

Conflict Resolution Strategies in Media Discourse: The Case Study of: “ʔəl xayT ləbyəD” “The Mediator”

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Abstract

This study examines the way discourse can contribute to conflict resolution. The study focuses on the discourse strategies used by the disputants in ‘the Mediator’ TV show to resolve their interpersonal conflicts. It also identifies the different tactics that the disputants in ‘the Mediator’ TV show use to negotiate their conflicts collaboratively and hence reach joint outcomes. Taking into consideration the significant role argumentation plays in the management of conflict, the study also seeks to underline the different rhetorical strategies and argumentative fallacies through which the contestants in ‘the Mediator’ TV show achieve their goals.

Within a data corpus based on video-recordings of disputants in ‘the Mediator’ TV show, a number of interactional exchanges are phonetically transcribed, translated into English and qualitatively analyzed. The study analytical approach includes conversation analysis (Sacks (1974) Jefferson & Schegloff (1974)) as the methodological framework to investigate the contestants’ discourse strategies during conflict resolution process. The qualitative analysis of the selected data reveals different discourse and negotiating strategies adopted by the disputants to reach a resolution. These strategies contain discourse strategies of integrative conflict resolution, discourse strategies of cooperative competing conflict resolution, avoiding discursive strategies to conflict resolution, and finally discourse strategies of compromising conflict resolution. Strikingly is the fact that the results of the study identify accommodating, as the only style that has not been adopted by the disputants in ‘The Mediator’ TV show during the process of resolving their conflict.

Keywords: conflict, conflict resolution, discourse strategies, negotiations, rhetorical devices, argumentative fallacies

1. Introduction

Most of the studies conducted by scholars in the field of conflict and conflict resolution studies, Mary P. Follett (1940,) Blake and Mouton (1964,) Putnam and Wilson (1982,) Hocker and Wilmot (1991,) Weider-Hatfield (1988,) have developed four models that include different styles of handling interpersonal disputes. These models range from a two-style model (Deutsch: (1990), Knudson, Sommers, and Golding (1980), to a three-style model (Putnam, Wilson (1982), to a four-style model (Pruitt 1983), Kurdek (1994), to a five-style model Folett (1940), Blake and Mouton (1964,) Thomas (1976), Rahim (1983a.) These studies refer to five strategies individuals can choose among to manage conflict constructively. These strategies are mainly avoidance, compromising, competitiveness, cooperation, and accommodation.

The field of conflict resolution discourse is relatively new and the very few studies that have been conducted in this field have examined the communicative strategies of conducting interpersonal conflict, interpersonal conflict negotiation and resolution rather than identifying the discursive strategies the disputants may employ to resolve conflict. Therefore, the basic concern of this study is to examine the discourse of Moroccan disputant participants in “ʔəl xayT ləbyəD” “The Mediator” TV show in an attempt to find out the discourse strategies the conflicting individuals use to resolve their conflicts. For this purpose, conversation analysis as a method of analysis of the data of the study is used.

This study has both theoretical and practical implications. The results of this study might be of a significant importance with regard to the theoretical background of the conflict resolution field, as it is expected to fill the gap in the scholarly literature of the conflict resolution discourse. Practically, this research will demonstrate the kinds of themes that mark the Moroccans’ interpersonal conflictual talk. Most importantly, the study and its results will also identify a number of discourse strategies Moroccans employ to handle and settle interpersonal conflicts. In addition, the study will

demonstrate how the disputant parties negotiate to conduct conflict positively. The present study will also shed light on the types of argumentation and rhetorical devices (Types of appeals: logos, ethos, and pathos) used by Moroccan disputants while attempting to resolve conflicts. Finally, we may draw from the study some recommendations for coaching conflictual situations which involve peer relationship, workplace interpersonal relationships, partners relationships.

2. Background of the Study

Numerous anthropological and non-anthropological studies have theorized that ‘diversity’ is one of the fundamental features that define humans. There is no individual that exhibits identical physical or mental traits. Accordingly, a system of categorization is adopted to classify human beings into different ranges by means of genetics, culture, geographical location, language, religion, race, experiences, and ethnicity. The interaction of these variables produces human beings with a set of distinct attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, worldviews, economic and political interests; all of which are highly likely to evoke a kind of relationship that is marked by competition and inconsistencies, namely conflict. (Tedeschi et al. 232)

Conflict, be it intragroup, intergroup, intrapersonal, or interpersonal, emerges as a result of the heterogeneous nature of human beings with regard to their beliefs, values, attitudes, and interests. Conflict may arise also from some communication problems that develop out of the misuse or lack of effective communication skills. Once conflict is initiated, communicative problems often build up because individuals in conflict do not communicate with each other as honestly, as frequently, and as veraciously as they usually do when relationships are healthy. It is in this manner that conflict leads to communication problems that destroy the productivity, empowerment, success, as well as the effective relations of the social entities involved in the conflict.

