E Arab locals and teachers are all also local nationals. Iranian community in Dubai feel the urge to preserve their culture, identity and their mother tongue as well, no matter how long they have resided in the U.A.E. According to Park (2013), heritage language loss usually begins with children of the immigrant communities, and Iranian parents may not be aware of this social phenomenon but deep down they know they need to preserve their roots for the sake of the next generation. Since Iranian students like other expats have only one option and that is attending an international school, joining any other international schools causes concerns for parents especially if they want their children to preserve their language, culture and remember their roots. Attending any other international school will not fulfil this desire, as the dominance of the English language in these schools as well as the wide cultural diversity of the students and teachers, has caused the appearance of a phenomenon where the students have become native speakers of English instead of their mother/heritage language. The depth of the issue is more tangible when the whole picture is present, as although English has become a first language for these students, it is not for their parents, as it can be the case that there are families where one or both parents have limited knowledge of the language while their children are fluent in it. The result of such contradiction may not pose a serious issue yet but in the long run, the Iranian society residing in the U.A.E will face a situation where parents and children cannot communicate and understand each other due to the language barrier.

The Iranian population in Dubai can be divided into three groups. The first group are those of Sunni minorities of the Southern regions of Iran who moved to Dubai up to the 1980s (Moghadam, 2021). These Iranians consist of mostly traditional merchants who have accepted the country as their home now. The second group of Iranians are those who migrated to the country after 1980 coming from major cities of Iran. And the third group are those Iranian dual nationals who come to Dubai from Western countries to be close to 'home' and still enjoy the freedom and peace of the Western countries they have left behind. Although the U.A.E government has never issued an official document consisting of the number of Iranians residing in the country, it is believed that the number is around half a million (Saseendran, 2025). What is common amongst all three groups of Iranians in Dubai is they are concerned with their children's education, and they seek a solution to preserve the mother/heritage language and their roots. One can understand why the establishment of the Iranian international schools was so important, as by sending the children to these schools the students can master the English language to be able to secure a bright future later on in life and have the opportunity to learn the heritage language and culture.

Teaching Persian language and literature in an innovative way

The traditional teaching method when it comes to Persian literature by most literature teachers is still the memorizing and interpretation of texts, verses and works from a millennium old Persian literature. This method of teaching is based on the preferences of the teacher and of course material provided to them by the curriculum. However, this traditional teaching method seems to be ineffective now with the advancement of the technology

and a generation of Persian youngster for whom English is their dominant language. Forcing them to memorize alien words, phrases, metaphors, similes, and literary devices is the most inconvenient and ineffective approach. In an unattested comparison at how English is commonly used around the world today and the way Persians had to read, write, speak, and report their academic findings and even great inventions of Arabic after the Muslim invasion led to many Iranians in all academic fields to be considered Arabs. The importance of preserving the language and igniting the interest of younger generation, and to preserve the roots and literary history is clear. However, in this path, and in Iran, there are several obstacles that prevent a teacher from using innovative techniques, such as playing music in their classrooms, due to religious bans imposed by the government.

In the U.A.E, which although an Arab and a Muslim country, those restrictions do not exist and as a Persian literature teacher, the research was able to experiment different teaching methodologies to grab the attention of the students. In the first year of teaching the class of twelve bilingual female students studying year 11 and 12 were forced to choose Persian language and literature by their parents or upon the suggestion of school supervisors. The idea was that as young Persian adults being raised in a Persian household the most logical choice for a second language examination would be Persian instead of Arabic/French for instance. However, most of the students were born in Dubai and some of them had a better understanding of the Arabic language due to socialization with the Arab community rather than interacting with other Persian teenagers. As human nature is, anything forced is not perceived or understood easily, and in this case, memorization was the worst approach, as without the passion or at least some interest in the topic the memorized knowledge will be forgotten easily. In the first introductory class all the research heard from the students was how they detested their mother tongue and its literature and how they could not memorize or even remember the topics they had been learning year over year including the grammar, vocabulary, and now in the final years of the IB and with the nine literary works they need to read, which also included a work in poetry, they felt like complete failure.

