

Derivation in Moroccan Teenage Talk

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to explore one of the most productive linguistic devices Moroccan teenagers employ extensively to create novel lexical items—namely derivation, and uncover some aspects of its innovativeness, which has widely been acknowledged to characterise youngspeak in general. The items analysed are extracted from relaxed group interviews involving six secondary school girls and recorded dyadic and triadic conversations mainly between four of them and two other female school mates. The results corroborate previous research findings that teenagers use derivational processes creatively. More specifically, Moroccan teenagers achieve innovativeness through the violation of some of the well-established derivational norms of their mother tongue, Moroccan Arabic (MA), at times, and their combination with some semantic and rhetorical tools such as unconventional metaphor, semantic shift, and hyperbole, at others. The outcome is thus a distinct language in which old words are reshaped to convey concepts that seem significant in their culture and through which, scholars claim, teenagers in general voice their distance from the world of adults on the one hand and affiliation and loyalty to their peers on the other.

Keywords: Youngspeak, Distinctiveness, Innovativeness, People categorisation, Derivation, Participles, Verbs

1. Introduction

Youngspeak has recently been the interest of extensive research. Various linguistic features and discourse markers have been examined and have largely been reported to be innovative. Tagliamonte (2005), for instance, studied the discourse markers ‘So who? Like how? Just what?’ in young Canadians’ conversation, and found out that these features “are not haphazard, random or indiscriminate” (p. 1896). Martínez (2011) observed that some lexico-grammatical features of British teenagers’ talk like quotatives are characterised by distinctiveness and novelty, and Lopez (2009), in a study of Madrid’s teenagers’ use of intensifiers, stated that they “are radicalizing their linguistic behaviour” (p. 92).

However, in Morocco, a linguistically rich community where Standard Arabic (SA) and the Moroccan Arabic (MA) dialect co-exist, the subject remains largely unexplored. Hence this article seeks to examine one of the most productive word formation processes Moroccan teenagers widely use to create new words—derivation. Our objective is not to provide a detailed morphological account of the derivational processes employed; we are rather concerned with identifying the types of word class they tend to generate, and uncover some aspects of their innovativeness. We first introduce some relevant facts about the complex Arabic morphological system. Then we present our methodology, analyse the data, and finally try to account for it.

2. Some Aspects of Arabic Morphology

Arabic has a rich morphological system, where most words are complex (Ennaji *et al*, 2004; Ryding, 2014). It is characterised by the mixture of concatenative (linear) and non-concatenative (non-linear) morphological processes. In other words, lexical items can be generated through the simple process of affixation, or through the prevailing complex root pattern alternations, where vowel melody plays a major role (Ennaji *et al*, p. 25).

Arabic morphology, it is generally agreed, is built upon a consonantal lexical root, most often triconsonantal or trilateral {f-ʕ-l} though quadrilateral (consisting of four consonants) and atypical (made of two or five) roots also exist. The root is usually defined as a discontinuous bound morpheme the components of which come in the same ordered sequence in all the words it is used to generate, and carries “fundamental kernel meaning” (Ennaji *et al*, p. 26).

Arabic is also classified as a root-pattern based language because its lexical units are constructed out of the root consonantal constituents interlocked with one or more phonemes in accordance with a given pattern (Ennaji *et al*). Ryding (2014) defined the latter as a bound, very often discontinuous morpheme, “consisting of one or more vowels and slots for root phonemes (radicals), which either alone or in combination with one to three derivational affixes, interlocks with a root to form a stem, and which generally has grammatical meaning” (p. 50)

In other words, roots possess semantic information. For example, the root {ḍ-r-b} of the triconsonantal verb /ḍrəb/ in MA denotes beating/hitting. By contrast, patterns have grammatical content for they distinguish between different word classes and subclasses. For instance, the MA {faʕəl} pattern indicates the active participle (AP) as in /ḍarəb/

(beating/hitting) while the {məfʔul} one forms the passive participle (PP) as in /məḍrub/ (beaten/hit).

The root can be construed as a nucleus on which various patterns may be mapped to generate different meanings (Ryding, 2012, p. 46). A triconsonantal verbal root in SA can theoretically generate from ten to fifteen verb forms, though five are rare, called /ʔawzan/ (measures), each expressing a certain semantic content such as causativity, reflexivity, and reciprocity. Mapping different patterns on these verbs, one can produce verbal nouns such /ḍarb/ or /ḍrib/ (beating) and APs and PPs, which constitute two major categories in our data, as illustrated in sections 4.1 and 4.2.

