

**Title: The Value and Signification of Proverbs in Algerian Arabic:
The Power of a Discourse Reflecting Popular Believes**

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Résumé:

Les proverbes représentent une manifestation spontanée dans le dialecte Algérien. Leur utilisation était surtout maîtrisée par l'ancienne génération. Une étude de ces expressions évoque surtout l'existence d'une grande habilité cognitive, et démontre aussi une facilité de manipulation du langage et une compétence dans la communication. Dans ce contexte, cet article examine le sens et l'importance des proverbes dans le développement du discours Algérien et la préservation de son patrimoine culturel.

Abstract

Proverbs are short well-known sayings that state a general use or give advice. They represent spontaneous manifestations in the Algerian dialect. Their use has particularly been controlled by the old generation. A study of these expressions evokes, especially, the existence of a great cognitive ability, the easiness in using the language and a competence in communication. Also worth noting is that from the cultural standpoint, proverbs have always conveyed significant cultural values usually reflecting a high degree of wisdom on the part of the user. In this context, the proposed article examines the importance of proverbs in the Algerian discourse and stresses on preserving the cultural patrimony. It is neither only a simple oral tradition nor a part of the folklore of a society; this cross-cultural activity is a spiritual means of education since it incites society to establish the universal morals of human values. A sample of proverbs will be dealt with to show the moral values of the proverbs.

I- Introduction

Proverbs are short sayings which often occur informally in everyday discourse and in oratory to garnish, conceal or hint. They function as images, metaphors and symbols which constitute the wisdom lore of the society. They are deeply rooted in the culture of people. Proverbs could be found in everyday verbal communication. The cultural affinity between the audience and the speaker makes the use of proverbs meaningful in the society. Bryant (1945:4) writes:

Proverbs, since the time of Aristotle, have been depicted as remnant saved from the "wrecks and ruins of ancient philosophy by reason of their conciseness and cleverness".

Proverbs are said to represent people's philosophy constituting the wisdom lore of the society. Abrahams (1968:123) states that "proverbs are often used to flavour conversation or oration ...they have a moral weight of their own and an argument that is virtually self-sufficient", i.e., Proverbs are not only used to flavour conversation but they have a moral to send as well. Hence, they are wrongly thought of being a folkloric manifestation of language. It needs to be taken into account by studies since it constitutes the turning ground between the major disciplines of human and social sciences.

II- Proverbs in Algeria

The cultural diversity and history of Algeria allowed her to create a wise population thanks to its historical figures like Cheikh el Sanoussi and Cheikh el Bachir el Ibrahimi Abderrahmane Ethaalibi... This is what is noticed in the Algerian vestiges and the richness of the dialect whose main characteristic is the use of proverbs. These are deeply rooted in the culture and the language of the elders.

The study of the Algerian proverbs may help us deal with an important cultural phenomenon seeking to understand and highlight the beauty, treasures and the cognitive skill of the elders. These latter, had a singular and specific mode of communication, which leaves the floor to the implicit and also gives the hearer something to crow about. In other words, it implies a certain cultural affinity between the interlocutors, or at least to trust and believe in the intelligence of the interlocutors and the ability they have to understand each other; which make the proverbial utterance meaningful to the hearer in the society. The proverbs' users assumed, in some cases, the risk of incomprehension.

The elders used proverbs as a spontaneous technique in their discourse which may explain their customary use. Proverbs served as an ethical model, of great antiquity, they originate from the observation of natural phenomena, and human relations with a condensed of moral to help the man in his daily life.

In this context, we propose to proceed to a thematic classification of the proverbs in the Algerian speech community. This latter may treat different aspects of life which manage, to a large extent, people's way of thinking. They also reflect a typology of the pragmatic reasoning. This view allows us to depict the following themes:

The wedding:

The wedding in Tlemcen has to obey to some specific norms. For this reason the elders did not neglect to leave a piece of advice on the subject, here is a semantic study of some proverbs taken as an example:

زواج لبده يفتاش له عام

'Successful marriage is one year search'

The concept of 'عام' does not necessarily imply one year of research to find the perfect partner, but it means that to make the good choice, one has to take the time needed to do it.

