Language ideologies in metaphors: Exploring L2 Saudi students' conceptualization of language mixing as a language practice

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study aimed to examine the embedded language ideologies within L2 Saudi students' metaphorical texts to discover their ideological perspectives about language mixing. Using language ideology as a lens of analysis, this study examined 74 metaphorical texts written by undergraduate students to determine their language ideologies. The results revealed that the students held multiple and contradictory language ideologies about language mixing. Students' language ideologies were found to be an orientation along a language ideological continuum with one end representing the ideology of language mixing as a resource and the other reflecting the ideology of language mixing as a challenge. Some students' language ideologies may fall somewhere in the middle of this continuum since they expressed conflicting language ideologies, perceiving language mixing as both a valuable resource and a potential challenge. Using language ideologies as a lens to evaluate students' metaphorical texts allowed the different language ideas hidden within the three basic language ideologies to be revealed. In addition, the study found that the students employed different metaphors to conceptualize language mixing, covering a wide range of areas such as food, drinks, objects, places and activities. The findings suggested that Saudi students' metaphors and language ideologies are intertwined and mutually influence each other. This study recommends that teachers use conceptual metaphors as a reflective tool to unveil L2 students' perspectives on academic activities and calls for further research on conceptual metaphors and language ideologies in L2 contexts.

Contribution/ Originality: This study aims to examine conceptual metaphors written by L2 students to investigate their language ideologies regarding language mixing. This study offers new insights into how L2 students view ideologically their own and others' language practices.

1. INTRODUCTION

People use language to reflect, construct and negotiate their world. When people use language, they often depend on cultural, political and historical relations; simultaneously, they create a set of beliefs about their own and others' languages and language uses. In this sense, language and language practices are perceived as complex concepts infused with belief systems involving assumptions, values, attitudes and feelings. This set of beliefs is known as *language ideology* (Woolard, 1998). Language ideologies are inherent in everyday linguistic practice and might be explicitly expressed in people's discourses and conceptualizations about languages. However, they can also be inferred from individuals' embodied practices and dispositions as well as from written forms and visual representations (McGrath, 2006; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). Although language ideologies are culturally and politically loaded representations, they are not fixed or static but rather multiple and diverse across cultures and

individuals (Kroskrity, 2010). Therefore, language ideologies are conceptualized as complex constructs always intertwined with metaphors in which they mutually shape each other. Metaphors play a crucial role in fostering and reinforcing certain language ideologies. People use metaphors to highlight certain valuable features of a concept while obscuring other aspects that they prefer to remain unnoticed. Language ideologies use metaphors to portray their central tenets.

Language ideologies have received attention in recent studies on second language acquisition (L2) because they provide important insights into students' views on language use, learner perspectives, teacher viewpoints, and appropriate usage and teaching. Examining language ideologies can help us better understand the micro- and macro-economic and political factors that influence L2 students' beliefs and how these are reflected in their discourse as language ideologies connect languages and their users to larger social, political and historical relations (Blommaert, 2006; Irvine & Gal, 2000). Furthermore, language ideologies provide useful perspectives for understanding how students' views shape their social identities such as their gender, race, social class and national identity (Kroskrity, 2010).

There is a noticeable lack of research regarding L2 students' ideological perspectives on language and language use despite the growing interest in examining language ideologies. There is a lack of research on L2 Saudi students' language beliefs in the literature that is currently available (De Costa, 2010; Razfar, 2005). Moreover, a large body of existing research has concentrated on the linguistic ideologies of second language learners regarding individual languages allowing their beliefs about language practice especially language mixing to receive less attention. A lack of research exists on the metaphorical construction of L2 students' language ideologies, particularly with regard to language practices like language mixing despite the fact that research on students' beliefs has extensively investigated L2 students' metaphorical evaluations of languages such as English (Fang, 2015) and language skills like writing (Wan, 2014).

1.1. Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study are:

1. What language ideologies are embedded in L2 students' metaphorical texts about language mixing?
2. What are the metaphors that L2 students' use to express their ideological perspectives about language mixing?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Language Ideology

Language ideology is a complex concept referring to a set of beliefs, values and feelings about the structure, use, and meaning of languages and their users (Irvine & Gal, 2000; Kroskrity, 2010). Language ideologies are socially constructed and shaped by historical, economic and political interests (Piller, 2015). In this sense, Woolard (1998) argued that language ideologies construct relationships between language and identity rather than being only about languages. McGroarty (2010) indicated that people judge the proper use of a language and its users who adhere to or deviate from the acceptable norms. Thus, some language elements are idealized as they conform to the prevailing norms while others are erased or stigmatized because they do not meet the dominant ideologies (Irvine & Gal, 2000). Therefore, the language ideologies perpetuated in societies affect people's linguistic choices and practices.

Blommaert (2006) noted that beliefs about language and language use often emerge from two paradigms. The first essentialist viewpoints saw languages as bounded systems made up of structured sounds, grammar and vocabulary, frequently associated with links to certain countries or cultures. Hence, language is stable, leaving no room for individuals to reject or modify practices. One significant language ideology representing this paradigm is the standard language ideology which identifies a particular variety as "aesthetically, morally and intellectually superior to other" varieties (Piller, 2015). The second paradigm emphasized that language is not a separate, discrete entity but a set of resources used to convey communicative aims (Creese & Blackledge, 2015). This paradigm

affirmed users' creativity while recognizing the norms that influence their linguistic choices. A number of concepts have been proposed to characterise language practices where meanings are created by means of the flexible use of signs. These included code-meshing (Canagarajah, 2011), translanguaging (García, 2009), and polylingual language (Jørgensen, 2008). However, this study uses *language mixing* to refer to individuals' employment of all their semiotic resources such as languages, varieties, genres and registers within a communicative event to convey their messages. In this way, I joined other scholars in challenging the fixed perceptions about language use (cf. Pennycook and Otsuji (2014)) and adopted a more inclusive and neutral term to describe individuals' language practice.

