SECTARIAN IDENTITY MANIFESTATION IN IRAQI PERSONAL NAMES

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Abstract
The issue of identity in studying personal names has not got much attention in the Arab World. Those who have studied this subject were usually grammarians, historians and archaeologists. No one has paid much attention to naming practices among the different sects of Iraq using linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics. This paper is an attempt to examine the Sunni and Shiite forenames by using aspects of linguistic anthropology and some aspects of sociolinguistics. It is based on the idea that there is a strong interface between people's languages and their cultural and social practices. Using the qualitative methods of document analysis and interview, the study questions the issue of sectarian identity and belonging in Iraq. The study concludes that in preserving their sectarian identity, Shiites and Sunnis use different personal names.

Key words: *personal names, identity, linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics*

1. INTRODUCTION

As two sects of the same religion, Shiites and Sunnis share many values and traditions, but they also differ in many other things. For Shiites, the first true leader of the Muslim community is Ali, who is considered the *imam*, a term used among Shiites not only to indicate leadership abilities but also to signify blood relations to the Prophet Muhammad. Shiite religious practice centers on the remembrance of Ali's younger son, Hussein, who was martyred near the town of Karbala in Iraq by Sunni forces in 680 AD. As for Sunnis, who comprise the majority of Muslims worldwide, they accept the first four Caliphs (including Ali) as the "rightly guided" rulers who followed the Prophet, but they believe that the leader (*imam*) of the Muslim community should be selected on the basis of communal consensus, on the existing political order, and on a leader's individual merits. Though, in their day-to-day practices, Sunnis and Shiites demonstrate slight differences in the performance of their obligatory prayers, both groups share a similar understanding of basic Islamic beliefs. (Blanchard, 2009, pp.4-5; Cordesman, 2006, p.4; Al-Khaiuwn, 2003).

Thus, the sectarian divide between Sunnis and Shiites is not new; it goes back to the era of Imams, the second generation after the Prophet Mohammed. The differences between them are rooted in the difference of opinion over the succession to the Prophet Muhammad, who died in 632 AD. Each sect believes that they have the right to replace him in leading the Muslim community. In Iraq, the conflict was reintroduced and provoked after the toppling of Saddam Hussein regime by the coalition forces in 2003, which finished centuries of Sunni political authority. Sunni-Shiite relations have been complicated by this striking shift in power dynamics. This shift has transformed the political or economic disagreement into wider sectarian conflict and in some cases even to personal killings and massive crimes on the base of sectarian identity, (Gabrielsen, 2013).

1.1 Personal Names

To relate the sectarian conflict, language and personal names, one needs first to shed lights on personal names. The theme of personal names is a multidisciplinary field that has attracted the interest of historians, archeologists, philosophers of language, anthropologists, and linguists. It is referred to as *anthroponomy*, which is related to genealogy, sociology and anthropology. It falls under the umbrella of *onomastics* that deals with the study of proper names including their forms and use, (Algeo, 1992, p. 727). David Crystal believes that onomastics is a branch of semantics. It studies the etymology of proper names (Crystal, 1999; Crystal, 1995).

Personal names are among most controversial problems in linguistics because of the status of these language units. Many treat personal names as a pattern of words, and others claim that personal names have different lexical meaning, (Dromantaite and Baltramonaitiene, 2002, p.21). So, one can say that the meaning of a personal name is the subject of theoretical controversy. Some linguists believe that proper words have no lexical meaning and do not designate any concepts, (Lyons, 1989; Morris, 1971). While others claim that names have clear and very important lexical meaning. According to J. Potter, vocatives perform a very significant role because in early stages of a language the first words were names – proper nouns. He states that, “even a primitive man felt that the relationship between name and thing … was close and intimate. The frivolous or malicious handling of a name in speech might imply insult or injury to the person bearing that name," (Potter, 1964, p.142). Rey (1995, p.26) believes that names and surnames are the source revealing man's origin, because personal names are a kind of a code, containing the information about a person's origin, social status, character features, occupation, and etc.