In the same line of thought, we have:

لعروسة فوء الكرسي ما تعرفها فاين ترسي

'ready made bride is not a guarantee'

كل شي بالمرغوب و الزواج بالمكتوب

'making is willing, marriage is destiny'

In these two aforementioned proverbs, we notice the influence of religious beliefs on the wedding: the destiny → المكتوب

The first proverb insists on the fact that we can arrive to the D-day and the wedding may not take place because the bride لعروسة was not the destiny. The second one evokes the same idea meaning that whatever are the circumstances the wedding will not take place because it was not their destiny. Till the last moment nothing is sure, things must not be taken for accomplished till it happens.

Other proverbs insist on the importance of the family before a person implies herself in an important project like the wedding:

ولد الجدود يكبر و يجود

'greater is he who raises in prosperity'

If we translate this proverb, we will lose its beautiful rhythm. The words' choice attracts the interlocutor's intention and show clearly the elders' ability to manipulate the language. The moral behind this proverb is to choose the family before choosing the person, because whatever is the behaviour of a person, the son of "a good family" always succeeds to follow the right path, and behave decently. This shows that wedding in Algeria is a very serious subject matter to which the elders attached much importance mainly on the links that unify the two families that are going to be united in the future.

The dialectal study of the aforementioned proverbs allows us to make many observations concerning the nature and the phonology of the lexicon used.

In the 1st and 3rd proverb,

زواج لبده يفتاش له عام

كل شي بالمرغوب و الزواج بالمكتوب

The use of the word 'الزواج' 'wedding', in two different ways compared to its origin in the standard Arabic: الزواج and زواج.

Germination 'الشدة', that shows the long consonants in standard Arabic, is put on /z/ and this despite the absence of vowels i.e. 'التسكين'.

However, the /al/ ال that is used in Arabic to define nouns appears in one of the proverbs for the needs of the morphological structure of the word. Moreover, we find also another category where the root of the word changes completely like:

<i>Dialectal Arabic</i>	<i>Standard Arabic</i>	<i>Translation</i>
لبده يفتاش فاين	ابد فتش اين	Eternity To look for Where

As far as the change of phonemes is concerned, it is important to mention the conversion /q/ ق into the glottal stop /ʔ/ called الهمزة in Arabic that constitute the linguistic variable in Tlemcen, an Algerian town:

<i>Dialectal Arabic</i>	<i>Standard Arabic</i>	<i>Translation</i>
فوء	فوق	On

Also in: ولد الجدود يكبر و يجود , we notice that all the words begin with التسكين, in other words, the absence of vowels, even if the structure of words is near the ones that exist in the Arabic language as it is clearly shown in the following table:

<i>Dialectal Arabic</i>	<i>Standard Arabic</i>	<i>Translation</i>
ولذ	ولذ	The son
الجدود	الجدود	Ancestors
يكبر	يكبر	Grow up
يجود	يجود	Becomes serious

In phonological terms, we can signal linguistic variability from the affricate sound [[dʒ] to the fricative sound [ʒ] as a in the words يجود - الجدود from one region to the other in Algeria.

2- Invitations and Visits to Relatives:

Proverbs have also left indications concerning the norms of the family visits. In this context, the proverbs are multiple, here are some examples:

مَرْحَبًا مِنْ زَارٍ وَ 'swift guest is best'
 خَفِّفْ كَثِيرَ لَأْدَامٍ يَمْتَلِ لَوْ كَانَ تُكُونُ فَوْجُهُ مَرَايَهُ وَ فَأَفَاتُ عَنَايَهُ
 'heavy guest is distaste'
 طَيَّافَتِ الْمَوْنِ ثَلَاثَ أَيَّامٍ 'three days invitation span is good belief'

These proverbs have as a theme the visits to relatives that must be brief and not too frequent. This social norm helps to set up a certain respect between friends and even members of the same family. In other ways, the elders advise us to never go or call on somebody without being invited as explained in the following proverbs:

يَا الْمَاشِي بَلَا عَرِطَ الرَّيِّكَ تُقْعِدُ عَلَى حَالٍ رَطٍ
 'no visit without invitation' العَرِطُ سَنَّهُ وَ الْحَادِقُ مَا يَدْنُهُ

The moral is then, to think 'before going to somebody's home, because even if sometimes, you are verbally invited it is simply a formality, we are not always welcome.

