TWO WAYS TO SAY 'I DIDN'T WRITE' IN THE SAME NEIGHBORHOOD: A SOCIOSYNTACTIC- EXPLORATION OF ARABIC NEGATION.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates linguistic variation in negation structures among Palestinian and Jordanian students residing in Al-Manshiyah, a linguistically diverse neighborhood in southern Karak, Jordan. Despite shared educational settings and close social interactions, students maintain distinct dialectal features linked to their regional identities. The research focuses on two negation forms: ma katabt (commonly used by Jordanians) and ma katabt-esh (prevalent among Palestinians). It examines the syntactic differences between these forms, particularly the presence of the clitic -sh in Palestinian Arabic, and analyzes sociolinguistic factors influencing their usage, including historical migration patterns, social networks, and identity markers. Data were collected from 41 male high school students (28 Palestinian and 13 Jordanian) through classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and syntactic elicitation tasks. The findings reveal that regional origin significantly shapes linguistic choices, with syntactic analysis underscoring differences in negation marker placement and clitic attachment. Sociolinguistic analysis highlights how community dynamics and historical migration contribute to the preservation of dialectal variation. This research offers insights into the interaction of syntactic structures and sociolinguistic influences in maintaining dialectal distinctions within mixed-origin communities.

Keywords: Negation structures, syntactic variation, sociolinguistics, Palestinian Arabic, Jordanian Arabic, clitics, dialectal preservation, regional identity, linguistic diversity, mixed-origin communities.

INTRODUCTION

Almanshyah, located in the southern part of Karak, Jordan, is a neighborhood characterized by a unique blend of linguistic diversity. The community is home to people from two main origins: Palestinians and Jordanians. The Palestinian population migrated to Jordan over the years, brings with them specific dialectical features that are distinct from those of the local Jordanian residents. The Jordanian community in Almanshyah speaks a variety of Levantine Arabic, which differs in certain aspects, including pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax. This geographic and social mix has resulted in a diverse sociolinguistic landscape where both Palestinian and Jordanian dialects coexist. Despite the strong relationships and frequent interactions among the residents, speakers of each group tend to maintain their distinct dialects rather than adopting features from the other, preserving their linguistic identity within this unique community.

It is a neighborhood where people from these two different origins live very close to one another and maintain strong relationships and frequent interactions. Students from Palestinian and Jordanian backgrounds study together in the same schools and classrooms, often sharing educational spaces for many years. This close social and educational environment reinforce significant interaction among students. Despite these strong social connections, both groups largely maintain the use of their respective dialects, preserving their distinct linguistic identities.

This mixture of origins is particularly evident in the linguistic practices of Almanshyah, where one can observe variation not just in pronunciation but also in the use of specific syntactic structures, including the formation of negation. As such, Almanshyah serves as a unique area to study how sociolinguistic factors—such as regional origin—affect the language practices of its residents. The differences in how Palestinian and Jordanian speakers use language, especially in terms of syntactic structures like negation, offer valuable insights into regional linguistic variation in Jordan.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

In Almanshyah, a neighborhood in southern Karak, Jordan, the researcher observed an intriguing linguistic variation among students when responding to the same question about whether they completed their assignments. The question was phrased as, "Did you write the assignment?" The students, who come from two distinct regional origins—Palestinian and Jordanian—offered two different negation forms in their answers:

1. ما كتبت (I didn't write) – Used by students of Jordanian origin.

2. ما كتبتش (I didn't write) – Used by students of Palestinian origin.

This variation in negation forms, despite the same question being asked, motivated me to investigate the syntactic and sociolinguistic factors influencing these two different responses. The use of the form ما كتبتش, which includes the clitic ش-, is common in Palestinian Arabic and is a marker of negation that is not present in Jordanian Arabic, where the simple form ما كتبت is used instead.

The motivation for exploring these forms lies in the opportunity to examine the syntactic structures involved, as well as to explore how sociolinguistic factors—particularly the regional origins of the speakers—play a role in shaping these linguistic choices. The difference between the two negation forms can provide valuable insights into syntactic variation in Arabic dialects and contribute to the growing body of research on sociolinguistic variation in urban or mixed-origin communities like Almanshyah. This study will contribute to understanding how language variation reflects social identity and regional background in a specific sociolinguistic setting.

