An Investigation of Feminine Personal Names in the Beni Sakhr Tribe of Jordan: A Sociolinguistic Study

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Abstract

The research paper examined the feminine personal names within the Beni Sakhr tribe, which inhabits the Jordanian central desert with the aim of pointing out the sociolinguistic implications of the names, and the differences in naming practices throughout three generations (grandmothers, mothers. daughters). For this reason, 300 names of female school students in the elementary stage were obtained from Almwaqqar Directorate of Education alongside their mothers and grandmothers. Analysis of a total number of 900 names, divided equally between the three categories, revealed that there has been a transformation from traditional old-fashioned names to modern stylish names. By way of illustration, 69 % of the grandmothers' names are found to be Bedouin-exclusive names opposed to 9% and only 2% of the mothers and daughters' names respectively. Grandmothers' names derive mainly from the needs of the dwellers of desert regions, the severe conditions they experienced, and the social values of the Jordanian nomadic tribes. Only 9 names (3%) of a religious background are identified in this category compared to 42 (14%) in the mothers' names and 25 (8.3%) in the daughters' names. In general, the paper finds evidence to suggest that the change in the lifestyle of the Beni Sakhr tribe does influence the naming practice in this community.

Keywords: Onomastics, Anthroponomy, Toponymy, Nomenclature, Naming conventions

1. Introduction

Names, in general, are perceived as well-defined nominals as they can express the speaker's presumption that their audience can pick out whom the speaker is referring to Gegg-Harrison and Tanenhaus (2016: 1), for example, posit "in order to refer using a name, speakers must believe that their addressee knows about the link between the name and the intended referent**.** Personal names, in addition to acting as channels of communication, can perform various types of functions and purposes. A personal name, in specific, can be seen as a label by which an individual human being is identified and differentiated from others. In this context, Abd-Al-Jawaad (1986: 80) asserts that the main purpose of naming is to provide a symbolic system of identification. Analogously, Agyekum (2001: 211) contends that "naming can be considered as a universal cultural practice; every human society in the world gives names to its newborns as tags majorly as a means of identification. Olatunji, Issah, Noah, Muhammad and Sulaiman (2015: 72) support this by positing that a name is what somebody or something is called, it is a term or phrase by which somebody or something is known and distinguished from other people or things.

Other than identifying people, personal names also carry out other additional functions. These functions include attenuating tension among members of a specific community, reflecting people's societal, cultural, and religious backgrounds, reflecting the namer(s) aspirations, and mirroring on the atmospheric conditions and circumstances in which the baby was born (Machaba 2004: 107). Personal names may also be considered a symbolic representation of self-identity. Gerrig and Banaji (1991: 175), for example, say that a name functions as a frame for the development for self-concept, marking the child's position in status hierarchies of gender, race, and social class, thereby affecting the behaviour of others towards them. Identity, in Seeman's (1980: 136) view, can be mirrored in a name as the name bears the 'stamp' of the namer's tradition and their hopes for the child.

Personal names exist in all cultures and human languages and can be an essential source of information about the bearer. A personal name, says Hawana **(**1977: 2), may often be a clue to the nationality, religion, or race of its bearer. Besides telling the cultural, social, ideological, and ethnic backgrounds of the bearer and the societies at large, personal names can reflect on the events and circumstances experienced in people's lives and tell stories of historic significance (Ansu-Kyereme 2000: 27). Additionally, the type of a name can be motivated by the situations and conditions connected with the birth of a newborn. Agyekum (2006: 209) notes that the events involved in the naming ceremony and the choice of names given to children have traceable links to the referent. Further, in some communities, such as in Clannish communities, a name can serve as indicator of the holder's community membership as is the case in some Bedouin clans in Jordan. In his study of family names in Jordan Hussein (1997: 25) posits "in addition to reflecting the dominant attitudes and the socio-cultural values of the community, family names serve as an index of the individual's membership in a large group (the family or the tribe) and consequently in a larger entity which is the community at large".

In Arab countries which are ethnically diverse, with Islam being the dominant religion there, people must select desirable names to their children and keep away from the disliked names. Such names go against the teachings of Islam, which command Muslims to give beautiful names. Plenty of research on Western naming conventions also has emphasized the need to give attractive names to newborns and to keep away from derogatory or peculiar names (Levine and Willis 1993; Mehrabian and Piercy 1993). However, the practices and rituals involved in naming and the interpretations attached to the names differ from society to society and from one culture to another". For example, in some West African communities, derogatory names (death prevention names) are believed to have inherent power to prevent death and withstand bad situations (cf. Agyekum 2006, for a discussion of the beliefs of Akan people of South Africa behind giving unattractive and nasty names).

The study of personal names is referred to in literature as *anthroponomy* which comes under the umbrella of *onomastics* which is concerned with studying proper nouns. Onomastics subdivides into two principal parts, namely, *anthroponomy*, the study of personal names, and *toponymy*, the study of place names (Al-Zumor 2009; Mandende 2009; Agyekum 2006; Mutanda 2016; among others). Another common expression which is closely related to *onomastics* is *nomenclature* which is used in literature to mean a naming system (e.g., Beeston 1971).

Onomastics can be addressed from various angles as it is interdisciplinary in nature. As a consequence, the interest in personal naming has been intriguing the attention of scientists representing diversified disciplines over the years, and it has been the issue of extensive investigation and analysis in a wide range of languages and cultures. Work on names was not confined to the sociolinguistic or the sociocultural analysis of names (e.g., Abd-el- Jawaad 1986; Al-Zumor 2009; Al-Azzam and Al-Qurann 2014). Other areas of knowledge have made important contributions to onomastics as well. It received, for example, a considerable attention from some social sciences such as psychiatry; and psychology (e.g., Lawson 1984, 1988). I provide an elaborate discussion of some of these works in the literature review section.

1.1 The Bedouin Tribe of Beni Sakhr

This section provides a brief history of the Beni Sakhr people, where they moved from before settling in their present settlements in Jordan, the dialect of the people, and their systems of naming.