Kroskrity (2010) contended that language ideologies are never monolithic or entirely discrete rather they are always multiple and contested. McGroarty (2010) noted that language ideologies could be explicitly articulated or implicitly embedded in people's actual use of languages. However, accessing people's beliefs is not an easy task because ideologies are diverse, may be held unconsciously, and can change in reaction to different contexts and social situations. Therefore, some scholars embarked on discourse analysis to explore L2 students' beliefs about languages and language use in different contexts. For example, De Costa (2010) and De Costa (2011) drew on ethnographic research to examine the language ideologies of L2 female Chinese high school students studying in Singapore about their identity construction while learning English. In their study, Lundell, Arvidsson, and Bouchard (2022) used interviews to explore the language ideologies held by a group of French residents in Sweden about their Swedish language proficiency. Regarding linguistic practice, Razfar (2005) investigated the language ideology ingrained in L2 high school students' repair practices in the United States with regard to language practice. The studies that are now available demonstrate how language ideologies integrate into different genres notwithstanding a lack of research on language ideologies among L2 students. Hence, this study aims to contribute to the existing body of literature on language ideologies by examining the conceptual metaphors used by L2 undergraduate students about the language practice of language mixing.

2.2. Conceptual Metaphor is a Window into Language Ideologies

Metaphors are perceived as linguistic and descriptive devices that creatively draw similarities between two expressions. However, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) asserted that the metaphors' function goes beyond providing artistic and rhetorical purposes; they serve as a mediational tool for negotiating meanings and forming individuals' social realities. Metaphors are ubiquitous in everyday language and conceptual by nature and their core function is to construct a concept in terms of another concept in which abstract ideas are revealed. Kövecses (2010) explained that a conceptual metaphor is a mapping between two conceptual domains. The first is the target domain which involves more abstract concepts that are challenging to understand. The second is the source domain which includes familiar concepts.

Kövecses (2010) defined conceptual mapping as "a set of systematic correspondences between the source and the target" (p. 6) in a metaphoric relation. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) used conceptual metaphors, such as '*argument is war*,' to explain the mapping process. In this metaphor, the target domain (argument) is mapped onto the source domain (war) in which essential elements of the concept of war such as defend and win are projected onto the concept argument to manifest its aspects such as defending one's stand and winning ground. In other words, the common aspects of war form "a systematic way of talking about the battling aspects of arguing" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

The norms surrounding the utterance and interpretation of language always impact this mapping process which is not linguistic alone (Deignan, 2008; Eubanks, 1999). People's experiences shape the conceptual metaphor's form and meaning-making. I contend that conceptual metaphor is fluid because it allows for numerous possible elaborations and should be seen as a discursive construct full of ideological linkages.

2.3. Metaphors, Language Ideologies and L2 Students

Metaphors are at the heart of scholarly work on language ideologies. For example, Bourdieu (1986) proposed theoretical frameworks that use economic metaphors to examine how language is reproduced and circulated through ideological systems. Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) in their elaboration on linguistic purism argued that language ideologies such as standard language are no longer seen as the product of human creativity "but are naturalized by metaphors such as that of the free market" (p. 64). Blommaert (2006) elaborated on language labelling ideology and claimed that African languages are categorized "through metaphors of kinship and gender" (p. 518). Moreover, a number of scholars scrutinized how metaphors are used in scholarly work (cf. (Jakobs & Hüning, 2022; Claire Kramsch, 1995)). According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), conceptual metaphor offered a useful framework to investigate L2 students' perceptions of certain concepts related to their academic experiences. The current L2 research on metaphors has followed two distinct tracks. Scholars in the first line used conceptual metaphors to examine how L2 students perceive their identities while learning or using a new language (Huang, 2011; Kramsch, 2003; Yang & Peng, 2021). The second line of research focused on students' beliefs about certain notions related to their L2 learning such as learning English (Baş & Gezegin, 2015; Yaşar & Gafar, 2023), language skills (Dincer, 2017; Hamouda, 2018), language teachers (Nikitina & Furuoka, 2008; Wan, Low, & Li, 2011), testing (Yeşilyurt, 2016), and coursebooks (McGrath, 2006).

The study not only demonstrated the value of metaphor analysis in second language (L2) research but it also provided valuable insights into the ways in which L2 students conceptualized and articulated different language acquisition ideas. However, beliefs are essential elements of language ideologies. These beliefs are too comprehensive to reveal the underlying assumptions that underlie students' judgements and to reflect the factors that influence how they interpret and use language. The analyses of the conceptual metaphors in the available literature tended to classify students' beliefs into positive, negative or even neutral categories. Indeed, such categorization provided meaningful results but we need to understand the ideologies wrapping up these metaphors and affecting students' perceptions of the concepts under investigation. Moreover, considerable attention was given to L2 students' perception of a particular language (e.g., English) or skill (e.g., speaking, writing) within the existing literature. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of research on students' metaphorical conceptualization of language practices such as borrowing and mixing between languages or varieties. Therefore, in this study, L2 students' metaphorical understanding of language mixing from the perspective of language ideology is examined.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative research design to explore the L2 students' language ideologies about language mixing as a language practice. Yin (2011) noted that qualitative research captures participants' perspectives on complex social phenomena that could not be examined quantitatively allowing the researchers to provide an in-depth understanding of individuals' social behavior. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) emphasized that qualitative research focuses on discovery and description. Thus, a qualitative researcher needs to extract, explore and interpret the participants' experiences and perceptions of the concepts under investigation. In this sense, this study used qualitative data collection methods presented as words that were obtained from participants' metaphorical texts as the primary data source. The textual data was analyzed according to qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) using the perspective of language ideology.

It is important to note that this study is qualitative in nature. The use of quantitative analysis was restricted to determining the frequencies of the occurrence of the language ideologies in the data. This validated the rigor and credibility of the patterns and trends of language ideologies that emerged in the data and explored the predominant language ideologies among the students about language mixing. The sections below provide more information about the participants of the study, the data collection method and the procedures for analyzing the textual data.