There are many evidences from everyday life that support the idea that personal names have cultural and social values; information on people and their identity can be gained from their personal names. One's name is often a valuable clue to one's nationality, mother tongue, social class, age, etc., (Brennen, 2000, pp. 139-142). In connection with this one can quote H. Mencken who writes that people, especially in the United States of America, where diverse nations are mixed, “show their alien origin … in their very names” (Mencken, 1962, p. 476).

The study of personal names can be studied under the topic of language policy as well. Jernudd (1995) and Spolsky (2004), for example, believe that personal names are often sometimes controlled by governmental language policy. In Bulgaria, until 1989, ethnically Turkish people were obliged to avoid Turkish-sounding names and use Bulgarian ones. In Indonesia, there was pressure on ethnic Chinese to avoid Chinese-sounding names. In Turkey, children with Kurdish names are not recorded in official birth records.

Culturally, personal names being the compound cultural sign of a language are considered a main means of expression and form the mnemonic function of culture, (Lotman, 1994, p. 5; Lotman 2004, pp. 396–397). A name can put a person into the sphere of a sign and also shows that it is a result of culture in which its meanings are increasing. Thus it has been stated that the name is supported and controlled by culture (Fedorova, 2005, p. 237). Rymes (1996) believes that personal names strongly reveal the power of names to emphasize social relationships. Personal names are iconic representations of composite social variables that indexicalise and relate to the name and the person. They include sex, hierarchy in birth, circumstances surrounding the birth, the person’s structure, power, status, etc. Losev, (1997, p. 28) believes that all our life, all human beings, every aspect of culture is reflected in names; all our cultural wealth that has accumulated for centuries is contained in a name.

With regard to the relationship between personal names and identity, Language, even at the level of individual words, may serve as an arena where such opposing ideologies of identity and exclusion play themselves out. One of the most common ways of using language to cast identity is by naming a person. Identity is intimately personal and "fuzzy," and each person's identity is a complex web of many different strands. It is in this context that the impact of one's name on one's identity should be seen. Identity is a fluid and complex constellation, and one's name is one of many elements constituting that identity, (Bakhtin 1981; Bulmer, 1996, p. 35; Mateos, 2007, p.19; Brennen, 2000, p. 145).

Personal identity is about a person’s biography. Here, one can add that a personal name is an integral part of a person's biography, since a name is something that is unique to a person and makes that person an individual within the social structure, (Goffman, 1968). What Goffman is arguing is that we present certain signs that identify us as an individual in the past and the present, and that will continue to do so in the future. One sign could be our names. In other words, the signs that set us apart from others are our personal identity. This could be our biography, accumulated information about us, our

names and even our fingerprints. We consider ourselves to be individuals but it is our membership of particular groups that is most important in constructing a sense of identity.

Since there are a lot of types of Arabic personal names, one needs to classify them. There are different classifications of names. Mateos (2007, p.150) classifies personal names into forenames and surnames. The forenames are the first names of people and surnames can be geographical, tribal or occupational. Richards (2002, p. 4) breaks Arabic personal names down into six general categories as followings:

