

Unveiling Meaning and Cultural Context: A Socio-Semantic Analysis of Surnames in Jordan

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Abstract—In light of the limited number of studies conducted on surnames in Jordan, this paper aims to highlight the ways in which Jordanian surnames carry cultural implications and semantic elements. It also intends to determine their meanings and what they stand for. Furthermore, the study focuses on the relationship between these surnames and why they were chosen. Nearly 70 Jordanian family members, key members of their families, leading figures, tribal chiefs, and previous members of the House of Representatives were interviewed, with a sample of 39 chosen on purpose. The findings indicated that surnames in Jordan can be divided into local surnames, occupational, anecdotal, patronymic, seasonal, regional, and surnames derived from nicknames. Furthermore, the findings showed that Jordanian surnames are inextricably linked to the culture and values that individuals hold, supporting the need to examine surnames in the context of society (Bonvillain, 2019; Kandt & Longley, 2018; Hymes, 2001).

Index Terms—surnames, naming practice, culture, semantics, sociolinguistics

I. INTRODUCTION

An analysis of names, including first names, last names, and surnames, is referred to as onomastics or onomatology, the terminology for this field of study. Onomatology is succinctly defined by Laycock (2016) as the study of names. It encompasses both forenames, often referred to as first, second, or middle names and surnames. Onomatology is an essential discipline within linguistics, subdivided into two fundamental components: etymology, the study of the origins of names, and semantics, the study of the meanings of words (Portner, 2005). Kennedy et al. (2023) assert that onomastics is a subdivision of semantics that examines the etymology of proper names. Surnames are proper nouns and hence fall within the domain of onomastics. The field dedicated to examining human personal names is called ‘anthroponomics’ derived from anthroponomy and a subset of onomastics (Sharma, 2005).

Presently, Jordanian surnames have not been fully investigated from a socio-semantic perspective. The present study is an attempt to analyse the reasons behind the naming of these surnames and classify these names following Hanks and Hodges’ (1988) approach to classifying surnames. Notably, surnames are not extensively investigated, even in advanced societies. Hanks (2003, p. xi) asserts, “Many American surnames, even quite frequent ones, have never been studied at all”. This study is deemed essential due to the lack of surname research despite its significance in society.

Surnames serve as a significant indicator of the societal structure. In Jordan, following the surge of Syrian immigrants since the onset of the Syrian conflict in 2011 (Tahat et al., 2020), Jordanians have become cognizant of various Syrian surnames that illustrate the composition of Syrian society. The researchers observed that many of these names are associated with professions, including *An-nHHaas* (coppersmith), *AlHayk* (sewer), *AJ-Jabi* (collector), *Ad-Dahhan* (painter), and *Al-9aTTar* (spice vendor). This indicates that Syrians have historically engaged in trade and commerce, corroborated by their recent contributions to significant businesses in Jordan, particularly in food and restaurant services

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(Joudeh et al., 2021). It can be inferred that an individual may not truly comprehend the structure of a language devoid of names, even though surnames are not essential components of our language.

The research on naming conventions, a component of onomastics and linguistic anthropology (Abubakari, 2020), reveals that naming practices vary across locations and cultures (Léglise & Migge, 2006). Furthermore, naming practices constitute a universal cultural principle that illustrates the profound connection between language, linguistic actions, and the associated culture (Bonvillain, 2019). Naming is a distinct linguistic act that reflects values, traditions, aspirations, anxieties, and daily occurrences in individuals' lives. Names reveal the preferences and concerns of both their bearers and givers toward tangible objects, acts, and beliefs (Rosenhouse, 2002, p. 99).

Naming Practices

The practice of naming goes back to the beginning of humanity. It is important to note that the first thing Allah taught Prophet Adam was names. The Qur'an indicates Adam's involvement in naming the creatures as instructed by Allah. Adam was informed about the names of all cities, birds, trees, food, and beverages (Alokaily, 2005, p. 1).

“وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ”

(سورة البقرة: 31)

Wa-9allama ?aadama I-?asmaa?akullathumma
and- taught adam the- names all then
9aradahum 9ala I-malaa?ikahfaqaala ?anbi?uuni
Showed+them on the- angels and- said tell+me
bi-asmaa?ihaa?ulaa?i ?in kuntumsaadiqiin
with-names these if were+you truthful
(Sura #2, Al-Baqara, verse:31)

“And he taught Adam the names of all things; then he placed them before the angels and said: tell me the names of these if you are right” (Translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali).

