



## The Linguistic Landscape in Jordan: Opinions and Attitudes

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### Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the languages choice in shop signs in Jordan from a sociolinguistic view. Two questions concerning language choice and attitudes towards the languages used guided the study. This study was carried out on shop signs in three different areas in Amman, Jordan, namely, Al-Wehdat Camp, Sweifieh and Jabal Al-Hussein. A sample of 100 participants was selected on ground of convenience. The researchers made use of a sociolinguistic questionnaire, comprising three sections and a survey of shop signs that totaled around 680 in the selected areas. Results revealed that there are two main categories of shop signs; namely, monolingual or bilingual signs. Results also indicated that the use of foreign names in shop signs is increasing especially the English ones. Moreover, Shop owners hold positive attitudes towards using foreign names for their shops.

**Keywords:** *Linguistics, Landscape, Shop signs, Jordan.*

### Introduction

This paper analyses the linguistic landscape of the capital city of Jordan, Amman. The analysis of a linguistic landscape is a fairly new approach to study multilingualism in metropolitan contexts and focuses on the observation of visible public verbal signs. The formation of the linguistic landscape includes eight major types of signs, namely; street signs, advertising signs, warning notices and prohibitions, building names, informative signs (such as directions and hours of opening), commemorative plaques, objects (such as post box, fire extinguisher), and graffiti. (Spolsky and Cooper, 1991). Also, it includes advertising billboards, shop signs, placards or any other displays of written language (Landry & Bourhis, 1997) and refers to “any sign or announcement located outside or inside a public institution or a private business in a given geographical location” (Ben-Rafael *et al.*, 2006: 14)

The concept of linguistic landscape has been the concern of researchers in the recent period. It was used in several ways: in a rather general sense for the description and analysis of the language situation in a certain country or for the manifestation and use of different languages in a larger geographic area (Gorter, 2006c: 1). Many researchers have started to investigate the language texts that are in public space such as Zughoul (2007), Gorter (2006a) and Gorter (2006b).

The linguistic landscape contributes to the sketching of the sociolinguistic context as people process the visual information that comes to them, and the language in which signs are written can certainly affect their perception of the status of the different languages and even affect their own linguistic behaviour. The linguistic landscape could even influence language use among people. For instance, the presence of the English language in the linguistic landscape of the city of Amman may influence the popularity or acceptability and thus the oral use of English Amman as well as the Jordanian society. It may seem that the study of the linguistic landscape is mainly interesting in bilingual or multilingual contexts, but this is only true to a limited extent. Cities, such as Amman and Baghdad, may look monolingual and unicultural, but these capitals have an enormous technological influx and they are widely open to globalization. Thus one language is used by their people as mother tongue and different languages used for instrumental purposes such as tourism and business. These languages are used as a means of communication but may also be used in their written form in public space. In such a way the linguistic landscape can provide information about the sociolinguistic context of such countries. Bearing the aforementioned in mind, the researchers investigated the linguistic landscape of the city of Amman and the attitudes towards the use of foreign names in shop signs.

### Statement of the Problem

The researchers, as Jordanians, noticed that the use of languages other than Arabic in shop signs is abundant. This is evident in as Zughoul (2007) concluded that the use of English signs in the streets was phenomenal. Therefore, the researchers intended to investigate the spread of foreign shop signs in Jordan and the attitudes towards these signs.

### Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the language(s) used in shop signs in Amman, Jordan. Also, it explored the shop owners' attitudes towards using foreign names for their shops.

### Questions of the Study

Two questions guided the study:

1. What languages are used in shop signs in different areas in Amman?
2. What are the shop owners' attitudes towards using foreign names for their shops?

### Significance of the Study

The sociolinguistic investigation of shop signs is carried out internationally. Yet, it is rarely studied in the Middle East, especially in Jordan. Therefore, this study may fill a gap in the literature. In addition, the selected sample, which comprised shop signs in three different areas in Amman, Jordan, was rarely investigated; the study may fill another gap. Likewise, the method used, which is both qualitative and quantitative, may make it more significant.

### Limitations of the Study

The findings of the current study are restricted to the time, place (i.e. Al-Wehdat Camp, Jabal Al-Hussein and Sweifieh) and the selected sample. Again, Results reported in this study cannot be generalized to shop signs in Jordan. It is limited to the sample and instrument used in it. Consequently, the results cannot be generalized beyond the sample chosen for the study.

