

ARTICLE

Jordanian Families in the Northern Jordan Valley: A Socio-Semantic Study

Luqman M Rababah * , *Maisa Ali Aljondi*

Department of English Language and Translation, Jadara University, Irbid 21110, Jordan

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to investigate Jordanian family names in the northern Jordan Valley from a sociological point of view, as well as to investigate the cultural importance of these names. In addition, it aims to classify the given family names according to their meanings and the reasons that led to their naming, as well as to ascertain the meanings, origins, and reasons that led to the selection of these names. The sample for this research project includes twenty-seven different family names from Jordan. In order to conduct interviews with relevant persons and members of the family, the study used a qualitative methodology. According to the findings of the research, Jordanian families who reside in the northern Jordan Valley may be classified into five distinct groups. These categories include regional, occupational, anecdotal, nicknames, and patronymic surnames. Future studies should look at more aspects of family names, such as phonetic, syntactic, and morphological differences. They should also repeat similar studies in other parts of Jordan or elsewhere, and look at other types of family names that have been found in previous research, such as metronymic surnames, kinship-derived family names, ethnic surnames, or other groups, as well as how they spread and what caused them to appear. It is of the utmost importance to investigate the ways in which the different dialects spoken by members of the community have influenced the surnames of families.

Keywords: Onomastics; Family Names; Naming Practice; Semantics; Culture; Sociolinguistics

*CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Luqman M Rababah, Department of English Language and Translation, Jadara University, Irbid 21110, Jordan; Email: rababah80@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 7 May 2025 | Revised: 11 July 2025 | Accepted: 21 July 2025 | Published Online: 10 September 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i9.10926>

CITATION

Rababah, L.M., Aljondi, M.A., 2025. Jordanian Families in the Northern Jordan Valley: A Socio-Semantic Study. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*. 7(9): 553–570. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i9.10926>

COPYRIGHT

Copyright © 2025 by the author(s). Published by Bilingual Publishing Group. This is an open access article under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

The naming practice has always been an ancient linguistic practice that no society can abandon. For this reason, names and naming practices have attracted the attention of many scientists as they depend on many social and cultural factors in the society from which they originate. Al-Tahat^[1] stated that the field of study of names is termed 'Onomastics', which is the science that studies proper names including personal names (first names) and family names. He also added that "onomastics" is a branch of sociolinguistics because it studies names and naming practices as a social and linguistic phenomenon that is affected by many social factors in society, in addition to that it is a branch of semantics that examines the meaning and the derivation of names^[2].

Naming is considered a universal practice and a linguistic act closely related to the culture of the society from which this language came, and therefore the naming process differs from one society to another and from one culture to another, so we see that gender, religion, beliefs, and society's attitude toward the name affect the choice of the name and its meaning, and this has been confirmed in many previous studies^[3,4]. Zhu^[5] confirms that "Names including family names, which are part of a language, are sure to reflect the distinct culture of the people using it". For this, it is necessary to study the names, whether personal or family names, from semantic (the meanings of these names) and sociolinguistic points of view. This is because sociolinguistics is a major part of understanding the relationship between any particular language and the culture of the community or any other social factor, as it plays a major role in explaining many linguistic phenomena such as naming practices.

In addition, since the name is a linguistic symbol that has meanings and connotations that reflect the feelings, culture and thoughts of the giver of the name, it is necessary to take into account the semantic aspect of these names and their social meaning. Through the name and knowing its meaning, we can learn a lot about the bearer of the name, his culture, identity and language. In fact, the name may have several meanings and interpretations that differ from one society to another and from one dialect to another. This shows the importance of the semantic role and knowing the correct meaning of the name for a clearer and more accurate understanding of the name and its connotations. For example, the family name "Abu Siraj"- /ʔabu sra:dʒ/- أبو سراج,

as the word "Siraj" may refer to several meanings, such as a light or a saddle, so knowing the exact meaning leads us to a correct interpretation of the social connotations of the name. The same thing applies to the word "Naseh"- /na:s'ih/- ناصح, as in some societies it means fat and in other societies it means intelligent or the person who gives advice. Therefore, studying a name and understanding its meaning within the linguistic and social context of society is important to give accurate explanations about the extent to which culture is related to the language from which the names originated.

In sum, names whether personal names or surnames are not abstract or have no meaning. 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^[5]. In fact, there are many cultural, social and historical reasons behind naming some family names. By knowing these reasons and the meanings of these names, we realize the extent to which language and names are related to the culture, customs and beliefs of society, and we also realize the social meanings and connotations of names such as lifestyle, social and economic level, gender, religion and traditions. Thus, this was the reason for the interest of many people and linguists in studying names and their meaning, origin and history.

2. Theoretical Framework

Onomastic and anthroponomastic studies are founded on the idea that a people's language and cultural practices are inextricably linked. It reflects how language is used as a strong instrument to examine and understand a society's worldview and how language is employed as a cultural practice. As a result, language can be used through a tiny level of words such as any small word or name with a certain meaning to observe and comprehend a society's social customs during daily activities.

Names are not abstract words without meaning, but rather reflect the social meanings and connotations where we can know a lot of information about the bearer of the name, whether a personal name or a surname, such as religion, language, gender, beliefs, customs and lifestyle in the society from which these names originated, and this was confirmed in many studies that dealt with names.

Studies on Jordanian family names and their meanings

from a socio-cultural perspective are few and did not include all families in all Jordanian regions^[6-9]. The northern Jordan Valley is among these regions that have been ignored in these types of studies, although it is a region with religious and political history and many civilizations such as the Romans, Byzantines, Arabs and Muslims lived in it as well as many battles took place in it such as the “Battle of Fahl”. In addition, it is an area of geographical importance, as it is a border area with Palestine and it is a rural and agricultural area as it was attracting many people who lived and worked in it. Thus, all these factors may play an important role in the reasons for naming these families and their meanings. That is why this study came to cover this gap, as the names of Jordanian families in the northern Jordan Valley were studied and analyzed, and to identify the origin and meaning of these names and the extent to which they were affected by the environment from which they originated.

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the meanings of the names of Jordanian families in northern Jordan Valley and their connotations?
2. What are the classifications under which these family names fall according to their meanings and the reasons for these names?
3. What role does culture play in these names?

The significance of the study is that, firstly, it concentrates on one of the important sociolinguistic themes in Jordanian society; that is the meaning of family names and the cultural variables that have affected the naming practice. This means that linguists can benefit from the results of the current study in examining the causes and sources of family names and their meanings which may open new ventures for interested researchers in onomastic studies. Furthermore, knowing the reasons behind naming these families with these names and their meanings and classifications may explain some cultural prevailing phenomena in a specific geographic region.

3. Literature Review and Previous Studies

In fact, there are few studies on family names (surnames), especially Arabic surnames from socio-semantic and cultural points of view. In this context, Al-Tahat^[1] mentioned that the study of Arabic surnames is difficult because

Arab linguists have abandoned writing about the origin and the sources of family names since the ninth century. He explained several reasons for this, including the increase in the Arab population and the absence of notation for a long period, which made it more difficult to trace the family sequence correctly. Also, because of the prominence of personal names upon the names of families, especially the names of people famous for their work or distinctive qualities they have, in addition to the similarity in the names of some families despite the differences in their origin. Furthermore, because of the repeated change in the names of families for some particular reasons or special events. The different forms of surnames and their change throughout history and the multiplicity of cultures, languages and religions in society may also play a role in the difficulty of studying them, as it is necessary to study and analyze the language and the changes in it to understand the meaning of surnames.