The dialectal study of these proverbs allows us also to notice and highlight the change in lexis structure in relation to its origin in the standard Arabic. The characteristic mentioned before, appeared in the terms used in these proverbs:

Dialectal Arabic	Standard Arabic	Translation
مَرْحَبًا	مَرْحَبًا	Welcome
كَثِيرَ	كَثِيرَ	A lot
لَأْدَامٍ	الْقُدُومِ	come
مَرَايَهُ	مِرْآةٍ	Mirror
عَرِطَ	عَرَضَ	To invite
طَيَّافَتِ	ضِيَّافَةٍ	Hospitality
ثَلَاثَ	ثَلَاثَةَ	Three
الْحَادِقِ	الْحَادِقِ	Wise
تُقْعِدُ	تَقْعِدُ	To sit

However, for the change in the phonological structure of words, we can distinguish several points:

There is first, the absence of vowels in the majority of the terms used as it is clearly shown in the above table that the majority of the words begin with التَّسْكِينِ .

In other respects, in the words كَثِيرَ and ثَلَاثَ, the letter ث (a dental fricative consonant [θ]) that has been replaced by the letter ت. This phenomenon comes again in the words such as: ثَمَانِيَةٌ instead of ثَمَانِيَةٌ (number 8), where we notice the transformation from a fricative to an affricate consonant transcribed as follows: [ts]; the glottal stop ʾ [[ʔ] the regional linguistic variable (Tlemcen) is found in the

expression فوء and لأدام where we also notice the simplification of the /al/ ال by omitting the /a/ to facilitate the language use.

Finally, we have to speak about the letter /t/ ط that replaces /d/ ض in the word عرط and طيافت. This transformation occurs frequently in some Algerian regions, as in: ظهر instead of ظهر (the back) and امخض instead of امخض (shake).

3-Money Management:

Money constitutes an important element to manage and control the relationships in a society. In this respect, the language tradition of the proverb of Tlemcen has left some indications concerning the topic:

طب طب يا الفاهم ما يقزذ بين لحباب غيل النساء و الدراهم
صولد فالكف ولا عشر فالتلف

'Knock o you intelligent man, what divides the friends is women and money'

'A bird in the hand is worth two in the birth'

The two proverbs insist the adoption of a clear attitude when handling with money. The moral behind the first proverb is then, to think about the impact that money may have, because it may throw away the biggest friendship and family's links.

The second, spread the idea that, it is better to have not much money in hand that to seek for a huge and important amount but the source is unknown. However, in another respect we have:

المال يعمل الطريء فالبحر 'money paves way in sea'
اللي ما عند فلوس كلام مسوس و جماعت خساره بين 'no money no word no friend'
الناس

قرع و بفلوس ار داك الراس نبوس 'wealthy bold is better than big head'

These three proverbs share the same idea, that is, they show the important role and status that a rich man may have in a society and to insist on the fact that in the world we are living, the more a person is wealthy, the more it has a social value. These latter, were mainly used to aim at the social awakening against those who sometimes unconsciously applied the principle described before. For this reason, we find another kind of proverbs such as:

يمشي مال الجداين و تبا صنعت اليداين 'handcraft is the real wealth'

The dialectal study of the proverbs mentioned above allows us to make the following remarks:

There is the use of a variety of words that refer to money, like: صولد الدراهم. The words الدراهم and مال originate from the standard Arabic, they differ only in the use of vowels mainly in the first word:

Dialectal Arabic	Standard Arabic	Translation
الدراهم	الدراهم	Money
المال	المال	Money or wealth

As for the word صولد, it comes from the name of an ancient currency. The term is still used in the Algerian dialect. The word has also a plural form which is صوالده

The word فلوس, that originates from the Moroccan dialect, deserves to be analysed because it represents an important element in the development of the oral tradition in some Algerian regions. it reflects the concept of the transfer of culture

because of the geographical boundaries. To illustrate this idea, we can mention the following proverb:

دمن السير يسير ترطاب الخرازه الأماح يجلب الطير من فاس
حتى لتازه
'money makes miracles'

Everything can be done with money as the seeds that attracts the birds from Fez to Tezza (Fez and Tezza are two Moroccan towns). The word money, here, implies the impact of corruption.

4- Family and Social Relations:

Apart from the wedding, the theme of family relations is found in many other proverbs having as an aim to reinforce and maintain the family links as in:

عجب العجايب و العداوه بين الحبايب
يا عدوه خاه مس تراه
'relatives in misunderstanding is disgusting'
'never be the enemy of your brother'

خوك خوك لا يغرك صاحبك

'never a friend is an allied than your brother'

The analysis at the semantic and pragmatic levels of our dialectal study draws nearer in these proverbs, as the terms used are not far from their literal meaning. Besides, as it has already been mentioned before, the three expressions reinforce the idea that the family relations must be strong whatever the situation is. They infer a warning on a potential misunderstanding between the members of the same family.

