

Discourse analysis of Algerian women's initiative of love declaration

Abstract

In the Algerian culture a great shame surrounds free expression of feeling in mixed- sex talk , in general, and love declaration, in specific (Chebel 19931, and Bouhdiba 1998) 2. The speech acts which are like actions (Austin ,1962) create a perlocutionary effect and ,thus, seem in the case of love declaration (LD), to put the locutor's / interlocutor's faces at risk by creating an offense based on the idea of territorial incursion (Goffman 1967). The issue becomes more hypothetic if it is initiated by woman because of power, solidarity and politeness norms at interactional level. The latter is rule-governed by the principles of politeness that involve the concept of face and place which structure the said and non- said. During interaction, the speech acts as defined by Austin (1962) are like actions that create perlocutionary effect. In other words, this represents a particularly embarrassing Act Threatening Face (ATF) (Brown & Levinson ,1987).

The purpose of this paper aims at highlighting how the informants of our corpus react towards woman's initiative of love declaration .The methodology to be applied is based on multidisciplinary approach based on Critical Discourse Analysis with Gender and language perspective. Our data

1 - References

- Chebel M,1993,L'imaginaire arabo-musulman, 1ère Ed. , Paris, Presses Universitaires de France.
2 - Bouhdiba,A. 1998 La sexualité en islam,5ème édition, Paris ,Presses universitaires de France.

are collected from informants whose age varies from 20-to 55 year old and whose education level ranges between university and non university. The results of this study show two main female attitudes :conservative and passive

Key words: interactional ritual, taboo, woman's initiative, love declaration, discourse analysis.

Résumé

Dans la culture algérienne une grande honte entoure l'expression libre des sentiments en général , et la déclaration d'amour, en particulier(Chebel 1993, and Bouhdiba 1998). Les actes de langage qui , selon (Austin ,1962, sont comme des actions ,semblent , dans le cas de la déclaration d'amour ,mettre la face des locuteurs/ices et interlocuteurs / ices en danger en créant une offense fondée sur le principe de l'invasion territoriale (Goffman,1967) générant, ainsi, un acte menaçant la face (AMF) (Brown & Levinson ,1987). La question devient plus hypothétique si l'initiative émane de la femme à cause des normes qui régissent le rituel d'interaction relatif aux rapports de pouvoir, de solidarité et à la théorie de politesse. Cette dernière implique les concepts de la face et de la place qui structurent le dit et le non-dit.

L'objectif de cette étude vise à mettre en évidence les représentations des informatrices de notre corpus vis-à-vis de la déclaration d'amour initiée par la femme. La méthodologie choisie pour mener cette étude est multidisciplinaire, adoptant l'analyse critique du discours dans la perspective des études qui mettent en relation les notions de genre et de langage. Les données du corpus sont collectées auprès d'informatrices multilingues dont le niveau d'instruction est universitaire et non universitaire et dont l'âge varie de (20 à 55) habitant à Tizi Ouzou et Boumerdès .Les résultats démontrent que les informatrices expriment des attitudes conservatrices et passives.

Mots clés :. Le rituel d'interaction, tabou, initiative, déclaration d'amour, femmes, Analyse de discours.

ملخص

يكتنف التعبير الحر عن العواطف عامة و البوح عن الحب خاصة الكثير من الحياء و الحشمة. إنَّ الأفعال الكلامية التي تؤدي في هذه الوضعية تضع الفاعلين في حال من الخطر ما يمنك أن يضيع لهم ماء الوجه لأنَّ البوح عن الحب يعدّ خرقة لفضاء أحد المتخاطبين. و يضعف الخطر عندما يكون الإعلان عن الحب من قبل المرأة نظرا للحدود التي تحدّ طقوس التبادل و التفاعل المتعلقة بصلات النفوذ و السلطة و التضامن و اللياقة و الدب السائدة في المجتمع الجزائري.