### Review of literature

Thonus (1991) examined the phenomenon of Englishization of shop names in Brazil. Her study explored the sphere of influence of English in five Brazilian state capitals. The study came up with two major groups of borrowings the first group included a more sophisticated use of English which was constructed upon conscious and meticulous selections and puns on words. The second group consisted of shop names that were chosen free from the context in which they were used. The inconsistency between the shop names and the types of business suggested that decision making behind those shop names was often haphazard. Another important conclusion that she reached in her study was that English naming was used to attract the ordinary Brazilian citizen or consumer. The assumption which English shop naming and brand naming in general manipulated was that the use of English brand and shop names was to sell more products and services provided.

Saleh and Al-Yassin (1994) researched the dissemination of foreign shop signs in Jordan from a socio-cultural perspective. They probed the motivation of Jordanian businessmen of choosing the foreign signs which are hung on their enterprises. Besides, these authors explored the potential adverse effects of English use in this particular domain on the national language and on the attitudes of Jordanian future generations towards both Arabic and English. They found that merchants use English nomenclature not because of disloyalty to the Arabic language and culture or because of Arabic deficiency in this realm, but mostly because of its effectiveness in promoting their trade. From the traders' perspective, the use of English in their shop signs gives glamour to their commodities and transmits sublime traits of quality, modernity, durability, serviceability, and management, a trend reflecting a growing socio-economic attitude that places high value on what is 'foreign' (p.45). Moreover, the authors echoed the concerns of other Arabists, namely that Jordanian youngsters are prone to influences of hybrid expressive styles manifested in shop signs which could eventually lead to national language loss and disuse, at least, in this domain.

McArthur (2000) explored the multilingual nature of shop naming process in Zurich, Switzerland and Uppsala, Sweden. The study sampled particular areas in the city centers of those two major cities. In Zurich, the sampled group, consisting of 31 shop names, displayed a considerable inclination towards English language by 17 English-including shop names (55%). The case in Uppsala was not different. The dominance of English in the field of business naming was felt to varying degrees. The sampled group consisting of 86 shop names displayed a remarkable tendency towards using the English language by 38 English-including shop names (44%). The conclusions to be drawn from McArthur (2000) study are twofold. One of the interesting contributions of McArthur's (2000) study to English shop naming literature is that the study is actually the manifestation of omnipresence of English, regardless of the languages that it coexists with. The other conclusion is the demonstration of the multilingual nature of the society in shop naming.

Additionally, in Bulgaria, Griffin (2001) maintained that the effect that English leaves should not be examined by the number of people who study it but by the way its impact is perceived by people or the way it penetrates the everyday speech. Griffin (2001) alludes to two examples of German and French authorities who try to "keep English at bay" (p.55).

MacGregor (2003) studied the influence of English on shop signs in Tokyo. In her study she sampled 120 shop signs found in three streets near Siejo Gakuen-mae train station. The preliminary assumptions included the fact that Japan is still a considerably monolingual country, notwithstanding its close economic ties with the rest of the world. Therefore, Japan was considered to be relatively safe from the global influence of English. The conservative nature of Japanese society, however, did not apply English language use in Japan since English language appears in some of the most popular domains such as music, fashion, print media, and advertising. The current penetration of English into deep strata of Japanese society was reflected in the study which asserts that of the 120 signs, half of the signs in the sample (50%) exhibit the influence of English in varying degrees. The research data were divided into three main categories as unilingual, bilingual and trilingual signs. Bearing in mind the importance of Japanese in business naming, the researcher concluded that 'foreign languages, mostly English, function to embellish the Japanese and to a lesser extent communicate meaning on their own. Results revealed that while Japanese is the language of the signs for restaurants serving Japanese food, pastry is equated with French and bread is linked to Scandinavia. The fashion industry is the battlefield of English and French.

Griffin (2004) examined the written English, "as an invader" (p.3) in the streets of Rome. In a similar study in Milan, Ross (1997) found that in some blocks half of the signs were in English concluding that it was not because of English as an International language but because of the fact that it seemed "attractive and fashionable". Griffin (2004) asserted that the strikingly wide use of varied range of English words on window shops, doors, or shop signs was obvious in the streets of Rome and that it signified that English was mostly used for commercial purposes and for either informing the non-Italians or giving a universal image of what was advertised.

Gao (2005) conducted a study on bilingual advertising in China. Gao asserted that English was employed as a means of persuasion since it was able to affect people positively creating an appealing attitude towards the product. Moreover, just like Lee (2006), Gao (2005) believed that English code-mixing in advertisements conveys the construction of a modern identity for people.

