

Discourse Marking Variation in Moroccan Arabic: Requests as a Case Study *

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ملخص:

ظل التباين بين المتحدثين بالدارجة المغربية موضوعا يتناوله الباحثون بالدراسة لسنوات عديدة وكانت النتيجة طائفة كبيرة من الأعمال التي عالجت عدة جوانب تتراوح من التباين البنيوي البحت، مثل التباين الصوتي والصرفي، والتباين من الناحية الاجتماعية اللغوية والناحية الاجتماعية البراغماتية. وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تجاوز الاختلافات البنيوية وتسلط الضوء على التباين الموجود في علامات الخطاب والمدلول الاجتماعي بما يتماشى مع الزعم القائل إن "مقاربات دراسة التباين القائمة على المدول الاجتماعي تفترض وجود روابط تأشيرية بين البنى اللغوية والاجتماعية تسمح للمتحدثين بنقل المعلومات من خلال خياراتهم اللغوية وبالتالي القيام بأعمال اجتماعية مثل بناء هوية من الهويات وعرض موقف من المواقف". وهكذا، تناقش هذه الدراسة تباين علامات الخطاب التي تشكل فئة من العناصر اللغوية التي لا يمكن فصلها عن الخطاب وتؤدي وظائف مهمة فيه، سواء كان منظوقا أو مكتوبا. وبشكل أكثر تحديدا، تقارن هذه الدراسة بين استخدام عبارات الطلب في لهجتين فرعيتين، هما دارجة وسط المغرب والدارجة الجبلية استنادا إلى بيانات جمعت بشكل طبيعي من خلال الاستماع إلى المتكلمين والمحادثات الهاتفية وكذلك من خلال الاستبطان. وتزعم هذه الدراسة أن عوامل لغوية اجتماعية، مثل أصل اللهجات، والحيز الجغرافي، والنشاط الاجتماعي والاقتصادي، تحفز التباين بين هاتين اللهجتين اللتين يستعمل فيهما المتكلمون أنماطا مختلفة في طلب المساعدة أو المعروف من بعضهم بعضا. وعلاوة على ذلك، تؤكد الدراسة أن علامات الخطاب تعتبر مؤشرا للعلاقات الاجتماعية وللتباين بين المناطق. وتخلص هذه الورقة إلى أن حفظ ماء الوجه وتحسين نظرة الآخرين إلى المرء يرتبطان ارتباطا وثيقا بتحقيق معايير مجتمعية محددة.

Abstract

Variation among Moroccan Arabic speakers has been the subject of study for many years and the result is a plethora of works that address several aspects ranging from purely structural variation, such as phonetic and morphological, to sociolinguistic and socio-pragmatic variation. The present study purports to go beyond the structural differences and investigate variation in discourse marking and social meaning in line with the contention that "Variationist approaches based on social meaning posit indexical links between linguistic and social structures that allow speakers to convey information through their linguistic choices and to thereby perform social work such as constructing identities and displaying stances" (Campbell-Kibler, 2010, p. 423). Thus, the study discusses variation in Discourse Markers (DMs), which are a class of linguistic items that are inseparable from discourse and fulfil important functions in discourse, whether spoken or written. More specifically, the study examines the use of expressions of request in two sub-varieties, namely Central Moroccan Arabic (CMA) and Jebli

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Arabic (JA) based on naturally collected data through participant observation, phone conversations as well as introspection. The study argues that sociolinguistic factors, such as the origin of the varieties, geographical space, and socio-economic activity, motivate the variation between the two varieties, which use different request patterns. Further, the study maintains that DMs index social relations as well as regional variation. The paper concludes that face maintenance and enhancement are tightly connected to the fulfilment of community specific norms.

Key words: discourse markers, variation, spoken discourse, request pattern, social indexation

1 Introduction

Variation among Moroccan Arabic speakers has been the subject of study for many years and the result is a plethora of works that address several aspects ranging from purely linguistic, such as phonetic and morphological to sociolinguistic and socio-pragmatic variation. This study is a further contribution to the possibility of extending variation from phonetics/morphology to sociolinguistics and more specifically, socio-pragmatics. More precisely, the study sheds light on the variation of discourse markers in Moroccan Arabic and compares the requesting strategy in two varieties, namely Central Moroccan Arabic (CMA) and Jebli Arabic (JA). The aim is to highlight the similarities and differences between these two codes in terms of some of the discursive functions and the markers used to express such functions. Thus, the study sheds light on the sociolinguistic variation in language use among MA speakers with a focus on the discourse markers used to express requests. As such, the research answers the following research questions:

1. To what extent are CMA and JA different in their discourse marking?
2. What factors determine the choice of a DM?
3. How does the study of the DMs contribute to the understanding of the sociolinguistic situation in Morocco?