Despite the reasons mentioned above, linguists and researchers have realized the importance of studying the social and cultural context of the language of the community from which names emerged, for a greater understanding of the meaning of the name, its history and origin. Surnames are not abstract, but rather reflect the culture, identity, customs, traditions and beliefs of a particular society, and this is what sociolinguists have confirmed. Al-Tahat^[1] stated that “surnames are an expressive tool for the structure of a particular society”. He also clarified this through some of the Syrian surnames in Jordan, through which we can predict the structure of the Syrian society, as most of the Syrian surnames are related to professions, and this indicates that the Syrian society was interested in trade and business. Therefore, surnames can reflect the nature of the life of a particular community, its culture, interests, and identity.

On the other hand, many sociolinguists have pointed out the importance of family names and their connection to the culture and history of the society from which they emerged. That is why we find that some surnames are related to the occupation of the ancestors or the name and nickname of one of them, or they may be related to a place or geographical location. In this context, Shokhenmayer^[10] has indicated in his study about Russian, French, German and British surnames that there are statistically significant differences in naming patterns and name-giving features due to local history, culture, and name-giving traditions. In patronymic and

nicknames, in favor of Russian, in occupational, in favor of German, in toponymic, in favor of British.

In another study, Çatalkılıç^[11] investigated the relationship between village histories and family names in the Caucasus. Using a historical design, the researcher worked on reviewing the historical documents available in various sources. The study concluded that there is a strong relationship between village names and family names as family names may be derived from the name of the village, which mirrors the geographical aspect of family name classification. Furthermore, the study also indicated that some villages were given their names because a single family lives in them. Here, I also mention an example through my knowledge and study of the names of families in the Jordan Valley, which is Al-Balawneh / ʔalbalawna/ clan, as they were Bedouins from the Jordan clans and they settled in the Jordan Valley and then the area in which they inhabit was called Ghor Al-Balawneh after them.

Politics and history in a particular region or place may have a role in forming some surnames. Lewis^[12] has pointed out the role and influence of the Saxon invasions in shaping English surnames. He also explained how the Danes form surnames derived from the names of the settlements they had, such as Enderby and Danby, where the suffix-by means settlement. In addition to this, through speaking about British surnames, Shokhenmayer^[10] has also emphasized the extent to which they have been influenced by history, stating that the meanings of patronymic surnames can be understood by studying the origin and history of Great Britain. Also, it has been stated that most British surnames are of Germanic origin and this reflects their Anglo-Saxon background. In addition, he has indicated the existence of surnames of Latin, French, and Norman origin associated with the Norman conquest. The oldest surnames were found in Britain shortly after the Norman conquest in 1066. This system of naming in Old English gradually disappeared and these names became less common and were replaced by common European names. Moreover, occupational surnames in Britain have shown their influence in history as they reflect the lifestyle of medieval societies.

In addition to that, surnames are a contemporary requirement, due to the increase in population, as surnames provide more information about persons. In fact, surnames give more connotations and information about people who share

specific surnames. This was also confirmed by Shokhenmayer^[10], as he stated that names convey a society's identity in a variety of ways. They provide proof of vital non-linguistic information on cultural, social, economic, and other levels, not just from a historical standpoint, but also from a statistical standpoint. Surnames, or family names, are a particularly intriguing set of names that can be found all over Europe. In the same line, one can infer the spread of specific customs, crafts, hobbies, and interests from the number and location of people with definite surnames. There are many names, locations, jobs, and local crafts, but the information about their former significance is well stored in onomastic evidence, mostly surnames, as well as statistics.

Furthermore, when studying surnames and the reasons behind their naming, we can learn more information about our ancestors, their history, origin, life, traditions and culture. Family names reflect the society in which our ancestors lived which also shaped our identity. Tümer^[13] has pointed out in his study about Jordanian family names to several functions for the family names. Through the names of the families, we can determine the origin of our ancestors and their place of residence, whether in the old village or town or even another country, in addition to knowing the social status of the family through some of the family names that refer to crafts and professions of our ancestors. Also, Jordanian family names reflect the prevailing social values and the community beliefs, as well as the extent to which our ancestors were affected by the natural environment around them, which appears through some names that refer to animals, birds, plants, flowers, etc. Therefore, studying the language of society through understanding the prevailing naming practice in it and the surnames that emerged from it is of great importance to take a broad look at the lifestyle in ancient societies. This was also confirmed by Hussein^[14] when he stated that “people's identities and heritage are often indicated by certain forms of language, such as their names”.

Knight^[15] also asserted one of the most important cultural facts that have been a sociolinguistic phenomenon from the beginning of history by claiming that surnames mirror the socioeconomic level of the family and indicate its status in any given society.

This study's distinct focus on the socio-semantic analysis of family and village names within a particular rural setting—the Northern Jordan Valley—set it apart from oth-

ers in both regional and local contexts. This study combines cultural discourse analysis and oral history to reveal how names serve as carriers of identity, memory, and tribal lineage, whereas the majority of earlier research has examined naming practices from sociolinguistic or historical perspectives. Rich insights into the interaction between language, culture, and collective heritage are provided by its in-depth qualitative approach, which is based on interviews with members of the local community. This area is still largely unexplored in Jordanian and larger Arab onomastic research.

Therefore, it is through what is mentioned in the previous studies on surnames^[15–18], we are aware of the relationship of culture and its impact on language and surnames, where surnames play an important role in understanding the structure of society and its history and the nature of the lives of its members^[19–21]. So, that is why they have gained the attention of researchers and linguists who are trying to understand the meaning and history of surnames in a particular society, and why people are so interested and proud of their family names. On the other hand, after reviewing the literature and the previous studies, the researcher found that there are few studies that dealt with the names of Jordanian families from the socio-cultural and semantic points of view, and that they did not cover all families in all regions, including the northern Jordan Valley. There are few studies conducted on this region and did not address any sociolinguistic aspects of the names of families in it and their meanings. Therefore, this study came to cover this gap.

4. Methodology

The study employed a qualitative design as the researcher conducted interviews with a selected convenient sample of family figures representing the different families at northern Jordan valley. This type of research design has been used because it is considered the most effective research design in such kind of studies, as it helps researchers to approach the phenomenon under examination. Moreover, employing face-to-face interviews gave the researcher an invaluable opportunity to benefit from some important information that cannot be provided by the participants if another research method was employed.

The study population includes all the families at Northern Jordan Valley (Northern Aghwar district) in Irbid Gov-

ernorate, which includes the towns in it from the north of the northern Aghwar to its south, such as Al-Karimah, Abu Habil, Al-Qaren, Wadi Al-Rayyan, Al-Mashare', Sulaikhat, Al-Sheikh Hussein, Waqqas, Al-Manshiya, Northern Shouna, Al-Adasiyah. A convenient sample was selected in this study, as the study sample consisted of 27 Jordanian families from different areas in the northern Jordan Valley. The names of these families were classified according to the classification followed by Al-Tahat^[1], who in turn adapted the classifications of Hanks and Hodges^[22]. The classifications that Al-Tahat concluded in his study on family names in Jordan included seven main categories, which were Local surnames, Occupational surnames, Anecdotal surnames, Surnames derived from nicknames, Patronymic surnames, Seasonal surnames, and Regional surnames.