A study was conducted in South Korea as well by Lee (2006) who examined English mixing in TV commercials and focused on identity construction and globalization. Lee argued that when globalization is advertised in locals a phenomenon called "glocalization" takes place where there is a mixing of, for example, English and Korean language, the same thing that happens in Indian English language (p.65).

Zughoul (2007) investigated the use of business sign language in Jordanian streets and analyzed the contents of those signs. He also discussed the sociolinguistic implications of the foreign language choices as featured in those signs. To attain his objectives, Zughoul (2007) conducted a massive survey of business signs in nine major Jordanian towns including Amman, the capital city, and its suburbs. He selected a sample comprising 2400 signs. Results revealed that Jordanian business signs incorporate a tremendous source of indigenous cultural heritage and foreign values. Although the community is monolingual and unicultural, the use of English signs in the streets was phenomenal.

In Slovenia, Mezek (2009) pointed out that people were concerned about the influence of foreign language on the local language, particularly in the field of economy. In her study, she found that 58% of advertisements utilized English while only 23% of street advertisements were only in Slovene. She suggested that since this tendency was inevitably growing, the possible solutions to protect the national language seemed to be restricting laws regarding the use of foreign languages and enhancing people's sense of national identity.

Khosravizadeh & Sanjareh (2011) investigated the people's attitude towards the use of English words in television commercials, brand-naming and shop signs in Iran. The widespread use of English shop signs and English brand names for recently produced goods drove the researchers to investigate peoples' attitude from two aspects of age and education. To reach the research goal, a twenty-item questionnaire, with Likert scale of two options, was devised and distributed to 100 people at random selection probing their attitudes while considering two factors of age and education. They concluded that "the widespread utilization of English in the media of advertising, brand naming, and shop signs of non-English speaking countries seems to be a growingly inevitable tendency." (p. 39).

## Methodology

The population of the current study was all commercial shop signs in the city of Amman, Jordan. These shops vary in terms of the services and goods they provide to their customers and their names differ in terms of the languages they have been written in.

Due to the difficulty of gathering and studying all shop signs in Amman, the researchers chose a purposively-selected sample of 250, 215, 215 shop signs from each of the areas in the Capital city of Amman, namely, Al-Wehdat Camp, Jabal Al-Hussein and Sweifieh respectively which are frequented by three socioeconomic groups, namely lower income class, middle income class and upper income class respectively.

In addition, the researchers selected on grounds of convenience 30 shop owners from each of the above areas to find out their attitudes and value systems as to the use of Arab versus foreign sign names. They were asked to fill out a questionnaire designed for this purpose. The questionnaire covered a variety of important demographic variables, namely, gender, age, educational backgrounds, marital status, type of school respondents attended and workplace. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the selected sample. (See Appendix A).

## Instruments of the study

In order to answer the research questions related to language choice in shop signs and the attitudes towards this choice, the researchers conducted a survey of shop signs in three major shopping areas in the capital city of Amman. Six hundred eighty wordings of such signs were collected. Besides, the researchers made use of a main sociolinguistic questionnaire as an instrument to fulfill the objectives of the current study. The researchers used a pilot questionnaire to collect data to be used in the main sociolinguistic questionnaire.

## The sociolinguistic questionnaire

After the researchers had received the responses of the pilot questionnaire, they started to prepare and design the sociolinguistic questionnaire. The questionnaire was validated and tested before it was administered to a sample of respondents from the shop owners in Amman. Sometimes, the researchers used the 'social network' model suggested by Milroy and Milroy (1978) to approach the subjects via a third party, as a friend of a friend. Three friends of the researchers' who have access to the community helped them to distribute and collect copies of the questionnaire. They distributed the questionnaire among their friends, co-workers' neighbors, all of whom were shop owners. The questionnaire was written in two languages: Arabic and English, and the respondents had the option to fill out the questionnaire in the language they prefer; they mostly opted to fill out the Arabic version of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections which were respondents' demographic and social data, shop naming background and attitudes towards foreign and Arabic names. The questionnaire also had a covering letter, explaining the aim of the questionnaire and the instructions to fill it out was attached to it. The first section covered a variety of demographic variables such as gender, age, educational backgrounds, marital status, type of school respondents attend and work place and concentrated on information about shop naming background. The second section of the questionnaire included nine items seven of which were open-ended and two of which respondents had to choose one suitable response. The last section aimed at probing the respondents' personal attitudes towards choosing foreign or Arabic names of their businesses. In this section the respondents were asked to check off only one response that reflected their personal opinion towards the given languages. This section consisted of two parts. The first part, which included six statements, focused on the respondents' attitudes towards foreign names such as, English being more attractive to costumers and reflecting the

quality of the products. On the other hand, the second part, which included five statements, concentrated on the attitudes towards Arabic names such as "reflecting my pride of being Arab" and "being more expressive than foreign ones", utilizing five-point Likert scale. Each statement was followed by five options for the respondents to tick or choose from. (See Appendix B)

