Abstract - AFRAR

Reinventing negation patterns in Moroccan Arabic

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This paper examines how new negation patterns are created in Moroccan Arabic (Oujda region, North East Morocco) by contact with Berber (Tarifit, North Morocco). The discussed cases concern contact-induced innovation processes in Moroccan Arabic negation through which the morphological data as well as the syntactic structuring and functioning have been modified by analogy with Berber negation.

The negation system of North African Arabic is fundamentally built on the morphosyntactic opposition between "verbal negation" and "non verbal negation". Where in the former negation type a verbal component functions as the negation incidence point (generally the verbal predicate), in the latter type, the negation refers to various nominal elements such as nouns and prepositions, that generally play the predicative role. Verbal predication is negated by means of the discontinuous marker *ma* ——— *š (ši/šay)* and its optional or conditioned (modality and expressive conditions) variants. The verbal negation structure mainly expresses existential values, whereas the non verbal negation is used for both "existential" and "attributive" semantic purposes. The existential negation marker is similar in the verbal and non verbal negation, while the attributive negation is mainly marked by the continuous morpheme *maši* ——— or *muš* ———.

With respect to this negation system, the Moroccan Arabic variety of Oujda distinguishes a new discontinuous marker, *ma* ——— *bu* of which the second element is borrowed from Tarifit, which is the only Berber language where this morpheme occurs (Lafkioui, 1996, 1999, 2007). It has in common with Tarifit not only this morphological particularity but also its morphosyntactic combinatorial restrictions and syntactic functioning (structural analogy); the hybrid negator *ma* ——— *bu* occurs in the following innovated negation patterns: [ma + verbal predicative syntagm + bu + noun] and [ma + non verbal predicative syntagm + bu + noun]. Moreover, this Arabic variety basically shares the same semantic properties with Tarifit, that is the expression of existential descriptive negation.

The analyses referring to Moroccan Arabic and Berber in this contribution are based on data from my fieldwork in Morocco since 1992. As for the negation in Tarifit, I also refer to Lafkioui (1996, 1999, 2007).

References

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