Since conflict is an inherent feature of human beings, and since it affects negatively the success and the productivity of societies as well as it destroys the relational bonds that join between the different groups of people, numerous scholars and researchers have developed an increasing interest in studying conflict and examining its miscellaneous causes to get an inclusive view of the nature of conflict. Most importantly, a large part of the studies conducted in the field of conflict, Follett (1940,) Blake and Mouton (1964,) Putnam and Wilson (1982,) Hocker and Wilmot (1991,) Weider-Hatfield (1988,) have sought to design a set of strategies that can be employed to handle and resolve conflict. These studies constitute the corpus of the so-called conflict resolution field. Recently. There has also been a growing trend in conflict resolution coaching programs that aim at training conflict resolution practitioners whose main concern is to assist the disputants to handle their conflicts, and keep them under control through the use of strategies such as mediation and negotiation.

Along with nonverbal communication, verbal communication is certainly the central tool to conduct conflicts in an effectual manner, more specifically interpersonal conflicts. The process of resolving conflict is a very complex process as it depends on how each individual perceives conflict and how he\she chooses to settle a particular conflictual situation. An effective process of conflict resolution requires the integration of three elements, effective communication skills--for example active listenership, problem-solving, and assertiveness-- negotiation skills (Umbreit: 2n) as well as the argumentation skills employed by the involved parties to persuade the involved parties themselves of the reasonableness of the proposed solutions . (Morasso: 28)

3. Research Methodology

This study is thoroughly descriptive; it applies a qualitative analysis to the discourse of the conflicting participants in /ʔəɫ xayt ləbyəð / TV show: “The Mediator” with the objective of identifying the different discourse strategies the participants employ to discontinue disagreements and regain or maintain healthy relationships. Unfortunately, for the scarcity of Moroccan TV shows that are concerned with resolving conflicts among individuals and that occur more specifically at the interpersonal level, the study focuses on the only TV show, namely “ʔəɫ xayT ləbyəð” TV show: “The Mediator”, broadcast in the second Moroccan channel and whose main concern is to seek reconciliation between the antagonists. The data of this study consists of a number of extracts that are taken from nine episodes of the previously mentioned talk show. These exchanges which last approximately for 10 minutes are deliberately selected as they comprise the communicative devices through which the disputants handle their conflicts or at least acknowledge the necessity of negotiating a solution. In this study, the researcher is concerned mainly with the analysis of sequential organization of the disputants’ talk as well as examining the discourse of the conflicting parties to unfold how conflicts are resolved discursively. Hence, the study is located within the framework of conversation analysis (CA) along with other analytic tools borrowed from other disciplinary studies, namely Argumentation Theory and Discourse Analysis.

3.1 Conversation Analysis

Conversation analysis is an academic discipline derived from ethnomethodology. As a field of study, CA emerged in the

1960s through the ideas and works of Sacks and his co-workers Schegloff and Jefferson. According to Peräkylä (2007), CA is “a method for investigating the structure and process of social interaction between humans. It focuses primarily on talk, but integrates also the nonverbal aspects of interaction in its research design.” CA seeks to investigate language from the perspective of its usage. Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008; 13) explains that the primary objective of conversation analysis is to “focus on the production and interpretation of talk-in-interaction as an orderly accomplishment that is oriented by the participants themselves.... CA seeks to uncover the organization of talk...from the perspective of how the participants display for one another their understanding of ‘what is going on’”.

Sacks et al (1974) point out that all conversation is a sequence of ‘turns at talk’ produced by the speakers and that these turns constitute the basic analytic unit in the field of conversation analysis. (Carter and Simpson, 1989). As the interactants begin to speak, they are to take a turn. If the interactant manages to finish their speech without being interrupted, the turn closes and either another turn is to be allocated or constructed by the next rightful interactant, or the conversation comes to an end. In order to lead a successful communication, Sacks et al assert that “one party talks at a time” (700). This short quote implies that interactants have to rotate between the ‘active speakership’ and ‘active listenership’ to ensure the ‘preferred organization’ of an interactive process. (Zimmerman and West: 108, 111).

To achieve and maintain a successful flow of interactions, Sacks et.al, (1974); Herring (1999); Schegloff, (2000) suggest that interaction has to be performed in such a manner as to guarantee that speakers talk one at a time. By so doing, an orderly distribution of the role of speaker between interactants is definitely guaranteed. There are further maxims for the turn-taking system that designate that the current speaker chooses the next speaker through including in their present speech a ‘current-speaker-selects-next’ technique, as in the case of addressed questions. (Power and Dal Martello: 30) If this alternative is denied, the listener is allowed to ‘self-select’ through producing utterances and hence initiates a turn. Most often, in confrontational form of interactions and more particularly in the management conflict interactions, speakers may not respect the turn-taking system; therefore, the mediator is urged to intervene in order to maintain orderliness within the turn-taking system.

However, a fundamental option to choose the next speaker is to introduce an ‘adjacency pair.’ According to Silverman (1998), not only does an adjacency pair “constrain what the next speaker may do, but it also constrains the initiator of the first part of the pair.” (105) This has been already examined by Sacks et al.,(1974) when they argued that conversation is patterned by a certain set of rules and principles through which individuals realize certain communicative objectives. (Liddicoat: 5) Equally important is that adjacency pairs serve to afflict coherence on conversation through the strong connection they establish among current, antecedent, and forthcoming utterances. Therefore, the power of adjacency pairs is clearly manifested in the fact that they both select the speaker and limit the topic of conversation.