The concept of family is mentioned through these terms: خاك خوك لحبايب

<i>Dialectal Arabic</i>	<i>Standard Arabic</i>	<i>Translation</i>
لحبايب	الأحباب	Family members /relatives
خاك	أخاك	Your brother
خوك	أخوك	Your brother
لعجايب	العجائب	Strangeness

It implies, then, that the family disagreements are not welcome, neither at the level of the family members or at the level of the family circle.

In addition, the phonological and lexical study allows us to distinguish the important points that become fluent in the dialect. First, we have the term لحبايب and لعجايب where the glottal stop originally found in standard Arabic is omitted, and this is used to facilitate the use of these terms in the communication and help to create a rhythm required in the production of the proverbs.

The second point that deserves to make a pause on is the use of the two forms of the word: brother: خاك and خوك. The first term is not frequently used in the dialect of some urban areas. The use of و in the first word helps us to speculate that the proverb is from a 'Bedouin' origin, and has been adopted in the urban oral production for the moral that refers to family principles.

As it is a custom, the group of families forms the society. So, it has to be sane in order to keep the families strength. In this context, we can mention the following proverbs:

'I can know you well when I know who you know'

كل فرد يحرت مع أرين
لكان تخالط راسك مع النخاله
ينأبوك الجدآذ

'one needs to have good relations in society' ما الفول الشعير و لامح و
يتخرخش

The moral behind these proverbs is then, to always mingle with well educated persons from a good family in order to keep a perfect behaviour and an exemplary social status.

For the phonological study, the characteristics mentioned in the words used above are found in these expressions as well, like the use of ت instead of ث in the word يحرت; the use of the glottal stop أ instead of ق in the word أرين. The word غيل, from its origin in standard Arabic غير we notice the change from the consonant ر to ل and the change in vowels position to simplify the pronunciation of the word. At last, the word جداد has kept the same letters as its origin in standard Arabic, there only a change in the position of the two first letters.

The characteristics mentioned above are summarized in the following table:

<i>Dialectal Arabic</i>	<i>Standard Arabic</i>	<i>Translation</i>
يحرت	يحرث	Plough
أرين	قرينه	Fellow creature
الجداد	الدجاج	Chicken
غيل	غير	Except

5- The Theme of Religion:

Islam has an important impact on the social norms in the Algerian society. Instructions transmitted by the great figures of Islam like the Cheikh El Bachir El Ibrahimi leave *their print* in the society.

In order to convey this knowledge to future generations, the discourse masters have also left some recommendations in this domain:

كول و بآ و خلّ للزمان بآش ثلى 'living satisfying when storing'

This proverb warns against the waste. This principle is taken from the holy Coran, for, we find this warning in: سورة الإسراء verse n° 27:

"إن المبذرين كانوا إخوان الشياطين و كان الشيطان لربه كفورا"

Meaning, the squanders are the brother of the devil because they are tempted by the devil to waste their wealth unnecessarily, and being ungrateful vis-à-vis God's kindness. In this way, the wise men push the members of the society to stick to the religious principles and God's adoration through proverbs like:

الله ينجينا من ألب اللا يخشع و من عين اللا تدمع و من علم اللا ينفع

God's adoration is found in a considerable number of verses in the Holy Coran, like in: سورة الأحقاف EL AHQAF - Verse 5:

ومن أضلوا ممن يدعوا من دون الله من لا يستجيب له إلى يوم القيامة و هم عن دعائهم غافلون

The elders warn against a futuristic situation, that we are may be living it nowadays, where to have faith in god becomes very rare. To push people to adore god leads to the fear of God's anger, and consequently, a heart full of kindness seeking at the well being of others.

The well being of others begins by being kind with oneself; in this context we have:

اللهم محض ولا مزبلح

In this same context, we have the same proverb in standard Arabic:

لوقاية أفضل من العلاج

The existence of many versions of this proverb does not exclude it from its religious context, because the theme of prevention exist in the holy Coran, like in 'و لا تلقوا بأنفسكم إلى التهلكة': (195) - سورة البقرة

Through all what has been mentioned before concerning this theme, we have noticed a great capacity of the elders' reflection and a great maturity concerning the principles of daily life on religious bases.

The phonological study of the terms used in these proverbs confirms what has been aforementioned like the use of the glottal stop in ثلثي and ثلثي, also in the first proverb the use of consonant lengthening attract the attention giving the impression to insist on the importance of the acts mentioned.

