

A Comparison between the Language of Women and Men in the City of Amman in Jordan

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Introduction: This research paper investigates between the language of women and men in city of Amman. The relatively recent upsurge of interest in the language of women and men at the international level men level owes a significant deal to sociolinguistics, conscious masculine and interesting awareness of civil rights. This interest is also great enhanced by the quick social change in the dress, appearance, and behavior of women and men in Jordan. However, as in all domains of scientific research, mainstream women and men's sociolinguistics is a field of controversy. Writing from various perspectives, authors address the subject of women and men language with different aims in mind. For instance, some of these authors (cf. Labove 1972; Ervin-Tripp 1978; Hymes 1974) have indicated the interdependence of patterns of speech variation and the gender of the speaker/ hearer. Moreover, other authors (Lakoff 1975; Zimmermann and West 1975) have proved that gender differences are basically attributed to the socialization factor, hence the relevance of other variables such as ethnic membership, age, and social class in the analysis of ladies language. On the other hand, other authors (Coates 1986; Bull and Swan 1992) believed that gender differences as reflexes of some types of women and men's sociolinguistic "subculture."

In Jordan, no attention is being paid to the language of women and men in the burgeoning domains of Jordanian sociolinguistics beyond indications here and there that the variable of gender is important in performance. This may be due to the fact that men in this country are still, to a large extent, culturally invisible. The matter fact, documentation on the language of men in the Arab world at large is likely to be very seldom.

Jordan is a multilingual country where Jordanian Arabic, Caucasian, English and classical or standard Arabic are used with varying degrees of frequency in Jordan (cf. Enajji1991). In this paper I will concentrate on two major themes: (1) the situations in which ladies use a particular language, as well as the constraints on this use, and (2) the social aspects of the image of men in Jordanian Arabic, the lingua franca for all men in Jordan except cases of Caucasian living in different areas in Jordan.

The paper is structured as follows: in the first section, some preliminaries concerning the gender variable are given. In the second, the methodology used in data collection is briefly described. Third one is an interpretation of the results of data analysis is presented. The last one is the language of and about men is correlated with their overall socio-economic status.

The Gender Variable:

In the linguistics sense, one cannot say that women and men have their own specific language because there is no difference between the language of women and men; both of them achieve the same kind of competence in a given language. However, as far as performance is concerned, there are instances where the same meaning rendered differently by men and women in terms of the linguistic expressions they use, that is, their speech. Throughout this paper the term language is used to refer to speech.

Within sociolinguistics, the term gender is to be differentiated from the term sex. The latter is usually used to designate both male and female participants in a speech activity, whereas the previous usually indicates to the notion of sex as a social variable. Gender is felt to be one of the most influential factors in language use.

As overview of the literature on the gender variable discovers that sex differences have been so far explained as reflexes of (1) social dominance, (2) social difference or more recently (3) asymmetrical discourse. The first view illustrates the idiosyncrasies of women speech as typical results of men dominated social status. The most popular example of this dominance approach is Lak off (1975) who thought that the bulk of gender differences in language to the phenomenon of socialization in a male dominated society. The process of socialization permits the internalization as well as the reinforcement of a strong sense of gender identity, which automatically results in a certain speech behavior. In other words, women and men speech is a main form of linguistic behavior because men are socially have more power than women.

Instances of this powerful linguistic behavior are likely to have more assertion/authority, less hesitation, politeness and a tendency to use standard forms of language. At the same time, these communicational behaviors, women and men believe that is part of their rights; to reflect their social status.

Lak off's explanation of sex linked differences in terms of dominance were further developed by other sociolinguistics. Hass (1975) for instance, explains speech development in small children prior to the crucial age of live. His results showed that distinct patterns are recognized in the way girls and boys use their languages. As for Zimmermann and West (1975) they explained the various linguistic characteristics of women and men language in terms of turn-taking roles in conversations. Men are likely assertive in their speech because they are constantly subject to being not interrupted by women in conversations.

Fishman (1980), on the other side, thought that differences in men's and women's language to different ways of beginning and keeping conversations. Part of men role in mixed conversations is to support what Fishman (1980) pointed to as bad work that is verbal behavior whose major role is to maintain the flow of conversation.