Doing a research in which conversation analysis is a framework of data analysis involves three stages. First, sequences of ‘naturally occurring talk’ have to be audio or video-recorded. Second, the recordings are transcribed according to specific transcription conventions first developed by Jefferson. In the third stage, the researcher is required to analyse the recorded data. The process of analysing data within the field of conversation analysis is a process of a line-by-line analysis of conversation. Unlike other kinds of studies that are based on methodology frameworks rather than conversation analysis and that are always based on hypotheses, conversation analysis is said to be moment-by-moment analysis of conversation. In this respect, Sacks (1984) states that “when we start out with a piece of data, the question of what we are going to end up with, what kind of findings it will give, should not be a consideration.” (27). Conversation analysis studies usually lack hypotheses.

That the data of this study will be analyzed in the light of conversation analysis and given the fact that a key stage while analyzing video recorded data is to transcribe it carefully, I have followed Jeffersonian transcription convention system. (See appendix I)

To illustrate the analysis of the data, I have selected the following exchanges that reveal conflictual and conflict management processes between the disputants in ‘the Mediator’ TV show. These exchanges also show the types of issues raised by the disputants in ‘the Mediator’ show. The analysis of these exchanges are performed in the light of turn-taking system, elicitation and information exchanges (Sinclair & Coulthard (1975), the concept of preference (Sacks), and the main discourse concepts that highlight the selected utterances. Since the conflict resolution discourse is totally held in Moroccan Arabic, a chart of IPA, International Phonetic Alphabet, is provided with the basic aim of facilitating the readability of the phonetic transcription of the disputants’ Arabic utterances. (see: Appendix 2)

3.2 Discourse Strategies of Conflictual Discourse

❖ Elicitation and Challenging moves

The following is an exchange from the conflictual discourse of a couple who have been married for 26 years. The conflict between the husband (**M**), who is a farmer, and the wife (**H**) arises, according to the wife when **M** has suspected her

infidelity. The conflict has reached a complicated degree more specifically when the husband has started addressing his wife in a disrespectful manner in front of her children and has decided not to pay the expenses. The husband, on the other hand, complains about the fact that his wife has changed in her behaviour; she is no longer a devoted and caring wife. To help the disputants resolve their conflict and regain their intimate relationship, 'the Mediator's' staff has gone to the couple's house in an attempt to get them discuss the conflictual points. Here is an exchange of the couple's discourse while negotiating their conflict:

Arabic Transcription	English Translation
1.H: Ya:k a MoHa' mmed ya:k, Hna zə qna dwəzna lxir wliHsa:n wkbərna ləwla:d wəlna zə qnanin bixir, maxllina ləHarra li: dwəzna, šqina wxdəmna ndaxəl wəbrra wəlna zə qna hanya ləwaqt wəliti dru:k had lyamat tšək = =	1.H: Shame on you Mohammed, we have spent good times; we have brought up our children, and we have been on good terms, we have endured the hardest experiences, we have worked hard inside and outside the house, and thought that we are having a happy life, now you suspect my infidelity= =
2.M: = = ?i:h tantiya mli dik sa qə kənti zwina tana matanxəllikš. kənti m qaya məzya:n, drəbti m qaya tamara, ma&adi[nəkdeb qə llaħ, rah tanšəhəd qə rasi w qik walakini fhad ləxxər wlliti maməzyanš m qaya= =	2.M: = =Yes, I also was good to you when you were good to me. I acknowledge that you were a good and a hard working wife. But recently, you have been treating me badly = =
3.H: = =mali ?a:š tandir ?ana? = =	3.H: = = what kind of wrong I am doing? = =
4.M: = =ma:h [wa]	4.M: = = Eh [uuh]
5.H: [gulliya] = =	5.H: [tell me] = =
6.M: = =wašuf nti [štaddir]	6.M: = = you know [what you wrong you are doing]
7.H: [gu:lliya štandir, gu:lliya šət hadi wla hadi]	7.H: [you tell me what I'm exactly wrong with me]
8.M: [nti rak nti rak qar ntiya rak qarfa ?aštaddir]= =	8.M: [you know, you know, you know what wrong you are doing]
9.H: = = ?a:š nə qəf [?ana]	9.H: what do I know [me]
10.M [?iwa]	10.M: [uuh]
11.H [?ana matandir Hta Haja]= =	11.H: [I'm doing nothing wrong] = =
12.M : = = ?iwa llaħ ?u: qəm	12.M: = =only God knows
13. H : ?ana hanya ləwaqt qandi ?ana= =	13.H: everything is fine for me= =
14.M: = =mahanya walu	14.M: = =No, nothing is fine between us