6- Popular Beliefs:

Popular beliefs are multiple, like the frequent use of certain creatures whether in the proverbs or other language manifestations, such as certain idiomatic expressions, infantile songs and stories. Concerning our theme we have selected the following expressions:

لعاب الغولي مع ولادها

بوشأشاء جا ييوس ولد عماه

These two proverbs are used to warn against the unrefined game of parents with their children, that when wanting to entertain them, may harm them without doing it on purpose. The moral would be then to be and play softly with children who in spite their hyperactivity they remain very fragile.

The term غول or غولي are frequently used to express a brutal state of mind, or human anger; as a form of exaggeration, we say about a person who is very angry, or adopt a nasty behavior, that s/he comes like an *org /ogress*. جات كي or جا كي الغول.

Apart from what has already been mentioned like the loss of vowels and the glottal stop in بوشأشاء we have noticed in these proverbs the omission of the glottal stop in certain words in comparison to their origin in standard Arabic, and the root's change of the noun لعاب:

<i>Dialectal Arabic</i>	<i>Standard Arabic</i>	<i>Translation</i>
لعاب	لعب	The game
ولادها	أولادها	Her children
جا	جاء	Has come

The word جا does not imply in this context the word جاء (has come), but it has the meaning of 'want to'

For our ancestors, the proverb remains the ideal means to express ideas. It contains a message that one has to decipher giving the impression that it achieved its aim and then, fly away. It is this effort of decoding that is particularly looked for by the users of proverbs because, by making the effort to interpret the message transmitted, the interlocutor took by the same occasion the time to think about the acts.

By interpreting these proverbs, we have found a wise characteristic that remains valid for every time. They are like 'a language of thought' of the elders

linking their preoccupations to the experience and create coherence between the social values. What has to be revealed as well is not only the relevance of the proverbs but also the fact that this relevance is the major characteristic, resulting from generations of observation and experimentation that have to be transmitted to the new generation.

The aforementioned proverbs and many others are parts of the oral tradition of our ancestors not mainly used nowadays. This oral tradition has to be considered as a patrimony and also a way to transmit the history and thoughts of a nation. It is not just a small part of the folklore of a society but one of the major forms of education, by the truth they convey. This cultural and spiritual patrimony of an oral transmission, will gain ground to be preserved by recordings or the transcription, even if they are fixed they will lose this power of playing a role in the circumstances of the moment.

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Is SMS Communication an oral or a written language? : A linguistic investigation of the nature of language and the use of code switching in SMS communication among young Algerian users

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Abstract

The present study on young Algerians' texters living in Oran aims at investigating to what extent the language of SMS is indeed a new form of written language by considering the ways in which this language draws upon features of spoken and written language and also questioning the use of code switching and discussing its very nature.

The main results obtained in this study as for the spoken and written-like features of SMS language have shown that texting in Algeria bears far more resemblance to oral language than to its written counterpart and that it is, according to the psycho-structural model, a written version of oral language.

The results found in relation to the study of the nature of code switching in SMS language corroborate with those investigating spoken /written like features of SMS language in the sense that language mixing in SMS communication, according to Yau's (1993) model, is identified as being written forms of oral code switching.

KEY WORDS: *Short Message Service (SMS); Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC); Linguistic Analysis; Spoken Versus Written Language; Oral Versus Written Code Switching.*

**Is SMS Communication an oral or a written language? :
A linguistic investigation of the nature of language in SMS communication
among young Algerian users**

I/ Introduction

Although all of us can speak at least one language, not everyone is able to write. Many would agree that written language is a limited competence because it demands special competences and skills. However, with the explosion use of the Internet and mobile telephone written language in the twenty-first century the picture is reversed: The number of people involved in written communication has skyrocketed.

In fact, the turn from page to screen has given rise to novel linguistic phenomena which have distinguished its users from other significant-groups. Many scholars have expressed concern about language undergirded by technology and were interested in studying the synergy between them.

As a major means of global communication, just like the Internet, SMS communication is having a great impact on language use. It is a boom not only to the English language usage (Baron, 1998, 2001; Herring, 1996, 2001) but potentially to many languages. This study shares much of this interest and aims at examining how this language is seen by its users.

To research the nature of language in text messaging (as being written and/or oral), my work will be mainly based on a model I propose. This model deals with studying the nature of written language in SMS communication at both psychological and structural levels. Basically, the principle behind this model lies in the fact that there is