To collect the data, the researcher developed a semi-structured face-to-face interview based on a comprehensive review of the relevant literature and previous studies. The researcher conducted interviews with 27 people representing the families in the study sample. The researcher tried to conduct interviews with people who have the ability to provide the necessary and reliable information so that they provide information that can help in achieving the objectives of the study, such as leading figures (Sheikhs) from these families and family members who are elderly and who were familiar with this type of studies.

The interviews were conducted with the participants in their homes or at any place they feel to be their comfort zone. This enables the interviewees to be secure and feel free when giving the responses they find suitable to the questions being posed by the researcher.

The researcher began the interview by explaining the purposes of the study to the interviewees and obtaining their informed consent for the consideration of the research ethics. To assure that the interviewees' responses are fully recorded, the researcher read the question in Arabic individually to each of them, and their responses were written on a separate paper and sometimes the recorder was used as well. The data collection period lasted for more than one month as the process of data collection firstly started by contacting the interviewee to take an appointment and then visiting him at his home. The period of the interview ranged between 30 and 45 minutes.

The researcher used qualitative analysis in this study.

The names were analyzed and the results were discussed in the next section of the study, where the analysis consisted two-fold: Firstly, the semantic aspect that explores the meanings of family names and knowing their accurate meanings through the answers of the interviewees about the meaning of their family names and the reasons behind the naming as well as understanding these meanings by knowing the social context from which they arose. Also, the social meaning associated with these names was discussed. Secondly, the sociolinguistic aspect that links these names and their meanings with the social and cultural background of the society from which they arose, as this appears by knowing the reasons for naming these families by these names. This part of the analysis focused on classifying these names as this takes the form of a typology of the family names according to the reasons behind their naming. Also, in this part of the analysis, the current study classified the family names according to the classification presented by Al-Tahat^[1] in his study about Jordanian family names, who adapted his work by referring to the works of Hanks^[22]. These authors are pioneers in the study of family names. The dictionaries they wrote are considered reliable sources in the field of family names and are highly recommended by sociolinguists in countries such as the United States of America and Great Britain.

The typology of family names according to the study of Al-Tahat^[1] includes the following categories:

1. **Regional Surnames:** Names that indicate that their holders are from foreign regions of origin, i.e. from regions outside Jordan.
2. **Local Surnames:** Names that derived from the names of the regions inside Jordan.
3. **Occupational Surnames:** These family names describe a specific craft or a profession one of the ancestors was known to practice in a specific region.
4. **Anecdotal Surnames:** Those names that are formed on the basis of an anecdote or specific event that happened in the past and led to the naming of the family.
5. **Nicknames:** The family name is taken from a nickname that is given to one of the ancestors based on a specific characteristic.
6. **Patronymic Surnames:** Such family names indicate that the family was named after one of the great ancestors who was known in the past for his deeds.

7. **Seasonal Surnames:** Names that indicate the meaning of something related to the seasons, day, or month.

5. Results and Discussion

This section presents an overview of what the researcher obtained from information about family names at northern Jordan Valley. As it is known, the study of family names in oriental cultures is of great importance, as the majority of community members are proud of their family names and feel enthusiasm and responsibility when raising such a topic, because the family name reflects the history and origin of their family and the achievements of its members throughout the history. The names of families represent their identity and social status.

It is necessary to understand the opinion of the person being interviewed and to understand his beliefs and his attitude towards the subject of the study, so as to be able to obtain sufficient information about the aspects that are examined in the study. Nonetheless, the researcher acknowledges one significant fact, which is that the Jordanians are very keen and insightful when talking about their families and the meaning of family names they hold in addition to talking about the history of their families. Thus, the atmosphere of data collection was relatively sensitive for both the researcher and the interviewee.

At the completion of the data collection phase, the study came out with five categories of Jordanian family names. They are regional surnames, occupational surnames, anecdotal surnames, surnames derived from nicknames, and patronymic surnames.

For the majority of those interviewed, they cited various reasons and explanations behind why a particular family bears a certain name. The researcher concluded that these reasons are directly related to the social and cultural context of the society at that time. Customs, traditions, beliefs, religion, culture, political and social events play a major role in the naming process in the oriental societies and have a great impact on the reason for naming families with these names, as this was clear when analyzing and classifying data about family names.

After analyzing and studying the family names in the northern Jordan Valley, the researcher concluded by categorizing the surnames as follows:

5.1. Regional Surnames

Names belonging to this category refer to the regions from which these families originally came, as these regions are from outside Jordan so they are called regional surnames, such as:

1. Al-qasrawi

القصر اوي

/ʔal-qasʕra:wi/

Coming from Qasra

This family name comes from the name of one of the Palestinian villages called “Qasra”. This village is near Nablus in the West Bank and it is a rural village where people work in farming, raising animals and other agricultural activities.

The village was occupied by the Israeli army in 1967 and people were forced to flee from this occupation and come to the Northern Jordan Valley. Those who were in this region called the family “/ʔal-qasʕra:wi/–القصر اوي” as an indication that they come from this village.

2. Abu Zaina

أبو زينة

abu zeina

Coming from Um Al Zainat

This family name originates from one village called “Um Al Zainat- / ʔumil zeinæt/ أم الزينات” which was occupied in 1948 by Israeli army. This village is near Haifa in Palestine and the people settled in it were working in farming and other activities. Thus, the family name derived from the name of this village where the first grandfather of this family was called Abu Zaina according to the place from where he came.

3. Al-ta'meri

التعمري

/ʔal-taʕmari/

Coming from Bait Ta'mar

The origin of this family comes from a village in Palestine called “Bait Ta'mar”, which was given this name after Caliph Omar Bin Al Khattab who stayed in the village for few days and prayed in it. Some historical sources indicate that this Caliph built a mosque (Masjed) and then people started naming this village Bait Omar, which became later Bait Ta'mar due to linguistic changes over the history.

4. Al-alawneh

العلاونه

/ʔal-ʕalawna/

Coming from Al-Ula Governorate in Saudi Arabia

This family name is related to “Al-Ula” city, which is located north of Medina in Hijaz, where the great grandfather of this family who was called Mohammed Al-Allawi came from the Al-Ula area in Hijaz to the east of Jordan about 400 years ago. He settled in the town of Al-Taybeh in Irbid, and then “Al-alawneh” clan was formed whose members were later distributed between this town and the town of Waqas at northern Jordan Valley.

5. Al-zubaidi

الزبيدي

/ʔal-zbeidi/

Coming from the city of Zabid in Yemen

The origin of the family name goes back to the city of “Zabid” in Yemen, where the Zubaidi tribe is one of the largest Arab tribes in the Arab world. When they embraced Islam, they fought with the Islamic conquests all over the word and participated in the battles over the years, including the battle of “Al-Qadisiyah” and the liberation of Iraq and in Palestine and others. They had a role in spreading Islam and defending Muslims in the Levant and Iraq. So, they are now in most Arab countries and some of them lived in the north of Palestine, and then moved to Jordan in the northern Jordan Valley, which is the closest area adjacent to Palestine.

6. Al Humaisi

الحميصي

/ʔal-hmeisʕi/

Coming from Homs in Syria

The family's origin and the meaning of this name go back to the city of “Homs” in Syria. The grandfather of this family lived in Palestine, then migrated to Jordan and settled in Wadi Al-Rayyan at northern Jordan Valley. As a result, people started calling them by this name in the past according to a place from where they came.

