Optional *You* and the Invocation of Shared Identity in Levantine Arabic

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Abstract:

When social actors communicate with others, they normally try to solicit their interlocutors' agreement, to get them to think in a certain way and to adopt a certain point of view. To ensure success, speakers use certain devices to present the content of their utterance from a specific perspective that may influence the hearer's thoughts and attitude. Such devices may include a special tone of voice, a certain posture, or, importantly for our purposes, a particular linguistic element. One linguistic element that is available for speakers of Levantine Arabic is an optional *you* in the form a dative pronoun. Speakers employ an optional *you* in order to anchor the content of their utterance, along with their evaluation of it, to their hearer and to invoke a shared identity with her or him in an attempt to get her or him to take the same stance and to recruit her or his assent. This paper presents attested evidence of optional *you* to illustrate how it functions as an invoker of shared identity. The paper also puts forth a sociocognitive model that draws on Cognitive Grammar and stancetaking theory to account for this function.

1.   Why *you*?

When social actors interact with others, be that in speech or writing, they share their thoughts with their hearers or readers and invite them to consider these thoughts and eventually accept them as part of their view of reality. These thoughts may be purely objective (e.g., factual,

informative); for example, the statement *The Himalayas are a mountain range in South Asia* given as an answer on a geography test. Alternatively, they may be purely subjective. That is, they may be an expression of an attitude or an emotion based on personal or shared beliefs, values, or experience; for example, the exclamation *Wow!* said in disbelief, fear, or admiration upon seeing a full-grown alligator for the first time.

Often, however, expressions are neither purely objective nor purely subjective; rather, they comprise both objective and subjective elements. In other words, they constitute content about objects, individuals, ideas, behaviors, actions, or states of affair, as well as the speaker's evaluation of some or all of this content. In fact, it is reasonable to say that there are hardly any evaluation-free utterances. As Stubbs (1996: 197) would put it, when speakers or writers produce an utterance about a certain entity (e.g., an object, an action), more often than not they also evaluate it or express their stance toward it (in Martin and White 2005: 92; see also Alba-Juez and Thompson 2014: 5). Evaluation or stancetaking normally comprises feelings and value assignment (Martin and White 2005; Du Bois 2007; Iwasaki and Yap 2015). That is, when social actors evaluate an entity, they may express how it makes them feel (happy, anxious, excited, etc.). They also assign it a value as good, bad, (un)ethical, (un)authentic, (in)appropriate, etc., all in accordance with their identities, the identities of their interlocutors, and shared or personal norms and beliefs.

Evaluation as an expression of stance via interaction allows social actors to move their stance from the realm of the personal, private, and subjective to the realm of shared, public, and intersubjective. The social actors' purpose is to make the hearer adopt their stance and accept it as part of her or his view of reality. If they are successful, they manage to manipulate the status of an underlying belief, value, or norm either by affirming it as shared and thus reinforcing it, or

by challenging and possibly redefining it. Alternatively, social actors may express a stance to introduce and negotiate an uncertain or new (probably personal and not yet shared) belief, value, or norm. In the process, relationships may get affirmed, enhanced, redefined, or challenged. For related discussions, see Brinton (1996: 31 and works cited there); Ochs (1996: 424); Thompson & Hunston (2000: 6); Spencer-Oatey (2002, 2008); Iwasaki & Yap (2015: 1); Haddad (2018, Ch. 2).

To be effective at influencing others' thoughts about or stance toward a certain entity, social actors may employ verbal and non-verbal elements that invite hearers or readers to view the content of an utterance from a specific perspective. Consider, for example, the following scene from an episode of the 2002-2006 American sitcom *Still Standing*. A father learns that his son Brian and his daughter Lauren are planning to go to a dance with a date. He approves of Brian's plan, but not of Lauren's. When his wife asks him why, he explains as follows: *Brian is just gonna take this girl to the dance and try to get lucky, but this Evan guy is gonna take Lauren to the dance and try to get lucky*. He says almost the same thing about both of his children and their dates … except for two differences, one verbal and one non-verbal. With regard to the verbal aspect, the father inserts *just* in the first half of the utterance in an attempt to diminish the seriousness of his son's plan and to signal his evaluation of it as innocent. In contrast, he uses *this Evan guy* in reference to Lauren's date to signal his evaluation of his daughter's date as immoral. At the non-verbal level, the father employs a neutral, rather dismissive tone in association with his son's plan; however, he expresses his disdain of his daughter's date's plan via an indignant tone of voice and a facial expression of disgust (Click here for video).