It is also important to point out that the structure of APs and PPs depends on that of the verb they are derived from. Verbs of different measures produce different participial forms. For example, a trilateral verb like /kasara/ (break) in SA produces the PP /maksu:r/ and the active counterpart /ka:sir/ whereas the quadrilateral /tarzama/ (translate) generates the AP /mutarʒim/ and the PP /mutarʒam/, where the vowel melody clearly plays a key role. The participial form also depends on the nature of the root phonemes (Ryden, 2014, p. 60), more precisely on whether the verb is weak, i.e. has as one of its radicals /w/ (waw), /y/ (yae), or /ʔ/ (hamza), or strong, which has none of these. The verb /ʃwa/ (grill) in MA, an example of the former, generates the PP /məʃwi/ (grilled) and the AP /ʃawi/ (grilling), whereas /smaʕ/ (hear), an instance of the latter, produces /məsmuʕ/ (heard) and /saməʕ/ (hearing), the respective PP and AP. The issue is complex; therefore, the reader is referred to Ryding (2014) for its study in SA and Ennaji et al in MA. Suffice it to mention here that the basic pattern in MA, which is formed from triconsonantal verbs, is {faʕəl} for the AP and {məfʕul} for the PP, both of which have variants depending on the verb type they are derived from.

Two last points are worth mentioning about the Arabic verbal form. First, a verb stem can function as a whole sentence marking the subject and the object, which is further evidence of the considerable complexity of Arabic morphology. To illustrate, /fhamtək/ (I understood you) is a verbal form that indicates the subject 'I' and the object 'you'. Second, the third person singular masculine form of the past (Arabic does not appear to have a non-inflected form) is, for its simplicity, considered as the basic form to which inflectional morphemes are added to derive other verbal forms (Ennaji et al, p. 30). It is this form that is used in the examples we analyse in this paper. For terminological simplification, and since inflectional morphology is not our concern, the word base, which refers to any form to which any type of affixes can be attached, is used instead of stem and root.

3. Methodology

The examples were taken from two-hour dyadic and triadic conversations in MA and five-hour relaxed group interviews. The conversations involve mainly six girls aged between 19 and 20 who study at the same secondary school, Elmalqui School in Kebibat, Rabat, and who live in neighbouring areas—Kebibat and Akkari, and two of their male schoolmates, who were passing by during the recording. Taking into consideration these two variables, the participants can be said to belong to the same average or very average socioeconomic background. The recording, in which our research assistant, one of the girls, used a smart

phone, took place in May and June 2015 in natural contexts—the street, areas by the school building external walls, and the houses of two girls. Only when the recording had been completed were the participants informed about it and its purpose, and asked for their approval to use it, which they did not object to.

Given the limited examples the recording produced, we had to use data eliciting techniques. Four of the six girls who were available and two others of their female school mates belonging to the same socio-economic background were invited to the researcher's house in late July 2015, where they were requested to list in writing all the words and expressions they usually use with their female peers. To facilitate the task for them, seven topics which, we had observed, recur in Moroccan youngspeak, were suggested: Appearance, personality, human relations, sex, drugs, money, and school. Nonetheless, the informants were encouraged and repeatedly reminded to cite any item they could think of and in any order, regardless of the suggested categories. To have the large set of words and expressions they provided explained and the contexts of their use clarified and exemplified, the six girls were asked to return in twos or threes, which happened in late August.

During the five-hour group interviews, many questions and items that had not previously been cited naturally emerged. Interestingly, the girls talked more with one another, recalled events and stories in which a word or an expression was employed, and even cited some taboo items they had refrained from using in the first session. In addition, items that had been listed in the first meeting came up in their 'talk', which provided a natural-like context, a fact that Schilling (2013, p. 96) confirmed about group interviews.

Judging from (1) the chats we have had with young people in five cities (Rabat, Sale, Kenitra, Larache, and Ksar-el-Kebir), (2) the observation we have made for over two years in these cities, and (3) two seminars we supervised last year on youngspeak, one of which involved adolescents from one more city-Sidi Kacem, we can say that the examples discussed in this paper, all of which occur in our participants' talk and lists, represent to a large extent Moroccan teenage talk at least in these areas. To transcribe them, we used English letters except for the Arabic sounds for which English does not have close corresponding ones. In this case, phonetic symbols were employed (see pages 15 and 16).

4. Data Analysis

A close look at the data clearly reveals that Moroccan youngspeak abounds in words that denote people's social, personal, and physical characteristics. Morphologically, a considerable number of these terms are built on {mfəʕʕəl}, and {mfəʕləl}, two highly productive MA patterns for the formation of PPs, as in /mhərrəs/ (broken) and /mʂəbbən/ (washed), which are examples of the former, and /mdəgdəg/ (broken into pieces) and /mbərzət/ (annoyed), examples of the latter. The patterns start with the systematic word formation device, the formative /m/. Ryding (2014) defined the latter as a phoneme "used to create patterns or templates into which root lexemes fit and by means of which word stems are created and/or inflected" (p. 65). Other lexical items are based on {fəʕʕal}, a largely employed pattern for the derivation of APs such as /kəddab/ (liar) and /sərraq/ (thief). The data also includes new verbs denoting actions that seem significant to our participants and

their peers. In the following section, we attempt to examine some features of the first category and the contexts in which the two patterns occur.