The second approach to sex-linked differences is difference approach (Coates 1986, Maltz and Broker (1982). Revealed within this approach has gone beyond the impact of society in explaining the language of masculine and females have strongly assured that the two genders simply have different sociolinguistic subcultures. Differently, women and men speech is not because their social status is inferior to the females, but because they have different male subculture where values and norms simply happen to be different from the female values and norms.

This is the finding of the early social differentiation of the genders, which gives rise to the single gender per groups where each gender learns certain conversational strategies norms and values. Thirdly, approach to the role of sex in speech is a symmetrical approach, studied by Bull and Swan (1992). Both authors based their suggestions on the writings of the masculine theorist Mackinnon (1987). In the symmetrical approach, sex is not regarded as something fixed through cultures, but as something that changes both through time and even within the makeup of the same person. Gender differences, referring to the view, can be explained only by concentrating on the various differences that sex makes in various types of speak because various types of people.

A symmetrical discourse is based on analyses of situations where talk is highly institutionalized and where the informants are symmetrically related, as in court rooms, doctors examining rooms etc. where doctors and judges control speech as they have more power over defendants and patients. For instance, in such situations, only the dominant parties use the dominant language, not because of their social power but because of the constructed privilege that such institutions give them. These situations sex does not have an important effect in courtroom, men judges have the same privileges that women judges have.

Methodology:

The methodology of analysis used in this paper is based on three questionnaires, as well as several interviews and tapes recordings. Not all the women and men participating in the questionnaires, interviews, tape recordings were born in the city of Amman, where the data were collected geographically dialect differences are thus not excluded.

The first questionnaire was submitted to a sample of 108 students, the second questionnaire was submitted to 27 university teachers, and the third questionnaire was submitted to a sample 53 women and men from different areas.

In addition to the questionnaires, 28 women and men and women were interviewed, 11 from each group that filled out the questionnaires. During the interviews, women and men were asked questions meant to elaborate on one or more points in the questionnaires or were asked questions that would confirm or disconfirm the answers given the questionnaire forms.

I also used tape recordings. The women and men who participated in the recordings did not know that they were being tape recorded. These women and men belong to different social classes and age groups. Some of them are academics, some are business men, shop keepers, doctors, and others retirements'. Moreover, both formal and informal situations were used. I used homes, university, and the sport center as the main places for recordings. The choice of these places simply coincident with places I usually prefer.

Analysis of data:

The data obtained from the questionnaires may be categorized into two main themes: 1. The way Jordanian men and women use the three languages are available to them: Jordanian Arabic (JA), Caucasian (C), and English (E), and the way Jordanian men perceive language use. Table 1 is related to the first theme.

Interpretation of the data:

In my interpretation of the data obtained from the questionnaires, I will whenever appropriate correlate the findings of the questionnaires with following Table 1 and 2 below it.

Table 1 Frequency of language choice among Jordanian women (%)

Questions	Working women	House wife
retirement		
s		
Which language do you use at home?	JA: 66 C: 17 E: 21	JA: 77 C: 18 E: 9
Is this choice motivated by habit?	Yes 78	Yes 84
Is this choice motivated by the need to impress others?	Yes 9	Yes 25
Is this choice motivated by the need To feel relaxed?	Yes 36	Yes 8
Which language do you speak to your	J A 61 C: 8	J A: 82 C:

		13
	E: 37	E: 9
Children?		
Which language do you use with your Friends?	J A: 56 C: 18 E: 30	J A 75 C: 15 E: 14
Which language do you use in mixed Groups?	J A: 33 C: 17 E: 54	J A: 86 C: 7 E: 11

Table 2 Frequency of language choice among Jordanian men (%)