The study is anchored within the variation framework; more specifically, the third wave variation (Eckert, 2012). Eckert divides variation into three waves; the first one was concerned with variation in the light of the correlation between the linguistic variable and social categories such as economic status, ethnicity, gender, and age. A seminal work in this respect is Labov (1963), who argues that there is a correlation between linguistic forms and socio-economic class as per his study of the [r] variation among the speakers of New York. The second wave, on the other hand, considers vernaculars to have social values as per the Martha Vineyard where the local pronunciation of the sound /r/ reflects and correlates with the social value of belongingness to the area (Labov, 1963). The third wave studies, on the other hand, focus on how variation constructs rather than just reflects social meaning (Bidaoui, 2015). The main thrust of third variation studies in the analysis of sociolinguistic phenomena is the focus on both structure and practice and the role of the latter in “producing and reproducing structure”. For Eckert (2009), focus on practice “brings meaning into the foreground” and accounts for the choice of a given variant over another based on “what speakers are doing on the ground” (p.14). In the context of this study, practice refers to the speaker’s choice of a DM based on the individual projection of his/her universe (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, 1985).

This paper is structured as follows. The first section sets the ground for this study. The second section provides a brief overview of research on DMs, while the third outlines the methodology adopted in this study. The fourth section provides an overview of the differences between JA and CMA, while the fifth section discusses DMs in MA. The sixth section, on the other hand, analyses requests and discusses the main findings. The last section concludes this study.

2 Background

Discourse markers (DMs) are very controversial linguistic elements in that researchers are divided with respect to their definition and classification. Thus, Schourup (1999) argues that DMs are inherently problematic and difficult to define or characterize in that they refer to a wide range of possible related labels including lexical markers, discourse particles, utterance particles, semantic conjuncts, continuatives and pragmatic markers. In the same line, Jucker and Ziv (1998) state that there is no standard definition of the term discourse marker (DM), but there are certain characteristics that a lex-

ical item or phrase possesses in order to be recognized as such. Other researchers consider DMs as syntactically and semantically optional (Fraser, 1988; Fraser 1988, Brinton, 1996;), although Andersen (2001) argues that they retain some of their conceptual meaning. Along the same line, other scholars argue that their removal may affect the ease of comprehension (Aijmer, 2002, Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh, 2007). Bidaoui (2015) sums up the controversy over the nature of these linguistic elements and whether they should be referred to as DMs or pragmatic markers (PMs) by pointing out that:

The choice of one term or another varies depending on whether the focus is on the formal or functional aspect of DMs. Hence, if they are looked at from a formal angle the term DPs -Discourse Particles- is used, but if they are viewed from a functional angle the term DMs is used. Fischer (2006), for instance, used the term DPs if the expression involves only one word and used the term DMs if it involves one or more words. (p.1).

This multiplicity of definitions made it hard for researchers to reach a consensus on the classification of DMs as pointed out by Schourup (1999). However, despite the controversy over the definition, the features and the items that should be included in the class of DMs, most researchers agree on a single property of these items, that is, their function of connecting stretches of discourse and creating a coherent discourse (Fraser, 1999; Blakemore, 1987, Blakemore, 2002; Schourup, 1985, among others.). It should be pointed out in this respect that López-Villegas (2019, p. 3) reports that DMs differ in the functions they perform. Thus, some have a cognitive function, such as in the establishment of coherence relations, while other markers have more pragmatic functions, such as in the management of interactional features of communication, while other markers express mental and emotional states.

Regarding the Arabic context, in his review of the studies on DMs in spoken Arabic, Azi (2018) distinguishes between DMs and pragmatic markers (PMs) on the grounds of their distinctive linguistic functions in the written and the spoken discourse. Thus, PMs perform a large set of functions related to spoken discourse, while DMs perform a restricted range of functions related to written discourse. Quoting Andersen (2001), Azi (2018) states that:

discourse markers are a “subtype” of pragmatic markers and have “a narrower meaning” in which it is mainly considered as “an expression which signals the relationship of the basic message to the forgoing discourse.” Their function is mainly related to the “textuality and coherence” of a text, whereas **pragmatic markers** have various functions that cannot be limited to the same basic functions of discourse markers (p.50).