4.1 Passive Participle Pattern-Based Adjectives

A careful consideration of the PP pattern-based words reveals that they are not all derived from verbs. In fact, there exist no corresponding verbal forms for some like the ones in table 1. They are, instead, generated from the corresponding nouns, and can function as nominals since they occur as subjects and objects. They also assign some personal, social, or physical attributes to people, and actually function as adjectives as well. Therefore, they are classified as nominal adjectives (NAs) whereas the PPs and APs derived from verbs would be referred to as participial adjectives, in line with the general tendency in linguistic research.

Table 1. Derivation of passive participle pattern-based adjectives from nouns

Nouns	Nominal Adjectives
1. tǝŋg (literally, tank)	mǝǝnnǝg (stupid)
2. lǝaqa (money)	mlǝǝǝǝq (having a lot of money)
3. ʃǝndala (sandals)	mʃǝndǝl (bare-faced)
4. dǝmduma (dumb person)	mdǝmdǝm (dumb)
5. ʃǝrf (money)	mʃǝrfǝn (having a lot of money)
6. tǝrf (big attractive bottom)	mǝrrfa (having a big attractive bottom)

As one can clearly notice, all the adjectives in the second column as well as all the remaining examples in this section are prefixed by the formative /m/. They also maintain the consonants in the base nouns in the first column, which have all undergone some vocalic modifications to generate NAs in compliance with the {mfǝǝǝl} pattern underlying (1) and (2) and the {mfǝǝlǝl} one in (3) and (4). More precisely, the final vowel /a/ in the nouns /lǝaqa/ in (2), /ʃǝndala/ in (3), and /dǝmduma/ in (4) (these three nouns, unlike the first, are all in the feminine form), have been omitted, and the medial consonants /n/ in (1) and /ʃ/ in (2) have been doubled. In addition, the vowel /ǝ/ has been inserted before the last consonant in (1), and /a/ in the same position in (2) and (3), and /u/ in (4) have been replaced by /ǝ/.

A careful examination of the NAs in (1) and (2) - /mǝǝnnǝg/ (stupid) and /mlǝǝǝǝq/ (having a lot of money) as well as others such as the adjective /mkǝbbǝt/ (terrific / terrible) (see pages 8-9) on the one hand, and /mʃǝndǝl/ (bare-faced) in (3), /mdǝmdǝm/ (dumb/stupid) in (4), and others like /mǝǝnsǝr/ (fooled/tricked) in (7) on the other, clearly shows that the pattern of the adjectives, as mentioned earlier in relation to verbs, is determined by the consonantal form of the base they are derived from. Triconsonantal bases in the former set have generated the {mfǝǝǝl}-based adjectives. By contrast, quadrilateral bases in the latter have produced adjectives built on the {mfǝǝlǝl} pattern. The adjective /mʃǝrfǝn/ (having a lot of money) in (5) is unusual and will be discussed separately later (page 7). As for /mǝrrfa/ (having a big attractive bottom) in (6), it takes the suffix {a}, which marks the feminine gender whereas all the other adjectives are in the masculine form (for more details, see page 7). The items in table 1 then provide another example of the morphological complexity of MA. Below, we examine them from a semantic angle and explore some aspects of their innovativeness.

In (1), both the noun and the NA are used metaphorically to convey stupidity. Like English, which has heavy-headed, MA uses /ras tqil/ (heavy head), but it also has the simile /ras tqil kiṭṭəŋg/ (heavy head like a tank) and /ras ṭṭəŋg/ (head of a tank). Neither of these figures in the data; the adjective /mṭənnəg/, which is shorter and sounds stronger, repeatedly does.

Similarly, the noun and adjective in (2) convey the same core denotative meaning, but the adjective includes the large amount of money. A common MA alternative to /mləʃʃəq/ and its synonymous creation /mṣərfən/ in (5) is the phrase /labas ʃlih/ (well-to-do).

