A Socio-Pragmatic Study of Greeting and Leave-Taking Patterns in Algerian Arabic in Mostaganem

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Received on: 1-4-2019 Accepted on: 16-7-2019

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the greeting and leave-taking patterns used in people’s face-to-face interactions in 16 villages and 15 urban areas in Mostaganem (Algeria) from a socio-pragmatic perspective. It uncovers the effect of age, gender, social distance and context on selecting greeting and farewell formulae. Three qualitative data collection tools were used, including observation of natural data, 123 audio-recordings of natural social encounters, and responses of 40 persons who partook in an oral Discourse Completion Test. The collected data were analysed according to Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory as a theoretical framework. The findings reveal similarities and differences in the rural and urban greetings and farewells in several aspects. Results rebut the allegation that greetings have no meaning apart from their phatic function and support the hypothesis that they are meaningful. Greetings and farewells, in Mostaganem Spoken Arabic (MSA), fulfil the following socio-pragmatic functions: welcoming, expressing surprise, seeking information, determining the interlocutors’ relationship, identifying attitudes towards relationships i.e. satisfaction, and umbrage, showing concern for the hearer and his relatives, boosting intimacy and enhancing in-group solidarity.

Keywords: Socio-Pragmatics, Greetings, Leave-Takings, Mostaganem Spoken Arabic, Politeness Theory.

1. Introduction

Greeting and parting are significant parts of the communicative competence of speech community members. Goffman (1971, 74) defines greeting and parting as “access rituals” which serve as transitions that open or close the social encounter. He has distinguished between passing greeting and engaging greeting, usually accompanied by a term of address and, when possible, a bodily contact having much the character of maintenance. They are performed to re-establish social bonding, allocate status, and guarantee for safe passage especially between strangers. Similarly, Firth (1972) has characterised English greeting and leave-taking as “rituals” which can be performed verbally by means of a question (‘How are you?’), interjection (‘Hello’, ‘Hi’), and affirmation (like ‘good morning’ that can modulate over time and can be prolonged) or non-verbally (hand-shakes).

Greeting and leave-taking, as a polite behaviour performed upon a norm, have been one of the major foci in different fields of research. They have been conceived by Laver (1981) as part and parcel of the linguistic repertoire of politeness that reflects social competence of any social member. According to him,
greeting and parting are fundamental strategies for the negotiation and control of identity. Moreover, he has highlighted two functions of phatic communion in the closing phase or leave-taking, including mitigation which maintains the addressee’s negative face by means of such mitigatory comments as “I am sorry, I have to go, I have to give a lecture” (Laver 1981,303) and consolidation which enhances the positive aspect of face via such consolidating comments as “It was nice to see you” (Laver 1981,303).

The present study tackles greetings and farewells within Mostaganem, a coastal city in the North-West of Algeria, from a socio-pragmatic standpoint. The linguistic profile of Mostaganem encompasses Modern Standard Arabic and Tamazight (Berber) as the official languages. Algerian Arabic is the mother tongue of the vast majority of people. French is typically used in government, and as the language of scientific instruction. The languages variably affected MSA. This impact appears in the way people perform various actions in their daily encounters such as making requests, congratulating, thanking, and so forth. Probing the effect of age, gender, social distance, and context on the way rural and urban speakers of MSA perform greeting and parting in various encounters is the heart of this study. This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How do the rural and urban people in Mostaganem perform greeting and leave-taking in their everyday encounters?
2. How can age, gender, social distance, and context affect the choice of greeting and leave-taking patterns in MSA?

2. Background

In his study on Sesotho greetings, Akindele (2007) formulates the Sesotho greetings sequence as phatic greeting, informatory greeting, and leave-taking, which includes a pre-closing and a closing phase. Notwithstanding that, Akindele (2007) draws a clear-cut distinction between prefatory and informatory greetings; he contends that the entire system is blatantly phatic. Duranti (1997), on the other hand, refutes the widespread belief that greetings are phatic, non-referential verbal formulae devoid of propositional content. According to him, the Samoan “Where are you going?” greeting conspicuously refutes such belief. Moreover, he provides a contra claim that greetings need not be expressive acts; they can convey new information instead. When two Samoan speakers, A and B, pass each other on the road, for instance, the initiator stops to greet the other, and the following can be observed (Duranti 1997, 83-84),

(1) A: Where are you going?
B: I’m going to [goal].
The greeting may continue with a leave-taking exchange:
A: Then go.
B: I/ we go.

The interlocutors recognize one another’s presence. The greeter seeks information about the addressee’s whereabouts (‘goal’) which may be either a place or a task. However, the addressee may or may not provide a satisfactory response.
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Analogously, Ameka (2009) analyses the access rituals in West African communities from an ethnopragmatic perspective. His findings have exhibited that the how-are-you questions are not only employed to display courtesy, they are real questions about the well-being of the hearer that have to be felicitously and faithfully answered. He contends that the period of absence, status, age, the type of the encounter and the sociocultural conventions determine the complexity of openings and closings everywhere. Identically, Mmadike and Okoye (2015) underline the salience of the foregoing variables in determining greetings patterns in Etulo. Their findings have endorsed the hypothesis that some greetings may have rich illocutionary meanings. Thus, there is a conspicuous discrepancy between greeting as non-referential or expressive function of language which is used merely to open channels of communication and greeting as an informative function going beyond phatic communion.

Furthermore, age, gender, degree of intimacy, context and social status variably affect not only the choice of greeting and parting strategies but also the initiation of these access rituals as Betholia (2009), Dezhara, Resaei, Davoudi and Kafani (2012), Nkamigbo (2012), Ekanjume-Ilongo (2013), and Mmadike and Okoye (2015) have pointed out. Contrariwise, there is no restriction on who should initiate greeting in the West African communities as Ameka (2009) has discerned.

Greetings are of utmost importance in the Arab culture and the principle of greeting and its response received an endorsement in the Quran. Therefore, Muslims are expected to greet each other and return a greeting with the same or better. Few studies have tackled greeting as politeness formulae in the Arab Culture. A pioneering study of Syrian Arabic was that of Ferguson (1967, 1976, 1983). Ferguson (1967) investigates the structure and the use of politeness formulae. He has found out that several Arabic politeness formulae come in pairs encompassing an initiator formula and a suitable response formula. Ferguson (1976) concludes that politeness formulae, which are non-referential, are utilized in the suitable occasion regardless of the meaning of its constituent parts. Likewise, in his study on the Saudi mode of greeting rituals, Hassanain (1994) supports Ferguson’s conclusion. He claims that in any greeting situation, what matters is the establishment and maintenance of social bond rather than communicating information. Moreover, his study pinpoints the sociolinguistic variables that are pivotal in selecting the appropriate formula of greeting rituals, including the spatio-temporal setting, participants’ age, gender, social status and their educational level, the channel of greeting (verbal or non-verbal), and the purpose of greeting. Nevertheless, Hassanain (1994) merely assorts the phraseology employed in greeting exchanges. In other words, he has not thoroughly expounded the effect of the social variables on the choice of Saudi greeting rituals.

Adopting Ibrahim et al. (1976) and Grimshaw and Bird’s (1976) classification of greeting structure of Tuareg encounter, Emery (2000) investigates the categories of politeness formulae in Omani Arabic, namely greeting and parting routines, congratulating and condoling. The upshot of his study is that Omani Arabic exhibits its own linguistic patterns that are determined by age, gender, status and setting, and demonstrates an on-going battle between vernacular and imported pan-Arabic forms. Emery distinguishes three stages of greeting in Omani Arabic, including summons, which are supplemented or substituted by
time-of-day greetings, health enquiry and the ritual or non-referential enquiry for news. The farewell sequence, on the other hand, comprises a basic five-move exchange.