The verbal and non-verbal elements just described serve as perspectivizers à la Verhagen (2005, 2010). They invite the hearer to view the content of an utterance from a specific

perspective. In this sense, the utterance becomes a perspectivized thought. A perspectivized thought is more than just informative; it is argumentative.

Another way social actors may perspectivize their utterance is by employing the second-person pronoun *you* in order to mark their reader's or hearer's engagement in what is being said. Consider, for instance, the exchange in (1) from a Lebanese talk show called *ʔaħmar bi-l-xatˁ l-ˁari:dˁ* 'a red line with a thick stroke.' The episode is entitled *hiya ʔaydˁan sˁayyidat l-qara:r* 'she too has the right to make decisions,' and it focuses on the role of women in marital relations. During the first few minutes of the show, one of the male guests, who has been married twice and divorced once, expresses his belief that men are superior to women and disagrees with the view that a wife should have the right to participate equally in decision making in a relationship. Rather, he maintains, she may have a say with regard to some but not all matters. When the presenter of the show resumes the floor, he makes reference to the guest's first marriage and asks him about what led to the divorce. Instead of providing a specific answer, the guest answers in rather general and vague terms. He maintains that men and women must play distinct roles in the house, and he adds (click here for video):

(1)   ma: fiyya: hiyye tiʒi: tʔarrir ˁann-ak ,   ʔinte   ʃu:
        NEG can   she   come decide for-you ,   you   what

        baddak   taˁmil …   w-titdaxxal   bi-ħaye:t-ak
        you.want   do …   and-she.interfere   in-life-your

        l-ʃaxsˁiyye   w-bi-ʔahl-ak   w-bi-ˁaylt-ak
        the-personal   and-in-parents-you   and-in-family-your

'She shouldn't be allowed to decide for you or decide what you could or could not do … or interfere in your personal life and in the life of your parents and your extended family.'

The guest goes on for over a minute addressing the same point. He does not address the issue by using a first-person *I* or *me*. Rather, he addresses the male presenter by using an impersonal *you*. By anchoring the potential behavior of wives in general to the presenter, and by association to any man present in the studio or watching at home, he marks the presenter's, as well as these men's, engagement. He places them inside his experience and invites them to evaluate it as shared. That is, he takes away from them the role of passive spectators and assigns them the role of active participants instead (Myers and Lampropoulou 2012). This observation is in line with experimental results by Ditman, Brunyé, Mahoney, and Taylor (2010) who find that participants show more active involvement in a narrative and better retention of the details when they are inserted in it via a second-person pronoun. In addition, as Laberge and Sankoff (1979) put it, by using *you*, the guest "assimilates himself to a much wider class of people, downgrading his own experience to incidental status in the discourse, phrasing it as something that could or would be anybody's" (429) or, in this case, any man's.

The presenter of the show that (1) comes from tries to bring back the discussion to the guest's personal experience by asking him personal questions. He asks him if his ex-wife actually interfered with his life; he also inquires about the reasons the guest considers such interference a problem rather than a right. This attempt fails; the guest refuses to address the issue from a purely personal perspective and continues to use an impersonal *you* instead of *I/me*. At this point, the presenter turns to another male guest and asks for his input on the topic. By

seeking input from another male rather than female guest, the presenter shows that he is tacitly aware of the first guest's tactic of marking the engagement of all men in the audience. By bringing another man into the discussion, the presenter tests the first guest's tactic to see if he is successful in invoking a shared identity in the men around him. The second male guest does express the same attitude toward women and their role in marital relationships and as such he shows that the *you* in (1) in fact involves him. If, however, other male guests or viewers disagree that women have less than an equal status in a marital relationship, and in fact some do, their disagreement indicates that the *you* used by the guest in (1) does not involve them and that his attempt to solicit their assent and invoke their shared membership has failed.

