The Extent of Gender Sensitivity in the Language of the Discussion Papers Produced by King Abdullah II ibn Al-Hussein: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract: This study investigates the extent of gender sensitivity in the language of the Seven Discussion Papers (DPs) produced by Jordan's King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein (KAII). The DPs came as a series of papers directed to Jordanians to lay down the KAII's vision of achieving a comprehensive reform in Jordan. In this study, gender sensitivity is determined by the extent to which men and women are addressed equally in the language of the DPs. The study employs the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach. In implementing the qualitative content analysis methodology, the findings show that KAII employed several linguistic strategies that were instrumental in producing a highly gender-sensitive language. These are the strategy of referring to both men and women simultaneously, the strategy of using inclusive terms, the strategy of using gender-neutral terms, and the strategy of using examples including both men and women. From a gender perspective, the study found that the language used in the DPs differs from that used in the prevailing political discourse. The findings imply that Arabic, which is generally labelled as a gendered language, can be gender-sensitive if its users have the right attitudes and the right linguistic strategies to change the existing prevailing norms.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, discussion papers, gender-sensitive language, linguistic strategy

1. Introduction

The study of the relationship between language and gender started, in a scattered way, at the beginning of the twentieth century and up to the 1960s by linguists (e.g., Chamberlain 1912; Jespersen 1922; Furfey 1944; Labov 1966). However, the publication of Lakoff's (1973) Journal article entitled: '*Language and Women's Place*', which in (1975) reappeared in a book carrying the same title, opened the door wide for the emergence of a new field within linguistic studies called the study of language and gender. Since then, this field has steadily proliferated, tackling various dimensions of the relationship between language and gender. Pioneers in this field include but are not limited to (e.g., Lakoff 1973; Spender 1980; Cameron 1985; Coates 1993; Tannen 1994; Pauwels 2000; Cameron 2005; Coady 2018; Alzharani 2019; Bataineh 2020). In these works, significant questions were raised, which, in fact, have continued to be debated until today. Basically, these questions are centered around (1) Do women and men use language differently? If so, how and why? (2) How are women talked or written about? (3) How do we face the challenge of gender insensitivity in language? In answering these questions,

researchers in the field of language and gender have employed a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches (Sunderland 2006).

Today, it has been established that the study of language and gender has become a widespread and innovative field within linguistic studies. In her comment on the growth of this field, Cameron (2020) argued that because of the Feminist movement and the emergence of a new generation of scholars addressing issues relating to the interaction of language and gender inequality, scholarship on such issues is now "mainstream" across several disciplines. In fact, this field's growth and worldwide recognition are manifested in significant developments. Firstly, the emergence of several specialized journals such as *Women and Language* (1976), *Gender and Language* (2007), and '*Language and Sexuality'* (2012). Secondly, the establishment of a professional organization called (the International Gender and Language Association IGALA). Thirdly, the proliferation of many courses, textbooks, handbooks, seminars, and conferences related to the field of language and gender worldwide. Fourthly, the appearance of various professional guides for the use of non-biased languages, such as the Gender Equality Guidelines for UNESCO Publications 1987, the Gender Free Legal Writing by the British Columbia Law Institute, the Guide to Gender Neutral Drafting by the United Kingdom's Parliamentary and Government Legal Department, and the Guidelines on Anti-Sexist Language 1990 by the British Sociological Association, and, Finally, the Non-Sexist Dictionaries which have been created and developed by (Graham 1975; Kramarae, Cheris and Treichler 1985).

2. Theoretical and conceptual backgrounds of the study of gender and language

Language is perceived as a communication tool and a means of knowledge through which the world around us is understood and interpreted. Thus, the kind of language used in communication in terms of whether it addresses both men or women or only one of them significantly impacts gender norms, opportunities, and equality in societies. Therefore, language can be an effective tool by which the worldwide prevailing gender inequality is either sustained or overcome (Tukhtaeva 2021). In this context, Lakoff (1973) argued that the powerlessness of women can be seen in the ways women are supposed to speak and the ways through which women are talked about. Furthermore, when examining the extent of women's representation in languages, Cameron (2005: 494) concluded that: *"*Our languages are sexist: that is, they represent or "name" the world from a masculine viewpoint and in accordance with stereotyped beliefs about the sexes".

3. The concept of gender

Gender is understood as a cultural construct that is produced over time through social interaction. As such, while gender is culturally constructed, sex is biologically determined. Stated differently, whereas gender is seen as a product of culture, sex is a product of nature. In this context, McConnell-Ginet (2011: 76)

concluded that "gender is not simply a matter of individual characteristics (e.g., sex), but it involves actions and social relations, ideology and politics". In fact, the usefulness of distinguishing between the word "sex" and the word "gender" has an important implication in the sense that what is culturally constructed has the potential to be more easily changed than what is biologically determined. Commenting on this implication, Epstein (1988:231) wrote: "It seems clear that most gender differences are socially created and therefore may be socially changed."