The conversation is initiated by the wife (**H**) who produces a particular first pair part in the form of an informing initiating move (T: 1) through which she recounts some of the main personal experiences she and her husband have shared during their 26 years of marriage. It is until the end of her first pair part that the wife introduces the primary cause that has raised conflict with her husband: 'wəliti dru: k had lyamat tšək = =', 'now, you suspect my infidelity= ='." The informing initiating move introduced by the wife seeks to get a piece of information about the real causes that urge the husband to suspect his wife's infidelity. Although the responding move (T: 2), produced by the husband (**M**) immediately after the wife closes her first pair part, confirms the narrative recounting of the wife: = =?i:h tantiya mli dik sa qə kənti zwina tana matanxəllikš. kənti m qaya məzya:n, drəbti m qaya tamara, ma&adi[nəkdeb qə llaħ, rah tanšəhəd qə rasi w qik walakini fhad ləxxər wlliti maməzyanš m qaya= =", "= =Yes, I also was good to you when you were good to me. I acknowledge that you were a good and a hard working wife," it immediately introduces a challenging move that demonstrates that the husband does not accept what the wife has reported to be the main cause of their conflict: "walakini fhad ləxxər wlliti maməzyanš m qaya= =", "But recently, you have been treating me badly = =" The discourse marker 'walakini', 'but' is used to introduce the challenging move that counter-argues the wife's claim and simultaneously ascribes responsibility of the conflict mainly to the wife.

Having been ascribed total responsibility of their conflict, the wife introduces an eliciting initiating move in the form of a rhetorical question in T (3): "= =mali ?a:š tandir ?ana? = =", "= = what kind of wrong I am doing? = =", to urge the husband to show how she has contributed to their conflict. Nevertheless, the husband is not willing to provide a preferred response that is supposed to bear an equal status as the first pair part. Rather, the husband challenges the illocutionary intent of the wife's utterance through providing a number of dis-preferred actions (Ts 6, 8, 10) that are preceded by the production of a prefatory turn (T 4): "ma:h [wa]", "= = Eh [uuh]" which appears in the form of a hesitation move or turn that introduces a direct negation to the assumption of the wife as in T(14): "= =mahanya walu", "No, nothing is fine between us." The production of these dis-preferred actions (Ts 6, 8, 10, and 14) shows clearly that the husband is unwilling to produce a linguistic response that provides the piece of information elicited.

❖ Competitive Overlaps

A further feature that plainly marks the conflictual nature of **M** and **H**'s discourse is the predominance of overlapped talk. The following exchange is an example of the overlapped speech of the couple:

Arabic Transcription	English Translation
4.M: = =ma:h [wa]	4.M: = = Eh [uuh]
5.H: [gulliya] = =	5.H: [tell me] = =
6.M: = =wašu:f nti [štadd:ir]	6.M: = = you know [what you wrong you are doing]
7.H: [gu:llyia štand:r, gu:llyia šət hadi wla hadi]	7.H: [you tell me what I'm exactly wrong with me]
8.M: [nti rak nti rak çar ntiya rak çarfa aštaddir]= =	8.M: [you kno, you kno, you know what wrong you are doing]
9.H: = = ?a:š nə çəf [?ana]	9.H: what do I know [me]
10.M [?iwa]	10.M: [uuh]
11.H [?ana matandır Hta Haja]= =	11.H: [I'm doing nothing wrong] = =

In this exchange, the wife keeps overlapping her husband's turn. The wife produces a number of competitive overlaps (from T 4 to T 11) to be exploited as a means of power to oblige the husband to provide a responding move that satisfies the expectation set by the wife's eliciting initiating move. The above exchange includes some instances of the wife's simultaneous discourse that occur before the husband is able to initiate a turn constructional unit as in T (5) or to make a completion to his turn (as in Ts: 7, 11). The production of overlapped talk in this exchange signals conflict as it serves mainly to resist the challenging moves produced by the husband to oblige the latter to introduce preferred responses that validate the illocutionary intent of the wife's elicitation.

To sum up, the conflictual nature of the discourse of both **H** and **M** is clearly identified through the production of sequences that are made up of elicitation, information initiating moves that are immediately followed by the production of dis-preferred moves that challenge the illocutionary intent of elicitation. Additionally, the process of investigating the selected exchange from a conversation analysis perspective reveals that conflictual turns are produced by self-selection and exhibit a high degree of competitive overlapping. As a result, the above exchange is highly characterized by short multiple turns resulting from the conversation violations the participants make.

3.3 Discourse Strategies of Conflict Resolution

This sub-section provides some exchanges that are drawn out from the discourse of the same conflicting couple **M** and **H**. These exchanges are analysed to provide examples of the different discursive strategies the disputants use to reach a compromise.