Parents must exercise caution when choosing names for their children, as this decision significantly influences the child's foundational sense of identity. The name will profoundly impact their life, as it serves as their identifier among family, relatives, friends, and the broader society. Therefore, the act of naming is a meticulously considered process. Portner (2005) contends that examining names can be explained in terms of their frame of reference by introducing two broad categories of ideas. In the first category, names correspond to their definitive descriptions; for instance, ‘Confucius’ equates to the designation of ‘the most renowned Chinese philosopher’. Consequently, the proper name ‘Confucius’ and its accompanying definite description are semantically identical. In other words, the definition of names related to their descriptions aligns with those initiated and expressed by the definite article ‘the,’ which encompasses unique characteristics rendering them exclusively suitable for names. Thus, ‘Confucius’ and names preceded by the definite article ‘the’ serve the same semantic functional role. The second type illustrates that names differ from their definitive descriptions. Saul Kripke posits that the meanings of names are non-descriptive. The significance of a name is solely its reference (Portner, 2005).

The present article presents two primary concepts regarding the reference of names: the first proposes that a name is semantically equivalent to its definite description. In contrast, the second asserts that a name is conferred through direct interaction with the giver, allowing others to reference the name initially designated by the initial giver. The researcher concurs with both perspectives, as specific names possess inherent references, while others are merely adopted and replicated by individuals without any connection. For example, the name John is initially assigned and subsequently passed on to other individuals bearing the same name.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Initially, individual identity was fulfilled with a singular name, typically a personal or first name. However, the necessity for surnames has emerged as a contemporary requirement due to the growing population (Wikstrøm, 2012). Surnames convey more information about individuals than one might initially assume; they furnish essential details on familial lineage and disclose ancestors' origins. The research on surnames is intriguing due to their informative nature, as evidenced by analysing the rationale behind the designation of a specific surname. For instance, the surname Al L-HSaan has been utilised by individuals to convey their perceptions of the attributes of family members, referring to their immense strength and power. This fact pertains to an additional sociolinguistic aspect reflected in the opinions held by people toward naming practices within Jordanian society.

Akinnaso (1980, p. 277) clarifies that the primary reason for examining surnames is “to provide a symbolic system of individual identification which is usually historically constructed, socially maintained, and based on shared assumptions and expectations of members of a particular community”. This discipline establishes the scientific study of surnames, enabling individuals in any society to trace their family ancestry through accurately documented names. One must examine names to comprehend how predecessors formulated their identities and the significance of these names in their social existence. This agreement arises from the functional correlation between names and culture. Surnames contribute to cultural heritage and convey their significance to contemporary applications by documenting the accomplishments of family members and referencing this heritage as required. Surnames are not solely linked to personal documents, nor are

they employed merely to distinguish individuals with identical given names. They signify the self-identity linked to an individual's social setting and culture.

Intons-Peterson and Crawford (1985) illustrate that women's surnames hold significant value and meaning for them, with a percentage of 60%, irrespective of marital status. The distinction between before and after marriage is emphasised, as women typically identify less with their surnames than men due to the societal expectation of changing them post-marriage. Goldin and Shim (2004) assert that the number of women retaining their surnames after marriage rose significantly from 2% in 1975 to 33% in 1998. The authors argue that the decision to retain or alter women's surnames is intrinsically linked to the prospect of childbearing post-marriage, as women with children exhibit a greater tendency to adopt their husbands' surnames, even if they initially chose otherwise. This decision aligns with men's preference for their offspring to bear the father's surname.

Nevertheless, the Arabic surname system parallels Western practices, except for the conventions regarding women's adoption of surnames. Arab women retain their maiden names throughout their lives following marriage, unlike the Western practice of changing surnames (Notzon & Nesom, 2005). Using surnames as a unique identifier for individuals was not previously recognised. In examining traditional naming conventions, particularly during the companions' era, it was observed that individuals utilised their fathers' names instead of surnames. Thus, this method, in which a person bearing a specific given name was differentiated from others through the identification of his father and paternal grandfather, is referred to as patronymic.