In this study, the use of the words "man" or "woman" is meant to refer to people of a specific gender rather than to people of a particular sex (i.e., a male or a female). Accordingly, the gender of a person is much more than just male or female biological entities, and, as such, gender is a result of social, political, and cultural aspects. Considering this, the study analyzes gender as a socially constructed concept of identity and behaviour. This kind of analysis helps to explore how the concept of gender is understood, constructed, represented, and changed in different ontological settings.

3.1 The concept of gender sensitivity

Gender sensitivity is the acknowledgement of gender differences and their incorporation into strategies and actions. Linguistically, gender sensitivity means that language attempts to address both women and men simultaneously to ensure they are equally treated. Therefore, in this study, the extent of gender sensitivity is operationalized based on the extent to which men and women are addressed equally in the language of the DPs. In this sense, gender sensitivity in the language is different from gender neutrality, where, in the latter, gender is not usually mentioned as the surrounding culture is already reasonably equal, and there is no need to highlight the participation of women. For example, gender-neutral language uses terms such as police officer instead of policeman/policewoman or chairperson instead of chairman/chairwoman.

3.2 Variations in world languages: Gendered and genderless languages

World languages differ in terms of their gender orientations. That is, one group of languages is classified as gendered languages (e.g., German, Spanish, French, Italian, and Arabic), whereas another group is labelled as genderless or gender-neutral ones (e.g., Hungarian, Estonian, Finnish, Turkish, and Chinese). In the former ones, objects are designated as either masculine or feminine, while in the latter ones, objects are neither classified as masculine nor feminine, nor gendered pronouns are used. A third group of languages lies between these two major groups. In this group, languages are called natural gender languages (e.g., English and the Scandinavian languages). Gender in such languages is distinguished through pronouns only (i.e., he, she, or it), whereas most nouns in these languages have no grammatical gender specification. Based on these three major groups of languages, Prewitt-Freilino, Caswell and Laakso (2012) classified (111) countries in the world

based on the kind of language prevailing in each of them, whether this language is gendered, genderless or natural.

As for the classification of the (111) countries by Prewitt-Freilino et al. (2012). Arabic is generally labelled within the group of gendered languages. Arabic, which is the language in which the subject matter of this study (i.e., DPs) was originally written, is the official language of Jordan. The labelling of Arabic as a gendered language is because the masculine form is often the origin or the norm, while the feminine is regarded as the marked form, as this is usually used unconsciously or by default. Compared to English, which is the second language in Jordan and to which the DPs are officially translated, Arabic, from a gender perspective, is more problematic, as its grammatical agreement rules are much more complex than is the case in English. This is mainly because, in English, only the pronouns have different gender words (i.e., he, she, or it), whereas, in Arabic, the nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs have different gender words depending on the structure of the sentence where in this structure the agreement rules between these various categories must be applied. Here, while grammatical gender in English is only reflected in pronouns (he, she, or it), in Arabic, grammatical gender has a more extensive system affecting nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. This entails that in Arabic, grammatical gender is basically determined by the form of the noun, where nouns are generally either masculine or feminine. Therefore, in Arabic, the gender of a noun affects the forms of the associated pronouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives in the sentence. For example, in English, if we say, "He or She is a participatory citizen," only the pronoun (i.e., he or she) is gendered, whereas the adjective (i.e., participatory) and the noun (i.e., citizen) are gender neutral or genderless. However, in Arabic, if one would like to be gender-sensitive in his or her language, the noun (i.e., muwa:tʿin 'male citizen' or muwa:tʿinah 'female citizen'), the pronoun (i.e., huwa 'he' or hija 'she'), and the adjective (muʃa:rik or muʃa:rikah) must be identified to reflect a gendered identity based on the structure of the sentence.

Although having said that Arabic, compared to English, is more problematic from a gender perspective, this should not at all be taken to mean that Arabic cannot be a gender-sensitive language. That is, with determination and serious efforts on the part of its users, Arabic can address both men and women equally without jeopardizing much of the style or grammatical rules. In this context, Schor and Drissne (2021) raised the question: Is Arabic a Gender Inclusive Language? In answering this question, they clarified, "In general, Arabic has the appropriate means to fulfil all the requirements to be gender inclusive." Fulfilling these requirements, however, requires the right attitudes and willingness to change existing norms and habits and necessitates creative linguistic skills and the right strategies in the right circumstances.

