

UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST
CENTER FOR ARAB STUDIES

ROMANO-ARABICA
XXII

Arabic literature, quo Vadis?



UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST
CENTER FOR ARAB STUDIES

ROMANO-ARABICA

XXII

Arabic Literature, Quo Vadis?



2024

Editors:

George Grigore (University of Bucharest, e-mail: gmgrigore@yahoo.com)

Laura Sitaru (University of Bucharest, e-mail: laura.sitaru@lls.unibuc.ro)

Associate Editors:

Eduard Bogdan Cojanu (University of Bucharest, e-mail: bogdan.cojanu@lls.unibuc.ro)

Ovidiu Pietrăreanu (University of Bucharest, e-mail: ovidiu.pietrareanu@lls.unibuc.ro)

Editor in charge of this issue: **Laura Sitaru**

Cover designer

Eduard Bogdan Cojanu

Sursă copertă

https://unsplash.com/photos/a-person-standing-on-top-of-a-sand-dune-gVDUuJaG_wM

Blind peer reviewed

Editorial and Advisory Board:

Jordi Aguadé (University of Cadiz, Spain)

Andrei A. Avram (University of Bucharest, Romania)

Zinah AlKasby (University of Babylon, Iraq)

Ramzi Baalbaki (American University of Beirut, Lebanon)

Mahmoud Elashiri (Georgetown University in Qatar)

Ali Faraj (University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy)

Ioana Feodorov (Institute for South-East European Studies of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania)

Hayder Ghadhban Mohsin (University of Babylon, Iraq)

Sebastian Günther (University of Göttingen, Germany)

Safa Jubran (University of São Paulo, Brazil)

Pierre Larcher (Aix-Marseille University, France)

Jérôme Lentin (INALCO, Paris, France)

Alexander Magidow (University of Rhode Island, USA)

Giuliano Mion (University of Cagliari, Italy)

Luminița Munteanu (University of Bucharest, Romania)

Shuichiro Nakao (Osaka University, Japan)

Bilal Orfali (American University of Beirut, Lebanon)

Christophe Pereira (INALCO, Paris, France)

Yulia Petrova (A. Krymsky Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine)

Stephan Procházka (University of Vienna, Austria)

Mehmet Hakkı Suçin (Gazi University, Ankara, Turkey)

Irina Vainovski-Mihai ("Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University, Bucharest, Romania)

Ángeles Vicente (University of Zaragoza, Spain)

Martin Zammit (University of Malta)

Published by:

© **Center for Arab Studies**

7-13, Pitar Moș Street, District 1, 010451, Bucharest, Romania Website: <http://araba.lls.unibuc.ro>

© **Editura Universității din București**

Șos. Panduri nr. 90-92, 050663 București, ROMÂNIA. Tel./Fax: +40214102384 E-mail:

editura.unibuc@gmail.com Web: <http://editura-unibuc.ro>;

Centru de vânzare: Bd. Regina Elisabeta nr. 4-12, 030018 București, ROMÂNIA Tel. +40213053703;

Tipografia EUB: Bd. Iuliu Maniu nr. 1-3 061071 București, ROMÂNIA Tel./Fax: +40213152510.

The official website of Romano-Arabica

<https://romanoarabica.academy>

ISSN 1582-6953



Romano-Arabica is an **A-class Academic Journal**, according to the Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research Institutes – Anvur, Italia:
<http://www.anvur.it/en/homepage/>



Romano-Arabica is a **Category A Academic Journal**, according to the Romanian National Council for Scientific Research – CNCS,
Romania: <http://www.cncs-nrc.ro/publicatii-stiintifice/>

