

# Comparative Linguistics of Meknasi and Er-Rissani Dialects: Phonological, Morphological, and Socio-Cultural Dimensions in Moroccan Arabic Varieties

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## Comparative Linguistics of Meknasi and Er-Rissani Dialects: Phonological, Morphological, and Socio-Cultural Dimensions in Moroccan Arabic Varieties

### Abstract:

**Purpose:** The study delves into the intricate realm of language and its regional variations, a topic widely explored across multiple linguistic branches, including sociolinguistics, phonetics, socio-cultural, and applied linguistics. Each of these branches brings forth a unique perspective, defining regional variation tailored to its specific theoretical framework. Typically, general descriptions of languages prioritize the standard variety in terms of pronunciation or vocabulary, but this does not necessarily rank it above other varieties. It is pivotal to understand the distinction between regional dialects, which differentiate residents of one region from another, and social dialects that align with specific social groups. Dialect geographers have endeavored to visually represent these linguistic nuances through 'dialect atlases,' employing 'isoglosses' to demarcate the geographical distribution of linguistic features. An exemplar distinction is evident between the Meknes community's use of the word /qal/ and Errachidia Province's use of /gal/.

**Methodology:** To elucidate the methodological framework of this study, a qualitative approach was employed, primarily through interviews, which were chosen based on their high acceptance within the local communities. This approach not only bolstered the reliability of the data gathered but also aligned with the nature of our linguistic inquiry.

**Findings:** The study finds that examining the broader linguistic practices of the Meknasi and Er-Rissani populations, especially in social interactions, offers insights into the underlying reasons for these linguistic disparities. Crucially, factors such as ethnic background, an individual's social and familial lineage, and the surrounding environment play significant roles in shaping linguistic choices, be it in Amazigh, Arabic, or southern Arabic dialects. This study further underscores the influence of modern and traditional environments on word selection.

**Keywords:** *Sociolinguistics; regional variation; ethnic background; dialects; Linguistic disparities.*

## 1 Introduction

Languages have continuously evolved throughout history. Some fade away, like Celtic, Sanskrit, and Hittite, while others morph and give birth to new linguistic forms. Take, for example, Vulgar Latin, which blossomed into dialects known as Romance. These dialects then evolved into today's Romance languages: Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, French, and Romanian. This transformation is evidence that language is a vibrant system, adapting to meet the communication demands of its users.

While linguistic changes are a testament to the fluidity of language, these shifts can sometimes introduce instability. However, interestingly, this instability does not pose communication challenges. The diverse elements of language remain structured, ensuring seamless interaction. Sociolinguistics, a branch of Linguistics focused on studying language variation and evolution, validates that such variations follow structured patterns. This ensures that despite changes, speakers can understand one another.

Languages naturally vary due to user preferences and external influences from other languages and cultures. These differences manifest in syntax, morphology, phonology, and more. Wolfram (2006, p. 333) aptly captures this with, "If structure is at the heart of language, then variation defines its soul."

Since language is ever-changing, understanding linguistic variation becomes crucial during the learning process, be it for native, second, or foreign languages. Renowned linguists Weinreich, Labov, and Herzog (1968) believe variation is intrinsic to grammar and becomes part of a speaker's internal knowledge over time. Consequently, it is vital to impart education on these variable linguistic structures influenced by language or the social backdrop of the speaker community. This study, therefore, aims to highlight the significance of language variation in Morocco and offers activity suggestions to explore the subject.

Currently, sociolinguists lean more towards exploring social language variations than regional ones. However, to truly grasp the methods adopted in studying social variations, we must revisit foundational work in regional dialectology. This retrospection illuminates the evolution of current research methodologies. Even though studying

regional variations presents challenges, many in the sociolinguistics field view it as a core component of their discipline, emphasizing how languages shift across geographies.

