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Extended Abstract

Dialectology of proper names: A new approach in dialectology and onomastics (Case study: Sorani dialect, Sardasht and Baneh varieties)

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Introduction

The current research has been carried out by adopting a variationist approach and based on the belief that names, in addition to their referential function, contain information about geographic and social variations, with the aim of introducing the interdisciplinary “Dialectology of Proper Names”. This new research field is not only different in terms of the research topic and the data used, which are limited to proper names, but also in terms of the research method, i.e., it should be able to investigate the geographical and social variations of names, the effects of the ecosystem on naming, the role of metaphor and metonymy in naming from a cognitive linguistics point of view, and identity and gender issues, thus involving other branches of linguistics, including sociolinguistics, cognitive linguistics, eco-linguistics, etc.

“Dialectology of Proper Names” can research more specifically on the following topics:

- Various pronunciations of personal names in different varieties,
- Geographical variation in naming (practices) in a particular language,
- Metaphor/metonymy-based naming and the influence of the ecosystem,
- Nicknaming and nicknames of people in different linguistic varieties,
- Place names and different pronunciations of the names of natural phenomena, including mountains, hills, etc., and settlements, including villages and cities.
- Naming livestock and pets.

Materials & Methods

The current study describes and analyzes the findings of the research focusing on the Sorani dialect, Baneh and Sardasht varieties. Since the research introduces and is based on the interdisciplinary “dialectology of proper names” and from a new and different perspective, it is the first research done with this approach. Ahmadi (2017) in his doctoral thesis addressed personal naming in Sorani Kurdish, based on socio-cognitive linguistics. However, in the current research, proper names (including personal names, different pronunciations of personal names, nicknaming people, naming livestock, names of natural and man-made places) are used as an indicator and the subject in dialectology during the investigation of linguistic diversity based on a variationist approach. Hence, it shows that diversity in the selection or creation and use of special names from different perspectives can provide a basis for future research in dialectology.

The research method was descriptive-analytical and the research data were collected in the field with the help of informed people living in different villages of Baneh and Sardasht, villagers and teachers of some villages, and also in a few cases the data were based on the author’s knowledge and intuition.

Results and Discussion

In this section, the research findings are discussed in six sections:

Section 1. Geographical diversity in personal naming

The frequency of names in different regions can be checked in dialectology because some names are used more in certain regions, such as the frequency of the names /pirot/, /homær/, /wösu:/, /babækır/, /mæmænd/, /bayız/, /xıdır/ in Sardasht.

Section 2. Geographical diversity in the pronunciation of the same name

This section deals with the different pronunciation of people's names in Sardashti and Baneh varieties.

2-1. Sardasht variety

Voiceless laryngeal fricative consonant [h] → voiced laryngeal fricative consonant [ʕ] (voicing):

ʔæhmæd → ʔæʕmæd

Voiced laryngeal fricative consonant [ʕ] → voiceless laryngeal fricative consonant [h] (devoicing):

ʕæli → hæli

2-1. Baneh variety

Omission of the final consonant [d]:

ʔæhmæd → ʔæhmæ

Vowel shift: short front closed vowel [ɪ] → long closed front vowel [i]:

ʕabɪd → ʕabid

Omission of the dental consonant [d] and replacing it with a semi-vowel [y] and converting the short closed front vowel [ɪ] into an open front vowel [æ]:

qadır → qayær

Deletion of the postvocalic consonant after the vowel in the names and compensatory lengthening of the vowel:

zاهر → zayi:r

behnám → be:nam

Change in the initial syllable:

yusef → wesif

Shortening personal names:

mohæmmæd → hæmæ

Section 3. Metaphor-based naming

Kurdish people use different conceptualizations in the construction of people's names, which are mostly rooted in their ecology, geography, and their lived experience, history and myths, and are based on metaphors derived from nature. Conceptualizations also reveal differences in gender: "Women" are usually conceptualized as life, light, and beauty. The underlying conceptualization of male names indicates steadfastness, resistance, and strength.

Female names

Underlying metaphor: Nature is human. Source domain: Surrounding nature → Target domain: Human

kæzæl (gazelle)

rozin (sun)

baran (rain)

Underlying metaphor: Life is human. Source domain: Life → Target domain Human

ziyan (life)

Male names

Underlying metaphor: Life is human. Source domain: Life → Target domain Human

faho (a mountain)

Section 4. Nicknaming

Nicknames show the views of others towards a particular person, so they are a reflection of the social structure of the linguistic community. Nicknaming of people in Baneh showed that appearance and behavioral characteristics are involved in nicknaming, which is mostly based on metaphor and metonymy.

hısæinæ fil (Hossein the elephant)

qalæ wuftır (Qader the camel)

Section 5. Naming livestock

The naming of livestock was mostly based on appearance and behavior, which is metaphorical.

Cows: ziba (beautiful), dıwane (beauty)

Dogs: feræ (lion)

Goats: qutæ (brisk)

Section 6. Naming natural places and settlements

Naming natural places was based on metonymy, metaphor, proximity, natural features, and names of persons.

Mountains: du:zin (two saddles), ʃilʃæmæ (forty springs)

Villages: ʔæhmawa (Ahmedabad), kani-gwez (Walnut Spring)

Conclusion

The findings of the research showed that proper names can be studied as valid indicators of different varieties as the subject of dialectology from different perspectives.

According to the first section, the differences in naming patterns can be studied as a different subject in dialectological research.

In the second section, the variation in the pronunciation of personal names in Sardasht and Baneh varieties of Sorani dialect, showed a picture of geographical diversity.

The third section, the metaphor-based naming, showed that the use of environmental characteristics and the ecosystem of Sorani speakers plays an important role in personal naming practices.

The fourth section showed that nicknaming people can provide an image of the social structure of different linguistic communities and that metaphor and metonymy can play a role in this process.

The fifth section dealt with the naming of domestic animals to show that metaphor and metonymy can be found in this naming.

The sixth section, the naming of natural places and settlements in Baneh and Sardasht, showed that proximity, appearance characteristics, and in general, metaphor and metonymy are involved in this naming.

In general, according to the findings of the research, it is both reasonable and viable to consider the “dialectology of proper names” as a separate interdisciplinary and research field, thus, introducing new paths for interested variationist linguistics researchers. This branch can surely address other issues such as identity, gender, variations in the names of businesses and brand names, streets, alleys, neighborhoods, and the differences between the naming practices in border areas and more central varieties, especially the standard variety.

Keywords: *Dialectology; Onomastics; Sorani Kurdish; Baneh; Sardasht*

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