1. Strongly Agree      2. Agree      3. Undecided      4. Disagree      5. Strongly Disagree

The researchers distributed one hundred copies of the questionnaire. However, only ninety copies were returned.

### The survey of shop signs

The conducted survey included 680 shop signs. These shops were selected on grounds of convenience and they represented a diversity of services, business, enterprises and facilities such as restaurants, offices, money exchangers, medical centers, hotels, companies, food stores, clothiers, travel agents, jewelers, florists, photographers and many others.

The researchers collected these signs, analyzed and categorized them in terms of monolingual signs, including 'Arabic', 'transliteration' or 'foreign' and bilingual signs, including 'Foreign and Arabic translation', 'Foreign and Arabic transliteration' or 'mixed' (i.e. Arabic and foreign).

### Validity of the questionnaire

After designing the sociolinguistic questionnaire, a panel of six jurors, who are experts in the field of sociolinguistics, was requested to comment on the suitability of the form and content of the questionnaire. The jurors suggested several modifications that rendered the questionnaire items clearer and more informative. For instance, one of them proposed the word 'area' instead of 'district'. Another professor suggested deleting few items and adding others instead. With regard to the reliability of the questionnaire, the researchers chose a group from the population – out of the sample - to fill out to the designed questionnaire and then the same procedures were repeated after two weeks as a pilot study.

### Findings of the Study

The first question concentrates on the languages used in shop signs in the selected areas. Results reported in Tables 2 below show that a total of 680 signs were collected in the three areas as follows; two hundred and fifty signs were collected in Al-Wehdat Camp, two hundred and fifteen signs were collected in Sweifieh and two hundred and fifteen signs were collected in Jabal Al-Hussein. Results also show that there are two main categories of shop signs regarding the languages used in them; namely, monolingual or bilingual signs each of which is divided into several subcategories as represented in the tables below.

Results reported in Table 2 below show that the monolingual shop signs include Arabic, foreign, Arabic transliteration and foreign transliteration signs. For instance, Al-Wehdat Camp includes Arabic shop signs such as Markaz Zahrat Al-Ittihad, Al-Waseem Lilmalabis and Qahwat Al-Oukhwah. Mata'am Izwitna, A-Thawb Al-Falastini Lilmalabis and Maktabat Al-Istiklal in Sweifieh, and Saydalyat Raniin, Malabis Shams and Al-Maqha Al-Fakher in Jabal Al-Hussein.

Regarding foreign names, Al-Wehdat Camp includes many shops such as Oxygen, El Classico and Freeman Cafe. Also, Hair Care Center, Two Rings and Family Needs exemplify such signs in Sweifieh, and Lavoro, Le Possible and Umbrella in Jabal Al-Hussein.

Furthermore, among the Arabic transliterated signs. Al-Wehdat Camp includes Holiday Shoes, Lavender Link, Soft Wear. Sweifieh includes a scanty number of this kind of signs like Lamita and Wow, whereas Jabal Al-Hussein includes Orange, Nice and Royal. When it comes to foreign transliterated signs, a very scanty number was noticed. Al-Wehdat Camp includes signs such as Al-theqa, Angham and Al-Ghadeer, whereas Sweifieh includes, Deeritna, Al-Majid and Saraya, and Jabal Al-Hussein includes Lamasat, Sahriya and Al-Jazeera.

Results reported in Table 2 show that the highest percentage of Arabic signs is used in Al-Wehdat Camp with 45%. On the other hand, 27% of Arabic signs are used in Jabal Al-Hussein and 19% in Sweifieh. Regarding foreign signs (mostly English), the majority of shop signs in Sweifieh, 55%, use foreign signs. However, 37% of them in Jabal Al-Hussein use foreign signs and 16% in Al-Wehdat Camp. When dealing with Arabic transliteration, 10% of shop signs in Al-Wehdat Camp are transliterated in Arabic, whereas 6% in Jabal Al-Hussein and only 3% in Sweifieh. Regarding foreign transliteration, it is conspicuous that it recorded the lowest percentages in the selected areas. Consequently, 3% is noticed in Al-Wehdat and the same is in Jabal Al-Hussein and 2% in Sweifieh.

