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**| RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## **Dominance of Foreign Shop Names Over Arabic Names in Saudi Arabia: Promotional, Sociocultural and Globalization Issues**

**Reima Al-Jarf**

*Full Professor of English and Translation Studies, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia*

**Corresponding Author:** Reima Al-Jarf, **E-mail:** reima.al.jarf@gmail.com

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**| ABSTRACT**

This article investigates the language choice in shop names in Saudi Arabia, and the factors that determine the language choice and the reasons for preferring English to Arabic names. A sample of 500 shop names in 12 cities was collected from a Saudi Mall Directory and analyzed. In addition, a sample of 75 students and instructors from the departments of languages, translation, education, computer science and business and 25 shop owners and workers were surveyed. It was found that 64% of the shops have foreign names (25% international foreign names and 39% local names); 24% have pure Arabic names and 12% have mixed names. Some shops with a foreign name add an Arabic descriptor which is a translation of the foreign name (Perfume (عطورات) بارفيوم). Foreign names are used in some mall and shop names although Arabic equivalents exist. The students, faculty and shop owners and workers gave promotional, sociocultural, linguistic and globalization factors, and lack of a business naming policy. They indicated that foreign shop names are used as a marketing strategy to attract customers who prefer foreign merchandise to local ones. They think it is more glamorous to use a foreign name as foreign names are associated with modernity, prestige, and elitism. They can reach more customers. A foreign name gives the customer the impression that the store is keeping abreast of latest international markets. They faculty added that in our cognition, foreign names are connected with high quality. Our culture looks at English as more sophisticated and fancier. An English name has a different effect. Shop owners indicated that new entrepreneurs adopt a foreign name because they are worried about their ability to compete with other shops. Shops like to imitate shops in the West. Some think that translating a shop name to Arabic creates a barrier between the customer and the foreign franchised company as the original name is in English. As an example, foreign names are used for promoting the Riyadh Season (Oasis, Winter Wonderland, Park Avenue بوليفارد). The article gives recommendations for protecting the Arabic language, translating shop names, and choosing glamorous and attractive Arabic names.

**| KEYWORDS**

Foreign shop names, Saudi shops, Saudi mall, shop naming practices, factors affecting shop naming, globalization, promotional factors, sociocultural factors.

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### **1. Introduction**

Thirty years ago, the majority of shops in Saudi Arabia had Arabic names. Many specialty- and high-quality names such as *Al-Ghazali*, *Mahmud Saeed*, *Gazzas*, *Fitaihi* were selling international brands and products such as Swiss watches and Parisian perfumes. There was only one western-style department store with a French name *Euromarché* and another department store with an Arabic name *Al-Sadhan*. Gradually, international franchised fast-food restaurants such as McDonald's started to enter the Saudi market with few branches in major cities. As the number of shopping malls is increasing, more and more foreign shops of clothing, beauty products, jewellery, restaurants, cafes and the like were imported. In the past decade or so, some local shops

started to substitute their Arabic names with an English one. New recreation centers and shops and even malls have been adopting an English name although Arabic equivalents exist.

The foreignization of shop names is not limited to Saudi Arabia. It is also a global phenomenon. The use of English as a trademark of modernity and elitism in the commercial contexts in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan is a new phenomenon which has emerged as Uzbekistan entered the global village as an independent and developing country in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Today English is seen as a symbol of advanced education, modernity, prestige, and elitism (Hasanova, 2010). The multilingual signs found in the shops of the Wangfujing Street in Beijing, China indicate how the multilingual linguistic landscape is constructed under the current language policy of China (Jingjing (2013). In Grønland, a multicultural neighbourhood in Oslo, the use of Norwegian, English and minority languages varies significantly. The wide use of English is connected to globalization and constitutes a typical picture of the linguistic landscapes in many places around the world today (Berezkina, 2016).

In Arab countries, numerous studies in the literature have focused on linguistic landscapes that refer to the language of public road signs, place names, street names, commercial shop signs, advertising billboards, and public signs on government buildings. They also cover directions, warnings, announcements, services provided, and tourist attractions (Al-Jarf, 2021d). In Lebanon, analysis of 128 private store fronts revealed a multilingual and diverse Beirut linguistic landscape with differences between reconstructed and non-reconstructed areas of the city. Results also demonstrated how the absence of certain scripts such as Armenian and Arabic in the streets of Beirut is indexical of the city's changing identity and how the use of iconic and international brand names has contributed to transforming old Beirut to a cosmopolitan city that is part of the globalized economy (Karam, Warren, Kibler & Shweiry, 2020).

