

Zayed University signs MoU with Diglossia for field-testing and research collaboration

The MoU aims to test vocabulary level for students and highlight the critical importance of its acquisition

Dubai, United Arab Emirates- February 3, 2016: With the UAE's declaration of 2016 as the Reading Year, Zayed University and Diglossia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at Zayed University in Dubai campus in the presence of Dr Marilyn Roberts, Acting Provost at Zayed University, and Diglossia's Co-Founder and CEO, Mimi Jett on Wednesday.

The MoU came as part of Zayed University's efforts to consolidate the UAE's position as a global capital for knowledge and culture.

Diglossia takes its name from the fairly rare linguistic phenomenon known by the same name wherein two forms of a language co-exist side-by-side within the same language community, but are used for different functions. Such is the case with Colloquial and Standard Arabic, where the written language can be quite different from the 30+ dialects of Arabic spoken throughout the region.

Delivered on computer, tablet, or mobile, around 900 Zayed University students enrolled at the Academic Bridge Program (ABP) will have the chance to test their vocabulary level and get a valid estimate of their English vocabulary size within 10 minutes. The test uses a yes/no design to sample a vocabulary range covering the 10,000 most frequently occurring words in English.

"In line with the directives of President His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan announcing that 2016 be commemorated as the year of reading, the MoU came to enhance reading among young students in order to gain and build a sizable vocabulary knowledge," Dr Marilyn said.

"Vocabulary acquisition is a critical part in foreign language learning and it can consequently lead to a successful communication. Therefore, Zayed University is very happy to partner with Diglossia to implement a new vocabulary test suitable for placement and ongoing measurement of progress in vocabulary growth. The test will provide valid and reliable data to help place incoming students quickly," she added.

Wayne Jones, Director of Academic Bridge Program, will oversee the implementation of the MoU within Zayed University Abu Dhabi and Dubai campuses.

"Ongoing use of Lexica-English will provide Zayed University with longitudinal data on students' vocabulary level changes and progress over time. It is an innovative and well-researched model for quickly estimating general language proficiency," Jones said.

With the modernization and reform of Arabic language throughout the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, Diglossia is preparing for the general release of Lexica-Arabic, which will be introduced and implemented at Zayed University.

For her part, Mimi expressed her pleasure on visiting Zayed University and said: "The MoU helps to further our commitment to partnering with local educational leaders, academics, and

Ministers of Education, to provide a suite of language assessments for native speakers of Arabic learning English that will give educators access to the kind of objective, accurate, and reliable data they need to make informed decisions when evaluation language program effectiveness, adopting new curricula, and targeting professional development needs.”

The MoU was also attended by Jonathan Cooper, Member of Diglossia Board of Directors and Manager of the Medium Enterprises Segment of the SME Equity Fund, and Jeffrey Smith, Chief Operations Officer of Sylvan Middle East and a Partner of Diglossia.

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About Diglossia:

Diglossia USA, LLC, is a new company formed by Mimi Jett and Paul Tucker with the specific purpose of forming the UAE subsidiary to provide language assessment, professional development, and related services in the Middle East and North Africa. Diglossia FZ, LLC, is licensed and registered through the Media Zone and located in twofour54 at the new North Park building. More information is available at: www.diglossia.net

About Zayed University:

Zayed University is today the premier national university in the United Arab Emirates and a regional leader in educational innovation and change. It has created and implemented a skills-rich, outcome-based general education program that systemically develops student skills, knowledge, and values associated with liberal learning and provided a solid foundation for pursuit of disciplinary majors and future careers. Zayed University welcomes national and international students, and provides them with a high quality education, offered by seasoned teaching scholars to prepare them to shape the future of the United Arab Emirates.

Zayed University offers Undergraduate and Graduate degrees in the following Colleges: College of Arts & Creative Enterprises (recognized as substantially equivalent by NASAD), College of Business (Accredited by AACSB), College of Communication & Media Sciences (Accredited by ACEJMC), College of Education (Accredited by NCATE), College of Sustainability Sciences & Humanities, and College of Technological Innovation (Accredited by ABET). For more information, visit www.zu.ac.ae

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