1. Honorific Name or Teknonymy (kunya or agronem) - as the father or mother of usually the eldest son, such as, AbuDa'ud (Father of David) or Umm Salama (Mother of Salama).
2. Personal Name (ism) - common: Muhammad (Mohammed), Ibrahim (Abraham), Hassan, Ahmad. They are rarely used socially, then only if the person is famous.
3. Descriptive Name (laqab or cognomen) – usually religious, relating to nature or some admirable quality the person has or would like to have, e.g. 'Abdu Allah (Servant of God, often written Abdullah), Harun Al- Rashid (Aaron the Rightly-Guided). Some cognomens are also used as personal names, e.g., Rashid and al-Rashid, by adding ad-din (Nor ad-din, meaning Light of the Religion).
4. Patronymic Name (Nasab or lineage) - denotes the pedigree, as the son or daughter of a certain person, e.g. ibn 'Umar (son of Omar) or commonly spelled "bin"Umar (as in Osama bin Laden). They are usually limited to three generations.
5. Geographical or Tribal Name (Hisba or Nisba) – derived from the place of residence or birth or origin of the family by using the prefix 'al or el' and the suffix i, e.g., Yusaf al- Isfahani (Joseph of Isfahan) or Ahmed Alghamdi (Ahmed of the Tribe of Ghamd).
6. Occupational Name or nickname (Laqab) - derived from a person's trade or family history, e.g., Muhammad al-Hallaj (Mohammed the Cotton Weaver).

From these classifications one can note that the Arabic personal names are somehow different from western personal names. The Arabic system has a regularity of its own, although it may have variations related to country of origin, religion, culture (rural or tribal vs. city), level of formality, and even personal preference. In general, however, traditional Arabic names consist of the six parts mentioned by Richards (ibid). The nisba is similar to what people in the West call the surname. It is often used as the last name, although its use has decreased in some areas. It usually stands for an occupation, a geographic location, or a tribe or family.

The focus of this study is on forenames of Iraqi people in 21st century. In this context, a personal name could be teknonymy such as Abu Bakir, a common (ism) like Mohammed, a descriptive (Laqab) such as Abdulla, a patronymic name such as Ibn Omer, but not tribal and occupational names, since they are surnames not forenames.

For the 21st century western societies, belonging is certainly changing. While in the past a sense of belonging was more rigidly defined in terms of the traditional markers of social identity such as class or religion, people are now far more able to choose the categories to which they belong. But this is not true for the Arab World in general and a country such as Iraq in particular. After the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq, an old kind of belonging is re-energized, which can be called the sectarian belonging or sectarian identity, which is a kind of religious belonging.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Regarding the theoretical framework, the study is based on some aspects of linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics; it is based on the theory that there is a strong interface between a people's language and their cultural practices. Linguistic anthropology is that sub-field of linguistics which is concerned with the place of language in its wider social and cultural context, its role in forging and sustaining cultural practices and social structures.

Linguistic anthropology is the study of language as a cultural resource and speaking as a cultural practice. The language of the people is inextricably interwoven with their culture and thought. In linguistic anthropology, language is considered as a social tool. Language has the power to evoke realities beyond the literal linguistic content of what is been talked about. It is a set of symbolic resources that enter the constitution of social fabric and the individual representation of actual or possible worlds. Linguistic anthropology uses general theoretical frames in specific sociocultural contexts. It focuses on how language allows for and creates differentiations between groups, individuals and identities (Foley, 1997, p. 3; Duranti 1997, p. 2).

With regard to sociolinguistics, the main argument of this study is that the analysis of personal names can be used to classify people to religious sects in certain societies. This argument is valuable when sectarian classification is not available in a country like Iraq. Proofing this argument is very problematic in a context like Iraq, since the data and statistics on the origins of people are very rare. In all Iraqi Population Censuses there is no indication to the sectarian divide in Iraq. Even nowadays, one cannot know the number and the percentage of Shiites and Sunnis in Iraq, since the sectarian information is not recorded in public datasets, including population registers such as birth, death, electoral and health registration.

The study hypothesizes that there is a kind of discrimination between the two major sects, Shiites and Sunnis, by asking questions such as, do people belonging to Sunni or Shiite have different names? Why they may have different personal names? Why some specific personal names are associated with specific sects?

