

The Formation of the Diminutive in Colloquial Jordanian Arabic

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Abstract : This paper is a linguistic and pragmatic analysis of the use of the diminutive in Colloquial Jordanian Arabic (CJA). It demonstrates a peculiar form of the diminutive in CJA inflected by means of feminine plural ends with -aat suffix. The analysis shows that the pragmatic function(s) of the diminutive in CJA refers primarily to 'littleness' while the morphological inflection conveys the message of 'the plethora'. Examples of this linguistic phenomenon are intelligible and often include a large number of words that are culture-specific to the rural dialect in the north of Jordan. In both cases, the diminutive in CJA is an adaptive strategy relative to its pragmatic and social contexts.

Keywords : Colloquial Jordanian Arabic, diminutive, morphology, pragmatics

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