

Investigating the Associative Network of Color Terms among Turkish University Students: A Cognitive-Based Study

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Abstract : Word association (WA) gives the broadest information on how knowledge is structured in the human mind. Cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, and applied linguistics are the disciplines that consider WA tests as substantial in gaining insights into the very nature of the human cognitive system and semantic knowledge. In this study, Berlin and Kay's basic 11 color terms (1969) are presented as the stimuli words to a total number of 300 Turkish university students. The responses are analyzed according to Fitzpatrick's model (2007), including four categories, namely meaning-based responses, position-based responses, form-based responses, and erratic responses. In line with the findings, the responses to free association tests are expected to give much information about Turkish university students' psychological structuring of vocabulary, especially morpho-syntactic and semantic relationships among words. To conclude, theoretical and practical implications are discussed to make an in-depth evaluation of how associations of basic color terms are represented in the mental lexicon of Turkish university students.

Keywords : color term, gender, mental lexicon, word association task

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