1.3 Related Literature

A review of the literature of anthroponomy reveals that a few studies have been carried out in this field, particularly studies on Arabic personal names. The studies found in the literature of Arabic personal names are mostly purely linguistic studies. They basically deal with the structure of Arab names in terms of *ism, kunya, nasab, laqab, nisba,* etc. For instance, Beeston's (1971) "Arabic Nomenclature", Auda's (2003) "Period Arabic Names and Naming Practices", Omer's (2006) "The typology of Arabic Proper Nouns" and, Zina Saadi (2006), "Behind the Name: Etymology of Arabic Names". Rosenhouse's study (2002) considers similarities and differences between names in Hebrew and Arabic from phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic perspectives. *Al-Zumor* (2009) investigates the naming practices followed in some tribal regions of Yemen neighboring Saudi Arabia.

Several other researchers through 20th century have studied the relationship between personal names and population structure. Many of them built models to compare personal names with the genetic evidence. Some other researchers tried to measure the different probabilities of finding the same names in different times, places, groups and martial parents. Some others studied the relationship between personal names and ethnicity, (Lasker, 1985, p. 5; Mateos, 2007, p. 80; Alford, 1987; Lawson & Butkus1999, Lawson & Balode 1996).

1.4 Data and Methodology

The study uses qualitative method, namely personal interviews and document analysis. Structured interviews have been conducted with a number of elite people, 50 Shiites and 50 Sunnis. The participants were selected randomly among intellectuals, university professors, historians, politicians and religious leaders. They have supplied the study with relevant information concerning personal naming practices in their respective communities.

Depending on the results of the first part of the study, the interviews, five common names used by Shiites, five common names used by Sunnis, and five neutral names used by both of them, has been selected to be tested by the method of document analysis.

For the document analysis, names from school register at the various levels of education are collected. A greater part of the names were selected form the list of students who graduated from technical institutes and the list of primary school pupils of two Iraqi cities, Mosel and Najaf, in the academic years of 2011 and 2012. The names of these different generations are chosen to be analyzed in order to investigate the past and current situation concerning name-giving practices for children.

2. FINDINGS

The study attempted to identify the Sunni and Shiite forenames (first names) based on the theory of linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics. Using methods of document analysis and interview, the study questioned the issue of sectarian identity and belonging in Iraq. The findings of the interview conducted with the 100 people shows that some names are exclusive to Shiites, some other names are exclusive to Sunnis, and some of them are neutral, used by both sects. They regard the names such as Abdul Kadhim, Abdul Zahra, Abdali, Abdulhusein, Abdulqasim, Abdulabas, Abduljawad, Abdulhamza, Abdulamir, Abdulsaid, Abdulhassan, Abdulraza, Abdultaj and Aqil as Shiite names. While names such as Othman, Bakir (Abu Bakir), Omer, Marwan, Osama, Khalid, Alhakam, Mu'away and Sufian are regarded as Sunni names. There are also some names that are used by both Shiites and Sunnis such as Mohammed, Ali, Hassan, Hussein, Ahmed, Rasul and Mustafa.

Depending on the results of the interviews, 15 names have been selected to be tested in the second level of the study which is document analysis, to make sure whether they give the same result or not, and to observe the change of the trend in different periods of time. The five common Sunni names are: Othman, Bakir (Abu-Bakir), Omer, Sufian and Mu'awya. The five Shiite names are: Abdulhusein, Abdulabas, Abdulhassan, Abdali and Abdulhamza. The five neutral names that are used by both sects are: Ali, Mohammed, Ahmed, Hassan and Hussein.

Forenames / Years	Mosel Province		Najaf Province	
	Students	Pupils	Students	Pupils
Othman	28	32	4	2
Abu-Bakr	33	45	5	2
Omer	66	87	8	4
Sufian	21	24	8	5
Mu'awya	23	26	3	3
Ali	36	42	40	45
Mohammed	44	45	23	28
Ahmed	28	31	12	15
Hassan	18	21	21	26
Hussein	12	16	33	34
Abdulhusein	8	4	38	42
Abdulabas	4	4	33	39
Abdulhassan	4	2	32	43
Abdulqasim	6	5	33	38
Abdilhamza	5	3	24	25

Table 1: the frequency of the names in the documents

Table 1 shows how the same names that are chosen in the interviews are frequent in the list of students who graduated from technical institutes and the list of primary school pupils of two Iraqi cities, Mosel and Najaf, in the academic years of 2011 – 2012.