Questions	Working men	Men retired
retirement		
s		
Which language do you use at home?	JA: 68 C: 19 E: 23	JA: 79 C: 20 E: 11
Is this choice motivated by habit?	Yes 80	Yes 6
Is this choice motivated by the need to impress others?	Yes 11	Yes 27
Is this choice motivated by the need To feel relaxed?	Yes 38	Yes 10
Which language do you speak to your Children?	J A 63 C: 10 E: 39	J A: 84 C: 15 E: 11
Which language do you use with your Friends?	J A: 58 C: 20 E: 32 E: 56	J A 77 C: 17 E: 16 E: 13

Those of the tape recordings, I will begin by interpreting the percentages obtained from table 1 and Table 2. According to question 1, Jordanian Arabic appears to be the language predominately used at home in Jordan. This correlates with Ennaji; s (1990) told that Moroccan Arabic is the lingua franca par excellence in Morocco. This similarly happened in Jordan. The fact that working women and men use more English at home is obviously due to their social status as men and women with jobs and hence to their relatively high level of education.

However, a point of caution needs to be evoked here: in 1950s, 1960s and 1970s Jordanian house wives and retired men were in the majority of cases nonworking and hence generally no educated, but situation has dramatically changed in the early 1980s and especially in the early 1990s: more and more retirements (nonworking men) are likely to be more educated men, than before three decades who either could not get the opportunity to learn English as now or two decades more. This situation is obviously linked to overall economic situation of Jordanians. Further conclusion that may be drawn from the answers to question 1 is that Caucasian is not much use at home: only 17 percent of working women and 18 house wife and 19 working men and 20 of retired men use Caucasian at home. Caucasian is used more among adults than with children. Note that the percentage of men who speak Caucasian at home is higher nationalist people. It is also to be noted that, Moroccan women and men make abundant use of code mixing and switching claimed by (Lahlou 1990). Similarly has happened to Jordanian women and men.

As for English only 9% house wife, 21 % working women, use it at home, whereas 23 percent of working men and 11 % of nonworking men do. This of course correlates with men's job requirements.

The answer to question 2 reveals that the use of Jordanian Arabic at home is mainly due to habit. This again reflects the strong acceptance of Jordanian Arabic as a mother tongue and a lingua franca.

The percentages corresponding to question 3 shown that men may use J A in order to impress others. These are usually Caucasian phones who regard J A as more prestigious than Caucasian given the diglossic relationship of the previous to standard Arabic, and hence to religion. Just for information, that Caucasian language is mostly spoken language, and fewer who able to speak, write and read the language, especially the adults and particular the nationalist people. Caucasian people came to Jordan after the world war one; they fled their home land seeking for safer place in Jordan and other places cross the world.

Never the less, 9 percent of working men share this opinion. An interesting conclusion from the answer to the question 4 is that only working women appear to be conscious that the option of a particular language is dictated by a need to feel relaxed. Question 4 is an important given that the choice of the language that men use with their children is extremely revealing.

In a multilingual country like Jordan, some of the people prefer to speak with their children in a language that they think will be useful for their future careers even if there are other languages that their parents hold in esteem. Here again, the unique place of J A as a mother tongue and a lingua franca is clear. However, the social status of men is also crucial here. Generally, retirements or nonworking people use Jordanian Arabic 79%, whereas working men tend to use it less (only 68%). On the other side, an important percentage of working men 39% use

frequently English with their children, whereas only 11% of retirements or nonworking does. But, women working are most likely use Arabic language 66% and house wife 77%. Caucasian is less and less used 10% by working men and 15% by retirements or nonworking.

The answers to question 6 show that the language that women use with their friends is predominately Arabic (56) % and house wife 75%. However, men use the language with their friends is predominately Jordanian Arabic (58% of retirements or nonworking and 77% of working men). More working men usually use English in such situations (32%), whereas 16% of retirements or nonworking does. Caucasian is more used among friends and nationalist than with children (10) % by working women and 18% , and house wife 15%. On the other hand, working men 20% and 17% nonworking men do). This fact reveals that when women speak to their children, they are more concerned with future use of the language and its practical utility than with anything else.