5.2. Occupational Surnames

As indicated earlier in this study, occupational surnames are those names that are derived from an occupation or a craft that one of the great grandfathers used to practice. The examples of this category are:

1. Al-Sawaei

السواعي

/ʔas-sawa:ʕi/

Those who work as postmen

The name of the family is related to the profession of their great grandfather, who worked as a postman and he was transmitting messages and letters to Muslim leaders between the Hijaz and the Levant, and he was also distinguished by his lightweight and speed of movement. Hence, his offspring were also called Al-Sawaei, after their grandfather's profession. Such a naming practice can be found in the various societies in the Middle East countries.

2. Al-Khateeb

الخطيب

/ʔal-xatʕi:b/

The man who preaches at the mosque and teaches the children how to read and write

One of the family members of this family attributes the family name to the fact that one of his great grandfathers worked as a preacher at the mosque and who also was responsible for teaching the children in the village how to read and write. People in the village started calling this person Al-khatib /ʔal-xatʕi:b/ and this name extended to his descendants.

3. Al-Khatatbeh

الخطاطبة

/ʔal-xatʕa:tʕba/

The educated person who teaches children or who works as a preacher in the mosques

The name of this family goes back to the profession of the great-grandfather of this family, who opened a school in his village and worked as a teacher for the children at that time as he was teaching them how to read and write. Currently, most members of this family name live in Ajloun and Al-Karimah region in the northern Jordan Valley and in other areas in Jordan. Also, it is said that the origin of this family is from the Hijaz and they came to the south of Jordan and then distributed in different regions of Jordan and in the north.

This surname is used very frequently in different regions of the Arab countries to describe a person who performs a significant profession in the city or village and who works as a preacher in the mosque or a teacher who gives knowledge and teaches people science and religious matters.

4. Al Jundi

الجندي

/ʔal-dʒundi/

The soldier: the man who works in the army

Working in the army is one of the oldest professions in the history of man. However, during the Ottoman rule, it was very rare to go voluntarily to sign into the army. Thus, it is rare to find individuals working in the army and this means that people as far as a few kilometers know where the soldier lives and who are his children. This leads to naming his children in this rare profession.

The reason for giving the family this name is in relation to the profession of their eighth grandfather who fought with the Ottoman Empire and was called the soldier / ʔal-dʒundi/. This family is scattered in several Arab countries, but as for the members of this family who live in the northern Jordan Valley, they came from Palestine from Haifa, and it is said that their origin is from Maarrat al-Numan in Syria. Members of this family have been famous for serving in military institutions over the years.

5.3. Anecdotal Surnames

The names belonging to this category indicate that the family name appeared as a result of a specific event leading to attaching the name to the person and his descendants. Examples of this category are:

1. Abu Al Rub

أبو الرب

/ʔaburrub/

The father of the paste

Giving this name to the family as indicated by one of the family members has a history. He said that the great grandfather of this family, who was called Sheikh Mohammed, visited one village to be a mediator in a dispute between two families in this village. At the dispute conciliation council, there were some women from the village who were making carob paste /ʔalrrub/ in a big pot on the fire. One of the men in the village wanted to joke with this great grandfather by saying to him: if you are a real sheikh or a man of Allah, go and put your hand in the pot and start moving the carob paste with your bare hand. Sheikh Mohammed said the name of Allah and put his bare hand in the pot while the carob paste was boiling without being burnt or getting hurt. After this incidence, people started calling him Abu Al Rub- أبو الرب- /ʔaburrub/.

2. Al-shwayyat

الشويات

/ʔal-fwajjæt/

Little things

In fact, there are two stories about why a family is called by that name. In the first story, it is said that the reason for the name is that the inhabitants, when they wanted to form clans, gathered (Al-shwayyat) themselves, that is the few people and the few groups joined together and formed a clan called /ʔal-ʃwajjæt/, i.e., the few groups that united and formed a clan. As for the second story, in which it is said that the grandfather of this family, when he was asked for something, he used to say “/kamæn ʃwajja/ كمان شوية”, which means just a little bit. Therefore, people began to repeat the man's sentence and that is why family members were called by this name.

The origin of this family goes back to Hijaz from the region of Ha'il and they moved to southern Jordan and then moved to Al-Wahadna area and Kufranjah in Ajloun and settled there. The reason for their presence at northern Jordan Valley, especially in Al-Karimah area, is due to the work and some special circumstances for some individuals of the this clan, which made them live and settle at northern Jordan Valley.

3. Al-Kafarneh

الكفارنة

/ʔal-kafa:rna/

The story of this family goes back to the sheikh (the leader) of the village of Al-kafr in Jabal al-Arab in Palestine, where he had guests and he honored them and gave them the best hospitality. When these guests left, they saw on their way a girl carrying mansaf on her head, as she was taking it to the tillers who work for her father, and when they asked her who she was, she told them that she is the daughter of the sheikh of this village. Although they knew that she was the daughter of the person who hosted them, they forced her to stop and they ate from the food above her head. After that, she returned to her father and replaced the mansaf with dirt and stones, as her father was surprised by her behavior and asked her about the reason. She told him what happened and said to him when you have men who protect your food, daughters and your honor, then you eat food other than dirt and stones. Her words enraged the men of her village, so they chased after those men and killed them. Therefore, a war occurred between the tribe of this girl and the tribe of those men, but after the killing, destruction and devastation

that befell the tribe of the girl, they were forced to leave their place of living and they went to Jordan Valley and the villages of Palestine, and people started to call them “Ahl Al-kafarneh” which means the people of that girl whose story became known at that time. Now, this family lives in Palestine, the Levant and Jordan, especially the northern Jordan Valley, in area of Al-Mashare' and Tal Al-Arbæen.

5.4. Nicknames

The family names in this category are taken from nicknames that are given to one of the ancestors based on a specific characteristic or a physical attribute. The families that represent this category are:

1. Al-Qarrut

القروط

/ʔal-qarru:t/

The child whose father and mother are dead

Giving a nickname is one of the common naming practices in the oriental societies. The nickname in the case of the above mentioned family was given to two orphan children whose mother and father- who was a prince- were killed and one of their uncles took care of them. The nickname stuck with the children of this prince and their offspring for more than two hundred years now.

2. Al Bishtawi

البشتاوي

/ʔal-biftawi/

The man who wears a wool cape

The family's origin related to Palestine, where they lived in Bisan before they moved to Waqqas in the northern Jordan Valley. The family was given this name because the great grandfather of the family met one of the Ottoman Sultanate men who gave him a present, which was a wool cape (Albisht). Because of this, this man and his descendants were given the nickname /ʔal-biftawi/- البشتاوي, after the great grandfather of the family who wore the Bisht and the name stuck with the family until this day.

3. Al-Sari

الساري

/ʔal-særi/

The man who goes out early in the morning

The family's origin goes back to Palestine from Marj Ibn Amer in Haifa, and then they migrated due to the Israeli occupation in 1948 to Jordan and settled in the northern Jor-

dan Valley. This nickname was given to the great grandfather of this family, as he worked in farming and people used to see him go early at dawn after Al Fajer pray to work in the fields. This behavior lasted for a long time and the early walk to work was attached to this person and his children later, leading to the emergence of this family name.