Contents

I. ARABIC LITERATURE, <i>QUO VADIS</i>	7
Basilius Bawardi . <i>Rethinking the Arabic Literature Curriculum: A Bridge to Written Arabic (Fuṣḥā) and a Mechanism for Cultural Change – Case Study of the Palestinian Minority in Israel</i>	9
Ali Faraj . <i>Literary Aspects of the Poem EDIRNE by Ma ‘rūf Ar-Ruṣāfī in the Conti Rossini Archive at the Accademia Nazionale Dei Lincei in Rome</i>	24
Najla Kalach . <i>Insights of the Marriage in Qatari Literature: A Reading of Three Short Stories</i>	44
Cristina La Rosa . <i>Writing a Marwiyya in Contemporary Tunisia: Taoufik Ben Brik’s Kawasaki</i>	56
Angelika Palmegiani . <i>الترجمة الأدبية وإشكال الحفاظ على البعد الثقافي للويجي بيرانديللو إلى العربية نموذجاً “IL FU MATTIA PASCAL” نقل رواية</i>	66
Rosa Pennisi . <i>A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Styles, Registers, and Varieties in Hot Maroc</i>	76
Ovidiu Pietrăreanu . <i>Old and Possibly New Perspectives on Metrics and Prosody – Could there Be a Place for Metrical Stress, after All, in the Recitation of Arabic Poetry?</i>	86
II. MISCELLANEA	117
Letizia Cerqueglini . <i>Count/Mass Nouns and Definiteness in Palestinian Arabic Heritage Speakers of English</i>	119
III. BOOK REVIEWS	131
Muntasir Fayez Al-Hamad . <i>Signs and Gestures: Non-Verbal Communication in the Qatari Culture (translated and edited by Alreem Al-Adba). Doha: Qatar University Press. (Najla Kalach)</i>	133

A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF STYLES, REGISTERS, AND VARIETIES IN *HOT MAROC*

ROSA PENNISI

IREMAM, Aix-Marseille Université
and University of Catania

Abstract: In *Hot Maroc* (2016), Yassin Adnan, a Moroccan author and journalist, reconstructs through the literary fiction the political and social changes of contemporary Morocco, from the end of the reign of Hassan II until today. Through the eyes of the main character, Raḥḥāl, the reader discovers both the social jungle of Marrakesh and the digital Moroccan jungle in which the young man becomes a professional keyboard warrior. Being paid by Moroccan *mukhabarat*, Raḥḥāl manipulates public opinion through readers' comments published in an electronic journal, called *Hot Maroc*. The present study aims to analyse styles, registers, and linguistic variation through a sociolinguistic perspective. Although the main language of the novel is *Fuṣḥā* (here intended as Modern Standard Arabic), discursive parts make also use of *Dāriġa* (Moroccan Arabic). The plurality of voices and linguistic diversity which emerge from online and offline discourses and interactions among characters is not limited to merely enhancing the novel's 'realism', but it makes it possible to analyse how the communicative nature of language is functionally manipulated to serve instead as an instrument of miscommunication.

Keywords: contemporary Moroccan novel, Yassin Adnan, stylistic variation, Moroccan Arabic, online and offline interactions.

1. Introduction

“Literary compositions in an Arabic colloquial are nothing new” (Cachia 1967:12). The opening sentence of Cachia’s study claims clearly that the use of colloquial varieties in prose and poetry is not a contemporary new development. In Arabic modern fiction, some authors considered Modern Standard Arabic (MSA, henceforth) ineffective for realistically representing specific social realities in dialogues (Abdel-Malek 1972)¹. In fact, as Mejdell (2006) pointed out, the use of the vernacular in dialogues of novels and short stories is a “stylistic choice, [...] a concern for realism, [...] to ‘provide local flavour’ to the text” (Mejdell 2006:204)². It is worth mentioning, however, that linguistic choices of modern

¹ Differently from Naġīb Maḥfūz who used *Fuṣḥā* as a literary language even in dialogues, although more recently, as mentioned by De Angelis (2021), he wrote dialogues in “colloquialised *Fuṣḥā*” (Somekh 1991:26-27).