El-Hassan (1991) investigates the “salutational” patterns used by Jordanian shopkeepers and their customs. He asserts that ḍassalæmu ṣalaykum/ṣalikum is the most common and typical formula among Muslim Arabs that derives its salience from Islam. Thereby, the use of an extended response rather than a mere mirror image to this pattern is seen as more courteous and religious. El-Hassan (1991) concludes that greetings conform to certain socio-cultural norms of linguistic etiquette shared by the collocutors. Another study on greeting expressions and their respective responses has been carried out by Al-Abdul Halim (1994), who analyses the greeting response formulae used by Jordanian students and teachers at Mut’ah University and those used by patients and physicians at two hospitals in Jordan. His data refute El-Hassan claim that ḍassælamu ḍalikum ‘peace be upon you’ is the most frequent strategy and criticize his assertion that using such pattern underlies loyalty to Islam for being impressionistic. Al-Abdul Halim (1994) finds out that certain greetings are more prevalently used than others, and each pattern has its typical responses. Moreover, both the form and response to greeting have been proved to be affected by the social status of the conversants. However, the influence of age has not thoroughly been tackled.

In an attempt to fill this gap, Rababa’h and Malkawi (2012) look at the sociolinguistic politeness of greeting and leave-taking in the everyday interactions of Jordanian people in different rural areas. Context-independent, time-specific and context-dependent patterns are used by Jordanians in their day-to-day interactions accompanied by relational and absolute forms of address. Their data suggest that age, gender, the level of intimacy between the interactants and the setting of the encounter coupled with some socio-cultural and socio-religious rules are the major requisites for the selection of the appropriate politeness formulae, and the initiation of greetings. However, leave-taking exchanges have not been thoroughly analysed. Similar conclusions have been drawn by Kirdasi (2013) in her study on greetings used by Arabs and Americans. Consonantly, in her study on Moroccan “Focused Dyadic Greeting,” Bouhadiba (2004) argues that interactants are highly selective regarding asking after the hearer’s relatives greeting strategy. She concludes that culture and gender play a vital role in shaping culture-specific politeness strategies. Briefly, greeting and parting, as polite behaviour, aim to break silence, display courtesy and hospitality, and therefore maintain the social cohesion. Although its phraseology may be culture-specific, greeting is a universal aspect of politeness.

Insofar as regional affiliation is concerned, Abu Laila (2013) accentuated the inconsequentiality of this factor with regard to the responses of greeting and apology employed by undergraduate students in two Jordanian universities, namely Yarmouk University and Zarqa University. A clear-cut observation is that most of Arab studies depicted greetings and farewells as routines with flexible meaning and function. According to these studies, greeting and parting are no more than routines that aim to display courtesy, enhance solidarity, and therefore maintain the social cohesion.

In short, a great bulk of research designated the various modes of greeting and leave-taking within and across different speech communities. It examined the effect of the contextual factors that come into play when selecting and initiating greeting exchange. However, some studies included certain social factors and excluded others. Other studies merely pinned down the greeting strategies and neglected the
social variables altogether. Besides, most of the abovementioned studies did not investigate the effect of the social variables on how people bid farewells, they focused on introductory salutations instead. The present study focuses primarily on the social variables that influence the choice of both greeting and leave-taking strategies, including social distance, age, gender, the geographical area and context and, accordingly, delineates the modes and patterns of these ‘access rituals’ in Mostaganem.

3. Methods and Procedures

Two hundred and eleven male and female participants, of different age groups (18 to 85), from different rural and urban areas in Mostaganem were observed to see how they express greeting and leave-taking for their intimates, friends, acquaintances, and strangers in six different situations, including sitting visits, chance encounters, customer-shopkeeper interaction, passer by-worker interaction, visiting the sick, and requestor-requestee interaction. The data were gathered from 16 villages in Mostaganem; the data were collected through natural observations, and 123 audio-recordings of naturally occurring greeting and leave-taking exchanges in different contexts, in family gatherings, stores, buses, restaurants, markets, and other public places. Notes about the contextual factors and non-verbal cues were jotted down immediately after recordings took place. An oral Discourse Completion Test (henceforth DCT) was designed to determine participants’ attitudes towards the use of certain salutation and farewell expressions. Forty rural and urban participants were interviewed to this end. The audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim. Thirty-three illustrative excerpts were selected according to the six types of social encounters. The data were categorised into greeting and leave-taking patterns and then analysed taking into account the social variables of age, gender, social distance, context and geographical area. Then, the data were discussed within the face-threatening act theory of politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987).

4. Findings and Discussion

This part is divided into sections: The first section expounds greeting patterns in MSA in six different situations. The second section is devoted to elucidate and discuss leave-taking patterns.

4.1. Greeting Patterns

Greeting and leave-taking are phases in an interaction that comprise several act sequences (Schegloff 1968), and are performed via a set of linguistic and non-linguistic devices. Greetings, as polite behaviour, can be analysed within the framework of face. On the one hand, when we say hello, we are deliberately intruding into someone’s personal life, thus threatening his/her negative face. On the other hand, salutations break the ice for a talk, thus maintaining the hearer’s positive face. This section outlines greeting stages in different encounters in the rural and urban context of Mostaganem.

4.1.1. Sitting visits

The greeting sequence for this situation can be divided into four stages, including summonses, greeting exchange, well-being enquiries and asking after the welfare of the hearer’s relatives.
4.1.1.1. Summons

Since it is customary for most of the rural people in the suburbs of Mostaganem to leave their house’s gate open, visitors typically use two types of summonses to draw the house dwellers’ attention before entering. They knock or clap at the gate in addition to another verbal summons comprising a quadripartite phatic exchange:

(3) Visitor (F): ǝšḥa:b l-xejmǝ!
O dwellers the-house
‘O house dwellers!’
Host (F): jæjlaeh!
‘Coming!’
Visitor (F): ǝʕjaʃ rebbǝ
guest God
‘Guests are at the door!’
Host (F): marħba
‘Welcome!’

The vocative ǝšḥa:b l-xejmǝ!(O house dwellers!) is -more likely to be used by old rural women with a simple acknowledgement by an affirmative jæjlaeh(I am coming) as a response. However, it seems that the traditional jæjlaeh is being substituted by jæh(yes). Alternatively, young women are keen to summon the female householder by name with a diminutive form saying, for instance, ǝ faṭ! , ǝ ʕafj ! from Fatma and Aisha, respectively. They use jæh in response to the vocative particle ‘ǝ’. Men, on the other hand, tend to summon the householder’s name, or used diminutives of long names like ǝ bqæs! (O Belkassem!) and compound names like ǝ ʕ qedǝr! (O Abdel El-Qader!). Diminutives function as indicators of minimum social distance and in-group membership as Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) have accentuated.

As doorbells become more common in towns, urban people tend to ring the bell or knock on the door. Males summon the householder’s name ‘Mohammed’, for instance. Thus, the quadripartite pattern is no longer used. It is subrogated by a tripartite pattern sselæm-ǝʕli:k ʊm with a modified-echo reply or time-of-day greeting with a root-echo response followed by tfed ʊo, marħba bi:kom (Please come in, you are welcome). They also use ǝʕjaʃ rebbǝ(Guests are at the door) when the host recognises him/her.

4.1.1.2. Greeting exchange

After exchanging the hailing routines, interactants proceed to the greeting exchange. The rural visitor initiates greeting using the time-free greeting xi:r ʕli:k ʊm (good day). The house dwellers then stand up and answer with a root-echo response xi:r (good day) while kissing the elder’s head. Others follow the same or more so principle xi:r wǝ l-xeʃǝ (good and wellness). It can be supplemented by ahlee (welcome) and a term of address with a difference in intonation depending on the length of time elapsed since the previous encounter, the extent to which the host is glad to see the guest, and the degree of
intimacy between interactants. In the following examples, the host returned greeting to his relative using an echo response followed by *ahlee*:

(4) Fatima: xi:r ʕliːkʊm!

good PREP-2.PL

‘Good day!’

Farid: xi:r ahlee Fatima! kiːʁa-kt? ɣaːja-a-kt mlhʊʔ? lehɛs?

Good welcome Fatima how-are-2.PL.F how good-are-2.SG.F fine-are-2.SG.F fine

‘Good day! Welcome, Fatima. How are you doing? Are you doing well?  The use of such extended response rather than a short one indicates courtesy and intimacy. Most of the rural men make use of *sselæm-ʊlkʊm* (Peace be upon you) accompanied by handshaking or backslapping to greet their male interlocutors with a permutated reply. However, they shift to *xiːr ɪlkʊm* to salute elders, especially women.

