Gender and Language Variation in the Community of Chlef : The Relevance of the Community of Practice Perspective

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Abstract:

A plethora of gender research have considered the community of practice (cofp) framework as an analytical tool which serves for a penetrating analysis of variation. In this paper, we strive to move towards a dynamic not static analysis and explore the avenue of how gender is constructed through language. The gist of this paper is to scrutinise the construction of meaning by means of linguistic variation which is part of the individual's participation in the different networks. We direct a limelight on the community of Chelifian Arabic and Berber speakers. Variation can be considered, de facto, as part of the speaker's active participation and his/her construction of the social world and himself or herself in that world.

Keywords: Arabic - Berber - Chlef - gender - linguistic variation - lexical - phonology.

التباين بين الجنسين واللغة في مجتمع الشلف: صلة منظور مجتمع الممارسة

الملخّص

نظرت مجموعة كبيرة من الأبحاث حول النوع الاجتماعي في مجتمع إطار الممارسة أداة تحليلية تعمل على تحليل التباين في التنوع اللغوي. في هذه الدراسة، نسعى جاهدين للتحرك نحو تحليل ديناميكي غير ثابت، واستكشاف السبيل لكيفية بناء الجنس من خلال اللغة.

جوهر هذه الورقة هو تدقيق بناء المعنى عن طريق التباين اللغوي الذي هو جزء من مشاركة الفرد في الشبكات المختلفة. وُجهت الأضواء على مجتمع الشلف (الناطقين بالعربية والقبائلية)، ويمكن اعتبار التباين بحكم الواقع جزءا من المشاركة الفعالة للمتحدث، وبنائه للعالم الاجتماعي نفسه أو نفسه في هذا العالم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العربية - القبائلية - المعجمية - الشلف - التباين بين الجنسين - علم الأصوات.

1. Introduction :

The analytical framework of the examination draws on Eckert and Mc Connell-Ginet's (1992) paradigm of "communities of practice". Gender is constructed through the social practices that people display in the miscellaneous communities in which they are members. Gender is, furthermore, what individuals do, not what they have (Wardaugh 2009). It is a set of social practices and behaviours emanated from certain ideas about what a particular culture at a particular moment in time reads as "masculine" or "feminine". Thanks to the concept of "community of factice", we gain the opportunity to canvass the individual's co-construction of the identity from the calibration of day-to-day social membership and activity of individuals. Along this line of thought, Wenger (1998) defines identity as spatio-temporal, which means that identity is constantly being constructed in a social context and through time.

1.1 Identity and Communities of Practice

For a start, let us point out that identity merely means how individuals come to construct themselves, of course with respect to those surrounding communities. Gender researchers have recognized, across the social sciences, that gender cannot be assessed as fixed or stable category because this would be generalizing the myriad experiences of women and men. In this line of thought, individuals contribute in various communities of practice and those communities are nested in a host of ways with other communities. Inasmuch as these processes of participation and interaction are continuously changing, members of the community of practice constantly reshape any sort of individual's identity, including gender identity. Wardaugh (2009) claims that individual identity is created in and through several interactions with others in different contexts. By this token, Ivanic (1998:10) notes that "identity" is a useful term, since *"it is the everyday word for people's sense of who they are".* Ivanič (1998) demonstrates that an individual's multiple identities are unlikely to be equally essential at any particular moment in time; one or more may spear-head at several and different times. Above all, Ivanič (1998) suggests that it would be beneficial to use the plural form of the word "identity" rather than its singular form. The plural form of identity allows for a tremendous breadth of coverage of the plurality and multiplicity of identities. She stretches the idea by asserting that: *The plural word 'identities' is sometimes preferable because it captures the idea of people identifying simultaneously with a variety of social groups. On or more of these identities may be foregrounded at different times; they are*

sometimes contradictory, sometimes interrelated: people's diverse identities constitute the richness of their sense of self. Identity is a result of affiliation to particular beliefs and possibilities, which are available to them in their social context. (Ivanič 1998: 11-12).

By this token, individual identity is not built in a vacuum; it is co-constructed with a group of identities. In tune with recent gender studies, the emphasis shifted from the fixed and ready-made gender identity to a more flexible perspective of constructing different forms of masculinities and femininities. Instead of looking at how selections of identities change in a number of different circumstances, linguists began to concentrate on figuring out the fluidity of gender identity. Gender identity is no longer tackled as fixed or unidimensional, but rather as a vital process, incarnated and reincarnated as the situation changes, time mutates, and the relationships are negotiated in the social practices of the community of practice.

2. The Relevance of the Community Practice Framework to Gender Studies

It is worth reminding that the CofP is seen by Lave and Wenger (1991) as *"an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavour, ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations- in short, practices-in the course of this mutual endeavour"*(Lave and Wenger 1991:464).

The definition highlights the critical role that practices play in constructing group membership and belonging without glossing over social and linguistic differences. The community of practices framework places language in the column of the different practices performed by individuals. A host of traditional researchers on gender and language studies (Lakoff 1975, for instance) postulated that this arena of research should imperatively direct the limelight on women and how they deviate, or how they are perceived as turning aside from what is called "the norm".