Persian as a second language classes are conducted twice a week consisting of three hours of in-person interaction. Keeping all the issues mentioned above in mind the researcher decided to use a different teaching method to make the students interested in the class. The researcher tried different teaching methodologies, starting with reading poetry out loud and explaining the literary devices and the significances of the poem, group homework, writing stories to teach writing and grammar, but noting worked until it was decided to implement song/music in the class. The idea was to ask the children to read a poem and underline the words/phrases that they did not understand and then try to make sense of the poem based on what they understood. The next step was to move to the second part of the teaching session where the students were asked to look at a music video, a song by a Persian singer, and then try to make sense of the poem as a whole and if they could understand the meaning of the words/phrases they had previously underlined. To the researchers' amazement their answers to the official questions in the book this time were much clearer, and their understanding of the entire lesson had improved significantly. The next step was the detection of literary devices in a puzzle like manner and they were asked to complete and try to detect paradoxes, similes, rhythm and rhymes, etc., while competing with other classmates. This participation and the sense of closeness with the teacher, other classmates and the fact that Persian literature was not boring anymore, as they were not forced to memorize grammar and implement different verb formation made students more interested in the topic. At the end of the IB diploma year all twelve students passed their second language examination with marks of +5 out of 7 band score.

The following section is a pilot study, and the results of the same methodology used in the classroom amongst the same group of students. From the class of twelve students nine participated in the experiment and answered the questionnaire, the other three participants are also students currently working on their Persian as second language examination within the IB system and who are private student of the researcher with online teaching sessions on the same Persian as the second language topic in IB.

Methodology

Due to the significance of the study a two-phase within subject design was used via online questionnaires to explore how musical choices and adaptation of student can influence comprehension of classical poetry among Persian heritage students. The research was entirely conduced online using Google Form, which allowed the participate to engage with both textual and musical versions of the poems and to respond a structured set of questions in each phase. There are twelve participants for the purposive sampling. These students age range was 16 to 19 years old, and nine out of twelve had completed their International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma

programme, while three were in the final year of their high school education at the time of data collection. All participants were taking Persian as the second language requirement of the IB, which requires the students to be at least have C2 fluency in the language. Therefore, they could communicate and understand cultural language but they had limited exposure to classical Persian poetry in written and musical form.

This study consists of two stages, and each stage has a structured questionnaire comprising of both open-ended and close-ended items. These questions assessed the students comprehension of poetic themes and meanings, recognition of literary devices such as rhyme, rhythm, metaphors, and paradoxes, and finally emotional and aesthetic response to the poems.

In the first stage the participants were presented with the written version of rhythmically rich poems (ghazals) of Rumi in Persian. Then they were asked to read and reflect on the poem and only then complete the questionnaire addressing their understanding of the poems language, emotional tone and important literary features.

The second stage uses the same poems but presented as pop music video adaptation after watching and listening to the performance, participants are asked to complete the second set of the questionnaire, designed in parallel to the first for comparison reason. The music videos used the contemporary pop music but they also preserved the original Persian lyrics and rhythm which aimed to make the poems more accessible to the participants. The questionnaires were pre-tested with a small group for clarity and face validity before administration.

The data analysis was conducted using quantitative and close-ended responses and they were analysed using descriptive statistics, such as the frequency of responses and cross-stage comparisons, in order to identify patterns in comprehension and engagement of the student. The qualitative and open-ended responses were analysed thematically, and responses from both stages were coded manually to trace recurring categories such as comprehension of the poems, literary devices detection and music impact were focused upon. A comparative thematic framework seemed more suitable for this research in order to assess changes in participants' interpretations and understanding between stage 1 and stage 2. This analysis was informed by theories of second language identity and cultural belonging, which is important for Persian diaspora in the UAE, and it helped guided interpretation of how music did alter student's relationship with the Persian classical poetry.

Results

In this section, the overview of the results of major questions are presented. Although all participants answered all the questions and there is no missing data the most important questions and their results will be shared here.

Table 2. Age of the respondents

Age of respondents	Number of Respondents
17	7
18	2
19	3
Total	12

Table 2 represents the age of participants who took part in the survey. The majority of them are 17 years old with 7 participants belonging to this group. The second group goes to the 19-year-olds with 3 participants, while there are only 2 participants who are 18 years of age. These age groups are expected categorization based to IBDP 16-19 years old are to attend diploma program.

Table 3. Enjoying Music by the Respondents

Do you enjoy listening to music?	
Yes	12
No	0
Total	12

Table 3 also represents the participants' opinion about music and listening to it. As is clear in the table that all the participants enjoyed listening to music and there was no missing data.

Table 4. Remembered words and phrases by respondents

Are there words/phrases in your mind after you read the ghazals?	
Yes, over 10 words/phrases	1
I remember a few words/phrases	7
I remember the rhyme and rhythm	3
I do not remember anything	1
Total	12

This question seeks to clarify the comprehension of the poem. As the data represented here suggests, participants had difficulty remembering the poem after they had read it for the first time. Only one participant answered with over ten words and phrases while seven participants remembered only a few words and phrases. With regards to the rhyming and the rhythm of the sonnet only three participants could detect and understand it, and one participant replied that they did not remember anything at all.