In light of the above, this study attempts to answer the following inquiries:

- What parameters can help differentiate traditional accents, like those of Er-Rissani speakers, from modern ones, such as those of Meknasi speakers?
- How can we determine if Meknasi Speakers (MSs) and Er-Rissani Speakers (RSs) perceive their spoken language (linguistic variables) differently?
- How does geographical location influence an individual's linguistic features?

After establishing the broader context of sociolinguistic variations and their influence on speech patterns, it is imperative to delve deeper into the specific factors that shape them. Understanding the nuances of this field allows for a richer interpretation of regional dialects and the myriad influences that determine them. This understanding sets the stage for our specific research focus. "Sociolinguistic variations, driven by factors such as geography and ethnic background, offer insights into a speaker's origin and knowledge of language. It is hypothesized that linguistic cues, such as accents, provide listeners with information regarding the speaker's origin. Additionally, geographical barriers like rivers, mountain ranges, or barren expanses, alongside ethnic backgrounds, can distinctively separate two populations, like Meknes and Er-Rissani, and impact the phonological characteristics of an individual's language.

## 2 Review of literature

### 2.1 Linguistic Identity and Differentiation

The term "linguistic repertoire" encompasses the complete set of linguistic abilities and vocabulary that a person possesses, allowing them to communicate effectively with others. Essentially, this repertoire encompasses at least one language or dialect unique to an individual. Some are multilingual, meaning they are proficient in more than two languages. For instance, Morocco stands out as a multilingual nation, given its use of Moroccan Arabic, Standard Arabic, Amazigh, French, and even Spanish. Looking at Er-Rissani, we observe a culturally diverse multilingual environment, with influences from Al-Filali, Hartani, Amazighi, and Aribi cultures. In such a setting, the local populace is keenly aware of both linguistic and cultural nuances when interacting with various social groups.

An interesting observation is that while it might be expected for one's linguistic repertoire to mirror another's understanding, the reality is quite different. Everyone boasts a unique linguistic repertoire, which might be more or less expansive than their peers. The beauty of language is its inherent variability. A deep dive into any language reveals a breadth of internal variations, with speakers making dynamic choices from the plethora of linguistic tools at their disposal. For instance, a resident of Er-Rissani, even if originally from a different locale, may be familiar with and employ the "Al-Filali," "Aribi," and "Amazighi" dialects, given the diversity of languages within their repertoire.

Sociolinguists have divided the study of linguistic repertoires into two main categories: micro-sociolinguistics and macro-sociolinguistics (Trudgill, 2000). While the former delves into the intricate relationship between language and society individually, the latter explores broader societal language trends, such as language attitudes, shifts, and interactions among speech communities. Ennaji .M and Sadiqi . F (1994, p. 74) eloquently clarified this distinction, noting that micro-sociolinguistics hones in on individual language variations, while macro-sociolinguistics examines the role of language within the broader societal canvas.

### 2.2 Language Variation and Its Implication

Complexity Theory posits that language is an ever-evolving dynamic system, adapting continuously to cater to communicative needs (Larsen-Freeman; Cameron, 2007). As speakers tweak language for effective communication, it transforms over time. At its core, language is influenced by its usage, and while it remains dynamic, it also maintains a consistency that allows it to be identifiable over time.

Speakers choose linguistic conventions (words and structures) based on prior experiences in similar communicative situations. However, listeners might interpret these conventions based on their own experiences, making every communication act somewhat unique. This dynamic interaction between speakers, listeners, and context often results in linguistic variations.

Sociolinguist Labov (1972) perceives language as a communal tool for communication, emphasizing its diverse nature. He suggests that variation is inherent and can be observed in daily vernacular. Simply put, variation can be seen as multiple ways of expressing the same idea. Such variations are evident across all aspects of language, from lexical choices across cultures (e.g., the Spanish-speaking world's various terms for beans) to semantic variations in English (e.g., the word "cool" meaning temperature-related or a colloquial term for "fashionable").

Given that language is a reflection of society and its dynamic nature, it is evident that variation is omnipresent. As Crystal (1963) aptly states, language is shaped by its users, marking it as a societal phenomenon.