4. The aim of the study

Given that the subject matter of this study is the DPs, which were originally written in Arabic and then officially translated into English and directed to Jordanians to accelerate the social, political, and democratic reform that the country has undertaken since the beginning of KAII's ruling era in (1999), the aim of the study is to examine the nature of the language used in the DPs from a gender perspective. Based on this aim, the basic questions are: (1) Is the language used by KAII in the DPs gender-sensitive? Here, the central concern is to examine the extent to which KAII in the DPs addressed equally Jordanian men and women. If so, (2) What are the linguistic strategies employed by the King to produce such a gender-sensitive political discourse? Considering the DPs' objective, the questions raised by this study became important. This is because one cannot expect a political discourse such as the one reflected in the DPs aiming at achieving social, political, and democratic reform not to represent all Jordanians, both women and men alike. Here, the assumption is that any political discourse that aims to be a reformist one cannot, simultaneously, trivialize, exclude, or devalue one gender against the other, where often the excluded gender is the woman.

5. Theory and approach

Theoretically, this study is based on the dynamic or constructionist theory of language and gender. This theory postulates that the interaction of language and gender is dynamic and changes over time. The nature of this interaction is often constructed through written or oral communications between men and women, women themselves, or men themselves. In this context, Halliday (1985) argued that language can be seen as a system of making meaning that emerges from the social interactions people have with each other. Within this theoretical framework, Fowler (1996:3) stated that language: "is a highly constructive mediator". According to this theory, the study of gender in written discourse aims to examine the extent of gender's representation or construction in such texts. Therefore, the study of gender and language in written discourses seeks to determine how gender identities are created, constructed, represented, reinforced, and transformed using the language in these texts. In this regard, Bucholtz (2003: 34) made the point that: "The study of language and gender has increasingly become the study of discourse and gender", then arguing that: "While phonological, lexical, and other kinds of linguistic analysis continue to be influential, the interdisciplinary investigation of discourse-level investigation is always a robust area of language and gender scholarship has become the central approach of the field".

Given that the study aims to analyze the extent of gender sensitivity in the language of the DPs' text, the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach will be implemented. Initially, this approach had been articulated by (e.g.,Van Dijik 1993; Wodak 1999). Analyzers using the CDA approach compared to the stylistic discourse analysis approach usually rely more on written texts as the subject of their analyses. The aim of this approach is, according to Fairclough (2001: 229), "to show non-obvious ways in which language is involved in social relations of power and domination". As such, this approach is a valuable instrument for examining

the interaction of language and gender to determine the extent of the impact of a text on constructing the attitudes and values of the text's users regarding gender.

In this regard, linguist analysts using the CDA approach, like this study, usually try to deconstruct the hidden ideology in the text to reveal how texts are constructed to reflect a particular perspective. In commenting on what the followers of CDA attempt to achieve, Batstone (1995) argued that they try to deconstruct covert ideology, which is usually hidden in the text. Regarding political discourse analysis mainly, Van Dijk (1998) argued that it is about political discourse and is also regarded as a critical enterprise. In this study, if the analyst demonstrates that the language used in the text is gender-sensitive, this may help shape the positive values and the right attitudes of its recipients regarding the equality of men and women in society. As such, depending on the language used in the text in terms of its extent of gender sensitivity, the language either sustains the existing domination of men over women or may function to change the existing power relation between men and women. As such, when the analyst shows that the language used in the political discourse is gender-sensitive, language can be a corrective social mechanism to change the existing social inequality between men and women.

6. Methodology

The study employs a qualitative content analysis methodology, which usually attempts to systematically analyze textual, visual, or audio data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). While quantitative content analysis is deductive to test hypotheses generated from theories, qualitative content analysis is basically inductive to infer conclusions from the data (Mayring 2000; Berg 2004; Schreier 2012). In the present study, based on the qualitative analysis of the content of the DPs' text, conclusions are induced regarding the extent of gender sensitivity in the language used in this text.

7. The DPs: The nature of the DPs and the context in which they were written

To provide a clear understanding of the nature of the discourse employed in the DPs from a gender perspective, I first introduce the subject matter of this study (i.e., the DPs) and the context in which the DPs were written.

7.1 The nature of the DPs

As indicated earlier, these DPs were originally written in Arabic, the kingdom's official language, and then translated into English by the researcher. The DPs, which address Jordanians, reflect KAII's vision of the Kingdom's comprehensive reform process that Jordan must undertake to be an indeed developed State. As they are accessible on the official website of the Royal Hashemite Court, the DPs come together in 47 pages and were written between 2012 and 2017. In fact, while each of them deals with a specific issue (i.e., political, social, legal, educational, and democratic) of the comprehensive reform process, the overriding emphasis of the DPs is mainly on democratic reform. Since their publication, the DPS, as will be

referred to below, has received tremendous national attention and has created continuous national debates. Moreover, they have become part of the curriculums relating to civic and national education and the modern history of Jordan in Jordanian schools and universities.