In Iraq, Abdulkareem (2021) investigated language choice in shop signs in Baghdad and the factors that determine language choice in shop sign names. Analysis of 200 shop names from three areas of Baghdad and surveys with 30 shop owners indicated that foreign names in shop signs are growingly used by shop owners. Those shop signages are either monolingual or bilingual, i.e., (Arabic, foreign, and mixed of Arabic and foreign). The researcher found a strong connection between prestige and commercial interests to borrow foreign names. Shop owners believe that foreign shop names attract more customers, and they enable them to sell more products.

In Yemen, Al-Athwary (2017) collected 755 multilingual signs in the linguistic landscapes in Sana'a and found that the strategies of duplicating, fragmentary, overlapping, and complementary multilingual writings were generally employed in Sana'a's linguistic landscapes. Standard Arabic appears on both top-down and bottom-up signs. The writing mimicry system, which is a salient feature of the public space of Yemen, is only used for advertising and promotional purposes rather than expressing the identity of ethnolinguistic minorities. In addition, the Sana'a multilingual linguistic landscapes are characterized by the use of Arabicized English, glocalization and multifunctional signs, which are used for promoting, and advertising commodities and showing modernity and success. In another study in Yemen, Saleh (2021) asserted that some shop owners in Aden who are using English in advertisements tend to think that their customers believe more in products from abroad. When customers see foreign names, they will have more confidence in the products, and they will trust using the foreign language. This will lead Arabic to become a dead language like Latin or ancient Greek.

In Jordan, Alomoush (2015) selected 4070 signs from sixty streets in Irbid, Salt, Zarqa, Amman, Karak and Aqaba in Jordan. 51% of the signs were multilingual and 49% were monolingual. Minority languages are almost absent whereas Standard Arabic and English on signs are the dominant languages, because they are closely related to Arab nationalism and globalization respectively. Jordanian Arabic is deleted from the top-down linguistic landscapes because it is closely linked to informal domains. Mixed codes, Romanised Arabic and Arabicized English are commonly used in the linguistic landscapes to reflect 'glocalization'. French, German, Italian, Spanish, Turkish and Russian are mainly used in brand names and business name signs for reasons of European linguistic fetishes and tourism. In another study, Alomoush (2021) examined the semiotic construction of 88 signs displaying a wide range of interlingual Arabic-English blends, compounds, and affixed words in the Jordanian linguistic landscapes. It was noted that different cycles of discourse (trans)national, economic, and cultural) emerge from the use of Arabinglish in signage. Arabinglish code-mixing practices are presumably an index of global identities and contributes to the visual dominance of English in Jordan, although constitutionally, Jordan is a predominantly monolingual country.

In a similar study, Amer and Obeidat (2014) found that 58.1% of the shop signs in Aqaba, Jordan are in both Arabic and English. In most of the signs the Arabic name is translated into English to give information about the goods and services provided to non-native speakers of Arabic. Some shop owners indicated that English is used in their shop signs to attract foreign customers' attention because businesses such as car rental, minimarkets, souvenirs, gifts, photo shops, hotels, computer stores, shoe shops, internet, bookshops, and jewellery are intended for tourists. Other shop owners use English and Arabic because the former is associated with globalization, modernity, prestige and for decorative purposes. English improves their business. The frequent use

of English words in the business context indicates that these items are eventually going to be loanwords in Arabic in the future as they are probably more familiar to local people and will be adapted to the linguistic system of the local dialect. The purpose of using English in shop signs was confirmed by El-Yasin & Mahadin (1996) who declared that signs in Irbid, Jordan aim at promoting goods and services offered by the businesses that display them and that use of foreign names in these signs is intended for promotional purposes.

In the West Bank, Farran & Hortobágyi (2020) analysed 519 pictures of signage in the linguistic landscape in the main street of Ramallah and noted the dominance of English vs. Arabic as L1. They also noted significant differences between language policies in the West Bank and the street reality. The linguistic landscapes in the street do not abide by the official language policy regarding the state language (Arabic) nor does it employ any minority language.