Due to the rural conservative societal norms, young rural men and women do not talk to each other unless they are relatives. If they do, they would merely say *sselæm* or *xiːr* without asking after each other’s well-being. The corpus included another pattern for sitting visits. In the following excerpt, the greeting formula was dispensed with by dint of being surprised to see the addressee after a long absence. Alternatively, the host used a good wishing formula as a welcoming strategy and to show her delight to see the guest, thus enhancing the latter’s positive face:

(5) Zinaːjæj! lˤlˤaljaʔtˤiːkʊm nn!

Wow! Allah give-2.PL.rain ‘wow! May Allah give you rain!’

In the urban context, young men generally use *sselæm-ʊlkʊm* to greet men and time-of-day greeting to salute women, especially younger, whereas women generally use *sselæm-ʊlkʊm* to greet men and time-of-day greetings to salute women. Elders mostly use *sselæm-ʊlkʊm* to greet both males and females. It is sometimes accompanied by time-bound greetings and handshaking. Rustic and townspeople noticeably alter their greetings according to the addressee.

The rural greeting formulae typically encompass diminutive terms of address as *asːiːd* (sir). It is peculiarly used by rural daughters and sons to greet their elder father, by grandchildren to greet their grandfather, and by daughters-in-law to greet their father-in-law to express respect, *xaːlt* (aunt) to address mother-in-law, *šemt* (auntie) to address real aunts, *šemm* (uncle) plus the first name to address old men. When returning a greeting, old men use kin terms, first names or nicknames to address relatives and acquaintances as well. Conversely, they address an old woman by *bent* plus her last name. For equals in terms of age, acquaintances and relatives summon each other using first names and nicknames. It is fairly common for urban people to use kin term like *bbλa* and *buːja* (father), *mmλa* (mother), *šemm* (uncle), *xaːltt* (aunt) to address older people, *xti* (sister), *xuːja* (brother) for equals in age, *bentt* (daughter), *weldt* (son)
to address younger people, whether they are relatives, acquaintances or strangers. These address terms are utilised to accord respect to elders, show solidarity between acquaintances, boost intimacy between friends and relatives, and display courtesy between distant collocutors.

4.1.1.3. Well-being enquiries

After exchanging prefatory salutations, visitors enquire after the host’s well-being. The “how-are-you” greeting may occur at the beginning as a conversation opener, or in the “how-are-you” sequence slot after the initial greeting xi:r or xi:r ʕli:kʊm. The following encounters illustrate the two positions, respectively:

(6) Amina: ki:-ra-k-r? ǝFati:h!
How-are-2.SG.FO DIM
‘How are you Fatiha?’
Fatiha: xba:r-kt? ki:-ra-k-r?
news-2. SG.F how-are-2.SG.F
‘How are you doing? Are you fine?’

(7) Souad: xi:r ʕli:-kʊm!ki:-ra-kʊm?
Good PREP-2.PL how-are-2.PL
‘Good day! How are you?’
Fatma: xi:r !xba:r-kʊm?ki:-ra-kʊm?
Good day News-2.PL how-are-2.PL
‘Good day! How are you doing? Are you fine?’

Apparently, xba:rak (How are you doing?), predominately used by elders, is a “how-are-you” greeting formula, not a news enquiry. Inasmuch as the answer to “how-are-you” question is its echo, ki:rak and xba:rak in this case are not real questions. Rather, they are phatic greetings. Young people answer such enquiries by means of a conventional response ra:nt ml:i:h (I am fine) accompanied by giving thanks to Allah. Old people sometimes merely use ra:nt (I am) with a low-pitched voice and a careworn face implying that something is wrong with them:

(8) Linda: xi:r ǝ xa:jr !
Good O DIM
‘Good day to you Khayra!’
Khayra: xi:r
Good
‘Good day!’
Linda: Ke-k-tdæjrā?
How-2.SG.F doing?
How are you doing?
Khayra: ra:n-ı
Am-1.SG
‘I am not really fine.’

Crucially, ra:n ɪ carries information about the hearer’s well-being. Comparably, urban youngsters tend to use ki:raқ(t) (How are you?) followed by the French greeting expression ça va (fine?) when greeting someone of their age. If the host is old, they use ya:ja? (fine?) instead accompanied by appropriate kin terms. Elders say ya:ja? (fine?) to ask after the host’s well-being regardless of his age.

Analogous to rural people, urban people use the “how-are-you” greeting either to open a conversation or in the “how-are-you” sequence slot after the initial greeting. The two cases are illustrated in the following examples, respectively:
(9) Nadia: ki:-ra-kr? ya:ja?, kæʤdi:d? (kissing each other)
How-are-2.SG.F fine any new
‘How are you? Any news?’
Ilham: fe-l-haq ra:-n mʃa ṭṭʃjar-a:τ
PREP-the-truth am-1.SG PREP test-PL
‘I am actually doing some medical tests.’

The response to the well-being enquiry in the above example carries an information load. The addressee who is an old woman said that she is doing medical test implying that she is ill.
(10) Siham: selæm!
‘peace!’
Zahra: selæm! ça va?
Peace fine
‘Peace be upon you! How are you?’
Siham: ntı ki:-ra-kt, mama:-k? Nora?
you how-are-2.SG.F mother-your Nora
‘How are you? How are your mom and Nora doing?’

Well-being enquiries were exchanged after the initial greeting. Both ya:ja and ça va followed by giving thanks to Allah appear to be the standard answers to this type of greeting.

4.1.1.4. Asking after the well-being of the hearer’s relatives

In this phase, the interlocutors show concern for the well-being of each other’s relatives, but such enquiries are basically phatic notwithstanding. That is, the asker is not really interested in receiving a precise answer about someone’s well-being. Rather, s/he merely endeavours to establish social contact. The host usually acts as interrogator through this stage especially elders. Consider:
(11) Guest (F): xi:r!

Good
‘Good day to you!’
Host (F): xi:r!ki:-ra-kr?ki:-ra:-h m̄o-k? bab-æk?
Good how-are-2.SG.F how-is-3.F.SG mother-your Father-your
ra:-kùm b-xi:r?
are-2.PL PREP-good
‘Good day! How are you? How is your mother? Your father? Are you well?’
Guest (F): ra:-na mlæ
are-1.PL fine
‘We are fine.’
Host (F): bezzaef
much
‘It is nice to hear that you are doing well.’

The term bezzaef is used in many varieties of Algerian Arabic and in the urban areas of Mostaganem either to mean ‘so much’ or ‘too much’. However, in some villages in the countryside of Achaacha (Mostaganem), bezzaef, is used by the hosts, especially elders, immediately after the hearer positively answers the successive questions about his/her relatives’ well-being. As such, when a rural man, for instance, asks after the relatives’ well-being of his urban interlocutor, the latter may say ra:hum ya:ja (They are fine). The rustic then may say bezzaef to express his gladsomeness to receive such good news. The townsman; however, will perceive it as a brusqueness and stop talking accordingly.

The corpus included other alternative strategies. Rural people, especially elders use such expressions as meli:h lelli:h (All of your family members) (see Appendix A, Example 1), mlkbi:r les’yi:r (from elder to younger) and wə geti: (everyone and everything) to ask after the well-being of the hearer’s relatives in one phrase instead of asking after them one by one. Use of such shorthand strategies indicates that such enquiries are distinctly phatic.

In the urban areas, the host also initiates enquiries after the well-being of the guest’s relatives. Consider the following excerpt:

(12) Guest (M): sselæm-əffii:-kùm !
peace-PREP-2.PL
‘Peace be upon you.’
Host (M): əhlee Mohammed! sselæm-əffii:-kùm! ki-ʃeʃi-tu?
welcome Mohammed peace-PREP-2.PL how-become-2.PL
‘Hello, Mohammed! Peace be upon you. Good evening!’
Guest (M): ya:ja? lebæs? a-k b-xi:r?
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fineWellare-2.SG PREP-good
‘Are you doing well?’
Host (M): ʕæʃmenʃæf-ek!o-wliː:d ɣaːja? lebæs?
live-past who see-2.SG the-child-PL fine well
‘I got extremely happy for seeing you!’ Are your children doing well?
Guest (M): l-ḥemd-leh, raḥmet rebb
the-thanking-Allah mercy God
‘We are fine. Praise be to Allah.’

