



THE DISTINCTIONS OF VERBS OF STEALING AMONG ARABIC-ENGLISH TRANSLATORS

Hussein Abushaaban¹ⁱ,
Rashad Faleh Alhasan²,
Hani Qasem Asaad³,
Khatra Amar⁴

¹School of Languages, Civilisation and Philosophy,
Universiti Utara Malaysia,
Malaysia

²Translation Department,
Saif Bin Zayed Academy for Police Science and Security,
Malaysia

³School of Languages, Civilisation and Philosophy,
Universiti Utara Malaysia,
Malaysia

⁴Saif Bin Zayed Academy for Police Science and Security,
Malaysia

Abstract:

This paper investigates the distinctions of verbs of stealing among Arabic-English translators. First, the four verbs selected for this study were 'shoplift', 'rob', 'burglarize', and 'heist'. Second, visual stimuli for four verbs of stealing were developed along with their dimensions of distinctions. Six participants were presented with these visual stimuli and were asked to describe them in Arabic and English, along with their respective definitions. Semantic analysis of the English naming pattern revealed that the participants had not demonstrated any knowledge with regard to the English-based dimensions of meaning for the four respective verbs, showing no consistent distinctions among them. Rather, these participants used general English verbs to describe more specific actions, a pattern that was emulated in their Arabic naming pattern, which might suggest conceptual transfer. The only verb that generated the best answers in English was the verb 'rob' and that might be due to the exact lexicalization pattern in both English and Arabic in the sense both use single-verb format to express the same idea. This result suggested the positive effects of the one-to-one lexicalization pattern of the L1 on the acquisition of L2 verbs whereas the more-to-one lexicalization patterns had negative effects.

Keywords: cross-linguistic influence, lexicalization patterns, translation equivalents, linguistic relativity, conceptual transfer

ⁱ Correspondence: email husseinabushaaban@gmail.com, rfkh999@yahoo.com, khatra2002@yahoo.fr

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The proposal that language affects cognition has been reported in many recent (Nuse, 2003; von Stutterheim, Andermann, Carroll, Flecken, & Schmiedtova, 2012). The basic assumption is that the lexicalization patterns of a particular language sensitize its speakers to carve up certain distinctions than other languages, and henceforth, affecting their perception of the outside reality. For example, von Stutterheim and Nuse (2003) investigated the grammatical aspect of Algerian Arabic, English, and German, and found aspectual differences in their retelling data. While Arabic and English participants paid more attention to the ongoingness of the action and encoded the progressive aspect, German speakers were more attentive to the endpoint of the action. Investigating the aspectual system across MSA, Czech, Dutch, English, German, Russian, and Spanish, von Stutterheim, Andermann, Carroll, Flecken, and Schmiedtova (2012) found that lexicalization effects on event construals where ongoingness was evident in the languages that encode aspect whereas the endpoints or 'holistic view' were evident in the non-aspectual languages. Such L1-based conceptualization patterns in L2 perception and production in literature are usually referred to as conceptual transfer (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008; Pavlenko, 2009). This current study intends to extend the application of the effects of lexicalization patterns on near-synonyms. Near-synonymous verbs represent a learning challenge for language learners due to the subtle differences and distinctions that learners have to make in order to avoid miscommunications and convey their messages accurately. Although some studies had highlighted the issue of near-synonymous verbs (Bogaards, 1996; Rundell, 1999) from the lexicographic perspective, no direct study to the best of the researcher's knowledge has targeted the verbs of *shoplift*, *rob*, *burglarize*, and *heist* from a conceptual perspective among Arab learners of English.

2. Research Questions

- 1) How do Arab-English translators differentiate similar verbs of *Stealing* in Arabic and English?
- 2) What are the conceptual structures that motivate the Arabic and English naming patterns?

3. Methodology

3.1 Material Selection

A group of semantic-related verbs representing different types of *stealing* actions was selected as the stimuli in this study. The verbs are '*shoplift*, *rob*, *burglarize*, and *heist*', which all represent specialized semantic distinctions in the English language that need to be differentiated and distinguished for clarity and accuracy reasons.

3.2 Research Design and Instrument

A qualitative approach was adopted to elicit the data from the participants. Two types of questions were developed to investigate the conceptual structures the of *'shoplift, rob, burglarize, and heist'* verbs of Arabic-English translators, and to examine whether the Arabic pattern of near-synonymous verbs is transferred into L2 English. Arabic-English translators were asked to describe videos of four synonymous verbs once in English and once more in English. The fill-in-blank type questions were selected because they can exclude any unwanted production (Majid, 2012, pp. 65-66).

3.3 Participants and Data Collection

The participants were professional Arab translators from different nationalities and backgrounds who are working in the governmental sector in the United Arab Emirates. The second author of this paper distributed the visual stimuli and the answer sheets to his colleague translators. Participants were given time at their convenience to fill in the answers and return them.