In general, the impact of the DPs on the Jordanian scene has been highly recognized as they have functioned as a road map for comprehensive social and political reform in Jordan. This is particularly clear in their influence on the recommendations of the Royal Committee for the Modernization of the Political System that was formed by KAII in (2021). In fact, these recommendations have resulted in significant constitutional amendments in (2022), which laid down the constitutional background and framework for the issuance of several new laws, especially the ones relating to the national and local elections and the political parties, where the empowerment of women and youth was a central issue. In fact, the DPs of KAII have been the subject of extensive analysis and scholarly works (e.g., Sa'ed Al-Deen 2015; Al-Dunaibat 2016; Salah, Al-Sit, Hani and Salah 2020). Generally, these studies have considered the DPs as one of the most important initiatives presented by KAII since he assumed his constitutional power in 1999. These papers are pictured in these studies as powerful levers for the future of reform in Jordan. Also, the political speeches produced by KAII were the subject of many linguistic studies (e.g., Al-Haq and Al-Sleibi 2015; Al-Ougaili and Yaqoub 2019; Al Bzour 2021; Jaradat 2022; Al-Khawaldeh, Rababah and Al-Khawaldeh 2024). However, none of these studies dealing with the political discourse of KAII, whether those that have dealt directly with his DPs or those that have dealt with his political speeches, had focused on gender. Accordingly, this study is perhaps the first to tackle the nature of the language implemented in KAII's political discourse, as reflected in the DPs. This should testify to the originality of this study.

Given the magnitude of the impact of the DPs on Jordanian society, it is essential to examine their language from a gender perspective. This importance is justified not only by the lack of studies from a gender perspective but also by the aim of the DPs as a political discourse, which, as indicated, was to accelerate comprehensive reform in Jordan. Here, it is difficult to think of any serious or genuine political discourse aiming at a comprehensive reform to address only one gender at the expense of the other. As such, the language used in this political discourse produced by KAII aiming at comprehensive social reform is expected to be gender-sensitive, addressing Jordanian men and women equally. This should be clear, as equality in dealing with both men and women is supposed to be the foundation upon which a genuine comprehensive reform is built.

7.2 The context

It is established that any political discourse like the one presented in the DPs cannot be effectively understood outside the context in which it was produced (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012). This is due to the fact that within the overall context, politicians can express and convey their visions and policies and as such political discourses cannot be separated from the contexts in which they were formulated. In

terms of the social and political context in which the DPs were written, they were produced just a little after the turmoil of what is known as the (Arab Spring) which started in Tunisia in (2010) and quickly spread to other Arab countries (e.g., Egypt, Syria, Libya, Yemen). In fact, regardless of the nature of the slogans raised in different Arab countries during the (Arab Spring), the central aim was to change the status quo by introducing effective and genuine political or democratic reforms. It is widely believed that the leaders in some countries with constitutional monarchy systems, like Jordan and Morocco, have rightly read the overall political scene. Such reading has motivated leaders in such countries to accelerate effective political and democratic reforms, which could function to absorb the state of turmoil experienced in other Arab countries. In his comment on the impact of the (Arab Spring), KAII, in his third discussion paper (2013: 6), stated:

> The Arab Spring and its Jordanian dynamics opened new horizons and allowed us to usher in a new wave of reforms and embark on an irreversible renaissance. It is a future I embrace, one in which all our people will have a voice, one in which no one is excluded from prosperity, security, and success.

Moreover, the king in the fifth paper (2014:1) said:

> Jordan has succeeded in creating its own spring by genuinely embracing the opportunity to speed up existing political reform efforts based on a gradual, inclusive, and evolutionary reform model. Let us also remember that the goal for Jordan's home-grown reform is clear: Empowering people to take the widest role in decision-making through their elected representatives.

Given the context in which the DPs were written, it seems that KAII, seen as a reformist, attempted to use these DPs to reflect his vision of modernizing Jordan to be a truly democratic and developed State. KAII made clear in one of the DPs that the constitutional monarchy he would like to leave for his son (i.e., the Crown Prince of Jordan) will be different from the monarchy he inherited in (1999) from his father (Late King Hussein bin Talal). In fact, after the production of these DPs and based on the directives of KAII, several constitutional amendments, especially those related to women and youth empowerment, were introduced in Jordan in the past few years. This is in addition to several royal initiatives targeting political and democratic reforms in Jordan. Accordingly, based on the aim of the DPs and the social and political context in which they were written, it is expected that the language used in them be a gender-sensitive language which addresses all Jordanians equally without offending or excluding any of them regardless of their religion, race, class, ethnicity, age, or gender. Here, as mentioned earlier, it is essential to bear in mind that Arabic is generally considered a gendered language, and compared to English, it is more complicated in dealing with the issue of gender. Thus, from a research perspective, it becomes rather substantial to see how KAII employed Arabic in addressing all Jordanians: women and men.