The differentiation established by identifying the mother's name is called matronymic (Hanks et al., 1989). The utilisation of patronymics distinguished Jewish communities from their neighbours until the advent of bureaucracy necessitated the adoption of surnames (Hanks et al., 1989). The examination of surnames falls within the domain of onomastics, indicating its connection to other disciplines, such as the study of toponyms or place names. Many surnames originated from geographical locations, serving as a fundamental basis for classification (Wikström, 2012). In examining the correlation between toponyms and family names, scholars cannot ascertain the etymology of a surname; therefore, employing terms such as 'probably', 'maybe', and 'possibly' is appropriate. For instance, a surname denoting a prevalent occupation, such as 'Carpenter,' may suggest an interpretation indicative of multiple origins, as this name is widespread, and numerous individuals may share a similar occupation. A surname derived from a distant, distinctive location may indicate a singular origin due to its rarity. Conversely, to ascertain the accuracy, place name researchers may visit a location to examine the topography before determining its suitability (Hanks et al., 1989).

Currently, the socio-cultural background of surnames inside a given community is discussed. The socio-cultural influence is evident in various multilingual societies. Surnames are distinctly influenced by language, and in a multilingual culture, they are shaped by the prevailing language as a source for these designations. According to Farkas (2009, p. 366), "the Gypsies took their surnames from the Hungarian language, while the Jews typically adopted German surnames." In a multilingual setting, using surnames may also be altered and significantly influenced by linguistic diversity, creating distinct names. Furthermore, Farkas (2009) illustrates this with the subsequent linguistic effect:

1. The change may occur to the written forms of surnames such as Hungarian *Kincses.Jozef* > Slovakian *JozefKinces*.
2. Morphological changes such as *Vasarhelyi* > *Vasarhelyszky*.
3. Semantic change such as *Bili* > *Feher* 'white' in Slovakian and Hungarian.

In the investigation of English and Chinese surnames, surnames are a fundamental part of the language because they are a cultural reflection of people's identities. For example, the English surnames reflect their love, interest, and attachment to everything in their culture. On the other hand, Chinese surnames express the feudal system in their culture with respect to all surnames granted by the emperors and nobles (Zhu, 2010).

The Meaning of Surnames in Relation to Sociolinguistics

When discussing the relationship between the semantics of names and their relation to the sociolinguistic variables in the culture, some linguists and philosophers such as de Saussure, Rymes and others believe that names must be studied and analysed in isolation from social context. They also claim that names are arbitrarily connected to the referent and have no mutual relation with the culture. Nevertheless, this is not all true because names are strongly connected to the social context and have a clear structure, which shows the cultural effect on the existence of names (Seide & Saparas, 2022). The following discussion elucidates the intrinsic relationship between names (semantics) and sociolinguistics, as the presence of a name within a specific context reflects the influence of various sociolinguistic factors, including gender, education, and societal attitudes on name selection.

The interdisciplinary study of semantics and sociolinguistics shows their mutual interaction and effect on the existence of a surname and that semantics has an active interface with many fields of linguistics. In his study on semantics, Palmer (1981, p. 206) concludes, "... semantics is not a single well-integrated discipline. It is not a clearly defined level of linguistics or comparable to phonology or grammar. Instead, it is a set of studies of the use of language in relation to many distinct aspects of experience, to linguistic and non-linguistic context". The quotation confirms the relationship that grows mutually between the study of meaning (semantics) and other linguistic fields, emphasising the contact with actual linguistic situations, distinct from formalism, logic, and semi-logic analysis. At this juncture, Palmer (1981) argues that semantics should be concerned with the world of experience, avoiding structure and pure theory. He adds that the one that represents this idea is the study of the role of language in society.

A surname researcher must address semantics and its intrinsic connection to sociolinguistics, as names are assigned or adopted by individuals whose linguistic practices and naming conventions are profoundly influenced by the language and its cultural context within a specific society. Zhu (2010, p. 226) asserts that “names, including surnames, as components of language, inevitably reflect the unique culture of the individuals who utilise them”. Names are the mirror of the culture because they are a rich source of reflections of this culture. Names may signify the structure, gender, religion, and customs of a particular civilisation through their meanings. Eslami-Rasekh and Ahmadvand (2012) emphasise the importance of socio-cultural values in comprehending names and appreciating the emotions, practices, thoughts, preferences, and ideas of the name’s giver within a particular culture or civilisation. The inquiry on the meaning of a name and its cultural implications is not arbitrary; it is, in fact, a thoroughly structured question. A name within a specific cultural language conveys significant information about the individual who possesses it, including their language and identity. Mphande (2006, p. 104) states, “A name may indicate the linguistic structure and phonological processes found in the language, the position of the name’s bearer in society, and the collective history and life experience of the people surrounding the individual”.