3.4 Data Analysis

The study employs semantic analysis for understanding the naming pattern of verbs of stealing among Arab-English translators. As explained earlier, each individual verb was analyzed and defined through the necessity and sufficiency principle (Murphy, 2003, p. 77) where elements of meanings of a particular word can be decomposed into semantic features that are necessarily required for words' definitions and their distinctions from others. Depending on dictionary definitions of these verbs, the extracted necessity elements of meanings for each particular verb which are described above are to be compared with the participants' own responses and definitions. Comparing the dictionary definitions with the perceived definitions of the translators can elicit invaluable information into the conceptual knowledge/structure that defines their English near-synonymy of the target verbs, the bases of the distinctions of similar verbs, and the potential role of Arabic lexicalization pattern in the process of the L2 English use. In the following, table 1.1 shows the dimensions of meanings that will be used to compare the Arabic and English responses with the dictionary meanings. These dimensions of meanings were based on multiple dictionary consultations including, Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, Collins English Dictionary, and Macmillan English Dictionary. These dimensions of meanings are not to be absolutely definitive in nature whatsoever; rather, they are to be taken as summative meanings to carry out semantic analysis and to compare the dimensions of meanings that each verb denotes. The dimensions of meanings, as discussed earlier, are place, materials (i.e., mat.), value (i.e., val.), and manner (i.e., man.) where plus and minus marks were used to indicate their presence or absence. As shown in Table 1.1, for example, the dimension of place in *'shoplift'* represents the defining criterion among other verbs of stealing in English as explained by dictionary definitions consulted. The dimension of place, rather than materials, value, or manner, seems to be the criterion that governs the use of the verb *'shoplift'*. While the use of arms, i.e., manner, is crucial for the definition of *'rob'*, other dimensions of place, materials, and value are not given equal importance, perhaps for

implication and entailment reasons. Similarly, the use of arms in the verb 'heist' disregards the dimensions of place, materials, and value to have an equally significant contribution to its core meaning. The verb 'heist' represents an added element that is not specifically entailed in the verb 'rob', that is, the value of the stolen materials. Although the using of arms is the defining criterion for the verb 'rob' and the verb 'heist' the distinctions between the two can be laid out through the value of the stolen materials where 'heist' is usually retained for stolen materials of the highest value than 'rob'. The verb 'burglarize', on the other hand, is usually used for stealthy acts of stealing regardless of place, materials, and value. Therefore, the four verbs of stealing were semantically decomposed into dimensions of place, materials, value, and manner in order to lay out their differences which can enable the researcher to compare these elements of meaning across English and Arabic. A blueprint for definitional comparison is presented in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1: Blueprint for Definitional Comparison

Verb	Place	Materials	Value	Manner	Lexicalization
English					
Shoplift	Shop [+]	Goods/Stuff	Medium	Secrecy	Integrated
Arabic Equivalent					
سرق من متجر	Any [-]	Any	Any	Any	Separate
English					
Rob	Any	Any	Medium/High	Arms [+]	Integrated
Arabic Equivalent					
سطا	Any	Any	Any	Arms [+]	Separate
English					
Burglarize	Home/Museum	Any	Medium/High	Stealth [+]	Integrated
Arabic Equivalent					
سرق	Any	Any	Any	Any [-]	Separate
English					
Heist	Bank/Museum	Money/Jewelry	High [+]	Arms [+]	Integrated
Arabic Equivalent					
سطا	Any	Any	Any [-]	Arms [+]	Separate

With regard to lexicalization, English encodes the dimensions of place, materials, value, and manner within the verbs themselves as a way of distinguishing different verbs of stealing. Nonetheless, the Arabic language does not follow the same defining dimensions as that of English. However, that is not to say that the Arabic language cannot provide equivalent meanings to that of English. To produce equivalent meanings to the verbs of stealing, the Arabic language provides separate particles, i.e., prepositions, nouns, phrasal verbs, etc., to catch the English meanings. Patterns of lexicalizations in English and Arabic, as well as the English-based dimensions of meaning distinctions, were perceived as significant contributors to the difficulty of the verbs of stealing. A full comparison of Arabic and English lexicalization patterns can provide an understanding of the conceptual knowledge and the definitional criteria that motivate the use of the verbs of stealing in English.

4. Findings and Discussion

The dimension of place, i.e., shop, store, or market, plays a critical role in the application of the verb 'shoplift' in situations of similar nature. In the Arabic naming task, the responses provided were in full sentence form. All the six Arabic sentences provided contained a verb, a preposition, and a noun (these translation equivalents were included in Table 1.2). Five out of six responses were correct whereas one participant used an Arabic word equivalent to 'pickpocket'. The responses indicate that the majority of participants represent a full conceptual knowledge of the verb 'shoplift' because they got five out of six items correct. Such a conclusion can be supported by the fact that they all recognized and mentioned the dimension of place, despite the different wordings. They gave the same semantic weight that English speakers would give to the dimension of place and represented that dimension verbally.