3.1. Participants

The study focused on L2 undergraduate female students enrolled in a public university in Saudi Arabia. An invitation to participate was given on Blackboard, the learning management system of the institution, in three mandatory courses offered to third- and fourth-year English language and translation majors during the spring semester of 2023 in order to recruit participants. Among the 94 students who agreed to participate, only 74 were purposefully selected because five did not sign the informed consent form, four did not complete the information section in the metaphor form and eleven failed to fulfill the metaphor task effectively. The participants' ages ranged from 20 to 22 years with 40 of them sophomores and 34 seniors. The students were informed that their involvement was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time.

3.2. Data Collection

The data was collected using a two-part form. The first asked for participants' background information. The second elicited students' metaphors on language mixing by completing the prompt "a language is like... because..." The students fill in the gap that appears after the word with a metaphor that illustrates the idea of language mixing. Then, the students fill in the second blank that follows 'because' with an explanation of their reasoning for the chosen metaphors. Students received training on metaphors, how to create a source metaphor and how to justify it before they completed the form. They were asked to return the form within two days to allow enough time for reflection.

It is worth noting that the instruction addressed language mixing as a meaning-making resource without identifying a context of use (e.g., academic or public, online or offline), languages (e.g., English and Arabic), or even labeling the practice with a particular name (e.g., translanguaging). This approach was chosen to eliminate any potential effects on the students' responses. Contextual clues (e.g., classroom) may suggest certain language policies (e.g., English-only) that some students adopt. Associating language mixing with labeled languages, varieties or dialects may imply ideological stands (i.e., monoglossic or heteroglossic ideologies) which could shape their ideological perceptions about language mixing. In doing so, I followed Otheguy, García, and Reid (2015) who argued that using 'language mixing' is acceptable. However, they cautioned that it should be considered an "outsider perspective" rather than a reflection of an "individual's linguistic competence" (p. 298).

The metaphorical texts were saved as raw data and labeled as SMT (Students Metaphorical Text) with numbers ranging from 01 to 74. For instance, student number one wrote the metaphorical text known as SMT_01.

3.3. Data Analysis Procedure

Qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the gathered texts in depth. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) noted that content analysis entails thoroughly examining and classifying a substantial amount of text into an efficient and manageable number of categories. In this study, the analysis of participant metaphorical texts was carried out in four phases (Creswell, 2013) which were as follows:

3.3.1. The Initial Phase

After compiling and transferring the participants' metaphorical texts into a Word document, they were carefully examined to determine their relevance for further analysis. Five texts were eliminated because they failed to create metaphorical images of the concept of language mixing. For instance, a student wrote, "Language mixing is another style of speaking because people mix two or more languages at the same time." This text serves as a definition rather than a metaphor. Six texts were excluded because they could not explain the relationship between the metaphors and the concept of language mixing. For example, a student wrote, "Language mixing is like painting." This text evoked the image of language mixing as a painting but it did not explain the link between the

source domain (painting) and the target domain (language mixing). Thus, 74 metaphorical texts were identified as relevant raw data and subjected to further analysis.

3.3.2. The Coding Phase

In this phase, all the metaphorical texts were reread word by word and line by line to sketch out the initial key terms associated with language ideologies. The repeated readings of the data in this phase helped verify the compiled data's suitability at the initial stage and refine the initial codes.

3.3.3. The Classification Phase

This phase included comparing the identified codes to organize them into clusters of themes based on their similar metaphorical conceptualizations and ideological perspectives about language mixing.

3.3.4. The Categorizing Phase

In this stage, the developed themes were grouped into categories according to their common traits. As a result, 74 metaphorical texts were grouped into three main ideological categories, each of which included different hidden ideologies.

3.3.5. Validity and Reliability

A university professor with expertise in discourse analysis was engaged to make revisions to the coding lists that were developed and to independently classify and categories them in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. We met in order to address the arising conflicts in the coding process, make changes to the original coding lists and topics and classify the themes because the coding process comprised several stages. In each phase, the reliability of the results is determined by comparing the expert's opinion to that of the researcher. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), reliability formulation is reliability = (number of agreements/total number of agreements + disagreements) X 100. As such, the inter-coder agreement was determined to be 93%, 97%, 91% and 98% at the initial coding, coding, classification and categorization phases respectively. In fact, the prolonged engagement with the data to check the findings' consistency increased their internal validity and reliability. In addition, in the results section, the participants' metaphorical texts are used as direct quotes precisely as the students wrote them without any spelling, grammar or punctuation modifications.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The qualitative analysis of the L2 students' metaphorical conceptualization of language mixing yielded three major categories of language ideologies. The first ideological category identified *language mixing as a resource* while the second labeled *language mixing as a challenge*. Both metaphors were borrowed from Ruiz (1984) work. The analysis revealed language ideologies juxtaposing the first and second ideological categories; thus, I labeled the third category as *conflicting language ideologies*. In the following sections, I present these three broad language ideologies, organized according to their frequency of occurrence. The most prevalent language ideology among the L2 students was "language mixing as a resource" followed by "language mixing as a challenge" and "conflicting language ideologies." I also shed light on some of the hidden language ideologies among them while presenting some illustrative samples from the students' metaphorical texts to clarify each ideology.

4.1. Language Mixing as a Resource

Of the 74 metaphorical texts, 32 (43%) students acknowledged the usefulness of language mixing for individuals and societies. Their justifications involved three hidden language ideologies: the importance of language mixing for socio-cultural relations, intellectual ability and economic capital. Table 1 shows these three language

ideologies, their definitions and frequencies of occurrence in the data. In the following sub-sections, I present these three embedded language ideologies according to their frequency of occurrence. The most frequent ideology was "the importance of language mixing for socio-cultural relations" which was followed by "intellectual ability" and "economic capital."