In line with Mphande’s (2006) argument, the name that is found in a language may have a story or tradition to tell, which reflects the way these people think and the ideas they believe in. For example, when a name in African societies is given to a child, people write a symbolic meaning to that name on a round pebble and keep this item as long as the bearer of this name is alive. Upon death, they break this round pebble into two pieces and put it back on the earth. This practice reflects the spiritual beliefs of the people who live in this society, where the broken pebble is returned to the spiritual realm (Fitzpatrick, 2012). The above example illustrates that each community possesses a distinct cultural and social framework that defines the bearers of a name; for instance, the method of identifying individuals in African society is linked to its religious practices. The significant insights gained from the name guarantee semantic and social diversity in naming conventions, demonstrating the interconnectedness of the name (semantics) and the socio-cultural values of societies. Despite the many methodologies employed by cultures in naming practices, researchers continue to explore the overarching theme of naming and its profound influence on daily life. Therefore, understanding the significance of a name is fundamentally important when situated within its socio-cultural context, underscoring the notion that names are not randomly associated with their bearers. Instead, they serve as indicators of individuals’ lifestyles. In summary, a name embodies a distinct representation of culture and significantly reflects its ideologies and beliefs. Thus, we might assert that we name to distinguish, identify, and ultimately comprehend.

III. METHODS

The population of the present study, to which the findings can be generalised, comprised individuals with surnames from the Jordanian cities of Amman, Mafraq, Ma’an, Ajloun, Karak, Zarqa, Jerash, Tafila, Madaba, and Irbid. The sample of this study consisted of 39 Jordanian surnames classified under seven categories, as shown in this section. Tables 1, 2, and 3 show the description of the sample according to age, level of education, and social status.

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE ACCORDING TO AGE

Age average	Number of participants	Percentage
30-45	15	38.6%
46-70	24	61.4%

TABLE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE ACCORDING TO THE LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Level of education	Number of participants	Percentage
Primary & secondary	21	53.8%
Degree	18	46.2%

TABLE 3
DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE ACCORDING TO SOCIAL STATUS

Social status	Number of participants	Percentage
Key members	18	46%
Leading figures	8	21%
Parliament members	1	2%
Heads of tribes	12	31%

The researchers conducted unstructured interviews with respected experts in this field in a confidential setting to collect data vital for this study. This research instrument is strongly recommended for descriptive investigations since it enables respondents to express their views and thoughts without constraint (Teddlie & Yu, 2007; Hashemi & Babaii, 2013; Guest et al., 2005; Braun & Clarke, 2016). The respondents were categorised as significant family members, prominent leaders, tribal chiefs (sheikhs), and parliamentary representatives. After clarifying the researchers’ aim for the interview sessions and securing the interviewees’ consent, the researchers diligently documented the data with a notebook and pen. The researchers allocated nearly two months for data collection.

For analytical purposes, the researcher adhered to the methodologies of Hanks et al. (1989) and Reaney and Wilson (1991b), who are regarded as leading authorities on surnames. Their surname dictionaries are regarded as reliable references in nations like the United States and Great Britain. The researchers adhered to the prevalent methodology for identifying and analysing data pertinent to the study of surnames, outlined by Hanks et al. (1989).

In surname studies, adhering to a specific classification system is recommended to analyse and understand the societal structure, discern the significance of a surname or its cultural connections, and evaluate the appropriateness of this classification for the surnames of a particular society. However, not all categories are utilised in alignment with the aims and criteria of this study. This study's data is restricted to the surnames of Jordanian Arabic, with other categories excluded. The following classifications are proposed:

- **Local Surnames:** These surnames are derived from the names of places. They are divided into two main groups/categories: topographic names and habitational names. The former are derived from general descriptive references to a landscape feature, such as a stream, a tree, or a hill. The latter are taken from the names of towns and villages. Moreover, surnames and personal names have interrelated relations with place names. Lyons (1977) points out, "If we trace the etymology of personal and place names, we will find that they have the same kind of origin". For example, the name *John* comes from a Hebrew name through Greek and Latin, which could be interpreted in terms of the ordinary vocabulary of Hebrew as "God has been gracious" (Alokaily, 2005, p. 13).