Table 5. Remembered words and phrases by respondents after listening to the music

Do you remember any words/phrases after you listened to the songs?	
Yes, over 10 words/phrases	9
I remember a few words/phrases	3
Total	12

This question was answered by the participants after they had watched/listened to the music video. As the data suggests 9 out of 12 participants remembered more than ten words/phrases which shows a significant increase in the number of participants who replied to this question positively as only one participant remembered more than ten phrases after reading the poem.

Table 6. Detecting literary devices by respondents

Did you detect literary devices when reading the poems or listening to it?	
Listening	9
Reading	3
Total	12

As the data presented here shows, 9 participants out of 12 replied that they could detect literary devices while listening to music more easily than reading the poems. While three participants believed it was much easier for them to understand the literary devices when they read the poem.

Table 7. Mystical poetry comprehension by respondents

Do you think mystical poetry comprehension is easier when taught via music or by traditional teaching method?	
Teaching with music	10
Traditional teaching method	2
Total	12

As the data presented suggests, 10 out of 12 participants believed that using music for teaching poetry and specifically mystical poetry is more effective. They enjoyed listening to music and they could remember important aspects of the poem much easier than when they tried remembering them after they read the poem. Only two participants argued that reading was much better in their case, and they preferred the traditional teaching method of teaching for Persian literature.

Discussion

Since this is a pilot study and the number of participants that the researchers could find for this research was not high, the overview of the results for major questions are considered for the purpose of this study. In this research all the participants took part and answered the questions carefully, and there was no missing data. Each

table presented the exact number of participants and their positive and/or negative answers. The evaluation of the data was done manually due to the limited number of participants. There were 17 questions in the questionnaire and at the first stage the participants were asked to answer only the general questions and those related to the reading part of the experiment. Once the music video was played the participants were asked to answer the rest of the questions which were related to the listening activity part of the experiment. The age range of the participants was between 16-19 years old, with 17-year-old being the majority, 2 participants of 18 and three of 19 years of age. With regards to their relationship with music all of the participants answered positively as they all listened to music. After reading the sonnet/ghazal, only one participant had the recollection of over ten words/phrases while the majority replied with few instances of words or phrases that they could remember. With regards to the rhyme and rhythm part of the question, only three participants paid enough attention to remember it. However, this number improved significantly when they listened to the music and watched the music video. As 9 out of 12 participants remembered over 10 words/phrases while only 3 participants remembered a few words. Literary devices are an important aspect of Persian literary works as they are not only used in poetry but rhythmical classic prose, and traditional teaching method focuses on this aspect of Persian literature. With regards to this aspect of the experiment, 9 participants answered that they could detect the literary devices much easier when they listened to the music than reading it as while reading, they had to really focus on the written words. However, when listening to the poems they could easily detect a literary device like paradox (day/night; black/white, etc.) just by listening to the words and they enjoyed it as well. Then comes the matter of mystical poetry for which Rumi is the best ambassador with his rhythmical elements and the musical ideology which makes understanding the poems challenging. Here too we can see that 10 out of 12 participants were in favor of studying this type of poetry using music instead of traditional teaching methods where the student is faced with an alien language of a poet who lived 8 centuries ago, and his language is outdated for the 21st century student anyhow. Now if the mystical element is also added to this outdated language and the fact that they are forced to memorize the poems and tis unique specifications makes the task of learning almost impossible with young adult bilingual students for whom Persian is considered their second language after English. However, these are not the only obstacles a Persian literature teacher faces in their classroom. The issue is multifaceted, as religion, parents' belief and culture, government laws and curriculum limitations, the lack of adequately trained literature teacher and the lack of digital equipment in the classrooms can play a significant role in effective teaching. However, some factors are more important than others, for instance religion and culture have a stronger effect on the teaching methodology of a competent teacher than the lack of a digital board. Another important factor is the religion and culture of each student in the classroom of an international school. As Iran is home to some 85 million people and different cities and counties have their own religion and cultures, as well as their own mother tongue which could be different than standard Persian which is the official language of the country.