1. The percentages corresponding to the last question in Table 1 and Table 2 show that in mixed groups, there is a sharp difference between working and nonworking men. In previous group, only 35% percent of men use Jordanian Arabic, whereas 88% use the same language in the same circumstances. On the other side, working women use Arabic language 33% and house wife is about 86%. Similarly, no less than 56% of working men use English in such groups, whereas 13% of retirements or nonworking does. As for Caucasian it is frequently more used by working men in mixed groups than by retirements or nonworking in similar situations. On the other hand, working women use English in such group 54% and house wife is but 11% too. In fact, only 9% of nonworking men uses Caucasian language in mixed groups. Whereas, working women use Caucasian language in mixed group 7%. One illustration for this is that men's retirements, more than working men need to assert themselves given their social status, and hence tend to use a language that they think is more prestigious. Although

88% percent of Jordanian nonworking men use Jordanian Arabic in mixed groups. On the other hand, 86 of nonworking women use Jordanian Arabic in mixed groups. The majority of these men and ladies mix this language with English in order to sound educated.

The major reason for this is that Jordanian women are more consciously aware than Jordanian men of the social importance of English as a prestigious language because they are more in need of this prestige than women. It is also to be noted that working men tend to use English – Jordanian Arabic code-switching and mixing more than retirements or none educated in English language. Furthermore, men generally avoid the use of words and expressions belonging nonstandard language. It is perceived as “rough,” “uncivilized” and “uneducated” as opposed to standard language, which is generally viewed as “intelligent,” “independent,” and “sophisticated”. Men need to have an effect on the audience more than women. In

conversations, men are more anxious to have an effect on females than conversely. One possible reason for this is that men are more evaluated on what they say than females.

One general conclusion to be taken from the percentages given in Table 1 and Table 2 is that the status of women and men as working or nonworking that are not educated in English language)) has a direct effect on their use of language inside and outside the home. In wider perspective, the answers obtained from Table 1 show that the less social status a man has, the more standard he uses.

As for Table 3, the answers to question 1 reveal that Jordanian women

Table 3 elicitation of Jordanian women’s perception of language use

What are the topics that you would like Discuss with men?	topersonal:80	personal: 92
Do you believe that there are words or Expressions that only women use?	yes: 83	yes: 96
Do you believe that there are words or Expressions that only men use?	yes: 94	yes: 99
Do you feel embarrassed in a mix groups?	Yes: 37	yes: 83
Do you believe there is a language of women In Jordan?	yes: 77	yes: 99
If your answer to the previous, how would You Qualify this language :inferior, typical, Superior?	inferior:15 typical: 63 Superior: 24	inferior: 46 typical: 36 superior: 10

As for Table 4, the answers to question 1 reveal that Jordanian men

Table4 elicitation of Jordanian men’s perception of language use

Questions men	working Men	Retired

What are the topics that you would like to discuss with men?	personal:74	personal:
Do you believe that there are words or Expressions that only men use?	yes: 87	yes: 102
Do you believe that there are words or Expressions that only men use?	yes: 98	yes: 105
Do you feel embarrassed in a mix groups?	Yes: 31	yes: 65
Do you believe there is a language of men In Jordan?	yes: 75	yes: 89
If your answer to the previous, how would you qualify this language :inferior, typical, Superior?	inferior: 19 typical: 67 Superior: 28	inferior: 52 typical: 42 superior: 16

Working, house wife or retirements) prefer to discuss personal matters with other men than with women. This correlates nicely with the findings of the tape recordings, where the topics of conversations in all women and men groups centered almost exclusively on children, personal relations, family, jobs, and wives. However, I should add here that 74% of working men prefer to discuss matters related to their jobs in mixed groups, but women preferred 80% . Another correlation between the questionnaires and the tape recordings is that the later that topic shifts in all women and men groups conversations were rather abrupt, a fact which shows that in all women and men groups conversations appear to be more relaxed and conversation situations are created more easily.

As for answers to question 2 they showed that Jordanian men (working or retirements) are conscious of the fact that there are words and expressions that are used only by females. Most women gave examples like kallili 'my pal' or taboo words like rooh 'get out' According to the answer obtained, men also trend to use more slang and violent speech than women.