For the purpose of this study, I use the term discourse marker (DM) to refer to the items under examination (see section 3) because they can consist of a single word or more, and also because I focus on their function more than their form. I argue that DMs are an important interactional feature of social conversation; they work inside and outside the discourse and reflect the interwoven interactions among the participants and context. Thus, following Fraser (1999), the term DM refers to a pragmatic class of words and expressions that signal a relationship between the segment they introduce, S2, and the prior segment, S1. Their core meaning is procedural, and their more specific interpretation is “negotiated” by the context, both linguistic and conceptual. The main assumption underlying this study is that MA speakers vary in the choice of the DMs used to express some pragmatic meanings. As pointed out by Bidaoui (2015, p. 15) the choice of a given DM is hypothesized to be shaped by the social-indexical meaning that a speaker wishes to express. It should be noted, however, that given the wide range of markers and the limited scope of this paper, I will focus on only the DM of requests. This choice is motivated by the variation in the request patterns that result from the use of such DMs in CMA and JA. Further, the studies that have dealt with DMs in Spoken Arabic either in Morocco or the Arab world did not address this issue, hence the need for such a study.

3 Previous Studies

The research that has been conducted on Discourse Markers in spoken Arabic can be grouped into two types; a group that deals with markers in foreign and bilingual contexts (Hammani, 2019, Bidaoui, 2015) and those that focus on markers in colloquial Arabic. This section will briefly outline the major findings of the second group of studies given that the focus of the current paper is on DMs in colloquial Arabic and not bilingual contexts. It should be noted, in this respect, that these studies span a large number of Arabic varieties some of which are Libyan (Gaddafi, 1990), Lebanese (Al-Batal, 1994), Jordanian (Al-Harabsheh and Kanakri, 2013, and Saudi (Al Rousan, 2015).

One of the studies that dealt with DMs in colloquial Arabic is that of (Gaddafi, 1990) cited in Azi (2018). According to Azi, Gaddafi investigated DMs in Libyan Spoken Arabic from an analytical frame that is based on 's five functional planes¹. His main findings were that PMs were used to perform multiple interactional functions at different discourse levels. In the same vein, Al-Batal (1994) explored the uses and functions of some Lebanese Arabic PMs including *ya?nī* "I mean," *bass* "but," *halla* "now," *tayyeb* "well," and *ba'a* "so" and "therefore," and demonstrated that these PMs function at both sentence level and discourse level. However, Azi (2018) criticizes Al Batal's study on the grounds that it is mainly concerned with coherence at the text/ sentence level and fails to address the global coherence, namely, the interpersonal functions.

Al-Harabsheh and Kanakri (2013) studied the uses and functions of the DM *ʔa:di* "ok," in Jordanian Arabic within the frameworks of discourse analytical approach and translation theory. This DM "*ʔa:di*" was reported to have many discursual functions and its pragmatic meaning relies on the context of situation and its translatability is cultural specific. Using Schourup (1999)'s characteristics of discourse markers, Al-Shamari (2015), on the other hand, investigated the function and status of some lexical markers in Hail Arabic using Relevance theory. His findings revealed that effort-effect-trade off motivates the use of DMs in that they maximize the contextual effect of the speaker's utterance where they show up and minimize the processing effort needed from the part of the hearer to interact properly with the speaker. Another study that was informed by Relevance theory is Bidaoui (2015), who studied the uses of PMs in three Arabic dialects based on a relevance-theoretic approach and a sociolinguistic theoretic model. He demonstrated a different sociolinguistic- based analysis of PMs in three spoken Arabic dialects through exploring the impact of important social variables such as nationality and types of interactions on the uses of PMs. His main findings are that these variables along with individual choices shape the realization of the DMs. As a result, and following Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985), the author stresses the need to take into account the socio-psychological choices made the individual in the study of variation.

Unlike Al-Shamari (2015) and Bidaoui (2015), who regard PMs as linguistic elements with procedural meanings that are context bound, Al Al Rousan (2015)'s study investigated the Saudi PM *maʕ nafsak*, which is widely used by young Saudi speakers of different Saudi dialects to communicate various pragmatic functions. His findings indicate that this DM has meanings that were coded in the consequent utterances, and it can also have "meaning when it occurs on its own" (p. 45). Azi (2018), on the other hand, bases his study on Al Rousan (2015)'s because for him the author's particular treatment of the functions and uses of *maʕ nafsak* deals with such linguistic elements as communication devices with functions that are contextually based and meanings that are mediated through interactions. Azi (p.66) further maintains that conducting a future study that investigates the impacts of the different sociolinguistic variables such as gender, age, social class, and region on the functions and uses of PMs will provide us with rich data, which will broaden our understanding of what Arabic PMs are in spoken discourse and enable us to uncover their multi-functionality perspectives and finally reach

¹These planes are exchange structures, action structures, ideational structures, participation framework and information state (see Schiffrin, 1987 for more details).

more valid conclusions. This is exactly what this study aims to do; that is, investigate the impact of the variable of region on the functions and uses of DMs.

