

KURDISH PERSONAL NAMES AND IDENTITY: HOW THE KURDS THINK OF THEIR PERSONAL NAMES

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ABSTRACT

This research discusses Kurdish personal names in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, and emphasizes the significance of names in Kurdish culture. The research examines Kurdish names from an anthropological and sociolinguistic point of view. It views names as sociocultural identifiers with sociocultural roles and meanings rather than arbitrary and superficial markings. The importance of one's own name has been greatly emphasized by the Kurds for generations. The study's aims are, first, to determine whether there is a relationship between Kurdish names and their national identity; second, how the Kurds perceive their names as representative of their identity; and third, what naming practices the Kurds employ when giving names to their children. In order to achieve these aims a close-ended and open-ended items questionnaire consisting of 19 items was given to 100 Kurdish families in the area of Duhok province in Kurdistan of Iraq. The study has found that there is a relationship between Kurdish names and national identity since they have always attempted to give their children Kurdish names that reflect their national identity, Kurdish human experience, lifestyle and history. Furthermore, the study found that Kurdish names were popularized after 1992 when people started to utilize names that reflect their history, national identity, and feeling of independence. Finally, the parents were mainly those who were responsible for the practice of naming within the Kurdish families under study.

KEYWORDS. Anthropology, Kurds, Kurdish personal names, personal names and national identity, Sociolinguistics

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of naming practices has been central to many disciplines within the social sciences and, as Geertz (1973: 363) puts it, naming is an act that converts 'anybodies' into 'somebodies': crucially, to become 'a somebody' is to have a place in society. The study of personal names comes under anthroponomy. Anthroponomy is a field of knowledge related to genealogy, sociology and anthropology. Anthroponomy is a branch of onomastics which deals with the study of proper names; their forms and use (Algeo 1992: 727). Traditionally the study of onomastics focuses on investigations of place names and personal names (Anderson, 2007; Blonar, 2009; Schlücker, 2009).

This paper deals with the names of a particular society; namely the Kurds, comes under the fields of linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics because it is based on the theory that there is a relationship between people's

language and their cultural practices. It sheds light on how language is used as cultural phenomenon and practices to view and understand the worldview and philosophy of the Kurdish society

1.2 Aims of the study

This paper aims at investigating the following concepts, first, whether there is a connection between Kurdish names and their national identity; second, how the Kurds view their names as symbol of their identity; and third, what naming practices the Kurds usually follow when they give names to their children at birth.

1.3 Questions of the study

1.4 This study tries to give answers to the following questions:

1.5 Is there a relationship between Kurdish names and their national identity?

1.6 How the Kurds included in the study perceive their names as representative of their identity?

1.7 What naming practices do the Kurds employ when they give names to their children at birth?

1.8 Significance of the study

This research will be of significance to sociolinguists and anthropologists who are interested in studying the relationship between personal names and identity, focusing on national identity. As for sociolinguists and anthropologists, this study will be a part of linguistic anthropology and contribute to the study of Kurdish names, culture, and sociology. It will also add to the general theory of onomasiology by scholars like Agyyekum (2006), Obeng (2001), and Ulmann (1972), among others (Al-Barany et al.2011).

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In order to give the current study a theoretical background, this section deals with theoretical concepts related to names, personal names, identity, and the relationship between personal names and identity at different levels.

Names, personal names in particular, have been always used as markers of cultural, social, ethnic or national identity (Alford 1988; Clark 1995; Härtel 1997; Virkkula 2001; Postles 2002; Beech et al. 2002; Hagström 2006) cited in Brendler (2012). Moreover, the topic of names is a multidisciplinary field that has taken the attention of philosophers, anthropologists, linguists and ordinary people. On the other hand, names and identity or the identity of names has hardly been researched comprehensively and specifically at the same time. The study of personal names is the most in-demand topic because the name is part of the culture. Personal names play an important part in a person's identity in different cultures of the world. The relationship between names and individuals in different cultures can be understood as one of them through naming patterns. However, it has been implicitly present as a methodological problem from the very beginning of modern name studies (Brendler, 2012:30). Accordingly, this paper deals with the relationship between personal names and identity focusing on the Kurdish national identity to put it, probably for the first time, within the scope of onomastic theory, and thus the study with its theme will be recognized as a principal onomastic concept in the discipline of linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistic. The knowledge about Kurdish names can give profound understanding to the Kurdish culture, philosophy, thought, environment, religion and language.

2.1 WHAT IS A NAME?

The study of names has always been considered to be a part of linguistics, though onomastics has, generally, designated a fairly marginal area of language research (Nuessel 1992:5; Joseph 2004:12; Algeo 2006:6).

According to Mill (1872), cited in Nicolaisen (1978:41–42) and Nuessel (1992:1), what distinguishes names is that they are "meaningless markers" with a purely referential, or denotative, function. The fundamental argument for the view that names have denotation but not connotation is that, unlike other types of referring expressions such as ordinary nouns and noun phrases, or "definite descriptions".) ¹(Searle (1969:163, 173) insists that names do not depict the objects they refer to; therefore, knowing names of objects or people does not mean that you can figure out some facts or information about them. In the same vein Markey (1982:139) claims that names are adjuncts to regular language that is they refer to but do not describe, and so, unless etymologically considered, have meaning only as referents. Then Markey (1982:131) continues, "the knowledge of a name does not require knowledge of language...names are linguistic isolates; they are singular terms.