نود في هذا المقال أن نبرز تصورات النساء الجزائريات حول اعلان عن الحب الذي تبادر به المرأة معتمدين منهجية الدراسات حول النوع و اللغة و هي مناهج مبنية على التحاقل. جمعت معطيات البحث لدى مجموعة من النساء الجامعيات و غير الجامعيات تتراوح أعمارهن من ٢٠ إلى ٥٠ سنة يعشن في مدينتي تيزي اوزو و بومرداس. تظهر النتائج التي توصلنا عليها أنّهن يعبرن عن مواقف محافظة و مستنكية جدا.



'Social life is an uncluttered, orderly thing, because the person voluntarily stays away from the places and the topics and times where he might be disparaged from going, he cooperates to save his face, finding that there is much to be gained from venturing nothing'

(Goffman,1967a,Interaction Ritual,p.43)

Introduction

In the Algerian culture a great shame surrounds free expression of feeling in face- to -face interaction, in general, and love declaration,(LD) in specific as affirmed by, among others, (Chebel 1993, and Bouhdiba 1998). In the case of LD, the speech act seems to put the locutor's / interlocutor's faces at risk by creating an embarrassment backed by the idea of territorial incursion in case the feeling is not shared or its expression is unexpected. Thus, the LD as a speech act has a perlocutive effect on the hearer (Austin,1970:19)³. In other words, this represents a particularly discomfoting Act Threatening Face (ATF) (Brown & Levinson,1987)⁴. The issue becomes more hypothetical if it is initiated by woman for power, solidarity and politeness norms that shaped mixed -sex interaction in gendered society. The latter is rule-governed by the principles of politeness that involve the concept of face and place.

The purpose of this paper aims at highlighting how the informants of our corpus react towards woman's initiative of love declaration. We want to know if they perpetuate or subvert the existing socio

3 - Austin,J.L.,1970 ,*Quand dire c'est faire,(How to Do Things with Words)*,1962, traduit par Gilles Lanes, Paris, Seuil.

4 - Brown,P. and Levinson,S.1987, *Politeness some Universals in Language Use* ,Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

cultural norms . The methodology to be applied is based on multidisciplinary approach based on Critical Discourse Analysis with Gender and language perspective. This paper is composed of a theoretical and practical section.

1 Review

Before analyzing the corpus ,it is necessary to present some concepts related to politeness theory such as face, Act Threatening Face, place and their relation to LD.

1.1 Face

The face-work stands for different emotions that the face reflects. It is through some physical reactions such as skin colouration, wrinkles, grimaces, eye sparkling, lips moves, that it is possible to interpret the inner emotions of happiness / humiliation the interlocutors are experiencing in any interaction. The concept of face has been developed by Brown and Levinson (1987) who explained that it involves positive / negative face. The positive face is concerned with the desire to be appreciated as a social person, while the negative face is related to the desire to see one's action unimpeded by others. For Goffman, "the face is an image of self, delineated in terms of approved social attributes" (Goffman 1967a:5)⁵. Consequently, the face is emotionally invested and can be lost, maintained or enhanced and must be attended to in interaction. In passing, we refer to some face-related expressions in English such as 'lose / save face' .Equivalent expressions are found in Standard Arabic, 'yahfadu ma?a wajhihi' for 'to save face'. In Algerian Arabic , it is possible to use 'qabel', for 'to face' (Bourdieu,1972)⁶, while 'darbet el wetch means ' the face 'stroke, standing for humiliation. Moreover ,the expressions, 'hemmer wetchek /seffer wethek (Kadra-Hadjadji, 1989)⁷(god will redden / turn yellow your face), respectively refer

5 - (Goffman 1967a) 'On face-work: an analysis of ritual elements in social interaction', In *Interaction Ritual: Essay on face- to -face Behaviour*, NewYork, Pantheon Books pp;(5-45)

6 - Bourdieu P., *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique, précédée de trois études d'ethnologie kabyle*, Genève, Librairie Droz, 1972, p 34.

7 - Kadra-Hadjadji,H., Oumelkheir Alger,SNED, 1989.

to benediction/malediction or thanking and cursing which could be matched by what is called Act Threatening Face (AFT).