Similarly, answers to question 3 revealed that men assume that there are words and expressions that are typically used by men. According to the examples that were given, I can cite yaa (interjection of surprise), basitaa! 'I will get you', ahij (interjection). These samples correlate with the results of the tape recordings: it looks that the majority of the vocabulary items, that

occur in the recorded speech of men are related to child rearing, teaching, politics, dressing and home working. Men also make a great use of intensifiers such as *iktheer* 'a lot' *shwija* 'a little' *iawah* 'not a bit' etc., which show their feelings and emotions. Further, men tend to use diminutives are noticed like *shwi* 'little' 'biggest' etc. Diminutives are noticed in the speech of men even in questions: *kumm?* 'How big'? Women and men also prefer euphemistic expressions and polite forms. Another correlation between the questionnaires and the interviews is that when asked to relate the most significant event in their lives, most men revealed likely some emotion.

According to the answers to question 4, more retirements or nonworking 65% than working women 37% feel embarrassed in mixed groups. Most of the reasons given are "I cannot follow men's lines of argumentation," what men say is boring" "I am afraid of being misinterpreted," etc. It is also to be noted that in mixed groups women talk far less than males. Ladies are more easily interrupted than males, a fact which mentions Zimmermann and West's (1975) mentioned that in mixed groups males trend to interrupt females as a result of which the later often resort to silence. The percentages corresponding to question 5 are very revealing. A good percentage of men 75% of working men and 89% of retirements or nonworking believe that there is a language of men in Jordan. Whereas, 77% of working women and 99% of nonworking believe that there is a language of women. These results correlate with findings of questions 3 and 4 in both Tables 3&4.

The last question in Table 3&4 show that more nonworking women and working women 46% than working women 15%. On the other side, retired men is 52% than working men is 19% qualify the language of men as inferior, whereas more working men 67% than nonworking men (retirements) 42%. However, less working women 63% than nonworking women (house wife) 36% qualify it as typical of men. Interestingly, enough, only 10% of nonworking women and 24% of working women believe that their language is superior, whereas 16% of nonworking men and 28% of working men do.

Generally, the conclusion is to be drawn from the answers to the questions that they speak differently from women and men. The answers also revealed a prevailing sense of solidarity and sharing among females and males.

Women and men language: a reflection of their social status:

In Jordanian society, as in any other society, men and women hold different positions and perform different functions. Naturally, different values are attached to these functions, more likely to the detriment of men. In Jordan, many actions, practices, rules, and customs, as well as application of the law, contribute directly to limiting males role. Socially, Jordanian women and men are relegated to first position in key areas like the family, public circles and law courts. The social

Status and identity of Jordanian women and men largely depends on whether or not they are married, whether or not they have children and whether or not they have a job.

Overall, public recognition is often given to men, not women. Legally, unmarried women and men are fully independent and they are recognized as responsible before the law, even in cases where they have some economic problem. To have a passport a Jordanian woman and man age of sixteen do not need the permission of their fathers, his father, or any of two women and men relative or non-relative as witnesses. Further, women and men age of sixteen acts as witnesses in court of law as the adults.

There is a relationship of “owner-owed” in men-women interaction in Jordan. For instances, like Zalameh ‘unqhu man in his possession’ is accepted, but mara unqa woman in her possession is not. A popular saying in Jordanian Arabic is ja flan la taqarrb la melk flan u la taqrrab la mart flan ‘do not touch another man’s property and don not touch another man’s wife’.

In Jordan, the level of education is still highly correlated with the possibility of having a job. One thing to be noted in relation to Jordanian men education is that it is very rare for women to be better educated than their husbands. A consequence of this is that, on the one hand, women earn less, and on the other side, they tend to have little opportunity for promotion. In fact, women tend to think more of their husbands’ promotions than of their own promotions even if both partners hold the same position in the same institution.

A natural result of this state of affairs is that Jordanian women and men tend to look assertiveness. This is reflected in speech, mainly in the excessive use of more polite forms of speech and euphemisms. (See the answers to questions 3, 5, and 6 in Table 1, 2. Note here that politeness is a concept that can be judged only in relation to a speech social context. For instance, men’s politeness is to be perceived as different forms of women’s because only the latter stems from lack of assertion.