By addressing both the syntactic and sociolinguistic dimensions of this variation, this research aims to shed light on how language structures are influenced by both the inherent syntax of different dialects and the social factors such as regional origin that impact linguistic practices. This will also provide further understanding of how dialectal boundaries are maintained or blurred in communities with mixed populations, such as Almanshyah.

OBJECTIVES

This study aims to explore two key research questions related to the syntactic and sociolinguistic variation observed in negation forms used by school students in Almanshyah, a neighborhood in southern Karak, Jordan. The research focuses on the syntactic differences between two negation forms used by Palestinian and Jordanian speakers in response to the same question.

1. Syntactic Question:

"How do these two forms of negation differ syntactically?"

This question will investigate the syntactic structure of the two negation forms, ما كتبت (I didn't write) used by Jordanian speakers, and ما كتبتش (I didn't write) used by Palestinian speakers. The research will explore how these forms are generated within the clause, focusing on the position of negation markers and the role of clitics like ش- in Palestinian Arabic. The study will examine whether these forms involve different syntactic processes, such as the movement of elements within the clause or the presence of additional functional projections (e.g., NegP).

2. Sociolinguistic Question:

"What are the underlying factors contributing to these two linguistic differences, and how are they

influenced by the regional and social backgrounds of the speakers?"

This question seeks to explore the sociolinguistic factors influencing the choice of negation forms. Specifically, it will investigate the role of regional origin (Palestinian versus Jordanian) in shaping the linguistic behavior of speakers in Almanshyah. The research will explore how historical migration patterns, regional identity, and social networks within the neighborhood contribute to the linguistic variation observed. It will also examine the impact of these factors on the maintenance of distinct dialectal features, such as the presence or absence of the clitic ش- in negation.

By addressing both the syntactic and sociolinguistic dimensions, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how syntactic variation in Arabic is not only a reflection of structural linguistic differences but also influenced by the social and regional backgrounds of the speakers. The research will contribute to broader discussions on language variation in Arab communities and enhance our understanding of how dialects evolve in sociolinguistically complex environments.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This study holds significant value in understanding both the syntactic variation and the social factors that influence language use in a specific community, especially in regions where dialectal variation is prominent. By investigating the syntactic differences in negation forms used by Palestinian and Jordanian speakers in Almanshyah, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how negation is structured in Arabic dialects, particularly those of the Levantine region. The syntactic analysis will shed light on how different dialects, even within a geographically close area, can employ varying syntactic rules to form negation, offering valuable insights into the mechanisms of language change and variation (Holmberg, 2016; Haider, 2017).

Furthermore, the sociolinguistic aspect of this study provides crucial insights into how social and regional factors influence the linguistic practices of individuals. The choice between ما كتبتش and ما كتبت reflects not only syntactic preferences but also cultural and social identity markers. Understanding the reasons behind this variation—whether influenced by migration history, regional identity, or social networks—can illuminate broader patterns of linguistic adaptation and identity formation in mixed-origin communities. This aspect of the research aligns with sociolinguistic theories that suggest language variation is inherently tied to social factors such as group affiliation, community membership, and social mobility (Labov, 2001; Trudgill, 2004).

This study's importance extends beyond academic curiosity; it offers practical insights into the role of language in community cohesion, identity construction, and social integration. As dialectal boundaries blur and communities mix, the findings of this study may help educators, linguists, and policymakers

better understand how language use in multicultural neighborhoods reflects broader social dynamics. Moreover, this research enriches the field of Arabic dialectology by providing a case study of syntactic and sociolinguistic variation within a Jordanian context, filling a gap in the existing literature on regional and social language differences in Arabic dialects.