Despite the lack of lexicalization in Arabic for the one-item expression for the English 'shoplift', the participants were able to reconstruct the action scene accurately with the addition of a preposition and object of a preposition. Lexicalization effects in this task did not play a role in the reconstruction of 'shoplifting' scene. The dimension of materials was given some semantic weight as half of the participants included words to indicate the stolen materials. Perhaps, some Arabic participants had felt necessary to include descriptors for the stolen materials for clarity reasons while others did not seem it necessary. The dimension of value, on the other hand, was not given any verbal weight as it is the case of English, and the Arabic responses converged into the English definitions analyzed earlier. The possible reason for that, which might be applicable to English and Arabic on equal bases, is semantic entailment. Stealing from shops is suggestive of what materials would be and what value of materials might be involved. The stolen materials from a shop are more likely to be grocery stuff, electronic gadgets, etc., whose value might range from low to intermediate; in other words, the value is somehow implied. So, Arabic participants disregarded these dimensions in their descriptions of the stealing events as English participants would do. Finally, the dimension of manner, which in this respect refers to the way of how the action of stealing is to be performed, received no verbal descriptors at all. It seems that the Arabic participants followed the same distinction criterion of distinguishing 'shoplift' as English definition dictates and disregarded the manner dimension altogether. The rationalization for that might be that the Arabic participants had followed the conventional manner of stealing in the 'shoplifting' action, which by necessity, indicates how it was performed, and did not deem it necessary to say it verbally.

The English naming task produced a completely different picture from the Arabic naming pattern. In the English naming task, there were two test items for the same 'shoplifting' stimuli to make sure that the participants have a solid knowledge of the verb under investigation and can represent consistency in their description. This did not happen nor did consistency occur in their responses, especially, if correct responses were considered. Only two participants were able to show consistency in the English task; yet, their answers were not correct as they used the verbs 'stole' and 'burglarize' instead of using 'shoplift'. For this first verb 'stole', although this participant had succeeded to recognize the dimension of

place through verbal utterance, he had failed to produce the exact term, i.e., 'shoplift', to describe the peculiarity of this verb of stealing. This participant had used a more general term where a more specific term shall be used. The plausible explanation for this is that either he did not know the target verb or he had a partial knowledge of it but resorted to the general term of stealing to avoid any mistakes. It might be argued that this participant might have possessed a partial knowledge of the target verb, i.e., 'shoplift' but resorted to a more general term to avoid making a mistake or did not the target verb altogether. It cannot be a recognition failure since the same participant had recognized the dimension of place and provided a full description of the verb in the counterpart Arabic task. For the second participant who used 'burglarize', the participant demonstrated consistency in the English task and used the same verb 'burglarize' to describe a 'shoplifting' event. Despite the consistency in the English task, which turns out to be the inaccurate description of the action event, this consistency falls apart if compared to the responses in the Arabic counterpart. The inconsistency in Arabic and English responses indicates that this participant treated the same action event of shoplifting completely differently and in separate ways despite the recognition of place as a defining criterion in the Arabic task. Furthermore, three other participants used 'rob' in the first test item whereas they used the verb 'stole' in the second test item, although the two test items were representing the same action of 'shoplifting'. Apart from failing to produce the target verb of 'shoplift', they were inconsistent in describing these actions and provided different verbs for the same particular action. In the first test item, these three participants used the verb 'rob' which implies the use of arms and in the second test item they used the verb 'stole' which does not necessarily require the use of arms. The general explanation for such inconsistency in using different verbs for describing the same action is apparently the incomplete vocabulary knowledge in the target verbs, because the used two verbs require different dimensions of definitions in terms of manner and place. The definitional dimension of the verb 'rob' is the use of arms (i.e., manner), and for 'shoplift' is the store (i.e., place) while the verb 'steal' is a general term that can loosely apply to all of the four actions but drops out the specificity elements that each of these verbs demotes. The use of a more general verb where a more specific verb is required might be understandable as the participants might not have known the target verb, i.e., 'shoplift'. Nonetheless, being inconsistent in the description and the use of 'rob' complicates the picture and implies that the participants had not clear criteria for the definition of not only the verb 'steal' but also the verb 'rob' as well. In the Arabic task, these same participants had correctly reconstructed the 'shoplifting' event and provided complete Arabic sentences to fully describe the target action. The correct reconstruction of the 'shoplifting' verb in the Arabic task and the incorrect description and inconsistency of the same action indicates two explanations. The first explanation is that these participants have separate vocabulary knowledge for both Arabic and English language, and the mapping of these two English verbs to their English counterparts is confused and does not follow fixed definitional criteria. The second explanation, which is not totally independent from the first explanation, is that these participants have correctly reconstructed the 'shoplifting' event in Arabic as a result of visual saliency and prominence rather than fixed definitional criteria. Given the proposal that the two English verbs are disconnected and are not correctly mapped into each other, the participants had reconstructed the same event separately and in