1.1.1 The Beni Sakhr People

Beni Sakhr is a large Bedouin tribe living in Jordan. History shows that the Beni Sahkr moved to Jordan from the Hijaz, a region in the west of present-day Saudi Arabia, in the late eighteenth century and inhabited the Jordanian central desert which is known officially as al-Badya Alwusta (the central desert) and exclusively comprises the Beni Sakhr population. The official name of the population of this district is Badu Alwast (the nomadics of the center). In agreement with the 1986 Jordanian Electoral Low, the Beni Sakhr tribe is composed of fourteen (14) clans (Bin Muhammad, 1999: 9-10).

In the 1950s and 1960s large numbers of Bedouins in Jordan have abandoned their nomadic and tribal traditions for a modern urban lifestyle. This change was motivated by governmental policies manifested in providing the Bedouin with different services such as education, housing and health clinics to encourage Bedouin to abandon herding for standard jobs. However, many retain traditional Bedouin culture such as retaining the traditional clannish structure, poetry, and many other cultural practices and concepts.

1.1.2 The Beni Sakhr Dialect

The Jordanian society has three main dialects of standard Arabic language. These include the rural, Bedouin and urban dialects. The distribution of these dialects is clearly divided according to geographical regions in Jordan. For example, the urban and rural dialects are found in mountainous and countryside areas. The Bedouin dialect, on the other hand, can be found in desert areas such as Mafraq, Ma'an and other Bedouin areas. In big cities such as Amman, Zarqa, Aqaba and Salt, urban dailect is the main dialect (Tawalbeh, 2013). Each dialect is characterized with specific syntactic, phonological, morphological and lexical properties. That is, a person may be distinguished from his or her specific vocabulary or morphemes that are related to a particular dialect (Al Salem, 2012).

Bedouin communities in Jordan have distinct dialects that distinguish them from other communities. Further, each Bedouin community or tribe has its own distinctive dialect that distinguishes its members from other Bedouin communities. This holds true for the Beni Sakhr people who have a distinctive Arabic Jordanian dialect to the extent that one can recognize the speaker's tribal affiliation once he speaks. Likewise, almost all the clans constituting the Beni Sakhr tribe use the same dialect except for some tiny phonological differences that can be spotted only by an experienced observer.

1.1.3 Background to the Research Locale

The research vicinity is represented by Almwaqqar province, which is a central part of the Jordanian central desert inhibited by the Beni Sakhar tribe. This locale, as mentioned earlier represents a Bedouin community. This community is homogenous in that its dwellers are of the same cultural system and originally related to each other by blood.

1.2 Problem of the Study

Different researchers in a wide array of languages have addressed personal names. However, a survey of the relevant literature indicates that there is a lack of studies investigating naming culture throughout successive generations and in the same genealogical chain. That being the case, the present study attempts to fill this gap by tracing Bedouin feminine personal names in Jordan across three generations (grandmothers, mothers, daughters). The study also emphasizes the role of personal naming as a powerful tool to view and understand the beliefs, culture, ideology, religion, and social values of a particular society.

1.3 Aim of the Study

In general, the study aims at providing evidence to suggest that the change of the lifestyle of Bedouin communities has a significant influence on naming system among the people affiliating to these communities.

Briefly, the study seeks to answer the following main questions:

(1) To what extent have the sociolinguistic implications of feminine personal names among Bedouin communities changed over generations?

(2) To what extent are communities, in particular Bedouin communities are distancing themselves from traditional names in favor of modern ones, and why?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The majority of the various studies conducted on naming conventions have addressed personal names at a certain point in time to reveal the social and cultural implications associated with the names. To the best of my knowledge, no study has been conducted to trace the change in naming practices from a synchronic point of view, and particularly, over successive generations with the same genealogical chain(grandparents- parents-grandchildren). Similarly, personal names within the Beni Sakhr tribe have not previously been approached from any perspective. On that account, and having in mind the significance of investigating personal names in mirroring the sociocultural norms and values prevailing in any community, the study will make a beneficial contribution to the body of knowledge about the lifestyle of Bedouin communities in Jordan over generations. Another importance of the study emerges partly from its attempt to highlight the seriousness of name giving in people's lives for the reason that giving disliked names will have negative psychological and social effects on the named persons.

2. Literature Review

The study of personal names has caught the attention of not only linguists, but also anthropologists, and psychologists over the years. Personal names have been approached from different perspectives. In the space allowed here, I provide a discussion of works primarily conducted on the sociolinguistic aspects of personal names. Included within these aspects are the typology and etymology of names (i.e., the sources from which names are derived), their implications, their functions, their structure and the linguistic processes involved in their structure. I also touch on other works addressing further aspects of names.

2.1 Typology and Etymology of Personal Names

In a brief thesis entitled "naming in Arabic", Hawana (1977) provides an account on Arabic and Moslem's personal names in terms of their typology, and objectives. The study emphasizes the role of religion in naming among Arabs. Accordingly, Moslem's personal names are mainly subdivided into two types: religious and nonreligious names. Religious names can be classified into two divisions: Those pertaining to the attributes and names of God and those pertaining to the names of the Prophet Muhammad, and known Islamic figures.

Nonreligious names include names expressing natural objects, descriptive connotations, and abstracts.

Abd-el- Jawaads (1986)'s study on personal names is one of the primary works on personal names in the Jordanian context. He studied around 13.000 students' personal names at Yarmuk University in the period 1984-1985 from different social and regional areas and analyzed them linguistically, socioculturally and contextually. His analysis of the data reveals that the majority of the names derives from verbal roots and follow different morphological patterns. According to him, personal names have literal meaning and reflect the positive sociocultural values of society, the political, social, economic, atmospheric conditions and circumstances in which the baby was born. They also refer to the time the baby was born, the natural environment, and they may have religious significance.

The sociocultural and linguistic motivations behind naming were also the focus of Al-Zumor (2009). He examined Yemeni female personal names in some regions of Yemen with the aim of revealing naming systems followed in these regions and understanding the anthroponomy of the Yemeni community. According to him, classifying the names into different categories and analyzing them socioculturally and linguistically reveals that they reflect the social and cultural attitudes and the way they are associated with the circumstances around them.