The foregoing argument that names have reference but not meaning appears to have its origins in structural linguistics, which studies language by abstracting linguistic form from its context and purpose. This is nicely demonstrated by Bloomfield's remark as cited in (Hymes 1974:5) that if a beggar says "I am hungry" to seek food, and a child says "I am hungry" to refrain from going to bed, structural/formal linguistics is solely concerned with the similarities between the two acts. On the other hand, the study of names is considered to be fundamental to several social science fields. Geertz (1973: 363) states that one of the functions of naming practices is to change 'anybodies' to 'somebodies' and then when you become a 'somebody' you have a place in society. The functions of the names go further and they can be used as a marker of cultural and national identity. To support the latter statement, Hanks, Hardcastle & Hodges (2006: xi) claim

(1) Crystal (1997:101,102,103,424, 425) claims that 'denotation' is concerned with explicit meaning or direct meaning, while 'connotation' incorporates additional and/or implicit meaning (indirect reference).

that "A woman called Niamh [for example] can be presumed to be Irish: at the very least, her parents, in choosing this name for her, were announcing some kind of cultural identification with Ireland and Irish culture".

2.2 Personal Names

Every day, we converse and speak with others. We write and read to one another, refer to one another, and describe what we and others have done and said. In doing so, we often utilize our personal names, which frequently suggest or clarify who we are. There are names everywhere because names have always been a component of human life. Richard D. Alford, a sociologist, asserts that ethnographic research has uncovered no civilization whose inhabitants lack names (Alford 1988: 1). Names, in general, and personal names, in particular, are cultural universals, something all humans share regardless of where they live or when. Consequently, the next paragraphs will talk about what researchers from different cultures have found about the qualities of people's names.

Lombard (2008: 20) argues that research has shown that personal names hold a wide variety of functions, uses, and meanings, and are strongly connected with a variety of sociocultural factors based on the findings of the following scholars (Sapir 1924; Miller 1927; Morice 1933; Wieschhoff 1941; Beidelman 1974; Underhill 1979; Moore 1984; Salomon & Grosboll 1986; Watson 1986; Basso 1996; de Klerk & Bosch 1996; Moyo 1996; Musere & Byakutaga 1998; Onukawa 1998; Gengenbach 2000; Rymes 2000; Schottman 2000; Skhosana 2005 ; Neethling 2005). These factors are "familial and social kinship ties and statuses, events and circumstances, occupations, social and cultural history, socio-political alliances and spiritual beliefs" (Lombard, 2008: 20). However, it should be noted that these are not the whole factors.

Based on a wide range of research literature that examined the characteristics of personal names Musere & Byakutaga (1998) studied the African personal names; Wieschhoff (1941) studied Ibo personal names; Beidelman (1974) examined names in Kaguru society; Gengenbach (2000) looked at southern Mozambique women's names and Watson (1986) studies the Chinese personal names), we can conclude that personal names appear to have the following characteristics: they have a direct connection to culture in that they designate the lifestyles of people in the past and present, as well as their

societies. Moreover, personal names can be used as a memorial to important events or situations that happened at the time of birth.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that Kurdish culture, like other cultures, employs names to distinguish, recognize, and ultimately know its members; No one is born without a name that distinctly identifies them as the owner (Al-Dilaimy, 2006:3; Crystal, 1989:112; Albarany et al., 2011:2). Kurds place a premium on names and naming practices. Understanding Kurdish names enables a more complete understanding of Kurdish culture, philosophy, thought, environment, religion, and language (Albarany et al., 2011:3), which are all reflections of the Kurdish identity in its general prospect.

2.3 The Relationship Between Identity, Language, And Names

This section discusses the role of language in enhancing and establishing a person's identity, in addition to its role in communication.

According to the majority of theoretical perspectives, language is crucial for identity development. According to some schools of thought, language is primarily a vehicle for a self-expression (Taylor & Spencer 2004: 3). Alternatively, some theories suggest that language is the true vehicle for the formation of identity (Benwell & Stokoe 2006: 17). In essence, some have asserted that, in addition to communication and representation, language's core function is identification (Joseph 2004: 20). A key process underlying the connection between language and identity is indexicality, or the creation of semiotic connections between linguistic forms and social meanings through the use of cultural, linguistic, and social norms and standards (Bucholtz & Hall 2005; Eckert 2008).

At present, there is no uniform onomastic theory of names and identities. According to some experts, the connection between a person's name and identity is mostly symbolic. For example, von Bruck & Bodenhorn (2006a: 27), define a name as "the acceptance of individuality rather than its imposition." According to Alford (1988: 36), naming is a process that aids in the construction of identity. Longobardi (2006: 190) considers a name to be a suit into which a person is born: "a reality into which we emerge, gradually absorbing the characteristics contained within." He inquires about the conditions that allow people to accept and reflect themselves in a given name. From the standpoint of the name-giver, naming can be viewed as a "communicative act with an identification

function" (Laskowski 2010: 84), raising the question of whose identity is conveyed and to whom. According to Aldrin (2011: 251), child naming is a "resource for assisting in the creation of different identities," implying that they serve as both self- and child-identifiers. According to Frändén (2010: 22-33, 264), when people change their names, they transmit their identity to themselves, organizations to which they belong (such as an ethnic group), and society at large (cf. Alford 1988: 51). However, debates about names and identities have occurred in a variety of other disciplines, including philosophy, psychology, anthropology, sociology, and economics. Renowned theorists, ranging from Platon, Mill, Searle, and Kripke to Mead, Freud, Piaget, Levi-Strauss, Bourdieu, Derrida, Lacan, and Butler, have tackled the subject (for further references and an overview of some of their conclusions, see vom Bruck & Bodenhorn 2006b).