Table 1. The language ideologies embedded within the ideology of language mixing as a resource.

Language ideology	Definition	Frequency	Language ideology
Important for socio-cultural relations	This ideology views language mixing as a way to preserve cultural differences and enhance interaction between social actors within a community and between societies.	47% (n =15)	Important for socio-cultural relations
Intellectual ability	Language mixing is viewed as an intellectual asset as its users are often seen as having better memory and possessing creative, critical thinking and problem-solving skills which have a role in academic achievement.	37% (n =12)	Intellectual ability
Economic capital	This ideology views mixing languages as an economic asset that provides its users with greater opportunities to meet the demands of the market.	16% (n =5)	Economic capital

The importance of language mixing for socio-cultural relations is the first language ideology that emerged from the students' discourse on language mixing as a resource. Fifteen (47%) out of the thirty-two students provided a detailed description of how mixing languages can promote cross-cultural communication and maintain societal cohesiveness (see Table 1). Some of the students' metaphorical texts are presented below as illustrative examples:

- *"Language mixing is like a bridge because it connects different cultures and allows excellent and respectful interaction with teachers and classmates in college from different linguistic backgrounds"* (SMT_13).

- *"Language mixing is like medicine because it is the best remedy for communication problems and it makes the conversation easy and healthy"* (SMT_6).

- *"Language mixing is like latte because it is a mix between black coffee and milk to produce something new, healthy and delicious and a mix of different languages is a solution to prevent the difficulty of using one language in speaking and make conversation clear"* (SMT_34).

- *"Language mixing is like a boat because borrowing and mixing different accents, dialects and languages shows that everyone is welcomed on board and to explain ourselves without following the grammar rules to deliver our message easily"* (SMT_61).

- *"Language mixing is like an art painting because it combines many amazing dialects and languages and to make all citizens and non-citizens speak freely and normally without paying attention to grammar and pronunciation"* (SMT_15).

In the above excerpts, the students acknowledged the linguistic diversity existing in their communities. Hence, they believed that mixing languages not only makes communication "easy," "healthy" and "clear" but it is also an effective "remedy" and "solution" for interaction problems that might occur in such diverse places. Indeed, this idea that language mixing provides opportunities to construct effective social relations within and outside the classroom is suggested in the work of Creese and Blackledge (2010) and Creese and Blackledge (2011). Although the researchers did not refer to language mixing, they affirmed that such a language practice which draws on various semiotic resources strengthens the students' relations in and out of their classrooms. Moreover, these students affirmed that language mixing promotes social inclusion for "citizens and non-citizens" because it establishes "respectful" and "comfortable" interactions among them. Their view contested Piller and Takahashi (2011)

observation that "linguistic assimilation is the high road to social inclusion" (p. 372). A notable observation was the students' normalization of non-standard language practice. Standard is a "particular variety of language, a register perceived as 'neutral' because of elaborate socio-historical processes of normalization and codification" (Blommaert, 2006).The conventions of socially and politically recognised languages are challenged when people switch between languages and use a variety of semiotic tools. Nevertheless, these students viewed language mixing as a natural and inevitable practice to establish harmony and sociocultural relations. Statements such as those in SMT_15 and SMT_61 exemplify how these students advocated the non-standard language ideology.

Students' understanding of the indispensable role of language mixing in building social relations is manifested in their metaphors. For example, they used various metaphors such as "bridge" and "boat" to highlight the connectivity aspect of language mixing. This finding is in line with the result that emerged in Pacheco, Kang, and Hurd (2019) study as their participants conceptualized translanguaging which is a form of mixing language as a connective bridge. According to Canagarajah (2013) mixing languages is a creative approach that enables speakers to switch between languages to meet the demands of various linguistic communities. Similarly, the students in this study used various metaphors such as "art painting" and "latte" to underscore creativity and complexity as distinctive attributes of language mixing in social contexts that are becoming increasingly diverse. The metaphors used by the students effectively communicate that language mixing is a complex process that enhances social interactions and builds a more diverse society rather than just a simple matter of switching between languages. This finding is in contrast with one of Burton and Rajendram (2019) findings as some of their participants expressed that language mixing is a means of isolation.

The second language ideology which is ingrained in the rhetoric of language mixing as a resource, views language mixing as a tool for people's intellectual capacities. Its potential to improve academic performance, creativity and cognitive skills was indicated by the fact that 37% of students agreed with it out of 32 metaphorical texts. Some illustrative examples are given below:

- *"Language mixing is like a healthy green juice because it has everything mixed together, fruits, vegetables and other green food that provide our bodies with energy. Language mixing is healthy for our memory and for our thinking skills that we need for success in college"* (SMT_3).
- *"Language mixing is like the internet because it has all the knowledge we need to show our talent and how we are smart to explore knowledge to solve academic problems we face in college"* (SMT_7).
- *"Language mixing is like a DJ because you can blend songs from different genres to create a new sound and we can choose and combine words and structures from different languages to form new words reflecting our attention and high thinking skills"* (SMT_38).
- *"Language mixing is like a dictionary because a dictionary gives many meanings and we mix languages to show our knowledge and creativity in choosing and organizing words and phrases"* (SMT_60).
- *"Language mixing is like a chef because he knows the ingredients that blend together to make a delicious dish. Mixing languages is blending words, sounds and grammar from many languages and dialects to create the impression of a well-informed and educated person"* (SMT_53).

The students believed that language mixing is a "healthy" practice for developing cognitive functions, particularly "memory," "attention," "high thinking skills" and "creativity." They recognized the complex mechanisms involved in "choosing," "organizing" and "blending" the appropriate "words, sounds and structures" from multiple "languages and dialects" for a specific communicative event. They attributed this cognitive process as a necessary "talent" for overcoming the "academic problems" faced in "college." Creativity is another cognitive aspect of language mixing reflecting the ability to generate "new" expressions. Indeed, students' perception that language mixing can potentially improve cognitive skills and academic performance has been articulated in several studies. For example, the participants in Makalela (2015) articulated that mixing between languages enhanced their English reading proficiency. Moreover, Blommaert (2006) argued that language ideologies involve identity work.