Conclusion

This paper is an attempt to look into the matter of how Persian bilingual students residing in Dubai can learn the very rich Persian language and literature. The fact that for these students English is their first language rather than Persian as their mother tongue is the result of the multicultural community of the country as they are mostly born in the U.A.E. In the IB system of education and its diploma program, students can choose a second language and for most students in Dubai their mother tongue is considered their less dominant language, hence a second language. During the 2-year period of the diploma stage the students have to read 9 literary works up until the academic year of 2026 and after that 7 literary works has to be read. These works should cover different genres, different times and countries, plus at least 3 works should be translated. At the end of the 2nd year their knowledge of the language is evaluated in the form of comprehension, speaking in the form of Individual Oran (IO) and a paper 1 and a paper 2 where they will need to show how well they understood the works they had studied. Although music has been employed by teachers at a higher level of education, using music/video songs in a Persian literature classroom has not been recorded or documented by other scholars up to this point. The reasons behind this lack of experiment are diverse, ranging from religion/cultural obligations to the lack of technology. For the purpose of this study twelve bilingual Persian students took part, out of which nine have already graduated last year and 3 are expected to finish their school education by the end of the 2022-2023 academic year. There were seventeen questions in total out of which 6 questions were related to the listening part of the survey. The students were asked to fill out the general and reading part of the questionnaire first and the rest of the questions after they had watched the music video. All of the participants are between 16 to 19

years of age, all fans of music, and believed that watching the music video was more helpful to them with regards to remembering words/phrases, literary devices as well as rhyme and rhythm. While with regards to using music as a tool in Persian literature classrooms, 10 out of 12 believed it definitely helps while only 2 participants disagreed and preferred the traditional teaching method of memorizing new vocabulary, repetition and line by line explanation.

This pilot study is an attempt in improving the outdated educational system of Persian literature classes. It is obvious that students of the 21st century have access to more information than their predecessors. Due to the ubiquity of social media, keeping students focused in the classroom has become an even bigger challenge which is further complicated when teaching a student their heritage language. Although the number of participants is not significant, considering the fact that the use of music in a Persian literature classroom proved to be a positive tool to improve the quality of teaching and learning it is suggested that this method should be implemented by more teachers specifically in different language classrooms. However, there remains the issue of religion, parental beliefs and culture as well as the lack of sufficient technology that could make this process difficult. On another scale one might want to try to answer that if a topic, regardless of its familiarity even as a mother tongue, has become alien to students how can an instructor improve the process of teaching and learning. Do religious beliefs and cultural specifications play a role in teachers teaching methodology and how can they implement an organized classroom where everyone is engaged an interested in the topic. And finally, is the traditional teaching method of reading, writing, and memorizing more effective for the twenty first century learners or should we try and use different and mor revolutionary methods to fill the gap and the needs of these students in international schools and via IB curriculum.

This research could interest not only teachers, policy makers, international schools and the IB examiners but also concern parents and those students who believe the knowledge of heritage language is not valuable and difficult to acquire. As with all research, this research too faced limitations such as finding interested students who were studying in an IB school specifically where they had chosen Persian as their second language option and were in the final years of their diploma program. Also, since they were minors parental consent was sent out to parents, but it was very difficult to have the signed copies back. With the advancement of technology and with its help, at first it might seem that children will learn more easily than a generation before did. Although the first thing that should be implemented in the educational system is to how to educate children to use technology responsibly, however, once it is done this advancement of the technology and any innovative teaching method should be handle with care and clear goal of the results expected.

References

Al Adab International School. (n.d.). *Al Adab Iranian Private School for Boys, Dubai*. https://dubaischools.com/en/institutions/al-adab-iranian-private-school-for-boys

Albers, B., & Bach, R. (2003). Rockin' Soc: Using Popular Music to Introduce Sociological Concepts. *Teaching Sociology*, *31*(2), 237–245. https://doi.org/10.2307/3211313

Alhosani, N. (2022). The Influence of Culture on Early Childhood Education in the UAECurriculum. *ECNU Review of Education*, *5*(2), 284–298. https://doi.org/10.1177/20965311221085984

Anderson, S. A., & Fuller, G. B. (2010). Effect of Music on Reading Comprehension of Junior High School Students. *School Psychology Quarterly*, *25*(3), 178–187. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021213

Carder, M. (2007). *Bilingualism in international schools: a model for enriching language education*. Multilingual Matters.