Table 2: Frequencies and percentages of monolingual shop signs in the three areas

Sign	Arabic		Foreign		Arabic transliteration		Foreign transliteration		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Al-Wehdat Camp	112	45	41	16	26	10	7	3	186	74
Sweifieh	41	19	119	55	7	3	4	2	171	79
Jabal Al-Hussein	59	27	77	37	13	6	7	3	156	73
<b>Total</b>									<b>513</b>	

Results reported in Table 3 show that the bilingual shop signs are divided into several subcategories such as 'foreign and translation', 'foreign and Arabic transliteration' and 'mixed signs' (i.e. Arabic and foreign). Also, results show that the highest percentage in using foreign signs along with their translations, 18%, is noticed in Al-Wehdat Camp, whereas 11% in Jabal Al-Hussein and 10% in Sweifieh.

Table 3: Frequencies and percentages of bilingual shop signs in the three areas

Sign	Foreign and translation		Foreign and Arabic transliteration		Mixed (Arabic and foreign)		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Al-Wehdat Camp	45	18	6	3	13	5	64	26
Sweifieh	22	10	21	10	1	1	44	21
Jabal Al-Hussein	24	11	32	15	3	1	59	27
<b>Total</b>							<b>167</b>	

Regarding foreign signs accompanied with their Arabic transliterations, 15% of them are used in Jabal Al-Hussein and 10% in Sweifieh. Yet, only 3% are used in Al-Wehdat Camp. Similarly, only 5% of mixed signs, which include both Arabic and foreign, are used in Al-Wehdat Camp, whereas only 1% in Sweifieh and Jabal Al-Hussein.

Results shown in Table 4 show that 58% of the respondents used the English language in their shop names, 40% reported using Arabic and 2% used French names. This shows that a total of 60% used foreign names for their businesses. Such a result might be a reflection of the bilingual or multilingual nature of these respondents.

Table 4: The language used in business names

Question	Arabic		English		French		Other		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. The language used in naming the respondents' businesses	36	40	52	58	2	2	0	0	90	100

As Table 5 shows, when the respondents were asked about whether their business names have Arabic meanings, 52% indicated that they have Arabic meanings. On the other hand, 43% indicated that there is no Arabic meaning or equivalent and 5% reported that they do not know. This shows that there are different backgrounds behind choosing the name of the business.

Table 5: The meaning of business names

Question	Meaningful		Meaningless		DK		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
3. The meaning of the respondents' business name is	28	52	23	43	3	5	54	100

\*DK: Don't Know

Results shown in Table 6 indicate that 81% reported that they use the same names in their business signs as that are recorded officially. Yet, 19% of them have a different name in license certificate. Some respondents use different names in license certificate from those used in their signs. This could be due to the naming procedures used officially.

Table 6: Business names and official records names

Question	Yes		No		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
4. The respondents' business name is similar to that in the official records.	73	81	17	19	90	100

Results shown in Table 7 indicate that the vast majority of respondents, 87%, reported having the same name since the date of establishment. However, 13% reported that they have changed the names of their businesses.

Table 7: Business name change

Question	Yes		No		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
5. Has the respondent's business undergone a name change	12	13	78	87	90	100

Results shown in Table 8 indicate that whereas the vast majority of businesses, as reported by 70% of the respondents, were set up after the year 2000, 17% of them were established between 1991 and 2000. Only 13% reported that they established their businesses between 1980 and 1990. Such results reflect the modernity of these shops. In addition, these results might be due to the high percentage of young respondents.

Table 8: The date of business establishment

Question	1980-1990		1991-2000		2001-2012		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
6. The date of establishing the respondent's business	12	13	15	17	63	70	90	100

Results shown in Table 9 show that the overwhelming majority, 57%, used business names that have a relation with the products or services they provide for their customers. Nevertheless, 43% of them reported their business names are not related to the products or services they provide.

Table 9: The relation between business name and products

Question	Yes		No		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
7. The relation between the name of the respondent's business and products they provide	51	57	39	43	90	100

Such a result may reflect the shop owners' tendency to link their business names to the quality of the products or services they provide. On the other hand, those who indicate no relation between business names and products may ascribe their business names to their family names or even names of certain places.