The results show that certain names are prevalent in certain cities of Iraq. The names such as Othman, Bakir, Omer, Sufian and Mu'awya are very prevalent in the province of Mosel. While the names such as Abdulhusein, Abdulabas, Abdulhassan, Abdulqasim and Abdilhamza are prevalent in the province of Najaf. Hence, there are some names that can be considered as neutral, since they are used in both cities, such as Ali, Mohammed, Ahmed, Hassan and Hussein.

From table 1, it is obvious that the first group of names (Othman, Bakir, Omer, Sufian and Mu'awya), which are regarded as Sunni names among pupils aged between 6 to 8 years, are increased in Mosel but decreased in Najaf. The second group (Abdulhusein, Abdulabas, Abdulhassan, Abdulqasim and Abdilhamza), which are Shiite names, are increased in Najaf but decreased in Mosel. The third group (Ali, Mohammed, Ahmed, Hassan and Hussein), which are regarded as neutral names, are increased in both cities. The reasons behind these changes in the trend are discussed in the following section.

3. DISCUSSION

The study attempted to trace the Iraqi naming practice to the sectarian conflict. Identifying the motivational force behind the process of name giving deepens one's understanding of the socio-cultural characteristics of this community. Personal names reflect, better than any language form, various social, religious and cultural attitudes. The process of name giving reveals the way in which social groups behave toward language, religion and other aspects of society. In many cultures, people believe that to inherit or to receive someone's name is to inherit or receive at the same time his qualities, faults and his destiny. All the 15 names of table 1 are Islamic religious leaders.

For the sake of simplicity, the names under discussion are classified into three groups, Sunni, Shiite and neutral names, as follows:

3.1 The Sunni Names

The results of this study showed that certain names are prevalent in certain cities. In the province of Mosel, with the majority of Sunni population, the five names of Othman, Bakir, Omer, Mu'awya and Sufian are very frequent, since these names are regarded as Sunni names and they were regarded as the followers of Mohammed. The first three names are the names of *Khulafa e Rashideen*, the four caliphs of Islam immediately after the death of the prophet. Abu Bakir was father in law of prophet. He became the 1st caliph (leader) of Islam after Mohammed. Omer was father in law of prophet and was younger than Abu Bakir. He became the 2nd Caliph of Islam. Othman was son in law of prophet too. He had married two daughters of Mohammed (one after another). He was elder than Ali and became the third caliph of Islam.

With regard to the Shiites in Southern Iraq (e.g. Najaf), they do not name their sons after Omar, Abu Bakir and Othman; it is almost impossible to find a Shiite with one of these names, whereas they are very common names among Sunnis. The results of the interview show that %98 to %99 of the people interviewed believe that these three names are Sunni names not Shiites. Shiites believe that the prophet based on God's order chose Ali, not the other three Caliphs, as his successor and expressed this several times to the Muslims (including in his last hajj). They view the fact that some Sahaba (prophet's companions) didn't follow his order as a big injustice and diversion from what Muslims should have done and believe that this diversion had a large effect on the Muslim community, (Saadi, 2006).

Additional negative feelings come from (according to Shiites narration of the early Islamic history) the way Abu Bakir and Omar treated the prophet's family and decedents, particularly Ali and his wife Fatimah (Prophet's daughter), in various conflicts that arose during their reign. For example, the story

according to Shiites is that they used force to make Ali accept Abu Bakir, Omer and Othman as the successors of the prophet (Blanchard, 2009).