This is clearly seen in students labeling the language mixing users as "smart," "well-informed," and "educated." This is a process of socialization and exclusion in which people who are multilingual are viewed as "clever" and "learned," whereas people who speak just one language are seen as less intelligent and educated. The students' perspectives on language mixing as a cognitive resource were brought to light through their metaphors. For example, the act of language mixing was viewed as having the nourishing qualities of an energetic "healthy green juice" or as an "internet" interweaving various resources, broadening people's intellectual horizons. This idea resonates with García and Wei (2014) view that the use of language mixing in educational contexts expands the students' perceptions and increases their participation. The metaphor "dictionary" emphasizes the function of language mixing to mediate layered meanings across linguistic boundaries. The creative interplay of languages, exemplified in "DJ" and "chef" highlights the cognitive ability of the users and the dynamic nature of such a practice. These findings may relate to the idea that language mixing is a creative space that facilitates the creation of novel and inventive concepts for meaning making (Rampton, 1995) which is associated with higher levels of cognitive flexibility (Ahlgren, Golden, & Magnusson, 2021).

Language mixing as an economic capital is the third language ideology related to the discourse on language mixing as a resource. As Table 1 presented, 16% of the students believed that language mixing had economic value for its users. Some examples are given below:

- *"Language mixing is like a passport because it gives many job opportunities and interacts with clients speaking different languages"* (SMT_2).
- *"Language mixing is like a bank because it helps to get anything like a well-paid job, a good position in a company, etc."* (SMT_44).
- *"Language mixing is like a key because it opens the future for people to have a good career inside Saudi Arabia or outside"* (SMT_48).
- *"Language mixing is like a credit card because it saves money when you travel to another country as you will not pay for translation services and get better deals on transactions and services"* (SMT_28).
- *"Language mixing is like currency because it gives you many chances to get a better education and a good job"* (SMT_9).
- *"Language mixing is like a cheque because it allows people to make new customers from around the world at any time to expand their business"* (SMT_58).

Language mixing was viewed by the students as an essential skill for success in the contemporary workplace because it enables the expression of a varied linguistic repertoire. They expressed four economic values of using language mixing: earning a well-paid job nationally or internationally; expanding business into new markets; reaching a wider range of customers and dispensing with those who benefit financially from providing language services. This result is in contrast with the result that emerged from Pan and Block (2011) study as their participants expressed that proficiency in one language mainly English is a resource for economic access. The students in this study challenged this ideology and argued that language mixing is an economic asset. Their view of language mixing as economic capital echoes (Heller, 2003) argument that language can be treated as a commodity, bought and sold in the market. The students' metaphors for language mixing highlighted economic values. The metaphors "passport" and "key" imply that language mixing is not just a linguistic competence but a gateway to economic opportunities. The metaphors "credit card," "currency" and "cheque" suggested that language mixing provides financial leverage for better education, job opportunities, global travel and business expansion. Participants in Niño–Murcia (2003) study were contradicted by the students' use of economic metaphors that valued English to describe language mixing.

4.2. Language Mixing as a Challenge

The second language ideology that emerged from the metaphorical texts was language mixing as a challenge which is the antithesis of language as a resource (Ruiz, 1984). Of the 74 texts that used metaphors, 26 students (or 35%) thought that language mixing was a practice that needed improvement. Students' explanations involved three hidden language ideologies: linguistic purism, cognitive difficulties, and one nation one language. Table 2 shows these three language ideologies, their definitions and how often they appeared in the data. These three hidden language ideologies ordered by their frequency of occurrence are presented in the following subsections. The most prevalent language ideology was "linguistic purism" followed by "cognitive difficulties," and "one nation one language."

Table 2. The language ideologies embedded within the ideology of language mixing as a challenge.

Language ideology	Definition	Frequency
Linguistic purism	This ideology considers language mixing an unacceptable linguistic practice that needs to be eradicated using a single, proper language.	42% (n =11)
Cognitive difficulties	This ideology views language mixing as a lack of intellectual abilities and reduces academic achievement.	31% (n =8)
One nation, one language	This ideology views language mixing as a threat to national unity and identity.	27% (n =7)

Linguistic purism is the first language ideology that emerged from the student's discourse on language mixing as a challenge. Linguistic purism is the belief that a particular language variety should be shielded from external linguistic influence (Langer & Nesse, 2012). According to Table 2, 11 students (42%) out of the 26 considered language mixing an inferior form of communication that should be eliminated to purify and preserve the original features of a language. Some examples are given below:

- *"Language mixing is like a stain on a white dress because it damaged the dress and you need to clean it and make it pure again"* (SMT_70).

- *"Language mixing is like tinnitus because you hear sounds and words bothering you and you cannot stand it so we must get rid of it sooner"* (SMT_1).

- *"Language mixing is like children talking because the words are pronounced wrongly and the sentences are not complete and you need time to understand, so people need to talk perfectly and correctly to be understood"* (SMT_8).

- *"Language mixing is like the water and oil mixture because we can't mix them up and it's hard to understand mixed languages since it is wrong and distracting and we must clear our language from impurity and speak true language"* (SMT_26).