² Rosebaum’s research (2000, 2012) on what he termed *fuṣḥāmmiyya* (an intentionally written style alternating *Fuṣḥā* and *‘Ammiyya*), questioned the linguistic-stylistic dichotomy between MSA/Narrative

authors also depended on political and ideological cultural factors. Between 19th and 20th century, Egyptian cultural production, such as satirical newspapers, used *‘Āmmiyya* (Colloquial Arabic), as an educational tool aimed at indoctrination of the nationalistic movement against the English occupants (De Angelis 2021:166), whereas in contemporary literary production the choice of linguistic varieties and registers responded mainly to “stylistic, and not political, considerations” (De Angelis 2021:168).³

The relationship between language choices and realism was also discussed by Lucia Avallone (2020) in her sociolinguistic analysis of ‘Alā’ al-Aswānī’s contemporary novel *‘Imārat Ya ‘qūbiyān* (2002). Her definition of social realism, whose narrative aim is “the representation of reality to raise awareness of its problems”⁴ (Avallone 2020:27), perfectly sums up a type of narrative that brings out social issues. As she states, “[in *‘Imārat Ya ‘qūbiyān*] the narrative is a *representation* of the human condition, often dramatic, attentive not only to the social dimension but also to psychological introspection.” (Avallone 2020:25-26).⁵ Social dimensions and psychological introspection are thus (re)constructed in the narrative, also through stylistic and linguistic choices.

Hence, starting from the assumption that literary texts are a ‘representation’ of human condition, the present study aims at analysing through a sociolinguistic perspective the plurality of voices and the linguistic variation as an intentional stylistic strategy for representing in literary production what Avallone called “social realism”. In the novel *Hot Maroc* (2016), Yassin Adnan reconstructs social and political developments of contemporary Morocco focusing on language (mis)communication and on individual and social impacts of the internet and social media, as a new public space for communication.

After a brief presentation of Yassin Adnan and his novel, the analysis will focus on language choices in discursive sections, both in offline direct speeches (reflecting oral ordinary interactions between characters), and in the online communications (reflecting digital written interactions).

2. Yassin Adnan and his novel

Yassin Adnan is a Moroccan cultural journalist internationally known. He is a member of the *ittihād kuttāb al-maġrib* ‘Union of Moroccan Writers’, a board member of the International Prize for Arabic Fiction Booker, but also a poet and a short story writer. Actually, *Hot Maroc* is his first novel, published in 2016 and edited by two publishers, the Egyptian (*Dār al-‘ayn*) and the Moroccan (*Dār al-fanak*). In 2017, *Hot Maroc* entered the long list of the Arab Booker Prize and in 2020 it was first translated into French by Meyer (2020), and in 2021 the English translation by Alexander Elinson (2021) was also published.

vs. Colloquial/Dialogues in contemporary literary production, stating that *fushhāmmiyya* is also used in the narrative sections.

³ See also Rosenbaum (2012) observing that the stylistic choices of contemporary Egyptian authors (i.e. sentences entirely in *‘Āmmiyya* or in a mix of *‘Āmmiyya* and *Fuṣḥā*), respond to achieve precise stylistic intentions through precise narrative strategies, such as emphasising the change of point of view or for free indirect speech.

⁴ Translated from Italian into English by the author.

⁵ *Ibidem*, emphasis added.

The novel is a social comedy. It is set in Marrakech and Yassin Adnan reconstructs through literary fiction the political and social changes of contemporary Morocco, from the end of the reign of Hassan II until today. The novel devotes special attention to the role of mass media after the Digital Revolution and the emergence of online newspapers and social media. A large part of the novel, in fact, takes place between the real life of the characters and the web, where readers' comments on the articles of a new online newspaper, called in the fiction 'Hot Maroc', play an important role in the construction of the narrative.

2.1. Narrative structure and stylistic strategies

The novel is structured in three parts, which are: I *al-firāša fī tarīqi-hā ilā al-maslah* 'The Butterfly on Its Way to the Slaughterhouse',⁶ II *al-singāb yadhul al-'ulbat al-zarqā* 'The Squirrel Enters the Blue Box', and III *al-kūmīdiyā al-ḥaywāniyya* 'The Animal Comedy'.⁷

In the first part, the reader meets Raḥḥāl, the protagonist, the anti-hero of the novel. Raḥḥāl is an introverted and inept student at the Faculty of Arabic Literature. He acts and reacts only in his dreams. He does not really live his real life. He lives in an inner universe and finds refuge in the web⁸. Even his marriage to Ḥassaniyya, a fellow student, is not his choice; the girl makes this decision and thanks to her, Raḥḥāl ends up managing a cybercafé and thus starting his real virtual life. In the second part of the novel, his alter egos enter the scene. They take revenge of Raḥḥāl's repressed feelings by vilifying people with whom Raḥḥāl has never really been able to interact and communicate in the real world.