The host asked after the guest’s children saying ˌlowlid ɣaːja? (Are you children doing well?). The answer is blatantly phatic. It is worth noting, however, that when well-being enquiries after the hearer’s family are repeated with a different tone of voice and expressive facial expressions, they could be deemed seeking-for-information strategies and not parts of the greeting routine. To illustrate, in an unplanned visit between relatives, the hostess asked the guests after their well-being and re-asked them in an expressive tone of voice and facial expressions indicating her concern for the welfare of the guests. The whole greeting sequence is usually rounded off by the host inviting the visitor for a drink, lunch or dinner. It can be observed from the foregoing excerpts that women prolong questions after the hearer’s relatives more than men do. Concisely, greeting exchange for family gatherings goes through four major stages, involving summonses, greeting exchange, well-being enquiries, and ultimately asking after the hearer’s relatives.

4.1.2. Chance encounters

People happen to meet accidentally in the street, in the neighbourhood, downtown, and so on. Their brief meetings involve the exchange of passing or casual greeting. This type of greeting occurs between strangers, acquaintances, relatives, and friends who are in a hurry and cannot engage in a conversation. They resort to “normal full greetings” in Kendon and Ferber’s (1973) terminology (as cited in Bellak and Hersen 1979) before engaging in brief general conversation, exchanging new ideas, or gossip. The following section introduces two types of chance meetings. One is of interactants who meet each other constantly, and the other is between people who rarely see each other.

It was observed that people who meet each other constantly use a vocative particle accompanied by terms of address as summonses. The addressee’s response could be verbal or non-verbal immediately followed by the “how-are-you” greeting with or without a response, as exemplified in the following excerpt:
(13) Kamel: Rachiːid!
‘O Rachid!’
Rachid: oui! ça vaKamel?
Yes, fine Kamel
‘Hey Kamel, how are you?’

The use of first names like *Rachid* and such nicknames as *s l-bekeja* (a bawler) and *Rux* (blondie) signal intimacy and full egalitarianism as Lakoff (1975) has averred. When unexpectedly meeting an acquaintance or a relative in the neighbourhood, downtown, or elsewhere, old rural people, particularly women use *xī:r* (good day) with an echo response. Young rural men and urban men regardless of their age mostly use *sseleem-dili-kom*. Urban women are keen to use either *bonjour* (good day), *salut* (hello), *sleem* (peace), *sbaeh lxi:r* (good morning) and *mes lxi:r* (good afternoon) or permuted formulae of good morning and good afternoon initiated by the one who recognises the other first.

Casual greetings can be expanded into normal greeting, especially between people who rarely see each other. In the following example, a young rural man greeted a man of his age using time-of-day greeting followed by a compliment, and stereotyped well-being enquiries. Casual greeting, in this example, is transitioned into content oriented greeting using news enquiry *jedr kef dʒdi:d mlḥa temma?*,

(14) a. (M) *sbaː h l-xi:r lheba!*

*b. (M) ça va?*

‘How are you?’

a. (M) *ɣaːja?*

‘Are you Fine?’

b. (M) *ça va?*

‘Fine?’

a. (M) *we-llah leɣaːja*

PREP- Allah really fine

‘I am very well.’

b. (M) *jædrakef ʤdiːd mlḥa temma?*

so any new nice there

‘So, any news? How is your situation there, in your new city?’

a. (M) *we-llah leyaːja*

PREP-Allah very fine

‘It is really nice!’

Seemingly, rustic men, especially youngsters, use urban greeting expressions to ask after the addressees’ well-being. It can be ascribed to the fact that men constantly come into contact with town dwellers as they travel a lot. Hence, they adopted urban greeting features and neglected their rural traditional features. Conversely, rural women are deemed more linguistically conservative. Although they shift to the urban features when interacting with a town, they are still attached to their rural traditional
greetings when communicating with rustics. Urban people also expand prefatory greeting into a full normal greeting. The following conversation took place downtown between a young urban man who was ascending to the bus greets an old man who was descending from the same bus:

(15) a. (M) ki:-ra-k daæjer?
how-are-2. SG.M doing
‘How are you doing?’
b. (M)ŷa:ja
fine
‘I am fine.’
a. (M)ki:-ra:-h l-hædţy?
How-is-3. M.SG the-pilgrim
‘Is your father well?’
b. (M) (went without reply)
a. (M) ŕMohammed hø
‘OMohammed!hey!’
b. (M) ra:-h mlį: h-al-hædţy:ja
is-3. M. SG well the-pilgrim fine
‘My father is well.’

The greeter summoned the interactant by his first name ‘Mohammed’ and re-asked him after his father’s well-being. Once the hearer realised that the greeter is interested in knowing the response, he stopped to answer the question. Additionally, casual greetings can be prolonged using health enquiries. Consider the following excerpt:

(16) Amina: sˤba:h l-xir!
Morning the-good
‘Good morning!’
Ahmed: sselaem-äuili:-kum!
Peace-PREP-2.PL
‘Peace be upon you!’
Amina: ça va?ki:-ra:-ha sˤsˤaha? ki-raq:-ha l-madame?
Fine how-is-3. F.SG health how-is-3. F.SG the-lady
‘How are you? how is health? How is your wife?’
Ahmed: ra:-hu fáWahrán
Is-3. F.SG PREP Oran
‘She is in Oran.’
Aamina: Je ʕend-ha?
what has-3.F.SG?
‘What does she suffer from?’
Ahmed: ra:-ht ddı:r f'les analyses
Is-3.F.SG doing PREP medical tests
‘She is doing medical tests.’

After the routine was completed, the speaker made solicitous enquiries after the health of the addressee’s wife. Accordingly, “how-are-you” greetings in the foregoing excerpts are content-oriented. Rural people who rarely see each other tend to go on record with positive politeness strategies. They utilise ʔhlee (Welcome) plus the addressee’s first name to express surprise and gladsomeness to see someone. They also use ʕeʃ men ʃæfek (Happy to see you) with its ‘general purpose’s response ʃajselmek or jselmek (God bless you). Younger people use mara:k tba:n, tweheʃṭāk (Long time no see, I missed you) in addition to ʕeʃ men ʃæfek to show his/her delight of meeting the hearer. However, tweheʃṭāk (I missed you) cannot be used to greet people of the opposite sex unless they are intimates. Elders most typically opt for going off record strategy by flouting the cooperative maxim of manner using ra:k mxetلى (You owe me an invitation) to greet acquaintances and intimates. Consider:

(17) a. (M) (enters the shop)
b. (M) ra:-k mxet³! ra:-k mxet³! (Shaking hands)
are-2.SG.M avoiding-2.SG are-2.SG.M avoiding-2.SG
‘You owe me an invitation !’
a. (M) mlhaʔ? (laughing)
fine?
b. (M) ça va Laid? Ki:-ra:-k Laid?
fine Laid how-are-2.SG.MLaid?
‘Hey, Laid! How are you?’

The phrase ra:k mxetلى can be either a joke indicating that the speaker is glad to see the addressee or a blaming strategy implying that the speaker is angry at the other party for avoiding him/her, and that she or he is waiting for compensation, or as both a joke and a blaming strategy concurrently (Example 17). The intended meaning is crucially determined by the context of situation. They also use heṭṭ yi:ba (I have not seen you for a long time). The response to this greeting is either saying ɪla:h le jyejbak (May Allah keep you close) or mentioning the reason behind the absence kunt maf/ʃu:l (I was busy).

In the urban context, tweheʃṭāk, ʕeʃ men ʃæfekand heṭṭyi:ba are also used to express happiness to see someone, to demonstrate closeness, camaraderie and solidarity. Such politeness strategies are primarily directed towards saving the hearer’s positive face. The following example is of two male acquaintances who met unexpectedly downtown:

(18) a. (M) we-ɪlah ʕeʃ men ʃæf-ek!ki:-ra-k dæjer?
PREP-Allah live who saw-2.SG how-are-2.SG.M.doing
‘I swear! I got extremely happy for seeing you.’

b. (M) ya:jə?
Fine
‘Are you fine?’