❖ Appeal to Authority

Extract 1. The Conflict Resolution Process between a Married Couple

Arabic Transcription	English Transcription
18.M: = = waxxa bëllati mə [lli mab&itš ngu]	18.M: Ok, wait,[I do not want to sa]
19.H :[ma çəndišana mça hadši]	19.H: [I am not that kind of disrespectful women]= =
20.M: = =hadišHal mən çam hadi sətta ?u çəşri:n çam hadi xəlli had lçam hadi, səbça ?u çəşri:n yalah dxəl, sətta ?u çəşri:n çam hadi maçəmmərnı magətli:k ?ana had ləklam hadi Htal ləşhər çəşra? = =	20.M: = = we have been together now for 26 years. We have recently celebrated our 27 th year of marriage but during the period of 26 years, have I ever suspected your infidelity until last October? = =
21.H: = =[wmalək]	21.H: = =[So what's wrong with you]
22.M: [waš zəçma a:š?ana msəTi] wila kənt msəTi xasni ndawi rasi]	22.M: [does it mean that I'm crazy and if I'm crazy, it means that I must get medical help]

The conflict resolution process of **M** and **H**'s initiates when the husband finally expresses readiness to disclose the real causes of the conflict: (T: 18) "waxxa bëllati mə [lli mab&itš ngu]", "Ok, wait, [when I do not want to sa]." In the above exchange, the husband uses appeal to authority, also known as 'irrelevant authority,' as a form of logical reasoning to support and convince both his wife and the large audience of his claim. Appeal to authority is a logical fallacy that urges the individual to accept a particular claim as being true only because it has been claimed by what they believe to be 'an expert' on a particular subject. In turn 20, the husband offers what appears to be, only for him, a good reason in support of his claim: : = =hadi šHal mən çam hadi stta ?u çəşri:n çam hadi xəlli had lçam hadi, səbça ?u çəşri:n yalah dxəl, stta ?u çəşri:n çam hadi maçəmmərnı magətlik ?ana had ləklam hadi Htal ləşhər çəşra? = =", "= = we have been together now for 26 years. We have recently celebrated our 27th year of marriage but during the period of 26 years, have I ever suspected your infidelity until last October? = =". In this utterance, the husband is trying to persuade his wife and the large audience of the truthfulness of his claim based on the fact that during the period of 26years of marriage, he has never complained about her behaviour and if he does now, he must have a real reason. By so doing, the husband is granting himself a legitimate authority that makes his claim reasonable to accept, and simultaneously devaluating the validity of the wife's position. However, the fact that the husband has never thrown out false accusations on his wife does not grant his claim rationality and validity, and this is clearly manifested through the subsequent arguments the husband uses. The husband's arguments are of no relevance to the main topic and they are produced with the intention of diverting the wife's attention from the original topic (T: 22): "[waš zəçma a:š ?ana msəTi] wila kənt msəTi xasni ndawi rasi]"[does it mean

that I'm crazy and if I'm crazy, it means that I must get medical help].” Regardless of the validity of the husband’s claim, the reader may notice that he indeed manages to divert his wife’s attention from the original problem and this is shown in the absence of any counter-argumentative discourse from her side.

❖ Indirectness: flattery

Another discourse strategy feature through which the husband, **M**, attempts to resolve conflict is indirectness. The latter has an instrumental role in humans’ personal interaction. (Grice: 1975) While interacting, individuals usually manage to understand what others imply when they speak indirectly. In addition to presupposition, entailment, and implicature, indirectness is another mechanism through which covert statements are generated and transferred. In the following exchange, the husband, **M**, uses indirectness as a tactic to refute what the wife claims to be the cause of their conflict, namely the husband’s suspicions of her infidelity. This strategy serves to save his face.

Arabic Transcription	English Translation
34.M: gətli:k ?ana, ntiya ləmərə dyali mən bəkri <u>wməzya:na</u> wmafik la difu lawalu= =	34.M: I told you, you have been my wife for such a long time, you are a good wife, you don’t have any vice, nothing= =
35.H: ==[?iwa çla:š tatšək ?]	35.H: ==[so why do you suspect?]
36.M: [?u: wmafik la&dər la taHəramiyat la walu, tahhh ?asmitu]	36.M: [uh, you are neither a perfidious nor dishonest wife, nothing, uh...]
37.M: daba wəlliti mbədlə çiya wəklə:m dyal hedra walu wəlliti tatjənnəb çiya wəlliti, mafhəmtš ?ana had mašaki :l hadi (0.2) xəssək tttšufini šnu Darrani ?	37.M: Nowadays, you have changed, you don’t talk to me, you avoid me, you become, I can’t understand these problems (0.1) you should know what’s wrong with me?
38.H: a:š Darrek?Hna rah Hna kberna= =	38.H: What’s wrong with you? we are getting old= =
39.M: =la warah mabqatš fəlkəbər= =	39.M: it is not a matter of getting old= =
40.H: = = rah Hna makayn Hta Haja	40.H: = =there is nothing wrong with us
41.M: nnas ga çkəbru: kayn bbak wmmuk kəbbəri:n çina	41.M: all people are old, you father and mother are older than us.