8. Findings and discussion

The content of the text of the DPs is qualitatively analyzed to uncover the nature of the language used from a gender perspective. This is operationalized through the analysis of lexical units, including words, phrases, expressions, or examples relating to Jordanians, to determine whether they equally address Jordanian men and women. As lexical choice is significant in political discourse (Schaffiner 2004), the next step of analysis included the determination of any linguistic strategies employed in producing such gender-sensitive political discourse. A thorough reading of the language used in the DPs shows that KAII employed four major linguistic strategies to produce a gender-sensitive language that equally addresses men and women.

8.1 Linguistic strategies

8.1.1 Simultaneously addressing men and women

As a reformist leader, KAII is aware of the importance of using this strategy to emphasize that he addresses all Jordanians, men and women alike. Therefore, he deliberately and intentionally directs the language of his discourse to represent both women and men. KAII does not seem to agree with the often raised and prevailing argument that in Arabic, the masculine form represents both masculine and feminine. Therefore, in attempting to liberate the language of his discourse from this prevailing tendency, KAII attempts to avoid using masculine forms to refer to both men and women as much as possible. KAII employs, whenever appropriate, the strategy of using both the masculine and feminine forms together to refer to the intended subjects of his discourse (i.e., the Jordanians). For instance, the word /ʔalʔurdunijji:n/ (Jordanian men), which, from a grammatical perspective, is a masculine generic form that is often used to represent men and women of both genders. Throughout his DPs, KAII attempts to employ the strategy of using both masculine and feminine forms together to refer to Jordanians. He deliberately uses simultaneously the words: /ʔalʔurdunijji:n/ (Jordanian men) and /ʔalʔurdunijja:t/ (Jordanian women) to reflect that he addresses both the Jordanian men and the Jordanian women. Consider Table 1, which shows the phrases or expressions reflecting the use of this strategy by referring to both men and women simultaneously.

Table 1. The expressions which simultaneously address men and women in the DPs

Arabic expressions addressing both men and women together	Translation	Page No.	DP No.

ʔalʔurdunijji:n wa ʔalʔurdunijja:t	The Jordanian men and the Jordanian women	2&5	1
ʔixwa wa ʔaxawa:t	Sisters and brothers	2	1
ʔalmuwa:tˁini:n wa ʔalmuwa:tˁina:t	The male citizens and the female citizens	5	1
ʔabna:ʔi wa bana:ti	My sons and daughters	5	1
ʔalʔurdunijji:n wa ʔalʔurdunijja:t	The Jordanian men and the Jordanian women	1&6	3
ʔalmuwa:tˁini:n wa ʔalmuwa:tˁina:t	The male citizens and the female citizens	2,3,6&8 (3)	3
ʔabna:ʔi wa bana:ti	My sons and daughters	4,5,6	3
ʔabna:ʔi wa bana:ti	My sons and daughters	1&5	4
ʔabna:ʔuhum wa bana:tuhum	Their sons and their daughters	1	4
ʔalʔurdunijji:n wa ʔalʔurdunijja:t	The Jordanian men and the Jordanian women	2	4
ʔalmuwa:tˁini:n wa ʔalmuwa:tˁina:t	The male citizens and the female citizens	3	5
ʔabna:ʔi wa bana:ti	My sons and daughters	3(2) &7	5
ʔaʃʃaba:b wa ʃʃa:bba:t	The male and female Jordanian youth	3	5
ʔabna:ʔi wa bana:ti	My sons and daughters	1	6
ʔabna:ʔi wa bana:ti	My sons and daughters	1, 2(2) &3	7
ʔabna:ʔuna wa bana:tuna	Our sons and daughters	3	7

It is apparent that the language employed by KAII addresses both Jordanian men and women simultaneously. He repeatedly avoids using masculine forms to refer to both genders as referring to Jordanian women and Jordanian men, women citizens and men citizens, sons and daughters, and youth women and youth men. This reflects that not only men are visible in the political discourse of KAII, but also women are visible on an equal basis. As such, the political discourse of KAII, as represented in the DPs, seems different from the prevailing oral and written political discourse in Arab-Islamic culture, where women are rarely visible and represented.