The cybercafé became a favourite meeting place for regular customers, all from different social backgrounds and experiences. Raḥḥāl will be intercepted by the Moroccan *mukhabarat* who will pay him to continue using his digital alter egos in order to influence public opinion, writing comments on the online newspaper Hot Maroc, and convincing people to support a new populist political party. In the third part of the novel, the "animal comedy" is performed. The main plot concerns the election campaign, the media conflicts between parties, and the effects that the actions of Raḥḥāl's alter egos have on the outcome of the political election. The other micro-stories take a turn in this final part, with episodes that also affect the offline lives of Raḥḥāl and the other secondary characters.

The novel is constructed by an omniscient narrator. Direct or reported speeches (dialogues and online written messages) perform the function of narrative action. The non-dialogue sections, on the other hand, serve for the description of environments, characters, or to explain particular events. The narrator often assumes the internal point of view of the characters with whom he dialogues, and thus representing the inner voice of each character.

The novel is written in the standard variety of contemporary Arabic. However, some dialogues, but also some descriptive parts, show elements and expression in *Dāriġa*

⁶ All English translations of the novel are from Elinson (2021).

⁷ As already shown in titles, animals are a core element in the novel. The main character sees himself as a squirrel, and assigns animal features and animal names to all other characters.

⁸ Note the metaphoric name of the main character: the noun *raḥḥāl* meaning 'wanderer, traveller' in Arabic, represents here not the classical 'wandering poet of the desert', but a 'wandering poet of the internet', considering the fact that Raḥḥāl is also a keen expert in classical Arabic poetry.

(Moroccan Arabic) and in other different stylistic registers. In an interview with *Lepoint*, Adnan states:

“Dans le livre, j'utilise l'arabe coranique, celui de la poésie préislamique, l'arabe officiel, l'arabe administratif, l'arabe journalistique, l'arabe des réseaux sociaux, le darija (arabe dialectal marocain). Le roman est écrit en arabe moderne standard, c'est l'arabe du narrateur. Mais les *strates narratives* emploient ces *différentes modalités de l'arabe*. La voix du narrateur utilise cette langue arabe standard afin de poser aussi une forme de neutralité ; puis je suis contre toute forme de sacralisation de la langue arabe. L'arabe est une langue vivante, *dynamique* et elle doit le rester”⁹.

The following analysis focuses on the concept of narrative layers and dynamicity of the Arabic language.

3. Offline interactions in fictional narrative

According to the different communicative contexts in the novel, characters express themselves -in direct speech and reported speech- using different registers, expressions and varieties. Their speeches, and the combination of different varieties and registers, allow the reader to contextualise the different social profiles within the novel. The analysis of the offline interactions focuses on the language practices of three characters, namely Ḥassaniyya (Raḥḥāl's wife), Yazīd (a customer of the cybercafé) and Raḥḥāl with his alter egos.

3.1. *Ḥassaniyya and Raḥḥāl*

Ḥassaniyya is Raḥḥāl's fellow student. They work together at their final dissertation. Moreover, she gives Raḥḥāl permission to ask her in marriage, despite the fact that Raḥḥāl had never spoken to her about marriage. In (1), Ḥassaniyya, in a peer-to-peer communication context, expresses herself in MSA:

(1)
 "لقد فكرتُ مليًا في الموضوع، وأنا موافقة. يمكن أن تتقدّم لخطبتي في أيّ وقت".
 أحس رحال كما لو أن الأرض تدور به. لكنّ حسنية ستضيف بهمسها الراعش، إنما بنفس النبرة الحازمة:
 "بالمناسبة، أمي هي الأخرى موافقة. فقط عليك ألا تتأخر". لكانّ البنية تستخطبك أيها السنجاب.¹⁰
 (Adnan 2016:126)

At the end of Ḥassaniyya speech, the readers can hear Raḥḥāl/Squirrel's inner voice in: "لكانّ البنية تستخطبك أيها السنجاب." 'It sounds like the little girl is proposing to you, Squirrel!'

