

Abstract

Changing Word Connotations during Al Aqsa Intifada

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This paper is a preliminary report on key changes in word usage within the Palestinian community over the course of the first three-and-a-half years of the second (Al-Aqsa) intifada. The data presented is drawn from a survey of 182 Palestinian university students, 69 females and 113 males. This paper includes a rationale for the project, a description of the methods used to administer the survey and analyze the data, preliminary findings and analyses, and plans to complete and extend the research. The purposes of the present research are (a) to document and measure changes in word usage within the Palestinian community, particularly in relation to words that have significant social and political importance in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict or in conflicts between Muslims (or Arabs) and Western countries; (b) to assess the kinds and degree of change among females and among males and compare them; (c) to analyze the implications of the changes found; and (d) to present findings and analysis to linguists, politicians, sociologists, educators, community leaders, diplomats, and conflict resolution practitioners, in order to promote cross-cultural understanding and productive communication among parties in conflict .