4 Methodology

The trigger point of this study was the variation among speakers when JA speakers perform requests through the use of some DMs that are region specific. Data collection was guided by three processes; namely, participant observation, phone conversations and introspection. Thus, real-life authentic conversations in which the researcher was either a member or a participant observer and which consisted of casual speech and carefree talks by the community members were the main source of data used in this study.

The participants were males and females whose age ranged between 30 and 80 years old with little to no education for JA and who are settled in the region of Jbala, Morocco, namely, Bni Zeroual. The choice of such speakers/interactants was made on purpose to discard those JA speakers who go back and forth to the neighboring cities and speak a hybrid variety, which is a mixture of JA and CMA. The CMA speakers on the other hand, consist of visitors, friends, colleagues and people from the researcher's network.

To triangulate data from JA and CMA and supplement the data obtained from free conversations recording, the researcher resorted to introspection given that the researcher is a native of the region and speaker of JA and is still connected to the region via family ties. It should be noted that the introspection technique adopted in this paper is the "Thinking aloud" technique, which Mann (1986) describes as a process of data collection where informants engage in a particular activity and report aloud the thoughts they are currently aware of without reflection. While collecting data, focus was mainly on those lexical items that are used to express requests in JA, the frequency of their occurrence, their meaning and their functions in both JA and CMA (see Aguade, 2008 for more details).

To transcribe data, I used broad IPA for some sound classes, such as vowels, especially schwa, pharyngeals [ħ, ʕ], gutturals [χ, ʁ], interdental fricatives [θ, ð], palatal fricatives [ç, j], [ʃ, ʒ] and their affricate counterparts [tʃ, dʒ]. Emphatic consonants are transcribed following the IPA conventions [tʰ, sʰ, ðʰ, dʰ]; emphasis spread as well as issues related to vowel quantity and length are ignored as they are not relevant to the scope of this study. Finally, it should be noted that the IPA transcription is necessary to highlight the phonetic differences between CMA and JA, namely the spirantization and ʔimala aspects.

5 JA and CMA: a brief overview

From a diachronic point of view, MA dialects are grouped into three major groups, the Northern, Central and Sahraoui types. The Northern dialects date back to the pre-Helalian era, while the Central and the Sahraoui dialects belong to the Hilalian period (Aguade, 2008; Heath, 2002; Colin, 1986). The two MA varieties that are the focus of this study belong to two different groups, thus, JA belongs to the Northern group, while CMA to the central one. Both groups have many features in common, but variation between them permeates several aspects of the language, such as phonological, morphological and lexical among others. Thus, to provide a succinct overview of such differences, some background information on JA is in order. Jbala, is a term used to refer to a group of distant Berber origin from northern Morocco which occupies the western Rif and central; the group is divided into 44 tribes whose territory extends over 112 municipalities distributed among the provinces of Chefchaouen, Fahs-Anjra, Larache, Ouezzane, Tanger-Assilah, Taounate, Taza, Tétouan and M'diq-Fnideq (Cattin, 2018, p. 154). The Jebli Arabic of interest in this study is that of Taounate, and more specifically, Bni

Zeroual, a rural community which counts ten tribes namely El Bibane, Oudka, Ratba, Rhafsai, Sidi Haj M'hamed, Sidi Mokhfi, Sidi Yahya Bni Zeroual, Tabouda, Tafrant and Timezgana. The common denominator among these tribes is that they are all rural communities that speak the same JA variety despite some minor variations. As mentioned above, JA is known to be a spirantizing dialect as opposed to CMA (Hammari, 1996; Laaboudi, 2004). As such, the variety is marked by the preservation of the alveolar spirants [θ, ð] in intervocalic position, the spirantization of the bilabial and velar stops [b] and [k] into [β] and [ç] intervocalically. Further, the velar stop [k] is an affix marking the second person singular, it spirantizes to [χ] after the low vowel /a/ as in *haði dyalaχ* 'this is yours' or *faj-naχ*? 'where are you?' and to [ç] elsewhere. Another conspicuous difference between JA and CMA is *ʔimāla*, especially word finally, where words ending in /a/ are realized with [e] as in *qβile* 'tribe', *kσιβε* 'livestock', *Raħbe* 'land', *ʃte* 'rain' (see Guerrero, 2018 for more details). As already pointed out, the differences between JA and CMA go beyond phonology, however, in view of the focus of this study I will limit the discussion to the variation in discourse markers. I will first provide a brief sketch of DMs² in MA in general and then focus on those that are JA specific.