1.2 Act Threatening Face (AFT)

Goffman's interactional ritual concept stemmed from Durkheim's religious ritual '*The Elementary Form of Religious Life*' (Durkheim, 1960) which organizes the social life. Similarly the interactional ritual at conversational level seeks for preserving order by applying the culture-specific rules that include prescriptions in terms of what is /is not allowed to say. Many factors such as, frame, territory, status, power, demeanour and deference (Goffman 1967b)⁸ which are socially determined, are interwoven to insure social order necessary for peaceful and secure coexistence (Ducrot, 1980: 174)⁹. Goffman argues that the framing of experience is usually anchored by layers of other frames (Lement and Branaman 1997:ixxv)¹⁰. Thus, the social meaning of our actions and namely verbal ones depends on these frames which play a powerful role in guiding the interrelation of experience, determining the meaning of social events and defining the personal identities of individuals' (Ibid). Viewed through the lens of Goffman's theories of 'work-face and politeness', individuals affirm social order by marking out their own territories and respecting those of others" (Goffman, 1963: 40-41)¹¹. Thus, the awareness of the territory impediment with its abstract and symbolic meaning dictates the type of discourse to produce. It follows that the discourse content has '*to be politically correct*' so that the interlocutors' face will not be threatened. To '*be politically correct*' signifies that one is aware of the censorship shaped according to the cultural norms of each speech community and of the positive /

8 - (Goffman 1967b) 'The nature of deference and demeanour' In *Interactional Ritual: Essay on face- to -face Behaviour*, New York, Pantheon Books pp:(47-95)

9 - Ducrot, O., 1980 *Dire et ne pas dire*, Paris, Herman, éditeurs des Sciences et des Arts. Paris, Ed de Minuit, ,p 174; Flahaut, F., 1978, *La parole intermédiaire*, Préface de Roland Barthes, Paris ,Le Seuil .

10 - Charles Lement and A. Branaman, 1997, *the Goffman Reader*, England ,Blackwell Publishing

11 - Goffman, E., 1963, *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the social Organization of Gatherings*, The Free Press.

negative face implications acquired through socialization. Another factor referred to by 'the place' structures hierarchically and genderly each discourse by implicitly categorizing it in terms of polite/impolite. From early socialization children learn how to speak, to whom it is/is not allowed to say something and who can or cannot say something to someone. This leads us to present the notion of power relationship between interlocutors determined by the concept of **place**.

1.3 Place and Power

The interaction ritual categorizes speakers as powerful/powerless persons whose status is determined by where his/her symbolic social place is. To schematize the idea of place at the level of the interactional process, we imagine that the speakers are positioned on a symbolic vertical axis ranged from up to down. Obviously the high place stands for the symbolically powerful forces and the low place for the powerless ones (according to Flahaut,1972 in KERBRAT-ORECCHIONI,1992:71)¹². For example, in the patriarchal system which is prevailing in Algeria, men / women are designated as the strong / weak creatures occupying, therefore high/low place respectively. The gendering frame is socially constructed as argued by Goffman in his two essays 'The Arrangements Between Sexes' and 'Gender Advertisement' (GA) (1979)¹³ that cultural sources are the primary sources of gender displays ((GA: 3-4).Thus, to be in conformity with the prevailing etiquette of one's culture, each speaker has to obey the interactional norms that underlie the daily language practices. In other words, the speakers must be aware of the rules that govern each discourse in terms of what is permitted/forbidden in order to insure a good communication without any incident or Act Threatening Face. Considering the power relations that predefine gendered discourse, it will be interesting to explore how the LD is perceived as an ATF.

12 - Kerbrat-Orecchioni, C.,1992 , *Les interactions verbales*, T.II, Paris Armand Colin.

