

Request Strategies in the Najdi Dialect: Human Interaction vs. AI-Generated Language

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate how the request speech act is constructed and interactionally managed in Najdi Arabic, and to compare these patterns with those generated by artificial intelligence systems. It focuses on conversational interactions among 32 first-year Saudi female students at King Saud University who are speakers of the Najdi dialect. Data are elicited through recorded role-play tasks designed to simulate semi-natural communicative situations, in addition to naturally occurring conversations among students in comparable contexts in two specific request situations, the first one is: requesting help for the exam, and the second one is: requesting to borrow lecture notes. The data consists of two comparable corpora: AI-generated dialogues simulating the two situations and naturally occurring conversations among students in equivalent contexts. The recordings are transcribed following the conventions of Heritage (1980), allowing for a fine-grained representation of interactional details. The study adopts a conversation-analytic approach based on Schegloff (2009), integrating two analytical levels: the sequential organization of requests (initiation, main request, and response), and the different use of Najdi dialect features within interaction between the AI-generated dialogues and naturally occurring conversations. In addition, the naturally occurring and elicited interactional data are compared with dialogues generated by generative artificial intelligence systems. This comparison focuses on identifying similarities and differences in interactional patterns, as well as the differential use of Najdi dialect features within interaction between AI-generated dialogues and naturally occurring conversations. The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interactional analysis with systematic comparison to AI-generated data in order to interpret convergences and divergences within a conversation-analytic and pragmatic framework. The findings reveal systematic differences between naturally occurring data and AI-generated. AI language tends to produce explicit, structurally complete, and standardized requests, with limited sensitivity to interactional sequencing and sociocultural constraints, particularly in ethically sensitive contexts such as exam-related requests. In addition, Najdi dialect features are inconsistently represented. In contrast, naturally occurring interactions display greater pragmatic flexibility and richer dialectal realization, where request strategies are dynamically shaped by context. These results indicate a dual gap—interactional and dialectal—between computationally generated and human language. The study highlights the importance of incorporating sequential, sociopragmatic, and dialect-sensitive dimensions into AI language modeling, and contributes to expanding empirical research on Arabic dialects within interactional linguistics.