The use of *you* in expressions like the one mentioned above is common in world languages. What is interesting for our purposes is that Arabic makes use of another type of *you* as well: an optional *you* in the form of a dative pronoun. The boldface pronoun in (2) is an example (click here for video).[1]

(2)   Context: A journalist asks Palestinians on the street if they watch any TV shows during Ramadan (a holy month in the Islamic calendar during which Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset; special TV programs are aired during this month). A woman responds by saying that she does. She goes on to criticize TV shows based on what she reads on Facebook:

bas   muttˤaliˤa   ˤala: l-Facebook   ˤala: ʔa:ra:ʔ

but   I.am.informed   on   the-facebook about opinions

kti:r   na:s   ʔinno sˤa:r   fi: ʔisa:ʔa

many	people	that	happened	there	harm

la-l-muslimi:n   ?isa:?a   la-l-na:s   l-mutadayyini:n

for-the-Muslims   harm   for-the-people the-religious

w-he:k   w-ħatta: fi: l-musalsala:t   l-misˤriyya …

and-like.this   and-even   in   the-shows   the-Egyptian …

bisawwir-**lak**   l-muslim   ?irha:bi: dayman   dayman

portray-**you.D**   the-Muslim   terrorist   always   always

'But I am informed about the opinions of many people on Facebook who believe that TV shows have been harmful to Muslims and religious people and such, and even Egyptian shows portray **[you]** Muslims as terrorists all the time.'

In Haddad (2018), I consider this form of optional *you* as an interpersonal pragmatic marker, and I refer to it as a Hearer-Oriented Attitude Dative. Like the *you* in (1), the dative pronoun in (2) may be described as an impersonal *you* that references, not only the hearer, but people in general, including the speaker her- or himself. Unlike the *you* in (1), the boldface pronoun in (2) is optional in the sense that it is neither syntactically required for the utterance to be grammatical nor semantically necessary for it to make sense. Stated differently, (2) would be structurally complete and would mean exactly the same with or without the dative *you*. This type of *you* does, however, make pragmatic (attitudinal and/or relational) contributions typical of interpersonal pragmatic markers in general. One such contribution is the invocation of a shared identity by attributing certain knowledge, experience, and/or attitude to the hearer/reader by marking it as shared rather than personal.

A brief note on the morphosyntactic distribution of optional *you* is in order before we proceed. This type of dative *you* is always realized as a clitic attached to a verbal element; that is, unlike other selected forms of *you* that serve as arguments, optional *you* may not be realized as a stand-alone pronoun. Also, there is no upper limit on the number of optional *you*'s that may occur in an utterance; as many optional *you*'s as there are verbal elements may be licensed in a sentence, as some of the examples below illustrate. See Haddad (2014) for more details.

Optional *you* like the one in (2) is the main focus of this chapter. The chapter draws on my earlier work, mainly Haddad (2018); it focuses the discussion on the issue of identity and the role of optional *you* as an invoker of shared identity in Levantine Arabic (a term used to refer collectively to Jordanian, Lebanese, Palestinian, and Syrian Arabic). The rest of the chapter is organized as follows. Section 2 presents a number of attested utterances with optional *you* from Levantine Arabic and discusses their pragmatic contribution in their social context. The utterances are only a sample that illustrate a rather prevalent phenomenon in Levantine Arabic, as well as other Arabic varieties; the sample comes from a large pool of data extracted from fieldwork recordings, soap operas, movies, plays, talk shows, and social media platforms. Section 3 draws on Langacker's (2000, 2008) Cognitive Grammar and Du Bois's (2007) Theory of Stance and provides a sociocognitive analysis of such utterances and the role that optional *you* plays in them. Section 4 is a conclusion.

2.   Optional *you* in its social context

Optional *you* is characteristic of informal communication in Levantine Arabic. This may include oral conversations, such as face-to-face or phone conversations, as well as written communication on social media. And while it makes no semantic contribution to utterances, this

dative *you* does make a number of pragmatic contributions (Haddad 2013; 2014; 2018, Ch. 4). For example, it may be used in storytelling to grab the hearer's/reader's attention and direct it to the most important, most exciting, scariest, or funniest part of the story; see Labov and Waletzky (1967), Labov (1972), and O'Connor (1994). Consider (3) from data I collected in Lebanon during field work in 2014 (click here for audio). The speaker relates an incident that happened in her village; she anchors the part of her story that she evaluates as the funniest (the punchline) to her hearer via an optional *you* in order to direct his gaze to it to make sure he does not miss it.