6 Discourse markers in MA

Although some DMs, such as interjections and conjunctions may form a close class (Fraser, 1999), their meaning may vary depending on the functions they perform, which can range from gap filling to hedging or boosting the illocutionary force (Lutzky, 2012, p. 36) of an utterance. Some such closed DM class in MA are 'iwa', 'waxxa', 'eh', 'Safi', 'zaʃma', 'χlas', etc. These particles serve the basic function of gap filling, where they act as fillers in stretches of discourse to validate the addressee's claim, or the hearer's hypothesis, protest and question among others, rather than contributing to the core meaning of an illocution as illustrated by the DM *iwa* 'so, well' below³.

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) | <i>iwa ʃ yaði ngollik</i> | "well, what should I say" |
| | <i>iwa ʃlaf ?</i> | "so, why?" |
| | <i>iwa...emm</i> | "wellemm" |
| | <i>iwa af χbarək?</i> | "so, what's up?" |
| | <i>iwa haa lli gəlt lik</i> | "...there you go!" |
| | <i>iwa zid</i> | "well, go ahead/ carry on!" |
| | <i>iwa, daba ʃnu kajən?</i> | "so, what now?" |

It should be noted, however, that in addition to gap filling and small talk initiation, the DM *iwa* also acts as a signpost of emotional states like admiration, annoyance/ irritation, threatening, or warning as well as giving heads up on a situation, as the examples below demonstrate.

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| (2) | <i>i waa ʃla kəswa!</i> | "waw! What a beautiful dress!" |
| | <i>iwa la, maʃi had ʃi ʃlaf tafəqna!</i> | "oh no! This is not what we agreed on!" |
| | <i>iwa harsa w ʃuf ʃnu ndirlək</i> | "Dare you break it and see what will happen to you" |
| | <i>iwa rəd balək qbəl ʃfut lfut</i> | "so, be careful before it's too late!" |

Note that although this DM⁴ occurs mostly in initial positions, it can also be in final position where it always conveys annoyance and irritation, as shown in (3):

²Variation in DMs is also gender based; some DMs that are used by JA female speakers, to express sympathy, surprise and concern, are different from those used by other CMA female speakers. For instance *ʔamdaʃliya* 'oh no!', *ʔaçaβdi* 'oh my dear!' are more commonly used by JA female speakers; it should be noted that *kəβda* 'liver' is used figuratively.

³In cases where there is no difference in terms of DMs or their meanings and functions, data used represents MA in general rather than CMA or JA.

⁴In JA, *iwa*, can sometimes assume the role of an action verb as in the example *iwa lilu*, 'attack him/it!'

- (3) ʔaʒi jwa⁵ ‘come!’
 barka jwa ‘stop it!’
 ʒlaS iwa ‘enough!’

Other closed class markers, as pointed out above, can be *waxxa* which can mean “yes”, “alright”, “even if”, or “let’s suppose that is the case” and *Safi* “alright”, “that’s it”, “that’s enough”, *Safi?* “are you done?”. These markers, which are common to all MA varieties, can take on different pragmatic meanings depending on the context in which they occur. However, there is a set of markers whose meaning differs from one region to another. For instance, *bohRa* “so that, in order to, right now” which can occur utterance initially or medially. This marker is used in alternation with *ʒad* when it is used to express temporal relations but has no equivalent in CMA when used as a subordinator to express purpose, causality or consequence as shown in (4).

(4) DM:bohRa Function	Example	Gloss
(i) Purpose	Tlaʃ w hbeT fel mðarej <i>bohRa</i> ðehDəm	“go up and down the stairs to digest”
(ii) Contrast	Tlaʃt nəjni lbaçor bohRa Teht məʃiʒRa	“I climbed up to get some figs, but I fell off the tree”
(iii) Consequence	ʒallaθ lməndʒil dyale təmme <i>bohRa</i> sərquhle Stənnə ʃwiʃ bohRa jTiβ	“She left her sickle there, so it got stolen” “wait a little bit till it is ready” /“give it some time to be ready”
(iv) Temporal relation	A: Fiwaʒ dʒiθ ? B: bohRa wesʃsʃalt!	“when did you come?” “Just now”

As can be seen from the examples in (4) above, the DM *bohRa* occurs sentence medially to connect two stretches of discourse to signal a relation of subordination (i), contrast (ii), logical consequence (iii) or time respectively. While some such functions, especially, temporal relations are common in CMA, the other functions are typical to JA. Consider for instance this example in CMA

- (5) fuqaf ʔaxər mərɾa ʃəftih? bəhRa dwit mʃah lbarəh.
 “when was the last time you saw him?” “I just talked to him yesterday”.