This raises an educational point: teaching linguistic variation, regardless of whether the language is native or foreign. Understanding these variations can assist students in avoiding misinterpretations and pronunciation issues. It is crucial to expose learners to more than just textbook content. Engaging with native speakers exploring media like movies, music, and even online resources can help provide a comprehensive understanding. This approach helps

students appreciate the richness of linguistic variations and prepares them for more genuine interactions in a global context.

### 2.3 Language vs. Dialect: An Exploration

The distinction between language and dialect traces back to the influence of Greek culture during the Renaissance, emphasizing the presence of written varieties (Haugen, 1966a). A key difference often lies in prestige; languages are perceived as more prestigious, while dialects can be seen as nonstandard or local variations.

Haugen (1966a) highlights the ambiguity in these terms. For many, a dialect is simply a local variation of a primary language. However, the term 'language' can denote either an individual linguistic rule or a broader set of related norms, with 'dialect' referring to a specific norm.

The challenge in defining 'language' arises from the vast array of communication systems we encounter. It might be more insightful to recognize that languages can differ significantly and delve into what qualifies as a language versus a dialect.

Languages are diverse. For example, Hudson (1996) suggests that a language variety is a collection of linguistic elements with a shared distribution. Thus, varieties like Er-Rissani Arabic, Meknasi Arabic, and Fassi Arabic, among others, emerged. Individuals from diverse backgrounds might speak varied languages or dialects. A person can be proficient in multiple dialects, especially if they have lived in different regions. For instance, regardless of their ethnicity (whether Al-Filali or Aribi), residents of Er-Rissani or Meknes, if originally from different cities, might exhibit diverse language varieties. However, their primary language, Moroccan Arabic or Tamazight, remains consistent.

In essence, while distinguishing between 'language' and 'dialect' can be challenging, these terms remain pivotal in sociolinguistic studies, offering insights into both regional and social linguistic variations.

### 2.4 Understanding Accent in Phonetics and Sociolinguistics:

Let us delve into the concept of accent from the perspectives of phonetics and sociolinguistics.

Phonetics, a branch of linguistics focused on speech sounds, perceives an accent as a distinct pronunciation shaped by the sound habits of a speaker's native language when they use another language (O'Grady et al., 2005). Here, the emphasis is on contrasting phonetic and phonological attributes across languages, rather than linguistic rules.

According to Merriam-Webster (n.d.) Online Dictionary describes an accent as "a manner of speaking distinctly to a group, especially native or inhabitants of a region". This implies that an accent is an evident characteristic of how one speaks and can indicate whether speakers share a language.

Dialect and accent, while sometimes used interchangeably, have nuances. As Gill (1994) points out: "Dialects often relate to regional language variations, while accents pertain to pronunciation differences among nationalities."

Sociolinguistics adopts a broader lens, seeing accents as variation markers across all linguistic levels. They are not just about how someone speaks; they signify where someone comes from. Munro & Derwing (1995a) even regard accent as a hallmark of social identity. Becker (1995) posits that accents can be the most revealing aspect of one's linguistic identity, highlighting a speaker's regional origin or cultural background regardless of spoken language.

In essence, through the lens of sociolinguistics, accent becomes a powerful tool that narrates a person's association with a particular community or group.

In our subsequent discussion, we will explore regional and social linguistic variations and their influence on speech.

### 2.5 Language and the Individual Speaker

#### 2.5.1 Regional Varieties

When probing into the nuances of language, regional differences provide an immediate window into its diversity. As one traverses vast areas where a language has long been spoken, unique pronunciations, word choices, structures, and rules become evident. These variations often possess a local flair, giving each region its distinct linguistic color. Such variations are commonly recognized as regional dialects.

Interestingly, the line separating dialects from languages is not just about vocabulary or pronunciation; it is also geographical. Typically, a region boasts its linguistic fingerprint, encompassing differences in sound, structure, and even idiomatic expressions. For instance, someone from Er-Rissani or Meknes is likely to exhibit distinct linguistic characteristics native to that region, a phenomenon referred to as a regional dialect.