13 - Goffman,E, 1979,'The Arrangements Between Sexes' and 'Gender Advertisement' (GA) Macmillan: 3-4)

1.4 Declaration of love and ATF

The LD represents an ATF for many reasons. On the one hand, it is considered by the interlocutor as a territorial incursion or as an aggression since it could threaten his negative face by implicitly imposing some constraints on him such as making some concessions or efforts to meet the declarer's expectations. On the other, the LD is equally interpreted by either man or woman as a loss of power and alienation. In these lines Kerbrat- Orecchioni reporting what Chambers (1983:95) in *La danse du coucou* said : *'L'aveu de l'amour est une aliénation',... [U]ne fois qu'on s'est déclaré, quoi, les gens ont barre sur vous. Ils savent. Ils s'arrogent des droits''*. (Kerbrat- Orecchioni,1992:173) (The love Declaration represents an alienation. Once the declaration is performed, people have power on you. They know and they claim rights upon you) (Trans.Mine).

Besides, in case the feeling of love is not mutually shared ,the LD is perceived as an ATF for the negative face of the declarer leading thus, to humiliation and confusion. This explanation is backed by the interactional ritual in general, and cultural implications in specific, as it is the case for the Algerian context where LD is surrounded by shame and tabooess for both man and woman, as affirmed by Plantade (148-149)¹⁴. But it becomes more problematic if is initiated by woman for at least two cultural reasons. To start with, initiating an action implies possessing the ability to take decision, to possess enough force, courage and sometimes audacity to do something. This in principle falls in the competence of a leading person, e.g. a powerful one .Arguably,in a society founded on the patriarchal system, it is up to man to take decision / initiative, and not to women. In other words, the patriarchal ideology assigns agency to men and passivity to women . Thus, it is evident that a woman is brought up with the idea of passivity that has confined her to the role of someone who has only to wait and pray for her destiny or to what is commonly referred to by '*testena mektubha*' (she waits for her destiny). The latter is an euphemistic expression in the Algerian Arabic meaning that woman secretly desires to get married. Secondly,the tabooess

14 - Plantade,N., ,1988, *La guerre des femmes, Magie, et Amour en Algérie*, Paris, La Boite à Documents.

of woman's initiative of LD seems to be grounded in the fact that it connotes with marriage which in its turn is implicitly associated with sexuality, another universal taboo which is avoided in 'politically correct' speech. Consequently, when a woman initiates the LD she will reverse the etiquette order and subvert the cultural norms and values in the Algerian gendered society. As an illustration of the tabooess of the female initiative of love, sustained by oral tradition, I will briefly refer to an excerpt of an Algerian storytelling entitled '*Bent Essoltan*' (The King's Daughter) collected from my grandmother who was originated from Blida. The tale said:

'Once upon a time, a princess fell in love with the prince Mhamed Ben Essoltan. Being ravaged by the fire of that love, she asked her father to send him a message to apply for marriage. As her father refused to fulfil her request, she took the initiative to send a letter in which she declared her love and proposed to marry him. As a reply, Mhamed Ben Essoltan sent a messenger with the burnt letter, a ring and a scarf accompanied with the following verbal message which said:

*'-If you burn yourself as this letter, I will not marry you,
-If you enter in and go out of this ring, I will not marry you,
-If you strangle yourself with this scarf, I will not marry you.'*

We assume that, when children and more specifically girls have been fed with such a type of storytelling during their early age, they will certainly not dare to initiate any LD at adult age for the long lasting impact of oral culture on constructing the social imaginaire and representations.

2 Profile of the informants

The data were extracted from the informants' corpus of our Doctorate Dissertation on the linguistic Taboo (2008)¹⁵—but the analysis was updated for the purpose of the qualitative study of this

15 - Mebtouche Nedjai F. Z. 2008. Le tabou linguistique : étude sociolinguistique des attitudes des femmes des wilayas de Tizi Ouzou et de Boumerdès. Thèse Doctorat en sciences du langage, Nouveau régime dirigée par Prof. Dourari, A. Université d'Alger.