Besides, people use $\textit{saef men } fefek$ in an ironic way implying that they took umbrage at someone’s long absence. Accordingly, the hearer was expected to justify his or her absence. Such kinds of greetings are noticeably meaningful. Thus, people who see each other incessantly use a mere passing greeting, whilst those who scarcely meet resort to expanding it into a normal full greeting. The two types differ in terms of structure and the context in which they can occur. In the former type of encounter, people use conventional greeting expressions and “how-are-you” questions usually responded to by echoing the expression. In the latter type, interactants use such expressions as $\textit{saef men } fefek$, $\textit{he\textdagger}\text{i:ba}$ employed by rural and urban people, and $\textit{ra:k mcket}$ (You owe me an invitation) commonly by rural elderly. They can sometimes be preceded by prefatory greetings. Use of such typical expressions maintains and even enhances the addressee’s positive face. Subsequently, interlocutors enquire after each other’s well-being and after their relatives. This phase can be extended by a ritualised news enquiry stage which is perceived by Ibrahim et al. (1976: 804) as a transition from non-referentiality towards referentiality whereby interactants show interest in hearing news. Speakers of MSA, particularly young women, enquire about each other’s news using $\textit{kafekdi:d?}$ (Any news?) with either a conventional answer $\textit{men } sendek$ (waiting for your news) or informatory answer. They also tend to use direct questions as $\textit{tzewdekti?}$ (Did you get married?), responded to positively or negatively. As a corollary, such enquiries may threat the addressee’s negative face who would, in turn, consider the speaker as a quidnunc.

Furthermore, interactants engaged in what Duranti (1997) called the “where are you going?” greetings as the following extract elucidates:

(19) a. (F) xi:r ə xa:jr!
Good O DIM
‘Good day to you Khayra!’

b. (F) xi:r ! ki-ra-\textkum? a-kəm mlæho?
good how-are-2.PL are-2.PL well
‘Good day! How are you? are you well?’

a. (F) ə-ne mlæh
are-1.PL fine
‘We are fine.’

a. (F) Abed, Belkasem?
‘How are Abed and Belkasem?’
Clearly, the speaker used the unpredictable “where are you going” greeting to seek information about the addressee’s whereabouts. The “where are you going” greeting, in MSA, can either be used at the beginning of a conversation as summonses, or adjourned until prefatory greetings are exchanged in order to counteract any possible damage to the hearer’s negative face. Using this greeting depends on the degree of familiarity between the participants.

4.1.3. Customer-shopkeeper greeting pattern

At the rural shops, young customers usually make use of the summons *sselæm-*ʕliː-*kum* with an altered reply. As being conservative, young rural women ask neither after the shopkeeper’s well-being nor after his relatives’ welfare even though he is an acquaintance or relative. Shopkeepers utilise the casual term *ahlee*! (welcome!) plus a first name or a nickname to welcome a male acquaintance of their age. To launch the conversation, one of the parties, usually the client initiates the well-being enquiries. However, the interrogator does not remain the interrogator through the whole exchange as the following conversation elucidates:

(20) Customer (M): *sselæm-*ʕliː-*kum*

peace-PREP-2.PL

‘Peace be upon you!’

Shopkeeper (M): *sselæm* *werahmet* llaː.h

Peace and mercy Allah

‘Upon you be peace and the mercy of Allah!’

Customer (M): Mohammed! *sæhhaːɾiː-*d-ek

Mohammed, blessedEid-2.SG

‘Blessed Eid, Mohammed!’

Shopkeeper (M): *sæhha*

‘Thank you!’

Customer (M): kiː-*ræ-*k dæjer?

How-are-2.SG doing
‘How are you?’
Shopkeeper (M): ça va fwrjə?

‘Are you doing well?’
Customer (M): we-lḥlḥe ja
PREP-Allah really fine.

‘I am doing great.’
Shopkeeper (M): lebæs?

Fine
Customer (M): mlḥh wə ɡæf?
fine PREP all

‘Is everything going well?’

The “how-are-you” questions are distinctly repeated all over the conversation. It may be because it was their first face-to-face encounter. This backs up Holmes (1992) who postulates that more extensive and elaborated forms are employed between non-intimates. They are, nonetheless, no more than ritualised enquiries. Noticeably, If the client is a familiar elderly person, the shopkeeper ought to step forward to kiss his/her head and greet him/her using the free-time greeting xi:r with an echo-response. The client then asks after the seller’s welfare, and after his relatives’ well-being.

In the urban context, data exhibited that customers, irrespective of their age and gender, initiate greeting using ssleæm-ǝliːkom with a permuted reply. If the shopkeeper is an acquaintance or a relative, the customer usually asks after his/her well-being to maintain his/her positive face. In the following excerpt, the customer who is a young woman used ssleæm-ǝliːkom and a time-of-day greeting to salute the shopkeeper. She initiated the “how-are-you” greeting which took the form of AB where both turns, A and B, are questions:

(21) Customer (F): ssleæm-ǝliː-kum!
Peace-upon-2.PL
‘Peace be upon you!’
Vendor (M): ssleæm!
‘peace!’
Customer (F): šbæːh l-xiːrça va? ɣaːja?
morning the-good well fine
‘Good morning! Are you fine?’
Vendor (M): rjeḥ-tfwrjə?
Rest-2.SG.Flittle
‘Are you feeling any better?’
Customer (F): ça va?
fine
‘How are you?’

Since the well-being enquiries, in this conversation, were not positively or negatively answered, they can plainly be regarded as phatic greetings. Storekeepers who are friends and intimates tend to use terms of endearment to address each other like ťmi:ra (dear), hbi:bo (sweetheart). As can be seen from the foregoing instances, sseleالم-ăšli:kom with its permuted replies is the most appropriate greeting formula among people in some shops of Mostaganem, as in Jordanian shops. This pattern underlines one’s loyalty to Islam as El-Hassan (1991) has asserted. Succinctly, the customer’s age appears to be an overriding factor in the initiation of greeting between familiairs at the rural shops. The degree of intimacy overrides age, gender and context in exchanging well-being enquiries at the rural and urban shops of Mostaganem alike.

4.1.4. Greeting the Sick

Visiting sick people is one of the virtuous deeds that Islam invites to, and one of the rights of one Muslim over another. When doing such responsibility that every single Muslim is duty-bound to fulfil, certain greeting routines are to be followed. Rural people start the greeting exchange saying xi:r šli:kom with a root-echo response, or sseleالم-ăšli:kom with a permuted reply by rural women and men, respectively. They, then, ask the patient if s/he is feeling any better as illustrated in the following excerpt:

(22) Visitor (F):xi:r šli:-kom!
Good PREP-2.PL
‘Good day!’
Patient (F): xi:r!
‘Good day!’
Visitor (F): njeh-ttʃwtja?
rest-2.SG.Flittle
‘Are you feeling any better?’
Visitor (F): ʃwja
‘A little bit!’

Urban visitors use ihemdu:lağ llt xardjet sëlemae (Thank Allah for your safety) to greet someone who had a serious accident to show concern for him or her. They opt for such Standard Arabic expressions as kuɬ møʔm[:u]n maʃt:j:b (Believers are tested according to their faith)and other expressions like ihemdu:lahe šla sëlemt (Thank God for your safety) or its short forms sëlemae, and ʃla sëlemt with a root-echo response:

(23) Visitor1 (M):a bu-lehjə (shaking hands and kissing each other)
O with-beard
O bearded man!
Patient (M): ki:-ra-kum ça va?
How-are-2.PL fine?
‘How are you?’
Visitor2 (F): sselæm-øli:-kum! s’ba:h l-xi:r,šla slæmt-ek ça va?
Peace-upon-2.PL morning the-good PREP-safety-2.SG fine?
‘Peace be upon you! Good morning! Thank God for your safety.’
Visitor1 (M):rjeh-t šwjja?
Rest-2.SG.M little
‘Are you feeling any better?’
Patient (M): çà va
‘fine!’

They use compliments to encourage the sick as the following example elucidates:
(24) Visitor (M): rebbi jʃæfi:-k nʃa:-llah. Mohammed. Tu es un homme de bien !
God heal-2.SG will-Allah Mohammed, you are a man of good
‘I wish you speedy recovery Mohammed. You are a good man.’

They also utilise rebbi jʃæfi:k ʃi:r haka wole kter (I wish you a speedy recovery, thank God for your safety) to encourage the patient to feel better. In contrast to Omani Arabic speakers, speakers of MSA, whether old or young, greet the sick using almost similar encouraging expressions directed towards the patient’s positive face.