Again, in the Jordanian locale, Al-Azzam and Al-Quran (2014) investigated proper names from a sociolinguistic and translational point of view. The article examines the various social and cultural significations carried in a sample of names and showed the multifarious reasons and backgrounds behind choosing certain names (climatic regions, political, religious and historic, psychological, romantic, and other social motives). The study finds that people in Jordan differ in their motives behind naming. Conservative peoples are more likely to name their children after grandparents, while young parents opt for borrowing the names of well-known figures for their children. The study further argued that translating such Arabic proper names into another language is quite problematic as the target language lacks the multifaceted significations associated with the name in the source language.

Another work, which arose from a sociolinguistic interest is Al-Qawasmi and Al-Abed Al-Haq (2016). Their study examined personal names of newborn children of both sexes in Jordan during the period from the seventies to the early year of 2015 with the aim of highlighting any differences in naming conventions within the Jordanian community. Results indicate that naming system in Jordan witnessed a significant linguistic and sociocultural change during the period in question. The study also reveals the reasons and backgrounds behind choosing certain names. These include religion, naming after relatives, politics, naming according to surrounding environment, stressing certain times and places, and borrowing.

A recent work which focuses on pointing out the typology of names is Bisilki (2018) who cross-sectionally looked into traditional personal names among the Bikpakpaam people of Ghana. Apart from the linguistic structure, and the changing patterns of personal names in the Bikpakpaam linguistic context, the study subsumes the typology of names. It argues that the

aboriginal personal names among this community can be classified into six categories, of which insinuating/proverbial names, as the author calls, represent the dominating category.

2.2 Functions of Personal Names

Many studies emphasize the functions of personal names and casting light on the roles they play in society. They highlight the different types of information personal names provide about communities and cultures. Some studies also emphasize the importance of names not merely as elements of cultural retention, but also as forms of resistance, and tools for constructing identity.

Functions of naming in the African culture were the focus of many studies. In that connection, Ansu-Kyereme (2000) examined the communication functions fulfilled by Bono (an ethnic and linguistic group in Ghana) personal names. He contends that Bono personal names provoked communication that might result in recollections of past memories or experiences. Besides telling the cultural and ethnic background of the bearer, they tell stories of historic significance and describe the circumstances of birth. Furthermore, Bono personal names, the author adds, tell the order in which one was born on the mother's side (birth-order names), and signify individualism (one indicator of individuality is that wives do not adopt husbands' names).

In her PhD dissertation about naming and identity in South Africa, Machaba (2004) also looked at changing naming patterns and the reasons behind the change among indigenous people in South Africa following the 1994 elections in which Nelson Mandela was elected as President. According to the study, for the majority of indigenous people in South Africa, Euro-western names function as symbols of colonialism and apartheid and therefore should be discarded. African names, at the other end, should be adopted as they function as a paint to portray South Africa as an African country, not a European country.

Another important and highly cited article that addresses the issue of the functions of personal names in the African culture is Agyekum (2006). He looks at personal names amongst the Akans who represent the largest ethnic group in Ghana. The study proposes that naming practices are considered an important feature of the Akan community as they reflect the people's belief and ideology and give insight into their culture, their language, and their religion.

Also, in a PhD dissertation, Mandende (2009) investigated personal names among the Venda people in the northern part of South Africa and described the functions performed by personal naming in Africa as an alternative way of communication. The study also asserts that Africans, particularly the Venda people, employ naming to address social, religious, economic and political issues.

In the same context and in a more recent work, Chauke (2015) studied names and naming practices among the Tsonga people in South Africa. He asserts that names are not only labels but give more insights into important social, cultural and political events at the time of birth. Naming an individual, according to the author, is considered an important event; hence,

names are sometimes determined by the need to perpetuate the names of some family members.

2.3 Name and Identity

In her investigation of naming process among Canadians who belong to different backgrounds, Seeman (1980) studied, among others, Indian, Chinese, Hebrew and European names. She states that identity can be expressed in a name as "the name bears the stamp of the namer's tradition and their hopes for the child". To illustrate the link between names and personal identity, the article concludes with clinical examples of names (i.e., names of persons who are asked interviewing questions in a psychiatric assessment such as whom they admire). Interviewees provide names of persons with whom they have certain traits in common (e.g., persons of short stature almost often pick Napoleon). In many cases, the link between the patient and the person selected is an identical name. In another important article entitled "The unconscious meaning of personal names", Seeman (1983) notes that personal names perform several psychological purposes, both for the namer and the named. As a psychiatrist at the university of Toronto, she proposes that "bestowing or adopting a name is often dictated by a number of wishes and associations which may not all be conscious. This is why different sounds and visual shapes of letters may evoke different unconscious associations that influence the choice of names, For example, names starting with labials are more likely to be unconsciously bestowed to girls as these sounds connote smallness and weakness (e.g., weak, mini, bit, baby, pigmy, etc.). In contrast, velar sounds connote largeness (grand, great, huge, heavy, king, etc…) and thus they are more likely to be given to boys.

In like manner, identity for Kotilainen (2012) refers to understanding and comprehension of oneself and one's social role as a member of a society. She asserts that personal name has always performed a key role in building individual's identity. Sabir and Nawaz (2015) also believe in the hypothesis that names do contribute towards the behavior and personality of a person and how he/she is seen by the others. To validate this, they explored the impact of the name Muhammad on one's personality among the Pakistani people. Data analysis demonstrates that names do affect the personality, behaviour, and the characteristics of an individual and the way he/she is seen by others. According to the study, the influence of the name Muhammad is manifested in enhancing the aspiration among the named person to be tolerant, courteous, and honest; serve the humanity, and do justice.

Other researchers, however, provide a counter argument to the belief that a personal name influences the personality of an individual. For example, in approaching the personal names of the Zulu people of South Africa, Mabuza (2014) believes that a personal name reflects the taste of the named person's parents and thus it will not reflect his or her personality. She adds that personalities are unlikely to be the same even if the personal name shares the same meaning. Thus, the meaning of a personal name has a minor effect on the individual's personality, which is the result of many other external and inborn factors.

