**The Role of Visuals in Understanding Store Names**

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**Abstract**
Numerous empirical investigations have examined the retail store nomenclature across a multitude of nations globally. In this particular study, we focused on a sample of one hundred and eighty (180) representative retail establishment names sourced from six distinct commercial districts within the Emirate of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (UAE). This sample selection comprised 30 store names from each of the aforementioned commercial areas. The dataset encompassed as well as encapsulated both bilingual shop names, displaying Arabic and English, as well as those solely transliterated. Data collection was facilitated through the use of the first researcher's mobile phone camera to capture store names displayed on storefronts. In addition, the first author administered a brief survey to assess participants' ability to discern the commercial activities associated with the stores, based on either the store names or the visual imagery presented on the storefront or windows. We reveal that the predominant lexical category employed in retail store names comprises nouns, encompassing proper nouns denoting geographical locations or personal names, including the family or first name of the business owner. Furthermore, we demonstrate that certain visual elements aided participants in ascertaining the commercial nature of the stores, while others proved less informative due to their general or nondescript nature. In conclusion, we acknowledge the research's inherent limitations and offer recommendations for the development of effective store-naming strategies.

**Keywords**: store names, shops' commercial activities, shop names and visuals, city and personal names, connotations of store names, transliteration, semiotics

**Introduction**
The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has garnered a reputation as an exceptionally secure and affluent oil-producing nation, in addition to its status as an extraordinary business hub. These attributes have rendered it increasingly attractive to investors, international corporations, and tourists from various regions worldwide. This prevailing environment has fostered an intercultural communication milieu, where individuals representing more than 200 diverse nationalities, encompassing a wide array of social and cultural backgrounds (EL-Sakran & EL-Sakran, 2021; EL-Sakran, 2023), engage in interactions and exchanges. Consequently, this has given rise to a multifaceted intercultural communication domain. This scenario has instigated a necessity for residents of the UAE whose native language is not Arabic to employ a common

linguistic medium for communication. Presently, the most prevalent language employed for this purpose is English, which has assumed the role of the lingua franca (Al-Issa, 2016; Badry & Willoughby, 2016; Woodrow, 2017). In light of this distinctive context, the UAE government has granted expatriates the authorization to establish their own enterprises upon securing the requisite approvals. Standing/obligatory regulations stipulate that:

> The trade name is the nomenclature that serves to distinguish one license from another, thus averting any potential confusion for the customers. The trade name must be germane to the nature of the license or bear any connotation thereof (Establishing business in the UAE | Ministry of Economy - UAE (moec.gov.ae)).

Garg et al. (2018) conducted a survey pertaining to consumer behavior in India with respect to jewelry stores, revealing that 42% of respondents regarded the brand name as a pivotal determinant in their purchasing decisions. While the issues we have voiced so far unmistakably constitute the principal objectives of our study, it necessitates our proposing the following research questions:

- What are the predominant naming strategies adopted by proprietors of retail establishments?

- Do the names of these retail establishments, once bereft of visual elements and head nouns featured on their signage and windows, convey to the observer the nature of the merchandise or services they offer?

- Does the visual imagery, if present, continue to signify the nature of the establishment's offerings once the shop name and head nouns have been omitted?

**Literature review**
Numerous studies have extensively examined store names across various countries worldwide. For instance, EL-Sakran (2004) conducted a comprehensive analysis of 1300 shop names across ten distinct categories of stores in the UAE. His primary focus revolved around the analysis of store names and the proposition of translation strategies to enhance the quality of shopfront translations. He concluded that proprietors' names and place names (i.e., names of cities and towns) were the two predominant naming strategies (pp. 53-54). These strategies, he contended, necessitated the utilization of a transliteration process.