By examining both syntactic structures and the social motivations behind their use, this study bridges the gap between linguistic theory and the lived experiences of speakers in Almanshyah, offering a holistic view of how dialects evolve within specific social contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Syntactic Variation in Arabic

Negation in Arabic dialects is a dynamic area of study, with significant variation across the different regional and social dialects. In general, negation in Arabic involves particles that are positioned within the syntactic structure of a sentence. However, the specific choice and placement of these negation particles differ across dialects. For example, in Classical Arabic, the negation particle لا is used for present tense verbs, while ما is used for past tense verbs. Over time, these negation particles have evolved differently in various dialects, resulting in variation in their use and syntactic placement.

In Palestinian Arabic, the negation construction often includes ما (as a negation particle) and a clitic ش- (which attaches to the verb, as in "ما كتبتش," meaning "I didn't write"). This phenomenon is particularly common in the Levantine dialects, where the clitic ش- serves to further mark negation, often reinforcing the negation or conveying a sense of emphasis or contrast. The cliticization of ش- onto the verb can be understood as part of the syntactic structure, with the verb potentially moving to accommodate the clitic, or the clitic acting as a morphological marker attached post-syntactically (cf. Benmamoun, 2000).

In contrast, Jordanian Arabic, particularly in the southern regions like Karak, commonly uses ما alone as the negation marker, without the additional clitic ش-. This form is syntactically simpler and reflects a regional variation where ش- is not part of the standard negation structure, distinguishing it from other Levantine dialects such as Palestinian Arabic.

Previous Studies on Negation

Numerous studies have explored the phenomenon of negation in Arabic dialects, focusing on the syntactic structures and morphological processes involved. Alqassas (2019) provides a comprehensive analysis of negation in various Arabic dialects, emphasizing the different syntactic and morphological strategies used in Levantine Arabic, including Palestinian Arabic. One of the key findings from Alqassas is the role of cliticization in negation, particularly the way ش- is used to mark the negation in Palestinian

Arabic, reflecting a syntactic structure where the verb and the clitic form a tight syntactic unit. Similarly, Obeidat (2022) explores how negation in Jordanian Arabic often excludes cliticization, as seen in the absence of ش- in negation forms, highlighting a distinction between Palestinian and Jordanian varieties.

Holmberg (2016) provides a cross-dialectal analysis of negation in Arabic, highlighting the syntactic features that distinguish various dialects, including the different uses of ما and the clitic ش-. These studies emphasize the syntactic implications of negation, suggesting that cliticization and negation particles play a crucial role in syntactic structure, and variations in their use provide insight into the broader syntactic and morphological differences across Arabic dialects.

Sociolinguistic Variation in Dialects

Sociolinguistic theories of language variation suggest that language use is deeply influenced by social and regional factors. Labov (2001) asserts that language variation is not random but instead systematically linked to social categories such as age, gender, class, and regional origin. In communities with mixed-origin populations, such as Almanshyah, linguistic features often reflect the historical and social interactions between different groups. These interactions shape how speakers use linguistic features, including negation, to align themselves with particular social identities or regional affiliations.

In urban or mixed-origin neighborhoods, sociolinguistic variation is particularly evident in the way speakers navigate their linguistic repertoires to signal membership in different social or regional groups. As Trudgill (2004) discusses, language change and variation in these contexts are often influenced by factors such as migration patterns, social mobility, and the desire to signal solidarity with specific communities. This theory is applicable to Almanshyah, where speakers from both Palestinian and Jordanian backgrounds may choose different negation forms as part of their social identity.

Sociolinguistic Aspects of Palestinian and Jordanian Dialects

The linguistic differences between Palestinian and Jordanian Arabic can be traced to historical, social, and cultural factors. Palestinian Arabic is shaped by the historical and social experiences of Palestinian people, including the impact of migration and displacement. Palestinian communities have maintained specific linguistic features, including the use of ش- in negation, as markers of regional and social identity.

On the other hand, Jordanian Arabic, particularly in regions like Karak, is influenced by a combination of Bedouin Arabic and the varieties of Arabic spoken by other groups in Jordan. The linguistic features of Jordanian Arabic are therefore deeply connected to the Bedouin cultural heritage and the linguistic contact between Bedouins and other groups in the region. As Al-Najjar (2010) notes, linguistic features in Jordanian Arabic, such as the absence of cliticization in negation, reflect the distinct social and

cultural histories of the communities in Jordan.