In the above exchange, the husband begins his complaint or problem in a positive way, using flattery. In turn (34), the husband provides a list of positive attributes that characterizes his wife: “gətli:k ?ana, ntiya ləmərə dyali mən bəkri wməzya:na wmafik la difu lawalu= =”, “you have been my wife for such a long time, you are a good wife, you don’t have any vice, nothing= =” He goes on making positive comments about past behaviours in turn (36) : “[?u: wmafik la&dər la taHəramiyat la walu, tahhh ?asmitu]”, “uh, you are neither a perfidious nor dishonest wife, nothing, uh...” The use of flattery and praising in turns (34, 36) reveals that the husband is opting for an integrative style to negotiate the conflict. The two utterances that appear in turns (34, 35) include lexical items such as: ‘a good wife, you don’t have any vice, you are neither a perfidious nor dishonest wife, in addition to the use of the term ‘nothing’ repeated to emphasize the absence of any negative quality the wife has; all of which are items that are used to praise his wife and to imply that she is respectful and faithful.

The use of indirectness in the above exchange contributes to the achievement of the sense of rapport between the husband and the wife that results from the wife’s ability to interpret the unstated meaning the husband conveys through the use of flattery. This is clearly shown in T (35) when the wife immediately asks the husband on what ground his suspicions emerge since he confirms her fidelity: “=[?iwa çla:š tatšək ?]”, “=[so why do you suspect?]” The rapport the husband manages to build up through indirectness helps the parties handle conflict in an integrative style that is proved by the long turns and the fewer overlapped utterances the husband makes.

After the frequent attempts he makes to avoid providing the real causes that ignite conflict with his wife, the husband in T (37) expresses his position clearly and makes the wife, for the first time, aware of the primary reasons for conflict: “daba wəlliti mbədlə çiya wəklə:m dyal hedra walu wəlliti tatjənnəb çiya wəlliti, mafhəmtš ?ana had mašaki :l hadi (0.2) xəssək tttšufini šnu Darrani ?”, “Nowadays, you have changed, you don’t talk to me, you avoid me, you become, I can’t understand these problems (0.2)” The sense of rapport is thoroughly built up in the end of T (37) when the husband asks his wife to take his concerns into consideration: “xəssək tttšufini šnu Darrani.?””, “you should know what’s wrong with me”, as well as in T (38) when the wife responds positively to the husband’s request by asking him to disclose his needs: “a:šDarrekHna rah Hna kberna= =”, “What’s wrong with you, we are old= =” In the above exchange, the reader may notice that indirectness as a conversational implicature is used as a discourse strategy that relieves the tension, builds up the rapport between the husband and the wife, and accordingly helps the conflicting parties handle their conflict constructively.

The basic objective of this section is to provide the reader with examples of discourse strategies that mark the conflictual as well as the conflict resolution discourses of Moroccan disputants. For this reason, the conversation exchanges of the participants in ‘the Mediator’ talk show are analyzed within the conversation analysis framework (Sacks (1974) Jefferson & Schegloff (1974) as well as according to some analytic tools borrowed from other disciplinary studies, such as Argumentation Theory (argumentative fallacies) and Discourse Analysis (indirectness.)

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Discourse Strategies of Conflict Resolution

The data corpus deployed in this paper has been purposefully selected to align with the primary objective of the study, namely, identifying the discourse strategies that are used by the disputants in 'the Mediator' TV show to manage and resolve their interpersonal conflict collaboratively. Based on Thomas and Kilman (1974) and Rahim and Benoma (1979)'s five style-model of conflict resolution the discursive strategies used by the contestants during the process of terminating conflicts are classified according to the style they belong to.

Thomas and Kilman (1974) and Rahim and Banoma (1979) underlines five styles of managing conflict, namely, integrating, accommodating, competing, avoiding, and compromising. However, the analysis of the selected data has reported accommodating, as being the only style that has not been embraced by the disputants in 'The Mediator' show during the process of managing their conflict. Therefore, the different discursive strategies the conflictual parties employ during the process of resolution are classified according to the following four styles: integrating, competing, avoiding, and compromising.

4.1.1 Integrating Discourse Strategies of Conflict Resolution

The analysis of the negotiating discourse of the disputants in 'The Mediator' TV shows that some disputants have opted for an integrative style to resolve their interpersonal conflict. This style has been identified through the use of the following discourse strategies: indirectness embedded in appeal to flattery, the elicitation of a biographical narrative, and cooperative overlapping turns along with overlapping moves that have emerged in the form of continuers. The use of these strategies during the process of negotiation has contributed to the creation of a smooth and effective communicative interaction between the parties.

4.1.2 Cooperative Competing Discourse Strategies of Conflict Resolution

Some of the disputing participants in 'the Mediator' show have shown a tendency towards conflict resolution competing style to handle their antagonisms. This conflict resolution style has been recognized through the use of communicative strategies as attack negotiating strategy, persistent repetitions, and interruptions. The competitive negotiators in the examined data have operated from a position of power, drawn either from their social status, like the father's authority, or the strong position as well as the persuasive abilities of the competitive disputants.

4.1.3 Avoiding Discourse Strategies of Conflict Resolution

Other disputing participants in 'the Mediator' show have chosen avoidance as a conflict resolution mode. This mode has been defined by the following communicative mindsets, namely, diversionary tactics of topic shifting, topic avoidance as well as the production of short conversational turns. Rahim (2001) explains that once the avoidance behavioural patterns are employed during the process of negotiation, they are most likely to lay a negative impact on communicating the disputants' needs and goals, and accordingly none of these goals are attained. However, the results of the present study have brought into view the issue of avoidance as an *active* and *powerful* means to achieve one's goals. It is set forth by the findings of the study, that the use of avoidance as a non-confrontational communication strategy has played an integral part in maintaining the on-going interaction between the disputants and creating a sense of solidarity that have finally led to the achievement of the disputants' needs.

