

Gender Differences in Naming Colors in Jordan: A Sociolinguistic Study*

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ABSTRACT

Based on a sociolinguistic perspective, the present study aims to shed light on gender differences in the color-naming system in Jordanian Spoken Arabic (henceforth JSA). Though the connotations of colors have been examined from semantic, pragmatic and psychological viewpoints, this study tackles the phenomenon from a sociolinguistic view in JSA. The participants of the study were 80 young Jordanians (40 women and 40 men). The participants were given the color spectrum wheel, and were asked to write down the names of the colors they can perceive and distinguish in Arabic. The theoretical framework for this study is based on the Linguistic Relativity Theory, in particular the Domain-Centered Approach. The study concludes that there are gender differences in the color naming system in JSA, as Jordanian young women employ more color names than young men do. In addition, young women associate the names of terms with socially familiarized objects such as fruits, vegetables and sweets, in order to distinguish between them.

Keywords: Color terms, Jordanian spoken Arabic, sociolinguistics, gender differences.

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