4.1.5. Passer-by/worker greetings

Whenever seeing an acquaintance, a relative, and even a stranger performing a physical work, rural and urban people tend to greet him/her to show respect and affirm solidarity. Data revealed that rural people do not say ʃla-ʃæwnak (May God help you) to a young worker of the opposite sex unless s/he is a relative or an elderly acquaintance. Rural men salute a man doing a work regardless of how familiar they are, whereas rural females greet female acquaintances and relatives only saying ʃla-ʃæwnak accompanied by diminutives. Greeting pattern in this case usually consists of a bipartite exchange, ʃla-ʃæwnak said by the passer-by, hømmeldi:k said by the worker. Well-being enquiries for this situation depend on such factors as urgency and degree of intimacy. Old rural men greet a young woman without asking after her welfare. If the worker is an old woman, they use ʃla-ʃæwnak plus the kin term ʃbent! (O daughter! ) plus her family name in order to signal respect and courtesy. They may ask after her well-being and her siblings’ welfare. If the worker is a young man, old men say ʃla-ʃæwnak without asking after his well-being. Rather, the young should initiate the “how-are-you” greeting. Old women, on the other hand, use
\textit{lla-\textit{jæwn}ok} preceded by \textit{xi:r \textit{\textit{li:k}}} plus the addressee’s first name. The greeting pattern for old rural people consists of a triadic formula sequence exemplified in the following manner:

(25) a. (F) \textit{lla-\textit{jæwn}ok \textit{a xajr! Allah-help-2.SG O DIM}

‘May Allah strengthen you!’

b. (F) \textit{hømm-a:ld-i:k bless-parents-2.SG}

‘May Allah bless your parents.’

a. (F) \textit{weldi:-na \textit{wa welded:-k, ke-kt-dejræ}} parents-1.PL and parents-2.SG How-2.F.SG-doing?

‘May Allah bless my parents and yours! How are you doing?’

b. (F) \textit{ra:-nt am-1.SG}

‘I am not fine.’

The second move \textit{hømma:ldi:k} (May Allah bless your parents) is substituted by \textit{ami:n} (ameen) in response to the prayer \textit{lla-\textit{jæwn}ok}, especially by the so-called Selef \textit{ɪji:n}.

The third move \textit{weldi:n \textit{wa welded:-k}} (My parents and yours) is hardly used by young people. Some old rural people expressed their displeasure at the way these moves are being dispensed with.

In the urban context, young women usually greet someone doing a physical work saying \textit{lla-\textit{jæwn}ok} regardless of his age and gender, and even to elderly strangers. It is sometimes preceded by time-of-day greeting and followed by “how-are-you” greeting. Others greet acquaintances and relatives only. Likewise, young urban men utilise \textit{ella-\textit{jæwn}ok} to salute men, and old women doing a work. Analogically, old people tend to use \textit{lla-\textit{jæwn}ok} preceded by \textit{sseleæm-\textit{\textit{li:kom}} with a permuted reply to greet workers, especially men. When greeting young women, old men use time-of-day greeting followed by \textit{lla-\textit{jæwn}ok} with its conventional answer \textit{hømmeldi:k}. The corpus contained other alternative responses as \textit{rebbi jehafdi:ak} and \textit{ba: rak\textit{a allahu fi:k}} (God bless you), mostly used by youngsters. Comparably, Rababa’h and Malkawi (2012b) have indicated a situation-specific term in Jordanian Arabic ‘\textit{jıfjı: ko \textit{\textit{\textit{li:feijjih}}} (May Allah give you health) used originally to greet someone performing a physical job, equivalent to \textit{lla-\textit{jæwn}ok} in MSA. As a corollary, expanding, narrowing, and even altering this exchange depends on age, gender and the geographical affiliation of the interactants. Exchanging the well-being enquiries primarily depends on context and degree of intimacy.

4.1.6. Requestor-requestee interaction

The requestor usually endeavours to be tactful. S/he is eager to go on record with negative redressive greeting expressions. Data exhibited that requestors regardless of being rural or urban, male or female, young or old tend to go on record with negative politeness using such courtesy phrases as \textit{møli:f\textit{nseqsi:k}.
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(May I ask you?) in order to soothe the potential threat of the requestee’s face. It can be used alone or in combination with either xi:r ʕli:k, time-of-day greetings, or sselaem-ʕli:-kum and an appropriate term of address. As the following excerpt illustrates, a young urban woman asked a man of her age about the location of a university using a courtesy phrase:

(26) Requestor (F): sselaem-ʕli:-kum xu:ja! meʃli:ʃ n-seqs-i:k?

Peace-upon-2.PL brother may 1.SG-ask-2.SG

‘Peace be upon you brother! May I ask you?’

Requestee (M): wa:h

‘Yes, you can.’

This parallels Brown’s (1998) postulate that one tends to be more courteous to strangers and people who are somehow socially distant. By dint of such contextual factors as urgency, rural and urban people in Mostaganem opt for the most face-threatening mode of action, namely going boldly on record when requesting strangers. That is, the requestor dispenses with greetings. The explanation Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) proffered for such phenomenon is that maximum efficiency is so salient that redress would absolutely diminish the communicated urgency. To put it another way, maximum efficiency surpasses face concerns.

The requestor sometimes, though rarely, opts for the politest strategy, which is “not doing the FTA”. S/he merely shows those around that s/he is having difficulty in finding something. To illustrate, a young urban woman was looking for an institution, an elderly man then asked her if she needed help. After saying that she was late for an interview, the elderly asked a bus driver to help her find the institution. Consider:

(27) Requestor (M): ǝ-l-weld! ʃendek l-bent bγa:-t t-seqs-i:k


‘O man! come over here, a girl wants to ask you.’

4.2. Leave-Taking Patterns

Leave-taking indicates that the greeting event is over. It commonly takes place in two phases, including the pre-closing phase and the closing phase. In the former stage, one of the participants signals his or her intention to withdraw from a talk using direct and indirect strategies to terminate the encounter as Eidizadeh et al. (2014) have set forth. In the latter phase, the same person normally initiates bidding farewell.

4.2.1. Sitting visits

The leave-taking pattern for sitting visits includes three major phases, including signal of leaving, counter-move, and finally, reassertion immediately followed by leave-taking.
4.2.1.1. Signal of leaving +a reason for closure

This phase is initiated by the interlocutor who wants to end the encounter, usually the senior member among the guests. Rustics and towns people tend to use such indirect topic termination strategies as an announcement of plan enaanra:hū, or biğrawaḥ (I am leaving), and a reason for closure, and indirect strategies like topic-bounding tokens, pointing to the time, and permission semhu:ni nsehal (excuse me, I should go) followed by non-verbal indicators.

4.2.1.2. Counter-move

The host may refuse the guest’s desire or request to leave even s/he does not want her/him to stay. Ostensible invitation for a drink, to lunch, an evening dinner, or to stay the night can be used in this phase in order to boost the guest’s positive face. The latter uses consolidatory comments to enhance the host’s positive face through praising his or her hospitality saying, for instance, lla:h jxlaʃ (God bless you).

4.2.1.3. Reassertion + farewell

The guest either accedes to the request or reasserts his/her desire to leave through declining the invitation, repeating the request, re-mentioning the reason, or adding another justification for being unable to stay longer. Immediately afterwards, the senior member among the guests initiates parting using a leave-taking formula and rises from his or her seat. The host responds with an echo response while seeing the visitor off. S/he may wish well to the visitor saying beslaem (goodbye), thalla:j fi rohek (take care), and send regards to the visitor’s relatives. This act is accompanied by a non-linguistic gesture. The visitor and the host kiss each other before parting. The three major phases are illustrated in the following excerpt:

(28) Guest (F): ejjarraw-u, l-ʃa ra:-h iʃærēʃSignal of leaving

Letgo-1.PL, the-dinner is-3.M.SGwaiting

‘Let’s go, I should prepare dinner.’

Host (F): he gūɗu mafreb-tuleqah-wa lewelu Counter-move

Oh! Stay not drink-2.PL neither coffee nor nothing

‘Stay, you did not even drink a coffee.’

Guest (F): we-llah ma ṣaʕi w-h ne-ʃer-b-u Reassertion
PREP-Allah from morning and we 1.PL-drink-1.PL +
terb-h-u farewell

farewell-2.PL

‘From morning up to now, we drank coffee several times. Farewell!’