The other two names, Sufian and Mu'awya, are used more frequently by Sunnis not by Shiites. Sunnis believe that Abu Sufian helped Prophet Mohammed in conquering Mecca. His son Mu'awya was made secretary to the Prophet, but it was as a warrior in the army sent by the caliph Abu-Bakir to conquer Syria that he first distinguished himself in the Muslim community. As a result of his military exploits, he was awarded the governorship of Damascus. Mu'awya, the son of Sufian (died 680) was the founder of the Umayyad dynasty of caliphs. That's why Sunnis hold him in high regard as they do for any companion. They praise him for his leadership in restating the Muslim empire, saving Muslims from elimination and fighting on sea. Before his death, he appointed his son Yazid as the next Caliph (Al-Zumor, 2009).

Shiites do not give the names of Abu-Sufian and Mu'awya to their children, since they believe that their clan, which had resisted Mohammed and his message strongly, forcefully won political control over the Islamic community. Both the son Mu'awya, and the father Abu-Sufian, did not adopt Islam until the conquest of Mecca in 630. Shiites believe that Abu-Sufian accepted Islam forcefully. They say that his supposed conversion to Islam before the conquest of Mecca is dismissed as a fable, or mere hypocrisy. He is said to have opposed Ali, who the Shiites claim was the rightful Caliph, out of sheer greed for power and wealth. According to Shiite Muslim belief, his reign opened the door to unparalleled disaster, marked by persecution of Ali and his followers. Shiites claim that Mu'away's mother, Hind bint Utbah, was a strong enemy of Mohammed and the Muslims; she ate the liver of Muhammad's uncle Hamza after the Battle of Uhud. They claim that even Mu'awya converted to Islam only when it was politically convenient. His reign was worldly and irreligious. He killed many of Mohammed's companions, either in battle or by poison, due to his lust for power. Hassan ibn Ali himself was poisoned by him (ibid).

The results showed that the first group of names (Othman, Bakir, Omer, Sufian and Mu'awya), which are regarded as Sunni names by the participants, are increased in Mosel but decreased in Najaf in the 21st century. The pupils from primary school were aged 6 years in 2012. This can be interpreted to mean that they were given these sectarian names by their parents in the years of 2006. The reason for this can be traced back to the new sectarian conflict, which was provoked after the toppling of Saddam Hussein regime by the coalition forces in 2003, which finished centuries of Sunni political authority. The conflict reached its climate in 2006 and 2007. It can be said that this conflict affected the process of name giving.

3.2 The Shiite names

The term Shiite in the Arabic language means the follower. The holy Quran in this regard says, "Abraham is one of the followers (Shiites) of Noah", (Quran, Safat Sura, verse no. 8). Therefore, the term Shiite is applied to a group of Muslims, who were so-called due to their belief that God appoints His caliphs. This group has already remained believing in following the Prophet's Ahlul-Bait (the household of Mohammed). The other group believed that the Caliphate position is elective; therefore, they swore allegiance to Abu Bakir, and later they were entitled as the Sunnis.

The five Shiite names investigated in this study (Abdulhusein, Abdulabas, Abdulhassan, Abdilqasim and Abdilhamza) are all either the names of Shiite Imams (leaders) or the names of Ahlulbait (prophet's family member).

Shiites believe that the holy Prophet, in his lifetime, specified that twelve persons would rule as Caliphs after him, and that they all would be from Quraysh tribe. They also believe that the glory of Islam would be protected under their Caliphate. Jabir Ibn Samareh said I heard the Prophet saying, "Islam will be revered by the twelve caliphs and leaders". And then said a phrase I did not hear, so I asked my father, and he replied, "The Prophet said that they all were from Quraysh", (Al-Khaiuwn, 2003).

