Linguistisches Kolloquium

UNIVERSITÄT BAYREUTH

Variation in Moroccan Arabic: What Can Be Revealed by Discourse Analysis

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This presentation illustrates some of the results obtained from a field study addressing linguistic variation in Moroccan Arabic. The aim of the research is the identification of the social and situational factors that guide the speakers' linguistic choices in contexts of dialect contact. To this purpose, two variables have been examined using analytical approaches taken from discourse analysis. In the case of the first variable, the alternation between two phonemes (/g/ and /q/) which are both reflexes of Old Arabic /q/, it is shown that some speakers often produce the same lexeme using both phonemes in the course of a single communicative event (a semi-controlled verbal task); this appears to be done either to distinguish focused from presupposed information, or to adopt different roles in the participation framework (Goffman 1979). The second variable, the alternation between the two verbs /dwa/ and /hdərˤ/ (both corresponding to the English "to talk" or "to speak"), is being studied by comparing the pragmatic and semantic functions fulfilled by the two lexemes in the context of single interactions, with data taken from multiple sources. The results, although partial, allow to advance some hypotheses on the diachronic evolution of the indexations of the two lexemes.