In a similar vein, Bugheşiu (2011, p. 40) explored store names in Romania, revealing that such names predominantly derived from geographical and personal names, serving as a means of distinguishing entities. Correspondingly, Alhyari and Hamda (2019) determined that shop names function as a reflection of the socio-cultural context of their respective locations. This is to suggest that names are inextricably embedded in a "semiotic budget" (van Lier in Lantolf 2000, p. 252). As a result, deciphering of any names could become acts of semiotic mediations that resonate as sign operations in keeping with the accruing synergies and stimuli of the semiotic budget. The notion of semiotic budget is valuable to our study since it invites us to view the word/text-rich environment in this investigation as a semiotic budget which can generate semiotic resources such as expressions of appreciation, empathy, understanding, and a host of other meaning making activities that support creative and critical thought. In the light of this, the

study notes that the metaphor 'semiotic budget' offers several opportunities for meaning constructions. In a parallel context, Mubarak and Abdul Muthalib (2021) investigated the motivations behind shop owners in Indonesia incorporating English on their shop signs. Their data collection method involved interviews with shop owners, and their findings indicated that shop owners employed English to establish uniqueness and differentiation from other businesses. A comparable finding was reported by Bugheşiu (2017), who noted that similar naming policies were adopted in the Romanian linguistic landscape of store names. This observation is consistent with the results documented by Alomoush (2022).

In another study pertaining to shop names in Macedonia, Dimova (2007, p. 21) scrutinized the nomenclature of various commercial entities and discovered that all shop signs of Internet cafés contained English words and expressions (100%), followed by bars with 88%, boutiques with 48%, and restaurants with 33%. However, none of the shop signs for butchers and pharmacies and only 20–25% of the signs for barbers, bakeries, and grocery shops featured anglicized elements. This finding may point to a cultural influence, suggesting that shops selling Western products tend to employ English names, while those dealing in local products exhibit a preference for local names. Notwithstanding this, we are inclined to believe that irrespective of the language featured in the names of business houses and products, the "relevance-making" translatability of their names will depend largely on a process of sign operations synonymous with semiotic mediation. (van Lier in Lantolf, 2000, p. 252). This leads us to factor in "affordance" as a key concept in an ecological approach as it is believed that it not only reinforces all the relevant issues discussed earlier, but also serves as a sequel for expanding our understanding of this approach. Therefore, we will discuss the notion of affordance in this section.

The study notes that the term affordance was proposed by the psychologist James Gibson (1979) to describe an interdependent/reciprocal relationship that exists between an organism and the environment in which it is situated. Gibson interpreted affordance as an aspect/feature or quality of the environment which can support action but not necessarily cause it to happen. In this sense, affordance affords action depending on what an organism does with the environment and what it wants from the environment. For instance, a leaf can afford different affordances to different organisms. 'It can offer crawling on for a tree frog, cutting for an ant, food for a caterpillar, shade for a spider, medicine for a Shaman, and so on' (van Lier in Lantolf, 2000, p. 252). In spite of the different ways that the different organisms act upon it, the leaf does not change its properties. In the same way language offers different affordances to its users who will find them encouraging to use them in meaning constructions and expressions. In the light of this, affordance is understood as the relationship between language and its learner/user. So, reading of shop names cannot be seen as an exclusive input-oriented process taking place in the brain. The following views of Shotter and Newson (1982, p. 34) can supplement our understanding:

> The linguistic world to which the learner has access, and in which she becomes actively engaged, is full of demands and requirements, opportunities and limitations, rejections and invitations, enablements and constraints – in short affordances.

Very similar to the study cited earlier, Zhang and Chan (2017) posited that the use of traditional Chinese characters in shop names conveys a desire to preserve cultural heritage, whereas the inclusion of English and simplified Chinese characters signifies a desire to embrace modernity

and internationalization. From a translation perspective, Alotaibi and Alamri (2022) gathered 184 shop names from Riyadh and Jeddah in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with a primary focus on identifying translation inconsistencies, erroneous transliterations, and spelling errors. They concluded by offering recommendations to the Saudi authorities to implement more stringent regulations governing the language employed on shopfronts. In a related context, Sun (2021) delved into the translation strategies applied in domestic cosmetic brand names, analyzing them from the vantage point of skopos theory. The author noted that some names were translated literally, others underwent free translation, transliteration, or remained untranslated in English. Nevertheless, the author observed that certain English translations conveyed the commercial activity of the respective shops.