detachment from each other, and the ending result was two different descriptions in Arabic and English. Furthermore, the inconsistency in English task while the accurate reconstruction of the Arabic task indicates that the two systems are separate from each other, and the correct reconstruction of the Arabic session was motivated by an ad hoc recognition and visual saliency rather than fixed definitional criteria that are established for both languages. It is worth remembering that the accurate description of the 'shoplifting' event in the Arabic task was reconstructed through the use of an additional preposition and a noun which equals a one-word verb in English. That difference in meaning encoding of English and Arabic and the additional lexicalization in Arabic to compensate for the English meaning might be supportive for the ad hoc recognition of the 'shoplifting' action in the Arabic task rather than the English task. The separate lexicalization of a preposition and a noun to compensate for the English meaning might indicate that these additional meanings were not integral parts of the verb itself nor representative of a unified conception in the Arabic language; rather, these meaning additions were conjured up in ad hoc manner to reconstruct the action event as a result of saliency. However, these distinctions were not perceived as necessary in English and that explains why inconsistency of verb use was present in the responses of three participants. The explanation that the resulting naming pattern for these participants was motivated by the lack of the target verb 'shoplift' cannot account for the inconsistency of using two different verbs, although it might be one of the possible reasons. The provision of two different verbs for the same action is deeper than the proposal that the participants' lack of knowledge of this particular verb. The inconsistency indicates that the participants lacked the depth of knowledge of these particular verbs and lacked fixed and clear dimensions to distinguish these verbs in event reconstruction. Furthermore, inconsistency was represented in one other participant where he used the verb 'stole' in the first test item and the verb 'shoplift' in the second test item. Despite the inconsistency, this participant seems to have had corrected himself in the second test item and used a more accurate verb to reconstruct the action scene after he used a more general term in the first item. However, this also suggests a level of confusion over the dimensions of defining the verbs of stealing that is similar to the pattern of those three participants just explained.

Table 1.2: Arabic/English Naming Pattern (Shoplift)

	Place	Mat.	Val.	Man.	Translations	Arb/Lexicalization	English	
P1	Supermarket [+]	Stuff [+]	[-]	[-]	1. Stepped into (Pre/Phr) 2. Stole (v)	دخلت الي السوبرماركت سرقت	1.Stole	2.Shoplift
P2	Store [+]	[-]	[-]	[-]	Steal from store (pre/Phr)	يسرق من متجر	1.Rob	2.Stole
P3	Supermarket [+]	[-]	[-]	[-]	Steal from store (pre/Phr)	يسرق من متجر	1.Rob	2.Stole
P4	Store [+]	[-]	[-]	[-]	Steal from store (pre/Phr)	يسرق من متجر	1.Rob	2.Stole
P5	Supermarket [+]	[+]	[-]	[-]	Pickpocket from supermarket (pre/Phr)	ينشل من سوبرماركت	1.Stole	2.Stole

P6	Supermarket [+]	[+]	[-]	[-]	Stealing from supermarket (pre/Phr)	يسرق من سوبرماركت	1.Burglarize	2.Burglarize
----	--------------------	-----	-----	-----	---	-------------------	--------------	--------------

The dimension of arms, i.e., gun, weapon, etc., play a critical role in the application of the verb 'rob' in situations of similar nature. In the Arabic naming task, the responses provided were in full sentence form either in a verbal phrase or nominal phrase as the Arabic grammar permits. All the six Arabic sentences provided were verbal or nominal phrases (i.e., a sentence that begins with a verb or a noun and can stand alone as a full-meaning sentence) along with prepositions. The translation equivalents for these verbal/nominal sentences were included in Table 1.3. Four out of six responses were correct whereas two participants used combinations of Arabic equivalents. Although the four Arabic responses were combinations of verbal and nominal phrases, they were considered as correct responses because they fulfilled the dimension of manner, i.e., the use of arms, and the task was in Arabic which allows nominal phrases to describe actions. One of the participants who were not able to produce a correct answer had used a combination of two verbs where the first translates into 'broke in' and the second translates into 'take over' and had not produced any Arabic equivalent to 'rob'. Similarly, the second participant used a similar combination of verbs where the first verb translates into 'broke in' and the second translates into 'stole', and never used as a verb equivalent to 'rob'. In total, however, the responses indicate that the majority of participants represented a full conceptual knowledge of the verb 'rob' in Arabic because they got four out of six items correct, despite the combination of nominal and verbal formats used. Such a conclusion can be supported by the fact that they all recognized and mentioned the dimension of manner, i.e., the use of arms. They gave the same semantic weight that English speakers would give to the dimension of manner (i.e., the use of arms) and represented that dimension verbally. It is worthy to mention in this regard that the Arabic equivalent of 'rob' lexicalizes the use of arms either in the form of the noun (i.e., سَطْو) or in the form of a noun phrase (i.e., سَطْو مسلح), the repetitive meaning in the latter being formed for an emphatic reason. Therefore, lexicalization effects had not played any role in the recognition and the reconstruction of the action event due to the one-to-one equivalency relationship between the English 'rob' and the Arabic 'سطو'. Yet, however, the lexicalization effect was present in the Arabic reconstruction of the action where nominal and verbal structures were employed to describe the action event. While the dimension of manner was fully reflected in the responses, other dimensions had taken any importance. For example, the dimension of value had been given a zero value as participants did not perceive such a component is critical in their descriptions. The dimension of materials was similarly perceived since one participant out of six provided a verbal description indicating the materials' dimension. The dimension of place, on the other hand, was recognized and verbally provided in the Arabic responses. Four out of six participants had described the place as a major component of the action reconstruction. For these four participants, the dimension of the place was given some importance in their descriptions as they felt it is a necessary component to include these descriptors to reconstruct the event.