8.1.2 Inclusive language

KAII effectively employed this strategy, where he attempted to implement inclusive words such as (we, our, you, all, they, and them, among others) as gender-

neutral alternatives. This strategy is well implemented by KAII in the DPs to give the readers of his discourse the feeling that they are all included and represented regardless of age, class, religion, or gender. This strategy provides the readers of KAII's discourse with a sense of belongingness and togetherness, which helps them not experience the feeling of being alienated or excluded. Table 2 presents examples of the inclusive expressions that the KAII used throughout the DPs.

Table 2. Arabic expressions showing the inclusive language in the DPs

Arabic expressions show the inclusive language	Translation	No. of pages	No. of the DPs
ʔan ʔuʃa:rikakum	I want to share with you	1	The first paper
ʔinnana biħa:dʒa	We in need	1	The first paper
ʕalajna: dʒami:ʕan	All our obligation	1	The first paper
naʕmal maʕan	Working together	2	The first paper
ʔadʕu:kum	I call upon you	3	The first paper
naʕi dʒami:ʕan	We all shall realize	4	The first paper
bina:ʔa mustaqbalina	Building our future	4	The first paper
dʒami:ʕuna ʃuraka:ʔ	We are all partners	4	The first paper
sanatamakkan	We all can	4	The first paper
nabdaʔ maʕan	We start together	5	The first paper
masi:ratuna	Our journey	1	The second paper
ʔan judrika ʔaldʒami:ʕ	All should recognize	2	The second paper
nadʒa:ħuna	Our success	2	The second paper
xila:la muru:rina	Through our transition	3	The second paper
kaʃuraka:ʔ	As partners	1	The third paper
mustaqbaluna ʔal-muʃtarak	Our joint future	1	The third paper
ʔinna filʔurdun	We in Jordan	2	The third paper
tatˁwi:r niðˁa:mina	To develop our system	2	The third paper
jartabitˁ biqudura:tina	Depends on our capabilities	2	The third paper
ʔal-masʔu:lijja:t ʔallati nataħammaluha	The responsibility we bear together	3	The third paper
watˁanuna jastaħiq	Our country deserves	3	The third paper
ʕalajna: ʔan nataðakkar	We shall remember	4	The third paper

ʔana: ʔuʃadʒiʕ ʔaldʒami:ʕ	I encourage you all	4	The third paper
jaħmi mudʒtamaʕana	To protect our society	6	The third paper
tatˁwi:r di:muqra:tˁijjatina	To develop our democracy	6	The third paper
wa ʕalajna: dʒami:ʕan taħqi:q	We all can achieve	7	The third paper
ʔatatˁallaʕ lilʔaʕamal maʕakum	I look forward to working with you	8	The third paper
ʔinna sanuwa:dʒih	We will face	8	The third paper
ʕalajna: wa:dʒibun muʃtarak	We have a common duty	2	The fourth paper
lituθbitu: qudura:tana	To ensure our capabilities	5	The fourth paper
linataðakkar dʒami:ʕan	To all remember	1	The fifth paper
nuħa:fiðˁ ʕala zaxam masi:ratina ʔalʔisˁla:ħijja	We maintain the momentum of our reform journey	2	The fifth paper
faqad ʃahidna	We witnessed	2	The fifth paper
ʔalizdiha:r ʔallaði jastaħiqquhu ʔaldʒami:ʕ	The prosperity that we all deserve	3	The fifth paper
min ʔalmuhim ʔan naʕi dʒami:ʕan	All of us must realize	4	The fifth paper
ʔattaħadija:t ʔallati nuwa:dʒihuha:	The challenges we all face	6	The fifth paper
ma:za:la ʔama:mana:	It is still ahead of us	7	The fifth paper
ma: jatarattab ʕalajna:	Our collective duty	7	The fifth paper
ʔila: ʔann nuθbit liʔanfusina:	We have proved to ourselves	1	The sixth paper
faxu:r bikum wa biʕazi:matikum wa ħubbikum lilwatˁan	Proud of you and your determination and patriotism	1	The sixth paper
la: budda min ʔan nuħaddid masa:rana naħwa ʔalmustaqbal	We must determine our path towards our future	1	The sixth paper
wa li:kajj nuħaqqiq ʔahda:fina:	To achieve our goals	2	The sixth paper
la: budda min taðˁa:fur ʔaldʒuhu:d	We must join our efforts	3	The sixth paper

wa sanabqa: multazimi:n biha:ðihi ʔalqijam wa lan naħi:d ʕanha:	We remain fully committed to these values and will not retreat from them	6	The sixth paper
naħnu naʕi:ʃu maʕan	We all live together	1	The seventh paper
wala: jumkinuna:	We cannot	1	The seventh paper
ʔanʕam ʔalla:hu ʕalajna:	God blesses us	2	The seventh paper
ʔinnana: natatˁallaʕ	We look forward	3	The seventh paper
nuri:du ʔan nara:	We want to see	3	The seventh paper
ʕalajna: taʃdʒi:ʕahum	We must encourage them	3	The seventh paper

