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Social construction of the elderly in Libya: Perception, communication and discourse (revisited)

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The paper investigates the social status of the elderly in Libya and how it is co-constructed in the way elderly fathers interact and communicate with younger sons, and healthcare providers. In Libya (Arab, Muslim and Bedouin) the elderly occupies significant familial and social roles. The findings reveal that elderly fathers are perceived as the family leadsser, advisor and decision maker. In contrast, the younger sons are perceived as always independent. Moreover, the large size of Libyan families provides a better chance for elderly fathers to live in extended families, and hence have more familial integration, interaction, and activation. Interactionally, elderly fathers manipulate conversations, use considerable overlap and interruption to seize their turns. Elderly fathers address their younger sons with the least preferable repair strategy, and adopt bald and unmitigated utterances when producing their refusals. They prefer to produce their requests to their younger sons in 'order' and/or 'order then explain' styles. In comparison, younger sons very rarely overlap, interrupt, or raise their voices when conversing with their elderly fathers. Furthermore,

they do not produce verbal rejections to their elderly fathers' demands. Interestingly, sexual and romantic issues could not be raised between them. Finally, elderly patients and their younger physicians tend to socialise their institutional settings by not mentioning terms like rectum. Moreover, they summon each other with social labels (hajji/son). The paper concludes that the elderly in Libya interact and communicate in accordance to their social status and perception. The subjects co-construct the elderly status in their everyday talk-in-interaction settings.

Speaker Biography

Mayouf Ali Mayouf was born in Sebha, Libya in 1971. He received his BA in English language from Garyounis University. In 2001, he joined Newcastle University and obtained his PhD in Language and Communication in April 2005 under the supervision of Prof. Li Wei. He participated in a number of conferences: Sociolinguistics Symposium 15 in Newcastle, Sociolinguistics Symposium 16 in Limerick, the Closed Workshop in Tokyo, the Pragmatics Conference in Gothenburg, and the IAGG2013 in Seoul. He is interested in the field of language and the elderly and the social construction effects on interaction and communication in the society. He is now an assistant professor in English language and linguistics at Sebha University.

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