Eckert and Mc Connell Ginet (1992), however, argue that researchers must also examine the norm for the sake of uncovering how it becomes the norm and to challenge its status as a norm. In a community of practice, language is seen as crucial in reliance with other practices. In accordance with this conceptualization, individuals can participate in multiple communities of practice and individual identity is the eventual repercussion of the multiplicity of this participation. Gender construction and development, to *précis* the point once more, does not stop in childhood or adolescence; gender is constantly reshaping as we learn to act like journalists, students in the laboratory, teachers in seminars, and as we

move in the market place. As another community which leagues persons together, the family via which individuals are taught how to cope with the constant status changes of the family. We learn how to be wives and husbands, mothers and fathers, aunts and uncles, sisters and brothers, grandmothers and grand fathers. (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992). Besides, the age plays a decisive role in our continuous knowledge of novel manners of being men or women. The community of practice perspective permits linguists to look over how males and females learn how to look and act in particular ways and to heed the way they participate in specific communities and relationships. So, the gist of the CofP perspective is to cast light on the activities and practices, in which members of the community perform practices striving to define themselves linguistically as members of the squad they belong to.

Eckert and Mc Connell-Ginet (1992) present the community of practice perspective as a theoretical framework to illuminate how women and men construct new and variable identities through breaking down the monotonous expectations of what women and men should be. They consider the CofP as a heuristic model which better helps capture the may femininity and masculinity are delineated. In a word, the community of practice perspective can be considered as feasible in analyzing the fluidity and the malleable perception of gender within the community.

3. Community of Practice and Gender Linguistic Variation

Interestingly enough, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) introduce the concept of communities of practice attempting to bridge some gaps left by the speech community perspective. They tried to use the CofP, *in lieu of*, speech communities (Gumperz 1968) to analyze social identity as fixed and gender as a homogeneous category. By this token, the community of practice is explained as a combination of people who come together around a specific mutual engagement or enterprise. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) describe the CofP framework as a constructionist approach to the interlocking network between language and identity.

Albeit the tendency towards the accomplishment of gender identity through the activities in communities of practice, research based on the concept tends to slip into conceptualizing identity according to the essentialist view. Notwithstanding the malleable and the dynamic nature of identity, its identification may involve the conflation of the essentialist with the constructionist perspectives.

In her study of a nerd identity, Bucholtz (1999) finds that the students identification as nerds has to infiltrate a process of negotiating their identity via a complex and dynamic set of activities and practices. In an attempt to negotiate the nerd identity, those students endeavour to innovate their practices so as to be the *ne plus ultra* of the other students. They try to distinguish themselves from other students by creating specific practices as a *sui-generis* of their identity adopting formal language and inserting complex and sophisticated vocabulary and expressions. It was clear, therefore, that the identification as a nerd was shaped within and in response to other identity practices. (Weatherall 2002). In this vein, Bucholtz (1999) intends to sustain the assumption that identity is constructed prior to language.

Again, the CofP notion of identities is not predetermined by what the expectations of the speech community call for; it is neither fixed nor unified. People may rather choose to engage in the construction of identities through practices performed across times and place. Along this line of thought, Eckert's (1989) examination of the study of identity practices of students in an American high school would be an illustrative example of the research conducted on linguistic variation and identity drawing on a community of practice framework. Eckert (1989) suggests that the social life of the students, those who she investigated, was defined by two salient social identity categories, viz. "Jocks" and "burnouts". "jocks" were effectively an adolescent version of the corporate middle class, where students' visibility was obtained through their commitment and success in school-related activities.

The term "Jock" originated in sports, which are core elements to the high school culture; this term is a classic North American stereotype of male athlete. By way of contrast, "burnouts" were likely to involve norms more associated with working-class ideals (Eckert 2000). "Burnouts" and "Jocks" as communities of practice were defined by engagement and participation is certain activities, such as drug use for burnouts and the contribution in school sports for jocks. They do so through the use of a specific unprecedented Detroit accent for burnouts and a more standard Midwestern accent for jocks. As they label themselves "Jocks" and "Burnouts" gender and (class-based) Burnout/jock identities interacted in order to leave room for burnout girls to display novel pronunciations from Detroit that discriminated them from burnout boys and from jocks girls as well. Albeit "Burnout girls" identified with burnout boys more than with jock girls, burnout girls engage

separately in practices from burnout boys. Said differently, these students seem as innovating multiple identities simultaneously, as burnout or jock, girl or boy.

As most sociolinguists who have taken up the concept of the community of practice, Eckert (2000) mainly bases her explanation of communities of practice through her rife ethnography of jocks and burnouts as adolescent style-groups at Belten High in the Detroit suburbs. She painstakingly explains how meaning is built through the interlocking network of relations. She elaborates as follows:

Meaning is made as people jointly construct relations through the development of a mutual view of, and in relation to the communities and people around them. This meaning-making takes place in myriad contacts and associations both with and beyond dense networks. To capture the process of meaning-making, we need to focus on the level of social organization at which individual and group identities are being constructed, and which we can observe the emergence of symbolic processes that tie individuals to groups, and groups to the social context in which they gain meaning. (Eckert 2000: 34-35).