2.4 Linking Names To Identity

This section will go over several major topics in the field of names and identity. However, as anthropologists Vom Bruck & Bodenhorn (2006b: 26) point out, names are a product of cultures and specific social contexts, and their meaning and significance for identity must vary accordingly.

2.4.1 Names And Personal Identity

The link between a person's name and their personal identity appears to be formed at an early age. Psychological studies show that as children, we frequently regard names as actual components of objects with similar characteristics. Since identity is formed in relation to others, the perception of names may also play a role in identity formation. According to psychological studies, people adore their own names more when they know that others adore them as well (Longobardi 2006). One conceptual approach to this issue is through the lens of a self-fulfilling prophecy (Erwin 1995: 42–43). Another method proposed by Gebauer et al. (2011) is the name-based interpersonal neglect hypothesis, which states that names influence interpersonal treatment, which in turn influences the name-identity carrier's construction and self-esteem.

2.4.2 Names And Social Identity

A widely held belief is that personal (individual) identity is primarily expressed through first names, whereas social (familial) identity is primarily expressed through surnames (Alford 1988: 144). However, as previously

said, both first and surnames can convey personal identification, and both name kinds can convey social identity. In this field, research is frequently undertaken qualitatively, either through interviews or survey questionnaires (Alford 1988: 144).

Surnames frequently play an important role in a person's social identity in terms of feeling connected to a specific family. Surnames, according to Finch (2008: 713), can be used to establish and manage family relationships. A common surname can provide a cross-generational link to a person's parents and family history, as well as foster kinship with partners, spouses, children, and other members of a current kin network (2013: 711, 721).

Additionally, first names can help define or express social identity. This may occur when children are named after relatives (Finch 2008: 719) or when names are chosen to reflect the family's cultural heritage. According to Longobardi (2006), a child's relationship with his or her name reflects the child's relationship with the caregivers who chose the name (2002: 190). Aldrin (2011) demonstrated that, from the parent's perspective, the choice of a child's first name is always part of the construction and display of additional social identities, including local identities such as being a more or less traditional name-giver or conforming to certain macro-societal groups.

2.4.3 Names And Cultural Identity

The study of naming in anthropology demonstrates that the relationship between name and identity can be interpreted very differently in different cultures around the world (vom Bruck & Bodenhorn, 2006a; Alford, 1988). Furthermore, it is obvious that the name chosen can be used to express or construct cultural identities. In this field, surveys and interviews are frequently used for research, which is then analyzed quantitatively or qualitatively. Numerous studies have found that when immigrants and couples from "mixed" cultural backgrounds name their children, they frequently combine names (or name components) from different cultural spheres to create a complex and flexible identity, or they use international names (Reister 2012; Edwards & Caballero 2008; Sue & Telles 2007).

2.4.4 Names And National Identity

For the sake of clarity, before discussing the link between names and national identity, the term 'national identity' needs to be defined first. Morris (1995:14) defines nationalism as "an

individual's sense of belonging to a collectivity that calls itself a nation." Esman (2018:27) provides a more detailed definition of the set of meanings that individuals attribute to their ethnic community membership, including those characteristics that bind them to that collectivity and distinguish them from others in their relevant environment. Ethnic identity, a psychological construct that can elicit intense emotional reactions, typically conveys strong components of continuity. The concept of collective identity encompasses more than just national identity. "The types of identities that people choose for themselves," writes Joireman (2003:2), "tend to fall into a few categories: regional, religious, racial, and linguistic." Wan & Vanderwerf (2009:32) claim that the term "nationalism" is often used to describe the same phenomenon as "national identity," i.e., as a descriptor of a person's sense of affiliation with their nation. In addition, Velikonja (2003:32) asserts, for instance, that national identity perceptions in eastern, middle, and southern Europe were distinct from those in western and northern Europe and evolved at a much later time. The territorial-political notion of the nation-state predominated in the former due to a particular historical course of events, but in the latter it was more heavily impacted by linguistic, cultural, and religious reasons. To make it simpler, according to Wan & Vanderwerf (2009:32), one's national identity can be defined as their sense of solidarity with a particular group or their sense of belonging to a state or country, regardless of their actual citizenship status. They do not naturally possess this quality; rather, experiences from the shared crossroads of life help people develop a feeling of national identity. Language, national emblems, colors, and history of the country, as well as kinship ties, culture, food, music, and other aspects, all play a role. When one has a favorable view of national identity, it is commonly referred to as "patriotism," and when one has a negative opinion, it is occasionally referred to as "chauvinism."

