A Socio - Semantic Study of Family Names in Jordan

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Abstract

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This study aims at illustrating the semantic aspects and cultural relations of Jordanian family names. It also aims at explaining and identifying the meanings of these names and what they stand for. Moreover, it concentrates on the relationship between these family names and the reasons they name for. Nearly, 70 Jordanian family members, key members in their families, leading figures, heads of the tribes, and former members of the House of Representatives were personally interviewed by the researcher, from which a sample of 39 were purposefully chosen. The results show that family names can be classified into many categories; those that are included in this study are Local Surnames, Occupational, Anecdotal, Patronymic, Seasonal, Regional, and Surnames derived from Nicknames. Further, the results show that Jordanian family names are strongly connected with the culture and the values people believe in.

Key Words: Surnames, naming practice, Culture, Semantics, Sociolinguistics.