Accordingly, Eckert (2000) examines the way jocks and burnouts generate and live-out specific styles-styles of dress, activity and speech- to define themselves as separate from other groups. Aligning with this idea, individuals are capable to engender novel symbolic features into their proper interpretations of group-style. In support of this, Eckert (2000: 43) maintains that "*both individual and group identities are in continual construction, continual change, continual refinement*".

Concerning the study of language variation, the "practice" perspective sustains the idea of structure as a potential attainment of language and discourse. It focuses on the construction of social meaning in a given context:

Variation does not simply reflect a ready-made social meaning; it is part of the means by which that meaning emerges. A study of social meaning in variation, then, cannot view speakers as incidental users of a linguistic system but must view them as agents in the continual construction and reproduction of that system. (Eckert 2000: 43).

Again, Eckert (2000) suggests, accordingly, that the phonological variation of language can serve in the distinctiveness of the jock and burnout social groups besides their variant engagement and commitment to school activities.

Eckert (2000) directs a spotlight on how some discursive moments are extremely salient loci for highly styled socio-phonetic features. She finds out frequent communicative

routines such as dude, cool, right, excellent and damn. (Eckert 2000: 218). By this token, she elucidates how socio-phonetically variants infiltrate the utterances they reveal by adding social meaning to those linguistic articulations. By way of illustration, the word "right" said with a very high nucleus of [ai], excellent with backed [**ɛ**], damn with raised [**æ**] may symbolize certain social meaning which differentiates them from the rest of the groups. The identities of those students were conveyed by the creative use of those phonological variants in their accents. Eckert (1996) interprets this fact of variation (the girl's use of [ai]) as a stigma of their pride of displaying particular styles that put them aside from the other jocks, albeit she is a jock. (Abdelhay, 2008)

As a theoretical framework, the community of practice embraces the idea that language can be considered as one of the various practices individuals put forth to take part in their communities of practice as means of constructing gender as something we do, create, manufacture, perform and thrive.

More interestingly, it should be noted that the community of practice subtle ideas about how women and men engage in a constant creation of novel and, sometimes, unprecedented linguistic styles, are crucial in the study of gender and language. Put another way, this new perspective provides the opportunity for a host of gender researchers to discern the vast array of linguistic choices men and women tend to perform as they contrive to construct miscellaneous gender identities drawing on a number of factors such as age, race, religion, history, etc. That is, the CofP model pulls us away from looking at gender differences as a fixed and binary opposition. This framework does not reject the existence of some linguistic differences between women and men, but it has been trying to dig out facts proving how gender differences are significant in understanding the relation between gender language and society, not as a stable and permanent roles that makes what is known as gender, but as a malleable and temporal social practices from moment to moment. Along this line of thought, gender implements the social practices is order to make them apt for the sudden and continuous situations that they spring each day and in every locus. We do think that the CofP perspective allows for looking at how social actors update their social identities corresponding to a great number of social and psychological factors.

4. Gender Differences in Communities of Practice

There is no gainsay, the study of gender differences plays *per se* a critical role in exploring prominent points in the area of language and gender. It seems beneficial to examine linguistic behaviours as vital and continuous manipulations of new and subtle modes following the social contexts that are constantly varying and emerging through time. Women and men tend to mutate, for instance, particular modes of speaking as they move from the family to another community of practice such as the university, either as a teaching or learning communities. Above all, the examination we attempt to do is not restricted on how women and men construct their gendered identities in their communities of practice. Male and female speakers are, undoubtedly, exposed to some linguistic differences, but these differences cannot be depicted as a chasm which necessarily breaks their communication. Notwithstanding, there is a propagation of innovation among women and men in order to define themselves and to render new linguistic manners according to the needs of the current ambivalent community.

-Participants

The informants in this survey are from different communities of practice. We intend to work on various contexts since the gist of this research paper is not to focus totally attention on the analysis of linguistic behaviours in a particular community. That is, study how women and men make various linguistic choices so as to acculturate to new social environments every single day. This is why our informants vary from teachers of the department of biology and the students and some other Chelifian people working as lawyers, doctors and housewives. Most importantly, both of the two communities are a mixture of 75 Arab speakers and 45 Berber ones living in Chelf.

-The method

Besides the attention we directed towards a spate of words uttered by male and female speakers, we used straightforward "how-do-you-say" procedure. We attempted to ask all the respondents questions concerning their opportunity to continuously create and change specific linguistic modes as they are nested in various communities of practice inasmuch as they are engaging in particular social practices. We asked, then, why they adopted the linguistic forms that they reveal at the university and when they are at home with their relatives.

As a matter of fact, the participant's feedback seemed to be spontaneous and honest as they boldly render their tendency to construct a bunch of gender identities in the course of a day. Female speakers affirm, for instance, that they are really fervent to align to more sophisticated and embellished styles of speaking.