4. Al-Fuhaili

الفحيلي

/ʔal-fheili/

A favourite and distinguished poet in his poetry

The history of this family name goes back to the grandfather of the family, Prince Al-Fuhaili, where he was receiving an important role in the Emirate of the Levant in the Umayyad era. He was distinguished by his poetry and also provided assistance to those from other clans seeking his help. Therefore, people gave him at that time the nickname “Al-Fuhaili” in reference to his high skill in poetry, and because he was a noble, fearless and chivalrous one for whom he sought refuge.

5. Al-Ghazzawi

الغزاوي

/ʔal-yazzawi/

Sticking a spear into the ground

The reason for naming the family with this name is that the prince of the clan at that time was a lot of conquests and many tribes feared him, as the members of this clan were invading the surrounding tribes and they used to stick the spear in the area they seized and this is why they were given this nickname as when they stick a spear into the ground, it means that they seized it and it became theirs, and that is the reason for calling them /ʔal-yazzawi/. It is said by some researchers that this Al-Ghazzawi clan had nothing to do with Gaza in Palestine, but rather they lived in Sakhras in Ajloun and then they left for Jordan Valley in Bisan and Tal Al Arbaeen.

6. Al-Asoud

العسود

/ʔal-ʕsu:d/

Very strong

The name of the family goes back to the great-grandfather of the family, who was nicknamed Al-Asoud because he is strong and tough on his enemies. It is said that the origin of this family is from Hijaz, then they moved to Beit Dajan in Palestine and settled there, but after an incident

of murder, blood and revenge, part of them left for several regions in Palestine and Jordan, where they settled in the Jordan Valley.

7. Al-Masalikh

المصاليخ

/ʔal-mas'a:li:x/

The Masalikh clan lives in Al-Mashare' area in the northern Jordan Valley, as their origin is from Hijaz, from which they migrated to several regions for different reasons such as the Levant, Palestine and Jordan, where they lived in Bisan before moving to the Jordan Valley. It is said that the reason for calling them by this name is that they have a long history of wars and they participated in the battle of Dhi Qar. Also, during the Persians' attack, their leader asked them to take off their clothes in order to differentiate themselves and this is why this nickname was given to them from which their family name was derived. In fact, there is no evidence to prove this story, as there are a lot of stories that have been said about the origin of their name.

8. Ibdah

إبداح

/ʔibdæh/

The brave man or sharp sword

The family's origin goes back to the Bani Sa'idan clan in Palestine who used to live in Al-Mansi in Haifa and then migrated due to the Israeli occupation in 1948 to Jordan and settled in Wadi Al-Rayyan in the northern Jordan Valley. As for the reason for calling the family by this name, it is said that it is a metaphor for the sharp sword, due to the participation of their ancestors in the Islamic conquests in the Levant, so they were given this nickname “Ibdah”. It is also said that it is the nickname of their great-grandfather, as he was fighting to spread Islam in the Islamic conquests.

5.5. Patronymic Surnames

Such family names indicate that the family was named after one of the great ancestors known in the past for his deeds. The families that represent this category:

1. Al-Rayahneh

الرياحنة

/ʔal-raja:hna/

The family name related to those who are attached to one personal name who is named after a plant, basil, which is characterized by a nice odor. The family name was given

this name after their first grandfather Rehan Al Humaidi, one of the tribal chiefs two hundred years ago. This man was a tribal judge who worked on reconciliation among the different tribes in the past.

2. Al-Farhat

الفرحات

/ʔal-farhæt/

Being joyful

The reason for naming the family name with this name goes back to one of the ancestors of this family, who was called Sheikh Farhat, who worked as the Secretary of Supply for Saif Al-Dawla Al-Hamadani. This family migrated from Palestine to Jordan with the families that were displaced due to the Israeli occupation, and it is said they are of Turkish origin.

3. Al-Nuaimat

النعيمة

/ʔal-nʕeimæt/

The state of being happy

The origin of this family goes back to Hijaz, especially from Taif, and they migrated to the Levant, Iraq and Syria and settled in different regions in Jordan. It was said that the grandfather of this family was named **Nuaim** - /nuʕeim/ نُعيم, and he is the brother of Izz al-Din Abu Hamra, and their lineage goes back to Imam al-Hussein Ibn Ali. Therefore, the reason for naming the family was that of their grandfather, Nuaim.

4. Al-Awwadin

العوادين

/ʔal-ʕawadi:n/

of Awwad

Al-Awwadin clan goes back to the companion Jaber bin Abdullah Al-Ansari Al-Qahtani, and it is said that he left Medina and settled in Palestine, as a large part of them migrated forcibly to Jordan after the Jewish occupation. Now, they live in different areas in Jordan, including the northern Jordan Valley. It is also said that one of the descendants of that companion, who is called Awwad Al-Sidqi, is the grandfather of this family. Therefore, after him, his grandchildren were called "Weld Al-Awwadin".

5. Al-shugairi

الشقيري

/ʔal-ʃqeiri/

They are a family of Palestinian origin who used to live

in Marj Ibn Amer in Palestine in the village of Abu Shusha, where it was named the town of Shuqairat after them before they migrated to Jordan into the Jordan Valley and other countries due to the Israeli occupation of the Marj. As for the reason for the family name, the name goes back to Sheikh Mutlaq Al-Sakran Al-shugairi, who was the leader of the Marj Ibn Amer clans, who came to Palestine with the forces of Salah Al-Din Al-Ayyubi when he was besieging the Karak Castle in southern Jordan. It is also said that people at that time called the grandfather of this family with the name "Shugairi" because he was distinguished by his blondness.

6. Al-Tuwaisat

الطويسات

/ʔal-tʰweisæt/

of Tuwais

The origin of Al-Tuwaisat in the northern Jordan Valley goes back to the area of Balqa, where their grandfather whose name is Tuwais /tʰuwe:s/ طويس, came to the northern Ghor from Zizia in Balqa and lived in the northern Jordan Valley. Now, members of this family most exist in the town of Sheikh Hussein and have joined the Ghazzawi clans in the Jordan Valley. They have relatives in the Lydda area in Palestine, and here it should be noted that the Tuwaisat in the Jordan Valley has no relationship or any connection with the Tuwaisat in Wadi Musa, but rather it is just a similarity of names. Therefore, it is noticeable from the above that the family name came after the name of their grandfather, Tuwais.

6. Discussion

In the beginning, after classifying the family names according to the reasons for their naming in order to understand the extent to which these names are related to the culture of the society from which they emerged and the extent to which social and cultural factors influence the naming practice, it should be noted that not all of the names of families at northern Jordan Valley applied to the classifications of Al-Tahat^[1] in his study about Jordanian family names. The study was limited to only five out of seven classifications, excluding local and seasonal surnames. By analyzing the sample of the study and studying the names of families at northern Jordan Valley, the researcher found that there are no family names that fall under seasonal names because they

are rare surnames in Jordan, where Al-Tahat^[1] hardly found names that fall under this category in his study.

In addition to this, one of the possible reasons for the lack of this category at northern Jordan Valley is that seasonal names may be in rural areas that do not witness many events, so the option of individuals at that time is to resort to names from nature because it is the option available from the environment around them. On the other hand, although the Jordan Valley is a rural and agricultural area, it was a border and remote area inhabited by a few Bedouin tribes in the past before experiencing population growth as a result of migration to it for several factors that were mentioned in this study. It was governed by political and religious factors, so people at that time were not interested in deriving family names from the nature or environment around them.