These sociolinguistic differences reflect the complex relationship between language and identity in these communities. The use of ما كتبت versus ما كتبتش can be seen as a reflection of the speakers' social origins and the ways in which regional identity plays a role in shaping the syntactic choices they make. The linguistic variation in Almanshyah offers a valuable case study for understanding how dialects evolve in mixed-origin communities and how language serves as a tool for social differentiation and identity formation.

DATA COLLECTION

Participants

The participants in this study were 41 male students from classes 10 and 11 in a school located in Almanshyah, a neighborhood in Karak, Jordan. The students' origins were diverse, with 28 students originally from Palestine, who predominantly use the negation form ما كتبتش, while the remaining 13 students have Jordanian origins, and typically use ما كتبت for negation.

Demographics

•   Origin: 28 students are originally from Palestine, while the remaining 13 are of Jordanian origin.

•   Age: All participants were between 15 and 17 years old, as they were in high school (classes 10 and 11).

•   Gender: All participants were male.

•   Educational Level: The students were in high school, either in class 10 or 11.

•   Family Background: The students were from various family backgrounds, some with a Palestinian heritage, while others were from Jordanian families, reflecting the linguistic diversity of the neighborhood.

Method of Data Collection

1.   Direct Observation

During classroom interactions, the students were asked to respond to the question: "Did you write the assignment?" (ما كتبت الواجب؟). Their responses were recorded, and two main negation forms emerged:

Palestinian students predominantly responded with ما كتبتش.

Jordanian students predominantly responded with ما كتبت.

The frequency of usage of each form was noted, and the data showed a clear distinction based on regional origin.

2. Interviews

In addition to observing classroom interactions, I conducted interviews with the students to gather more sociolinguistic data. The interviews focused on the students' perceptions of their dialect and the influence of their regional origin on their language usage. The interviews helped confirm the linguistic patterns observed in their speech and provided insights into their awareness of these differences.

The questions included:

"How do you usually say 'I didn't write' in your dialect?"

"What does the negation particle 'ما' mean to you in your dialect?"

"Why do you think you use '-ش' in your negation structure?"

"Do you think there is a difference between your dialect and other dialects?"

3. Syntactic Elicitation Tasks

I also elicited specific sentences from the students to examine their use of negation in controlled tasks. For instance, students were asked to complete sentences such as:

"I _____ write the assignment."

I compared how they used ما كتبتش vs ما كتبت in these tasks, which helped clarify their syntactic choices.

Frequency and Patterns

- Palestinian students used ما كتبتش more frequently, in line with Palestinian Arabic negation patterns.

- Jordanian students used ما كتبت without the clitic ش-, which is characteristic of Jordanian Arabic.

- The differences in usage were consistent across the participants, with a clear division based on regional origin.

DATA ANALYSIS

Syntactic Analysis

The syntactic analysis of the negation forms ما كتبتش (PA) and ما كتبت (JA) is performed using a minimalist syntactic framework. The focus here is to break down and compare the two negation structures found in Palestinian Arabic (PA) and Jordanian Arabic (JA).

1. Analyzing Negation in Palestinian Arabic (PA): In Palestinian Arabic, the negation structure is ما +
Verb + ش-, where ما is the negation particle, the verb follows, and the clitic ش- attaches directly to the
verb. The clitic ش- is a distinctive feature of Palestinian Arabic, which marks negation in this dialect.

o NegP Structure:

NegP → [Neg] (ما) + [VP] → [V' [V] (Verb) + -ش]

Example: ما كتبتش (I didn't write). Here, the verb كتب (to write) is negated by the particle ما and the clitic
ش- is added to the verb, forming the complete negation.

☐ Tree Diagram:

scss

NegP

├── Neg (ما)

└── VP

└── V'

├── V (Verb: كتب)

└── Clitic (ش-)

This structure shows that the clitic ش- is attached to the verb within the verb phrase (VP), specifically
after the verb itself, marking it as a feature of Palestinian Arabic negation.