The adjective /mṣəndəl/ (bare-faced) in (3), which seems to be spreading well beyond the teenagers' sphere, stands in a different relation with the corresponding noun /ṣəndala/ (sandals), which denotes only its pure conceptual meaning. This new adjective is much more recurrent in teenage talk than the synonymous well-established MA words and expression /mqəzdər/ (literally, tinned), /qəzdira/ (tin sheet), and /wʒah mqəzdər/ (tinned-face). One could say that a person who is /mqəzdər/ or /mṣəndəl/ is objectivised for he does not *feel* any embarrassment when lacking respect to others. One may also claim perhaps that, unlike the old metaphorical words and expressions, the new creation has an allusive power: It may evoke in the hearer's mind the vivid expressive image of a person throwing sandals at another. A question that may arise here is why the creator did not employ the super-ordinate term /ṣəbbat/ (shoe) to produce the adjective /mṣəbbət/. The fact is the latter exists in MA and refers to a person who is wearing shoes in its general sense, or does not lack in shoes to wear. Apparently aware of this, the creator had to think up a new term so that the two meanings remain separate.

The noun /dəmduma/ and adjective /mdəmdəm/ in (4), both of which denote stupidity, are only phonologically related to the MA onomatopoeic verb /dəmdəm/ (mutter). Semantically and morphologically, there exists no relation between them. Basing ourselves on two informants' statement that the noun /dəmduma/ (stupid person) first emerged in a Golf song, we may claim that the English adjective 'dum-dum' was first borrowed and incorporated phonologically and morphologically into Arabic to generate the noun /dəmduma/. Then thanks to the song, the word has become popular among Moroccan adolescents, who, in their turn, have used it as a base for the formation of the new adjective /mdəmdəm/ (stupid). Thus, like the previous adjectives, it falls into the nominal adjective category. (4) presents an example of another largely used word formation process in Moroccan teenage talk—namely borrowing. It is also important in that it provides an idea about how novel items can spread cross-culturally.

In short, one feature that characterises (1) to (4) is brevity, which is achieved through the adjectivisation of concepts, some of which are expressed in phrases in MA. (3) also uses a new metaphor, which is a prevailing feature in youngspeak (Zimmerman, 2009), for the old tin-related one has apparently lost its expressiveness through frequent use. Moroccan teenagers then do not seem to be content with 'ready-made linguistic products'. Seemingly considering them dated, they seek to renew them by "recycling" them (Widawski, 2015) morphologically and semantically so that they can fit meanings that seem important in their culture such as concepts denoting social, personal, and physical labels. Other examples are

the adjectives in the pairs /ʃərf/ (money)//mʃərfən/ (having a lot of money) in (5) and /tərf/ (big attractive bottom) //mʔərrfa/ (having a big attractive bottom) in (6).

Unlike the first four examples, the pairs in (5) and (6) have morphologically related verbs in MA—namely /ʃərrəf/ (change (money)) and /tərrəf/ (wash one’s limbs). Semantically speaking, however, these verbs are only distantly related to the adjectives /mʃərfən/ and /mʔərrfa/. One can claim then that the adjectives are nominal, i.e. they have been derived from the nouns with which they share the same semantic content, as argued in the following.

One point that might first strike the reader’s attention is the consonantal structure of /mʃərfən/: Like all the adjectives discussed in this section, it receives the formative /m/, but unlike all the latter, it has an additional final consonant—/n/, which does not feature in the base noun from which it is derived. Adjectives derived from trilateral bases, we have seen, have their second consonant doubled to produce the corresponding adjective, a fact that does not materialize in /mʃərfən/. Thus, instead of being built on the {mfəʃʕəl} pattern, which applies to triconsonantal bases in all the data, it is built on the underlying {mfəʃləl}, which serves as a pattern for quadrilateral bases. To account for this unusual form, one has to explore the example semantically.

/ʃərf/ and /mʃərfən/ illustrate a feature that is largely present in teenage talk—the expansion of the lexicon through different types of semantic shift. The noun /ʃərf/, which means ‘(money) change’ in MA, has had its meaning broadened to denote ‘money’ in teenage talk. The latter has, in its turn, been subjected to both derivation and semantic narrowing to produce the novel adjective /mʃərfən/ (having a lot of money). It is important to note here that the usual adjective /mʃərrəf/ exists in MA and conveys the same core meaning as its corresponding verb /ʃərrəf/ (change (money)). Just as in the previous example then, the creator had to find a new word for his new meaning. Briefly, he utilised a phonological device, the unusual addition of the final consonant /n/, and a morphological pattern in his own way to lexicalise a concept that appears to be significant in teenagers’ life, as their varied lexicon in this field reveals.

The novel adjective /mʔərrfa/ in (6) also expresses a seemingly important concept in Moroccan teenage culture. The noun /tərf/, the singular form of /traf/ (limbs), which is often used with the verb /ʕsəl/ in /ʕsəl traʔu/ (wash one’s limbs) has, we think, acquired a new meaning—big attractive bottom—through semantic narrowing and pejoration, yet both the noun and the adjective are positive terms. A close synonym to the latter is the taboo /mʔərrma/; however, this is a rather negative term and applies both to men and women whereas the former is attributed only to women.