After this introduction, we can say that despite those functions and uses of names that have been mentioned above (see What is a Personal Name?), there is another important function of names in which they can be used as a badge of cultural and national identity, as suggested by Hanks, Hardcastle, and Hodges (2006: xi), Moreover, according to Ellison (2003:192), our names are how we initially

identify ourselves in the world. Since our names are gifts from others, we need to claim them as our own. In fact, when we meet someone new, we typically introduce ourselves by sharing only our names. People frequently pick it up as one of the first indicators of our identity (Ellison, 2003:192). Furthermore, Albarany et al. (2011) who studied Kurdish names report that "we can infer here and say that generally, names were chosen after the 1991 imply a sense of national self-awareness of revolution, folklore, and respect for those who sacrificed themselves for the sake of Kurdistan land. They voiced the people's willingness to maintain their national identity as Kurds".

To summarize, along with Alabarany et al. (2011), this study believes that names are not randomly assigned and are more easily understood when placed within a social context. They act as indicators of individuals' views and behaviors, and it is what Agyekum (2006); Al-Dilaimy (2006) among others believe that an analysis of proper names should place a greater emphasis on a functional theory about society and culture. The best way to understand and interpret Kurdish names is to know the language and culture of the people who use them (Alabarany et al., 2011:4).

3. DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodology

The methodology that is used to collect and analyze the data in the current study is a quantitative method. According to Bhandari (2021), quantitative research is the process of gathering and interpreting numerical data. It may be used to identify patterns and averages, make predictions, examine causal linkages, and generalize results to larger groups. Dornyei (2007: 24-27) further notes that in quantitative research, data is numerical and measured with statistics. Bhandari (2021) says that quantitative research is the counterpart of qualitative research, which involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data (text, video, or audio).

3.2 Data Collection And Participants

To achieve the aims of the study and answer its questions, a questionnaire that contains 19 close-ended and open-ended items were designed by the researchers and randomly sent online as Google form to one hundred Kurdish (100) families in Duhok province. However, it is worth confirming that the participants of the

study are actual representative samples of the target population (Salkind,2010). □□ Accordingly, our samples include family members who are professors, employees, and students at Cihan University-Duhok and Duhok Polytechnic University. The samples also include MA and PhD. students from the University of Duhok—College of Languages. They responded to the questionnaire online and the data was automatically saved. The data was then exported to an Excel sheet and statistically analyzed with the SPSS version (IBM SPSS Statistics 26).

3.2.1 The Questionnaire

One of the most common methods of data collection, particularly in the field of social science research, is the use of a questionnaire. When conducting research, the primary purpose of a questionnaire is to acquire pertinent information in the most possible valid and accurate manner. Because of this, validity and reliability, which are important parts of the research process, focus on how accurate and consistent the questionnaire or survey is (Taherdoost, 2016). Babbie (1990) described a questionnaire as a document comprising questions and other components to collect data (as cited in Acharya, 2010, p.2). Moreover, Walliman (2011) said questionnaires are good for data collection because:

- They let the researcher set up questions and get answers without having to talk to each participant individually.
- They don't cost much and are easy to give to a large number of people in many different places.
- Since the researcher does not need to talk with each participant individually, he/she has no "control" over the responses.
- Finally, questionnaires allow respondents to freely respond to sensitive or "embarrassing" questions.

3.2.2 Description Of The Questionnaire

As mentioned in 3.2 above, in order to answer the research questions of this study, a questionnaire was constructed in the shape of a "Google Form," which made the process of collecting the data easier and quicker. The participants were given a short description of the study (goals, confidentiality, etc.). The questionnaire consists of nineteen items as follows:

- Socio-demographic background (name, date of birth, and place of birth).

- Items related to the participants' personal names that include the following details: the meaning of their names, the person who named them, the reason behind naming by that name, whether they like or dislike their names, and why, if their identity is reflected in their names, and finally whether they favor changing or keep their names and the reason(s) for that.

- Items about the participant's father, mother, and grandfather's names include the following details: whether their names are Kurdish (writing down the meaning) or not, parents date of birth, the person who named them, and the reason behind giving them that name.

- Items about the participant's brothers and sisters' names (here we asked the participant to list the names with their dates of birth in order to find out whether they are Kurdish or non-Kurdish).

- The final question is an open-ended question, and it is qualitative in nature since it allows the participants to give their own ideas. It asks the participants whether they prefer Kurdish names to non-Kurdish names and why.

The data was then exported to Excel and analyzed by SPSS (IBM SPSS Statistics 26).

3.2.3 Validity Of The Questionnaire

Validity describes the extent to which the obtained data corresponds to the real field of research (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). When the questionnaire is relevant to the goal of the study and assesses what it is intended to measure, its validity is established (Field, 2005). The questionnaire was sent by email to four juries of specialists in the field of linguistics and sociolinguistics to ensure the validity of the questionnaire construction, and finally modified according to their ideas and suggestions. See Appendix (10) for the details of the jury members.