(3)   Context: The speaker relates the story of a disagreement that took place one day right after midnight between two men, a local and a visitor, in her village in Lebanon. The disagreement almost devolved into a fist fight, but other locals interfered and it ended without anyone getting hurt. When the confrontation was over, the visitor had gotten so cold or scared or both that he went to a nearby wall and urinated. The speaker relates this part of her story as follows:

baram   dˤahr-o   w-ʔiz   bismaʕ-**lak**
he.turned back-his   and-suddently I.hear-**you.DAT**
xari:r   mayy
tinkling   water
'He turned his back (to us), and all of sudden I hear **[you]** tinkling water.'

Another function of optional *you* in Levantine Arabic is to anchor an entity (e.g., an event, a behavior, an idea, an object, and/or an individual), along with the speaker's evaluation of it, to the hearer in an attempt to fulfil two objectives. First, by using an optional *you*, the speaker tries

to recruit the hearers' emotional engagement. That is, if the speaker is excited or indignant about a certain event, individual, or behavior, an optional *you* is an attempt to get the hearers to adopt the speaker's emotions as something that they would also experience if they were in the same position. Second, by inserting an optional *you* in an utterance, the speaker tries to invoke shared membership and shared cultural understanding with the hearers. If the speaker judges an entity as good or bad, an optional *you* is an attempt to get the hearers to adopt the same judgment. If the hearers do, they become or continue to be members of the same group to which the speaker prescribes. These objectives are often present in communication, with or without the use of an optional *you*. The employment of an optional *you* makes the attempt of the speaker to fulfil them more overt and hard to deny. That is, if confronted by *Why do you involve me in this* by the hearer, the speaker will have some explaining to do!

The use of optional *you* – or any pragmatic marker for that matter – does not happen in vacuum. Rather, it interacts with elements of the social context. These include the sociocultural values, beliefs, and norms that they and their community live by and take for granted. These elements inform the use of optional *you*, as we will see.

Another contextual dimension that is relevant in interaction is the speakers' and hearers' identities. In their attempt to invoke a shared identity, speakers are aware of their identity and the identity of their hearer; these identities inform their linguistic choices. Identity includes a social actor's individual identity, such as her or his personality traits and reputation. It also includes her or his group identity, which normally reflects assimilation to or identification with a certain group or groups; for example, an individual may perceive herself as a Palestinian woman in terms of her group identity. Finally, identity includes a social actor's relational identity as a

mother, brother, boss, employee, etc. (Brewer and Gardner 1996). Not all types of identities are relevant all the time.

The rest of this section presents a number of examples to illustrate the interaction between optional *you* and the elements of the context. Observe the excerpt in (4) from a Syrian soap opera, *ba:b l-ħa:ra* 'the neighborhood gate.' The soap opera is set in the early twentieth-century. Example (4) comes from Season 1, Episode 15. The speaker is an important community member in a meeting with the mayor and other leading figures in the community. He relates a story about another individual that he recently interacted with and praises him for his generosity. He speaks with a tone of excitement, which indicates that he has positive emotions toward the individual and his selfless behavior. The speaker uses an optional *you*, and by doing so, he recruits his hearers' emotional engagement and tries to get them to feel the same way. He also characterizes the experience as shared; that is, as something that the hearers as individuals or as representatives of a specific group (as Damascene, Arab, male, and so on) would also experience under similar circumstances. The response he gets from his hearers indicate that the speaker has succeeded in asserting his and his hearers' in-group membership and in affirming their group identity (click here for video).