One may perhaps alternatively argue that the base for /mʔərrfa/ is another MA noun /tərf/ meaning ‘piece’ and that it has been semantically narrowed to refer to a piece of meat. The term /lham/ (meat) does in fact recur in the data, but it carries a negative connotation: It is associated either with fatness or bestiality. As one informant said in French, “c’est coté animal” (It is the bestial side of things). The widely cited hyperbolic and jocular /lham ʕimʃəttət fəzzənqa wɔdarna fihum ʒzuʕ/ (meat is all scattered in the street and my family is hungry) points to the fatness component.

Briefly, (5) and (6) bear witness to Moroccan teenagers' involvement in linguistic creativity and their ability to discern nuances of meaning. They also attest to their continuous pursuit of lexicalising concepts they seem to deem significant especially those related to categorizing and labelling people.

We have so far argued that all the previously discussed adjectives are derived from the corresponding nouns and have, therefore, been classified as NAs. It is true they are built on patterns that are usually referred to as PP formation patterns, but, unlike PPs, these adjectives do not indicate that a given person has undergone or received the effect of an action. They rather denote permanent characteristics of people.

Others, like /mħənsər/ in (7), /mqəwləb/ in (8), and /mbiydəq/ in (9) in table 2 below, all of which mean 'fooled/tricked', have, we think, been derived from the corresponding semantically related verbs, for the person to whom these are attributed has received the action conveyed by the verbs. Thus they are classified as passive participial adjectives.

Table 2. Derivation of passive participle pattern-based adjectives from verbs

Verbs	Adjectives
7. hənsər	mħənsər
8. qəwləb	mqəwləb
9. biydəq	mbiydəq

The words in (7) are, to our knowledge, the most recent creations of the three pairs and are increasing in use, competing, it seems, with the rather popular ones in (8) and (9). The nominal form corresponding to the words in (9), /biydəq/ (pawn), which has long been used in its metaphorical sense to refer to a gullible or manipulatable person, was apparently borrowed from SA. Quite interestingly, the latter does not have a verb for the concept. The novel hyperbolic AP /biydak/ (a cheat or a hoaxer) also features in the data. Examples (7) to (9) further demonstrate Moroccan teenagers' orientation towards the adjectivisation and verbalisation of concepts that tend to be conveyed in expressions in MA such as /ḏhak ʕlih/ and /darha bih/, both of which mean 'trick somebody'.

One more novel adjective to close this section with is /mkəbbət/ (terrible or terrific) from the MA concrete noun /kəbda/ (liver), which provides a more complex and interesting example of the busy productive process of creation through derivation Moroccan teenagers are involved in. The verbal expression /kəbbətha/ (make (a) very serious mistake(s)) and the abstract noun /kbata/ (great/terrible event or situation) have also been thought up. All these creations are largely encountered in the data whereas the concrete noun /kəbda/ does not figure at all. Considering the semantic content of the new verb, which is used only in the sentential verbal unit /kəbbətha/ and the adjective in its 'terrible' sense, we can claim that the creator seems to have 'extracted' one component of 'liver'—its dark colour, and deployed this darkness component to create the verb. The same meaning, it is worth noting, is conveyed by the common synonymous metaphorical expressions bearing the same darkness component /kəhhəlha/ and /kəffəsha/, which literally mean 'he darkened it' and 'charcoal-dusted it', respectively. These metaphorical expressions have, it seems, become dead metaphors, i.e.

have lost their force and vividness through common use, and have had to be largely replaced by the novel expression, which is one more case attesting to Moroccan teenagers' preoccupation with linguistic renewal.

What is more striking perhaps is the fact that the adjective has two extremely opposite meanings, 'terrible' and 'terrific', which are ascribed to people and things alike. In fact, assigning a common word a new opposite meaning characterises other items in Moroccan youngspeak, a further illustration of which is the abstract noun /kbata/. The latter is used to describe a situation or an event that is either fantastic or dreadful depending on the accompanying prosodic features. Furthermore, the adjective can also be used as an adverb of manner, as in one informant's example /dəwwəzt mkəbbət/ (I did very badly on the exam). A paraphrase of this is the common Moroccan /dəwwəzt mkəffəs/, which uses the same metaphor as in /kəffəsha/. However, unlike /mkəbbət/, this adverb (and adjective) conveys only the negative meaning.

Briefly, the liver-related creations, like the ones previously analysed, prove that Moroccan adolescents are 'linguistic doers' who work on more than one linguistic level—morphologically, through derivation, and semantically, through semantic shift and metaphor, to "recycle" existing items in order to create novel words and expressions that categorise people and describe their attitudes and life experiences.