Host (F): terb-uselm-ʃi a Fatma Farewell +

farewell-2.PLkiss-2.SG PREP Fatma sending regards

‘Farewell! Give my regards to Fatma.’
Guest (F): jselm-ek je-bleɣ
Bless-2.SG, will-sent
‘God bless you. I will.’

However, giving regards is optional. The urban leave-taking pattern for urban females is illustrated in the following excerpt:
(29) Guest (F): ena nruːh, l-weqt ʕend-t l-hʃa
I gothe-time have-1.SG the-dinner
‘It is time to leave and prepare dinner.’
Host (F): sˤāhhazi:d-ɣraʃr dqaeq, l-hʃa kæjen ɫjdt:r-eh,
okadd-2.SG just ten minutes the-dinner therewho make-3.SG
‘ok! But stay just for more ten minutes. Anyone could prepare dinner.’
Guest (F): llenr: h ʈbq-ʊʕ lɤ ɪrwaːh-kum
‘No, I am leaving. Goodbye! Take care of yourself.’
Host (F): be-slæma
PREP-safety
‘Goodbye!’

Rural and urban men follow the same pattern as their female counterparts to take leave from the hosts. However, they utilise different topic termination strategies, different reasons for closure, and different farewell formulae. They mostly used ena nxelli:kum (I must go) to indicate their intention to leave and ejjasse:l-ʊli:kum followed by shaking hands to close the encounter. Rural men, however, use terbhu! (farewell!) to take leave from women. When rural and urban people are collocutors in the same conversation, each of them adheres to his traditional farewell formula as the following except exhibits:
(30) Guest (F): ʕadʃbet-ek l-geʃda! ejjanruːhu
like-2. SG the-gathering so go
‘It seems you want to stay longer! Let us go.’
Host (F): (laughing)
Guest (F): ejjatbq-æw ʕla xiːr
So, stay-2.PL PREP good
‘So, goodbye!’
Host (F): be-slæma terbh-ʊ
PREP-safety Farewell-2.PL
‘Goodbye! I bid you farewell!’
The hostess, who is an old rural woman, reciprocated leave-taking to the guest, who is acquaintance, saying *beslama* (goodbye!) and then used the traditional rural parting formula to bid farewell saying *terbhu* (farewell!). A point worthy of mention here is that the rural leave-taking strategy *terbhu* with its echo or “you-too” kinds of response is the standard exit pattern among rural people. Younger people use it interchangeably with *tebqew* *ʕ* *xi:r* (goodbye) usually depending on the age of the addressee. Conversely, to townspeople, *terbhu* means ‘It is over’. According to some urban participants, it is effrontery for a young to say *terbhu* to an elderly. Other participants said that it is a casual term that can solely be used between friends and intimates with “you-too” kind of response *jrebehna wa jrebhek* (to you too).

Rural and urban people use such time-bound-leave-taking patterns as *tˤeʃʊbxi:r* (good evening) at parting in the evening and *tɔˈbɔxɔxi:r* (good night) in parting at night-time. The former is peculiar to elders, whereas the latter is used by all age groups. As a corollary, age seems to be a staple controller of social action. It overwhelmingly contributes to the discrepancy in the rural and urban greetings and leave-takings. This is consistent with Wolk’s posit that the individual’s power of age overrides that of official status (as reported by Duszak and Okulska 2011).

In the pre-closing stage, guests indicate their intention for leaving using permission, announcement for a plan, pointing to the time, and pointing out the reason for leaving, to attenuate any potential feelings of rejection, thus addressing the host’s negative face. Afterwards, the host may refuse the guest’s desire to leave and invites him/her to participate in an activity. The guest either accepts the invitation, or declines it and re-mentions the reason for leaving, or offers an apology for any disturbance that s/he caused to the host, thus addressing the latter’s negative face again. Concurrently, the host’s positive face is enhanced through praising his hospitality. It is noteworthy that people in Mostaganem attach much attention to consolidatory comments rather than mitigatory comments. Eventually, visitors bid farewell using *terbhu* by old rural people, and *tebqew ʕ* *xi:r* by two people and young rural people.

4.2.2. Chance encounters

With regard to chance meetings, not all the aforementioned phases are included in bidding farewell. It rather comprises a bipartite structure, including topic termination sequence and goodbye exchange immediately afterwards. When they know that they will encounter each other soon, rural women merely use non-verbal topic termination indicators in conjunction with the farewell formula *terbeh or terbht* with its echo response. Some use ostensible invitations to pre-close their encounters. Women who rarely see each other and will not meet soon tend to resume the greeting exchange initiated by the one who wants to leave. They wish well to the hearer saying *thallaːw fɔr waːhkom* (take care of yourself)’and *nɔtˤeqəwʕɔsːəsxi:r* (see you) to bid farewell as the following example illustrates:

(31) a. (F) eʃjɔyːja?

So fine

‘So; everything is fine?’

b. (F) lebæs
‘fine!’

a. (F) tebq-a:w ʕla xi:r wa thall-a:w firwa:hkum
‘So, goodbye! Take care of yourself.’

b. (F) ne-tleq-a:w fi setet xi:r
1.PL-meet-1.PL PREP hour good
‘I hope that we will meet again soon.’

Old women use terbḥt in lieu of tebqḥt ʕla xi:r. Hence, the anticipated time of separation following termination affects the strategies employed in topic termination. In the same vein, rural males tend to close short conversations without using topic termination indicators. They merely say s’ahha, s’ahha (ok, ok), or ejjaselam-a:lī:kum. Rural men who rarely see each other show concern for the hearer saying thalla fi rohek (take care of yourself), and wish well saying bqʕla xi:r (goodbye) to take leave from him.

By virtue of some contextual factors, urban men may go against the pattern. They end their conversation using neither a topic termination strategy nor a farewell formula. In expanded chance encounters, they terminate their talk using either a mere ejja (so) followed by sselam-a:lī:kum to take leave from each other or a re-invocation of the “how-are-greeting” followed by a promise to another meeting. Consider the following example:

(32) a. (M) a-k ya:ja?
Are-2.SG.M fine
‘Are you doing fine?’

b. (M) we-llah bien
PREP-Allah fine
‘I am very well.’

a. (M) qejsaej-tu:n tem
when 2.SG-bethere
‘At what time will you be there?’

b. (M) belaek l-hṣja
may be the-afternoon.’

‘In the afternoon, may be!’

a. (M) bəf ne-drub dawra:nd-ek
PREP 1.SG-hit turn PREP-2.SG
‘I may come to see you.’

b. (M) lla-juft ʕl-i:k
Allah-open PREP-2.SG
‘God bless you.’
a. (M)ami:n
‘Ameen!’

The phrase sejja menbeʕl and nedrъb dawra Šendek (I may come to see you) can interchangeably be used with its French equivalents a tout à l’heure, and au revoir (see you later) by urban youngsters, especially females. Setting time for a next interaction and keeping in touch boost the hearer’s positive face and consolidate the relationship between the participants. Old urban women utilise netleqæw fi sej̱a tæʕ xi:r (see you) to indicate their desire to bring the encounter to a close as shown in the following example:

(33) a. (F) ne-tleq-æw fi sej̱a tæʕxi:r tsˤɔ:m-t bo-ʃˤəhə
1.PL-meet-1.PLPREPhour PREP goodfast-2.SG.FPREP-health
‘I hope that we meet again soon. Have a blessed Ramadan!’
b. (F) jselm-ek. ḥnew în bless-2. SG. 1.PLand 2.SG.F
‘Thank you. The same to you.’

The response to the context-dependent leave-taking strategy tsˤɔ:m bæʃˤəhaʔ(Have a blessed Ramadan!) is a “you-too” kind of response, typically used by elders. By contrast, young women use ça va (fine?) to terminate their topic. To illustrate, two intimate young women met accidentally at the mall, the girl who was in a hurry-initiated topic termination via resuming the greeting ça va? (fine?) accompanied by a promise nʔaktvʔ wə nʃejetlek (I will give you a call) as a consolidatory comment. She closed the encounter saying bye bye! (Goodbye) menbeʕl (see you soon). A point worthy of mention here is that, according to some participants, if a younger greets or takes leave from elder using French expressions, he or she will be regarded as arrogant and ill-mannered. Moreover, inasmuch as the time of separation after closing is expected to be a long-term period, people wish well to each other and give their regards before closing their encounter.