As for the local surnames, the researcher found one family that falls under this category, which is Al-Shawabkeh/ʔaʃwæbka/الشوابكة, where it is said that its origin is from Shobak, but this category was excluded due to the lack of family names that fall under it at northern Jordan Valley and because the researcher was unable to obtain sufficient and reliable information about this family. In addition, the researcher was unable to conduct an interview with a family member who had sufficient, reliable and accurate knowledge about the name, history and origin of the family.

In terms of social analysis of these families and looking at their meanings and origins, we find that some surnames refer in their meanings and origins to proper names, whether to personal names or place names. Examples of these families are:

- a) Family names that refer to proper names (personal names) such as patronymic surnames:

Al-Rayahneh	From their first grandfather " <i>Rehan Al Humaidi</i> "
Al-Farhat	From their first grandfather " <i>Sheikh Farhat</i> "
Al-Nuaimat	From their first grandfather " <i>Nuaim</i> "

One of the common naming practices in the past was to name the family after their first grandfather. It was part of the culture, traditions and values of societies, especially oriental societies, to call someone's offspring by the name of this person, either because he is a well-known figure and has a great social status, or for the sake of respect and appreciation for this person, or in order to distinguish this man and his descendants for a specific reason. On the other hand, some studies have confirmed that some personal names are

similar to family names in terms of the origin of the name, which goes back to a well-known historical and religious figure but the difference that was observed is that most of the names of families with a religious impression go back to their roots and ancestors to the name of a companion, a prophet, or any well-known religious or historical figure, while personal names are named after religious and historical figures in honor and respect for them.

- a) Family names that refer to proper names (names of places) such as regional surnames:

Al-qasrawi	From " <i>Qasra</i> " in Paestine
Al-alawneh	From " <i>Al-Ula</i> " Governorate in Saudi Arabia
Al-zubaidi	From the city of " <i>Zabid</i> " in Yemen
Al-Humaisi	From " <i>Homs</i> " in Syria

One of the linguistic practices prevalent in many societies is to name and call an individual who comes from a particular place or country to another region by the name of the region from which he came. This common linguistic practice is used in societies where strangers come to them from other regions, so the stranger is called by the name of the region from which he came. Since the northern Jordan Valley region was considered a remote area in the past and

a few tribes lived in it, any new person who came to them from somewhere called him by the name of this place to distinguish him from the original inhabitants of the region. Notzon and Nesom^[23] and Mphande^[24] postulated in their study that remote areas- such as the case in this study, which was the Northern Jordan Valley-, are known to contain many families whose surnames come from the names of places. They start distinguishing each family by giving the name of

such place.

In addition to that, the Levant region was generally considered a destination for many individuals who came from several countries in the past and settled there. Many Arab and Jordanian families came from Hijaz, Yemen and other countries and settled in the Levant region which includes Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. This may be due to many reasons, including the geographical nature, the availability of food and the appropriate weather, and also the political factor in the Levant region may have the effect of attracting fighters from many Arab regions to defend their beliefs and religion. Also, there may be some reasons such as tribal wars and some special reasons related to individuals, which were the cause of their migration to other countries. Therefore, we find families who came from countries such as Yemen, Saudi Arabia and other regions and then settled in the Levant such as Al-alawneh, Al-zubaidi and others, where they were named after the places from which they came.

On the other hand, it is noticeable from the results of the study and the social analysis of surnames that the majority of Jordanian families who live in the northern Jordan Valley are of Palestinian origin or came from Palestine, and this became clear by tracing the origin of these families and the reasons for their names. These families were displaced due to the Israeli occupation and tribal wars in the past. So, the Jordan Valley was the closest place for these individuals looking for refuge and safety, as the Jordan Valley is located on the border between Palestine and Jordan. Examples of these families include Al-qasrawi, Abu Zaina, Al-ta'mari, Al-khateeb, Al Jundi, Abu Al Rub, Al-kafarneh, Al Bishtawi, Al-Sari, Al-Asoud, Ibdah, Al-Farhat, Al-Awwadin, Al-shugairi, and others.

Those who lived in the Palestinian cities and the surrounding villages were forced to leave their homes and look for new places to settle in. Since the Jordan Valley was known for its farming and agricultural activities from the mid 1960's of the 20th century after the opening of King Abdullah I Canal, it attracted many people who were looking

for refuge and an opportunity to have a work. This is why there are families who settled at the Jordan Valley coming from various villages in Jordan and Palestine. The families that came from Palestine coexisted and merged with the Jordanian society and became part of the Jordanian people and have a kinship relationship, friendship and business. Therefore, they were granted the Jordanian nationality to be under the leadership and protection of the Hashemites. Furthermore, it is well known that The Levant countries are characterized by the fact that the kinship relations between the various families are strong and this is evident in the place of the study. Therefore, the influence of the political aspect, history, as well as the lifestyle prevailing at that time such as tribal wars, which caused the emigration of many individuals to this region, appears in the naming practice for some families, as it was found through the family names that fall under the category of regional surnames that they refer in their meaning to the original place from which these families came, such as Al-Qasrawy and Al-Ta'mari.

Similarly, Darlu, Bloothoof and Brouwer^[25] have noted that the same pattern of naming practice was followed in the Middle Ages in German, where rural immigrants to German towns were named after their place of origin. Also, it was found through the results of this study and its comparison with the results of other studies dealing with classifications of names, whether family names or personal names, that the family names which refer to the names of places are a result that family members were originally inhabiting, while studies that dealt with personal names, whose meaning refers to the names of places, showed that the reason for naming is due to the giver of the name's love for these places, as was shown in the study of Al-Zumor^[3].

The results of the socio-semantic analysis of the families have also showed that there are families whose meanings refer to "strength and violence" and evoke the sense of horror, as well as others whose meanings refer to weapons, where this is also due to social and cultural reasons and factors. Examples of these families are:

Al-Asoud	It means a person who is very strong and cruel to his enemies, and it also means a snake that catches and tracks its prey until it kills it.
Al-Fuhaili	It means a distinguished person in poetry and it also means the noble, fearless and chivalrous one.
Al-Ghazzawi	means sticking a spear into the ground.
Ibdah	means the brave man or sharp sword.

The impact of history, religious wars, conquests and even the prevailing lifestyle in the past between societies on names and naming practices appears, as the lifestyle in the past was dominated by invasions and tribal wars, which led individuals to resort to certain naming practices in order to show strength and sovereignty, as well as instilling terror in the hearts of other tribes through personal names, family names, and even nicknames and such examples of that in this study are Al-Ghazawi, Al-Suqur, Al-Asoud and Ibdah. Hussein^[14], in his study of Jordanian family names, referred to some family names derived from the names of fierce animals and birds, and even frightening mythical names such as ghouls, eagles, falcons, etc, where the aim was to provoke terror in the hearts of other tribes.

In addition, it is noticeable after comparing the results of this study with previous studies on the extent of the impact of history, culture and lifestyle in Arab societies on their naming practice, that some masculine personal names, especially in some tribes in the past, are similar to family names that refer to some animals or frightening surnames, especially in societies where tribal wars were common, unlike the names of girls, which were more influenced by the religious character, as appeared in the study of Alzamil (2020).