Linguistic evolution, which can involve introducing new vocabulary or even changing how words are pronounced, tends to ripple from one locale to its neighbors. For example, a linguistic trend emerging in Meknes or Er-Rissani might soon be adopted by nearby cities like Fez or Erfoud but take longer to reach distant ones like Rabat or Tanger due to socio-cultural and socio-economic dynamics (Ennaji & Sadiqi, 1994).

In wrapping up this section, it is worth noting that the linguistic demarcation between places like Meknes and Er-Rissani is fluid, adapting to various contexts. This dynamism in language mirrors the ever-evolving tapestry of human interactions, social contexts, and group distinctions. To truly understand these finer distinctions, we must pinpoint linguistic traits tied to group disparities.

### 2.5.2 Social Linguistic Varieties

Delving into regional linguistic variations, we often stumble upon intricate social layers intertwined within. Investigating social dialects offers a distinct set of challenges compared to examining geographically-bound dialects. The aim is not just to understand how language varies across societal segments but also to discern the broader implications of this variation on both linguistic theory and daily interactions. Notably, researchers like Labov have made strides in methodically examining social dialects, emphasizing hypothesis formulation, systematic sampling, data analysis, and connecting these findings to overarching linguistic and societal themes.

The task of pinpointing social variation, however, can be intricate due to the multitude of factors influencing it— from one's profession and residence to their cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. However, akin to regional varieties, social, linguistic variations also manifest through differences in pronunciation, lexicon, and grammar.

Take Er-Rissani as an example: here, elements such as one's accent, place of residence, and daily routines often determine the specific dialect spoken. Localities like "Alfida," "Abouam", and "Wlad abd lhlhim" exhibit distinct Arabic dialects, suggesting a mosaic of social groups, each with unique linguistic patterns, customs, and practices. Similarly, Meknes presents a rich tapestry of cultural and linguistic diversity, with areas like "Bni-Mhmmmed," "Borj Meshqoq," "Elkasba," and "Mellah" each contributing their unique linguistic and cultural flavors.

In places like Meknes and Er-Rissani, spoken dialect often correlates with societal standings. Rural dwellers or native city speakers, for instance, may employ a dialect perceived as more traditional or "lower" in the linguistic hierarchy. In contrast, frequent travelers or those more exposed to modern linguistic trends might lean towards "higher" or more standardized forms of Arabic.

Ennaji and Sadiqi (1994) illuminate this dynamic further by suggesting that linguistic innovations within a lower social echelon might remain isolated or be slow to influence upper echelons. Conversely, linguistic trends emerging from the elite may never permeate down or take significant time to do so.

Labov's work (1970) sheds light on this, aiming to chart the linguistic characteristics of specific social groups or sociolects. He argues that when accounting for free variation, an individual's linguistic style (idiolect) can often encapsulate broader linguistic tendencies within their linguistic community.

## 3 Methodology

This section outlines the methodological approach anchoring our study, with a significant emphasis on interviews. The rationale for selecting interviews, whether direct or indirect, arises from their favorable reception among the local populace. This strengthens the credibility and efficacy of the data collection process. Through face-to-face interactions, the researcher has the unique opportunity to closely observe and document the interviewees' pronunciations, ensuring the genuine lexicon—central to our research objectives—is meticulously recorded. Following these interactions, a comprehensive analysis will be undertaken.

The overarching ambition of this research is twofold: firstly, to discern the spectrum of vocabulary used, pinpointing the most and least prevalent terms, and secondly, to weave a narrative around participants' sentiments on linguistic accuracy without venturing into tests of significance owing to the descriptive nature of our linguistic variables.