Table 10: The role of the area in name choice

Question	Yes		No		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
8. The area in which the respondent's business is located has a role in adopting the name of their business	52	58	38	42	90	100

Results reported in Table 10 show that a large number of respondents, 58%, reported that the area in which their business is located plays an important role in adopting such a name. However, 42% reported that the area where their business is located does not play a role in their decision when they chose the name of their business.

Table 11: Customers' socioeconomic class

Question	High class		Middle class		Lower class		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
6. The date of establishing the respondent's business	27	30	41	46	22	27	90	100

The results reported in Table 11 indicate that 46% of the respondents reported that their customers belong to the middle class, whereas 30% referred to their customers as of the high class and 27% responded that their customers belong to the lower class according to their annual income.

Results reported in Table 12 show that 37% of the respondents do not believe that foreign names are more attractive to customers, whereas 31% indicate that they strongly agree with this and 22% agree. Thus, results show that the majority of respondents agree with the suggested statement, whereas 40% disagree with it. In addition, 7% responded were "undecided".

When asked about the prestige of foreign names, 55%, agree that foreign names are more prestigious than Arab ones while 38% disagree with this and 7% answered "undecided". In other words, 30% answered strongly agree and 25% agreed. On the other hand, 15% strongly disagreed and 23% disagreed. Regarding acceptance of foreign names, results show that 50% of respondents agree that foreign names are more acceptable to customers than Arab ones. Yet, a scanty number of respondents, 35%, disagree with the suggested statement and 15% answered "undecided". When asked whether foreign names reflect the quality of the products, 57% agreed with that, while 35% disagreed and 8% expressed uncertainty.

Again, Table 12 shows that foreign sign names reflect the socioeconomic classes of customers as a total of 65% agreed with this. Yet, 20%, were "undecided" and only 15% disagreed with the statement. Forty percent of the respondents agreed that using foreign names in business pollutes the Arabic language, whereas 45% disagreed with that and 15% were "undecided".

Table 12: Attitudes towards foreign shop names

No.	Statement	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %	Total %
	Foreign shop names:						
1.	are more attractive to customers.	31	22	7	37	3	100
2.	are more prestigious than Arab ones.	30	25	7	23	15	100
3.	are more acceptable to people	25	25	15	27	8	100
4.	reflect the quality of the products.	27	30	8	28	7	100
5.	reflect the high socio-economic class of customers.	28	37	20	8	7	100
6.	pollute Arabic.	27	13	15	33	12	100

Key: SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, U: Undecided, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree

Results shown in Table 13 indicate that the respondents have positive attitudes towards using Arab shop signs. This is clear as the majority, 70%, perceive Arab names as a reflection of pride of being an Arab. However, 20% remained neutral and 10% disagreed with the statement. When asked whether Arab names are more expressive than foreign ones, 55% responded positively. Yet, 17% disagreed with that and 28% were neutral. Regarding indigenosity of Arab names, the majority of respondents, 73%, considered Arab names to be more indigenous than foreign ones, whereas, 20%, were "undecided" and only 7% disagreed with the statement.

Results of the tenth statement show that foreign names, unlike the Arab ones, reflect modernity. This is obvious when the majority of respondents, 72%, considered Arab names to be more traditional than foreign names, 8% disagreed with that and 20% were "undecided".

The last statement deals with the comprehensiveness of Arab names. Regarding this statement, results indicated that the majority of respondents, 63%, deem Arab names to be easier to comprehend than foreign ones. However, 20% disagreed with that and 17% were "undecided".

Table 13: Attitudes towards Arab shop names

No.	Statement	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %	Total %
	Arab shop names:						
7.	reflect the pride of being an Arab.	58	12	20	7	3	100
8.	are more expressive than foreign ones.	43	12	28	15	2	100
9.	are more indigenous than foreign ones.	48	25	20	7	0	100
10.	are more traditional than foreign ones.	35	37	20	8	0	100
11.	are easier to comprehend than foreign names by all people.	41	22	17	15	5	100

Key: SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, U: Undecided, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree

## Discussion

Results reported in Table 2 concerning language choice show that shop signs in the selected areas are monolingual, bilingual and multilingual where many languages are involved such as the native language of the country, which is Arabic (e.g. Mta'am Izwitna), English (e.g. Freeman Cafe), French (e.g. Le Possible), Spanish (e.g. El Classico) and Italian (e.g. Lavoro). These results agree with the findings of McGroger (2003) who concluded that shop signs were unilingual, bilingual and trilingual and Zughoul (2007) who maintained that although the Jordanian community is monolingual and unicultural, the use of foreign signs in streets is a phenomenal.