⁹ https://www.lepoint.fr/afrique/yassin-adnan-ce-roman-parle-d-un-maroc-en-entre-deux-page-2-13-03-2020-2367059_3826.php#xtatc=INT-500 (30/08/2022), emphasis added.

¹⁰ "I've thought it through, and I'm all for it. You can propose to me anytime." Rahhal felt as if the earth was spinning around him. But Hassaniya would add in her trembling whisper, in the same, resolute tone: "And by the way, my mom agrees, too. It's just up to you not to take too long." It's as if the young lady is proposing to you, Squirrel. (Elinson 2021:89).

- فعلاً، صدق الله العظيم، علقت حسنية ساخرة قيل أن تقوم مغتابة عن مائدة الأكل.
 - اختفت لدقائق ثم أطلت على الفارين وعلى ملامحها ارتسمت ابتسامة احتقار. قالت لعباد:
 - سلم لي على أخيك وزوجته، ولا تنس أن تدقق مع عبد السلام في أي من سُور القرآن وردت تلك الآية.¹⁴
- (Adnan 2016:253-254)

In (3), at the end of the dialogue, her sentences are syntactically and lexically constructed in *Dāriġa*. Note for instance the switch between the first 'Atfi' *al-nūr*, 'Turn out the light', in MSA, and the second *tfi l-daw* in *Dāriġa*; this switch shows the increasing nervousness of the young girl in that embarrassing situation with Raḥḥāl. Whereas, in (4) the expression of her nervousness turns into sarcasm. The bold parts show all sentences in *Dāriġa* (interrogatives, prefix conjugation, indefinite article, final proposition, etc.) from 'Ayyād and Raḥḥāl, the latter adapting himself to the familiar register in *Dāriġa* (see for instance, *dakšī dyāl Allah ā 'ammī* 'my uncle, that's up to God'). Hassaniyya on the other hand, irritated by the question, answers in perfect MSA. Her communicative strategy, i.e. the choice of MSA in a colloquial dialogue, underlines, not only her dominant personality, but also her (cultural) superiority over 'Ayyād.

3.2. Raḥḥāl and Yazīd

Raḥḥāl, like Hassaniyya, has a higher level of education that allows him to exploit all registers of Arabic depending on the communicative situation. While in his traditional family he is used to interacting in a colloquial register, Raḥḥāl's ordinary communications with the outside world tend to be in an educated and controlled register. In the following dialogue (5) between Raḥḥāl and Yazīd (a customer of the cybercafé), Raḥḥāl register is accommodating to the communicative contexts:

- (5)
- الأخ.. الأخ.. الله يخليك، ناداه رَحَال بتضرع .
 - أش خصك ثاني؟ تساءل اليزيد بنفاد صير .
 - الله يخليك. اقرأ شو مكتوب ف الباب: ممنوع التدخين. وهذا ماشي القانون ديالي. أنا غير خدام. هذا قانون واضعينه أصحاب المحل.
 - لا لا ماتخافش. ما حدي معاك هنا ما كاينش دين أمه اللي يقدر يشعل كارو ف هاذ المحل.
 - ولكن ها انت شعلتية؟
 - لا . . كن هاني، طمأنه اليزيد، حتى حد آخر ما نخليه يكمي ف السبير غير اديها ف شغلك.¹⁵
- (Adnan 2016:308)

¹⁴ "So? What are you two waiting for, Hassaniya? You still don't want to bring us a baby boy or girl to brighten our world?" "That's up to God, Uncle." "But as God Almighty says, 'Make it happen, my servant, and I will help you,' trust in God Almighty." [...] "Sure, trust in God Almighty," Hassaniya snarled before getting up angrily from the table She disappeared for a few minutes then glared at the two rats with a hateful smile on her face and said to Ayad: "Say 'hi' to your brother and his wife, and good luck to you and Abdeslam finding that verse in the Qur'an." (Elinson 2021:180).