Table 1.3: Arabic/English Naming Pattern (Rob)

	Place	Mat.	Val.	Man.	Translations	Arb/Lexicalization	English	
P1	Supermarket [+]	Money [+]	[-]	[+]	1. Broke into (pre/Phr) 2. Take over (Phr/V)	دخلت الي استولت علي	1. Rob	2. Theft
P2	[-]	[-]	[-]	[+]	Armed robbery (Adj/Phr)	سطو مسلح	1. Rob	2. Rob
P3	Store [+]	[-]	[-]	[+]	Are robbing (Prog.V)	يسطون علي متجر	1. Burglary	2. Rob
P4	Store [+]	[-]	[-]	[+]	Armed Robbery (Adj/Phr)	سطو مسلح علي متجر	1. Burglary	2. Rob
P5	Store [+]	[-]	[-]	[+]	1. Armed men break in (Phr/V) 2. To steal (inf)	رجال مسلحين يقتحمون متجر لسرقه	1. Burglarize	2. Burglarize
P6	[-]	[-]	[-]	[+]	1. A break-in (N) 2. To Rob (inf)	اقتحام للسطو	1. Rob	2. Rob

The English naming pattern for the verb 'rob' was completely different from the Arabic pattern. While four out of six participants recognized the dimension of manner and described the 'robbing' action correctly, only two participants out of six used the correct verb of 'rob'. These two participants had used the verb 'rob' in a consistent manner in both the two test items; whereas the other participants had used other verbs or were inconsistent in their verb selection to describe the target action. One participant, for example, used the verb 'burglarize' consistently in the two test items which do not conform with his answer in the Arabic task. In the Arabic task, this particular participant used an Arabic sentence that indicates his knowledge of the manner of action, i.e., the use of arms as the translation suggests, but he failed to produce the English counterpart for the target action. The possible explanation is that he does not know the defining criterion for the verb 'burglarize' and was unable to differentiate it from other verbs of stealing. As will be shown below, the verb 'burglarize' is defined through the dimension of manner, i.e., Stealthiness/Secrecy, rather than the use of arms. The other three participants were inconsistent in using verbs in the first and second test items. The three participants used a combination of English nouns and verbs to describe the 'robbing' action which is consistent with their Arabic language which allows nouns to describe actions as explained below. However, the inconsistency of these uses indicates that these participants had not had a clear definitional criterion nor a full knowledge of the verbs they used. One participant used the verb 'rob' in the first test item and used the noun 'theft' in the second. The other two participants used the noun 'burglary' in the first test item and used the verb 'rob' in the second test item. Such inconsistency in semantic and syntactic uses can be explained through the proposal that these English translators are lacking adequate knowledge of the verbs of stealing due to their subtle differences in their meanings.

The dimension of manner, i.e., the Stealthiness component, is the defining criterion for the verb 'burglarize'. In the Arabic task, only one participant used this dimension in his Arabic description, while the other five participants did not mention it in their descriptions. However, the other dimensions of place and materials were fully recognized through their descriptions. Although these dimensions were not essential in defining the verb 'burglarize', these participants had felt it was necessary to describe them in their descriptions. As indicated earlier, these recognitions were most probably due to the saliency of the stimuli rather than an integral part of a unified concept of the English 'burglarize'. The dimension of value was perceived as unimportant since only two participants had described the value of the stolen materials in their descriptions. All the participants used a general Arabic verb (i.e., يسرق) which translates into (i.e., steal) to describe a particular action of stealing. This means that the Arabic-English participants did not perceive any need to describe the stealthiness component in the verb with the additions of prepositions or adverbs. The verb 'burglarize' to them is synonymous with the verb 'steal' without any significant difference between the two.