3.2.4 Reliability Of The Questionnaire

One of the important aspects to be considered when conducting a questionnaire is to measure its reliability. Carmines & Zeller (1979) define reliability as "the degree to which results may be consistent or stable." It implies that the results of a test should be consistent when measured again. Likewise, reliability is concerned with repeatability. For instance, a scale or test is considered reliable if repeated measurements made under identical conditions obtain the same result (Moser & Kalton, 1985). The most prevalent measure of internal consistency is the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. It is regarded as the most suitable indicator of reliability (Whitley,

2002; Robinson, 2009). Internal consistency has no absolute rules. However, a minimum internal consistency coefficient of 0.70 is widely accepted (Whitley, 2002; Robinson, 2009). In addition, Hinton et al. (2004) propose four reliability cut-off points: excellent reliability (0.90 and above), high reliability (0.70 to 0.90),

moderate reliability (0.50 to 0.70), and low reliability (0.50 and below) (Hinton et al., 2004). Fortunately, the reliability of the questionnaire was (0.835) as shown in the below table, which is "high reliability" according to Hinton et al. (2004).

Table (1):- Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.635	11	.835	17

3.3 Data Analysis And Discussion

This section deals with the data analysis of the items of the questionnaire and interprets those individually using descriptive statistics.

1. Names: Kurdish or non-Kurdish

Table(2):-Names

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Kurdish	63	63.0	63.0	63.0
	Non – Kurdish	37	37.0	37.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The aim of this item in the questionnaire is to know the number of Kurdish names besides non-Kurdish names among the participants of this study. Table 2 above reveals that the Kurdish names outnumber non-Kurdish names by 27%,

which is an indication that the participants take into consideration the feeling of their Kurdish national identity by using and giving their children pure Kurdish names.

2. Does his/her name have any meanings?

Table(3):-The meaning

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	92	92.0	92.0	92.0
	No	8	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table (3) shows that 92% of participants know the meaning of their names, while only 8% are unaware of their names' meanings. Therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of people have good awareness of the meaning of their names. However, it is normal for someone to know the meaning of their names.

Moreover, knowing one's name will make a person understand why and how the/she was given that name, which might contribute to one's identity as some of them might appreciate and adore their names.

3. Date of birth

Table(4):- Date of Birth

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Before 1992	45	45.0	45.0	45.0
	After 1992	55	55.0	55.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The number of people who participated in conducting the questionnaire is one hundred participants. The date of birth of forty-five participants is under 1992 and fifty-five are above 1992, as shown in table (4) above. In fact, we included this item in the questionnaire in

order to know whether there was any tendency of naming towards pure Kurdish names after 1992, which is the year of the Kurdish Intifada (uprising) and a sort of an informal Kurdish independence in Iraq.

4. Who named him/her?

Table(5) :-Who named him/her?

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Parents	78	78.0	78.0	78.0
	Grandparents	11	11.0	11.0	89.0
	Others	11	11.0	11.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 above designates the practices the Kurds use in giving names to their children. The majority of the names were given to babies by their parents (that is 78% of the total) and only 11% were given by their grandparents and also 11% of the names were given by other members of the family (sister, uncle, aunt, and so on). These results indicate that mainly the parents

give names to their children in Kurdish society, which is a social practice. Therefore, it can be seen that the parents consider the process of naming very crucial for the reasons that will be answered in the following item of the questionnaire.

5. Why was s/he given that name?

Table(6):- Why this name?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	After anyone in your family	18	18.0	18.0	18.0
	After ancestors who are already dead	1	1.0	1.0	19.0
	After a famous person	12	12.0	12.0	31.0
	After a religious name/person	7	7.0	7.0	38.0
	To rhyme with my brothers and sisters? Names	9	9.0	9.0	47.0
	After an important event	16	16.0	16.0	63.0
	After a place name	8	8.0	8.0	71.0
	Others	29	29.0	29.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 6 above shows why the children were given certain names. The participants were given the names of *someone in their family* (18% of the total) to have meaning near to other family members. However, only 1% of the participants were named *after ancestors who were already dead*, which may indicate that the parents avoided an old ritual that when someone died, the first baby who was born after his death /her should be named after his/her name. However, it might also indicate that the parents believed that the child had the right to have a good name and not to be named after someone who had already died. Naming children after a famous person receives 12% of the total. Names under this category included names such as Nechirvan (a Kurdish leader), Fairuz (a Syrian singer) among other famous Kurdish personalities. Twelve per cent of the names were given after a religious personality like Sidra (a tree mentioned in the holy Quran), Suhaib/Anas (two of the prophets Mohammed's companions, peace be upon him), and Abubakar (the first Islamic caliphate) so that they will pass on their good qualities. Moreover, 9% of the participants were given names *to rhyme with their siblings' names*,

and this was to create a sort of musicality and beauty for the names within the family; names like *Hozheen, Rozheen, Vazheen, and Viyan, Jiyan, and Shilan*. Sixteen percent of the respondents gave their children names after *an important event* that happened on the date of their birth, like *Revink* (traveler), *Hazhar* (poor), *Bewar* (homeless), *Kazheen* (where is life), *Nirozh* (a New Day), and *Hallat* (sunrise). Eight percent of the participants named their children *after a place name* such as *Sipan* (a mountain in Wan), *Hakar/Aras* (mountains in Kurdistan). This naming phenomenon might be due to the fact that Kurdistan is a mountainous area that is full of beautiful landscapes.. Finally, 29% of the participants resort to other reasons for naming their children not included in this item of the questionnaire like *Bafrin* (snowing), and Baren (when the rain is pouring). All the aforementioned names indicate a Kurdish identity in its wider perspective and reflect the practices that the Kurds use in giving names to their children. Albarany et al. (2011) have given detailed classification of Kurdish personal names.