4.2 Active Participle Pattern-Based Adjectives

As mentioned earlier, the data also features words built on {fəʕʕal}, a highly productive pattern used to generate APs not only in Moroccan youngspeak but in Arabic in general. Semantically speaking, Ennaji et al stated that they are "linked to professions and personal characteristics or habitual activity" (p. 38). None of these adjectives, examples of which are provided in table 3, however, denotes a profession in our data though they actually do in Arabic. They ascribe a permanent personal or social characteristic to people, but the actions denoted by the verbs from which they are derived are not only repeated or renewed; they are rather exaggerated.

Table 3. Derivation of active participle pattern-based adjectives from verbs

Verbs	Nouns
10. gra (stuy)	qərray (high achiever in school)
11. dəwwəb (melt)	dəwwab (Romeo)
12. zkər (be strict in proctoring)	zəkkar (extremely strict proctor)
13. həbbəs (be strict in proctoring)	həbbas (extremely strict proctor)
14. tzəlləl (harass sexually)	zəllal (sexual harasser)

Actually, the corresponding {faʕʕa:l} pattern in SA is classified as a form of exaggeration (şiyat mubalaya). To express renewal or repetition of an action, one can utilise other devices such as the 'nisba' adjective, which is formed from nouns through the attachment of the highly productive suffix {i} to a noun (Ryding, 2014, p. 80). For instance, /zlayli/, the old MA corresponding 'nisba' adjective of /zəllal/ in (14), which the informants said they do not use, refers in MA to a man who is reputed for being a sexual harasser. Quite interestingly,

one girl claimed that it denotes “someone older than us—of our father’s age, for example” (/ʃiwaħəd kbir ʕlina qad bbana matalan/). Likewise, the relatively old term /zkayri/ is attributed to a person, most often a teacher, who is well-known for being strict in proctoring. However, unlike the {fəʕʕal} pattern-based adjectives in (10) to (14), the action is not exaggerated. /mzəkkər/ and /mhəbbəs/, the PP pattern based adjectives corresponding to (12) and (13) do not convey any exaggeration, either.

The adjective in (13) carries the same core meaning as the verbal creation /həbbəs/ (be strict in proctoring), which is followed by the preposition {mʕa} (with) and its object. We think the common MA verb /hbəs/ (emprison) has undergone gemination in the second consonant to generate the verb /həbbəs/, the pattern of which is associated with causative verbs; however, unlike causatives, it is followed by the preposition {mʕa}, in analogy to its well-established synonym, /ziyyər mʕa/ (literally, tighten with). One could perhaps alternatively suggest that the MA common causative /həbbəs/ (stop somebody or something from doing something) has undergone semantic shift and acquired the preposition {mʕa}. In both cases the recycling of an old item is at work. We would personally go for the first account, though, on the grounds that the students in the data use words from the semantic field of prison to describe the atmosphere in a classroom where extremely strict proctoring takes place. In addition to the adjectives mentioned above, /həbs/ (prison), /bniqa/ (holding cell), and /fəwhuha/ (vented it) all recur in their talk.

The use of the prison metaphor, like the hyperbolic {fəʕʕal}-patterned adjectives, bear witness to teenagers’ love for exaggeration. The old adjectives /ʕʕib/, /waʕər/ and /mziyyər/ can also be attributed to a strict proctor, but they seem to be considered ‘worn-out’ words. They lack the expressiveness and forcefulness characterising the prison-related items. Furthermore, they are void of exaggeration, towards which Moroccan teenagers are considerably oriented. Their language also features the hyperbolic /ʕabaqira/ (geniuses), a synonym of /qərraya/ (high achievers in schooling) in (10), and its highly hyperbolic metaphorical opposite /ʔabaṭira/ (emperors), which is used ironically to refer to lazy students. The novel adjective /dəwwab/ (literally a melter) in (11) is doubly hyperbolic: The exaggeration operates at both the morphological and semantic levels. It refers to a Romeo who is well-reputed for achieving great amatory success as he has the skill to ‘melt’, i.e. seduce girls and make them fall deeply in love with him. Another metaphorical hyperbolic creation synonymous to this is /ṭiyyaħ/ from the verb /ṭiyyəħ/ (drop or knock down).