2. Analyzing Negation in Jordanian Arabic (JA): In contrast, Jordanian Arabic employs a simpler
negation structure, consisting of ما + Verb, without the clitic ش-. This structure is more straightforward
and lacks the post-verbal clitic found in Palestinian Arabic.

NegP Structure:

NegP → [Neg] (ما) + [VP] → [V'] [V] (Verb)

Example: ما كتبت (I didn't write). In this case, the verb كتب (to write) is negated by the particle ما, but
there is no clitic ش- attached to the verb.

☐ Tree Diagram:

scss

NegP

```
├──── Neg (ما)
│
└──── VP
   │
   └──── V'
      │
      └──── V (Verb: كتب)
```

The absence of ش- in this structure reflects the simpler nature of negation in Jordanian Arabic, where the verb is simply negated by ما without further morphological attachment.

3. Comparison of NegP Structures: Comparing the two dialects, we can observe the following syntactic differences:

In Palestinian Arabic, the ش- clitic attaches to the verb, forming part of the NegP structure. This indicates that negation in PA is more complex, with the verb phrase (VP) containing both the verb and the clitic ش-.

In Jordanian Arabic, negation is simpler as the verb is negated with ما only, without the additional ش- clitic. This structure reflects a more streamlined verb phrase.

These differences highlight the syntactic variations between the two dialects, with Palestinian Arabic displaying a more complex negation structure, influenced by its historical and linguistic features.

Sociolinguistic Analysis

The sociolinguistic analysis explores the social factors influencing the use of these two negation forms and the role of regional origin in the students' language choices. The goal is to understand the underlying reasons for the syntactic variation and how social factors, such as family background, community influence, and historical migration, contribute to the observed differences in negation usage.

1. Patterns Based on Origin:

Palestinian Students: The 28 Palestinian students in the study consistently used ما كتبتش, which suggests that the use of ش- is a defining feature of their dialect. The frequency of this form is notably higher among Palestinian students than Jordanian students.

Jordanian Students: The 13 Jordanian students predominantly used ما كتبت, which aligns with the negation structure of Jordanian Arabic. The absence of ش- in their responses indicates the simpler negation structure of their dialect.

This pattern supports the hypothesis that regional origin plays a key role in determining the negation form used by speakers.

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2. Social Factors:

Family Background: The family origin of the students seems to correlate with their use of negation. Palestinian students, whose families are from Palestine, were more likely to use ما كتبتش, whereas Jordanian students, from Jordanian families, used ما كتبت. This suggests that family background is a significant factor influencing language use.

Community Influence: Students from mixed-origin communities might be more likely to adopt different linguistic forms based on interaction with peers from diverse backgrounds. However, the strong preference for ما كتبتش among Palestinian students and ما كتبت among Jordanian students indicates that community norms may reinforce regional linguistic features rather than lead to significant convergence.

3. Historical and Cultural Factors:

Palestinian Influence: The presence of the clitic ش- in Palestinian Arabic is likely rooted in the historical linguistic features of Palestinian Arabic. Historically, Palestinian Arabic has retained this clitic, which differentiates it from other Arabic dialects, such as Jordanian Arabic, where the clitic is absent.

Jordanian Influence: The lack of ش- in Jordanian Arabic may reflect historical influences, particularly the sociopolitical factors shaping Jordanian dialects over time. The simpler negation structure without ش- could be a result of these influences, possibly linked to the dialect's evolution over time.

4. Perceptions and Attitudes: From the interviews, the students were generally aware of the differences between their dialect and that of their peers. Some Palestinian students viewed their use of ما كتبتش as characteristic of their regional identity, while Jordanian students identified ما كتبت as more "standard" in their context. These perceptions suggest that dialectal differences in negation are tied to identity and community belonging.

5. Language Contact and Change: The mixed-origin nature of the neighborhood suggests that language contact plays a role in the evolution of dialect forms. However, the clear division in negation usage between Palestinian and Jordanian students suggests that the dialectal differences are resistant to change, likely due to the strong influence of family and community norms. This could be a sign of dialectal preservation rather than convergence.