5. Phonological Variation in Communities of Practice

The community of practice perspective gives priority to the local and practical on the assumptions that these must put their feet on the variability of gendered practices and perspectives. The prominent sphere of language variation has been buttressed by the empirical studies of Labov (1972) and Trudgill (1972). Overall, Trudgill (1972) claims that women tend to concentrate on adopting a punctilious mode of speaking, choose prestigious patterns and reveal their reluctance to use stigmatized speech forms. In a piece of work which has now become renowned, he correlates "*phonetic and phonological variables with social class, age, and stylistic context"* (1972: 180). He, nevertheless, had a keen interest in taking into consideration biological sex as a sociolinguistic variable, following in that Labov (1972).

Trudgill (1972) finds, concerning the different pronunciations of words ending in [ing**]**, that women had the tendency to use prestige forms more than men and that they strive to over-report their utterances.That is to say, when asked about their manners of pronunciation, said they produced more "prestigious" utterances than they actually did. Above all, Norwich inhabitants pronounce the (ing) as in Standard English, and at other times they use [n] instead of [**ŋ]** when say, for instance, walking', talking', singing'. By this token, the first pronunciation with [**Iŋ]** was considered as that of middle class workers those who used forms closer to Received Pronunciation (RP). In one word, this accent is to be delineated as more formal and more prestigious than that of working class speakers. The latter was, in Trudgill's sample, more associated with an accent which can be neither counted as formal nor as prestigious.

This gender-based phonological variation is explained by Trudgill (1972) via suggesting that women are keenly aware of the social status and the paramount importance of the correlation between linguistic variation and language usage. By way of explanation, women are likely to mitigate their underprivileged social echelons via selecting the more prestigious language forms and endeavour to continuously learn adopting manners to

improve and boost their tendency to sustain sophisticated linguistic behaviours. Nevertheless, they can be considered as social components that are in the lead of language change, especially when they are in charge of a social position associated with higher local prestige. (Labov 1994). We cannot, however, claim that there exists a chasm between male and female conversational styles in Chlef Spoken Arabic (CSA) since no such examination has been undertaken up to the moment.

Now, let us touch the tip of an iceberg and state that it would be blatant to notice some phonological variables that are used, principally, by Chelifian female speakers as more elegant, *soigné* and refined. For a start, it would be worth mentioning to note that there are some phonological differences between males' and females' utterances.

The most obvious differences between the two sexes are in the realization of [g] by most male speakers and the adherence to realize the phoneme /q/ as [q] by most females. The following table illustrates some real-life examples about the phonological distribution between [g]and [q] as determined by the sex of the speaker.

Female pronunciation	Male pronunciation	English translation
nqqas	nggas	I cut
Wqaf	wggaf	He stood up
qarəb	garrab	He approached
θqi:l	θgi:l	heavy
marqa	marga/səgja	broth
tæqa	ṭa:ga	window
tbaq	ṭbag	Bread basket
tqadəm	tgəddəm	He progressed/advanced
rqi:qa	rgi:ga	Slim (for a woman)
qæbəl	gæbəl	He faced

Table1: The realization of the phonemes /q/ and /g/ by females and males in CSA.

More interestingly, the above examples do not only reveal the variant realizations of the phoneme /q/ depending on the gender; it shows different pronunciations of the plain /t/ and the emphatic /ṭ / in some words.

Indeed, some Chelifian females exhibit greater tendency to reverse the realization of the emphatic /ṭ/ by the use of the plain /t/ to construct feminine identities that do cope with

particular loci and specific moments. Many Chelifian female speakers advisably favour the articulation of the consonant /t/. The central objective of this survey is the attempt to canvass whether male/female speakers in Chlef sustain the set of phonetic articulations expected by the speech community or they strive to exploit the emphatic/non-emphatic counterparts so as to construct a plurality of gender identities in terms of masculinities and femininities.

According to Sibawayhi's taxonomy, the emphatic sounds are dubbed as "al huru: f al mutbaqa" or "al muntabiqah" as an opposed version of the remaining Arabic consonants i.e., al "huru:f al munfatiħa" (Bouhadiba 1988: 26). A modern equivalent for this dichotomy would be: Emphatic Vs. plain consonants. Lehn (1963) advocates that what is known as emphasis in phonology as "Itbaq" would refer to the "*spreading and rising of the tongue*". Furthermore, Sibawayhi elucidates that "Al-Itba: q is "*the raising of the tongue towards the upper palate*". (Quoted in Bouhadiba, 1988: 26).

Overall, we have noticed that females of CSA choose between emphatic/non-emphatic sounds not as deriving from the gender-specific subcultures that are constructed in childhood; yet they engage in a malleable process whereby they adopt suitable emphatic /non emphatic cognates according to their communities of practice. In this sense, female speakers in CSA seem as not socially instructed to display non-emphatic pronunciation. Put another way, they may receive from their early years of childhood expressions like "be pretty", "don't be tough", "speak nicely" and "behave in a ladylike manner", but there is no evidence that they are taught to say [tæqa] (window) instead of [ṭa:ga].