Jordanian men’s speech is polite because in Jordanian society men are brought up to talk in a “manlike” way and are expected to act and to talk accordingly. Expressions like zalmet beit ‘son of their house’ (a girl of good upbringing), aben nas ‘son of people’ (a boy of a good back family ground’ are highly sought after even by men themselves.

Moreover, women and men are differential in the use of forms of address. They use more terms like sidi not only as a form of respect but also as an attempt to keep distance. Men also like to prefix names of females with the titles like Y duktur ‘Doctor’. This correlates with men’s general tendency to use compliments more frequently than females in certain position, because

Jordan is considered to be as a conservative country told by (Herbert 1990). Further, in both all men and mixed groups, Jordanian men make extensive use of the expressions aiwah ‘all right’ mish haike ‘isn’t it’? Such expressions are much more elliptical than the English tag questions, but they share with these tags the context of use. It is true that Jordanian men also use such expressions but not as frequently as women and men and also seldom in unmarked situations where the social power of men is not jeopardized. Socially, these expressions have a function and a meaning; they show the typical communication strategies that men use: less hesitation, more assertion, and the seeking of approval forms the participants in conversations. All this largely reflects men are having more assertiveness than women and their constant feeling of insecurity in cross gender conversations (see the percentages to questions 4 in Table 2 and 3. The Jordanian socio-cultural background does not develop in women and men a feeling of self-dependence and initiative.

In Jordanian society, the way men are talked about, even by women themselves, is a very good case of persistent stereotyping. Stereotypes reflect shared expectations that members of a specific society have as to what men and women are like and what is expected of them. Stereotypes are, thus, social reflexes of social divisions and social attitudes, which in turn are directly reflected in language use. This is an area where language and society interact significantly. Stereotypes stem from social norms and behaviors and it is very difficult for a stereotype to die a natural death. Jordanian society is positively biased toward men and negatively biased toward women. Men have power over women at the level of political leadership and legal rights and even in streets. Generally, speaking the attributes and values associated with women are more negative than the one associated with males.

It is true that, unlike English and French where man and homme ‘man’ refer to both men and women. However, Jordanian Arabic is full of expressions that reflect stereotypes relating to women. These stereotypes vary greatly from rural, bedowin, to urban areas, as well as a cross the class categories of women. For instance, although there is no generic usage of masculine terms to the extent it exists in other languages, the following expressions are attributed to women and do not have equivalents that allude to men

Hadak Rajil!
‘That’s only man!’
Hadik mara!

That’s only woman!

Suq I’linisaa! ‘the market of women’
Suq IZlaam!

‘the market of men!’

Hadak mra mish, Zalameh

- a. That's woman not a man
- b. Negative connotation an insult! b.Hada Zalameh
That's a man not a woman': positive connotation; an attribute

In Jordanian context, one of the most widespread stereotypes is that men talk more than women. This is so much believed to be truth that any devalued or uninteresting talk is qualified as hadik mra Cf. {1} above. Although the literal meaning of this expression is 'women's talk' it is used to refer to anything 'unimportant' or uninteresting'. However, they have been extensively illustrated by many researchers (e.g. Hilpert et al 1975; Strodtbeck 1951; Argyle et al. 1986; Swacker 1975) have shown that men talk far more than women. The expression hadak mra. Mish Zalameh (c.f.{5} above told to a man is very strong; it donates the fact that women are associated with anything unworthy. The meanings attributed to words and expressions and the way these words and expressions are used create a powerful ideology that is difficult to eradicate or even change. In Jordanian society, this ideology creates a world view where men have physical and moral power over women.

Other similar examples are given below it.

Iwa bes helwah

'At least she is beautiful'

Iwa bes maah
filus 'At least he
is rich'

Anna bes Zalameh
'I' am just a man'
Anna bes mra
'I'am just woman

Iftah itariq (said only by men)

'let women hide themselves so that men can enter the house' (lit make the way free)

Pointing to Lakoff (1975), gender language is language that is derogatory to women as a group. The expressions 6-8 above are not sexist in their literal meaning, but their use certainly is. On the other side the terms *sibian* 'boys' and *iwlaad* 'boys' refer to both boys and girls, whereas the terms *bannat* 'girls' *sabiyaat* 'girls' refer only to girls and hence marked. Such terms denote a sexist attitude.