- *These students perceived language mixing as "wrong," "bothering" and "distracting," urging others to "get rid of it sooner" to achieve a "pure" and "clean" language. The students' desire for language purification aligns with the discourse of linguistic purism, which aims to "remove any linguistic material ought to be considered purist" (Gregersen & Langer, 2021). Langer and Nesse (2012) highlighted the connection between linguistic purism and language standardization, both of which promote a single form of language as the only correct or even perfect option. This ideology was evident in the students' use of evaluative terms such as "correctly" and "wrongly."*

- *Students' purism tendencies were revealed in their metaphors. The "water and oil mixture" metaphor portrayed language mixing as a combination of two incompatible substances, reflecting the notion of separate bilingualism (Creese & Blackledge, 2011). This implies that mixing languages deviates from the norm and pollutes the purity of the language. Similarly, metaphors such as "stain on a white dress" and "tinnitus" associate language mixing with negative concepts such as dirt and noise, reinforcing the desire to remove it.*

The cognitive difficulty is the second language ideology that emerged from the student's discourse on language mixing as a challenge. Out of 26 students, 31% conceptualized language mixing as a cognitive challenge. Below are

some examples.

- *"Language mixing is like a tornado inside his head because when someone is mixing multiple languages, he is stressing his brain trying to find all the correct words he needs"* (SMT_56).
- *"Language mixing is like a maze because of the difficulty of delivering speech in a smooth, correct manner and the listener's ability to understand and focus are dispersed"* (SMT_41).
- *"Language mixing is like a split-brain syndrome because what is uttered is disordered and chaotic and not everyone can understand your messy language and later your brain will fail to deliver the message and your GPA will decline"* (SMT_5).
- *"Language mixing is like fake eyelashes because it will not do the job of original eyelashes and because they are not real, they disturb the brain to function properly"* (SMT_11).
- *"Language mixing is like perfume layering because you will not get the original smell or a good quality, but you have created a distorted and puzzling thing that confuses everyone including their teachers and leads to failing classes"* (SMT_59).

The students described language mixing as a "chaotic" and "puzzling" practice. They perceived that the cognitive effort required in managing the use of multiple languages is "stressing," "dispersed" and affects the brain's ability "to function properly," which causes confusion and miscommunication. They believed that the inefficiency of language mixing users' brains rendered their languages as not "real" or wrong and "messy" uses of the "correct" language. Apparently, these students endorsed the standard ideology which they perceived as an unmarked and "original" variety (Woolard, 1998). Therefore, it is not surprising that they related academic underachievement to using language mixing (e.g., "failing classes" or "GPA will decline"). This finding contrasts with the results of Zhang (2022) study in which the participants found that language mixing enhanced their reading skills.

The students' perceptions of the cognitive challenges of language mixing were spelled out in their metaphors. The metaphor "tornado" signifies chaos and unpredictability which may confuse people. The "maze" metaphor depicted the complex process of navigating languages and the disordered experiences associated with it. The metaphor "split-brain syndrome" describes the brain malfunction during the process of meaning-making through language mixing. These students treated languages as unique and separate entities (Creese & Blackledge, 2011). Thus, their metaphors suggested a strong bias towards language mixing perceiving it as a burden hindering people's cognitive abilities. One nation, one language is the third- language ideology on language mixing as a problem which stresses the importance of one language for a nation's unity and coherence. Of the 26 students, 27% believed that language mixing could rip the nation apart and must be avoided. Some examples are presented below.

- *"Language mixing is like a thief because he steals from here and there to make wealth and at the end people will not like it because it corrupts the language and weakens the values that hold the community together"* (SMT_66).
- *"Language mixing is like a non-independent country because mixing one language with another damages the uniqueness of the language that this country speaks, and this makes it rely on other nations to get their languages and lose the most powerful tool that unifies its people"* (SMT_24).
- *"Language mixing is like a war because it damages the language of society and then destroys its structure and uniqueness."* (SMT_29).
- *"Language mixing is like colonialism because it is dangerous so having a bunch of words from here and there is a sign of dividing the people instead of unifying them"* (SMT_21).
- *"Language mixing is like belligerent parents because the more the parents fight, the more distant the child is, the more you add from other languages to your language the more you get distant from your own society"* (SMT_37).

Students perceived language mixing as a force that "corrupts" or "damages" the "structure" of society and "weakens the values" that bind its members together. It is a sign of "losing" the language of society and marginalizing people from their own communities. The students' claim stemmed from nationalist ideology which is at the heart of puristic discourse (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). Nationalism is the tendency to keep societies as

pure and homogeneous as possible (Blommaert & Verschueren, 1992). Thus, these students idealized a monolingual society and avoided recognizing the linguistic diversity existing in their communities which their peers acknowledged in their discourse of language mixing as a recourse. Blommaert and Verschueren (1992) argued that the ideology of one nation, one language is used to justify suppressing minority languages leading to language loss or discrimination. However, the students in this study expressed this ideology to protect the dominant language of the larger society rather than the languages of minorities. Students' metaphors reflected their concerns about a society's linguistic unity if its members mix languages. The metaphors "thief" and "war" symbolized the loss of a valuable resource which is the nation's language. The metaphors "colonialism" and "non-independent country" suggested the fear of language-mixing users losing their linguistic identities as they assimilate to the dominant language. Blackledge et al. (2008) echoed a similar finding in which the participants insisted on 'separate bilingualism' to preserve and protect the students' heritage language from the colonizer language (English) in the heritage classroom.

4.3. Conflicting Language Ideologies

The study found that out of the 74 metaphorical texts, 21.6% of the students expressed contradictory perspectives on language mixing. They stated a belief and then expressed an opposing opinion. Within this language ideology, two underlying ideologies emerged: language mixing is important for interaction but ruins the language, and language mixing facilitates communication but affects the speaker's authentic identity. Table 3 presents these two embedded language ideologies, their definitions and how often they appear in the metaphorical data. The following subsections present these language ideologies in order of decreasing frequency with the most frequent presented first and the least presented last.

Table 3. The language ideologies embedded within the conflicting language ideologies.