Despite the plethora of research studies on the use of English in many linguistic landscapes worldwide, including some Arab countries such as Jordan, Iraq, Yemen, Egypt and Lebanon, there is a dearth of publications on the dominance of English in the linguistic landscapes, particularly in shop names in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to: (i) investigate the language choice in shop names in Saudi Arabia, i.e., find out the percentage of Arabic shop names, foreign shop names and mixed shop names consisting of an Arabic and a foreign name; (ii) find out the promotional, sociocultural, linguistic and globalization factors that determine the language choice in naming the shop signs and the reasons for preferring English to Arabic names and transliterating foreign names rather than translating them.

This study is significant as it will provide shop owners, shoppers, the Chambers of Commerce and Ministry of Commerce in Saudi Arabia a global picture of the languages used in the linguistic landscapes in Saudi Arabia, especially shop signs, whether the over-use of foreign shop names constitute a threat to the status of Arabic as a national language, and which precautionary measures should be taken to preserve the status of Arabic as a national language.

## 2. Definition of Terms

### 2.1 Brand Names<sup>1</sup>

A brand name identifies a specific company, product or service and differentiates it from similar brands within a particular category. Brand names are often accompanied by a logo and are typically registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to protect their equity.

### 2.2 Types of Brand Names

- Descriptive Brand Names: *Toys R US, General Motors, Hotels.com, Bank of America.*
- Lexical Brand Names: *Dunkin' Donuts, Crazy Glue, Sizzler Steakhouse, Krispy Kreme.*
- Acronymic Brand Names: *IBM, BP, UPS, BMW, MTV, GEICO, H&M.*
- Invented Brand Names: *Google Exxon, Kodak, Xerox, Verizon, Adidas.*
- Founder Brand Names: *Kellogg's, Ford, Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein.*
- Geographical Brand Names: *American Airlines, California Pizza Kitchen, Kentucky Fried Chicken.*
- Evocative Brand Names: *Amazon, Nike, Amazon, Virgin, Apple, Greyhound.*

### 2.3 Characteristics to be Considered When Choosing a Brand Name<sup>2</sup>

The brand names selected should be distinctive, authentic, memorable, enduring, defensible, flexible & extendable, legally safe, short and easy to remember, unique with positive meaning, match the company business or product, cross check the meaning before going global, how it is pronounced by native and non-natives speakers such as Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese or French native speakers, what does it mean in these languages, and does it sound foreign?

## 3. Data Collection and Analysis

### 3.1 Sample of Shop Names

A corpus of 500 shop names was collected from a Saudi Mall Directory. The corpus included all malls in major cities in Saudi Arabia: Riyadh, Jeddah, Makkah, Madinah, Dammam, Dhahran, khobar, Hassa , Jubail, Abha, Tabuk and Taif. It included shops for clothing, shoes, accessories, beauty products, children's toys, in addition to restaurants, cafes and amusement areas. Shop names were classified into 4 categories: (i) International franchised foreign shop names; (ii) local shops with foreign names; (iii) (shop names with a mixture of an Arabic and foreign name; (iv) shops with pure Arabic names (See Table 4 and images in the

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ignitebrands.com/7-popular-types-of-brand-names/#:~:text=A%20brand%20name%20identifies%20a,often%20accompanied%20by%20a%20logo.>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.oliveandcompany.com/blog/characteristics-of-strong-brand-names/>

Appendix). All shops with pure Arabic names and those with a mixture of Arabic and foreign names were excluded. Duplicate shop names were removed as well. Only shops with foreign names whether they are international brands/chains or local foreign names were compiled and subjected to further analysis (See Table 4 for examples). Thus, the final sample consisted of 320 foreign shop names together with their Arabic transliteration.

### 3.2 Sample of shoppers

A sample of 75 shoppers (students and instructors from the departments of languages and translation, education, computer science, business, marketing, and others) who are native speakers of Arabic and some knowledge of English participated in the study. In additions a sample of 25 shop owners and/or shop workers who are native speakers of Arabic but have some knowledge of English were interviewed as well.