Table 1.4: Arabic/English Naming Pattern (Burglarize)

	Place	Mat.	Val.	Man.	Translations	Arb/Lexicalization	English	
P1	Museum [+]	Painting [+]	Valuable [+]	[+]	Stole from (V/Prep) Rolled under	سرق من تدحرج تحت	1.Stole	2.Theft
P2	Museum [+]	Painting [+]	Expensive [+]	[-]	Steal from (V/Prep)	يسرق من	1.Theft	2.Theft
P3	Museum [+]	Painting [+]	[-]	[-]	Steal from (V/Prep)	يسرق من	1.Theft	2.Theft
P4	Museum [+]	Painting [+]	[-]	[-]	Stealing/Theft from (N/Pre)	يسرق من	1.Theft	2.Theft
P5	Museum [+]	Painting [+]	[-]	[-]	Stealing/Theft from (N/Pre)	سرقه من	1.Burglarize	2.Burglarize
P6	Museum [+]	Painting [+]	[-]	[-]	Stealing/Theft from (N/Pre)	سرقه من	1.Burglarize	2.Burglarize

In the English task, however, the responses were not that different from the Arabic counterpart task. Three participants used the noun 'theft' consistently in the first and second test items to describe the 'burglarize' verb. Although the participants used the wrong word form (i.e., the noun instead of the verb), the semantic meaning resembles their answers in the Arabic task. Two participants used the correct verb 'burglarize' to describe the target action. Finally, one participant used the verb 'stole' in the first test item and the noun 'theft' in the second test item.

In the Arabic task, only one participant recognized the dimension of value that is a necessary component for the definition of the verb 'heist' while all of the remaining five participants did not. Similarly, the dimension of materials was not considered in the descriptions as only one participant recognized it in his description. On the other hand, the dimensions of the place and manner were fully recognized and described in the Arabic descriptions. The plausible explanation for this description is the saliency of the stimuli which might have motivated the participants to include them in their descriptions. Nonetheless, the dimension of value that is the defining criterion for the verb 'heist' was only recognized in the

description of one participant only. The recognition and description of the dimension of manner and the failure to recognize the dimension of value renders the meaning of 'heist' similar to the verb 'rob' without any perceivable distinctions between the two verbs. All of the participants recognized and described the dimension of manner, i.e., the use of arms, in the verb 'rob' and the verb 'heist' exactly the same, and did not recognize the value in both verbs in almost the same manner. This means that the participants perceived 'rob' and 'heist' in the same manner, and did not recognize any dimension to distinguish between them. This pattern of dimension recognition of 'rob' and 'heist' means that these verbs are the same for the participants.

Table 1.5: Arabic/English Naming Pattern (Heist)

	Place	Mat.	Val.	Man.	Translations	Arb/Lexicalization	English	
P1	Bank [+]	Money [+]	Huge Amount [+]	Arms [+]	1.Robbed (v) 2.Took over (Phr/V)	سطا علي استوليا	1.Rob	2.Steal
P2	Bank [+]	[-]	[-]	Arms [+]	Armed Bank Robbery (Adj/Phr)	سطو مسلح علي بنك	1.Stolen	2.Steal
P3	Bank [+]	[-]	[-]	Arms [+]	Armed Bank Robbery (Adj/Phr)	سطو مسلح علي بنك	1.Steal	2.Rob
P4	Bank [+]	[-]	[-]	Arms [+]	Armed Bank Robbery (Adj/Phr)	سطو مسلح علي بنك	1.Steal	2.Rob
P5	Bank [+]	[-]	[-]	Arms [+]	Armed Bank Robbery (Adj/Phr)	سطو مسلح علي بنك	1.Steal	2.Stolen
P6	Bank [+]	[-]	[-]	Arms [+]	Armed Bank Robbery (Adj/Phr)	سطو مسلح علي بنك	1.Steal	2.Stolen

In the English task, no single participant used the target verb 'heist'. Furthermore, three out of six participants were inconsistent in the descriptions of the first and second test items. For example, three participants used the verb 'rob' in one test item and the verb 'steal' in another. In light with the failure of recognizing the dimension of value in the Arabic task, such a pattern indicates that these participants did not know the defining criteria for the verb 'heist' rather than a wrong selection of the target verb or mis-mapping problem. The other remaining participants were consistent in using the verb 'steal/stolen' in both of the test items using a general verb term rather than a specific one, indicating incomplete knowledge of the verbs 'steal' and 'rob'.

On the other hand, if we look at the definitional criteria of these verbs that were provided by the participants (see Table 1.6), we find that the participants had not had any clear dimensions of definitions that are consistent with the dimensions extracted from the dictionary definitions. Some participants had not provided any definitions whereas those produced definitions provided general ideas of what stealing is and never provided any distinctions between them. Some others had completely missed out on the point and provided irrelevant definitions. In a nutshell, the data in this task was eliminated from any further discussion.