The previous examples clearly show that the language KAII uses is gender-inclusive and seeks to address all Jordanians equally. This inclusive strategy effectively qualifies the language of the DPs as a truly gender-sensitive language that deviates from the norm in the political discourse in Arab-Islamic societies. As such, the language used by KAII can be seen as a step in the right direction to liberate Arabic from the overall tendency of being classified as an endocentric language.

8.1.3 Gender-neutral terms

In this strategy, KAII attempts to avoid using specific gender terms in various contexts, whether in the masculine or feminine forms. For example, instead of using the term/ʔakadimijju:n/ (academic men), KAII used the term /ʔalmudʒtamaʕ ʔal ʔaka:di:mi/ (the academic society). In fact, using gender-neutral terms in oral or written discourse is an effective strategy to produce more gender-sensitive language. In the DPs, it is evident that KAII was very eloquent in implementing this strategy. Table 3 presents examples of some of the gender-neutral terms used by KAII throughout the DPs.

Table 3. Arabic expressions reflecting the use of gender-neutral terms in the DPs

Arabic expressions reflect the use of gender-neutral terms	Translation	No. of pages	No. of the DPs

ʔannadʒa:ħ kaʔusra wa:ħida	The success as one family	1	The first paper
dʒami:ʕ ʔalʔatˁra:f	All parties	4	The first paper
lixidmat ʔaʃʃaʕb	To serve the people	5	The first paper
ʔaʃʃaʕbu ʔalʔurdunijj	The people of Jordan	1	The second paper
ʔalfari:q ʔalwiza:rijj	The ministry team	3	The second paper
ʔalkutal ʔalnija:bijjah	The Parliamentary blocs	3	The second paper
ʔaldʒiha:z ʔalħuku:mijj	The governmental apparatus	4	The second paper
ʔalafra:d ʔalmustaqlli:n	The independent individuals	2	The third paper
madʒlis ʔannuwwa:b	The lower house	6	The third paper
madʒlis ʔalwuzara:ʔ	The council of ministers	7	The third paper
dʒami:ʕ ʔatˁra:f ʔalʕmalijja ʔalʔisˁla:ħijja	All stakeholders of the reform process	7	The third paper
min kul ʔalfa:ʕili:n fi ʔalʕamalijja ʔalsija:sijjah	From all stakeholders in the political process	1	The fourth paper
likul fard minna:	For every one of us	2	The fourth paper
xaja:r ʔalbaʕdˁ	The choice of some	3	The fourth paper
dʒami:ʕ ʔatˁra:f ʔalmuʕa:dala ʔalsija:sijja	Stakeholders in our political system	3	The fifth paper
likul tˁaraf min ʔatˁra:f ʔalʕamalijja ʔalsija:sijja	For each party of the political process	1	The sixth paper
ʔaddawlah wa ʔafra:duha:	The State and its individuals	3	The sixth paper
ʔalka:dir ʔalwaðˁi:fij	Personnel apparatus	5	The sixth paper
wa ʔaha:li:hum	Their families	3	The seventh paper
lilʕuqu:l ʔalmufakkira	For thinker minds	3	The seventh paper
muju:l ʔatˁtˁalaba	The attitudes of the student body	3	The seventh paper

8.1.4 Using examples representing men and women equally

The last strategy that KAII has implemented to maximize the use of gender-sensitive language in his DPs is related to giving examples that represent both men and women equally. This means that both men and women are equally visible in

the examples used in the language of the DPs. On the few occasions that KAII implemented the use of the examples referring to the Jordanians, he seems to use examples representing both men and women deliberately. For instance, in the fifth paper, when KAII referred to the Initiative of Democracy in Arabic, which is the Youth Empowerment Window for democratization and youth empowerment launched by KAII in (2012), he gave three unique examples that emerged from this initiative. Two of them were developed by young Jordanian women named Furat Malkawi and Hannieh Dmour, and the third one was developed by a young Jordanian man named Mohammad Alʕmour.