- **Occupational Surnames.** These surnames refer directly to a particular trade or occupation and can be divided into various classes, such as agricultural and manufacturing (Hanks, 2003). Some occupational surnames are derived from the trilateral root, such as *?AlHayk* is based on the stem *Haka* (sewer from sew), and *?Al9abed* is from the stem *9abada* (worshipper from worship).

- **Anecdotal Surnames:** This type of surname is derived from an event or a story that lies behind the acquisition of this name. Some surnames are related to a particular story that happened in the past and resulted in the naming of that family. A notable example is the Syrian surname Bakdones, which translates to "**parsley**" in English. This narrative centres on a parcel of land gifted by Syrian farmers to their neighbour to assist him in alleviating his circumstances following the catastrophic fire that engulfed his house. Subsequently, the guy resolved to cultivate the designated field with parsley, while the farmers opted to refrain from planting parsley for one year, so rendering him the sole supplier of this crop. As a result, he succeeded in overcoming his unfavourable conditions. Subsequently, his neighbours referred to him by the name of this plant, which has since become emblematic of a peculiar Syrian family (Alsawaf, 2010).

- **Surnames from Nicknames:** The surnames included in this classification can refer to physical features or characters.

- **Patronymic surnames:** This surname classification is the most common classification of surnames, which comes from the personal names of ancestors. Patronymic surnames may be categorised into several traditions, with religious surnames being among the most prominent. The current research indicated that certain Jordanian families have names originating from religious sources. Another type of surname incorporated into patronymic names comes from the prefix term meaning 'son of', such as *IbnJazy* son of Jazy, and some of them come from the prefix term meaning 'father of'. The meaning of this linguistic term is prevalent in Jordanian surnames, in addition to its cultural value, as described earlier.

- **Seasonal surnames:** As the name implies, the surnames under this type refer to a season such as *?ASSaefy* (summer), the name of a month such as *Sha9ban* (an Arabic month), or a day of the week such as *?Abu Jum9h* (Friday).

- **Regional surnames:** this group denotes the place of origin for someone from a specific country or region. These surnames are designated as a result of an individual's migration from a distant location to a new area. Hence, the name derived from their place of origin holds no significance inside the new culture or community, so they are just identified by the name of their nation. Moreover, these surnames have the form of adjectives or nouns denoting a person, such as French, Danish, and Welsh (Hanks, 2003).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The examination of surnames and their relation to societal culture provides significant insight into the character of people's thoughts, traditions, beliefs, and history. During data collecting, the researchers noted that most Jordanians have a strong interest in Jordanian surnames, their meanings, the reasons for their adoption, and the historical backdrop influenced by these families. The interviewees offered various explanations regarding the naming process and its societal implications "see Appendix A". The researchers found that the suffix 'y' is systematically connected to the surnames derived from place names. It denotes the meaning "to come from".

Local Surnames

Jordanian surnames belonging to this category were divided into two classes: the first was the surnames derived from the names of Jordanian towns where people live (habitational). The second one was the surnames derived from the topographic features where a member of a family had first settled (topographical).

Habitational Surnames

- *Al-Malkawi ?al-malkawy* was derived from the town of Malka. This surname is derived from the town of *Malka*, located in the north of Jordan. The town was established by the Romans and was called after a Roman queen, Malaka.

The residents of this town bore its name, so the surname Al-Malkawi signifies the town's history and serves as a testament to the bond between its inhabitants and the culture of the succeeding civilisation.

- *Al-Barmawi* البيرموي *?al-barmawy* originated from the town of Burma. There were two stories about the origin of this family name, and both were related to the names of places in different countries: Jordan and Egypt. The first claimed that this name derived from the town of Burma in the Jerash governorate in the north of Jordan. The second claimed that the first dweller of Burma was a man who came from the Burma village in Tanta in the western governorate of Egypt. This man designated the old name of his town to the location he reached.

- *Al-Maqableh* المقابله *?al-maqableh* originated from the town of Mekbleh. This surname means *?almuajaha* (confrontation), i.e., to meet someone face to face. In Arabic culture, it is customary for poets to convene in a designated location to recite their verses to one another; this location is known as Mekbleh. The eldest ancestor of this family derived his name from historical events and was named *Meqbel* after the town of Mekbleh. All descendants of *Mekbel* are called *?al-Maqableh* after the name of this town, situated in the north of the Jordan-Jerash governorate.