**Theoretical Foundation**

Of particular centrality, immediacy and primacy in this context is Grice's (1975, p.166) formulation of four maxims. These maxims delineate the fundamental principles that one must adhere to when engaging in communicative interactions with others. Grice's theory represents a foundational framework, prescribing that individuals should "contribute in a manner that aligns with the requirements of the ongoing conversation, guided by its accepted purpose or direction." Cooperation is a fundamental requirement in effective communication, and interlocutors employ various strategies to achieve this objective. Grice designates these strategies as the "maxims of conversation."

These maxims encompass the following principles:

- **Quantity**: Contribute information that is as informative as necessary for the ongoing conversation's current purpose, without overloading it with excessive information.

- **Quality**: Refrain from uttering falsehoods or making statements for which you lack supporting evidence.

- **Relation**: Maintain relevance in your contributions to the conversation.

- **Manner**: Strive to express yourself clearly, avoiding obscurity and ambiguity, while also being concise and orderly in your communication.

In addition to Grice's four maxims, we wish to factor in the notions of semiotic budget, affordance and sign operations/semiotic mediations with a view to augmenting the theoretical foundations of our study given their considerable commonalities and complementarities.

Higher mental processes such as belief, reasoning and thought and language are rooted in social activity. Reading shop names too is a social activity and like any researcher understand that social activities are mediated by linguistic signs like facial expressions, gestures, exclamations and remarks. Viewed from a Vygotskian (1978) perspective, these names as signs are 'human creations' (Kramsch in Lantolf, 2000, p. 134) and they can influence behaviour through which external social activities are internalized into different ways of thinking. Therefore, it is argued that sign operations can have useful implications for the educational practice of reading the word in names to read the world and it is necessary for our study to examine them with reference to Vygotsky's semiotic analysis of language. In this connection, our study wishes to draw on the ideas and insights of Kramsch which:

> …integrates Vygotsky's approach to semiotic mediation with…Peirce's theory of signs and Bakhtin's concept of dialogism with the aim of bringing to light the ways in which learners, to some degree at least, experience new identities as authors, narrators and interpreters and critics through their second language (Lantolf in Lantolf, 2000, p. 22).

Vygotsky's semiotic perspective has similarities to the perspective that Peirce (in Buchler, 1955) proposed in his semiotic theory. Peirce (in Buchler, 1955) like Vygotsky emphasized that signs were always directed towards someone who was meant to read them and make sense of them. However, Peirce carried his semiotic notion further than Vygotsky in that 'he broke down the symbolic function into 'icon' and 'symbol', using the former for a relation of resemblance between sign and object, the latter for a relation of arbitrary cultural convention' (Kramsch in Lantolf, 2000, p. 135). Based on this, it is possible for us to view names as linguistic signs, which can be as indexical, iconic and symbolic or as a combination of all three. In this sense, the names that we read and write 'can be interpreted as either expressing an external reality or as being iconic of certain values, attitudes, and beliefs, or as reproducing or 'subverting' certain conventionalized rules of use' (Kramsch in Lantolf, 2000, p. 136).

Names as signs are not arbitrary but they are artificial. The Vygotskian view of sign operations articulates the unavoidability of signs which are drawn from their original contexts and applied to different contexts to provoke reflection in the language user. For example, an EFL/ESL student reading about a birthday party which had a positive meaning in a short story or novel, can use it in his/her writing in which the word party develops negative/sad meanings as it was ruined by the sudden loss of a close friend. In this connection, names as miniature texts can situate their readers in different ways and by doing so encourage a diversity of reader responses (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1995).

Names as signs convey purpose. This is to suggest that they signal the presence of activity and participation in it. In other words, the presence of signs is seen as an engagement in which a group of participants interpret an event/experience with reference to its context. The activity, in which the participants are engaged, moves along a continuum of time and space and is indicative of the collective attempts made by the participants to accomplish something. In this sense, sign operations serve to orient and direct the activities towards its fulfillment thereby facilitating a dialogical growth of consciousness ( Bakhtin, 1981) in the participants.