In summary, the sociolinguistic analysis shows that the differences in negation usage are influenced by a complex interplay of regional origin, family background, community norms, and historical factors. These influences contribute to the distinct syntactic choices made by Palestinian and Jordanian students, highlighting the role of social identity in shaping linguistic behavior.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Minimalist Syntax

The Minimalist Program (Chomsky, 1995) provides a framework for analyzing syntactic structures by focusing on the most basic and universal principles of grammar. It posits that syntax is governed by a small set of principles that allow for the generation of all possible grammatical structures in human languages. In the context of negation in Palestinian Arabic (PA) and Jordanian Arabic (JA), the NegP structure and the cliticization of ش- can be analyzed within this minimalist framework.

1. NegP Structure:

In Palestinian Arabic (PA), the negation structure consists of ما + Verb + -ش, where the clitic ش- attaches to the verb to form part of the NegP (Negation Phrase). According to the Minimalist Program, negation is assumed to be an operation that moves the negation marker to the head of the NegP, thereby c-commanding the verb.

In Jordanian Arabic (JA), the structure is simpler, with ما + Verb, where the negation ما is positioned in the head of the NegP, but there is no clitic to follow the verb. The verb is negated solely by the NegP structure, suggesting that JA lacks the post-verbal cliticization found in PA.

From a minimalist perspective:

In PA, the ش- clitic is treated as a morphological affix that is syntactically integrated within the verb phrase. The attachment of ش- is likely analyzed as an instance of v-head movement within the VP, which moves ش- to the verb in order to form a complex verbal structure within the NegP. This interaction between cliticization and negation fits within the minimalist framework, where affix movement and clitic attachment are crucial components of syntactic structure building.

In JA, the absence of the clitic ش- suggests a more straightforward negation process, where NegP → [Neg] (ما) + [VP] → [V'] [V]. The lack of a post-verbal clitic indicates that Jordanian Arabic does not rely on morphological processes like cliticization to mark negation, instead using ما alone within the negation phrase.

2. Comparison within Minimalism: The minimalist framework suggests that the difference between PA and JA negation can be attributed to lexical variation (the presence or absence of the clitic ش-) in the NegP structure. In this framework, the syntactic structures are derived from universal principles, but dialectal variation arises from the selection of specific morphological elements like clitics. Thus, ش- in PA serves as an example of how dialectal syntax can involve additional morphological elements that modify the basic syntactic structure of negation, as opposed to the simpler JA negation structure.

Sociolinguistics

To understand the sociolinguistic aspects of negation variation in PA and JA, we can apply Labov's Theory of Social Variation, which analyzes how language use varies according to social factors such as social identity, regional origin, and community background.

1. Labov's Theory of Social Variation: William Labov's theory, particularly his work on social stratification of language, posits that language features are often markers of social identity, and these features vary according to factors such as social class, regional origin, age, and ethnicity. According to Labov, individuals in a community adopt specific linguistic forms based on the prestige, solidarity, or identity they associate with those forms. In the case of PA and JA negation, the use of ما كتبتش by Palestinian students and ما كتبت by Jordanian students reflects the different social identities linked to each group's regional origin.

Regional Origin and Identity: The use of ما كتبتش by Palestinian students can be seen as a linguistic marker of their Palestinian identity. This form signals their belonging to a linguistic community that retains this feature of Palestinian Arabic. Similarly, the use of ما كتبت by Jordanian students reflects their Jordanian identity, where this simpler negation structure is more typical.

Community Background and Social Networks: Labov also emphasizes the role of social networks in language variation. Students from different social backgrounds or communities may adopt language forms that signal affiliation with their peers. In mixed-origin neighborhoods, where Palestinian and Jordanian communities interact, the transmission of linguistic forms can be influenced by social networks within families and communities. However, despite the presence of mixed communities, the persistent use of distinct negation forms suggests that family and regional origin continue to strongly influence language choice.

2. Social Variation and Language Change: The differences in negation structures between Palestinian and Jordanian students also reflect broader sociolinguistic processes such as language change and language contact. Over time, language contact in mixed-origin neighborhoods can lead to shifts in language use, but as Labov suggests, such changes often happen gradually and are strongly conditioned by social factors such as age, gender, and community norms. The persistence of the two distinct negation forms in this study suggests that despite potential contact and influence, language change is not immediate and that dialects continue to maintain their distinct features.