According to Shiite sources the twelve Imams of Shia have always been the symbol of piety and virtue in their own eras and thereafter. As a consequence, they preserved the Prophet's traditions and were honored by their disciples, followers, and the next generations. The historians have certified their immense knowledge and authority. They are as follows, (Blanchard, 2009):

1. Abu'l-Hasan, Abu'l-Hasanayn, known as Ali al-Murtada ibn Abu Talib (10 B.H. - 40 A.H.)
2. Abu Muhammad, known as al-Hassan al-Mujtaba ibn Ali (3 A.H. - 50 A.H.)
3. Abu Muhammad, known as al-Husayn al-Asghar ibn Ali (4 A.H. - 61 A.H.)
4. Abu Muhammad, known as Ali Zaynu'l-Abidin ibn al-Husayn (38 A.H. - 95 A.H.)
5. Abu Ja'far, known as Muhammad al-Baqir ibn Ali (57 A.H. - 114 A.H.)
6. Abu 'Abdillah, Abu Musa, known as Ja'far al-Sadiq ibn Muhammad (83 A.H. - 148 A.H.)
7. Abu'l Hasan, known as Musa al-Kadhim ibn Ja'far (129 A.H. - 183 A.H.)
8. Abu'l Hasan, known as Ali al-Rida ibn Musa (148 A.H. - 203 A.H.)
9. Abu Ja'far, known as Muhammad al-Jawad ibn Ali (195 A.H. - 220 A.H.)
10. Abu'l Hasan, known as Ali al-Hadi ibn Muhammad (212 A.H. - 254 A.H.)
11. Abu Muhammad, known as al-Hassan al-Askari ibn Ali (232 A.H. - 260 A.H.)
12. Abu'l-Qasim, known as Muhammad al-Mahdi ibn al-Hasan (255 A.H. - still alive)

The results of the study show that Shiites love their imams' names and name their children after them. They may believe that to inherit or to receive someone's name is to inherit or receive at the same time his qualities, faults and his destiny. Three names of the five Shiite names (Abdulhusein, Abdul Hassan and Abdulqasim) are the names of Imams. Abdulhusein is the son of Ali who was killed in the sectarian war in 61 A.H. Abdul Hassan was also the son of Ali, who was believed to be poisoned by Mu'awya followers in 50 A.H. Abdulqasim, known as Mohammed al-Mahdi ibin al-Hassan, was born in 255 A.H. Shiites believe that, he is still alive and one day he will come back to rule the Muslim community.

The two other Shiite names (Abdulabas and Abdulhamza) are the names of prophet's uncles; they are from ahlul bait (Mohammed's household). Abbas was a paternal uncle and Sahabi (companion) of Mohammed, just a few years older than his nephew. He was a wealthy merchant. During the early years of Islam he protected Muhammad while he was in Mecca. Hamza was also a companion and paternal uncle of the prophet Muhammad. The epic Hamzanama (literally "Epic of Hamza") narrates his legendary exploits and adventures. He was skilled in wrestling, archery and swordsmanship. He was fond of hunting, and he is described as "the strongest man of the Quraysh, and the most unyielding. Abas and Hamza's father was Abdul Muttalib ibn Hashim ibn Abd Manaf ibn Qusayy from the Quraysh tribe in Mecca, (ibid).

It is remarkable to know that the Sunnis also use these names, Hussein, Abas, Hassan, Qasim and Hamza, but without the prefix 'Abdul', since they believe that this prefix can only precede the Gods names, which are 99 names. The meaning of Abdul literally and normally means "Slave of the", but English translations also often translate it to: "Servant of the". Shiites may use this prefix before the names of their Imams, since they believe that the Imams are appointed by God to be the leaders of the Muslim community.

Abdul does not appear on its own as a male given name when written in Arabic. However, Abdul by itself is sometimes used as an independent full given first name outside of Arabic-speaking societies. The use of *Abdul* as an independent name appears to have arisen in the United States in the 20th century, perhaps among African-Americans who turned to Islam in the latter half of the century. When written in English, Abdul is subject to variable spacing, spelling, and hyphenation. It has various forms such as Abdal, Abdel, Abdil, Abdol, Abdool, or Abdoul, as the primary transliteration of the Arabic compound words: Abd meaning 'slave' and al is a definite article 'the', (Bernnen, 2000).