Names as sign operations are dialogic. Given that different names are used by different participants to signal different contexts of communication, the accruing operations are always dialogic (Vygotsky, 1978). This is to suggest that interpretations will always be multiple and that communication can progress only when the participants accept each other's signs (interpretations) as a 'temporarily shared social reality' (Wertsch, 1985a, p.160). The points discussed here assume special significance in light of the issues raised with reference to the context of the study.

Names as signs carry stimulus in them. This is to interpret that signs relate to the context in which they originate and that signs function outside of the context in which they occur by signaling relationships/meanings that do not differ across different contexts. When signs function indicatively or indexically, they relate the object they indicate/index to the context in which it becomes meaningful. For example, the word shampoo can relate to hair, bottle or bath. When signs function symbolically, they relate the idea/object they symbolize to other ideas/objects as a

way of establishing relationships. For example, a bandaged arm can be a symbol for broken arm, accident injury, limited mobility, personal discomfort and so on. By restricting signs to the objects they refer to and thereby ignoring the associations that they can encourage beyond their referential meaning, we are misleading ourselves into believing that signs are only meant for referential meaning. But if we relate our signs to the other and explore its meaning relationships in the imaginal domain, we can realize the potential language has for creating meanings.

**Methodology**

Experimental details/ Materials (selection of shop names)
For the purposes of this study, a total of one hundred and eighty (180) representative shop names were systematically selected from six diverse regions within the Emirate of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. Specifically, the sample consisted of thirty shop names from each of the following categories:

Restaurants

Jewelry Shops

Barber Shops

Pharmacies

Beauty Salons

Women's Clothing Stores

We hasten to state that all shop names falling within the category of international franchises, characterized by globally recognized brand names such as KFC, were excluded from the scope of this research. Additionally, shop names that exclusively employed Arabic language or script were also omitted from the dataset. Consequently, the dataset comprised shop names that were either bilingual, featuring both Arabic and English elements, or transliterations of the original Arabic names. We believe that such a choice will help maintain our epistemic resolve in this study in that it will help signpost the inevitable fluidity, provisionality and plurality of meanings that names carry in them. More importantly, while the first author conducted the field work which entailed data collection, the second author provided epistemic peerage with a view to infusing a collaborative dimension to this study. By the same token the use of first-person voice "I/ my" will refer to the first author while the first-person plural voice "we/our" will refer to the collaborative and conjoint actions of both the authors in the study.

I used the camera on my mobile phone as the principal instrument of data collection to photograph the signage displayed on the front facades of the selected shops. Furthermore, I conducted a brief survey to assess whether study participants were able to infer the nature of a shop's business based on the shop's name and/or the visual cues provided by the shopfront or window displays.

**Analysis**

The scope of analysis is limited to the permanent shop names displayed prominently on the front of shops. It is worth noting that all head nouns identifying the commercial activities of these

shops (e.g., "restaurant," "beauty," "barber," "health," "pharmacy," etc.) were removed to assess whether participants could deduce relevance for the shops' commercial activities based solely on their names. Subsequently, participants were presented with images (i.e., visuals) from the shopfronts to assess their ability to predict the shops' commercial activities based on these visual cues.

**Results and discussion**
In this section, we report only on the 180 shop names studied. Table 1 displays the most frequent types of shop names.

Table 1: The most frequent shop names

| Shop Names | Frequency |
|---|---|
| Arabic personal names with their English transliterations | 54.9% |
| Non-Arabic personal names with their transliterations | 17.4% |
| Place names with their transliterations | 14.2% |
| English names with their transliterations | 8.9% |
| Arabic adjectives with their transliterations | 3.6% |
| Ambiguous names with their Arabic transliterations | 1% |
| **Total** | **100%** |

We note that the most frequently employed lexical category in shop names are nouns. These include proper nouns referring to place names (i.e., *Istanbul, Milano, Paris*) or persons' names (*Shakespeare, Dilshad Ahmad*) (see Figs 1,2,3 & 4 below).