### 3.1 Participants

The study will tap into a diverse cohort of native individuals who will enrich the research with a variety of synonyms and insights pertinent to the topic at hand. Building a foundation of trust and mutual understanding with our respondents is central to the success of this endeavor. The distinct advantage of opting for skilled interviewers is their ability to probe deeper into responses, facilitating a richer understanding by seeking elaboration or clarity where needed. It is paramount to underscore that all our participants originate from the regions under study: Er-Rissani and Meknes.

Given the study's emphasis on linguistic variations, it is imperative to offer a brief overview of the language dynamics involved. The primary language (L1) in focus is Moroccan Arabic, the native tongue of our participants.

### 3.2 Data analysis

#### 3.2.1 The linguistic variable

##### Phonological variables:

**Table (1):** Analysis of Linguistic Variables in Meknes and Er-Rissani Speech Patterns

		[p] / [b]	
Er-Rissani		Meknes	Meaning
[ppah]		[bbah]	His father
[ppah]		[bbah]	Nothing
[pidu]		[bidu]	Bottle
[sppat]		[sbbat]	Shoe

The first table presents a comparative analysis of linguistic variables, specifically focusing on the bilabial sounds [p] and [b] as they manifest in the spoken languages of both Meknes and Er-Rissani.

For clarity, when delving into phonological nuances, it is observed that individuals from Er-Rissani predominantly articulate the [p] sound. Conversely, the Meknesi people exhibit a distinct inclination towards the [b] sound.

**Table (2):** Analysis of Alveolar Sounds in Meknes and Er-Rissani Speech Patterns

<u>[t] / [d]</u>		
Er-Rissani	Meknes	Meaning
[ð'tar]	[ð'dar]	House
[iti]	[jdi]	Hand
[ti]	[di]	Take
[tura]	[dura]	Tour
[kttab]	[kddab]	Lair
[tʔanja]	[ddanja]	World
[tʔin]	[ddin]	Religion/ loan

The purpose of this table is to illuminate the distinctions in linguistic variables, specifically the alveolar sounds [t] and [d], as they appear in the spoken dialects of Meknes and Er-Rissani.

To provide a clearer picture, phonologically speaking, Er-Rissani residents predominantly use the [t] sound. In contrast, those from Meknes show a pronounced preference for the [d] sound.

**Table (3):** Unpacking Velar-Glottal Sounds in Meknes and Er-Rissani Conversations

<u>[g] / [q]</u>		
Er-Rissani	Meknes	Meaning
[grib]	[qrib]	Near
[gal]	[qal]	Said
[zgag]	[zqaq]	Road/ avenue!
[dgig]	[dqi q]	Flour
[gbila]	[qbila]	Before
[gtræn]	[qtræn]	Tar

Through the insights garnered from our interviews, we could discern the distinct consonantal preferences, particularly the velar-glottal sounds [g] and [q], within the spoken dialects of Meknes and Er-Rissani.

To elucidate, individuals from Er-Rissani frequently employ the [g] sound when communicating, as exemplified in the phrase /galk khoya/ (my brother told you). In contrast, those hailing from Meknes predominantly utilize the [q] sound, evident in phrases like /qalik khoya/ (my brother told you).

**Table (4):** Examining Consonantal Preferences in Meknes and Er-Rissani Speech Patterns

<u>[ʃ] / [s]</u>		
Er-Rissani	Meknes	Meaning
[ʃəmʃ]	[səms]	Sun
[ʃta]	[sta]	Rain
[ʃafni]	[safni]	He saw me
[mateʃa]	[matesa]	Tomato

The insights from our interactions with the interviewees highlight the distinct consonantal tendencies, especially between the alveo-palatal and alveolar sounds [ʃ] and [s], within the spoken dialects of Meknes and Er-Rissani.

Notably, Er-Rissani speakers tend to use the [ʃ] sound in contexts where, traditionally, the [s] sound would be expected. This is in stark contrast to the Meknesi speakers, who predominantly adhere to using the [s] sound in similar linguistic scenarios.