Another example is shown in the sixth paper, where the language of KAII was balanced in referring to both men and women equally when he wrote:

> The rule of law cannot be applied selectively, and it supersedes social status, rank, and family connections. I feel so disheartened and outraged when I learn that **a young girl** (emphasis added) has died in the arms of **her father** (emphasis added) because of festive firing at weddings or celebrations or when **a mother** (emphasis added) loses **her son** (emphasis added) in a car accident because of a reckless driver, or when an excellent student loses an opportunity, he has every right to, or when a criminal enjoys freedom without accountability. All of this happens when the rule of law is not upheld. These are examples we all know and can relate to; they touch the essence of our rights and show division among us.

The above two extracts from the fifth and sixth of the DPs clearly show that when KAII decided to use examples relating to gender, he intended to use examples that represent both Jordanian men and women. This reflects KAII's tendency to be as gender sensitive as possible in the language used in his DPs.

KAII implemented four major linguistic strategies to produce a clearly gender-sensitive language. These strategies were creatively employed to emphasize that men and women are equally included, represented and visible in the DPs. As such, this political discourse reflected in the DPs should function to build positive attitudes and values regarding the equality between Jordanian men and women.

The overall findings above show that the language used by KAII in the DPs can significantly be described as gender sensitive. As such, the language of the political discourse of KAII, as reflected in the DPs, deviates from the traditional political discourses prevailing in Arab-Islamic societies, which often tend to use masculine forms when addressing both men and women. This deviation implies that while Arabic is generally labelled as a highly gendered language, it can be gender-sensitive if the right attitudes and determinations of its users are present and the appropriate linguistic strategies are employed.

9. The English version of the DPs

The papers were initially written in Arabic and then translated into English. In fact, when the DPs are read in English, they reflect a very highly gender-sensitive discourse. This is mainly because, in English, only the pronouns have different gender words (i.e., he, she, or it), whereas in Arabic, the nouns, pronouns, verbs,

adjectives, and adverbs have different gender words depending on the structure of the sentence. This is clear in that in English, the most often used words like Jordanian, citizen, or child, whether in the singular or plural forms, do not have different gender forms as is the case in Arabic, where they have different gender forms. This is perhaps the reason why KAII in the Arabic version used words such as /ʔalʔurdunijji:n wa ʔalʔurdunijja:t / 'Jordanian men and Jordanian women', /ʔalmuwa:tˁini:n wa ʔalmuwa:tˁina:t/ 'citizen men and citizen women', or /ʔabna:ʔi wa bana:ti/ 'my sons and daughters' to be gender sensitive.

Although it is beyond the scope of this study to analyze the extent of gender sensitivity in the English version of the DPs, it can be concluded that the gender sensitivity in the English version is clearly higher than is the case in the Arabic version. This has an important implication for linguistic comparative studies regarding gender. It is much easier to produce a more gender-sensitive discourse using one language rather than the other. In the case of this study, given that Arabic is generally labelled as a highly gendered language compared to English, it is evident that KAII has implemented various linguistic strategies to produce a gender-sensitive political discourse. This shows that no matter how the nature of the gendered orientation of a language is, it mainly depends on its user's willingness, determination, and skills to employ the right strategy to adapt the language to her/his need to produce a gender-sensitive language.

10. Conclusion

Based on the above findings, it can be concluded that:

- The language used by KAII in the DPs is clearly gender sensitive. This sensitivity is reflected in the fact that KAII had creatively employed various linguistic strategies to be as gender sensitive as possible in his political discourse. These strategies are the strategy of addressing men and women simultaneously, the strategy of using inclusive language, the strategy of using gender-neutral terms, and the strategy of representing men and women equally.
- The political discourse of KAII, as reflected in the DPs, is significantly different from the prevailing political discourses in the Arab-Islamic countries, where the often-used languages in such discourses tended to be generally endocentric.
- The study shows important implications for Arabic's gender orientation. While Arabic is labelled as a highly gendered language in which the masculine form is often the norm, whereas the feminine is regarded as the marked one, Arabic has the potential and the appropriate means to fulfil all the requirements to be gender sensitive. As such, Arabic can be gender-sensitive if its users have the right attitudes to change the existing norms and to use the right linguistic strategies.
- The officially translated English version of the DPs reflects a higher degree of gender sensitivity than the Arabic version of the DPs. This has been explained by the fact that in English, only the pronouns have different gender words (i.e., he, she, or it), whereas in Arabic nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs have different gender words depending on the structure of the sentence.

- The study's overall findings also lead to the conclusion that language is a means of communication that can be used differently by various users based on their attitudes and values regarding gender or any other issue on the one hand and the employment of the right skills and strategies on the other hand.
- Finally, it is concluded that this study may open the door wide for further studies in the area of gender and language within the setting of Arabic to explore new dimensions of the relationship between gender and Arabic from sociolinguistic, phonological, semantic, and syntactic perspectives.

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