(4)   Context: Abu Esam is a leading figure in an affluent community in Damascus, Syria in the early 1900's. He and another community member have just come back from a tour to surrounding neighborhoods to collect money in support of the rebels against the British occupation of Palestine. In a meeting with the neighborhood committee, the sheikh inquires about the tour and whether it has paid off. Abu Esam answers:

Abu Esam: … ma: fi: riʒʒa:l bi-kil   l-ʃa:m …   ma:

… NEG		there	man	in-all	the-Damascus …		NEG

ntaxa:	w-dafaʕ		min	xa:tˤr-o		…	bi-ba:b tu:ma
acted	and-pay		from	will-his		….	in-Bab Tuma

…	fat-**lak**		wa:ħed,		ʔallaah		yku:n
…	enter-**you.D**		one ,		God		be

bi-ʕo:n-u ,		byiʃtiɣel		ʕata:l ,		ʃe:x-i: .		wallaah
in-help-his ,		he.work		carrier ,		sheikh-my .		by.God

l-ʕazˤi:m		kil	nha:r-o		biʔadˤi:		ʔarbaʕ
the-almight		all	day-his		he.pass		four

xams	ʔru:ʃ		ytˤaliʕ-hum .	ħatˤtˤ-un
five	pennies		he.earn-them .	he.put-them

mitil	ma:		hinne	ʕa-l-tˤa:wle		w-ra:ħ !
like	that		they	on-the-table		and-left !

'There was no man in Damascus who didn't man up and pay of his own will. In the neighborhood of Bab Tuma, there entered **[you]** a man, God help him, who works as a carrier. I swear he works all day to earn four or five pennies. He placed his whole earnings on the table and left.'

Sheikh:	ʔalla:	yʕawwidˤ-hun		ʕale-e		w-ʕala:
	God	replace-them		for-him		and-for

kil	mi:n	biʔa:ʒir	bi-ʔirʃ		walla:	bi-nigli .
every	who	contribute	with-penny	or		with-dime .

'May God reward him and anyone like him who has made a donation no matter how small.'

Everyone: ʔa:mi:n …

'Amen'

In (4), the speaker is aware of the identities of his hearers as charitable community members and of the sociocultural values they hold dear, including the value of supporting fellow Arabs against foreign oppression. He would not use an optional *you* if he were relating the same event, say, to a police officer affiliated with the British in Palestine or the French in Syria.

A shared identity may be invoked in relation to any value or behavior that the speaker wishes to promote. The purpose of the speaker is to get as many social actors as possible to rally behind the value or behavior and thus prescribe to the speaker's group as members. The more members the speaker is able to attract, the higher the chance that the value or behavior she or he is trying to promote will transcend the status of individual preference and becomes communal. In (4), an optional *you* is employed to invoke a shared identity in relation to an arguably positive (laudable, legal, charitable, etc.) value. Alternatively, shared identity may be invoked in relation to a value or a behavior that the rest of the community, to the exclusion of the speaker and hearer and their cohort, considers negative (e.g., reprehensible, illegal). A case in point is (5) from the Lebanese play, *Nazl l-suru:r* 'the Surour Inn' (click here for audio).

(5)   Context: One man criticizes the government for banning hashish plantations and

explains how that has affected his life.

baʔa ,   ya   si:d-na: l-kari:m ,   tˤilʕit-**lak**   ha-l-dawle

so ,   VOC   good sir ,   go.up-**you.D**   this-the-government

ʕa-l-sahel ,   w-ʔe:l   mamnu:ʕ   zarʕ   l-ħaʃi:ʃe ,

to-the-plain ,   and-said   forbidden   planting   the-hashish ,

smaʕu: ʔʃaʕu: ,   ya: ʒame:ʕa ,   niħna: ʕe:yʃi:n

listen   look ,   VOC   people ,   we   living

ʕa-ha-l-ʃatle ,   le: ,   ma: fi: ,   ki:f   ma: fi: .

on-this-the-plant , why ,   no.answer ,   how   no.answer .

l-ħa:sˤl-o   bi-l-nihe:ye ,   ʕidna: zraʕna: dara .

the-conclusion-it   in-the-end ,   we.went.ahead   planted   corn .

'So, my good sir, government officials went **[you]** to the plains of the Beqaa Valley

and forbade the planting of hashish. We tried to explain to them that this plant is our

livelihood, but in vain. So eventually we ended up planting corn.'