6. Does s/he like his/her name?

Table(7):- Like or dislike the name

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	92	92.0	92.0	92.0
	No	8	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

For different reasons, 98% of the participants in the current study liked their names as shown in table 7 above. There are some common reasons mentioned by the participants as follows: The name is famous all over the world; it is a nice name; a Kurdish name; very rare; a strange name; culturally common; easy to pronounce; it has a good meaning, and it has a religious connotation. From those reasons, we can conclude that the Kurds desire unique and well-known names and, at the same time, names that are easy and have significant meanings. Moreover, the Kurds are attached to their religions, especially Islam

(besides Christianity—Yezidi), since the majority of the Kurds are Muslims. After all they reflect elements of the Kurdish identity in its wider perspective.

However, 8% of the participants did not like their names for the following reasons: because of their bad meaning, because they are long and difficult to pronounce, and because they are not Kurdish names. The last reason indicates that those respondents are attached to their national identity. These reasons above also reflect the Kurds' practices of naming.

7. Do you think your name reflects your identity?

Table(8):- Reflection of the identity

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	78	78.0	78.0	78.0
	No	22	22.0	22.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The core point of the current study is to investigate whether there is a relationship between names and national identity. Results from table 8 indicate that 78% of the participants believe that their names reflect their national identity, whereas only 22% of the participants believe that their names do not reflect their national identity. Here, it can be concluded that the majority of the participants' names reflect 8. If you could change your name, will you change it?

their national identity as these names have a relationship with the Kurdish national identity of the person in terms of meaning and connotation. These results also support the results obtained from item 2, table 2 where 63% of the participants' names were Kurdish. Accordingly, the researchers believe that there is a relationship between Kurdish names and the national identity of the Kurds.

Table (8):- Will change your name?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
	No	96	96.0	96.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The aim of this item in the questionnaire is to know whether the participants are willing to change their names and why. Table 9 above shows that only 4% of the people who participated in the study wanted to change their names and the other 96% wanted to keep their names as they are. Those 4% of the participants who wanted to change their names gave the following reasons for not keeping them: their names have unpleasant meanings, and they

desired to have Kurdish names instead of their current names. However, the participants who did not want to change their names mentioned the following points: "my name reflects my identity; it has a meaningful meaning, and I adore my name". Moreover, their names play a crucial role in defining who they are. For example, some participants said that their names carry strong historical, familial, cultural, and personal ties. Other participants said that their

names are means to keep their identity as they reflect their identity, and “wherever I go, my name will be like a badge for my Kurdish identity”. The results of this item together with the responses of the participants are good

indications that these people are proud of their names and of their Kurdish national identity; names and identities are attached to each other.

9. Father, grandfather, and mother name?

Table (9):- Father name

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Kurdish	7	7.0	7.0	7.0
	Non - Kurdish	93	93.0	93.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table (10):- Grandfather name

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Kurdish	5	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Non - Kurdish	95	95.0	95.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table (11):- Mother name

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Kurdish	34	34.0	34.0	34.0
	Non - Kurdish	66	66.0	66.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

This study has raised this item in the questionnaire in order to know whether there were any differences or tendencies towards Kurdish names across the generations of children, parents and grandparents. The results of Tables 10, 11, and 12 elucidate that 93% of the names of the participants' fathers were non-Kurdish while only 3% were Kurdish names. Moreover, 95% of the names of the participants' grandfathers were non-Kurdish, and only 5% were Kurdish names. In addition to that, 66% of the names of the participants mothers were non-

Kurdish while only 34% were Kurdish names. These individuals (father, grandfather, and mother) were all born before 1991; the year of the Kurdish Intifada (uprising) against Saddam Husein's regime. These results can imply that Kurdish names were popularized after 1992 when the Kurds of Iraq felt free to give Kurdish names to their children that reflect their history, their national identity, and their feeling of independence.

10. Who named your father and mother?

Table (12) :-Who named your father?

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Parents	69	69.0	69.0	69.0
	Grandparents	26	26.0	26.0	95.0
	Others	5	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table (13) :-Who named your mother?

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Parents	85	85.0	85.0	85.0
	Grandparents	10	10.0	10.0	95.0
	Others	5	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The researchers separated this item from item No. 4, which asks the participants who named you, for validity reasons, and to find out whether there were differences in naming practices

across generations. The majority of the names were given by *parents* (69% of fathers' names and 85% of mothers' names) ; a similar result to that of item 4, which makes the two items valid

and reliable . Moreover, the *grandparents'* selection of names was (26% for the father's names and 10% for the mother's). Surprisingly, only 5% of the names were provided by other family members for both the father and mother. These results confirm our interpretation of item 4 in which we believed that in Kurdish society,

parents are the first ones who give names to their children, rather than other family members. As a result, it is an indication of the role of the immediate parents in the Kurdish society who consider naming practices important.

11. Do you know why your father and mother were given their names?

Table (14) :-Do you know why your father was given this name?

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	29	29.0	29.0	29.0
	No	71	71.0	71.0	100.0
Total		100	100.0	100.0	

Table (15) :-Do you know why your mother was given this name?