article. However, the quantitative study based on a questionnaire will be excluded from this study for space limitation. The informants are women from Tizi Ouzou and Boumerdes wilayas(districts), in Algeria, whose age ranges from 20-to 55 years.They are basically either university or secondary school graded and fewer are intermediate school graded. They are multilingual and speak Algerian Arabic, Kabyle and French that are co-used in daily life interactions. As for the corpus ,we had collected note- data of what we considered as ‘spontaneous talk’ produced in parallel with the questionnaire distribution. We have taken notes of any comment which was addressed to us as a woman researcher, or to other women present in the room .Some of them knew each other as in working places, and some other didn’t as in hair-do parlor. Sometimes, the present women reacted to the interviewee’s spontaneous talk which turned into a thematic conversation on one of the items of the questionnaire. These acts of speech refer to agency of the informants who seemed endorsing the responsibility of their ideas and defending their own thoughts. Theirs answers to the question of whether they can initiate love declaration in face –to-face interaction with man were written in the vernacular speech forms in Algerian Arabic, Kabyle and or French. Their discourses have been recorded through note taking and translated into English . Even if the discourses may appear as unrelated sentences they are thematically bound.

3. Discourse Analysis

The corpus-based analysis shows divergent attitudes of the informants, who tend to express in their majority their linguistic insecurity regarding the initiation of LD .

3.1 Attitudes of Resistance

It is possible to categorize the attitudes of informants advocating avoidance of the LD initiative according to several factors glossed in terms of social, space and time deixis.

1- “Oh!”

2- “Oh really!”

3- “It is impossible”

4- “Never! Even if I must die”

First, the statements referring to the initiative of LD (1,2,3 and 4) strongly express the informants' linguistic insecurity (LI), evidenced by the interjections (1) 'Oh! (2)'Oh really!' the adjective 'impossible' (3) and the adverb 'never' (4). These discourses show the repulsion created by the reversal of the passive image of women. As if to underline this categorical attitude, (4) emphasized the denial of LD through the use of the conditional clause introduced by a concessive subordinator 'even if' (I have to die). “Concessive adjuncts signal the unexpected, surprising nature of what is being said in view of what was said before.” (Quirk & all, 1972:674)¹⁶. Both conditional and concessive clauses tend to assume initial position in the superordinate clause. (ibid.p.746). Besides these attitudes of avoidance, other informants mention the language gendered discrimination.

3-2 Gendered Discourse

5 - “It is not the woman's role to take the initiative to express the LD.”
The informants have frequently reiterated.

6- “No, it is not for her to say it; it is a question of pride.”

7 - “It's tricky in the Algerian context. We do not know how it is perceived by the Other.”

8- “If she says it, she can be accused of dredge.”

Statements (5,6,7,8), present arguments to explain the social meaning that underlies the informants' culture within gender perspective. To begin with, (5) and (6) reflect the distinctive sociolinguistic norms that allow man

16 - Quirk, R. & all, 1980, *A Grammar Contemporary English*, 9th ed. Essex, Longman Group Limited.

and exclude woman from say/not to say love. The concept of “pride” is a generic term that can refer to several paradigms. It could mean, honor, self-esteem, courage, among others, but in this context, pride overlaps with woman’s passivity and silence and man’s activity and performance. Thus, the discourse (7), illustrates the fear of misunderstanding between woman and man since it is not possible to predict the other’s reaction. Furthermore, the statement stresses the risk of receiving a dysphoric answer through the referent He / She. The unknown reaction of ‘HE’ can lead to the risk of exposure to humiliation, when the feeling of love is not shared as it may be perceived as a territory incursion. In other words, the Other may admit or refuse that a woman can declare her love. But as the saying goes “when in doubt refrain,” it is better to avoid the initiative of the LD, seems to suggest the informant. In fact this is an attitude of prudence that is meant to preserve the informant’s positive face. There is no intermediate situation. Performance to say love is combined with exclusion. The interpretative frame of traditional culture claims the reserve in the verbal behavior as an identificatory trait of femininity and as a constitutive parameter of honor. On its part, the statement (8) by its impersonal appearance describes the collective representation towards a woman who dares take the initiative of LD: “*she could be taken for what she is not, a prostitute.*” This represents an offense or an insult that threatens the informant’s negative face.