Table 1.6: Definitional Criteria

	Shoplift	Rob	Burglarize	Heist
P1	--	--	--	--
P2	Action/Crime of stealing	Take property without permission/intention to return	Entering a building with the intention to commit a crime	Take a property unlawfully
P3	Using force to steal	Take other things illegally	Lifting things not belonging to you	Take things without the permission of owner
P4	--	--	The action of stealing other things	Enter to commit a crime
P5	The action of theft	To enter property illegally	Valuable things stealing	To have unowned things
P6	Break in illegally	Take property illegally from a place/person by force or threat of force	The action or crime of stealing costly items	Steal a lot of money

5. Conclusion

In this study, two research questions were raised. The first was how Arabic-English translators distinguish similar verbs of stealing in English and Arabic. The underlying logic of using verbs of similar meanings, near-synonyms, as research stimuli were to understand the mapping process of linking L2 English verbs with their Arabic meanings, and to examine for cross-linguistic differences and lexicalization effects on the reconstruction of these verbal events. Stimuli representatives of four stealing events were developed and presented to six Arabic-English translators and were asked to describe them in both Arabic session and English session. Interestingly, two complex patterns in Arabic and English emerged. First, this study confirmed cross-linguistic differences between Arabic and English. While English language might encode multiple dimensions of meaning into a one-word format, Arabic does not possess such capacity. The equivalent to a one-word verb format in English requires a longer string of words in Arabic in order to convey the same message. So, for example, the verb 'shoplift' in English cannot be equally expressed in Arabic in single-verb format. Arabic speakers who want to express the same meaning value need other linguistic particles like a preposition and a noun. Second, due to the differences in meaning encodings where additional linguistic particles are required in Arabic to describe English-based verbs, lexicalization effects might be having an influence on the process of meaning internalization and semantic linking. The lexicalization effect in a sense refers to the incomplete process of vocabulary learning where some semantic gaps are missing in their vocabulary knowledge which allows for semantic mis-linking. In other words, lexicalization effects are likely to occur at the comprehension and learning processes of English and Arabic which are hypothesized to be conceptual transfer, and are likely to cause semantic mis-linking which is hypothesized to be semantic transfer. If we look at the Arabic pattern of naming, we find that the majority of responses were correct and participants were able to find Arabic linguistic particles to reconstruct the 'shoplifting' and 'robbing' actions correctly. However, if we look at the English naming pattern for the same verbs, we find a different pattern. Participants were not able to produce the verb 'shoplift' but they were able to produce the verb 'rob', though in a confused fashion. If the responses in English and Arabic were corresponding to each other, then one

can conclude that the participants have a comparable knowledge of Arabic and English verbs. However, this was not the case which means that these participants had demonstrated incomplete knowledge of the respective English verbs with some kind of variations. The variation in the Arabic and English naming pattern not only indicates mis-linking between the Arabic verb and its English equivalent but also indicates a lexicalization effect in the learning process where the participants were not able to derive the correct meaning from the English verb. Furthermore, the positive lexicalization effect might bolster better semantic mapping between English and Arabic. The equivalent of 'rob' in Arabic is a one-verb format that is equivalent to the English counterpart which translates as (سطو). This can explain why almost half of the participants got the right answers. On the other hand, it might also be possible to propose that lexicalization can have a negative effect in the sense that the longer the Arabic equivalent is the harder the acquisition of that target verb becomes. If we compare the responses for the verb 'rob' in English and Arabic (see table 1.7), we can find that those who got some correct answers to the verb 'rob' had produced one-single verb format in the Arabic language. On the other hand, if we compare the responses for the verb 'shoplift' in English and Arabic, we can find that those who had failed to produce a single-verb format in the Arabic language. Altogether, we can presume that semantic linking gets easier with single-verb format during the learning process of target words.

Table 1.7: Percentage of Correct Answers (English)

Percentage of Correct Answers (English)							
Shoplift		Rob		Burglarize		Heist	
0/6	1/6	3/6	4/6	2/6	2/6	0/6	0/6
Percentage of Correct Answers (Arabic)							
5/6		5/6		1/6		1/6	

With respect to the other verbs of 'burglarize' and 'heist', the picture is completely different from the other two verbs. The Arabic and English patterns of naming are comparable to each other. Those who failed to describe the action of 'burglarize' in English had also failed to describe the action in Arabic. Similarly, those who failed to describe the action of 'heist' in English had also failed to describe the action in Arabic. This pattern does not only designate another facet of mis-linking, but reveals an important finding in the process of learning similar verbs. When confronted with similar verbs during the internalization process, learners need to extract dimensions of similarities and differences in order to acquire the exact meanings of the target words they are learning. In the two verbs tasks, participants had not had any clue what these verbs are or how they should be used, and therefore, they confused them with other similar verbs like 'steal' and 'rob'. It is noteworthy to mention that the Arabic responses for these two verbs, 'burglarize' and 'heist', are perfectly correct in the Arabic context but when it comes to English, the English equivalents become problematic since the definitional dimensions for these verbs are missing. Arabic language can easily provide for the missing definitional dimensions through other linguistic particles, i.e., prepositions, nouns, etc. However, the participants in this study did not produce any, not because they were not any, but because these participants had not had the definitional knowledge that distinguishes between them. Therefore, as a result of lacking such knowledge, the participants had not been

able to define these English-based verbs in a proper fashion nor were able to generate their Arabic equivalents, which in turn, produced such confused patterns in English.