As I motioned in section 1, work on names was not confined to the sociolinguistic or the sociocultural analysis of names. Addressing the morphophonology of personal names was

also the focus of many papers. It is reported that personal names, for example, undergo some morphophonological alternations at the phonetic level of the language (Adomako 2015). Much research has also been devoted to studying the semantics associated with names (e.g., Lawson 1985; Garayevaa , Akhmetzyanova and Khismatullinaa 2016). The influence of name- valence, in the sense of being attractive or unattractive on rating the physical attractiveness of the named person has also been investigated in several studies (Greitemeyer and Kunz 2013; Zwebner, Sellier, Rosenfeld, Goldenberg and Mayo 2017, among others). The literature has also reported a statistical relationship between people's initials and their life expectancy (e.g., Pinzur and Smith 2009; Abel and Kruger 2007; 2010)

The possible association of a peculiar given name with a less adjusted personality is also validated by a number of researchers (e.g., Savage and Wells 1948). The relationship between an individual's name (typical / unique) and assessment of artistic creativity in various fields (poetry, science, music) was also explored (e.g., Lebuda, Izabela and Karwowski 2013). In addition, the literature noted an association between an individual holding an undesirable first name and the emergence of the development of psychopathology (Ellis and Beechley 1954). However, other researchers argued against too much significance on the harmful effects of an undesirable first name on predicting personal characteristics (Steele and Smithwick 1989; Mabuza 2014), and highlighted a positive side to uncommon names (Zweigenhaft 1983).

In line with what has been mentioned above about the different and considerable effects a personal name has on its bearer, it has become clear that personal names are not mere labels or tags to refer to a particular individual and distinguish him/her from others, or as a practice to mirror or retain the culture of certain ethnic groups. They should be taken as tools that perform a key role in building individual's identity and influence how he/she is seen and treated by others. Thus, choosing a desirable name for the newborn is one of the most important decisions to be taken carefully and seriously.

In addition to first names, other types of names have been investigated in different cultures and languages. Investigating family names, for example, was the subject of many studies (Hussein 1997; Tahat's 2014, among others). Furthermore, Nicknames have been the subject of extensive investigation in a wide variety of languages (Haggan 2008; Starks and Kerry 2011; Koehn 2015, to mention only a few).

The literature that has been reviewed so far shows that even while the researchers seem to be addressing the sociolinguistic aspects of personal names, many of them gave special importance to the typology and the structure of the names. Some of the researchers also discuss the socio-cultural aspects of personal names but few discuss changes and innovations that occur in the various naming systems..

It is in this perspective, the current study seeks to do a synchronic sociolinguistic analysis of feminine personal names in a Bedouin community in Jordan to show whether the naming process have witnessed a qualitative change over time or not. The current study also attempts to reveal to what extent the change of the lifestyle of a community affects naming throughout successive generation. An aspect that also helps distinguish my research from existing studies is that the names being analyzed are related to the same immediate or nuclear family.

Specifically, the names of daughters were looked into in relation to their mothers and grandmothers.

3. Methodology

In this section, I present the theoretical framework on which the study draws. I also identify the sources of data and the methods that were used to gather the data as well as the instruments that were used in the data collection process. The method of data analysis will be explained as well.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This study adopts a synchronic and comparative approach into exploring and investigating the sociolinguistic implications of personal names and naming practices in a specific community. In this perspective, the study draws on the theory, which holds that there is a firm interrelatedness between a community's language and its lifestyle and cultural practices. Within the broad field of sociolinguistics, William Labov, a leading scholar in the field of sociolinguistics, pioneered this research model, which is known as *variationist sociolinguistics*. The core notion of variationist Sociolinguistics is that language has an underlying structure, and that this structure changes according to external linguistic variables such as age, social class, gender, nationality, community membership, and so on (Botha, 2011: 2). The current study, at the same time, adopts a mixed-method approach (using both qualitative and quantitative research approaches) in examining personal names. This means that the study, in part, uses numerical analysis and comes up with statistics such as averages, percentages, or quotas. Incorporating such quantities in the study makes it quantitative research. Nonetheless, a analyzing the names in terms of their origins, motivations, and implications, and revealing the quality of the change that touches the names over time marks the study qualitative.

3.2 Data Sources

To obtain the information needed for this study entailed collecting full names of female school students in the elementary stage of the academic year 2018/2019, and particularly from the fifth and sixth grades. This allows obtaining the first names of students who are young enough to represent the modern and stylish trend in naming patterns, and the names of their mothers, and grandmothers who are old enough to represent the traditional naming system. The names were obtained through a number of primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include the Directorate of Education to which this community belongs, school records, Directorate of Civil Status, in addition to other data-collection instruments. Apart from the primary data mentioned above, some articles and publications as supplementary sources of data for this research were consulted. In the following sub-sections, a summary of the data sources used in this study will be provided.

3.2.1 Directorate of Education

Name lists of the targeted classes were collected from the database of Al-Muwaqqar Directorate of Education in Al-Muwaqqar district. The directorate incorporates forty (40)

elementary schools divided equally between males and females with a total number of 2985 fifth and sixth graders. Out of this number, 1510 are females and 1475 males.

3.2.2 Schools Registers

Accessing the mothers' names through the directorate of education turn out to be unworkable and a waste of time and effort. For this reason, the names of the mothers were obtained from schools registers with the help of the students' class teachers and the school principals. It is noteworthy, in this context, that the researcher who affiliates to the Bedouin community was granted unrestricted access to all the relevant schools and the required data.

3.2.3 Directorate of Civil Status

Grandmothers' names are not available neither in the directorate of education nor in school records. Therefore, the researcher resorted to the Directorate of Civil Status in Almwaqqar District to obtain these names based on their daughters' names (i.e., the mothers).

3.2.4 Structured Interviews

A structured interview was conducted to obtain information from name-givers concerning the motivations behind bestowing certain names on their children, and, if they aware, the implications of the names. Also, six secondary male schoolteachers who affiliate to the Beni Sakhr tribe were consulted about the sociolinguistic implication of the certain names, particularly, uncommon names. There was a need also to determine whether certain names are Bedouin-specific or popular names (i.e., names that can be found in other regions in Jordan). Besides my knowledge as a member in this Bedouin tribe, I sought the assistance of the Arabic-teacher group in this regard. Additionally, there was also a need to consult eight elderly notables from Beni Sakhar tribe who are old enough to provide genuine information concerning the sociolinguistic implications of peculiar Bedouin exclusive names and the original reasons behind giving them.