Topographical Surnames

- *Al-Tlool* التلول *?at-tluul* (Hills). This surname is the plural form of *?at-tal* (hill). It was developed from a topographical feature defined by *?al-mu9jam* *?al-wajeez* as an elevated area of land that is lower than a mountain. The patriarch of this family emigrated from al-Hijaz to the capital of Jordan, Amman, and established residence at Taal Amman, from where the name was derived. It was claimed that the surname *?at-tluul* originated from the town of *?at-talnear* in Damascus, Syria. Nevertheless, the majority of family members attributed the name to the topographical features of the landscape.

- *Al-Khawrah* الخوره *?al-xawarah* (Low Land): It is one of the oldest families in the *Ma'an* (Ma9aan) governorate. This surname was derived from a topographical feature of the ground, known in Arabic as *?al-xawar*. According to *?al-mu9jam* *?al-wajeez*, *?al-xawar* is defined as the lowland located between two high places. Furthermore, this family had an interest in agriculture and was motivated to seek a suitable place for cultivating plants. Accordingly, they headed toward *Wadi Araba* (Wady 9araba), which was recognised for its fertile land.

Anecdotal Surnames

This category of surnames reflected aspects of the cultural events prevalent in Jordan. It also conveyed the values and views of their ancestors, which subsequently reflected the identity of Jordanians. This category is presented under the names of the following families:

- *Al-Amraat* العمرات *?al-9amraat* (Builders). This family lives in the villages of the Irbid governorate. The nomenclature of this family pertained to a man who was wed to four women and exhibited an obsession with having many children. Upon his children's growth, he resolved to transfer them to a secluded region to facilitate their cohabitation. Consequently, his family grows, necessitating the construction of many residences in the same neighbourhood; thus, they are referred to as *'?al-9amraat'* (builders). This name had undergone a morphological change from *'sons of Imraan'* to the current well-known name *'?al-9amraat'*.

- *Al-Nhhaas* النحاس *?an-nHHaas* (Coppersmith). While it may initially appear that this name was derived from the profession of coppersmiths, the family's designation indicated that its origin was rooted in an ancient narrative. The narrative described the circumstances in which the family's elder tended sheep and preserved dairy products in copper vessels. One day, the man assembled all the equipment at his house in preparation for a trip. At this time, a passerby remarked *'naHHas'* in reference to the array of brass instruments he observed.

Surnames Derived from Nicknames

This category of surnames constituted the predominant distribution of Jordanian surnames. It illustrated the simplicity of employing straightforward terminology from the surrounding environment. This category was also linked to traits derived from animal features, like strength, beauty, and endurance.

- *Al-Olemaat* العليمات *?al-9lemaat* (Those Who Teach Religious Science). It is one of the families that belong to the largest tribe in Jordan, the tribe of Bani Hassan. The name of this family went back to the nickname given to the family's ancestor, an old man with significant religious knowledge. Individuals sought his advice and instruction in religious studies. This nickname can be pronounced in one of two ways: the accusative case, which refers to the people who sought knowledge and those who received it. The second pronunciation denotes the nominative case, broadly referring to a teacher of science and specifically to Islamic knowledge.

- *Al-Khasawneh* الخصاونه *?al-xaSawneh* (The Elite). It is a family that lives in the Irbid governorate, especially in the towns of *?eduun* and *n9aimeh*. Al-Khasawneh was derived from the definition of the word (private) or (special person), who is considered among the elite. This nickname was initially given to one of the social groups in the Ottoman era, where this regime treated a specific social group in a superior manner and called them *khassana-xaSSaneh* (important people).

- *Al-Qadadmeh* القادامة *?al-qadadmeh* from Hammar Qaduum. This surname is pronounced using the [j] sound and written with a 'q'. This phonetic alteration is related to the Bedouin dialect, wherein the consonant 'j' is pronounced as [q]. This name originated from the term *Qaduum*, an instrument featuring a wooden handle and a round or flat metal head used for striking and smashing objects. The term was bestowed upon the ancestor of this family due to his reputation for using this instrument to cut wood for coal production during that era. Several pronunciations characterised the Bedouin dialect. Al-Abbadi (2006, p. 122) asserts that Jordanian surnames are pronounced distinctively in the Bedouin dialect, featuring unique phonetic markers. For instance, 'l' is articulated as [n], 'k' as [ch], (?) as (9), and 'th' as [T] when situated

between ‘?’ and ‘n’, exemplified by the term ?thna9asharto?Tna9esh. Furthermore, they emphasise the sound [y] in several words, transforming it into [yy], as in *zyyēt*. They may also add (?) to the beginning of some words to facilitate pronunciation, such as *beDaarto?bDaar*.