As from real-life examples, female speakers (aged between 20 and 36) are keenly aware about the normal use of [tæqa] [nqas] [rqi:qa] in their homes, and they feel, at the same time, the necessity to refine their pronunciation when they are at the university with their professors and their classmates. Our female respondents told us that their speech styles (the pronunciation in particular) play a pivotal role in forming a vast array of femininities in different communities of practice by manipulating their utterances. Unsurprisingly, female teachers at the Department of Biology let us discern that their engagement in their teaching practice stipulates an alternative use of emphatic/non emphatic cognates as a distinctive social practice. So, a host of social variables are associated with the variation in emphasis in speech production, embracing level of education, social class, and the difference between a "traditional" and a "modern" lifestyle.

As a matter of fact, what we have inferred from this succinct analysis is a general consensus from females that the use of emphatic consonants are often perceived by others as "dull", "husky", "thick", or "heavy". In this vein, Harrell (1957) claims that the speakers, those who usually use the full degree of emphasis in their spoken utterances, are likely to interpret non-emphatic pronunciation as affected or effeminate. Whilst, those who tend to employ lesser degree of emphasis may perceive full emphasis either tremendously formal or unrefined and rough.

Needless to say, educated female speakers of Chlef are in the lead concerning the full awareness and care in the variation of emphasis. In this respect, Badawi (1973) writes that the choice of the degree of emphasis is, to a large extent, linked to the speech of educated persons since it reflects the influence of social progress and modern culture upon the well-educated speakers. Although, we share the same view point with Abdelhay (2008) that the emphatic/non emphatic distinctiveness does not necessarily symbolize male privilege or female weakness.

A striking fact about those women who produce the less emphatic /t/ is their purpose to reframe a wide range of identities through the strategic use of plain and non emphatic /t/. That is, less "emphaticization" in females' speech and full degree of emphasis in males's modes of speaking can be considered as a phonetic tool or "mechanism", in the word of Abdelhay (2008), which yields the opportunity to both women and men to become full members of the community and to guarantee their legitimate statuses in their community, of course.

We have observed that men stick to the pronunciation of emphatic [ṭ] in conformity with the conventional stereotypes that call for a particular manner in transforming phonetic clusters in which power and virility are attested. In a similar vein, female speakers pay great attention to lessen emphatic counterparts in response to the need of displaying softness and sweetness in their articulation. In one word, it is believed that the overwhelming majority of women strive to create and adopt more refined and *à la mode* speech styles. Badawi (1973) draws links between the weak production of emphasis and femininity. It is well mirrored in some linguistic styles performed by women in Chlef Spoken Arabic that they are likely to be reluctant to utter words with emphatic [ṭ] in the sense that it is not possible to lessen the emphaticization. By way of explanation, 70% of our female respondents avoid using words such as: [gaṭawæt] (cakes), [ṭwæbəl] (tables) and [ṭɒbsi] (a

plate). In this context, they cannot fine their pronunciation by merely reducing the degree of emphaticization of /t/; they would be interpreted as though they are exaggerating in constructing their femininity.

Instead, they would say "des gateaux", "des tables" and "une assiette", respectively. Let us say that women are likely to continuously select novel and flexible mechanisms to sustain suave speech styles, and in particular the manner of pronunciation. In other words, female speakers who are interested in embellishing their sound articulation, endeavour to switch to another language (French for instance) that enables them to get rid of the emphatic [t].

In addition to females' attempt to the lessening of emphasis, women in Chlef seem to be conscious of the concept of femininity, and they interestingly, feel that there is an extra pressure on them to sound more formal and refined. In Chlef spoken Arabic, female adherence to say [ʔalfræk] (ten dinars) rather than [ɛalfræk]. I personally prefer to use the glottal stop instead of [ɛ], but, of course, we have to record respondents' views about what pressurized them to use the prestigious forms of speech. There is a testimony that because of what the concept of femininity calls for, women tend to indulge in prestige variants to a greater extent than men. Men on the other hand are forced by the concept masculinity not to worry about prestige or standard rules of speech.

Trudgill (1972) highlights that women reveal higher tendency to be status-conscious to their sensitivity to the notion of overt prestige, whilst men are said to favour the concept of covert prestige. In this respect, let us direct the attention to the fact that females' preference of using less emphaticization and more prestigious pronunciation to manifest thin and weak voice does not necessarily signal women's weakness and powerlessness. Similarly, males' thick and sturdy voice symbolizes social order not inherent women feebleness and inherent men powerfulness (Abdelhay 2008). As it has been stated earlier, a host of gender differences in CSA, not to say all, are flexibly constructed in different communities of practice. Put differently, female speakers may not pay great attention to say [tæqa] instead of [ṭa:ga] at home, for instance. Notwithstanding, they, especially young women, do not venture to use emphatic /ṭ/ or the voiced velar plosive /g/ in formal contexts; at the university when participating in a seminar or when directing a formal powwow. You can nevertheless hear the word [qarəb] as uttered by the same woman who took great care not to seem rural and unsophisticated at the morning seminar. It would be note worthy to

reckon that if you are a foreigner and you strive to capture the phonological variation by those women, you have to blow in while she is chatting with her close friends or acquaintances. What we intend to mean is that in response to the ongoing demands of any social interaction, both women and men employ a bunch of phonological styles so as to construct the social meaning (Wenger 1998) stemmed either from masculinity or femininity.