Al-Sari	means the man who goes out early in the morning.
Al-Asoud	means the man who is very strong.
Al-Qarrout	means the child whose father and mother are dead.
Al Bishtawi	means the man who wears a wool cape called "Albisht".

After analyzing the names of families in this category, it was found that they refer to personal attributes and certain traits and characteristics of one of the ancestors, which were the reason for giving him a certain nickname related to these traits, from which some family names were derived. In addition, a nickname may be given as a result of a specific event or an action that a person used to do. Therefore, the language, beliefs, customs, traditions and lifestyle of the members of society are all reflected in their choice of some nicknames and family names.

The study also showed that surnames derived from nicknames were the most prevalent. This was confirmed by Al-Tahat^[1] in his study that this category is the most preva-

This indicates the extent to which their beliefs and culture influence the way they give names to their sons, especially in oriental societies that give their male sons such names so that they may obtain from their names a share of qualities of strength and chivalry.

In the context of talking also about the culture of the community and its history, which is dominated by wars and fighting, the similarity in the naming practices of different societies between personal names and family names appears. There are names, whether they are personal names or family names, derived from the names of weapons, and this indicates the common beliefs and cultures in Arab societies. In a study conducted by Al-Zumor (2009) on personal names in Yemen, many personal names were mentioned that refer to weapons, as well as in this study, which showed that some family names in the northern Jordan Valley also refer to weapons such as Abu Seif and Ibdah.

With regard to surnames derived from nicknames, the meaning of family names refers to certain traits and characteristics of one of the ancestor, as naming a person with a specific nickname is a very common practice, especially in oriental societies. Examples of these families and their meanings and connotations:

lent in oriental societies, due to the simplicity of the words used directly from the surrounding environment. On the other hand, occupational surnames were the most common surnames in Germany, and patronymic surnames were also the most common in France as reported in Shokhenmayer's study^[10]. Each society has customs and interests that may differ from one society to another, according to the lifestyle and culture prevailing in these societies.

From the linguistic point of view, it is noted that most family names that refer to the name of a place and also many nicknames end with the suffix /y/, as this is a common linguistic practice, especially in Arab societies. Some examples of these surnames are:

القصر اوي/ʔal-qasʕra:wi/	Regional surname.
الحميصي/ʔal-hmeisʕi/	Regional surname.

البشتاوي /ʔal-biʃtawi/

Surname derived from a nickname.

الغزاوي /ʔal-ɣazzawi/

Surname derived from a nickname.

This was also confirmed by some researchers such as Al-Tahat^[1] as he stated that adding the suffix /y/ at the end of the name of a place to indicate the surname is a unique linguistic practice in the Arab countries. For example, he cited the family name /malka:wi/ - ملكاوي – from Malka as one obvious linguistic practice in Jordan, and this was very evident in this study.

In addition to that, it is also noticeable about naming family names that it is a common linguistic practice in Arab societies when referring to the descendants of a person and the individuals from one family using a plural form. This is done in more than one linguistic style, but the most common is to add the suffix /at/ or /ah/, /eh/ at the end of the name. Among the examples given in this study:

Al-Nuaimat	refers to the descendants of the first grandfather “Nuaim”.
Al-Tuwaisat	refers to the descendants of the first grandfather “Tuwais”.
Al-Rayahneh	refers to the descendants of the first grandfather “Rehan”.
Al-Alawneh	refers to the descendants of the first grandfather who came from Al-Ula in Saudi Arabia.
Al-Khatatbeh	refers to the descendants of the first grandfather who worked as a preacher and a teacher at mosques.

There are also family names whose meaning refers to a profession or a craft, and this reflects the structure of society, the social and economic level of individuals and their lifestyle. Examples of that in this study are:

Al-Sawaei	means “those who work as postmen”.
Al-khateeb	means “the man who teaches and preaches at the mosque”.
Al- khatatbeh	means “the man who teaches and preaches at the mosque”.
Al-Jundi	means “the soldier”.

A common practice in Middle Eastern societies is to call someone by the name of the profession in which they work. Confirming this fact, some well-known families were given their names based on the profession their ancestors practiced. For example, one of the major families in the Levant countries is /haddæd/- حدّاد - *blacksmith*. This also applies to other families such as /ʔal-nadʒa:r/- النجار - *carpenter*, /ʔal-xaja:t/ - الخياط - *tailor* and others in many Arab countries. Naming a family according to the profession or craft is a common linguistic practice. Emphasizing this, Notzon and Nesom (2005) explained that the prevalence of occupation surnames can be attributed to one significant fact, that is occupations and crafts were respectful professions in the past. Furthermore, people were proud to hold a surname reflecting an occupation, and this is why people did not oppose being given a craft as a surname. This fact has been confirmed by many of the interviewees in this category because people in the past respected the one who had a craft or a profession as this profession constituted the identity of individuals and that the owner of the craft would earn the

respect of others if he became professional, maintained and diligent in his work.

It is also noted in this study that there are some names whose meaning is clear so that guessing the meaning and the reason for the family name is correct, such as occupational surnames and some nicknames such as Al-Qarrou, Al-Sari, Al-Fuhaili because they are common words in society and are used by many members of the Arab community. Despite that, there are some surnames for which the correct meaning can only be known when we know the social context from which these surnames arose by knowing the reason for the name through which we realize the correct meaning of the name, especially with names that carry more that interpretation and connotation by people who have no information about these families. Examples of these families are Al Humaisi, Abu Al Rub, where their meaning may refer to a specific profession, but by knowing the reason for naming these families, we realize that their meaning refers to something different from what we thought. Also, Al-Ghazawi, which may refer to a family originally from Gaza in Palestine, but after knowing

the reason for the name, we realize the correct meaning of it and the ambiguity of many people who do not know about these families is removed. Therefore, it is necessary to know and study these names and their correct meaning within their social context in order to have a more accurate understanding of society, the social and linguistic phenomena of individuals and their lifestyle.

Finally, the classifications mentioned support the onomastic theory that there is a strong link between culture and language since the naming practice depends on social considerations and the culture prevailing in a particular society. Names are not abstract words that do not indicate any meaning, but rather they were closely related to the culture of the community and had meanings and valuable social connotations. Through the results of the social and cultural analysis of the family names at northern Jordan Valley and knowing their meanings, connotations, origins, and the reason for their naming, this study has shown how the culture, beliefs and lifestyle of a particular community have affected the naming practice of these families, as this was evident through the family names that fall under different classifications that express the extent to which the name and its connotations are affected by the social and cultural context of the society. On the other hand, through the names of families, we can understand the lifestyle, culture and history of these families. Surnames are a mirror of many aspects of the history of societies and individuals.

7. Conclusions

This research examines the name conventions of families in the northern Jordan Valley, a traditionally isolated area in Jordan. The research revealed that families were assigned various names with distinct meanings, illustrating the influence of cultural variety on the naming practices of these families. The area was primarily Palestinian, with most families uprooted due to Israeli occupation or tribal conflicts. The nearest location for these folks was Jordan, particularly the Jordan Valley.

Most surnames in the northern Jordan Valley originate from nicknames, a prevalent linguistic convention in Oriental cultures. Surnames originating from nicknames represent

the predominant category of family name classifications, attributable to the straightforwardness and simplicity of creating nicknames from the immediate surroundings using direct and uncomplicated terms from colloquial language used in everyday discourse.