Occupational Surnames

As the name implies, all surnames in this category originated from a profession or trade. The names in Jordan, such as blacksmith and carpenter, among other vocational titles, are also prevalent in other nations. In contrast, most Jordanian occupational surnames originated from Syria, implying collaborative activities between Jordan and Syria (Greater Syria), demonstrating that both areas were perceived as interconnected and unified.

- *Al-shar’a* الشريعة ?*ash sharu9* (Doctrine). The term signified a collection of laws and orders pertaining to religious issues. This designation was assigned to this family during the Ottoman Empire because of their profound expertise in Islamic doctrine. Specifically, their profession involved issuing *fatwas* (official pronouncements from Islamic scholars) and clarifying ambiguous concepts for the general population. The family’s ancestor was renowned for his profound knowledge of Islamic issues.

- *Al-sabbagh* الصباغ ?*aSSabbaG* (Dyer). The researchers discovered that many Jordanian families bear the name ?*aSSabbaG*, similar to those in the provinces of Irbid, Jearsh, and Al-Husen. Nevertheless, familial ties did not connect these families; they were not kin. This surname indicated the occupation for which these families were recognised. In other words, the profession of people who dye fabrics or materials was historically a respected craft and profession in many cultures, from where the name ?*aS-SabbaG* was derived.

- *Hadadeen* حدادين *Hadadyyn* (Blacksmiths or Surveyors). This family had two narratives regarding its name, each illustrating the family’s occupation. The initial narrative suggested that the name was probably derived from the blacksmithing occupation of the family members. The second narrative, corroborated by the majority of this family’s members, pertained to the task of identifying the topography (now referred to as ?*l masa*) in regions such as Al-Karak and Al-Shabak, where they initially resided and possessed comprehensive knowledge of the land’s boundaries.

- *Al-Sharbari* الشربجي ?*ash sharbajy* (A Military Rank for a Person Who is Responsible for the Sultan’s Food). It was one of the families inhabiting the province of Jerash during the early twentieth century. The etymology of this surname pertained to the term ?*aj-joarbajy* الجوربجي, a military rank in the Ottoman army assigned to an individual responsible for all matters related to the Sultan’s sustenance. This name had undergone phonetic alterations over time, ultimately resulting in the present designation, ?*ash sharbajy*.

Patronymic Surnames

The names that belonged to this category of surnames were derived from names of persons who established a particular family as in the following:

- *Al-Mahameed* المحاميد ?*al-maHamyyd of Mohammad*: His family was named after their eldest ancestor, Mohammad. In addition, they called his descendants in the past ?*abna?muHamad* (sons of Mohammad). The pronunciation has evolved to become ?*al-maHamyyd*. This surname was regarded in Arabic as a gerund noun that rhymed with *mafa9yyl* (the foot) to denote descendants.

- *Al-Omari* العمري ?*al-9umary* of Caliph Omar ibn Al-Khattab. It is one of the most prominent families in the Irbid governorate. The surname was derived from Caliph Omar Ibn al-Khattab. This family had a significant link to religious practices; they were acknowledged as devout and pious. They tended to the ill by assessing the afflicted organ and reciting the Noble Qur’an and prayers. Caliph Omar Ibn al-Khattab, the founding father of this family, was an advocate for the study of genealogy and familial ancestry. Moreover, he urged his son to pursue this, emphasising the importance of the subject in question.

Regional Surnames

These names clearly showed that their bearers were from a foreign origin. People in Jordan are acquainted with the classification of surnames as follows:

- *Al-Kordi* الكردي ?*al-kurdy* from Kurdistan: This family was initially named *Kordi*, referring to the area of Kurdistan, which is in the middle Asian region. The family members were dispersed over several cities in Jordan. They inhabited the area and engaged in agricultural activities. The term is a gerund of Kurd; they are referred to as *al-Kurdyas*, indicating their ancestral homeland.

- *Al-Masri* المصري ?*al-maSry* from Egypt: This family’s origin can be traced to Egypt. They were referred to as *al-maSry* due to their region of origin, a consequence of the war led by Mohammad Ali Pasha in Egypt. They live in many places in Jordan, such as Sahab, Karak, Ma’daba, and Salt.