**Table (5):** Distinctive Consonantal Patterns in Meknes and Er-Rissani Dialects

<u>[ʒ] / [z]</u>		
Er-Rissani	Meknes	Meaning
[raʒl]	[razl]	Man
[ʒa]	[za]	Came
[nʒəh]	[nzəh]	Succeeded
[ʒib]	[zib]	Bring/ fetch

The table presented provides a comparative analysis of the consonantal variations, specifically between the alveo-palatal and alveolar sounds [ʒ] and [z], in the spoken dialects of Meknes and Er-Rissani.



Intriguingly, Er-Rissani speakers consistently employ the [ʒ] sound in their daily conversations, aligning closely with the standard Arabic pronunciation. In contrast, Meknasi speakers exhibit a unique linguistic nuance, often substituting the traditional [ʒ] sound with [z].

### Phonological processes:

**Table (6):** Phonological Processes in Meknes and Er-Rissani Dialects

<i>Insertion and elision</i>		
Er-Rissani	Meknes	Meaning
[maklt]	[maklit]	I didn't eat
[lust]	[lwəst]	Middle/ center
[ba]	[bRa]	Wants
[dʃi]	[hadʃi]	This
[ʃu]	[ʃuf]	See/ look
[Xbarku]	[Xbarkum]	How are you doing?
[hmku]	[hmku]	Your personal affair
[djalku]	[djalkum]	Yours

The presented table, Table 6, offers a closer look into the distinct phonological processes, particularly 'Insertion' and 'Elision,' that characterize the spoken dialects of Meknes and Er-Rissani.

From the data, it is evident that speakers from Er-Rissani often tend to elision, omitting sounds from various positions within a word. A prime example can be seen in their preference for /ʃu/ over the more complete /ʃuf/. In contrast, the Meknasi dialect showcases a pattern of inserting sounds into words based on specific phonological contexts.

### Morphological variables:

**Table (7):** Morphological Variations in Meknes and Er-Rissani Dialects

<i>Prefix: Free morpheme:</i>		
Er-Rissani	Meknes	Meaning
[inbRi]	[htanbRi]	when I want
[indarbK]	[Htandarbk], [RandarbK]	I will beat you/ when I beat you

Table 7 outlines the unique morphological tendencies, specifically regarding prefixes as free morphemes, observed in the dialects of Meknes and Er-Rissani.

From the data presented, it is evident that there is a clear divergence in the linguistic choices of the two regions when signifying future actions. Er-Rissani inhabitants predominantly use the prefix /in\_ / to denote the future, whereas those from Meknes lean towards the /hta\_ / prefix to express the same temporal context.

**Table 8:** Morphological Preferences in Meknes and Er-Rissani Dialects

<i>Bound morpheme:</i>		
Er-Rissani	Meknes	Meaning
[aʃbit]	[ʃnubRit]	What do you want?
[aʃdak]	[ʃnuhadak]	What is that?
[Afri:t]	[ʃnuʃrit]	What did you buy?

Table 8 provides an insightful look into the distinct morphological tendencies, specifically regarding prefixes as bound morphemes, in the dialects spoken in Meknes and Er-Rissani.

From the data collated in this table, we observe that the Er-Rissani community prefers the bound morpheme /aʃ\_ /. In contrast, Meknasi speakers typically employ the bound morpheme /ʃnu\_ / when framing inquiries.