Moreover, females and males in CSA tremendously reveal a conspicuous difference in the realization of the phoneme /r/. Albeit we will devote a whole chapter to the use of code switching as a social practice by women and men in Chlef, it seems worthy to cast some light on females' tendency to use the uvular /ʁ/ (Durant 1993: 268). Whereas women usually pronounce the phoneme /ʁ/, male speakers tend to pronounce it as a rolled alveolar sound: [r]. The following words will illustrate how a woman would pronounce the [r] sound in the French way i.e., a uvular trill, whilst a man would readily adopt the Arabic rolled [r]. So, the words "France", "portable", "laboratoire", "pizzeria" and "la route" are conspicuously pronounced differently by women and men concerning the realization of /r/ sound. Women are closer to the supra-dialectal norm of mainland France where uvular [ʁ] is considered to be the prestige realization. (Durand 1993: 268). Moreover, languages, throughout Europe which have the phoneme/r/, the uvular realization have been steadily gaining ground over the rolled [r] variant (ibid).

Undeniably, females in CSA are likely to benefit from every linguistic (especially phonetic clue) to make themselves perfectly geared to exploit cornucopia of social practices to construct masculine or feminine personae as participating in different communities which may interact in various ways with one another, and these processes of interaction and participation are constantly mutating so as to negotiate gender identities in order to cope with the context of the interaction.

Oddly enough, female speakers in CSA aged between (19-36) tend to shift their pronunciation of some French words from the uvular trill [R] to a sound which is well-nigh like the Arabic back construents /x/. It is possible to say that this new feminine style is roughly pervasive among young educated females. By this token, French words that are frequently used by those female speakers such as: "bonjour", "à tout à l'heure", "au revoir " and "encore" seem to contain a covert sound after the uvular [ʁ]. If one listens to them

frequently, he/she would realize that such words end with CC [ʁx]. It is believed that the French articulation of uvular [ʁ] may roughly resemble the "pharyngeal consonant" of Arabic [ɣ], which can be articulated with a great constriction in the upper part of the pharynx (Bouhadiba 1988: 35). Although those females may seem as if they experience the first moment of suffocation, we can phonetically interpret this by noting that they "*lessen the high pharyngeal constriction*" (Delattre 1971: 135) of /ɣ/ to articulate /x/. The word /bɔ̃nʒuːʁx/ is, from a sociolinguistic stance, a phonetic variation which is purposefully invented to create particular social meanings and construct a number of gender identities.

Generally speaking, what we understand from women's greater affinity to adopt and adapt particular pronunciations such as the uvular [ʁ] of French is because this articulation is associated with French values of education and high prestige.

Concerning Berber speakers living in Chlef, they report that there are no such differences in CSA in the pronunciation of men and women to construct different gender identities in miscellaneous communities of practice. However there is a slight variation in the pronunciation of some words depending on the sex of the speakers; Berber women are likely to either make words feminine or minimize them. A striking fact about this variation lies in women's attempt to remake even masculine words seem as feminine:

The word	male version	female version
(12) My bell	[aɛabuḍ-iw]	[θaɛabuṭ-iw]
(13) My shoes	[asəbaḍ-iw]	[θasəbaṭ-iw]
(14) My mouth	[aqamuːʃ]	[θaqamuːʃθ]

Additionally, there is no rule which prevents women to say /æfus/ (my hand), they nevertheless, choose to say [θafətusθ] as an intention to employ diminutive forms. Obviously, in the first example, males would tend to say [aɛabuḍ-iw], whilst female speakers prefer to say [θaɛabuṭ-iw] as if it belongs to a little boy or a little girl. By analogy to Berber female speakers, we cannot deny that women in CSA are extremely well-known of their prolific use of diminutives, especially adjectives such as [ṣɣiwər] [qliwəl] [ʃbijəb] [rwidʒəlha]. They are diminutive forms of [ṣɣiːr] (small), [qliːl] (slim), [ʃbæb] (beautiful) and [radʒəlha] (her husband). Diminutive adjectives are extremely attested in the speech of women because it is stereotypically believed to connote signals of femininity in the Algerian social cultural context.

Surprisingly, male speakers in CSA are likely to adopt particular diminutive forms, but, of course, not for the same aim as women. In this respect, you should not be flabbergasted if you hear a man who possesses "Toyota Rav 4" saying [hæd lkriri: ṣa] (this small car) about it. It is, *de facto*, used among male speaker's utterances such as [dwi:ra], [ħwinita] which are diminutive forms of [dɑ:r] (house) and [ħænu:t] (a shop). It is imperative, then, to note that male speakers in CSA feel the need to make diminutive forms as part of their speech because they beware of averting /ɛajn El ħasu:d/ (the envious eye). They customarily use the above diminutive forms about things that may tremendously bewitch and attract you. Interestingly, this linguistic style is, fundamentally, apparent at the phonological level; this is why we can consider this as a phonological variation which is present in informal contexts; among the family or neighborhood communities. Accordingly, a male teacher would be reluctant to use such words with his students and foreign females.