The speaker and hearer in (5) are playing backgammon and chatting. The speaker shares with

the hearer a problem he has had with the Lebanese government and its decision to ban the illegal

plantations of hashish in the Beqaa Valley in Eastern Lebanon. He describes how that decision

has affected his source of income. In order to get the hearer's attention, the speaker uses an optional *you* in the form of a dative pronoun. He directs his hearer's gaze away from the game and to the issue he raises. Importantly, the speaker is dissatisfied with the government; by using an optional *you*, he invites his hearer to feel the same. He also tries to recruit his hearer's assent and invoke his in-group membership. In a possible world where the speaker is able to get enough members to prescribe to his group, he may be able to bring about change in the law whereby the plantation of hashish may actually become legal.

Note that the speaker in (5) is aware of his hearer's identity and thus of his chances at recruiting him as an empathizer and a potential supporter of hashish plantation. If the hearer were a government official, the speaker could still perform the same complaint or criticism. However, the use of the optional *you* would be quite risky. The dative would index an out-group as an in-group; it would invoke his empathy and shared understanding when he is in fact the one causing the damage.

Examples (4) and (5) target specific events and anchor them to the hearer. Alternatively, an optional *you* may be used in relation to general observations about cultural phenomena. Consider the Facebook posts in (6) and (7), for example. In both posts, the Facebook users seem to have certain criteria for piety; for example, they believe that for an individual to be truly pious, they must adhere to a certain dress code. If an individual does not abide by these criteria, they consider her or his claim to piety as hypocritical, and it is this hypocrisy that they criticize. Importantly, they anchor their evaluation to their readers and Facebook friends via their use of multiple instances of optional *you*. Based on the reactions (e.g., likes, responses) to both posts on Facebook, the friends seem to be like-minded individuals whose identities and sociocultural

beliefs align with those of the Facebook users. Both posts invoke this shared identity and affirm the sociocultural belief.

(6) btilbis-**lak**   fi:zo:n   biʒib-**lak**   l-ruʔya

she.wear-**you.D**   tights   bring-**you.D** the-visibility

3D & HD w-btiħki:-**lak**   btiħlam   bi-l-ʒanne

3D & HD w-she.say-**you.D**   she.dream   of-the-paradise

'She wears **[you]** tights that provide **[you]** details that may be characterized as three-dimensional and high definition, and yet she claims **[you]** that she dreams of heaven (that is she is very religious).'

بتلبسلك فيزون بجيبلك الرؤية 3D & HD
وبتحكيلك بتحلم بالجنة

(7) ʔaħqar   l-na:s   yalli: byilbis-**lak**   qina:ʕ

Most.despicable   the-people   who   wear-**you.D**   mask

l-ħamal   l-wadi:ʕ   hahaha   w-huwwe

the-lamb   the-gentle   hahaha   and-he

ma: byiswa: sˁurma:ye   w-biku:n   ʕa:mil

NEG   worth   shoe   and-he.would make

ħa:l-o   mitil ʃurafa:ʔ   makka   w-huwwe

self-him   like   nobles   Mecca   and-he

ma	byaʕrif	tˤari:ʔ	l-ʒa:miʕ	ʔasˤlan	w-fo:ʔ
NEG	know	way	the-mosque	to.begin.with	and-above

kil ʃi:	bifut-**lak**	bi-l-ħala:l	w-l-ħara:m
everything	he.go-**you.D**	in-the-allowed	and-the-prohibited

ha:do:l	l-nawʕiyya:t	ya: we:l-hum min ʔalla:
those	the-types	woe.betide.them

'The most despicable of people are those who wear **[you]** the mask of a gentle lamb when in fact they are not even worth a shoe (they are worthless). They pretend to be as pious as the nobles of Mecca, but they do not even know road that leads to the mosque. And above all this, they get involved **[you]** in debates about the halal (the allowed) and the haram (the forbidden). Woe betide these people.'

احقر الناس يلي بيلبسلك قناع الحمل الوديع ههه و هو ما بيسوى صرماية و بيكون عامل حالو متل شرفاء مكة و هو ما بيعرف طريق الجامع اصلا و فوق كلشي بفتولك بالحلال و الحرام هدول النوعيات يا ويلهم من #الله

It may be argued that the social actors in (6) and (7) redefine or even challenge what piety means by highlighting some circumstances under which they consider the claim to piety hypocritical. By using an optional *you*, they anchor the redefinition to their readers and Facebook friends and they redefine their shared identity in the process. This attempt brings those who agree with them closer and thus enhances their shared identity. Those who disagree with the redefinition will feel that the optional *you* invokes an identity to which they do not prescribe.