### 3.2.2 Vocabularies

**Table (9):** Dialectal Vocabulary Distinctions Between Meknes and Er-Rissani

Er-Rissani	Meknes	Meaning
[ħnija]	[kuzina]	Kitchen
[mʃrija]	[bit]	Room
[sluqija]	[ruɡa:r]	Drain
[lmtərb]	[itrudjalzit]	A liter of oil
[mida]	[twaliʃ]	Toilet
[səndas]. Arabic		
[rwa]	[kuri]	Corral
[ħasi]	[bir]	Well
[qwijs]	[lavabu]	Sink
[zakru:m]	[saqta]	Lock
[spala]	[rɔbine]	Faucet
[ħzæm]. Arabic	[smta]	Belt
[kafa]	[matla]	Blanket
[dwirija]	[bitdjaf]	Living-room
[mnʒura]	[ʃante]	Road
[bhra]	[ʕad]	Just
[ʔeda ħija]	[ʔeda Xdra]	Unpoached egg
[dmæn]	[ħawli]	Sheep
[zad]	[tani]	Again
[kməd]	[msəd]	Massage
[mizab]. Arabic	[qadus]	Gutter
[ħazni]	[ʃRli]	My business
[dha]	[wlla]	Becomes/ appointed as
[taqa]	[ʃarjam]	Window
[nqqər]	[nfəd]	Clean
[buʃam]	[bartal]	A bird
[taskala]	[sllum]	Ladder
[ħbil]	[ħmaq]	Foolish
[wsada]. Arabic	[mXda]	Pillow
[ʃin]	[Xaib]	Bad
[taX, taX]	[daRja, daRja]	Quickly
[ʕin, ətər]	[pasju]	Balcony
[zmani]	[raʃli]	My husband
[dhas]	[zħam]	Crowding
[drbəh]	[ħamdullah]	Praise be to Allah
[ʕadini]	[tawsni]	Leave me
[Rtar]	[təbsil]	A dish
[ħap]	[bus]	kiss
[tarwʕ]	[louh]	Threw
[lʕlali]	[stoh]	Up
[əʔjah]	[ah]	Yes

Table 9 offers an insightful comparison of the vocabulary choices predominant in the dialects of Meknes and Er-Rissani. From the data, it is evident that each community boasts distinct lexical choices that mirror their unique linguistic heritage and influences.

Er-Rissani speakers lean more towards traditional vocabularies, often drawing from standard Arabic. In contrast, the Meknesi dialect reflects the community's adaptation to a rapidly changing world, favoring modern lexemes influenced by globalization and the ever-evolving dynamics of their society.

#### 4 Summary of the findings

Our comprehensive analysis has illuminated intriguing perceptions and biases embedded within each community concerning their respective dialects. When inquiring about these dialectal preferences, one can discern the deeply rooted linguistic pride and identity intertwined with their social fabric.



For instance, an individual from Er-Rissani tends to perceive the Meknes dialect as having a more 'feminine' undertone. In contrast, a Meknes local might describe the Er-Rissani dialect as somewhat 'old-fashioned' or traditional, using the term 'Beldia.'

Peeling back the layers, Er-Rissani locals advocate for a robust connection between one's character, actions, and language, emphasizing a more 'masculine' paradigm in all aspects of life. Conversely, those from Meknes champion modernity, aligning their linguistic choices with progressive and contemporary ideals.

A closer observation of Er-Rissani reveals a society grounded in tradition, reflecting simplicity in their way of life. Linguistically, this translates into a penchant for elision, diminutives, and a conservative lexicon. Interestingly, Er-Rissani's linguistic heritage intertwines deeply with standard Arabic. This affiliation is evident in their tendency to incorporate borrowed words while distancing themselves from colonial languages like French and Spanish.

Meknes, on the other hand, stands as a beacon of modernity, shaped and influenced by the winds of globalization. This modern influence is palpable in their linguistic choices. Code-switching is a common phenomenon among Meknasi speakers, showcasing their adaptability and integration of multiple languages. Furthermore, the use of short vowels in their speech is a testament to their evolving and dynamic linguistic landscape.

In essence, while both communities are distinct in their linguistic choices and perceptions, they provide a rich tapestry of cultural and linguistic diversity, each adding value to the vast mosaic of Moroccan dialects.

## 5 Recommendations

Understanding and appreciating the distinctiveness and richness of the Meknasi and Er-Rissani dialects is paramount. To this end, educational institutions and cultural organizations should actively champion an appreciation of linguistic diversity. By initiating workshops and interactive sessions, the younger generation can be educated about the historical and cultural significance of these dialects, emphasizing the equal importance of every linguistic variation.