Fig. 1- Personal Names on Beauty Saloons

Fig. 2- Personal Names on Barber Shops


Fig. 3- Personal Names on Jewelry Shops

Fig. 4- City Names on Jewelry Shops

In the selection of business names, it appears that the chosen names do not carry specific associations for customers, as they consist of proper names rather than those of well-known public figures. Nevertheless, one could speculate that the proprietors of these establishments opted for such personal names as a means to differentiate their businesses from others, although this choice may have no discernible impact on prospective clientele. Notably, the name "Geneva" (as depicted in Figure 4) may be linked to notions of elegance, style, and luxury, rendering it a potentially excellent choice for a jewelry store appellation. This name exudes a timeless and sophisticated connotation, aligning harmoniously with the opulent and precious character of jewelry, and conjuring imagery of exquisite craftsmanship, artistic design, and a touch of romance, particularly appealing to a populace in a developing nation that often holds Western countries in high regard. This then unmistakably points to the inevitability of proprietors' selective and discrete use of signs as names to augment the noticeability by their would-be customers. By the same token, we are inclined to believe that such selectiveness and discretion in the name formulation of businesses can have far-reaching indexical, symbolic and iconic relevance that abound in the way the names are displayed. Notwithstanding this, we are able to perceive the commonalties and complementarities that exist between what Grice has postulated and scholars such as van Lier (in Lantolf, 2000, Bakhtin, 1981) and Pierce (in Buchler, 1955). It

then begs the question whether the entirety of the intended audience comprehends these connotations, a subject meriting investigation by future scholars.

Furthermore, one could contend that the prevalence of Arabic transcripts employed in the nomenclature of these establishments may reflect the demographic composition of business proprietors in the Emirate of Sharjah. The use of English transliterations also underscores the substantial presence of expatriates within the country. Additionally, certain stores endeavor to evoke connotations associated with jewelry, cultural elements, or religious themes (as depicted in Figures 5 and 6) in an effort to attract customers.



Fig. 5- Religious Appeal



Fig. 6- Cultural Appeal

In the realm of commercial nomenclature, it is noteworthy that numerous shop names within the UAE exhibit a fusion of adjectives and nouns, both in Arabic and English. Examples of this naming convention include "final," "bronzy," "muhtarfeen" (signifying professionals), and "aneeq" (indicating stylishness). A deeper analysis of these shop appellations unveils that a minority of them carry connotations or implied meanings extending beyond their explicit designation. For instance, "Rukn Al Rawaa" barber shop, translating to "corner of beauty," conveys its specialization in providing beautification services, encompassing haircuts and beard trimming for its clientele. Similarly, "Final Touch" alludes to the ultimate enhancements administered to patrons to ensure their satisfaction with their transformed appearances. In the same vein, "Al Fata Al Aneeq," denoting "the stylish boy," functions as a shop name that extols and complements the appearance of its customers post-transformation. Nevertheless, it is evident that the majority of the nouns employed exhibit minimal to no relevance to the underlying nature of the business. Notably, establishments such as "The Code," "Al Marefah" (meaning knowledge), "Shakespeare," "Flamingo," and "Milano" bear no consonance with the services and purpose typically associated with barber shops or hairdressing salons.

In a parallel manner, several shop names present an element of ambiguity, as exemplified by "Dilshad Ahmad" and "Al Tamam," which could conceivably signify the name of the shop

proprietor or their family surname. The selection of shop names in the aforementioned categories can be ascribed to various factors, encompassing trade name registration regulations in the UAE, the idiosyncratic preferences of the proprietors, and the target demographic of their customer base. Notably, one of the stipulations for registering a trade name in the UAE is its non-duplication with previously registered names ("Register the Trade Name," n.d.). This regulation may account for the distinctiveness of shop names and the inclusion of personal names within them. The indication that certain names may have been chosen solely to distinguish the establishment from others is evident in the illustrative examples presented in figures 7 and 7A, which could be applied to multiple commercial activities.