3.3 Sample of the Study

Three hundred (300) names where selected by drawing fifteen (15) names from each of the twenty (20) female schools. The females with their mothers and grandmothers' names make up nine hundred (900) names as the total size of the sample of the study.

It is worth noting here that the names in the original lists that were drawn from the database of the Directorates of Education are distributed randomly. Therefore, there was no need to follow certain procedure when selecting the sample of this study.

4. Findings and Discussions

Analyzing the data under investigation reveals that the process of name-giving in the Bedouin community (the Beni Sakhr tribe) was influenced by a number of motivations that differ from one generation to another. In the following sections, I separately discuss the findings associated with each category. These include the grandmothers, the mothers, and their daughters' category.

4.1 Grandmothers' Names

When analyzing the grandmothers' personal names, the researcher observed that these names, in their majority, revealed the dominant social and cultural values of the Jordanian nomadic tribes. Out of the 300 names, 207 names (69%) were identified, in the analysis, as traditional Bedouin–specific names. The remaining 93 names (31%) were popular names, i.e., those that are commonly found in different regions in Jordan. It is also noteworthy to mention that the vast majority of the grandmothers' names, i.e., 278 names (92.6%) end in the suffix /ah/, which is typically a feminine ending, (e.g., /naufah/: "a women of perfect beauty", /khshayfah/: "diminutive form of deer, /ʔˤlayah/: "highness; glory). By way of comparison, such names dropped to 107(35.6%) in the mothers category, and again to 38(12.6%) in the daughters category. In general, grandmothers' names were classified into many types according to the factors motivating them. These types are discussed in the sub-sections below.

In general, grandmothers' names were classified into many types according to the factors motivating them. These types are discussed in the sub-sections below.

1. Names derived from the severe weather conditions: The tough climate conditions experienced by the dwellers of desert regions constituted a rich source of naming among this name category. Our analysis of the 207 Bedouin-exclusive names revealed that 20 (9.6 %) of them originated from such conditions. The following are examples of these names (note that the pronunciation of the names follows the Arabic Bedouin dialect of the Beni Sakhr).

/thlayjah/ 'the female diminutive form of snow'

/shatwah/ 'of or relating to a case of rainfall'

/ mteyrah/ 'synonym for /shtayah/ mentioned above'

/meznah/ 'a piece of rain cloud'

/mheylah/ 'diminutive form of drought'

2. Names motivated by the dire need for grass and pastures: As a Bedouin tribe, the Beni Sakhr's life was marked by wondering the desert in search of grassland and water. This challenge had its impact on their life and more importantly on giving names to newly born infants. Twelve names (5.7%) of the (207) Bedouin-exclusive names were found to be motivated by this need. Examples include:

/ˤushbah/ 'singular form of grass'

/ʔˤshaybah/ 'diminutive form of grass'

/nifal/ 'type of desert grass'

/ shi:hah/ 'type of desert herb'

/khadra/ 'green'

3. The season during which the named person was born: Some names in this category are derived from the seasons of the year. Eight (3.8%) names were found to be motivated by this factor. Examples of such names include:

/ ribi:ᶜah/ of or relating to 'spring'

/shtayah/ of or relating to 'winter'

/qeyḏah/ of or relating to 'summer'

4. The location where the named person was born: one name (0.03%) was found to represent this type of personal names among the grandmothers category. That is:

/ruffah/ 'the side part of the Bedouin hair tent'. It is derived from the side corner of the hair tent where the female named person is born.

5. Emergent social events: A quick decision is taken sometimes to depart from one region to another within the borders of the country. The decision to depart is taken suddenly if, for example, a member of the clan commits murder outside the clan. In other cases, a decision is taken to invade another rival tribe for material gains. These events and practices were commonplace amongst Bedouin tribes, and as matter of course, they had their impact on the people life and their practices including naming conventions. Names of such significance were 18(8.6%). Examples include:

/ri ḥi:lah/ 'of or relating to departure'

/hajah/ 'swift and collective departure'

/jalwah/ 'forced expulsion of a perpetrator and their family from community'

/gha:ziyah/ 'feminine form of invader'

/ghazwah/ 'assault'

6. Names of favorable animals living in the desert: These names were 19 (9.1%). The following are some examples.

/ ʔᶜnayzah/ 'she goat' diminutive form

/ʔghzayil/ 'deer' diminutive form

/ dhi:bah"/ 'female wolf'

/fhadah/ 'female Leonard'

/fhaydah/ 'female Leonard' diminutive form

/kheshfah, khshayfah/ which are both names of 'a baby deer', with the latter being a diminutive form

/shi:ha:nah/ 'female falcon' which denotes a very pretty woman

/mhayah/ 'wild cow'

7. Names expressing gratitude: Many names in the sample express the namer's gratitude to life. Their gratitude to people, events, or situations on their life leads some people to pass on this sentiment to their children by giving them names derived from words of gratitude, grace, and satisfaction. Twenty-six names (12.5%) were found to express such attitude. Examples include:

/ ḥamdah/ 'grateful': This name is the most frequent name among the grandmothers' names category with 17 instances (5.6%).

/ radwa/ 'of or relating to satisfaction'

8. Names expressing hopes and wishes: Bestowing some names are usually determined by the parents' expectations, wishes, and hopes for the future. The following are examples of such names which sum up to 18 names (8.6%):

/kmalah, kumayel, khatmah/ They all imply the 'wish' for putting an end to an undesirable situation. In many cases, these names are given to females with the hope that the mother will stop giving birth to females, and that the next newborn will be a male.

/ʿi:dah, ʿwaydah, thnayah, lfayah/ They all imply the 'hope for somebody or something, to return.'

9. Names derived from jewels and precious natural objects: Names of jewels are another source of naming among this category. They include 15 names (7.2%) with the name / jewahir/ 'jewels' registering 5 instances. Other examples include:

/feḏah/ 'silver'

/dh haybah/ 'a piece of gold' diminutive form

10. Names expressing desirable Bedouin values: The remaining 70 names (33.8%) of the 207 Bedouin-bound names were found to express meanings of different positive social values of the Bedouin communities. These include, among other, success, prosperity, beauty, hospitality, and other favorable feminine attributes. The following are examples of such names.