### 3.3 Instruments

To find out why shops in Saudi Arabia prefer to use foreign shop name, the students and instructors answered a questionnaire-survey consisting of the following open-ended questions:

- Why do stores use foreign names for them, as in *Operation Falafel, Brand Center, Baby Shop*?
- Why do they write English names in Arabic letters and not translate them even though many of them can be translated as in *Adventura, Jarlicious' Lounge, American Eagle Outfitters, Keseray Cafe, Esprit, Accessories, Payless, Barbecue Tonight, Nescafe Dolce Gusto, Dr. Nutrition, Natural Touch*? Why is the *Red Sea Mall* in Jeddah transliterated to *ريد سي مول* instead of using the Arabic name *مول البحر الاحمر*.

Answers to the questions were compiled and subjected to further analysis. Answers were grouped into promotional, sociocultural, linguistic and globalization factors and lack of naming policies that affect the dominance of foreign shop names over Arabic names. Results are reported qualitatively.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 The Languages of Shop Names

Findings presented in Table 1 show that 24% of the shops in the sample have pure Arabic names; 12% Mixed names (Arabic + Foreign); and 64% have foreign names (25% have international brand names and 39% have local foreign names (coined) created by the shop owners (See Al-Jarf, 2022a).

**Table 1: Percentage of Shops with Foreign International Brand Names, Local Foreign Names, Mixed Names and Pure Arabic Names**

	%	Examples
International brand names	25%	Mango مانجو, Starbucks, Bershka بيرشكا, Debenhams دبنهامز, Costa Café, Pierre Cardin, بيري كارديان, Mother Care مذكرير, Burger King, Tacco Hut تاكو هت, Zara زارا, Pizza Hut, Terranova تيرانوفا, New Yorker, Domino's Pizza, The Body Shop ذا بودي شوب, LC Waikiki, Gloria Jean, Top Shop توب, جيوردانو, Monsoon, Subway, Toys R Us تويز ار اص, H & M, Tim Hortons تيم هورتنز, Giordano, دانكن دوتنس, Chicky Cheese تشيكي تشيز, Dunkin Donutس
Local shops with foreign names	39%	Java Hour جافا أور, Pink Blue Fashion بينك بلو فاشن, Java Chocolate جافا شوكلت, Surprise Gift سربرايز, Grill & Chill (مطعم) جفت, Jori Coffec الجوري كوفي, Suitable Time Cafe فاشون ستور, Free Look فري لوك, Bush Avenue صالة للعب تنس الطاولة- Jeddah Masters, Curry Special كاري سبيشلل, بوش افينو, Bloomng بلومينج, Modds Life مودز لايف, Moon Toon موون تون وهي قاعة, Burger Kitchen براند سنتر, 45 Place 45 بليس, Brand Center, Moon Diamont مون دايمونت, عائلية للترفيه, برج كتنش, Black Spoon بلاك سبون
Mixed Names (Arabic + foreign)	12%	ثوب كيدز, بسبوسة بوكس, الصيرفي ميغا مول, صيادية إكسبرس, الرياض هب, محل دايتشن, لاكجري للإكسسوارات والمجوهرات, زكي أوبتكال, اوبريشن فلافل, تفاحة كيدز, بست عبايا, اليشمك للجلايبات, المشاط لانجري للملابس الداخلية, عالم سماش للترفيه, سرايا الزهور, المبدعون للملابس والأسبورات, كازا الزهور.
Pure Arabic Shop Names	24%	البيك, الركن السويسري, البيت الإماراتي للعود, طاجن, زهور الريف, بيت التصميم الإسلامي, الطازج, النهدي, الغزالي, هرفي, قرية الألعاب, عبد الصمد القرشي, القهوة الإيطالية, المخزن الكبير, قزاز, المذاق المغربي, أسواق العزيزية, محمود سعيد, المشواة الذهبية, جوهرة وجواهر, فتيحي, الشواية, محمصة الرفاعي, الصاج الريفى, المهياج, نعومي للملابس الداخلية, مطعم الليوان.

In addition, data analysis revealed that the majority of shop names are from English, followed by French, Italian, Turkish, Japanese, Chinese and Indian (See Table 2 for examples).