Cummins, J. (2005). A Proposal for Action: Strategies for Recognizing Heritage Language Competence as a Learning Resource within the Mainstream Classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, *89*(4), 585–592. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3588628

Dethier, B. (1991). Using Music as a Second Language. *The English Journal*, *80*(8), 72–76. https://doi.org/10.2307/818692

Dolby, N., & Rahman, A. (2008). Research in International Education. *Review of Educational Research*, *78*(3), 676–726. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308320291

Ehrlin, A., & Gustavsson, H.-O. (2015). The Importance of Music in Preschool Education. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *40*(7), 31–42. http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2015v40n7.3

Elterman, H. (1983). Using Popular Songs to Teach Sociology. *Teaching Sociology*, *10*(4), 529–538. https://doi.org/10.2307/1317300

Gallagher, K. (2020). *Education in the United Arab Emirates: Innovation and Transformation*. Springer.

Central European Journal of Educational Research 7(1) 2025. 103–117.

Ghandi, V. K. (2012). *An Investigative Study into the Socialization and Learning of Children at a Preschool in Dubai, U.A.E. and the Parental Demographic Factors that may Contribute to it* [Unpublished master dissertation]. The British University in Dubai.

Hayden, M. C., & Thompson, J. J. (1998). International Education: Perceptions of Teachers in International Schools. *International Review of Education*, *44*, 549–568. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1003493216493

Hopkyns, S. (2020). *The Impact of Global English on Cultural Identities in the United Arab Emirates: Wanted not Welcome*. Routledge.

International baccalaureate®. (n.d.). Diploma Programme. https://www.ibo.org/programmes/diploma-programme/

International School Association (n.d.). *About us*. https://isaschools.org/about-us/

Iranian School Dubai History. (n.d*.). History of Iranian schools in Dubai*. https://www.citysearch.ae/towheed-school-dubai

Knowledge and Human Development Authority. (2025, October). *About KHDA*. https://www.khda.gov.ae/en/about-us

Li, X., & Brand, M. (2009). Effectiveness of Music on Vocabulary Acquisition, Language Usage, and Meaning for Mainland Chinese ESL Learners. *Contributions to Music Education*, *36*(1), 73–84.

Moghadam, A. (2021). Iranian Migration to Dubai: Constraints and Autonomy of a Segmented Diaspora. The Working Papers by Ryerson Centre for Immigration and Settlement and the CERC in Migration and Integration at Ryerson University, *Working Paper, 2021*(3).

Montrul, S. (2010). Current Issues in Heritage Language Acquisition. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *30*, 3–23. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190510000103

Park, S. M. (2013). Immigrant Students' Heritage Language and Cultural Identity Maintenance in Multilingual and Multicultural Societies. *Concordia Working Papers in Applied Linguistics*, *4*, 30–53.

Rogers, J. (1990). Using Popular Music to Teach Global Education. *OAH Magazine of History*, *4*(4), 43–45. https://doi.org/10.1093/maghis/4.4.43

Saseendran, S. (2025, September). *Thousands of Iranian expats join first mega Dubai celebration of UAE–Iran friendship*. Gulf News. https://gulfnews.com/uae/thousands-of-iranian-expats-join-mega-dubai-celebration-of-uaeiran-friendship-1.500268337?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Savva, M. (2013). International Schools as Gateways for the Intercultural Development of North-American Teachers. *Journal of Research in International Education*, *12*(3), 214–227. https://doi.org/10.1177/1475240913512589

Sedighi, A. (2010). Teaching Persian to Heritage Speakers. *Iranian Studies*, *43*(5), 683–697. https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2010.518033

Silverman, M. J. (2022). *Music Therapy in Mental Health for Illness Management and Recovery*. Oxford University Press.

The Official Portal of the UAE Government (2024, December). *Vision 2021*. https://u.ae/en/about-the-uae/strategies-initiatives-and-awards/strategies-plans-and-visions/strategies-plans-and-visions-untill-2021/vision-2021

Tinar, F. D., & Khandke, K. (2000). From Rhythm and Blues to Broadway: Using Music to Teach Economics. *The Journal of Economic Education*, *31*(3), 253–270. https://doi.org/10.2307/1183096

Torras Vila, B. (2021). Music as a Tool for Foreign Language Learning in Early Childhood Education and Primary Education. Proposing Innovative CLIL Music Teaching Approaches. *The Journal of Economic Education*, *31*(3), 35–47. https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/clil.60.

Towheed Iranian School. (n.d.). *Towheed Iranian School Dubai*. https://www.ibo.org/en/school/050464

Trentman, E. (2015). Arabic Heritage Learners Abroad: Language Use and Identity Negotiation. *Al Arabiyya*, *48*, 141–156. https://www.jstor.org/stable/44654042

Valdes, G. (2005). Bilingualism, Heritage Language Learners, and SLA Research: Opportunities Lost or Seized? *The Modern Language Journal*, *89*(3), 410–426. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2005.00314.x