To conclude, the data in this section as well as that in section 4-1 clearly bears witness to Moroccan adolescents’ prevailing tendency towards categorising people. In this regard, Eckert (2003 / ‘Why Ethnography?’), using her ethnographic research based in the public secondary school, observed that the latter is a space where adolescents from different backgrounds and of various ideologies form groups that position themselves against one another, and seek to attain recognition and control of the social landscape in the school. One tool they use to achieve this purpose, Eckert further argued, is the creation of social and, as is the case in our data, personal and physical category labels. Undergoing various developmental changes and, “engaged in a fierce negotiation of the social landscape, social values, differences, tolerances, and meanings, adolescents are continually making new

distinctions and evaluations of behaviour ('Adolescent Language', p. 6). The school then is a 'fertile soil' for the growth and flourishing of people categorisation and labelling.

In the busy process of creating labels, Moroccan adolescents use morphological, semantic and rhetorical devices. In relation to the latter, we have witnessed their overwhelming tendency to exaggerate, a feature that characterises not only teenage talk (Martinez; Lopez) but every day language (Claridge, 2011; Leech, 1983). It is the "overuse or the novelty of an instance of hyperbole that strikes us as extraordinary" (Claridge, p. 2), as is the case in our data. It is perhaps the desire to look extraordinary or interesting, which Leech formulates in his 'Interest Principle'—"Say what is unpredictable, and hence interesting" (p. 146), that motivates partially at least Moroccan teenagers' extensive use of new hyperbolic words and expressions.

Combined together, the above mentioned features give teenage talk expressiveness, vividness, and colourfulness, which all contribute to its distinctiveness. This distinctiveness is sought not only in the special use of language, but in general cultural patterns of behaviour (Eckert 'Adolescent Language'; Lopez ; Zimmerman ; Martinez), as will be further discussed below (section 5).

4.3 Verbs Derivation

One more recurrent derivational process in the data is the formation of verbs, which either undergo semantic shift or take on a figurative meaning. One example is the derivation of /kəbbət/ from /kəbda/ discussed in section 4.1. Others are the following, which all denote sexual harassment.

Table 4. Derivation of verbs from nouns

Nouns	Verbs
15. liwaṭ (sodomy)	tləwwəṭ
16. zək (bottom)	tzəkkək
17. bubriṣ (chameleon)	tərbəṣ

In (15), the abstract SA noun /liwa:t/ (sodomy) has been used to form the new verb /tləwwəṭ/, which is only distantly semantically related to it, as the latter means 'to sexually harass women' whereas the former maintains its meaning—homosexuality. Similarly, the taboo noun in (16) keeps its meaning whereas the verb is assigned the same distantly related meaning as that expressed by the verb in (15), probably because touching women's fundamentals is a common harassing practice especially in crowded spaces. By contrast, the words in (17) are not taboo. The harasser's action is compared to that of a chameleon: The animal keeps moving and changing its colour to protect itself and the harasser protects his interests, trapping his prey by moving around her saying and doing different things to please and charm her. The example then is a case of another new metaphor.

All the verbs in table 4, one can notice, are moulded on the same pattern as the MA /θarrəf/ from the SA /taħarrafa/ ((sexually) harass). Other synonymous verbs built on the same pattern are the old taboo MA /tzəlləl/, the relatively new non-taboo /tbəssəl/ from the old one /bəssəl/, and the new taboo /tzəwməl/ (see below), all of which our informants say they use to convey

‘to sexually harass’. This is perhaps a reflection of these girls’ concern about this phenomenon, which has turned into a national concern in Morocco.

Other evidence of the busy productive derivational process Moroccan teenagers are engaged in is the taboo verb /zməl/ (be overwhelmed with uncontrollable lust) from the old MA taboo /zaməl/ (gay), which is assigned a new meaning in our data—sexual harasser. The corresponding new adjective /məzmul/ and the noun /zəmla/ (uncontrollable lust) indicating a state are two more creations. The verb denotes being momentarily overwhelmed with uncontrollable lust whereas the adjective refers to this as a person’s permanent characteristic.

Interesting, we think, is the lexicalisation of the concept of lust in both its momentary and permanent senses. To our knowledge, what MA has are various euphemistic expressions or circumlocutions that do not denote in their conceptual meaning the notion of lust such as /zah həlu/ (literally, his state has come) and /fiħ llula/ (there is a flaw in him). This could perhaps be partly due to the influence of the internet and its pornographic sites. It further reflects and is reflected in the growing openness to the discussion and public debates about intimate relations between men and women in Morocco.

One more point worth mentioning is that the verbs in (15) to (17) are also transferred from the taboo field of sexual harassment to the non-taboo one of buttering up, in which case the flatterer also seeks to please his addressee in order to gain something from him. This also holds true of the lust-related verb and noun indicating a state for they too are emptied of their taboo meaning to describe a situation where a person cannot stand still or loses control over something. An example from one participant’s clarification is /malək zməlti? zatək zzəmla?/ (what’s the matter with you? Have you lost control?). This transference from a taboo field to a non-taboo one seems to be developing into a general tendency in Moroccan teenage talk, and needs to be examined in a separate paper.