**Table 2: Foreign Shop Names, Language of Origin and Examples**

Language	Shop Names
<b>French</b>	L'Occitane لوكسيطان ; Aix Tral Aix إيكس ترال ; La Romana لارومانا دال ; La Vie En Rose لافي ان روز ; Lakolin Cafe لاكلين لاكلين ; Louis Féraud لويس فيرود ; So Souffle Cafe سوسوفليه ; Lajita لاجيتا ; Lumar لومار ; Caribou كاريبو كافييه ; Camaieu كامايو ; Esprit إسبريت ; La Sienza لاسينزا ; Parfois بارفواه
<b>Italian</b>	Artisana أرتيزانا للتصميم الداخلي ; The Zone Adventura أذنتورا ; Pizzeria البيترزيريا ; Rotti Boy روتي روتي ; Soprano سبرانو آيس كريم ; Maestro ماسترو بيتزا ; Peninos مطعم بنينوس ; Giordano جيوردانو ; Dolce Veta ماما روتي ماما روتي ; Sabriano صبريانو للبصريات ; Corsini Cafe كورسيني كافييه ; Merkato ماركاتو ; Mama Rotti ماما روتي
<b>Turkish</b>	Keisari كيسي كافييه ; Simit Saray سميت سراي ; Guzel قوزال للملابس التركية ; Gürkan Chef قوركان شيف بمبوني ; PALOVA بالوفا ; Assaraya Turkish Restaurant ; TOPKAPI ; Güllüoğlu KSA ديار الحلقوم ; Beyzade ; Kebapci Mahmut ; Ipekyol متجر للملابس ; Lokum Diyari
<b>Japanese</b>	Inso مركز ترفيهي ; Oak Berry Acai اوك بيري آساي ; Okaidi أوكايدى للأطفال ; Benihana ككامپاي ; Okku ; Yokari ; Bonzai Japanese Grill ; Shiro ; Kimono كيمونو ; Myazu Riyadh ; Sushi Yoshi ; Oishii Sushi أويشي سوشي ; Samurai Japanese Cuisine Restaurant
<b>Chinese</b>	Sichuan Scrispy سيشوان كريسبي ; Chinese tandoori شايينز تندوري ; Chinwa شينوا ; Golden Dragon, Bistro Chino ; Yummy Wok ; Panda Express ; Yauatcha Riyadh ; Canton
<b>Indian</b>	Tandoori ; Copper Chandni, Saravanaa Bhavan, Raan Mahal, Maharaja East By Vineet, Anardana, Zafran Indian Bistro, Peradiz الهندي للمأكولات الهندي , Shikara Restaurant مطعم شيكارا الهندي

Some shops with a foreign name have added an Arabic descriptor which is a translation of the foreign name as in *Perfume* بيبي فل للملابس ; *Babyfel for newborn clothes* فايف سيزون للنظارات ; *Five Seasons* ترو كافييه للقهوة المختصة ; *True cafe* عطورات بارفيوم ; *Solaris* الشمسية ; *Inrest Home furniture* سولاريز للنظارات الشمسية ; *Xtep* المشاط لانجري للملابس الداخلية ; *انريست هوم للأثاث* ; *المشاط لانجري للملابس الداخلية* ; *Naomi* نايمي للملابس النسائية ; *OKAIDI* أوكايدى للملابس الأطفال ; *Adventura* مركز ترفيهي للمراهقين ; *INSO* مركز ترفيهي للمراهقين ; *Jeddah Masters* صالة للعب تنس الطاولة جدة ماستر ; *Zon* زون أذنتورا

Foreign names are used in some mall and shop names although an Arabic equivalent exists as in (مول) ساوث ; الرياض هب ; فاللا بلازا (مول) الراشد ; جولد مور مول ; جدة نايس مول ; مومون تون وهي قاعة عائلية للترفيه ; فلانجو بارك جده ; عطورات بارفيوم ; الصيرفي ميغا مول ; مول ذا زون *THE ZONE* ; نايس جدة مول *Nice Jeddah Mall* ; ساوث مول *South Mall* ; ايفنت *Event Mall* ; ثوب كيدز ; افنت مول ; تاون سكوير الرياض

#### 4.2 Why Shops in Saudi Arabia Adopt Foreign Names

Surveys with the students, faculty, shop owners and workers gave several reasons for adopting foreign shop names. Those are classified as follows:

##### 1) Promotional Factors

Almost all the subjects, whether students, faculty, shop owners, or workers stated that foreign names, in general, and English names, in particular, are used as a marketing tools to attract customers' attention. They think it is more glamorous for customers to use foreign names for stores, hotels, movies, literary works, T.V. programs and so on. They added that a foreign shop name is associated with modernity, openness, elitism and high quality. They give the customers the impression that the store is fashionable, up to date and keeping abreast of latest international markets. Both Arab and foreign shoppers will be impressed by the foreign name. Both local and foreign customers prefer foreign merchandise to local ones. Some respondents added that most new entrepreneurs adopt a foreign name because they are worried about their ability to compete with other shops.

Dalal, a language instructor, declared:

*Use of foreign names such as Park Avenue, Oasis, Winter wonderland, the Boulevard بوليفارد have been used for promoting the Riyadh Season and attracting foreign tourists.*

Ahmed believes that:

*Shops can reach more customers when they use a foreign shop name.*

Many shop owners think that choosing a foreign name is a marketing strategy and it is a way by which shops like to be distinguished (stand out). Abdullah, a shop owner, asserted:

*My children suggested this foreign name. The English name would make my store well-know and my business prosperous in addition to using the name in Arabic. I am proud of my Arabic language...but in this day and age we need to keep up with latest developments in business. Adopting a foreign name is a means of attracting customers only. When customers see a shop with a foreign name, they accept it more. It is noteworthy to say that all the shops around us have English names."*

## **2) Sociocultural Factors**

Some respondents noted that in our cognition, we believe that an English name is cooler. Our culture looks at English as more sophisticated, fancier and gives customers a positive image and high social status. Some consider using a foreign name from English and/or French more prestigious and glamorous. Some participants feel that English and/or French are of a higher status than Arabic, with English being the lingua franca and global language.

Ghada indicated:

*Shops like to give customers the impression that they are high class. Knowing English, and having an English name is prestigious in our society".*

Omar said:

*We, Arab,s have an inferiority complex. We like to imitate the West which is ridiculous from a commercial as well as a cultural point of view. I consider this defeatism.*

## **3) Linguistic Factors**

The subjects indicated that some foreign names are characterized by brevity and conciseness, whereas Arabic has a long or explanatory equivalent as in: *Tele-money* which requires an explanatory equivalent. Some shop owners and workers have poor knowledge of Arabic equivalents and thus cannot translate the foreign name. Other respondents pointed out that translating the foreign shop name especially international franchised shops to Arabic will put a barrier between the customers and the foreign company as the original name is in English.

Lubna asserted:

*Shop owners prefer to use foreign names and transliterate them as in Red Sea Mall ريد سي مول rather than using the Arabic version مول البحر الاحمر.*

Samia thinks that:

*The English name has a different effect.*

## **4) Effect of Globalization**

Respondents gave globalization factors that affect the preference for foreign names to Arabic equivalents. Many shop owners like to imitate the West. They admire the Western culture. They consider English as a global language and English shop names, are common in many countries around the world, especially the International franchised brands.

## **5) Lack of a Business Naming Language Policy**

Some participants blamed the Chamber of Commerce and Ministry of Commerce who grant shop owners a permit for establishing their new business, and who do not care about whether the name of the business is Arabic or English. It looks like there is a lack of commitment on the part of the authorities in following up the naming issue and making sure that the foreign name has at least an accurate translation. Some enquired why the authorities allow a mall to be called ريد سي مول rather than مول البحر الاحمر; why call it البولييفارد instead of جادة الرياض. It seems strange when some shops are named in English and the name is transliterated, rather than translated into Arabic. Why not translated *Potato Corner* into ركن البطاطا instead of using بوتيتو كورنر. This seems strange, because there should be a law for protecting the Arabic language that is effective in preventing non-Arabic shops naming. When it is necessary to use a foreign name, it should be printed with smaller fonts with the Arabic name in larger fonts.

## 5. Discussion

Findings of the current study have revealed dominance of foreign shop names over Arabic names in Saudi Arabia. This is similar to the dominance of foreign shop names in other countries like Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon and Yemen as reported in studies by Karam, Warren, Kibler and Shweiry (2020); Abdulkareem (2021); Al-Athwary (2017); Saleh (2021); Alomoush (2015 & 2021); Amer and Obeidat (2014); El-Yasin and Mahadin (1996) and Farran and Hortobágyi (2020).