The DM *bohRa*, which is realized as *bəhRa*, can be used alternatively with *ʒad*, which also functions as a time adverbial.

Another set of DMs that is specific to JA are *LlahomarDe* and *ʔamə sʃsʃaβ*. These two phrases, which are composed of two to three words, namely, *Llah o ma rDe* “Allah bless” and *ʔa mən Saβ*, which is used to express some wishful thinking, are very common in JA, especially BZA. The two expressions act as DMs because they connect two stretches of discourse each in its own way. Thus, *LlahomarDe* is usually used to signal a result or a logical consequence as in the following narrative from a landowner who leased his plot to another farmer in return of some crop:

- (6) (i) Father: mʃiθ baʃ ndʒiβ zRaʃ djali saʃa ma siβtuʃaj, LahomaRDe dʒiθ bħali
 “I went to fetch my share of the crop, but he was not home; God bless, I came back”
 (ii) ba nəhDar ba ðqulu qβih, LlahomarDe nəskuθ
 “If I talk, you will think that I am a bad person; God Bless,
 I’ll keep quiet” I’d rather keep quiet, because if I talk you will say I am a bad person”

The use of this DM in such contexts to solicit God blessings for one’s actions is typical of this region where speakers draw on the religious register to perform some communicative functions.

Similarly, the DM *ʔaməsʰsʰaβ* connects parts of discourse, where the interactant builds on the speaker's statement to express regrets and or wishful thinking. As such, this marker occurs sentence initially. Consider the excerpts from conversations between a father and his son, two female friends and family members respectively:

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| (7) | (i) Father: IdzaR baʃ Raħbe djalu
Son: ʔaməsʰsʰaβ ta ɕa ʃandi lflus
ʔana ta ʃriθe mənnu | “the neighbor sold his plot of land”
“I wish I had the money,
I would have bought it from him |
| | (ii) ʔaməsʰsʰaβ ta qutli maʃə dzuR,
tamʃiθ mʃaɣ | “I wish you told me that you were going to visit the
saints, I would have gone with you” |
| | (iii) Waʃ ba dʒi mʃah jəmme ?
ʔaməsʰsʰaβ ta ɕa bað hiβ | “Is mom coming with him?”
“I wish/ if only she would accept” |

In all three conversations, the DM *ʔaməsʰsʰaβ* is used as a metatextual device to express either regret or some wishful thinking. While this use may not be typical of JA, it is not very frequent in CMA.

The aim of this section has been to shed light on DMs in MA and provide a brief overview of the different functions they perform. Focus has been laid on those DMs that are common and how their usage and meaning can be similar as per 1-3 or different as per (4). Data 5 through 7 on the other hand, have shown variation between CMA and JA in terms of the DMs chosen to perform some functions, such as consequence and temporal relations among others. This section sets the background for the next one, which focuses on DMs of requests and the variation between CMA and JA.

7 Requests and Face Saving

Human interactions are achieved through speech acts that perform different communicative functions, one of which is requesting. Indeed, requesting is part and parcel of our daily interactions, and to ensure a pleasant social interaction with others, it is incumbent upon the social interactants to be ‘polite’; failure to do so can result in misunderstanding and consequently impoliteness. Such a situation is commonly known as face loss or face threat. The theory of face work finds its origin in Goffman (1955), who defines face as the positive public image one seeks to establish in social interactions and strives to maintain throughout the interaction. Despite the similarities, face definition differs from one school to another. Thus, while some focus on the social context, others emphasize the interpersonal aspect and still other stress the linguistic aspect. The conventional approach views politeness through respecting social rules and etiquettes lenses, whereas the interpersonal approach focuses on the rapport between the social interactants and their feelings (Brunet et al., 2012).

Brown and Levinson (1987), who expand on Goffman's work, define face as “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself”; for them, this ‘public self-image’ or face can be either ‘positive’ or ‘negative’. Positive face is a positive self-image, or simply put, one's self-esteem. Negative face is the desire to act freely and be unimpeded by others (Brunet et al., 2012). However, Brown and Levinson's face was characterized as being individualistic and their theory of politeness as being unable to account for all cultures (See Brunet et al., 2012, for a detailed review). Thus, Hudson (1996), who considers face as “something that other people give to us, which is why we have to be so careful to give it to them”, rejects the ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ face subcategorization on the grounds that it is “misleading as both kinds of face are valuable” (p.114). Instead, he suggests ‘solidarity-face’ and ‘power-face’, with the former implying “respect as in *I respect you for...*, i.e. the appreciation and approval that others show for the kind of person we are, for our behavior, for our values and so on” (p.114). Power-face, on the other hand, is “respect as in *I respect your right to...*, which is a ‘negative’ agreement not to interfere”. Hudson further points out that each kind of face

represents a different type of ‘politeness’ in that solidarity-politeness shows respect for the person, whereas power-politeness respects their rights.