¹⁵ "Uh, excuse me, my friend. Please . . ." Raḥḥāl implored. "Now what?" Yazid asked impatiently. "Please, read what's written on the sign: 'No smoking.' This isn't my rule. I just work here. This is a rule imposed by the shop's owners." "No, don't worry about it. No one here, damn his mother, will dare light a cigarette." "But haven't you just lit one?" "No, calm down," Yazid assured him. "I won't let anyone else smoke in this cybercafe . . . Just mind your business." (Elinson 2021:219)

While Yazīd only speaks in *Dāriġa*, Raḥḥāl accommodates himself to the style and register of his interlocutor. See for instance in Raḥḥāl's approach to the dialogue, the use of *al-aḥ* instead of the more common *ḥuyya* in *Dāriġa*, and the mixing with MSA, such as in *ḥaḍa māšī l-qānūn dyālī*, 'this is not my rule', where the pronoun *ḥaḍa* 'this' follows the MSA spelling, unlike the Yazīd's utterance where he uses the spelling *hād* 'this', in *Dāriġa*. All Yazīd's direct speeches in the novel are in *Dāriġa*, in a sort of rude *Dāriġa*'s register, representing his social background: a petty criminal who tries to survive every day with lucky jobs on the edge of legality.

4. Online interactions in fictional narrative

In online communications, Raḥḥāl successfully utilises his linguistic accommodation skills. His alter egos express themselves each with their own unique styles and registers reconstructing different, although non-existent, social profiles. In the following example (6), a sequence of comments from Raḥḥāl's alter egos, show how Raḥḥāl interprets different social profiles. In this sequence, Raḥḥāl uses defamation for a personal vendetta against Wafīq al-Dara'ī, an ex-colleague of the Faculty of Literature, who became a famous poet. Raḥḥāl deeply detests Wafīq and his poetry, so when Raḥḥāl read in Hot Maroc that Wafīq won the National Poetry Prize Ibn al-Wannān, wrote three comments on the article in order to denigrate the young poet:

(6)

الاسم: قاعدي سابق.
عنوان التعليق: شعرية الوشاية.
"قرأتُ باهتمام مقالكم حول أمير شعراء الفروماج المدعو وفيق الدرعي [...] كاتب المقال أغفل محطة أساسية في ساره وهي العمالة للمخابرات [...] فمناضلو كلية الآداب [...] يعرفون شاعركم المفلق - أريد أن أقول المفلق - خير المعرفة خبروه أساسا كعنصر مخابراتي كان مدسوسا على مناضلي الاتحاد الوطني لطلبة المغرب [...] ورحم الله ابن الوثان مرة أخرى، فقد أعدتم قتله اليوم بمنح جائزة تحمل اسمه لجاسوس جبان"¹⁶

(Adnan 2016:224-225)

الاسم: ولد المواسين.
عنوان التعليق: فخر واعتزاز.
لا يسغني كأحد أبناء حومة المواسين إلا أن أعلن فخري واعتزازي وأنا أتلقى هذا الخبر السعيد. ابن حومتي يفوز بأهم جائزة شعرية في بلادنا. [...] لذا اسمحوا لي بأن أقدم أحرّ التهاني للكومي سير السراج ولكل عائلة

¹⁶ "Name: A Former Qaīdi Basista Student. Comment Title: The Poetics of Denunciation. I read with interest your article about the prince of cheesy poets, aka Wafiq Daraai, [...] the article's author neglected a key element in his biography – that being his collaboration with the Mukhabarat, [...] The militants of the College of Humanities [...] know their poetic counterfeiter – what I mean to say is, their poet, whose poems glitter – essentially as a Mukhabarati element who served as a mole within the ranks of the National Union of Students in Morocco. May God have mercy on Ibn al-Wannan once again, with you having killed him a second time by granting a prize that carries his name to such a cowardly spy." (Elinson 2021:157-158)

الدرعي في المواسين على هذا الإنجاز. [...]لذا أعتذر يا وفاقة - عفوا، يا وفاق - عن كل ما حصل في الحمام [...]وفقك الله وتمنياتنا لك بالمزيد من التآلق¹⁷.
(Adnan 2016:226)

الاسم: عبد المقصود الطاهري.