Fig. 7- Ambiguous Names



Fig. 7A- Ambiguous Names

The same naming strategy was noted with pharmacies. It is observed that more than 25.7% of them were named after famous figures from the field of pharmaceuticals such as Ibn Al-Nafees and Al-Kindi (see fig. 8).



Fig. 8-Historical Names

This observation unveils that pharmacy proprietors do not merely employ the names of historical figures of significance within the medical domain, but rather, they deliberately choose those figures capable of evoking sentiments of cultural pride and shared heritage among their predominantly Muslim and Middle Eastern consumer base. These favorable emotions are potentially harnessed as a motivating factor for consumers to make purchases. Furthermore, this pattern may elucidate the rationale behind some pharmacies adopting local place names (as depicted in Figure 9), which can potentially foster a sense of community and identity, while simultaneously functioning as a geographic indicator of the respective locality.



Fig. 9-Historical Names

In the case of pharmacies bearing foreign place names, such as "Milan," it appears that these names are primarily employed to distinguish the respective pharmacy from others in close proximity. Notably, certain pharmacies have adopted abstract names like "Life" or "Supercare." This nomenclature strategy may be indicative of a deliberate effort to elicit positive sentiments among customers, given that the titles "Life" and "Supercare" draw from the semantic field associated with the functions of pharmacies, as suggested by Boran (2018). However, an inherent question arises: can all customers comprehend the cultural context(s) that the pharmacy owner seeks to invoke? This is a query that warrants investigation in future research.

We further reveal a significant number of establishments incorporating transliterations of names from Arabic to English. Transliteration, in this context, refers to the representation of letters or words using the corresponding letters of another language's alphabet. For instance, "Muhtarfeen Istanbul" (i.e., Istanbul's professionals) is rendered in Arabic and transliterated to English, instead of being accurately translated to "Istanbul's professionals." Additionally, some transliterations feature individual Arabic words alongside their English counterparts, such as "Al Marefah" (i.e., knowledge) and "Al Hekaya" (i.e., the story). It is evident that transliteration serves its purpose effectively for the intended audience of Sharjah city, who possess proficiency in Arabic. Nonetheless, these specific shop names do not appear to have any discernible connection to the promotion of the respective businesses. However, we hasten to point out here that the findings in question can help confirm the efficacy of sign operations in names in regard to its transferability, translatability and dialogicity.

With regard to experimental research question 2, the query arises: Can respondents discern the commercial activity of a shop based solely on its name?

The results we obtained from the survey indicate that the percentage of participants capable of accurately identifying the commercial activities of the shops based on their names was remarkably low, at just 10%. It is plausible to suggest that the extensive usage of proper names is a contributing factor to this limited success in identification. For instance, consider a shop named "Shakespeare" (see fig. 10), lacking any additional contextual cues; it could potentially be associated with a wide range of commercial activities.



Fig. 10- Ambiguous Names

However, the results have demonstrated that the presence of specific commercial concrete objects in the field, as illustrated in Figure 11 below, has had a significant impact on the effectiveness of the identification task. To elaborate, the inclusion of images such as jewelry items, elegantly dressed women on beauty salon storefronts, tantalizing food items on restaurant facades and windows, among others, has facilitated the identification of the respective businesses' commercial activities. For more comprehensive information on this matter, interested readers are directed to EL-Sakran and Ankit (2018).

In other words, when participants were presented with visual representations displayed on shopfronts, they consistently succeeded in identifying the commercial activities of the shops, as exemplified in Figure 11.



Fig. 11-Visuals on store windows

This supports Kress and Leeuwen's (2006, p. 26) statement that "the code directs viewers to specific readings". That said, it should be mentioned here that some shop names, such as the one in fig. 12 below, completely defied identification. The name "Fan Al Isturah' (i.e., The Art of Legendary) could be used for any type of commercial activity in the Arab world, depending on the business owner's preferences.