4.1.4 Compromising Discourse Strategies of Conflict Resolution

Similarly, the analysis of the data corpus of the present study has demonstrated that a second style through which the contestants in 'the Mediator' show have resolved their disagreements is compromising. The latter has emerged as a result of the production of discourse strategies such as, preferred responses, speech act of commitment, speech act of confession, and finally speech act of begging. Furthermore, the analysis of the data has revealed that the contestants, who have employed these strategies during the process of reaching a compromise, have been willing to meet the other party's needs; however, they have been reluctant to give up their good self-image which seems to be threatened by the concessions they have made during negotiations.

4.2 Negotiating Strategies of Conflict Resolution

The literature review of this study identifies two basic approaches to negotiating interpersonal conflicts; these approaches boil down to integrative or interest-based approach to negotiation, and distributive or competitive approach to negotiation. The analysis of the selected data has confirmed these two approaches as being the primary negotiating approaches adopted during the process of conflict resolution. The findings have demonstrated that some adversaries who have participated in 'the Mediator' show have been well-disposed towards managing their conflictual issues in a collaborative manner so that creative solutions that benefit the both sides could be reached. However, other disputants have functioned along the competitive orientation to negotiation in which the agents have attempted to win rather than

to lose the negotiation.

In addition to the different discourse strategies the contestants have utilized to seek reconciliation, the results of the study have unfolded a further kind of communicative tactics employed by the contestants with the primary aim of *negotiating* their incompatibilities and differences. These communicative tactics have comprised active listenership, disclosure, and attack negotiating strategies. Based on the functional pattern of each of the above tactics, the researcher has been able to determine the kind of approach that has been put into service by the disputants to reach a compromise. Strategies, which include active listenership, disclosure as well as the use of 'I' statements, are to define the integrative approach to negotiation, while attack negotiating strategies and high demand utterances are to characterize the distributive approach to negotiation. However, the qualitative investigation of the selected data has manifested that the two approaches of negotiation are highly likely to overlap with each other during the process of conflict resolution. This finding appears to be most consistent with the findings of the studies conducted by Mayer (2000), Eadie (2009), and Shiring (2014) which deny the predominance of one negotiating approach over the process of resolving conflict. In this respect, the results of the study have indicated that it is due to the incorporation of different strategies from the two approaches of negotiation, namely integrative and distributive approaches that the disputants have been able to yield jointly agreeable outcomes.

The results of the studies have expounded that one of the significant prerequisite strategies to the success of negotiating processes is the employment of *active listenership*. The latter, as has been demonstrated by the analysis of the data, involves skills such as the acknowledgment of feelings and needs, asking open-ended questions, demanding clarifications, and the use of minimal encouragers. The use of active listening by the disputants during the process of negotiation has facilitated self-disclosure. It motivates the disputants to talk more candidly about their needs as well as the kind of attitudes and emotions they have developed during the conflicting experiences. However, the production of a candid flow of communication cannot be ensured, as it has been found out, unless the negotiators show interest and respect for the others' standpoints by expressing genuine agreement and appreciation of their views and feelings. Additionally, the results of the present study have underlined the important role active listening has played in building empathy, trust, and rapport. The latter have allowed the negotiating agents to re-evaluate each other's needs, reframe conflict, and ultimately generate creative solutions that are beneficial for all the involved parties.

4.3 Rhetorical Devices in Argumentation

The analysis of the examined data has revealed that argumentation is a key element of the process of resolution of conflict. It has helped the contestants to handle their conflict reasonably and reach ultimately reach collaborative and long-run agreements. However, resolving conflict through well-grounded logical arguments has not always been the case in the examined data. The investigation of the data has demonstrated that the disputants who have participated in 'the Mediator' show have made use of a number of argumentative techniques that have been devoid of rational reasoning with the primary objective of getting the advocacy of their interlocutors and audience. Such rhetorical devices and argumentative fallacies that have been identified by the findings of the study are: appeal to logos, appeal to pity, appeal to religion, appeal to cultural norms, and appeal to authority.

Although they are perceived as incorrect and illogical after being meticulously examined or investigated, the argumentative fallacies committed by the disputants during the process of conflict resolution, as has been indicated by the results of the study, can still be compelling or convincing as arguments. This is due to the fact that these fallacies are based on the most important areas of common ground, namely religion and cultural norms. Hence, they can serve as a basis for powerful persuasive effort. The findings of this study have revealed that the argumentative dialogue the disputants in 'the Mediator' TV show has held aims, more specifically, at persuading the audience with a particular claim. Therefore, regardless of the reasonableness or unreasonableness of the produced arguments during the process of negotiation, these arguments have helped in manipulating the second party as well as their emotions, and ultimately persuading them of accepting the current speaker's positions.