/seku:t/ 'a women who is silent or does not talk much'

/falḥa/ 'prosperous'

/feli:ḥah/ synonym for /falḥa/ mentioned above

/nawfah/ 'of or relating to highness'

/mni:fah/ synonym for /nawfah/ mentioned above

/karmah, kraymah/ which are both related to 'hospitality'

/alḥelwah/ 'the beautiful'

/sabḥa / which derives from 'morning' and signifies 'a women with a bright face'

The names /falḥa/ and /feli:ḥah/ mentioned above are two of the most frequent names in the grandmothers category with 5 instances each.

Some names of these Bedouin-bound names were found to follow names of objects possessed by Bedouin people. Examples include: /dalah, dleylah/ which both mean 'coffee pot', /ḥarbah/ 'bayonet'. Few names are found to carry disfavored meanings (e.g., /zᶜeylah/ 'anger; displeasure', /maᶜyu:fah/ 'being disgusted; disliked').

The other 93 grandmothers' names, on the contrary, are familiar names, that is, they exist in other communities and areas in Jordan. These names can be primarily classified into two types:

11. Names expressing the sociocultural values of the Jordanian society: These values include generosity, success, beauty, righteousness, happiness, kindness, safety, glory, highness, etc.). The following are some examples:

/keri:mah/ 'generous'

/seᶜda/ derives from 'happiness'

/nejah/ 'success'

/fa:yzah; fauzah/ 'winner'

/jemi:lah/ 'beautiful'

/wardah/ 'rose'

/ᶜalya/, /ᶜa:lyah/ 'highness'

/salḥah/ 'righteous'

/sa:lmah/ 'safe'

/raḥmah/ 'tenderness'

12. Names relating to religion: Religion has no conspicuous influence on names given to members of this category. Only 9 names (3%) of the 300 grandmothers' names bear religious significance. These include /fa:tmah/ 'the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad' which occurs 6 times , /ᶜa:yshah/ 'the wife of the Prophet Muhammad' (1 time), /ʔa:mnah/ 'the mother of the Prophet Muhammad' (1 time) , /maryam/ ' the Prophet Jesus' mother' (1 time).

4.2 Mothers' Names

When analyzing the mothers' personal names, the study found that the change in the lifestyle of the Beni Sakhr tribe has its influence on the naming practices among people. In contrast to the grandmothers' names category in which 207 names (69%) of the sample are considered Bedouin specific names, only 27 names (9 %) in this category were identified as Bedouin-specific names. Examples include:

/kumayel/ 'completeness; perfection'

/khatmah/ 'completion'

/methayel/'ideals'

/tarfah/ 'luxorious'

/rajhah/ 'overweighing; superior'

/nefal/ 'type of desert grass'

/maqbu:lah/ 'welcomed; pleasing'

/fesayel/: 'one's close kinsfolk'

4.2.1 Names Relating to Religion

Unlike in the grandmothers' names, the impact of religion can clearly be seen in the religious names given to members of this category. Forty-two (42) names out of the 300 names encode religious inclination. These include"

/fa:tmah/ the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad (12 times)

/maryam/ the Prophet Jesus' mother (8 times)

/ᶜa:ıshah/ the wife of the Prophet Muhammad (7 times)

/ʔa:mnah/ the mother of the Prophet Muhammad (6 times)

/i:ma:n/ 'belief' (5 times)

/hali:mah/ the foster-mother and wetnurse of the Prophet Muhammad (2 times)

/maymu:nah/ the wife of the Prophet Muhammad (1 time)

/ khidi:jah/ the wife of the Prophet Muhammad (1 time)

4.2.2 Names Expressing Social Values

In this category, the largest part of the names express preferable social values of society such as hospitality, integrity, justice, loyalty, completeness, beauty etc. These include, among others, /nija:h/, /fa:yzah/, /fawzah/ all express 'success', /siᶜda/ 'happiness', /karmah/ 'hospitality', /tama:m/ 'completeness', /wafa:ʔ/ 'loyality', /ikhla:s/ 'sincerity' /jamla/ 'relating to beauty', /ʔamal/ 'hope', /ʔa:ma:l/ 'hopes', /insa:f/ 'justice', /intisa:r/ 'triumph', /fadwa/ 'self-sacrifice', /hana:n/ 'kindness', /mana:l/ ' attainment; achievment'. The name /jamla/ mentioned above is the Bedouin equivalent name of /jami:lah/ 'beauty', which is a common name in other urban regions in Jordan.

4.2.3 Names of Objects Relating to Nature

Natural objects represent another source of naming among this category. These include, among others, names of jewels and precious stones, and names of favorite plants, flowers, birds, and animals. Totally, these names recorded 11 instances. Examples include /alma:s/ 'diamond', /jewa:hir/ 'jewels', /nefal/ 'type of desert grass', and /shi:ha:nah/ 'female falcon'.

4.3 Daughters' Names

Today, most Bedouins are settled. They have traded their traditional existence for the conventions of the modern world, as remarkable changes over the last two decades have altered the nature of their life and the land they inhabit. Nonetheless, Bedouin culture still survive in Jordan, where there is a growing appreciation of its value. This dramatic change in the lifestyle has a direct influence on the naming practices among the Beni Sakhr tribe mirrored in the new naming trend.

When analyzing the 300 daughters' personal names, the study found that nearly all of them (98%) are shared with other regions and communities in Jordan except for 6 names (2%) which are considered Bedouin –exclusive names. These include /ᶜanu:d/ 'the leader of a deer herd', /ᶜadha:ri / 'plural of maiden ; virgin', /ḏabyah/ 'wild cow', and /mesha:ᶜil/ ' torches'. Unlike in grandmothers and mothers' names, where no foreign name was noticed, 8 foreign names (2.6%) were identified in the daughters' category. The analysis of the Arabic names revealed the dominant social and cultural values of the Jordanian community in general. The names in this category can generally be classified into the following categories:

4.3.1 Names Relating to Religious Backgrounds

Twenty-five (25) names (8.3%) in this category were identified as reflecting religious impact. Unlike, the religious names that exist in the grandmothers and mothers' category which were perceived as traditional, the 25 religious names found in the daughters' category are judged as modern and stylish. No religious name is shared between this category and the grandmothers' category; one name is shared between the mothers and the daughters (i:ma:n). The following are examples of such names:

/sa:rah/ the wife of the Islamic prophet Abraham and the mother of the prophet Isaac (6 times

/salsibi:l/ 'a spring in paradise'

/isla:m/ 'Islam'

/doᶜa:ʔ/ 'prayer'

/sundus/ 'fine silk in Heaven'

/zamzam/ 'Zamzam well' located within the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca

/tasni:m/ in Islam, 'a spring in paradise'

/suju:d; sajdah/ 'prostrating to God done by Muslims during prayers'

4.3.2 Names Relating to Nature

Many names in this category are derived from the natural environment and objects from nature. These involve preferable animals and birds, e.g. /mays/ 'small deer', **/**ri:m/ 'deer', /ʔarya:m/ 'deers', /taghri:d/ 'twitter', /hadi:l/ 'cooing of a pigeon'. It is noticed that all the examples above reflect beauty in the physical appearance or in sound.

Other names in this category are derived from preferable plants and flowers, e.g. /zuhu:r/ 'flowers', /ya:smi:n/ 'Jasmin', /wuru:d/ 'roses', /narjis/ 'narcissus', /sawsan/ 'iris', /baylasa:n/ 'a tree which yields a fragrant resinous substance', especially one used in medicine, /khuza:mah/ 'lavender'. Another subclass of names is found to denote precious stones, e.g./fayru:z/ 'turquoise', /jewa:hir/ 'jewels', /alma:s/ 'diamond', /lujayn/ 'silver', /rima:s/: 'the glitter of diamond'.

4.3.3 Names Relating to Social Values

Many names in this category express social desirable and preferable meanings. These include, among others, /ju:d/ 'hospitality', /wafa:ʔ/ 'trustfulness', /wala:ʔ/ 'loyalty', /majd/ 'glory', /ikhla:s/ 'sincerity', /hana:ʔ/ 'happiness', /farah/ 'joy', /hala/ 'beauty'. These names are completely different from their equivalents in the grandmothers and mothers' names even though they express the same meanings.

4.3.4 Foreign Names

It is found that 8 names in this category are of different foreign origins. Some of them has many possible origins and meanings. These include, among others:

/orya:na/: Latin origin meaning 'dawn'

/nermi:n/: Persian origin meaning 'softness'

/mayar/: Turkish origin meaning 'rose of paradise', others say that it is of an Arabic origin meaning a person who fetches food and supplies.

/maya/: many possible origins (Hebrew, Spanish, Greek) and meanings that not all of them are related (water; goddess of spring; the month of May)

/mira:m/: Hebrew origin meaning relating to 'an ancient flower'

/lama:r/:French-Norman origin meaning 'the pond; pool'

/ya:ra/: many possible origins (Persian 'honest', Arabic 'butterfly', Turkish 'a beautiful flower')

Many other stylish, attractive, and pleasant sounding Arabic names are included in this category of daughters' names. None of these names exists in the grandmothers or even the mothers' names. These names have beautiful and special meanings. The following names are cases in point:

/ajwa:n/ plural of 'bay ; gulf'

/jana/ 'yields of trees'

/li:n; laya:n / 'delicacy'

/nabaʔ/ 'news', also it is the name of chapter 78 of the Quran.

/niba:l/ 'arrows'

/rafi:f/ 'kindhearted; loving'

/ra:ma/ 'green land'

/rani:m/ 'chanting'

/rita:j/ 'great door; the door of al-Kaʿbah al-Musharrafah'

/sadi:l, sadal/ 'a hanging down cloth covering a woman's legs, or any hanging down substance especially hair'

/sidra/ an Islamic name, short for Sidrat al-Muntaha, 'a holy tree at the end of the seventh heaven'

/wasan/ 'drowsiness'

When talking to the parents of the girls holding the foreign, and the modern invented names, most of them stated that they chose such names because they want their daughters to be distinguished. For them, these names are simple, beautiful, and modern regardless of their social or cultural implications. However, the most frequent name in the daughters category turns out to be /rima:s/' the glitter of diamond' with 12 instances flowed by /fara<u>h</u>/ 'joy', and /ʔa:yah/ 'a sign which directs one to something important; an individual verse in the Qur'an', with 11 instances each.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, the study addresses the sociolinguistic aspects of feminine personal names among three successive generations belonging to the Beni Sakhar tribe of Jordan and aims at establishing the factors which motivate people to give particular names to their children. Unlike the majority of the various studies conducted on personal names that have addressed naming conventions at a given point in time, this study has been conducted to trace the change in naming practices over successive generations with the same genealogical chain. That is, the names being examined are related to the same immediate or nuclear family. Specifically, the names of grandmothers were looked into in relation to their daughters and granddaughters. More importantly, personal names within the Beni Sakhr tribe have not previously been approached from any prospective. From this perspective, and in light of the significance of studying personal names in echoing the sociocultural norms and values predominant in any community, the study will make a valuable addition to the body of knowledge about the way of living of Bedouin communities in Jordan over time.

Findings of the study reveal that there is a striking difference between the implications of the names across generations. At one end of the spectrum, grandmothers' names tend to express the traditional social values of a nomadic Bedouin tribe. Daughters' names, at the opposite side, tend to represent a modern stabilized community, which adopts a fashionable naming system. It is found, for example, that the majority of the 300 grandmothers' names (69 %) are Bedouin- exclusive names. These names are old-fashioned names that delineate the dominant way of living of the Bani Sakhar people as desert dwellers at the time, and characterize their true ingenuity and uniqueness. They are peculiar to rural or urban communities in Jordan, and

therefore, it is uncommon to use such names by people outside Bedouin communities, or even within the same communities at the current time. The names in this category are mainly derived from the local circumstances and the weather conditions experienced by people, emergent local social events, desert preferable animals, and the challenges people encounter in their pursuit of earning livelihood.

Mothers' names, on the other hand include 28 Bedouin- specific names (9%). Names relating to favored social values of society make up the largest percentage (52%) of the names in this category, followed by names of religious background, which make up 16% of the names. Daughters' names include only 6 names that can be regarded as as Bedouin- specific names. The largest percentage of the names in this category is also made up of those expressing social values in Jordan and other Arab countries, followed by those relating to nature. Another feature by which the daughters' category is marked is the existence of eight (8) foreign names compared to none either in the grandmothers' names or in the mothers' names.