3. Social Identity and Perceptions: The sociolinguistic analysis also considers perceptions of language use. Palestinian students might perceive the use of ما كتبتش as a marker of prestige or authenticity in their community, while Jordanian students might view ما كتبت as the more standard or neutral form. These

perceptions shape how individuals adopt or avoid certain linguistic forms based on their social identity and their desire to align with particular regional norms.

In summary, the use of distinct negation forms in PA and JA can be analyzed both syntactically and sociolinguistically. The Minimalist Program helps us understand the syntactic structures of negation in both dialects, while Labov's Theory of Social Variation sheds light on how social identity, regional origin, and community background shape linguistic choices in these dialects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Syntactic Findings

The syntactic analysis of the negation forms in Palestinian Arabic (PA) and Jordanian Arabic (JA) revealed distinct structural differences based on the cliticization of ش- in PA, which is absent in JA.

1. Palestinian Arabic: In Palestinian Arabic, negation is marked by the structure ما + Verb + ش-. The clitic ش- attaches to the verb, forming part of the NegP (Negation Phrase). This structure suggests that the ش- clitic is syntactically integrated within the VP (Verb Phrase). Within the minimalist syntactic framework, the structure can be analyzed as:

NegP → [Neg] (ما) + [VP] → [V' [V] (Verb) + -ش]

This indicates that ش- is a post-verbal clitic, which attaches directly to the verb to form a complex verbal structure, as part of the negation phrase. The attachment of the clitic ش- shows a feature of cliticization typical in Palestinian Arabic, where clitics play an important role in verb morphology.

2. Jordanian Arabic: In contrast, Jordanian Arabic uses a simpler negation structure, ما + Verb, without the post-verbal clitic ش-. The structure here is more straightforward, with no additional morphological elements attached to the verb. This can be analyzed as:

o   NegP → [Neg] (ما) + [VP] → [V'] [V] (Verb)

The absence of ش- in JA suggests that this dialect relies purely on the negation marker ما at the head of the NegP, with no further syntactic complexity introduced through cliticization. This results in a simpler negation form compared to Palestinian Arabic, where ش- provides additional syntactic structure to the verb phrase.

These structural differences reflect lexical variation between the dialects, where the presence of ش- in Palestinian Arabic introduces additional syntactic layers that are absent in Jordanian Arabic. This syntactic distinction may be rooted in historical, cultural, or community-based linguistic patterns, which we will explore further in the sociolinguistic findings.

Sociolinguistic Findings

The sociolinguistic analysis sheds light on how social identity, regional origin, and community background influence the usage of these negation forms. The differences in negation structures are not only syntactic but also reflect deeper social and cultural factors.

1. The Palestinian Community's Linguistic Influence on the Use of ش-: The frequent use of ما كتبتش by Palestinian students can be attributed to Palestinian Arabic's long-standing linguistic features, which include the use of cliticization as a grammatical strategy. This form of negation is not only syntactic but is also a marker of Palestinian identity, signaling affiliation with the Palestinian community. According to Labov's theory of social variation, language features are often used to signal group membership, and Palestinian students may consciously or unconsciously maintain this feature to align with their community's linguistic norms.

The use of ش- is likely a product of historical and geographical factors, as Palestinian Arabic has evolved with certain syntactic markers that distinguish it from other Levantine varieties. This form may also carry a degree of prestige within the Palestinian community, making it a preferred choice in informal and conversational contexts.

2. The Jordanian Community's Preference for Simpler Negation Structures: In contrast, Jordanian students tend to use ما كتبت, without the clitic ش-, reflecting the simpler negation structure typical in Jordanian Arabic. The absence of the clitic might reflect linguistic simplification, where certain morphological elements, like clitics, are less prevalent or have been historically dropped over time. This can also be seen as part of Jordanian Arabic's grammatical evolution, which may favor more streamlined structures compared to other dialects in the Levant.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, Jordanian students may identify with a more standardized or neutral form of Arabic, as ما كتبت is common across many Arabic dialects and might be perceived as more "neutral" or "modern" compared to the more regionally specific Palestinian negation. This preference for a simpler form could also reflect social mobility, where students from Jordan may favor forms of speech that are less marked by regional identity, especially in mixed neighborhoods where different dialects interact.