Fig. 12- Ambiguous Names

Given below, Table 2, are the percentages of the successful and unsuccessful identification attempts through the images displayed on storefronts and windows.

Table 2: Percentages of commercial activity identification from the images used

| Commercial Activity | Correct Matches | Incorrect Matches |
|---|---|---|
| Pharmacies | 30 | 0 |
| Women's Clothes | 30 | 0 |
| Beauty Saloons | 24 | 6 |
| Restaurants | 23 | 7 |
| Jewelry Shops | 20 | 10 |
| Barber Shops | 18 | 12 |
| **Total** | **145 (80.55%)** | **35 (19.45%)** |

Therefore, in light of the aforementioned observations, it is advisable to recommend that the utilization of generic names on storefronts be accompanied by visual representations, such as images, depicting the specific type of commercial activity undertaken by the respective store. This practice would facilitate the identification of the commercial nature of the store by passersby and potential customers. Such a strategy is commensurate with Grice's (1975) maxims of manner and relation, which emphasize clarity and relevance in communication.

Moreover, the higher rates of successful identification of shops' commercial activities through the use of images suggest that the extensive incorporation of clear and distinct visual elements on storefronts may serve as a means to help prospective consumers, hailing from diverse linguistic backgrounds, overcome the communication obstacles highlighted in Abuarqoub's (2019) research. In this context, Morell (2015) posits that signs act as vehicles for conveying meaning to the interpreter through external visual representations, transcending the confines of individual cognitive processes.

Further to what has been discussed earlier, it is worth noting that some shop proprietors opt for names that appear synonymous with their commercial pursuits, as exemplified in the jewelry sector. Such a choice can signpost the indexical and iconic nature of the meaning alluded to by the namer as illustrated in Figure 13 below.



Fig. 13-A transliterated Alternative for Precious Stones (Al Masah means diamond)

Naming strategies rely on the identification of closely associated terms within the same semantic domain, as asserted by Wang (2023). Likewise, they are predicated on the semiotics and semantics embedded in the very fabric of the names. Nonetheless, a pertinent question arises concerning the comprehensibility of these designations to all observers. Consequently, additional investigations are warranted to explore this matter in depth. In other words, researchers may seek to ascertain whether these nomenclatures effectively serve the purpose of conveying the brand's intended significance and exert influence over the perception, recollection, attitudes, and conduct of potential consumers, as posited by Carnevale, Luna, and Lerman (2017, p. 572). This contention stands in contrast to Grice's (1975) principles of quantity and quality.

It is worth noting that the shop names employed in this study, located in an Arab country, follow a particular arrangement, wherein Arabic names or transliterations thereof are positioned above the English transliterations, or are presented side by side with the English text, with English characters appearing from the left and Arabic characters from the right. Additional research could be conducted to scrutinize a broader spectrum of shop names and investigate the precedence of one language over the other in this context.

**Conclusion, recommendations for future research and pedagogical applications**
In conclusion, the utilization of shop names appears to encompass a multifaceted array of purposes, contingent upon the preferences of their respective proprietors. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that certain shop names lack discernible characteristics that would facilitate their unequivocal identification, a circumstance that runs counter to Grice's (1975) maxims of quality and manner. Nevertheless, the shop names in question can function in affirmation of its

underlying process of semiotic mediations. Consequently, it is advisable to minimize the usage of abstract and generic store names devoid of visual elements. With regards to potential pedagogical applications, students specializing in visual design and architecture could be presented with exemplar shop names and tasked with creating visual representations that align with and mirror the intended commercial activities of the respective stores. Additionally, students may be exposed to sample shop visuals and required to articulate descriptions of their connotations and their suitability within specific cultural contexts. These activities serve the dual purpose of fostering collaborative teamwork among students while enhancing their competencies in visual literacy, critical thinking, and oral communication skills. Furthermore, future research endeavors may delve into the correlation between the positioning of shop names and their translational or transliterational adaptations, and the implications of such adaptations on identity. Researchers may also probe into what shop names attract more customers to the shops in question.

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