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	20	20.0	20.0	20.0
	No	80	80.0	80.0	100.0
Total		100	100.0	100.0	

This item is included in the questionnaire in order to know if the participants were aware of the reasons behind naming their fathers and mothers. Unfortunately, the results of tables 15 and 16 show that only 29% of the participants know the reason behind the names of their fathers' given names, and 20% know the reasons for their mothers' given names. On the other hand, 71% of respondents are unaware of why their fathers were given such names, and 80% are unaware of the reasons behind their mothers'

given names. Contrary to item 10, which indicated that the participants knew who named their parents, but when it comes to the reasons of their given names, most of them didn't know why. These results could mean that both children and parents were careless about the meaning of their names for reasons that need to be investigated.

12. What are the names of your brother(s) and sister(s)?

Table (16):- Names of brothers and sisters

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Kurdish	73	73.0	73.0	73.0
	Non - Kurdish	27	27.0	27.0	100.0
Total		100	100.0	100.0	

The aim of this item is to know which type of names, Kurdish or no-Kurdish is dominant among the participants' family members. Table 17 demonstrates that the majority of the names were Kurdish, which makes up 73% of the total. However, only 27% of the names were non-Kurdish. It is worth mentioning that the date of birth of most of the brothers and sisters was after

1992. Thus, this answers one question of the study, which asks about the tendency of Kurdish personal names after 1992 towards being Kurdish rather than non-Kurdish. It is also an indication to the relationship between personal names and national identity.

13. Do you prefer Kurdish names or non-Kurdish names?

Table(17) :-Prefer Kurdish or non-Kurdish names

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	71	71.0	71.0	71.0
	No	29	29.0	29.0	100.0
Total		100	100.0	100.0	

The current study aims to discover whether there is a relationship between names and national identity and how the Kurds think of their names as representative of their identity, as mentioned in item 1 above where the majority of the participants' names were Kurdish. Table 18 above reveals that 71% of the participants declared that they prefer to have Kurdish names rather than non-Kurdish names. The reasons they give for their preference are as follows: "since we are Kurds, we should keep our culture by using Kurdish names; our names represent our history; they represent our identity; after all it is our language, and we like our language". These answers clearly mean that the [participants of this study are attached to their identity and there is a clear relationship or link between their personal names and their Kurdish national identity. On the other hand, 29% of the participants did not prefer Kurdish names, and they justified themselves by not stating that they did not like Kurdish names, but they said there was no difference between the two; the meaning of the name matters.

1. CONCLUSION

This paper, which is based on the premise that there is a close connection between a person's language and cultural practices, is a component of sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology. Accordingly, the importance of personal names in Kurdish culture is emphasized as the paper covers Kurdish personal names in Kurdistan, Iraq, which are investigated anthropologically and sociolinguistically. By reviewing the literature on personal names and identity, analyzing the data; items of the questionnaire and discussing the results, the study has come up with the following conclusions that answer its questions:

1. This paper has seen personal names as social identifiers with societal roles and meanings instead of seeing them as random and superficial markers.
2. The Kurds have placed a high value on their own personal names and consider them as representatives of their social, cultural and national identity.
3. Kurdish personal names outnumber the non-Kurdish names in the understudied participants of this paper as reflected in their dates of birth and descriptive statistics used in the study. However, this is a common and expected result.

4. There is a connection between Kurdish personal names and Kurdish national identity since parents have always made efforts to give their children Kurdish names that reflect their national identity, social identity, the Kurdish human experience, Kurdish history and lifestyle among another social elements.

5. The participants of the study have confirmed that they like their names, are proud of them and don't like changing them.

6. Some participants did not like their names because of their bad meaning, they are long and difficult to pronounce, and they are not actually Kurdish names.

7. As a naming practice, the Kurdish family's naming procedure was carried out by the parents.

8. Furthermore, the statistical analysis has revealed that the Kurds tend to use more Kurdish personal names that reflect their history, and their national identity after 1992 when they got a sense of independence and built their own government institutions. Since then Kurdish personal names have become more common.

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Appendix “A”: The Questionnaire

Your Name:

Date of Birth:

Place of Birth:

Dears,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to trace the changes in Kurdish personal names as a part of language and identity. The questionnaire is voluntary and the data collected is strictly confidential. The data collected will be analyzed and used for academic purposes. The researcher will be grateful to have your sincere responses. We thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

1. Does your name have any meanings? Yes () No ()
- If yes, what does it mean?
2. Who named you by this name? Parents () Grandparents () others () if others who are they? ()
3. Why are you given this name?
after anyone in your family ()
after ancestors that are already dead ()
after a famous person ()
after a religious name / person ()
to rhyme with my brothers and sisters' names ()
after an important event (family, historical, national)
after a place name ()
Others () what is it ?
4. Do you like your name? Yes () Why?
No () Why?
5. Do you think your name reflect your identity? Yes () No ()
6. If you could change your name, will you change it? Yes () Why ?
No () Why ?
7. If you could change your name , what would it be?
Why this (new) name?
8. What is your father and grandfather's names?
Father
Grandfather
9. If they are Kurdish, what do they mean?
Grandfather (meaning)
Father (meaning)
10. Who named your father? Parents () Grandparents () others () if others who are they? ()
11. Do you know why he was given this name? if yes, why?
12. Your father's date of birth:
13. What is your mother's name? (optional)
14. What does it mean?
15. Do you know why she was given this name? if yes, why?
16. Who named her? Parents () Grandparents () others () if others who are they? ()
17. Your mother's date of birth:
18. What are the names of your brother(s) and sister(s)? Please list them with their dates of birth

1.

- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

19. Do you prefer Kurdish names to non-Kurdish names? Yes () Why?
No () Why?

Thank you for your cooperation

ناڤین کەسی و ناسناما کوردی: کورد چاوا هزر د ناڤین کەسی دا دکهن

پۆخته

ئەف قە کولینە گەنگەشی لسه ناڤین کەسایه تیپین کورد ل کوردستانا عیراقی و جهخت ل گرنگی یا ناڤان د کەلتوری کوردی دا دکهت، قە کولین دویفچوونا ناڤین کوردی د دیتنا ئەنپروپۆلۆجی و کومه لایهتی و زمانی دا دکهت، ناڤان وه کو ناسینهرین کومه لایهتی و کەلتوری دبینیت یین کو رۆل و پامانا کومه لایهتی و کەلتوری ههیه نه کو وهک نیشانین ئاره زوومه ندانه و کوردان بۆ ب شیوهیهکی مهزن جهخت ل گرنگی یا ناڤین مروقی کریه، ئیک ژ ئارمانجین قە کولینی ئەوه کو ئایا په یوهندی دناڤهرا ناڤی کوردان و ناسناما نه ته وهیی یا واندا ههیه یان نه، ئارمانجا دووی: چاوا کورد به ریکو ددهنه ناڤین خو کو دهربرینی ژ ناسناما وان دکهت، ئارمانجا سی: کورد ل ده می بناڤکرنا زارۆیین خو چ پیرابوونا بکار دئینن. ب مه به ستا جیبه جیکرنا ئان ئارمانجان، راپرسیهک (گرتی و یا قە کری) هاته ئاراسته کرن کو ژ 19 برگا پیکهاتبوو، هاته پیشکیشکرن بۆ 100 بنه مالین کوردان ل ده قهرین پارێزگه ها دهوکی ل کوردستانا عیراقی، ئەنجامین قە کولینی دهرکهفتینه کو په یوهندیهک دناڤهرا ناڤین کوردان و ناسناما وان یا نه ته وهیی ههیه، کو بهردهوام ههولداینه زارۆیین خو بناڤین کوردی ب ناف کهن یین دهربرینی ژ ناسناما نه ته وهیی و ئەزموونا مروقی کورد و شیوازی ژیان و میژوویا کوردان بکتهت. کوردان ناڤین خو خوش دقین و شانازیی پی دکهن. [ژبلی قی چهندی ژی ناڤی کوردی پشتی سالا 1992ی به لاقبووینه کو خه لکی دهست ب بکارئینانا وان ناڤان کریه یین رهنگه دانا میژوووی و ناسناما نه ته وهیی و ههستی سه ریکو خویا خویا ههیی. ل دویمهیی، باب به رپرسن ژ پراکتیزه کرنا بناڤکرنی دناڤ خیزانین کوردی دا کو ل ژیر قە کولینی دا یه.

په یقین سه ردی: ئەنپروپۆلۆجیا، کورد، ناڤین کەسایه تیپین کوردی، ناڤین کەسایه تی و ناسنامه، زمانین کومه لایهتی.

الأسماء الشخصية الكردية والهوية: كيف يفكر الأكراد في أسمائهم الشخصية

الخلاصة

يناقش هذه البحث أسماء الشخصيات الكردية في كردستان العراق وتؤكد أهمية الأسماء في الثقافة الكردية. كما يوضح البحث الأسماء الكردية من وجهة نظر أنثروبولوجية ولغوية اجتماعية. يرى البحث الأسماء كمعرفات اجتماعية ثقافية ذات أدوار ومعاني اجتماعية وثقافية بدلاً من العلامات التعسفية والسطحية. لقد أكد الأكراد بشكل كبير على أهمية اسم المرء لأجيال. يتمثل أهداف البحث أولاً في تحديد ما إذا كانت هناك علاقة بين الأسماء الكردية وهويتهم القومية. ثانياً، كيف ينظر الأكراد إلى أسمائهم على أنها ممثلة لهويتهم. وثالثاً، ما هي ممارسات التسمية التي يستخدمها الأكراد عند إعطاء أسماء لأبنائهم. من أجل تحقيق هذه الأهداف، تم تقديم استبيان مغلق ومفتوح النهاية يتكون من 19 فقرة إلى 100 عائلة كردية في محافظة دهوك في كردستان العراق. ووجد البحث أن هناك علاقة بين الأسماء الكردية والهوية القومية، حيث أنهم حاولوا دائماً تسمية أطفالهم بأسماء كردية تعكس هويتهم الوطنية والتجربة الإنسانية الكردية وأسلوب حياتهم وتاريخهم. الأكراد يعشقون أسمائهم ويفتخرون بها. علاوة على ذلك، انتشرت الأسماء الكردية بعد عام 1992 عندما بدأ الناس في استخدام الأسماء التي تعكس تاريخهم وهويتهم الوطنية وشعورهم بالاستقلال. أخيراً، كان الآباء هم المسؤولون عن ممارسة التسمية داخل العائلات الكردية قيد الدراسة