In short, if a chance meeting ends with passing-by-greeting and no conversation has been started, then both the pre-closing phase and the closing phase will be dispensed with. On the contrary, if a long conversation was opened, and one of the interactants has suddenly left at the end of that conversation without closure, s/he might threaten the addressee’s positive face and would be perceived as rude.

4.2.3. Customer-shopkeeper leave-taking pattern

When the transaction is completed, the interlocutors proceed to the final phase of the encounter. The leave-taking pattern for young rural men is based on a bipartite formula sequence: lla-jšewnoken (May God help you) is said by the customer, həmma:ldi:k (May Allah bless your parents) is the shopkeeper’s response. Contrariwise, old rural people tend to expand leave-taking through using such pleasant prayer for the shopkeeper as lla-jšeddi:loʕ and lla-jfețeh fli:k (May Allah bless you abundantly). The leave-taking formula can also be accompanied by sseleem--initialized, especially by young men. Inasmuch as
interactions between strangers of the opposite sex, especially youngsters, contravene the rural societal
norms, parting takes place between acquaintances and relatives only.

Urban customers initiate parting too by using either sselæm-ǝli:ıkum or lla-jeunok. The
shopkeeper’s response hommeldi:k can interchangeably be used with beslema, especially by young urban
people. They also use rebbi jehafel ek, s'ahha (May God bless you, thank you), s'ahha (thanks), and
marbha bi:ki:m (You are welcome) to create an amicable atmosphere for business and promote solidarity.
Acquaintances may utilise context-dependent leave-taking strategies like s'ahha fʕ:ra:k (Have a good
lunch) with its response jselmek (God bless you).

4.2.4. Bidding farewell to the sick

To take leave from the sick, the leaver, usually the elder member amongst visitors, initiates the pre-
closing and the closing exchange. In the following excerpt, the visitor, who is an old rural woman, used
rrawh (we should go) as a topic termination indicator (We should go) followed by ejja terbho! (farewell!) with “you-too” kind of response and good wishes to close the encounter:

(34) Visitor1 (F): rrawh-u
go-1.PL
‘We should go.’
Visitor2 (F): wa:h
‘Yes,’
Visitor1 (F): ejjaterb-u
so, farewell-2.PL
‘So, farewell!’
Visitor2 (F):terb-u wǝ ila-jæf-ı:k
farewell-2.PL and Allah-heal-2.F.SG
‘Farewell! I wish you aspeedy recovery.’
Visitor3 (F): ejjaterb-u
so farewell-2.PL
‘So, farewell!’
Patient (F): hnewnt1
1.PL and 2.F.SG
‘The same to you.’

Their male counterparts, on the other hand, tend to wish speedy recovery immediately followed by
sselæm-ǝli:ıkum. Youngsters use tebqæw ǝl x:i:r (goodbye) and wish a speedy recovery to the sick to
enhance the addressee’s positive face. Urban people use supporting strategies to terminate the encounter
such as t'du:x nfa:llah (Never mind, may it be a purification, if Allah wills), ǝlla:h jerzæk ʃʃø, rebbi
“Wish you speedy recovery.” Additionally, the greeting expressions can be utilised to take leave from the sick. The following extract, which is the closing sequence of Example 21, illustrates such case:

(35) Visitor I (M): jالفی:ک slæmt-ek
PREP safety-2.SG
‘Thank God for your safety.’

Patient (M): jsلم-ek
bless-2. SG
‘God bless you.’

Urban people conspicuously lessen the leave-taking sequence. A plausible explanation is that urban people are more aware of the fact that one should pay a flying visit to the sick.

4.2.5. Passerby-worker closings

Data showed that leave-taking takes place only when familiar interactants open a conversation. The leaver closes the conversation via resuming the greeting formula یلا-یکسنوک preceded by یکیا. Rural people use یتممح:لی:ک as a response, whereas urban people use either یتمملدی:ک or یبسلم. However, when the encounter involves mere passing greeting, the farewell exchange will be dispensed with.

4.2.6. Requestor-requestee interaction

Taking leave from the requestee includes thanking only. Old rural people use یتممح:لی:ک coupled with such blessings as یجمیر یمدغحی (God bless you). Young rural people and townspeople generally use یسلا:یت (thank you) with ییُجِی:ک یسلا:یت (May God bless you with good health) as a response. Such thanking expressions as یمرسی (thank you) with its response یدِرِن or یا پاس دِقو (Do not mention it) coupled with blessings are employed by some urban people, especially young women. That is, requestors tend to enhance the requestee’s positive face through thanking and expressing gratitude. Hence, the relative social distance between the collocutors seems to be one of the basic determiners of the appropriate level of politeness as Holmes (1992) has contended.

Conclusion

This study has revealed that each social situation demands a certain kind of greeting and leave-taking formula that conforms to a certain communicative norm. As long as the “how-are-you” questions in MSA could, in certain contexts, faithfully be answered, they are not only expressions of politeness, but also real questions after the hearer’s well-being. Moreover, it has been found that it is inadequate to show interest in the hearer but also in the hearer’s family, especially between relatives and acquaintances in order to save and enhance the addressee’s positive face. Otherwise, not asking after the addressee’s welfare may be considered as underestimation. Besides, age, gender, degree of intimacy, and such contextual factors as regional affiliation, the time elapsed since the interlocutors’ last encounter, the anticipated time of separation following termination, the type of encounter, and the sociocultural conventions appear to play
a pivotal role in the initiation, selection, and answering the greeting and leave-taking formulae. They seem to be the main determinants of the expansiveness, form, and functions of greetings and farewells. Moreover, greetings and leave-takings serve such socio-pragmatic functions as welcoming, establishing social rapport through showing concern for the hearer and his relatives, boosting intimacy and camaraderie, and enhance the in-group solidarity bonds using appropriate terms of address, diminutives, and endearments. Some greeting and leave-taking formulae carry an information load, convey information about the interlocutors’ relationship, and identify attitudes towards relationships such as satisfaction, appreciation, deference, and umbrage. As the findings have revealed, some discrepancies might potentially create misunderstandings when rural and urban people come into contact. Hence, understanding the illocutionary force of greeting and leave-taking speech acts requires shared cultural knowledge.
دراسة اجتماعية - برامجية لأنماط التحية والاستدان باللغة العربية الجزائرية في منطقة مستغانم

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الملخص
الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو تحقيق الأهداف التالية:

- تحليل السياق الاجتماعي والاقتصادي لанаيات التحية والاستدان بتبادل معلومات وذوق وثقافة وسلوكيات النظام الاجتماعي.
- التحقق من التأثير الجماعي والذاتي لانايات التحية والاستدان بتبادل معلومات وذوق وثقافة وسلوكيات النظام الاجتماعي.

وقد استخدمت أعضاء البحث الثلاث أدوات تمثيلية لجمع البيانات، بما في ذلك رصد محادثات مفتوحة ودراسة صوتية وتحليلات من خلال شفهية. وتم تحليل البيانات التي جمعت ضمن نموذج التحية لبرك وريسون كمتر للدكتور. كشفت النتائج من أوجه تشابه واختلاف في أسلوب التفاعل الاجتماعي والاستدان باللغة العربية بين الرفيق ومجتمعه وفصول الأفكار والوعي الاجتماعي والاقتصادي، ونسبة المشاركة في اختيار التحية وبدنها والاستدان باللغة العربية، ووظيفة كل منها. كما أنها أهم المحددات للاستراتيجيات التأليف.

توضح النتائج الفرضية القائمة بأن التحليات ليس لها معنى أو وظيفة تتحضر في تحسين التواصل الاجتماعي لأنماط التحية ولها وظائف اجتماعية مقاومة كالتحريج ومحاولة الحصول على معلومات ومرافقة سلوكية. وتحديد العواطف والمواعيد تناول هذه العلاقات كالانغرام، والرساء، والاستتاء، وإبداء الاهتمام بكل من السامع وفقاً لألفة بين أفراد المجتمع.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاجتماعية - المقابلة، ناملة، الاستدان باللغة العربية المحكية في مستغانم، نظرية التأليف.
Endnotes

1 The short form of ǝllâ:h jer hem weldi:k ‘May Allah bless your parents.
2 People who show strict adherence to Islamic principles.

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