عنوان التعليق: شعر أم شعير؟

باسم الله الرحمن الرحيم [...]، أولاً أتحتفظ بشدة على التعليقين المنشورين أعلاه. [...] فهذه السفاسف لا تشغل بال الناقد العلامة والدارس البحاثة. ما يعنيني أصلحكم الله هو الشعر ذاته. [...] وأطرح سوالي على وفاق الدرعي نفسه هو وأمثاله من أشباه الشعراء؛ هل بهذيانكم المريض واستعاراتكم الذهنية وكلامكم المعتمى [...] سنحزُرُ فلسطين ونُعيد للامة العربية عزتها وكرامتها؟ لا وألف لا. [...] هل تعرف الرجل الذي فزت اليوم بجائزة تحمل اسمه؟ جواب لدي، ببساطة لأنني أحس أن لا جواب لديك. [...] ولا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله¹⁸.

(Adnan 2016:227-228)

All the comments are written in MSA, but in three different styles. The former has an ironic and sarcastic tone. Note, for example, the construction *Amīr šu‘arā’ al-frūmāğ* ‘the prince of cheesy poets’ in contrast to the expression *Amīr al-šu‘arā’*, a traditional honorary title for poets, and the ironic wordplay between الملقق ‘fake’ and الملقق ‘eminent’. Finally, the references to the National Union of Students of Morocco build up the profile of an ex-militant student.

The second comment is more informal, with the use of some words that are apparently in standard Arabic, but depending on the pronunciation they could also be in *Dāriğā* (e.g. the term *ħawma* ‘neighbourhood’ spelled in *Dāriğā* as *ħūmā*, or seemingly the term *walad* ‘a guy’ spelled *wuld*).

The third shows Quranic formulae, at the beginning and at the end. Stylistically, the commentary is written in a formal style, with word plays that mark irony (شعر أم شعير؟ ‘Poetry or barley’, same radical letters, but different forms and meanings), but also internal assonance or reiteration of morphological constructions within the prose (e.g. بال الناقد العلامة ‘The mind of the sage critic and erudite scholar’, where ‘critic’ and ‘scholar’ share the same pattern of active participle, as well as their qualifiers share respectively the same adjective pattern). Those stylistic strategies make the comment almost lyrical, thus

¹⁷ “Name: A Guy from Mouassine. Comment Title: Pride and Glory. As someone from Mouassine, all I can do is express my pride and joy at having come across this happy piece of news. Imagine, someone from my neighborhood winning the most prestigious poetry prize in the country. [...] So, allow me to present my warmest congratulations to Police Commissioner Serraj and to the entire Daraai family in Mouassine on this achievement. [...] Therefore, I apologize, Wafiq – I mean Wafiq – for everything that happened in the hammam so long ago, [...] May God grant you success and we hope for even more brilliance for you.” (Elinson 2021:158-159)

¹⁸ “Name: Abdelmaqsud Taheri. Comment Title: Poetic Food for the Soul or Poetic Fodder? In the name of God, [...]. First of all, I absolutely disassociate myself from the two comments posted above. [...] This triviality is of no concern to the scholarly critic or academic research. What concerns me, may God allow you all to prosper, is the poetry itself. [...] I direct my question to Wafiq Daraai himself, along with the so-called poets like him. Is there anything in your mad ravings and your intellectual metaphors and blind talk [...] with which we will liberate Palestine and return the Arab community to its former honor and greatness? No! A thousand nos! [...] Do you know the man for whom the prize you won today is named? I have no response, simply because I’m going to guess that you have no response. [...] There is no power nor strength save for in God.” (Elinson 2021:159-161)

seemingly to the language of a man of letters, like a professor, in order to authoritatively justify the artistic inconsistency of Wafīq.

The (mis)communication strategy of Raḥḥāl, that is the construction of a vilifying discourse based on attacks from heterogenous social points of view, is also used when he works for the *mukhabarat* with the aim of manipulating public opinion.

In the other sections of the novel, the narrator's inner voice, the voice of Raḥḥāl, commenting his online vilifying actions will state:

(7)
والأنداد الآخرون سيُردّدون نفس الشيء. كلُّ بلُغتيه، ومزاجه، واسلوبه. فما تَكَرَّرَ تَقَرَّرَ. والتَّكَرُّار يُعَلِّمُ
الحمّار¹⁹.
(Adnan 2016:369)

This statement is particularly interesting not only for the concept of reiteration as a mechanism of persuasion, but especially because it underlines that each reiteration represents different styles and registers, i.e. individual voices that together represent/(re)construct social actors and contexts, and consequently, the messages and discourses whether they come from real or fake users, through reiteration become shared, then authoritative, then persuasive, so truthful.