3. Historical, Geographical, and Family Background: The differences in negation forms can also be traced back to historical and geographical factors. Palestinian Arabic, particularly the version spoken by refugees or descendants of Palestinian migrants, has preserved features that reflect the dialect's evolution in specific historical contexts, including linguistic interactions with neighboring Arabic varieties and foreign influences during periods of displacement. On the other hand, Jordanian Arabic is

shaped by Jordan's own historical development, its role as a crossroads of regional cultures, and its contact with neighboring dialects.

Family background also plays a crucial role, as students from Palestinian families are more likely to use ما كتبتش, while those with Jordanian origins may prefer ما كتبت. These patterns reflect the intergenerational transmission of dialect features, where children continue to adopt the language practices of their families.

4. Language Contact and Linguistic Variation: The presence of both Palestinian and Jordanian students in the same social and educational environments can lead to language contact and linguistic variation. In neighborhoods where these dialects coexist, students might experience linguistic convergence or code-switching, where elements of both dialects influence one another. However, as observed in this study, the persistence of distinct negation forms suggests that these forms are deeply entrenched in social identity and family background, making them resistant to full convergence in the short term.

5. Perceptions of Prestige: Students' perceptions of prestige and correctness also affect their choice of negation form. While Palestinian students may see ما كتبتش as part of their identity, Jordanian students might view ما كتبت as the more neutral or "correct" form. This reflects how linguistic prestige is often tied to social perceptions of a dialect's status within the larger sociopolitical context.

The results of this study demonstrate that the syntactic differences in negation between Palestinian and Jordanian Arabic are not merely structural but also reflect deeper sociolinguistic factors related to social identity, community background, and historical influences. The use of ش- in Palestinian Arabic and its absence in Jordanian Arabic highlights how linguistic features can serve as markers of regional identity and group membership. These findings also underscore the role of language contact and social networks in shaping the way dialects evolve and influence each other.

 CONCLUSION

This study examined the syntactic and sociolinguistic differences in the use of negation between Palestinian Arabic (PA) and Jordanian Arabic (JA). The primary focus was on the two distinct negation structures used in these dialects: ما + Verb + ش- in Palestinian Arabic and ما + Verb in Jordanian Arabic.

Syntactic Differences:

The syntactic analysis revealed clear differences between the two dialects:

•   Palestinian Arabic employs a more complex negation structure with ما + Verb + ش-, where the clitic ش- attaches to the verb, forming part of the NegP. This cliticization reflects a more layered and morphologically rich negation structure.

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- Jordanian Arabic, in contrast, uses the simpler form ما + Verb, where the verb is negated without the addition of the clitic ش-, resulting in a cleaner and more straightforward syntactic structure.

These differences illustrate how cliticization in Palestinian Arabic adds an extra syntactic layer that is absent in Jordanian Arabic, signaling structural and morphosyntactic divergence between the two dialects.

Sociolinguistic Reasons:

The sociolinguistic findings emphasize that these syntactic differences are not solely linguistic but are deeply tied to the regional origins and social identity of the speakers:

- Palestinian students often use ما كتبتش due to the influence of Palestinian Arabic, which has historically maintained the use of clitics like ش-. This reflects a connection to Palestinian identity and culture, where this form of negation is a strong marker of regional affiliation.

- Jordanian students, on the other hand, favor ما كتبت—a simpler negation structure that aligns more with the Jordanian Arabic spoken in their community. This preference may also indicate a trend towards more standardized or simplified forms in Jordanian Arabic, which are less regionally marked.

The use of these two forms reflects how family background, social identity, and community norms influence language choice. The historical and geographical factors at play are significant in shaping the dialectal features of Palestinian and Jordanian Arabic. The Palestinian Arabic structure with ش- may be a relic of historical linguistic practices specific to Palestinian communities, while Jordanian Arabic reflects broader trends of simplification and standardization.

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