Language ideology	Definition	Frequency
Language mixing is important for interaction but ruins the form of a language.	This ideology stresses the importance of language mixing simultaneously; it perceives that language mixing affects the structure of a language.	69% (n =11)
Language mixing facilitates communication but affects the user's authentic identity.	This ideology acknowledges the necessity of language mixing for communication while addressing the potential challenges of its users' identities.	31% (n =5)

Language mixing is important for interaction but ruining the form of a language is the first conflicting ideology of language mixing. Eleven students (68%) out of 16 viewed languages mixing as essential for interaction and simultaneously expressed their concerns about the potential language problems associated with such a practice. Below are some examples:

- *"Language mixing is like a blender because it dissolves the original language and creates unknown substances that are sometimes messy and sometimes an amazing mix that keeps interaction smooth"* (SMT_33).
- *"Language mixing is like an old book because it is valuable but has some torn pages that make you miss some information like that mixing languages is important to interact even though you tore the language"* (SMT_69).
- *"Language mixing is like a doctor because he helps people keep the conversation alive and going while removing the essence of the real language"* (SMT_18).
- *"Language mixing is like a weapon because sometimes you need it to convey the message and sometimes it may injure your message or hurt others' languages"* (SMT_64).
- *"Language mixing is like cough medicine because it is bitter and not tasty but it is important to cure as mixing languages is not correct but needed for communication"* (SMT_74).

The students viewed language mixing as a necessity for "smooth" and "alive" interaction allowing people to effectively "convey" their messages. Their perspectives draw on the ideology that emphasizes the importance of

language mixing for interaction. However, they contradicted their view by asserting that language mixing is a "not correct" practice and may "injure" the "real language." Similar to their peers in the precious set of language ideologies, this group of students' views rested on the ideology of linguistic purism (Langer & Nesse, 2012) which challenges mixing languages. As mentioned earlier, linguistic purism goes hand in hand with standardization discourse (Woolard, 1998) emphasizing the use of a distinct language and purifying it from any element that might deviate from the established norms. Students' conflicting language ideologies regarding the use of language mixing are similar to those of a participant in Pacheco et al. (2019) study who conceived language mixing as a valuable resource for class participation; yet, she was uncertain about how to achieve the academic goal of using correct English. The students' metaphors captured their ideological tension about language mixing. They compared it to a "blender" that melds but may disrupt an "old book" that is priceless but missing pages, a "doctor" who cures and alters, a "weapon" that can protect or harm and a "cough medicine" that is necessary but not always pleasant.

Language mixing facilitates communication but affects the speaker's authentic identity which is the second conflicting ideology of language mixing. Only five out of 16 students perceived language mixing as a useful communication resource but they also raised concerns about the speaker's identity. Here are some examples.

- *"Language mixing is like a chameleon because it makes your interaction flexible and adaptable but at the same time you become deceivable and a cheater because you are not yourself anymore"* (SMT_16).
- *Language mixing is like a roller coaster because it may be necessary for excited interactions while encouraging people to be more playful, not serious language users"* (SMT_43).
- *"Language mixing is like plastic surgery because it looks amazing and repairs many misunderstandings but it will harm the patient and cause many side effects and the speaker is not authentic anymore"* (SMT_62).
- *"Language mixing is like a loud neighbor because she must live next to you and you cannot tolerate her behaviors but you have to respect them as Islam instructed us. Similarly, mixing languages is a need in our lives and even though it is annoying you must pretend to be tolerant of narrow-minded speakers"* (SMT_27).

Similar to the previous excerpts in which the students expressed the importance of language mixing for interaction, the students here suggest that language mixing is a "need" for "flexible" and "excited" communication and to eliminate "misunderstandings" occurring during a conversation. While the students' conflicting beliefs in the previous excerpts were about the language, the students' ideological discrepancy here lies in the risk of reflecting a devalued identity if someone uses language mixing. In contrast to other participants in the study who thought language mixing users were intelligent and well-educated, this student believed that language mixing was crucial for fostering sociocultural relationships. Language mixing users are characterized by these students as "narrow-minded" and "not authentic" speakers who are more likely to be "playful, not serious" about language; listeners are therefore expected to be "tolerant" towards those speakers. It seems that the students' perspectives are tied to what (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004) referred to as the "authentication of identity," which involves a purification discourse of identity (p. 385). The students' metaphors expressed their dual beliefs about language mixing as a communicative asset and a challenge to users' identities. The metaphor "chameleon" highlighted adaptability as a merit of language mixing while underscoring the potential risks of losing one's original identity. The "roller coaster" metaphor stresses the excitement of language mixing, but its playful nature may make its users appear less serious. According to research conducted by Harissi, Otsuji, and Pennycook (2012) language play is not seen as a serious expression of one's identity in front of higher social class people. In front of those with greater social status, Harissi et al. (2012) discovered that dabbling with languages is not seen as a serious expression of one's identity. Furthermore, the metaphor of "plastic surgery" highlighted the benefits of language mixing in communication but it also raised concerns about linguistic authenticity being lost. This finding resonated with Zhang (2022) finding, as some of the participants described the students blending languages as not real readers but "L2 weak readers" (p. 197). The "loud neighbor" metaphor affirms the inevitability of language mixing in interaction. However, it moves beyond the originality discourse and brings the social demands of accepting such practice despite its disruptive effects.

Students' metaphors in these conflicting language ideologies suggest that while language mixing facilitates seamless interactions, it poses potential linguistic disruptions and conveys an unauthentic identity. Students' apparent ideological contradictions reflect their entrapment in what Creese and Blackledge (2011) and Harissi et al. (2012) deemed the push and pull between fixed and flexible ideologies about language use.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined 74 metaphorical texts written by L2 undergraduates to explore their language ideologies on language mixing. The analysis showed that they held multiple and contradictory ideologies about mixing languages. Students' perceptions were found to be an orientation along a language-ideological continuum. On one end of the continuum was the ideology of language mixing as a resource while on the other was the ideology of language mixing as a challenge. Most students' language ideologies were rigidly positioned at one of the extremes. However, some students' ideologies occupied a central position on this continuum as they expressed conflicting language ideologies holding both views of language mixing as a resource and a challenge.