Such individuals may choose to react by challenging the redefinition and/or by unfriending the Facebook users.

The utterance in (8) further illustrates how a social actor may challenge and redefine a sociocultural belief, value, or norm instead of affirming it. The comment[2] is made by a reader in response to a 2009 article[3] about an incident of honor killing in Jordan. A young woman in her twenties was found dead after she was stabbed twenty times in her neck. The crime was labeled as honor killing, a homicide performed by a member of the family – in this case, the brother – because he believed that his sister brought dishonor to the family by engaging in a sexual relation out of wedlock. The short article concludes with a statement that the medical examination confirmed that the victim was still a virgin when she was murdered, implying that honor killing was not justified in this case. The comment by the reader in (8), unlike the vast majority of the other 196 comments that condemned the murder, indicates that she or he is pro honor killing. However, the contributor goes on to define dishonor and to delimit the types of behavior that may bring it about.

(8) Ɂawwalan ,   Ɂalla: yirħam-a: w-yiɣfir-la: .

first ,   God   have.mercy-her   and-forgive-her.D .

θa:niyan ,   le:ʃ   sˤa:r   mafhu:m-na   li-l-ʃaraf

second,   why   happened   notion-our   for-the-honor

murtabitˤ   bi-l-ʕuðriyye   faqatˤ ?   Ɂana:

linked   to-the-virginity   only ?   I

la: Ɂaqsˤid   l-fata:t   wa-la:kin

NEG	mean	the-girl	and-but

bi-ʃakl   ʕa:m .   yaʕni: ʔaħya:nan

in-manner   general .   this.mean   sometimes

taʒid   fata:ya:t   ʒamʕiyya:t   bitsˤa:ħib-**lak**

you.find   girls   organizations go.out.with-**you.D**

ʕiʃri:n   ʃabb   w-ra:yħa   w-ʒa:yi   wi-l-mixfi:

twenty   young.men   and-going   and-coming   and-the-hidden

ʔaʕzam …   yaʕni: l-ʕuðriyye   hiyye l-ʃaraf

more.grave … this.mean   the-virginity   it   the-honor

w-ma: du:n ðalik muʃ ʃaraf ?   ɣari:b !

and-that less than NEG honor ?   strange !

'First, may God have mercy on her soul and forgive her. Second, why is our notion of honor linked to virginity? I do not mean single/unmarried women only; I am talking in general terms. I mean, sometimes you find single women who are members of social organizations and yet they go out **[you]** with twenty young men, and you see them coming and going, and what you don't see might be worse. Is virginity the only measure for honor, while anything less than that doesn't count? Strange!'

أولا الله يرحمها ويغفر لها .. ثانيا : ليش صار مفهومنا للشرف مرتبط بالعذريه أنا لا أقصد الفتاه ولكن أتحدث بشكل عام .. يعني أحيانا تجد فتايات جمعيات بتصاحبلك 20 شب ورايحه وجايه والمخفي أعظم من لمسات وقبلات وكلام فاحش وبدون علم أهلها على نية أنها بتروح الجامعه .. يعني العذريه هي الشرف وما دون ذلك مش شرف ؟؟؟؟؟!!!! غريييييييييب !!!!!!

By using an optional *you*, the writer of the comment in (8) anchors the redefinition to other readers. Her or his attempt is to redefine what it means to be a 'conservative' Jordanian and wants fellow Jordanians to adopt this redefinition as part of their group identity. If the writer is a

man (the comment does not include the name of the contributor), he also redefines his shared relational identity with other men, promoting a more stringent belief that their honor is contingent not only on the virginity but also on the general behavior of the women in their families. In the process, he challenges the less 'conservative' views that oppose honor killing, as well as the readers who prescribe to such views. The comment section of the article does not contain any responses to this particular individual. Any readers who disagree with the writer of (8) are bound to feel that the optional *you* does not refer to them. If, say, a Jordanian man chooses to respond, he will have the option of getting himself unanchored first by saying something like (9), with stress on the verb with the dative pronoun. By doing so, he will isolate the dative from the rest of the utterance in an attempt to ask the question: *X? What do you mean X?* à la Potts (2011). He may then go on to discredit the rest of the comment.