To summarize, Hudson (1996) maintains that people have to learn how to recognize the social factors that affect our language use or what he calls “social constraints on speech”. The factors that constrain speech in this study and motivate face negotiation are two: the geographic space with its dominant social norms and the socio-economic activity. More specifically, and in view of the prevalent mode of life and economic activity, the geographical space where JA is spoken calls for what Hudson refers to as “focussed” interactions where the interactants consider themselves to be “together in more than a purely physical sense, which also provides most of the serious threats to face” (Hudson, 1996, p. 115). He further points out that “this is where solidarity becomes most important because we care about what our friends and family think of us”.

8 Discourse Markers of Request

Having laid the ground for the norms of face interactions or politeness, I will turn now to discuss the variation in discourse markers that perform requests in MA. A case in point is DM [$\chi as^s s^s a\chi$] “you should/need”, which acts as a modal of necessity ⁶ as the conversation between a daughter and her father below illustrates.

- (8) (i) Daughter: $ba\beta e byit n\acute{a}m\acute{f}i \zeta and t^s\beta i\beta, \chi as^s s^s a\chi \delta\acute{a}\zeta t^s ini lflus$
 “father I want to go to the doctor, you should give me money”

The word $\chi as^s s^s a\chi$ whose semantic meaning is ‘you need/should’ has a DM status, because the exchange between the speakers can be performed without it. The optionality of this DM $\chi as^s s^s a\chi$ in the above exchange can be illustrated as follows:

- (ii) $ba\beta e byit n\acute{a}m\acute{f}i \zeta and t^s\beta i\beta, \zeta t^s ini l flus$
 “father, I want to go to the doctor, give me money”
 $\chi as^s s^s a\chi st\acute{o}nne tanbi\zeta lbaqRa$
 “wait till I sell the cow”.

The core meaning of the exchange between the daughter and her father is preserved even after the deletion of the DM $\chi as^s s^s a\chi$. However, pragmatically speaking the exchange sounds dry and rude in that the speech act changes from a request to an order $\acute{p}t^s ini lflus$ “give me money”, which will be perceived as a serious face threat to the hearer, especially in such a context; hence the importance of the DM which establishes the relevance of the exchange. However, interactants use it to perform an indirect request, which marks a form of politeness, since the illocutionary effect on the hearer is achieved. Evidence for this comes from the hearer, that is, the father, who recognizes his daughter’s intention and responds favorably. He himself uses the same DM to request her to be patient. Further context for this DM is provided in (9) below:

- (9) Speaker A: $\zeta andi tawaze y\acute{a}dde, \chi as^s s^s a\chi \delta\acute{d}zi \delta\zeta aw\acute{a}nni$
 ”people will be helping me with harvesting tomorrow, and I need you to join”
 Neighbor: $j\acute{c}u \chi ajr \acute{?}in \acute{f}a \zeta aLah$ ⁷
 ”will be good, inshaa Allah/ I will be there inshaa Allah”

The DM $\chi as^s s^s a\chi$ occurs sentence medially linking two segments, as pointed out by Fraser (1999), SI < $\zeta andi tawaze y\acute{a}dde$ > and SII < $\delta\acute{d}zi \delta\zeta aw\acute{a}nni$ >. Here again, the speech act could be performed

⁶See Traugott (2007) on the distinction between DM and modals

without the DM, which may suggest that it is a mere discourse connective that does not contribute to the truth condition of the speech act. Nevertheless, following Blakemore (1987) and Escandell-Vidal, Leonetti, and Ahern (2011), this DM constrains the inferential phase of interpretation by cuing the hearer as to how the proposition should be processed for relevance, i.e., by guiding him/her to the appropriate choice of contextual assumptions he/she must supply to obtain the intended interpretation. In other words, it provides helpful information that aids the relevant interpretation and thus meets Grice (1975)'s cooperative principle and maxim of relevance resulting thereby in solidarity and a positive face in that both speakers want the same thing, and that they have a common goal. A further context where this DM $\chi as^s s^c \chi$ - occurs is provided by this conversation.