No family name in the northern Jordan Valley qualifies as a seasonal surname. The names of Jordanian families in the northern Jordan Valley are classified into five categories: local surnames, occupational surnames, anecdotal surnames, surnames derived from nicknames, and patronymic surnames. The study identified some similarities in family names from the northern Jordan Valley and those from other locations; nevertheless, this does not imply a common origin.

The surnames of families in northern Ghor exemplify the straightforward vernacular of the culture from which they originated, since these names consist of terms used in the colloquial language of everyday interactions among community members.

Future research should encompass the exploration of additional dimensions of family names, including phonetic, syntactic, and morphological transformations, the replication of similar studies in distinct regions of Jordan or beyond, and the investigation of alternative classifications identified in prior research, such as metronymic surnames, kinship-derived family names, ethnic surnames, or other categorizations, alongside their dissemination and the factors contributing to their emergence.

The study has limitations, including a sample restricted to family names in the northern Jordan Valley, an absence of analysis on morphological or phonetic alterations of these names, an incomplete identification of all family names in the northern Jordan Valley according to the classifications established in Al-Tahat's study, and the inability to generalize the results to other regions of Jordan.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, L.R.; methodology, L.R.; formal analysis, L.R.; supervision, L.R.; writing—original draft, L.R.; writing—review and editing, L.R.; Data collection, M.A.; investigation, M.A.; transcription, M.A.; initial draft preparation, M.A. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding

The publication of this research has been supported by the Deanship of Scientific Research at Jadara University, Jordan.

Institutional Review Board Statement

Ethical review and approval were waived for this study due to its focus on the analysis of publicly known family names and non-sensitive sociolinguistic data. No personal or identifiable information was collected, and participation in interviews was voluntary and fully anonymized.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all participants involved in the study. Participants were informed of the study's purpose and their right to withdraw at any stage. All information was treated confidentially and anonymized.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. To protect participant anonymity, the data are not publicly available.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the Deanship of Scientific Research at Jadara University, Jordan, for supporting the publication of this research. We also extend our thanks to all participants, particularly those from the northern Jordan Valley, for generously sharing their valuable experiences and insights.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Al-Tahat, A., 2014. A Socio-Semantic Study of Family Names in Jordan [Ph.D. Thesis]. Yarmouk University: Irbid, Jordan.
- [2] Rababah, L.M., 2025. Linguistic analysis of gender representations in magazine advertisements: Breaking the semiotic codes. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*. 7(4), 296–306. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i4.8521>
- [3] Al-Zumor, A., 2009. A socio-cultural and linguistic analysis of Yemeni Arabic personal names. *GEMA On-line Journal of Language Studies*. 9(2), 15–27.
- [4] Alzamil, A., 2020. Analysis of the Sociolinguistic Status of Saudi Female Personal Names. *International Journal of Linguistics*. 12(4), 127–138. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v12i4.17214>
- [5] Zhu, H., 2010. A Cultural Comparison of English and Chinese Family Names. *Asian Social Science*. 6(11), 226. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v6n11p226>
- [6] Rababah, L.M., 2025. EFL learning in the digital era: Navigating language and culture in Jordanian universities. In: Vendrell Vidal, E., Cukierman, U.R., Auer, M.E. (eds.). *Advanced Technologies and the University of the Future: Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems*. Springer: Cham, Switzerland. pp. 419–437.
- [7] Amaireh, H.A., Rababah, L.M., 2024. Bidenian and Harrisian metaphors: A corpus-based analysis of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris' political discourse. *Jordan Journal of Modern Languages and Literatures*. 16(3), 651–671. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47012/jjml.16.3.5>
- [8] Rababah, L.M., Rababah, M.A., Haddad, M.T., et al., 2024. A linguistic and cultural analysis of British football club nicknames. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*. 6(6), 1164–1174. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v6i6.7495>
- [9] Harara, N.M., Amarneh, E.F., Al Hammouri, R.N., et al., 2024. The effect of Osborn's model on developing students' rhetoric concepts. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*. 15(4), 1072–1082. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1504.05>
- [10] Shokhenmayer, E., 2014. Comparative Study of the 100 Most Frequent Russian, French, German and British Surnames. In *Proceedings of the 25th International Congress of Onomastic Sciences*, Glasgow, UK, 25–29 August 2014; pp. 221–232.
- [11] Çatalkılıç, D., 2021. Kafkasya'dan uzunayla'ya taşınan hafıza mekânları: köy toponim ve sülale tarihleri. *Karadeniz Araştırmaları*. 33(69), 71–120. (in Arabic).
- [12] Lewis, W., 2010. *What's in Your Surname?: The Fascinating Story of British Surnames*. Brazen Head Publishing: Abingdon, UK.
- [13] Tüm, G., 2021. Turkish Patronymic Surnames Ending with-oğlu/Son of: A Corpus Linguistic Investigation. *Names*. 69(2), 21–33. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5195/na mes.2021.2278>
- [14] Hussein, R., 1997. A sociolinguistic study of family names in Jordan. *Grazer Linguistische Studien*. 20(48), 25–40. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.10n.5p.40>
- [15] Knight, Z., 2018. "Speaking the Names" of Family as

- “Speaking a Place”. *British Journal of Psychotherapy*. 34(3), 428–442. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjp.12359>
- [16] Al-Mazari, W.Y., Rababah, L.M., 2024. Flouting Grice’s maxims in a Jordanian TV talk show. *Jordan Journal of Modern Languages and Literatures*. 16(2), 443–460. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47012/jjml.16.2.9>
- [17] Al-Khawaldeh, N., Al-Nusairat, R., Rababah, L.M., et al., 2024. The ideology of tolerance in King Abdullah’s speeches: A critical discourse analysis study. *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies*. 24 (2), 17–34. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33806/ijaes.v24i2.589>
- [18] Almwajeh, M., Rababah, L.M., 2024. Physically exiled, spiritually returning: A comparative reading of Beckett’s *Murphy* and a selection of poems by Darwish. *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies*. 24(1), 285–296. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33806/ijaes.v24i1.549>
- [19] Rababah, L.M., 2023. Examining speech acts in Jordanian advertising: Pragmatic functions, linguistic features, and rhetorical devices. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*. 10(5), 212–223. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/1722>
- [20] Bardaweel, M.R., Rababah, L.M., 2022. Gender differences in using Arabizi among Jordanian undergraduate students: A sociolinguistic study. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*. 12(1), 86–95. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1201.10>
- [21] Rababah, L., 2025. Charting the path to EFL writing proficiency: Unleashing creativity with flow charts. *Novitas-ROYAL*. 19(1), 159–171. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15210932>
- [22] Hanks, P., Hodges, F., 1999. *A Dictionary of Surnames*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK.
- [23] Notzon, B., Nesom, G., 2005. The Arabic naming system. *Science*. 28(1), 2233–2240.
- [24] Mphande, L., 2006. Naming and linguistic Africanisms in African American culture. In *Proceedings of the 35th annual conference on African linguistics*, Somerville, MA, USA, 2–4 April 2004; pp. 104–113.
- [25] Darlu, P., Bloothoof, G., Boattini, A., et al., 2012. The family name as socio-cultural feature and genetic metaphor: From concepts to methods. *Human Biology*. 84(2), 169–214. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3378/027.084.0205>