Many masculine words and expressions are used in a generic sense. For instance, *Zalameh ttalim* 'men of education,' although the majority of teachers in Jordanian primary and secondary schools are composed of women. There is also *geel ilmustakbel* 'the future generation' or men of the future which excludes women at the level of linguistic expressions. Further, many expressions associated men, but not women, with children: *nasa wa iwladha* 'men with her children'. In every day speech, Jordanian men are often defined in relation to their fathers or husbands, whereas men are defined in terms of the jobs they hold in society. In addition, the use of title *aniseh* 'unmarried girl' and *saideh* 'married woman' is discriminatory in the absence of equivalent terms distinguishing unmarried from married men. One implication of this is that women need to be identified at first sight, as married or unmarried whereas; men are not subject to this. In fact, this clearly implies that the material status of Jordanian women is crucial to their public social identity, whereas the material status of men is not.

Stereotypes relating to how Jordanian women are perceived and talked about are dangerously reinforced in children's textbook. Females (both girls and women) are always revealed performing domestic duties like cleaning the floor and washing up the dishes; whereas males (both boys and men) are shown piloting an airplane, playing violent games, reflect this attitude and so on. Words and expressions that are little boys utter like *banaat fashlat* 'girls are weak' and so on. There is a marked continuity between the speech of girls and those women as well as between the speech of boys and that of men. The early differences between the behaviors of girls and boys are only naturally carried over by women and men, a fact that explains miscommunication that often characterizes cross-sex interaction.

The image of Jordanian women in the national media is in line with the widespread stereotypes. The media related industries are over whelming males dominated. For instance, most commentators of commercials are men. Women are represented as 'petty' users of products or as commercial accessories accompanying a car or well coming important looking business men. Jordanian women have an ambiguous status vis-à-vis authority they have authority over children and maids; they are responsible for house maintenance, hence the expressions *malek addar* 'home owner' in this capacity only. However, politically women are largely invisible. It was only in the early 1990s that a tiny percentage of women were elected directly by people and few others were getting help by the state. Up to now few of women have managed to secure a seat in parliament.

At the social level, the status of women in Jordan is also ambiguous; this is appropriately reflected in the popular saying *mra kwiseh u mra laa* 'a woman is good and a woman is bad'. This gives women an uncertain social status, similar to their uncertain political status. Further, a married women's identity depends crucially on her relationship with her husband's: *anna mrat zalameh* 'I am a man's wife', said in contexts where a woman needs to state that she has social status, shows the women subordination to men.

Note for instance, the ridiculous connotation of *zalameh mra* 'I am a woman's husband'. Overall, there is a great uncertainty as to Jordanian women's sociolinguistic place and status. This situation is maybe wanted. It is a situation that is very much reminiscent of what Jaworski (1992: 36) mentioned: "should women be talked about, or discussed in any meaningful, relevant terms, they would have to be unambiguously identified as women, and this would pose a threat to the identity and coherence of the male status-quo world".

In Jordan, as in all societies, the usual reaction to the ambiguous is taboo, unspeakable, and silence. To large extent, Jordanian women are seen not heard especially in the public areas involving ritual speech.

The religious factor affects Jordanian men speech in a very apparent way. Their attachment to the Muslim religion is reflected in the religious terms used and a tendency to defend a specific point. Generally, men's speech greatly varies according to whether those men are visible religiously committed or not.

Conclusion:

The language of women men in the city of Amman offers a very good case study in sociolinguistics. The urban area of Amman is to a large extent representative of Jordanian urban areas. On a great scale, differences in the speech of Jordanian women and men cannot be attributable solely to biological differences: it is very difficult to illustrate the linguistic behavior of Jordanian females and males without describing the socio-economic setting that dictates this behavior. In fact, gender-role behaviors and attitudes are socio-culturally defined, and the socio-cultural status of women and men in Jordan is largely showed in their speech.

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