In addition, the factors that affect the naming practices in Saudi Arabia as reported by the students, faculty, shop owners and workers in this study are similar to those reported by prior studies such as Abdulkareem (2021); Al-Athwary (2017); Saleh (2021); and Amer & Obeidat (2014). In the current study and other prior studies, foreign shop names are used for promoting, and advertising commodities and showing modernity and success. Shop owners believe that foreign shop names attract more customers, and they enable them to sell more products. English improves their business. Their shop signs attract foreign customers' attention.

In Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries, the dominance of English is seen as a symbol of advanced education, modernity, prestige, and elitism. English is not only dominant in shop names only but is also dominant in other domains such as the hotel industry. For example, in Riyadh, dominance of foreign names is reflected in adopting the names of international hotel chains such as *Hilton, Marriott, Sheraton*; combining a local designation with English and French descriptors such as "*Plaza, Palace Tower, Royale, Crowne, Coral*" as in (*AlFanan Palace, Coral AlHamra AlFahd Crown*). Many contain a foreign toponym as in *Mandarin, Berlin, Venice*. Some use of a totally foreign name, which is not an international brand name as in *Romance Hotel, Ronza Land, Roseline Hotel Suites, Harmony House, Golden Tulip, Refal Kempinski. Wonder Plaza, Quiet Seasons, Pearls Venice Hotel Apts, Rest Place, Marina, Dior, Dellmon, Vera, Vivienda, Dilara, Mocador* and from French: *Le Park Corncorde, Berlin Chalet, Hier suites, Le Meridien Towers* (Al-Jarf, 2021c).

In the field of education, the Arabic language is severely marginalized by higher education institutions in the Arab world, as in using English or French as medium of instruction, appointing foreign deans and department heads at some institutions, the plethora of periodicals, articles, theses, conferences published in English compared to those published in Arabic; Arab institution's limited role in Arabization and translation, inadequacy of translated works and number of translation centers; use of English/French in specialized associations, training workshops, conferences, academic correspondence and reports; inadequate Arabic language and Arabization functions and events such as students' clubs, celebrating the International Mother Tongue Day and International Arabic Language Day; the type of language used in Arab students' online discussion forums; negative attitudes towards using Arabic as a medium of instruction, towards those who have received their college education in Arabic and towards instructors and specialists who do not know English. At the United Arab University (UAE) University, the English college requirements were increased to four levels or a total of 300 hours per semester for level I, and a total of 204 hours per semester for levels II, III & IV. In addition, 12 3- hour ESP courses or a total of 48 hours per semester are offered to all UAE University students depending on their major area of study. At the same time, the Arabic language core courses offered to students at UAE University were reduced to two credit hours per week or a total of 32 hours per semester (Al-Jarf, 2021a; Al-Jarf, 2018; Al-Jarf, 2008; Al-Jarf, 2005c; Al-Jarf, 2005b; Al-Jarf, 2004a; Al-Jarf, 2004b).

At the elementary school level, English is receiving more attention as exhibited in the increasing numbers of international schools using English as a medium of instruction and the increasing number of private schools teaching intensive English between 5-10 hours a week, in addition to teaching English starting from first grade at National Public Schools. Parents provide more support to their children in learning English than Arabic. Many prefer to enrol their children in a kindergarten that teaches English at a young age (Al-Jarf, 2022b; Al-Jarf, 2022c; Al-Jarf, 2020).

Moreover, Arabic is deteriorating on social media. This is noted in the decrease in Arabic language proficiency, as exhibited in the use of Colloquial instead of Standard Arabic, use of foreign words although Arabic equivalents exist, and committing spelling errors. Most educated adult users of Facebook and other social media use slang and Colloquial language. Some Arabic posts are fully Romanized rather than written in Arabic script. English words are transliterated and inserted in Arabic posts. Many adult users completely ignore Standard Arabic spelling rules on social media. They spell words the way they pronounce them in their own dialects. Users do not seem to recognize word boundaries, cannot connect phonemes with the graphemes they represent and cannot distinguish vowel length (Al-Jarf, 2021b; Al-Jarf, 2019; Al-Jarf, 2011b).