6. Lexical and Grammatical Variation in Communities of Practice

It is undeniably true that lexical variation among women and men plays a critical role in exploring the arena of gender and language and their intimate relation to society. This unanimous recognition of the significance of holding a variety of lexicon items has been perceived in, mainly, two different ways. Drawing on the community model, each word uttered denotes a particular meaning that must be gleaned according to the sex of the speaker. That is to say, vocabulary items are likely to demarcate the role of the speaker and its value within society. Thanks to the speech community interpretation of words, social categories are recognized as men, women, manish, womanish, sturdy, and weak; etc. (Abdelhay 2008:58). By adding the suffix "ish", there is a signal of a deviation from what is called "the norm". In Chlef Spoken Arabic, male speakers, especially young ones, tend to spawn a vast glossary of terminology. Women are extremely, according to the speech community model, asked to sustain a chic, smooth and beautiful manner of speaking; including vocabulary. Men are on the other hand expected to display and reveal certain meaning of power, freedom, tough and courage. Yet, the community of practice framework reads, as a constructivist approach, that gendered practices are the construction of men and women as members of a community. (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992). Male speakers in CSA seem to innovate simultaneously a tapestry of codes, and females in Chlef are, surprisingly, not patient to follow the sociolinguistic expectations of the speech community model. They aim, recently, at displaying a variety of gender identities for the sake of

defining themselves responding to all the needs of day-to-day interactions. Four years ago, [gæɛ ʃta kæjən] was an expression peculiar to men which denotes the English adjective "fantastic". This expression is, however, pervasive these days among female speakers. They use it, as a matter of fact, openly and with greater confidence to exploit an unprecedented expression among female speakers. We attempt, accordingly, to note that such an expression is extremely used by females in informal context, not between teachers and students in a formal lecture. By the way, women speakers using those expressions with their male or female friends strive to negotiate and exhibit a supple and open-minded gender identity. This might be suggestive in the sense that the forte of the community of practice perspective lies in its constructive lens. This framework does not belittle the social norms of the speech community, but it directs a spotlight on the great possibility that men and women, as human beings engrossing in their communities of practice, are capable of manipulating a variety of identities through the performance of feasible speech styles in their communities.

Undoubtedly, female speakers in CSA would be sanctioned and severely judged as deviant and impolite if they are exposed to blaspheme and utter profanities, especially publically. Tough and harsh language is, indeed, permissible to men. So women are asked to cull the linguistic features which go with their religious and cultural demands.

The following table will represent some general male /female linguistic items:

The word	Male (CSA)	Female (CSA)
She seeks for news	[təstaxbar]	[tnəsnəs] [tqarɛədʒ]
She gazes at	[tbərgag]	[tqæt] [tgæbər]
Harry up	[ṭalgi:na] [æktivi]	[əɣaṣbi] [xəfi]
I like	[nəbɣi]	[nħab]
I take off	[nəglaɛ]	[nnaħi]
She is angry	[zəgrana]	[zaɛfana]
She is nice	[zi :na]	[ʃæba]

Table 2. Lexical synonymous pairs: male version Vs female version

Most of the time, male speakers tend to use more rural lexical items (Dendane, 1993), but we cannot ignore their frequent tendency to manufacture a host of new words through different periods of times.

In support of this, the borrowed word from French [æktivi] is recently aroused by male speakers which carry, in fact, two meanings. This borrowed word may either mean to come quickly or to find out a viable solution so as to contrive vital ways to carry their lives and to catalyze, especially young men, in order to take their place in society as a "breadwinners". By the word "borrowing", we mean "*the introduction of single words or short, frozen, idiomatic phrases from one language to another. The items in questions are incorporated into the grammatical systems of the borrowing language*" (Gumperz, 1976: 8).

This word [æktivi] is integrated into the Arabic language, submitting to the modifications of its rules. Female speakers in CSA tend to exploit such fresh word with an endeavour to negotiate a vigorous and active identities in particular communities of practice, especially with male friends as a means to corroborate mutual engagement between them.

Unsurprisingly, the word [ţalgina] which is male referential is seldom, if not never, used by women because it is considered as rural and unrefined term. Put in another way, women and men are in a constant process of defining themselves by either weeding-out or adopting particular lexical items to construct social meanings to their femininities and masculinities.