Results reported in Table 2 concerning language choice show that in comparison with other foreign languages, English is mostly used as only six non-English shop signs are noticed in the survey. Similarly, they are in line with McArthur (2000) and Shlick (2003) who concluded that English is the language most dominant in store signs.

Results reported in Table 12 concerning the respondents' attitudes towards foreign names show that shop owners have positive attitudes towards using foreign names. They consider them more attractive and prestigious than Arab names. They also deem them more acceptable to people as they reflect the high quality of the products sold or services provided in these shops. This could be explained by the fact that the quality of foreign goods is high among people. The spread of foreign movies could also be another reason of such attitudes.

Moreover, according to the respondents, foreign naming attracts customers as people believe that such names reflect the high socio-economic class of customers. This result might be due to the belief that wealthy people prefer shopping in well-known shops that have foreign names. Again, positive attitudes towards foreign names are evident as most of the respondents disagree with the statement that using such names does not pollute the Arabic language. These results may be due to people who consider bilingualism or multilingualism an advantage. These results agree with Thonus (1991), Ross (1997), Griffin (2004), Gao (2005) and Khosravizadeh & Sanjareh (2011). Thonus (1991) pointed out that English naming is used to attract the ordinary citizen or consumer to purchase the products or services provided in shops. Also Ross (1997) concluded that "English is today seen as an attractive and fashionable language. An English name lends an aura of chic prestige to a business, suggesting that it is part of the international scene, following the latest trends, up-to-date with the newest ideas." (p.63). Similarly, Griffin (2004) concluded that attitudes towards English are positive and it is viewed as 'attractive' and 'fashionable'. Gao (2005) believes that English code switching in advertisements conveys the construction of modern identity for people. And Khosravizadeh & Sanjareh (2011) concluded that "the widespread utilization of English in the media of advertising, brand naming, and shop signs of non-English speaking countries seems to be a growingly inevitable tendency." (p. 39)

Results reported in Table 13 concerning the respondents' attitudes towards Arab names show that the respondents have positive attitudes towards their native language, Arabic. They consider Arabic a source of pride to them. It is their mother tongue that they use in every aspect of their life and it reflects their traditions and conventions. Thus, for them, it is more indigenous, expressive and easier to comprehend than foreign names. This result could be due to the pride of the Arabian background and the good merits that the Arabic language reflects such as being the official language of Jordan and the language of Islam, which is the religion of the country, the language of the ancestors and the characteristics that this language implies including generosity, nobleness and courage. This result disagrees with McGroger (2003) in that using foreign languages embellish the native names of the shops. In contrast, it subscribes to Saleh and Al-Yassin (1994) who found that traders use English nomenclature not because of disloyalty to the Arabic language and culture or because of Arabic deficiency in this realm, but mostly because of its effectiveness in promoting their trade.

## Conclusions

The analysis of the overall results of both the survey of shop signs and the sociolinguistic questionnaire indicates that a variety of languages are used in shop signs in Jordan and the attitudes towards the use of languages other than Arabic are positive. As a matter of fact, this clarifies the bilingual and multilingual nature of shop signs in the country. The languages that are used in such signs are mostly Arabic and English. Furthermore, language choice is determined by several factors including attitudinal, linguistic, commercial and other factors. The proposed research questions could be answered in the light of the findings of the study as follows:

1. There is a diversity of languages that are used in shop signs in Amman. These languages include:
  - Arabic is the native and official language of the country and is the means of communication among all Jordanians regardless of their ethnic backgrounds.
  - English is viewed as a foreign language in Jordan and it is also taught in all educational levels. The overwhelming majority of foreign shop signs are written in English.

- Other internationally well-known languages such as French, Italian and Spanish are also used.
- 2. Shop owners' attitudes towards using foreign names for their shops are positive. They consider using foreign language for their shops attractive, prestigious, acceptable to people, reflecting the high quality of the products sold or services provided in these shops and attracts customers as people believe that such names reflect the high socio-economic class of customers.