The second question that was raised in this study was the conceptual structures that motivates the naming pattern in Arabic and English. In the analysis, I developed a blueprint for comparing the Arabic and English naming patterns. In this blueprint, I distinguished between the four verbs of stealing through different dimensions despite their convergences in the traditional and components of stealing that are present in the four target verbs. The 'shoplift' verb is defined through the dimension of the place from which the materials are stolen while other dimensions of materials, manner, and value are unimportant to distinguish it from the remaining three verbs. The verb 'rob' is defined through the dimension of the manner in which the use of arms is always involved while other dimensions are insignificant in their definition. The verb 'burglarize' is also defined through a manner in which the dimension of secrecy or stealthiness is the most important criterion for its distinctions from the other verbs. Finally, the verb 'heist' is defined through the dimension of the value of the stolen materials which is to be extremely high to distinguish it from the verb 'rob'. Within this blueprint in mind, the Arabic and English naming patterns have demonstrated variations. Only the responses in the verb 'rob' showed some correspondences between the Arabic and the English naming patterns which indicates that the one-to-one equivalent relationship had produced some positive results in the acquisition of verbs. In other words, positive conceptual and semantic transfers might have motivated the correct responses in the English language. Nonetheless, all of the Arabic responses in the other verbs had failed to produce adequate lexicalizations for the English-based definitions. Such Arabic naming pattern, which does not give the same dimensions of definitions as that of English, seems to be reflected in the English naming pattern, and the failure to reconstruct these events in Arabic was similar and comparable to that in English. Overall, one can argue that the Arabic naming pattern of the verbs of stealing had motivated its English counterpart.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author(s) declare no conflicts of interest regarding this article.

About the Authors

Hussein Abushaaban, School of Languages, Civilisation and Philosophy, Universiti Utara Malaysia. Email: husseinabushaaban@gmail.com; orcid.org/0000-0001-5245-9639

Rashad Faleh Alhasan, Translation Department, Saif Bin Zayed Academy for Police Science and Security, UAE. Email: rfkh999@yahoo.com; orcid.org/0000-0001-9774-6084

Hani Qasem Asaad, School of Languages, Civilisation and Philosophy, Universiti Utara Malaysia. Email: hanialasbahi@gmail.com

Khatra Amar, Translation Department, Saif Bin Zayed Academy for Police Science and Security, UAE. Email: khattra2002@yahoo.fr.

Bibliography

- Bogaards, P. (1996). Dictionaries for learners of English. *International Journal of Lexicography*, 9(4), 277–320. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijl/9.4.277>
- Jarvis, S., & Pavlenko, A. (2008). *Crosslinguistic Influence in language and cognition*. Routledge.
- Majid, A. (2011). A guide to stimulus-based elicitation for semantic categories. *Oxford Handbooks Online*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199571888.013.0003>
- Murphy, M. L. (2003). *Semantic Relations and the lexicon: An extralexical approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nüse, R. (n.d.). Segmenting event sequences for speaking. *Mediating between Concepts and Grammar*. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110919585.255>
- Pavlenko, A. (2009). Conceptual Representation in the Bilingual Lexicon and Second Language Vocabulary Learning. In A. Pavlenko (Ed.), *The bilingual mental lexicon: Interdisciplinary approaches* (pp. 125–160). essay, Multilingual Matters.
- Rundell, M. (1999). Dictionary use in production. *International Journal of Lexicography*, 12(1), 35–53. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijl/12.1.35>
- Stutterheim, C. von, & Nüse, R. (2003). Processes of conceptualization in language production: Language-specific perspectives and event construal. *Linguistics*, 41(5). <https://doi.org/10.1515/ling.2003.028>
- von Stutterheim, C., Andermann, M., Carroll, M., Flecken, M., & Schmiedtová, B. (2012). How grammaticized concepts shape event conceptualization in language production: Insights from linguistic analysis, eye tracking data, and memory performance. *Linguistics*, 50(4). <https://doi.org/10.1515/ling-2012-0026>

Creative Commons licensing terms

Author(s) will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). and European Journal of Literature, Language and Linguistics Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflicts of interest, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated into the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).