- (10) Daughter: $\dot{c}ut \ ʔanqallə\beta \ ʕla \ ʃi \ daR \ ləlbi? \ wma \ si\beta tʃi \ talhis$
 “I was looking for a house for sale, but I found nothing”
 Mother: $Si \ Marouane, \ \chi as^s s^c \chi \ \delta əmʃi \ mʔaha$
 $\delta ʔawne, \ hiʒe \ ma\delta əʔrafʃi \ hal \ m\delta ine$
 “Marouane, you should go with her to help her,
 she does not know this city”
 (Marouane puzzled does not know what to say)

In this example, the DM is an indirect request for assistance; however, the hearer, who is a Doukkali and a speaker of CMA, is confused because of his understanding or the lack of understanding of the meaning of the request that he perceives as an imposition. Unaware of the sociocultural rules of JA, this request is face threatening for the addressee who feels coerced to help, which he does not agree with, as reflected by his facial expressions and his silence. In fact, to any non-JA speaker, this request is face threatening since it conveys the sense of coercion and imposition and appears to be rude and impolite to say the least. However, if we take into consideration the socio-geographical space of JA, which is based on the community spirit and dynamics, this request is an instance of “focussed” interaction, that is an instance of solidarity that indicates intimacy, social equality and similarity between the interactants in line with Hudson (1996) and Xiaopei (2011). It follows then, that to JA speakers, the linguistic marker $\chi as^s s^c \chi$ is co-indexical with solidarity face, and as such the interactants, especially the interlocutor, view this as a call for action and a necessity to honor the request and consolidate the interconnectedness and the intimacy between the community members (Xiaopei, 2011).

On the other hand, for this request or speech act to sound less face threatening, a typical CMA speaker would hedge the request with DMs such as $\beta afak$ ⁸ “please”, which performs the same function as the JA DM $\chi as^s s^c \chi$ but in an indirect way. It can be inferred that discourse marking variation between JA and CMA is a variation in what Blum-Kulka (1987) refers to as “request patterns”. More specifically, the author argues that the requestive force can be marked either directly or indirectly. While the direct way can be explicit through the use of Mood derivables, or performatives, the indirect way refers to a set of requesting techniques including hedge performatives among others.

As can be seen, the study of DM or request shows that politeness norms are shaped by the social norms and the cultural characteristics of the community, which bring us to the research question about the relation between the study of DMs and the sociolinguistic situation in Morocco. It should be noted, in this respect, that the main finding of this section is that variation between CMA and JA is a variation in the request pattern. Thus, while CMA relies on the indirect pattern, JA resorts to the direct one, especially in situations that require an immediate practical answer. As outlined above, JA directness is usually motivated by face rather than power solidarity in that there is no coercion or imposition but rather a sense of egalitarianism and loyalty to the community. This implies that face is dependent on the power dynamics of the community and contributes to the shaping of the

⁸This is just one of the many polite forms of address that CMA speakers draw on for their requests. Other forms include, *Lah jərham lwalidin*, *lah jəstʔik matmänniti*, *Llah jsətrək*, etc.

sociolinguistic communicative competence, which according to Saville-Troike (1989, p. 24) “refers to the communicative knowledge and skills shared by the group, although these (like all aspects of culture) reside variably in its individual members”. It follows then that cultural norms and socio-geographical dynamics shape the communicative competence of the speakers. Evidence for this claim can be drawn from Hofstede (2011)’s cultural dimensions, specifically, the individualism-collectivism which he defines as:

On the individualist side we find cultures in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him/herself and his/her immediate family. On the collectivist side we find cultures in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, often extended families (with uncles, aunts and grandparents) that continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty, and oppose other ingroups. (p.11).

This dimension refers to the strength of the ties that people have to others within their community. In the light of this and given the fact that JA is spoken in rural areas where people live in a community bound to each other by blood as well as social ties, they are loyal to each other and the need to help is an obligation rather than a favor. Hence, these markers go beyond the structural functions of connecting stretches of discourse to indexing social relations, cultural norms and the ‘local identity’ (Eckert, 2012) of JA speakers. Thus, this study highlights the diversity of the social world in line with Eckert (2019)’s argument that sociolinguistics brings the diversity of the social world into language (Eckert, 2019, p. 751).

9 Conclusion

In this paper, I have revisited variation in MA through comparing the use of DMs in CMA and JA. The findings indicate that DMs index social reality, which is shaped by different cultural norms depending on the socio-economic dynamics of the community. Hence, discourse marking tends to be power oriented in CMA and solidarity marked in JA. Accordingly, the two varieties tend to resort to two different request patterns in that the requesting strategy in CMA is largely indirect, as opposed to JA, where the process is more direct and transparent.

An important contribution of this study is that it accounts for this sociolinguistic variation by moving beyond the structure and macro-sociological categories to “looking into people’s moment-to-moment negotiation of selves as a personal and individual dynamic” (Eckert, 2012, p. 27).

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