Furthermore, many Arabs, and social media users prefer to use English or French words although Arabic equivalents exist. For example, students use "*class, project, cancel, mobile*"; Facebook and Twitter users use "*share, comment, like, profile, message, tweet, hashtag*"; and T.V. anchors use "*break, agenda, politics, media*" and others. They think it is more prestigious to use foreign words and very often say: "everybody is doing it" (Al-Jarf, 2016; Al-Jarf, 2011a).

## 6. Recommendations

The dominance of foreign shop names over Arabic names poses a serious threat to Arabic due to misconceptions about the foreign and English shop naming and lack of language planning and linguistic policies that protect, develop, and promote the Arabic language. In this respect, Hassan (2012) indicated that globalization poses a serious threat to Arabic, our national identity. He added that Arabic faces some problems in the age of globalization such as the use of English instead of Arabic as a medium of instruction, hybridization, and variations in terminology. He recommended language planning activities to protect Arabic and the national identity. In business, Saleh (2021) declared that when customers see foreign names, they will have more confidence in the products and when customers are comfortable using the foreign language, Arabic will eventually become a dead language like Latin or ancient Greek. Linguistic nationalism is significant to the communicative and symbolic functions of Standard Arabic in articulating national identity in the linguistic landscapes in Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries (Al-Jarf, 2005a).

To promote Arabic shop naming, this study recommends that foreign shop names, especially local ones, be translated rather than transliterated into Arabic. The Arabic version Arabs and the English version for foreigners. نظارات زكي can be used in Arabic instead of أوبتكال; زكي أوبتكال; ركن البطاطا; instead of بوتيتو كورنر; مقهى جوري; instead of الجوري كوفي; instead of بيت الشوكولاتة/بيت الشوكولاتة; قصر الشوكولاتة; instead of المول الجنوبي; شوكلت سراي; instead of قطن هوم; بيت القطن; instead of قطن هوم; اللسة الطبيعية; instead of ناتشورال and so on.

The Ministry of Commerce and Chambers of Commerce, that grant shop owners a permit to start a business, should preserve our national language and care about profit only.

All Arab shoppers and business owners should be aware of the threats the foreignization of shop names and businesses pose on the status of the Arabic language as a national language.

Attractive Arabic names can be created. It is the quality of the products, the prices and employee-customer relations and friendliness that matter NOT the foreign name. *Al-Baik, Al-Tazej, Al-Ghazali, Gazzaz, Al-Nawras Juices* are examples of shops with prosperous and popular businesses with Arabic names.

The A/B or split testing technique can be used to compare two versions of the same shop name by showing half the sample the English name and the other half the Arabic name such as showing one group *Red Sea Mall* مول رد سي and the other *مول البحر* قصر & شوكلت سراي; مقهى جوري & الجوري كوفي *Jori Coffee*; ركن البطاطا & بوتيتو كورنر; نظارات زكي & زكي أوبتكال, الاحمر اللسة ناتشورال تاتش *Natural touch*; بيت القطن & قطن هوم *Cotton Home*; المول الجنوبي & ساوث مول; الشوكولاتة/بيت الشوكولاتة الطبيعية and each group decides which name they like better. This can be done before a business is established and for feedback to existing businesses as well.

Finally, a sample of shoppers can be surveyed to explore the factors such as the brand name, price, quality of the product that affect their decision to buy a product such as adult and children's clothes, beauty products, jewellery, coffee, dessert, food are still open for further investigation by researchers in the future.

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**ORCID ID:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6255-1305>

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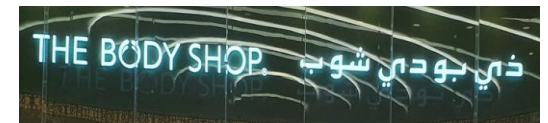
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#### Appendix: Image of a Sample of Foreign Shop Signs with Their Arabic Transliterations







**Source:** Al-Jarf, R. (2022a). Deviant Arabic Transliterations of Foreign Shop Names in Saudi Arabia and Decoding Problems Among Shoppers. *International Journal of Asian and African Studies (IJAAAS)*, 1(1), 17-30.