Building on this foundation of appreciation, there is a pressing need for meticulous documentation and preservation of the unique phonological, morphological, and lexical features of these dialects. In an age of rapid globalization and its consequent effects on local dialects, establishing a comprehensive linguistic database or a digital archive would be pivotal in ensuring these dialects do not fade into obscurity.

As we foster a deeper appreciation, it is equally important to enhance mutual understanding among the communities. Cross-cultural communication training is a robust tool to bridge potential biases and misconceptions. Addressing perceptions, such as one dialect being 'feminine' or 'old-fashioned,' communities can be ushered towards a more inclusive understanding.

Further enriching this understanding, integrating regional dialect studies into educational curricula can immerse students in their linguistic heritage. This deep dive not only instills linguistic pride but also equips students with the nuances of cross-dialectal comprehension, preparing them for more diverse interactions in their future endeavors.

Beyond the immediate scope of Meknes and Er-Rissani, there is a vast Moroccan linguistic landscape awaiting exploration. Embarking on further research and comparative studies with other regional dialects will paint a comprehensive picture of the country's linguistic diversity, enriching our collective understanding.

However, knowledge without engagement might not bear the desired fruit. Hence, socio-cultural programs, wherein members from both regions collaborate, can be pivotal. Encouraging dialogue through joint projects, stories, or events can allow individuals to experience the beauty of each dialect firsthand.

Lastly, the youth stands at the crossroads of tradition and modernity. By establishing linguistic platforms, such as debate clubs or storytelling events focusing on regional dialects, young individuals can find a voice in their dialect. This not only ensures the dialect's continued relevance but also fosters a sense of belonging and identity.

In essence, while the study has illuminated the intricate tapestry of Meknasi and Er-Rissani dialects, the path to a linguistically inclusive society is ongoing. Through concerted efforts and these recommendations, we can envision a society where every dialect is celebrated, understood, and spoken with pride.

## 6 Conclusion

Linguistic diversity and regional variation stand as monumental pillars in the broader landscape of linguistics, encompassing realms such as sociolinguistics, phonetics, and socio-cultural studies, along with applied linguistics. Intriguingly, as these subfields evolve, their interpretations of regional variations shift, echoing their respective theoretical underpinnings and research nuances.

Generalized accounts of languages, often highlighting pronunciation and vocabulary, predominantly spotlight the standard variants of a particular language. However, it is essential to underscore that the prevalence of a 'standard' does not necessarily eclipse the intrinsic value and richness of other dialectal varieties.

One of the significant attributes of a regional dialect is its power to delineate the inhabitants of one locale from another. Conversely, a social dialect emerges as the linguistic signature of a particular social ensemble, distinguishing it from other societal groupings. Historically, dialect geographers, in their quest to present these linguistic nuances, have encapsulated their discoveries in dialect atlases, employing isoglosses to demarcate the

territorial confines of specific linguistic attributes. A pertinent illustration would be the lexical choice of /qal/, predominant in the Meknes community and its neighboring areas, contrasted with the usage of /gal/ in the Errachidia Province.

Reflecting on the intricate tapestry of language usage, particularly how the Meknasi and Er-Rissani populace wield language for social engagement and achieving distinct objectives, we unearth potential rationale behind their linguistic divergences.

At the heart of this study, it becomes evident that an individual's linguistic choices are not merely spontaneous; they are deeply rooted in their ethnic lineage, encompassing their familial and social histories. Whether one's heritage aligns with the Amazigh, Arabic, or the southern Arabic spectrum, it undeniably influences their linguistic palette. Moreover, the ambiance, characterized by the modern-traditional continuum, also wields a profound impact on lexical preferences.

In summary, the interplay of ethnicity, environment, and socio-cultural context crafts the unique linguistic identities we observe in the Meknasi and Er-Rissani dialects, underlining the beauty and complexity of regional linguistic variations.

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