How can one relate the female LD to prostitution? As previously mentioned, the LD implies sexual desire and seek for pleasure. This idea is not retained by the Algerian cultural scale which relates women sexual activity to reproduction and motherhood constructs that have shaped the social imaginary for immemorial times as sustained by (Plantade ,1998: 47). In the same way the woman’s functional sexuality was spread in the Greek culture too. For example, women were said to be deprived from any sexual impulse as sustained by (Foucault,1984:188)¹⁷. Obviously, these discourses unveil the awareness of the lower informants’ place they are not ready to subvert. However, others seem to be mitigated as it will be discussed in what follows .

17- Foucault ,M.,1984, *Histoire de la sexualité.L’usage des plaisirs*, T.2, Paris,Gallimard

3.3 Ambiguous Attitudes

9 - “Normally bent familia “(a girl of good family) will not say that.” Another representation of honor emerging from the dichotomous relationship “bent familia (vs ‘mashi bent familia’) (daughter of good/bad family) (9), is worth analyzing. Reference to ‘bent familia’ connotes with the symbolic social capital that values the family bonds and the collective identity. But at the same time this discourse seems mitigated and polyphonic with the use of the adverb ‘normally’ in initial position. It is easy to infer from the adverb ‘Normally’, which introduces the discourse that the subject voice of ‘I’ may mean that ‘I’ is either in intimacy or distance relationship with the voice of the social norm that condemns the LD by the use of the anaphora “it”. The reporting of the voice of the other reveals the knowledge of common sense but does not necessarily imply that ‘I’ is supporting the initiative of LD. The adverb ‘normally’ expresses an ambivalent attitude because the ‘I’ cannot decide between what the normal and the abnormal is. Moreover, ‘normally’ is an axiological adverb whose meaning is rather vague and, therefore, leaves room to various interpretations. Moreover, some informants display an attitude of cultural relativism as it will be argued in the following.

3-4 Cultural Implicature and Space Deixis

10 –“For us it is taboo”. (*hna ‘andna teyaha’*)
11 – “ This does not happen in our country “(*‘mashi fi bladna’*)

The code switching in (10) reiterates the sense of belonging to the culture of love tabooism which is highlighted by ‘teyaha’ meaning lowering. The term ‘teyaha’ can be matched with ‘ayb’ (shame) triangulating the register of taboo/ love /and woman. The meaning of ‘teyaha’ reflects two world views related to the positive / negative face. The first is to protect the positive face of the self meaning that ‘bent familia’ is proud and does not accept to declare her love, while the latter refers to the humiliation that is subdued to the LD which may threaten her negative face.

The fourth argument is to distinguish between what is said here / there that it is possible to infer from (10 and 11). The statement 'hna 'andna ' (in our (culture), (10) 'mashi fi bladna' (not in our country) (11) is a negation of what used to be the rule **here** which opposes **there**. The contrast underscores the possibility / impossibility of the LD, determined by a space location, which proves, once again, the awareness of the relativity of linguistic taboo among informants. Moreover, through a group integration expressed by 'na' (ours), the voice of 'I' is included in that of 'US' which involves collective identity and adhesion to the social group norms. The informant is aware that the basic rule of self- respect and considerateness is based on social "desirability that is achieved through demeanor such as discretion, sincerity, modesty, self control and poise" (Goffman,1963:77)¹⁸ . However, a glimmer of change may bring into light some relatively new ideas.

3-5 Mitigated attitudes

12- "yes, rarely" “

13 - "It's difficult for my generation."

14 - "Women are 50 years ahead of men in relation to sex."

In contrast, (12, 13 and 14) reflect a modulation in relation to the precedent statements . The adverb 'rarely' in (12) introduces the assertion of the initiating LD although it is limited in frequency. In the same way, (13) by specifying 'my generation' meaning old one can allow us to presuppose that it is not as difficult for the present generation as it was for her generation. This discourse raises the dichotomy between past and present and permits us to think that new changes are occurring in the contemporary society. This is what is explicitly, confirmed in (14), that reports women are 50 years ahead of men. The contrast reveals the hidden face of the iceberg. Does this mean that less tabooeness in relation to the LD is observed?

¹⁸ - Goffman,E.,1963, *Behavior in Public Places:Notes on the social Organization of Gatherings*, The Free Press.