5. Conclusion

The linguistic and stylistic choices in *Hot Maroc* represent/(re)construct the multifaceted socio-cultural landscape of contemporary Morocco. Different social profiles express themselves in their dialogues reflecting their social environment: a rude petty criminal (Yazīd), educated young students (Raḥḥāl and Ḥassaniyya), Moroccan from rural regions (Raḥḥāl's uncle), erudite man of letters (Raḥḥāl's fake digital alter ego), etc. Everyone expresses himself using different multi-layered registers of Arabic (rude Moroccan Arabic, Educated and Mixed Arabic).

In the analysis of offline and online dialogues, several phenomena, such as linguistic variation, intrasentential codeswitching, accommodation, have been investigated accordingly to sociolinguistic approaches to authentic corpora. In *Hot Maroc*, registers and linguistic varieties (re)shape the plurality of voices that make up contemporary Moroccan society. The dialogues are, of course, not authentic, but represent, with their heterogenous voices, communicative strategies that serve to reconstruct the pragmatic functions of discourses. Linguistic choices and narrative actions based on the construction of dialogues allow the author to apply the mechanism of reiteration and persuasion serving for (mis)communication purposes, as a literary strategy. The stylistic variation in *Hot Maroc* does not only serve to represent the Moroccan sociolinguistic reality in a realistic manner, but more generally to serve as literary strategy to represent and consider the relationship between power, language and society.

¹⁹ “And the others will repeat the same thing, each in their own language, mood, and style. For that which is repeated is set. As they say, ‘Repetition teaches the donkey.’” (Elinson 2021:263)

References

- Abdel-Malek, Zaki N. 1972. "The Influence of Diglossia on the Novels of Yuusif al-Sibaa 'i", *Journal of Arabic Literature* 3, 132-141. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4182901>
- Adnan, Yassin. 2016. *Hūt Mārūk*, al-Qāhira: Dār al-'Ayn.
- Avallone, Lucia. 2020. *Ascoltando le voci di palazzo: per una lettura sociolinguistica di Palazzo Yacoubian*. Roma: Aracne Editrice.
- Cachia, Pierre. 1967. "The Use of the Colloquial in Modern Arabic Literature". *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 87/1. 12-22.
- De Angelis, Francesco. 2021. "Literature in Dialect: The Great Absentee", in Golfetto, Marco Aurelio, Osti, Letizia, Chakrani, Brahim (eds.), *Arabic Language and Language Teaching: Policies, Politics, and Ideology, Lingue Culture Mediazioni* 8/2. 163-176.
- Doss, Madiha. 2006. "Cultural Dynamics and Linguistic Practice in Contemporary Egypt". *Cairo Papers in Social Sciences* 27 (1-2). 51-68.
- Elinson, Alexander. E. 2021. (trans.) *Hot Maroc, a novel*, Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.
- Mejdell, Gunvor. 2006. "The use of colloquial in modern Egyptian literature – a survey". *Current Issues in the Analysis of Semitic Grammar and Lexicon II*. Harrassowitz Verlag. 195-213.
- Meyer, France. 2020. (trans.), *Hot Maroc*, Arles: Actes Sud.
- Rosenbaum, Moshe, Gabriel. 2000. "'Fuṣḥāmmiyya': Alternating Style in Egyptian Prose". *Zeitschrift für Arabische Linguistik* 38. 68-87.
- Rosenbaum, Moshe, Gabriel. 2012. "Mixed Arabic and Stylistic Choices in Contemporary Egyptian Writing". Bettini, Lidia & La Spisa Paolo (eds.), *Au-delà de l'Arabe Standard: Moyen Arabe et Arabe Mixte dans les sources médiévales, modernes et contemporaines, Quaderni di semitistica* 28, Firenze: Università di Firenze. 291-306.
- Somekh, Sasson. 1991. *Genre and Language in Modern Arabic Literature*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Tiparul s-a realizat
la Tipografia Editurii Universității din București



97715821695304