It is true that most of the novel words or loanwords are brought by male speakers, however, this cannot hide the fact that a host of men seem to boldly sustain the ancient words used by older generation. Surprisingly, I, as a non-native speaker of Berber language, have discovered and learnt that the word [wurʒi:n] is used to refer to the word "never" at the same time with some Kabylian female speakers. What is of particular concern here is that young ladies are fluent speakers of Kabyle, yet they seem to be reluctant to adopt ancient vocabulary maintained by elder people; they would rather say (jamais) in French. (This phenomenon will be thoroughly elaborated in the subsequent chapter). They prefer, then, to supplant the jejune-in their words- and unsophisticated ancient vocabulary with what does cope with modernity and prestige. Similarly, a great number of young female speakers of Kabyle seem to opt for the use of the English expression (Bye bye) *in lieu of* the Berber equivalent [arθufaθ] (Good bye).Besides their tremendous pride of their mother tongue (Kabyle), they merely responded to our wondering about this words' manipulation by claiming that they usually intend to weed out all what may make them seem as lagging behind, they think that they should be aware of their selection of words especially in front of foreigners and in formal communities of practice. They are always looking for what is

new and modern, not what is inherited by old people. Meanwhile, male speakers do not face any problem in their choice of vocabulary; they are much more likely than women to sustain and indemnify their language through the use of words that seem to female speakers as old and outdated.

Albeit this point holds true, female speakers in CSA are likely to use some words which are peculiar to old women such as [traɛraɛ] (she shouts), [təṭanəb] [təʃəgləb] (she plays up), [jləgləg] (he hastens). Notwithstanding, their insertion of such words is customarily preceded or followed by the sentence [kima jgu:lu lkba:r] (as old people say). Not to make these observations seem as a flagrant contradiction, female speakers are much likely to point out that such words are not theirs (part of their repertoire). By the term "repertoire", Milroy and Milroy (1985:119) postulate that it is *"the totality of styles available to a community".*

Interestingly, those female speakers may intend to point out that besides their adherence to what is germane to enlightenment and modernity, they may find themselves in need of using some traditional words ascribed to the old generation, but they aim at reminding the other interlocutors that the words cited- above are not part of their identity. They would rather attempt to accentuate that they are quoting from the register of old people.

7. Conclusion

Our findings demonstrate that women and men constantly twist and change particular linguistic styles as they are nested in different communities of practice. A good case in point in this respect is the realization of /q/ and /g/ by the two sexes in Chlef. Female speakers adhere to the use of /q/ instead of /g/ in some words aiming at displaying particular notions of femininity by the employment of *soigné* and refined pronunciations. What is of particular interest here is that this mode of speaking is not the echo of the norms of the speech community or what those females learnt in their childhood. By this token, the same woman alternatively adopts /g/or /q/ in the same word, albeit in different communities of practice. Apart from that, the CofP framework offers us the opportunity to indicate that Chelifian females select between emphatic/non-emphatic consonants as though they are calling for the necessity to sleek their pronunciation, particularly when they are engaged in formal communities of practice such as the university with their professors, for instance.

Although it is believed that the empathic/non emphatic distinctiveness does not imperatively equate with male potency and female weakness, men and women seem to be in a constant readiness for varying their linguistic practices to define themselves and negotiate a myriad of social meanings in an endeavour to guarantee their agency in the community they participate in and to cater to the communicative needs of each moment of interaction.

In tune with the CofP framework, it is believed that the examination of language variation should reside in the fact that the area of language and gender (gender differences in particular) is perceived from what a particular variable could produce specific meanings, but not how variation in linguistic practices is quoted by the sex of the speaker. On the whole, variation is said to be a social practice in which women and men exhibit a wide array of linguistic styles used especially by women in the sense of the community's social practice.

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List of Phonetic Symbols

I) **Consonants**

Consonant	Arabic word	English translation
[m]	[mra]	a woman
[n]	[na:ḍ]	he stood up
[dʒ]	[ra:dʒəl]	a man
[ʃ]	[ʃibæni]	an old man
[ɛ]	[ɛərs]	a wedding
[k]	[kəlma]	a word
[k̲]	[isərwalik̲]	your trousers (a Kabyle variety)
[d]	[dwa]	medicines
[r]	[rabbi]	God
[j]	[jəbki]	he cries
[l]	[li:m]	lemon
[ɣ]	[ɣanna]	he sang
[w]	[warda]	a rose
[b]	[bæb]	a door
[s]	[sma]	the sky
[ṣ]	[ṣalla]	he prayed
[t]	[tra:b]	soil
[ṭ]	[ṭabla]	a table
[h]	[hija]	she
[ħ]	[ħəʃma]	abashment
[v]	[vɣiɣ]	I want (a Kabyle variety)
[q]	[qli:l]	little
[ɒ]	[fɒm]	a mouth
[z]	[jəzgi]	he shouts
[x]	[xæli]	my maternal uncle
[g]	[galb]	a heart
[ʔ]	[ʔalf]	a thousand

[θ]	[θu:m]	garli
[ð]	[ðəbæna]	a fly
[ḍ]	[ḍaw]	light
[j]	[jəd]	a hand

II- Vowels

[a]	[æna]	me
[ə]	[ħbəs]	he stopped
[u]	[huwa]	he
[ɒ]	[xɒdmi]	[a knife
[i]	[ħidʒæb]	a veil
[a:]	[fa:r]	a mouse
[i:]	[smi:n]	fat
[u:] [sxu:n] hot	[u:] [sxu:n] hot	[u:] [sxu:n] hot