4 Discussion

The analysis of the corpus raises the question of the impact of power, solidarity and politeness. How? To start with the acts of speech of these female informants who strongly eliminate the idea of initiating LD in heterosexual relation are indeed, expressing the underlying norms of their culture which excludes it for both men and women as above stated. What has shaped this censorship? Probably the patriarchal institution of marriage in which unequal relations (Mebtouche Nedjai, 2013)¹⁹ between husband and wife are predefined leaving no agency for women and oppositely conferring the power of deciding to man who can decide who to love and to marry or to use a locally colloquial expression who “to buy”. Consequently, as LD could be interpreted as an invitation to marriage, (because lovers are denied this right out of the marriage frame), women know that this is not their role. There is another point, which seems for us worthy theorizing is the fact that women as discourse producers are also the makers of culture as claimed by (Buscholtz, 2003:52).²⁰ By perpetuating the tabooeness of LD through their discursive practices, they reinforce the cultural layers which are implicitly tied to power relations and solidarity instantiated by politeness. Power relations dictate to women attitudes of distance towards men by using negative politeness e.g avoiding territorial impediment and respecting the man’s freedom because of the hierarchically constructed social place. Thus, they affirm their solidarity to their speech community by displaying their anti attitude toward LD under many artifacts such as, pride, honor, taboo, and location deixis (not in our country). They feel more secure by adhering to the norms of their social group as commented by (Kies Ung, 2003:116)²¹. In this case, they

19 - Mebtouche Nedjai F. Z. ‘The Insidious Violence: A Study of Husband-Wife Power Relations in the Algerian Context’, pp. 196-217, in *Gender and Violence in Islamic Societies. Patriarchy, Islamism and Politics in Middle East and North Africa* edited by Zahia Smail Salhi.

20 - Bucholtz, M. 2003. ‘Theories of Discourse as Theories of Gender: Discourse Analysis in Language and Gender studies’. In: Holmes, J. & Meyerhoff, M., *The Handbook of Language and Gender*. England: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 43-68.

21 - 16 Scott Fabius Kies Ung, S., F., 2003. ‘Prestige, cultural models, norms and gender’. In: Holmes, J. & Meyerhoff, M. *The handbook of language and gender*. England: Blackwell Publishing, 509-527.

Appendix: Original corpus.

use the positive politeness which aims at “focusing on the similarity between speakers ‘wants’” (Ibid) .

Conclusion

Finally, in most cases, regardless of age or level of education, the informants clearly affirm that the LD puts them in linguistic insecurity and threatens their face. They still hold conservative discourse on femininity that overlaps with passivity, shame and mostly with the preservation of their vulnerable positive face. The censorship inherent to the women’s LD reveals the unequal power between men and woman in the here and now. However, the fewer informants who declare the saying of love possible insist on a more individual and subversive identity and suggest that a new place is being negotiated to reduce the frame of gender. However, the limitation of the scope of this study suggests the needs for further investigations with a wider sample to confirm whether LD initiated by women will be positively echoed and accepted.

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- 1-« OH »
 - 2-« Ah ce point ! »
 - 3- «C’est impossible. »
 - 4- « Jamais ! Même si je dois en crever. »
 - 5- « Ce n’est pas à la femme que revient l’initiative d’exprimer l’aveu de l’amour. »
 - 6- « Non, c’est à lui de le dire, par fierté. »
 - 7- « C’est délicat dans le contexte algérien, on ne sait pas comment c’est perçu par l’Autre. »
 - 8- « Si elle le dit elle peut être taxée de traînée. »
 - 9- « Normalement « bent familia » (une fille de bonne famille) ne va pas dire ça.»
 - 10 - « Hna ‘andna teyaha.” (Chez nous c’est tabou).
 - 11 - « Mashi fi bladna ». (Ceci ne se fait pas dans notre pays)
 - 12- « oui, rarement »
 - 13- « C’est difficile pour ma génération. »
 - 14- « Les femmes ont 50 ans d’avance sur les hommes par rapport au sexe. »