For the sake of providing the readers of this study with a clear understanding of the different discursual and negotiating strategies the disputants in 'the Mediator' show have employed during the process of negotiation, the following table is provided:

Table 1. Discourse & Negotiating Strategies of Interpersonal Conflict Resolution

Discourse Strategies of Integrative Resolution	Strategies of Conflict	Discourse Strategies of Cooperative Conflict Resolution	Strategies of Competitive	Discourse Strategies of Avoiding Conflict Resolution	Strategies of Compromising Conflict Resolution
-Indirectness		-Cooperative interruptions		-Diversionary tactics: topic shifting, topic avoidance)	-Preferred responses
-Cooperative (collaborative completions; supportive agreements	overlaps	-Attack negotiating strategy		-The production of short turns	-Speech act of commitment: making promises
-Narrative		-Appeal to authority			-Confessional speech act
-Disclosure		-Appeal to cultural norms			-Speech act of politeness
-Active listenership		-Appeal to religion			-Acknowledging responsibility
-Empathy and rapport building		-Appeal to logos			
-Appeal to pity					

5. Conclusion

To conclude, the analysis of the disputants' conflict resolution discourse in 'the Mediator' show reveals that the process of resolving conflict is first and foremost about communication. It involves a dialogue in which each individual explains his/her position and appreciates what other individuals say. The success of the compromising process is dependent on the employment of a set of different discourse and negotiating strategies that ensure first smooth ongoing interaction, and second the satisfaction of the varying nature of the disputants' interests and needs.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. This appendix provides Jeffersonian transcription convention system needed to represent basic transcription of the disputants’ speech

Convention	Symbols	Function
[text]	Brackets	Indicates the start and end points of overlapping speech.
=	Equal Sign	Indicates the break and subsequent continuation of a single utterance.
(# of seconds)	Timed Pause	A number in parentheses indicates the time, in seconds, of a pause in speech.
(.)	Micropause	A brief pause, usually less than 0.2 seconds.
. or down arrow	Period or Down Arrow	Indicates falling pitch or intonation.
? or up arrow	Question Mark or Up Arrow	Indicates rising pitch or intonation.
,	Comma	Indicates a temporary rise or fall in intonation.
//	Double slash	Indicates an abrupt halt or interruption in utterance.
>text<	Greater than/Less than symbols	Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered more rapidly than usual for the speaker.
<text>	Less than/Greater than symbols	Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered more slowly than usual for the speaker.
◦	Degree symbol	Indicates whisper, reduced volume, or quiet speech.
ALL CAPS	Capitalized text	Indicates shouted or increased volume speech.
underline	Underlined text	Indicates the speaker is emphasizing or stressing the speech.
:::	Colon(s)	Indicates prolongation of a sound.
(hhh)		Audible exhalation
•or (.hhh)	High Dot	Audible inhalation
(text)	Parentheses	Speech which is unclear or in doubt in the transcript.
<i>italic text</i> ^[+]	Double Parentheses	Annotation of non-verbal activity.

Appendix 2. phonetic transcription symbols

Arabic script	Phonetic Symbols	Distinctives	Examples	English Translation
ب	B	voiced labial stop	lbab	The door
ت	T	voiceless alveolar stop	tlata	Three
ط	T	emphatic ‘t’	Tləb	Beg
ث	θ	voiceless dental fricative	maθal	Example (CA)
د	D	voiced alveolar stop	Dima	Always
ظ	D	emphatic ‘D’	DDar	The house
ك	K	voiceless velar stop	Klam	Speech
ق	G	voiced velar stop	Gulli	Tell me
ف	Q	uvular stop	Rqiq	Slim
ء	ʔ	Glottal stop	lʔamal	The hope
ر	R	alveolar trill	Lbra	Needle\ injection
ر	R	emphatic ‘r’	lbRa	A letter
ع	S	voiceless alveolar fricative	Salam	Hi\ peace
س	S	emphatic ‘s’	SSala	The prayer
ش	š	voiceless pal-alv. fricative	ššems	The sun
ف	F	voiceless labial fricative	Fin	Where
ز	Z	voiced alveolar fricative	Zwin	Nice
ج	J	voiced post “ “	Jawab	The answer
ح	H	voiceless pharyngeal fricative	Hlu	Sweet
خ	X	voiceless uvular fricative	xdəm	Work
ح	ç	voiced pharyngeal fricative	çlaš	Why
ع	&	voiced uvular fricative	&ali	Expensive
ل	L	alveolar lateral	Lmuhim	The important most
م	M	labial nasal	Məzyan	Good
ن	N	alveolar nasal	nnaR	The fire
ه	H	voiced glottal fricative	Hada	This
و	W	labiovelar glide	Waqla	Perhaps
ي	Y	palatal glide	Yemken	Perhaps
تت	Double consonants	geminates	Hətta	Until

Appendix 3. Vowels

Arabic script	Phonetic Sounds	Gloss	English Approximate
i	High front vowel	?illa	If
ə	Central vowel	məlli	When
a	Low back vowel	mRa	A woman
u	High back vowel	kul	Eat (imperative)

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