Kroskrity (2010) argues that language ideologies are never fixed but are always multiple and contested. The in-depth examination of the students' metaphorical texts revealed that the three overarching language ideologies were layered with various language ideologies. First, implicit heteroglossic beliefs that uphold the dynamic nature of bilingual language practices were apparent in the students' discourse on language mixing as a resource. These ideologies obviously influenced the students' perspectives. The results revealed that the predominant language ideology within the students' ideological discourse on language mixing as a resource was the *importance of language mixing in building socio-cultural relations*. The students acknowledged the diverse nature of their communities and that language mixing is the only effective communication tool to establish harmony and unity. According to Blommaert (2010), language practices serve as both means of communication and markers of inclusion and exclusion in varied societies. These students believed that non-standard language practices were ways of establishing a sense of belonging and inclusion. The second language ideology consistent with the students' discourse of language mixing as a resource wa*s language mixing as a resource for people's intellectual abilities.* The students attributed language mixing as a complex practice fostering the high cognitive skills necessary for academic success as supported by several studies (e.g., (Adesope, Lavin, Thompson, & Ungerleider, 2010; García & Wei, 2014)). The third language within the students' discourse on language mixing as a resource was *language mixing as a resource for people's economic capital.* Perceiving language mixing as an effective tool for the modern economy suggests that the students challenged the common discourse that often associates English with economic values at the expense of other languages and linguistic practices. This finding reminds us of Albury (2021) argument that "cracks have emerged in what may otherwise be seen as the ironclad universal status of English." (p. 189).

Second, the students who conceived language mixing as a challenge implicitly conveyed their ideological concerns by subscribing to monoglossic ideologies stemming from essentialist perspectives (Blommaert, 2006). The students expressed the ideology of linguistic purism which views language mixing as a deviation from the norm and has a detrimental impact on a language within their ideological discourse on language mixing as a challenge (Langer & Nesse, 2012). Students' beliefs about the importance of purifying a language from incidents of crossing languages were often articulated in evaluative terms such as 'good' or 'bad' which are ways of expressing language standardization ideology (Blackledge et al., 2008; Woolard, 1998). Therefore, some perceived language mixing as a challenge and revealed the ideology of *cognitive difficulty*. Language mixing was viewed by this group of students as a barrier to their academic performance in contrast to their colleagues who viewed it as a resource for intellectual ability. This finding is in contrast with the circulating benefits in the literature (e.g., (Adesope et al., 2010; García & Wei, 2014)) of the linguistic practices of language mixing such as developing students' higher-order thinking skills and improving their academic achievement. The third language ideology consistent with the students' discourse of language mixing as a challenge wa*s one nation, one language.* The students asserted that speaking a single language

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is essential considering language mixing as a means of undermining the cohesiveness and unity of the country. According to Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) nationalists frequently use the one nation, one language concept in their rhetoric to maintain the greatest level of homogeneity within groups of people. The last language ideology found in this study was the *conflicting language ideology* in which the students expressed a nuanced middle ground, recognizing language mixing as both a boon and a bane aligned with heteroglossic and monoglossic ideologies (Blommaert, 2006). Two language ideologies were associated with the students' conflicting discourse on language mixing. The first one was that *language mixing is important for interaction but ruining the form of a language* and the second one was that *language mixing facilitates communication but affects the speaker's authentic identity*. The students who held both language ideologies displayed ideological conflicts with the ideas of linguistic purism and identity verification even though they seemed to agree with the other students who viewed language mixing as a tool for fostering socio-cultural relationships. These two language ideologies framed the students' views within the discourse on language mixing as a challenge. This finding is also articulated in Harissi et al. (2012) study in which the multilinguals revealed ideological tension because of the push and pull between fixed and flexible language ideologies. Indeed, such tension indicates that different perspectives on discursive practices have a complex interplay (Creese & Blackledge, 2011). Students employed various metaphors encompassing a broad spectrum of domains such as food, drinks, objects, places and activities among others. Indeed, grouping the elicited metaphors into categories according to their shared characteristics did not yield any noticeable ideologies embedded within these metaphors. For example, the metaphor DJ (i.e., disc jockey, a person who plays recorded music for others) was articulated by two students who viewed language mixing as a resource. However, their justification revealed that one student employed the metaphor DJ to express the importance of language mixing for socio-cultural relations while the second student used it to express the ideology of the intellectual abilities of language mixing. Using language ideologies as a lens to scrutinize students' justifications helped bring the various hidden language ideologies to the surface and understand the metaphors employed to express them. The study found that the students' metaphors matched their ideological perspectives. This is seen, for instance, in students' employment of metaphors that resonated with economic values, such as currency, banks and credit cards to express the language mixing as a source of economic capital employed. Moreover, the metaphor "water and oil mixture" reflected the ideology of language separation whereas the metaphor "green juice" referred to the flexible language ideology (Creese & Blackledge, 2011; Harissi et al., 2012). The results supported the idea that metaphors are more than cognitive mechanisms and are always infused with ideological freight (Eubanks, 1999). Language ideologies and metaphors are intertwined and mutually influence each other. The current study was a first step to understanding how language ideologies are conceptualized through metaphors.

The results suggested some implications for teachers dealing with L2 students. Metaphor elicitation proved an effective reflection strategy for L2 students to unveil their perspectives on specific issues related to their language learning journey. Thus, teachers may use conceptual metaphors to understand students' views regarding the tasks and activities affecting their academic achievement, which may effectively evaluate the instructors' teaching practices. In addition, conceptual metaphors might be used to deconstruct language ideologies that prompt exclusion and inequality in L2 classrooms. There are some limitations that need to be addressed to guide future research. First, the students' metaphorical texts were the primary source for this qualitative study. Alternative data collection methods such as interviews and surveys could be considered to broaden the scope of interpreting the students' ideological perspectives on concepts under examination besides the metaphor-eliciting approach. Moreover, future studies could expand on the current study by including teachers and authoritative individuals to understand the language ideologies perpetuated in the institution where the L2 students are studying.

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