3.3 Neutral Names

Shiites and Sunnis are two sects of the same religion. Though they differ in some Islamic practices, they share many values and traditions, and they have similar understanding of basic Islamic beliefs. With regard to the naming practice, they have similar names too.

As the results showed (see table1), there are a number of names that are used by both sects and we called them neutral names. The five common ones are Mohammed, Ahmed, Ali, Hussein and Hassan. The first two names are the names of the prophet of Islam. He was known as Mohammed, but He himself told that one of his names was "Ahmad"; people during the days of Sahaba referred to him as "Ahmad" in their poems; children were named "Ahmad" after him in the same period. It has a number of variations such as Ahmad, Ahmed or Ahmet, which are the principal transliterations of the Arabic given name *aḥmad*. The name comes from the Arabic triconsonantal root of Ḥ-M-D, meaning *"highly praised"*, which in turn implies *"one who constantly thanks God"*. The name has its origins in a prophecy attributed to Jesus, (Rosenhouse, 2002). Allah says:

"And [this happened, too,] when Jesus, the son of Mary, said: "O children of Israel! Behold, I am an apostle of God unto you, [sent] to confirm the truth of whatever there still remains of the Torah, and to give [you] the glad tiding of an apostle who shall come after me, whose name shall be ***Ahmed****." But when he [whose coming Jesus had foretold] came unto them with all evidence of the truth, they said: "This [alleged message of his] is [nothing but] spellbinding eloquence!"* (Quran in Surah 61: As-Saff).

Shiites and Sunnis share the same religion, prophet and the Holly book, Qur'an. Consequently, since they both regard Ahmed as a name of their prophet, they give the two names of him, Mohammed and Ahmed, to their children.

The other three names, Ali, Hussein and Hassan, are neutral names too. Ali was son in law of the prophet and was younger than Othman. He became the 4th Caliph of Islam, after Othman's death. The results of the interview and document analysis show that Ali and his two sons, Hassan and Hussein, are neutral names which are used by Sunnis and Shiites alike to a great extent, since the prophet had special love for him. In praising them, the prophet once said,"Ali bin Abi Taleb is God’s best creation after me. Hassan and Hussain are The Masters of the Youth of Paradise", (Al-Khaiuwn, 2003).

Another reason of Sunnis love for Ali could be the way he treated the other Caliphs, Abdu-Bakir, Omer and Othman. He named his sons after them. There is no doubt that when someone names his son after a person, this means that he loves that person.

The results of this study show that the sectarian based naming practice (Shiite names vs. Sunni names) increased during 2006-2007, since the sectarian violence started after the collapse of Saddam's regime in 2003. This violence reached its topmost by 2006. Gabrielsen (2013) shows that by 2006 there was an extremely violent sectarian civil war in Iraq, with as many as 2700 to 3800 civilians being killed every month in the period from September 2006 to January 2007 with death squads roaming the streets of Baghdad and some other cities of Iraq.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the anthroponomy of the Iraqi community. It is an attempt toward understanding anthroponomy as a branch of the science of Onomastics in the region in relation to sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology. Following are the major conclusions of the study:

1. The Arabic system of personal names has a regularity of its own. It may have variations related to country of origin, religion, culture (rural or tribal vs. city), level of formality, and even personal preference.

2. Names as valuable markers of collective identity are culturally and socially linked; Naming practices offer clues on the type of social and cultural ethos within the community in which they are used.
3. The traditional forms of belonging in Iraq have not declined yet; the naming practice in Iraq is bound to religion and the different sects that people belong to.
4. Through a personal name, one can often know to what sect in Iraq, Shiite or Sunni, someone belongs.
5. The sectarian based naming practice (Shiite names vs. Sunni names) increased during 2006-2007, since the sectarian violence started after the collapse of Saddam's regime in 2003.

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