As already noted, some of the factors influencing naming persist throughout generations. However, names motivated by some factor are found to be completely different over generations. The names derived from favorable animals in the grandmother's category, for example, are found to be different from their equivalents in the mothers and the daughters names even though they are semantically the same. The same thing holds true for names derived from jewels and precious natural objects, social values of society, or even names of religious backgrounds. Table 1, for example, shows the distribution of religious names among the three categories (grandmothers, mothers, daughters) with the names included in each category.

Table 1. Distribution of religious names among Bani Sakhar female group

Category	Religious names		
	N.	%	Names (frequency)
Grandmothers	9	3%	**/fa:tmah/**(6), **/ᶜa:yshah/**(1), **/a:mnah/**(1), **/maryam/**(1)
Mothers	42	14%	**/fa:ṯmah/**(12)**, /maryam/**(8), **/ᶜa:ɪshah/**(7), **/a:mnah/**(6), /i:ma:n/(5), /ẖali:mah/(2), /maymu:nah/(1), /khidi:jah/(1),
daughters	25	8%	**/**sa:rah/(6), /i:ma:n/(5), /mala:k/(2), /salsibi:l/(2), /isla:m/(1), /isra:ʔ/(1), /doᶜa:ʔ/(1), /sundus/(1), /ʔsma:ʔ/(1), /zamzam/(1), /tasni:m/(1), /suju:d/(1), /sajdah/(1), /marwah/ (1)

The table above shows that all the traditional religious names that exist in the grandmothers' category are also found in the mothers' category where other religious names are noticed.

However, none of these names is found in the daughter's category where modern religious names emerge.

In general, it is clear that the change in the lifestyle and interests of the people of Bani Sakhar that took place in the recent few decades has its impact on naming conventions among this community. A quick glance at the following table showing 10 examples of daughter-mother-grandmother names can evidently display this dramatic change in the naming system throughout the successive three generations. Notice that only names reported for the first time are paired with their English meaning.

Table 2. Examples of daughter-mother-grandmother names

Daughter	Mother	Grandmother
ra:ma راما	nisri:n: 'yellow flower' نسرين	tru:sh 'desert travelers' طروش
shahad 'honey' شهد	mana:l منال	telhwah: 'amusement' تلهوة
jana جنى	sha:miyah: 'Levantine' شامية	falha فلحى
ta:li:n: 'followers' تالين	fa:tmah فاطمة	lfayah لفية
la:ma:r لامار	Bahjat: 'pleasure' بهجت	khadra خضرا
marwah مروة	amal امل	madh hah: 'neglector' مذهة
rafi:f رفيف	yusra: 'ease' يسرى	thnayah ثنية
rani:m رنيم	sabha صبحا	ᶜushbah عشبة
shahad شهد	hana:n حنان	dhwabah 'strand of hair' ذوابة
arya:m أريام	afa:f: 'virtous' عفاف	rahi:lah رحيلة
rema:s ريماس	ama:ni أماني	fla:hah فلاحة
jana جنى	nefal نفل	qeydah قيظة
shams 'son' شمس	farah فرح	nzeylah 'dweller' نزيلة
wajid 'passion' وجد	hasna 'charming' حسنا	fazᶜah 'supporter' فزعة

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Transliteration symbols

Arabic words which appear in this paper are transliterated according to the following phonetic system

Arabic alphabet	Symbol	Example	Meaning	Description
ء	ʔ	ʔamal	hope	voiced glottal stop
ب	B	ba:b	door	voiced bilabial stop
ت	T	ti:n	figs	voiceless alveolar stop
ث	Th	thaᶜlab	fox	voiceless inter-dental fricative
ج	J	jamal	camel	voiced post-alveolar affricate
ح	H	hub	love	voiceless pharyngeal fricative
خ	Kh	khubz	bread	voiceless uvular fricative
د	D	dars	lesson	voiced alveolar stop
ذ	Dh	dhahab	gold	voiced dental fricative
ر	R	rasama	draw v.	voiced alveolar approximant
ز	Z	zayt	oil	voiced alveolar fricative
س	S	sama:ʔ	sky	voiceless alveolar fricative
ش	Sh	shams	sun	voiceless alveopalatal fricative
ص	S	sayf	summer	voiceless velarized alveolar fricative
ض	D	dayf	guest	voiced velarized alveolar stop
ط	T	ti:n	mud	voiceless velarized dento-alveolar stop
ظ	TH	THuhr	noon	voiced velarized alveolar fricative
ع	ᶜ	ᶜabd	slave	voiced pharyngeal fricative
غ	Gh	gharb	west	voiced uvular fricative
ف	F	fan	art	voiceless labiodental fricative
ق	Q	qalam	pencil	voiced uvular stop
ك	K	kalb	dog	voiceless velar stop
ل	L	la:ʔ	no	voiced alveolar lateral
م	M	madrasah	school	voiced bilabial nasal stop
ن	N	najm	star	voiced alveolar nasal stop
ه	H	hawa:ʔ	air	voiceless glottal fricative
و	W	ward	rose	voiced labio-velar glide
يَ	Y	yawm	day	voiced palatal glide
(فتحة) ◌َ	A	kataba	he wrote	short low front unrounded
(ضمة) ◌ُ	U	kutub	books	short high back rounded
(كسرة) ◌ِ	I	sin	tooth	short high back unrounded
مد طويل ا/ى	a:	ka:tib	writer	long low front unrounded
ضمة طويلة و	u:	fu:l	beans	long high back rounded
كسرة طويلة ي	i:	fi:l	elephant	long high front unrounded

شدة	CC	ᶜamma:n	Amman	geminate consonant
Diphthongs	Aw	mawt	death	
(أصوات علة مركبة)	Ay	bayt	house	

Appendix 2. Interview Questions (Name Givers)

1) Your name:

2) Where do you come from?

3) How many children do you have?

4) What are their names?

Name	Sex

5) Who gave them the names?

6) Why did you give them such names?

7) What is the meaning of the names?