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## Appendix (A)

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the selected sample

<i>Demographic variables</i>	<i>Sex</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	
<i>Age</i>			
(20 –30)	13	6	19
(31 – 40)	33	5	38
(41 – 50)	17	4	21
51 and above	12	0	12
<i>Education</i>			
Secondary school or less	21	8	29
Diploma	25	3	28
BA	27	2	29
Other	2	2	4
<i>Marital status</i>			
Single	11	5	16
Married	64	9	73
Other	0	1	1
<i>Type of school respondents attended</i>			
Public Arabic schools	47	13	60
Private Arabic schools	25	2	27
Religious schools	1	0	1
International schools	2	0	2
<i>Workplace</i>			
Al-Wehdat Camp	30	0	30
Jabal Al-Hussein	24	6	30
Sweifieh	21	9	30

## Appendix (B)

## English language questionnaire

Dear participant,

We would like to express our gratitude to you in advance for taking some of your time in filling out the attached questionnaire which investigates the language used in shop signs in Amman, Jordan. It also explores the shop owners' attitudes towards using foreign names for their shops.

You have been selected because your response is very important and because you are a member of the community under investigation. We are interested only in obtaining the needed information that helps answer the questions of the study.

We strongly urge you to complete the enclosed questionnaire at your convenience. If you have any questions, please feel free to enquire about any information that you may need. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

**All information provided will be used by the researchers for only scientific research purposes.**

Thank you in advance,  
The researchers,

**1. Demographic and social data**

**Instructions:** Please answer the following questions by putting (X) in the relevant place.

1. Gender:  
 Male       Female
2. Age:  
 (20- 30)    (31- 40)    (41-50)    (51or above)
3. Educational level:  
 High school or less       Diploma  
 BA       Other. Specify .....
4. Marital status:  
 Single       Married     Other. Specify .....
5. What kind of school did you attend?  
 Public Arab school     Private Arab school  
 Religious school       International school
6. What languages do you speak? .....

**2. Shop naming background**

**The following questions provide information about your business, please answer them.**

1. In which language is the name of your business?  
 Arabic       English  
 French       Other. Specify .....
2. What is the name of your business? .....
3. If your business name is a foreign one, what is the meaning of your business name?  
 .....
4. What is the name of your business in license certificate?  
 .....
5. Has your business undergone a name change?  
 .....
6. When was your business established? .....
7. Is there a relation between the name of your business and the products you sell or the service you provide?  
 .....
8. Does the area in which your business is located have a role in adopting the name you chose?  
 .....
9. What, in your opinion, is the socioeconomic class of your customers according to their annual income?  
 1. High class (more than JDs 30000) ( )  
 2. Middle class (JDs 9000 – 19000) ( )  
 3. Lower class (less than JD's 9000) ( )

**3. Naming attitudes**

**In the following questions, the researchers are interested in your opinion and attitude towards foreign and Arab shop names. (Please check one answer)**

**SA: Strongly Agree      A: Agree      U: Undecided      D: Disagree      SD: Strongly Disagree**

**A. Attitudes towards foreign shop names**

No.	Statement	S A	A	U	D	S D
1.	Foreign shop names are more attractive to customers.					
2.	Foreign shop names are more prestigious than Arabic ones.					
3.	Foreign shop names are more acceptable to people					
4.	Foreign shop names reflect the quality of the products.					
5.	Foreign shop names reflect the high socio-economic class of customers.					
6.	Foreign shop names pollute Arabic.					

**B. Attitudes towards Arab shop names**

No.	Statement	S A	A	U	D	S D
7.	Arab shop names reflect the pride of being an Arab.					
8.	Arab shop names are more expressive than foreign ones.					
9.	Arab shop names are more indigenous than foreign ones.					
10.	Arab shop names are more traditional than foreign ones.					
11.	Arab shop names are easier to comprehend than foreign names to all people.					

**Appendix (C)**  
**Transliteration System for Arabic Sounds**

Consonants			
Arabic Alphabets	Symbols	Examples	Meaning
ح	<u>H</u>	hub	love
خ	Kh	khubz	bread
ز	Z	zi:t	oil
س	S	sin	tooth
ص	<u>S</u>	sayf	summer
ط	<u>T</u>	ti:n	mud
ع	C	cabd	slave
ف	F	fa:r	mouse
ق	Q	qalam	pencil
ل	L	naml	ants
م	M	masjid	mosque
ن	N	na:r	fire
هـ/ه	H	haram	pyramid
و	W	ward	rose
ي	Y	yawm	day
Vowels and Diphthongs			
فتحة ( َ )	A	kataba	he wrote
ضممة ( ُ )	U	kutub	books
كسرة ( ِ )	I	sin	tooth
مد طويل اى	a:	ka:tib	writer
ضممة طويلة و	u:	fu:l	beans
كسرة طويلة ي	i:	fi:l	elephant
Diphthongs (أصوات علة مركبة)	Ay	bayt	house