In conclusion, Moroccan teenagers reshape MA words morphologically and semantically to express sex-related concepts such as sexual harassment and lust. Some of these are expressed in circumlocutions in MA, as the general tendency is in the taboo field in humans’ languages (Wardough, 1980, p. 239). Moroccan teenagers then, like their peers (Stenström & Jørgensen 2009; Lopez; Martinez), seem to be one group of “those who are prepared to break the taboos in an attempt to show their own freedom from [.....] social constraints” or “to mock authority” (Wardough, p. 239). The relatively large lexicon in this field, which not only male but also female adolescents use, seems to point to the change in the social and thus linguistic norms and standards in Morocco.

5. Conclusion

To summarise, Moroccan teenagers use derivation innovatively to create novel lexical items which convey concepts that seem important in their culture. One prevailing type of these creations is active and passive participial adjectives denoting people’s social, physical and personal characteristics, which reveals their orientation towards categorising and labelling people, a highly significant tendency in adolescence, as pointed out above. Another is verbs, among which are those denoting sex-related concepts.

In the active creation process, Moroccan adolescents employ various linguistic resources. Among them are different derivational processes, which they use in an innovative way, violating the norms governing them at times and combining them with other semantic and rhetorical devices at others. Of important recurrence are unconventional metaphor, semantic shift, and hyperbole, which they express on both the formal and semantic levels. MA also uses these devices but they appear, to this age cohort, to have lost their expressiveness and vividness through extensive use, and, therefore, need to be renewed and refreshed. In fact, renewal is a salient feature not only of teenagers' linguistic behaviour but their general cultural behaviour such as their dressing style and taste in food and music (Eckert, 'Adolescent Language'; Zimmerman). These cultural patterns of behaviour, scholars argue, are used to make claims to a distinct culture and an identity different from the one adults, parents in particular, do not only want them to have but, we would even say, may exert themselves to help them construct.

To account for adolescents' orientation towards distinctiveness, Eckert rightly argued (2003 /'Adolescent Language'/'Why Ethnography?') that as the young are moving away from childhood towards adulthood, they are expected to adopt adults' behavioural patterns, the linguistic ones included, but are denied access to the economic and political power work opportunities endow adults with. Enclosed in the limited institutional sphere that the public secondary school is, where they have to daily interact with their peers, and where they are monitored by adults and have to comply with a significant number of norms, teenagers seek to give meaning to their existence. Thus they create a world where they can make "*a mark*", and the "*mark*" is teen culture (Eckert, 'Adolescent Language', p. 2; the emphasis is hers).

Linguistically, the *mark* is revealed in their innovative use of language, in which they break well-established morphological and other linguistic norms, and set their own to "recycle" existing items they apparently consider dated or simply 'not theirs'. The outcome is creations conveying meanings that seem important in their world and a distinct language through which they express their autonomy and disassociate themselves from the monitoring parental generation. The taboo lexicon can be said to be another tool they employ to challenge societal norms. This language expresses, at the same time, their affiliation and loyalty to their peers (Stenström and Jørgensen, 2009, p. 4), which gives them and reinforces "a sense of belonging and a feeling of companionship" (Lopez, p. 83). In brief, teenagers' talk as well as their other cultural behaviour patterns, represent "indicators of a kind of youth rebellion, of claims and demands" Lopez (p. 83). These claims, one can further notice, become stronger and more insistent when resisted, criticised, or rejected, for they are an audible claim to an independent identity and a pronounced expression of the sense of peer group membership teenagers create and endeavour to preserve.

A more comprehensive approach to the language of Moroccan teenagers from different parts of the country and belonging to different socioeconomic backgrounds may reveal regional and social variation. It may also, along with an exhaustive examination of the topics they talk about and the way they interact in daily conversation, enable us, parents, educationalists, and educators, to largely understand this social group, their interests, fears, and concerns. This may lead to a better communication between the two age groups and the devising of curricula

as well as extra-curricular activities that may contribute positively to their identity construction and academic success.

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Key to the transcription symbols

Vowels

a : َ

u : ُ

i : ِ

ə : sometimes a reduced form of (ُ) and (ِ)

(:): lengthens a vowel

Consonants

ʔ: ا

b : ب

t : ت

ʒ : ج

ħ : ح

x : خ

d : د

r : ر

z : ز

s : س

ʃ : ش

ʂ : ص

ɖ : ض

ʕ : ع

ɣ : غ

t	ط
f:	ف
q:	ق
k:	ك
g:	ك
l:	ل
m	م
n:	ن
h:	ه
w:	و
y:	ي

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