- *Al-Raihani* الريحاني ?*arrayHany from Wady?lr r-ayHan*: It is one of the families that live in many different places in Jordan such as Al-Hussen, Al-Karak, and BaniObeid. People named them ?*arrayHany* to distinguish them from where they came from, such as *Wady ?lr r-ayHan* in Hijaz. This was one of the methods used in surname classifications by which you can distinguish a family by identifying their origin, similar to many other names such as *Kurdy*, *MuGraby*, and *Sharkasy*.

Seasonal Surnames

- A limited collection of Jordanian surnames signifies seasonal, daily, and monthly identities; hence, the researchers combined almost all these names. The data collected from the family members was limited and immediately correlated with the identification of the day, month, and season as follows:

- *Abu Joma 'h* ابو جمعه? *abu jum9ah* was based on the word *Friday*: This surname was derived from the day of *aljum9ah* (Friday).
- *Al-Sabti* was derived from *السبتي*? *as sabty* (*Saturday*): This surname originated from the day of *?as sabt-* (*Saturday*).
- *Al-saifi* الصيفي? *aSSaefy* was based on the summer season: This surname has been derived from the name *?aSSaef* (summer).
- *Sha 'ban & Ramadan* شعبان و رمضان *sha9ban & ramadan* (Hijri/ Arabic Months). These surnames were derived from the names of the months *Sha 'ban* and *Ramadan*.

V. CONCLUSION

This study examined the socio-semantic features of Jordanian surnames. It investigated the significance of these names and the rationale for their designations. Moreover, it emphasised that names act as an expression of Jordanian culture since the formation of these names mirrors the characteristics of their originator. This study employed unstructured interviews with individuals of varied backgrounds, ages, educational attainments, and professions to comprehensively explore the significance of Jordanian surnames and the underlying principles of naming conventions. The current study demonstrated that most surnames in Jordan can be divided into seven categories: local, anecdotal, nicknames, occupational, patronymic, regional, and seasonal surnames. From the prior discourse, the following conclusions may be deduced:

- The significance of Jordanian surnames is drawn from the societal traditions common to its people, exemplified by the concepts of generosity and magnanimity inherent in the meanings of *9awaySah* and *baTayHah*. Furthermore, the historical narratives or events that transpired in the past significantly influence the nomenclature of these families; such narratives are intricately connected to the cultural fabric of Jordan.
- Jordanian surnames, which are derived from nicknames, form the primary category. The nicknames assigned to these families are generated by individuals to serve a particular social and semantic purpose. These nicknames originate from colloquial expressions in Jordanian society, such as *9awaySah* and *qaduum*, from which *?l-9awaySah* and *?l-jadadmh* have been derived. The researchers concluded that a limited number of surnames pertain to the 'seasonal surnames category'. Moreover, families with the same surname may not always originate from the same region.
- The study determined that Jordanian culture significantly influences the formation and nomenclature of families. This underscores the reciprocal relationship between language and culture as the function of language is manifested via naming conventions and the meanings attributed to these surnames. Bardsley (1915) contends that nothing exists without a name and that every name, whether pertaining to a person, their work, or earthly inheritance, is not an outcome of coincidence. Moreover, the methodology employed by Jordanians for assigning surnames is grounded in simple terms prevalent among residents of certain regions in Jordan.
- The examination of surnames aids in comprehending individuals' identity and lineage. Examining these names encompasses several facets, including their meanings, etymologies, societal views, and socioeconomic elements that affect the naming process. Consequently, the subsequent guidelines for scholars engaged in the study of surnames may be proposed:
 - Jordanian surnames can be studied and classified into other categories, such as metronymic surnames, surnames derived from kinship, and ethnic surnames.
 - A similar study that deals with the phonological and syntactic changes of surnames in Jordan should be conducted. It is also important to take into consideration dialect variations, which helps clarify the variables involved in these changes.
 - A comparative study between surnames in Jordan and other surnames in different countries can also be undertaken. This will help establish the similarities and differences in naming practices between countries.
 - Although most of the surnames classified under the category of habitational names were derived from the names of the towns and villages, such as *Malkawy* and *Barmawy*, it was found that there are some surnames which did not fall under this category, such as the surname *ShaTnawy*. This surname has no relation to the town of *ShaTana*. Hence, it is necessary to perform studies to examine this gap in the research domain.

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