(9)   ħa:ʒ   tsˤa:ħib-**li:**   w-tsˤa:ħib-**lak** …

enough.with   go.out.with-**me.D**   and-go.out.with-**you.D** …

'Enough already with this type of thinking.'

Note that the datives in (9) target both the speaker and hearer; this is in line with the observation that the type of *you* under examination is an impersonal *you* that references, not only the hearer, but people in general, including the speaker (Myers & Lampropoulou 2012: 1206). In fact, optional *you* of the type discussed here may always be replace by an optional *us*. This interpretation also explains its function as an invoker of shared identity.

The following section presents a sociocognitive analysis of optional *you* as used in utterances like the ones in (2) through (9).

3.   A sociocognitive account of optional *you*

In Haddad (2018), I label optional *you* as a hearer-oriented attitude dative and classify it as a type of interpersonal pragmatic marker that serves two broad functions: (i) an attitudinal function to express a stance toward the main message of an utterance and toward any underlying values and beliefs, and (ii) a relational function to manage (affirm, maintain, challenge, etc.) relationships between social actors (see Halliday 1970; Brinton 1996, Chapter 2; Beeching 2016, Chapter 1). To account for the social functions of optional *you,* as well as the other types of attitude datives and interpersonal pragmatic markers, I put forth a sociocognitive account that draws on Langacker's (2000, 2008) Stage Model and Du Bois's (2007) Theory of Stance. I call it the Stancetaking Stage Model. This section provides a summary of this model in relation to optional *you*.

Consider the Stage Model in Figure 1. According to Langacker (2008), when a speaker (SP) and hearer (HR) interact, they resemble viewers in a play. They occupy the off-stage region, along with their identities and their shared knowledge of social norms and sociocultural values, and they direct their gaze to the on-stage region; see also Taylor (2010: 346) and Verhagen (2005: 5). By making an utterance, the speaker presents an object (OBJ) on stage and invites the hearer to attend to it and to accept it as part of her or his view of reality. The hearer considers whether she or he wishes to do so, as the broken line in Figure 1 indicates.
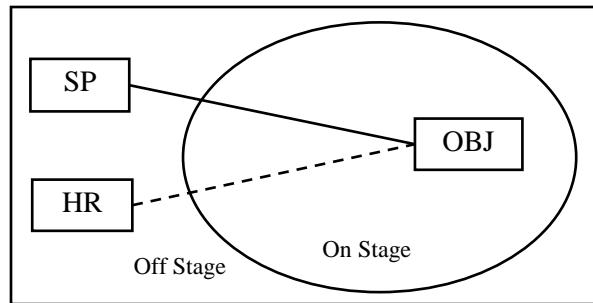
Figure 1 – Stage Model

Crucially, when social actors use words, they do more than present an object on stage. They also present their stance toward that object; they assign value to it, and they position themselves toward it by expressing (verbally or non-verbally) how it makes them feel. By doing so, they invite their hearer to align positively with them; that is, to evaluate the object in the same way and to feel the same way they feel (Du Bois 2007). Du Bois presents this relationship schematically via the Stance Triangle in Figure 2:
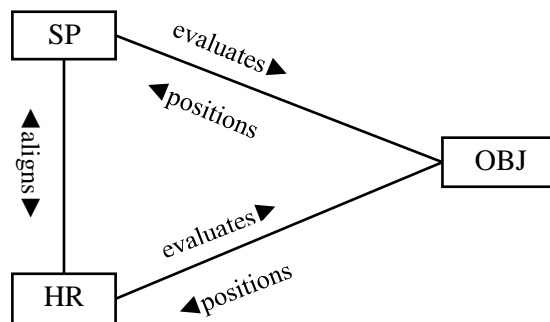
Figure 2 – The Stance Triangle

Combining Langacker's Stage Model with Du Bois's Stance Triangle, we end up with Figure 3 and the Stancetaking Stage Model:
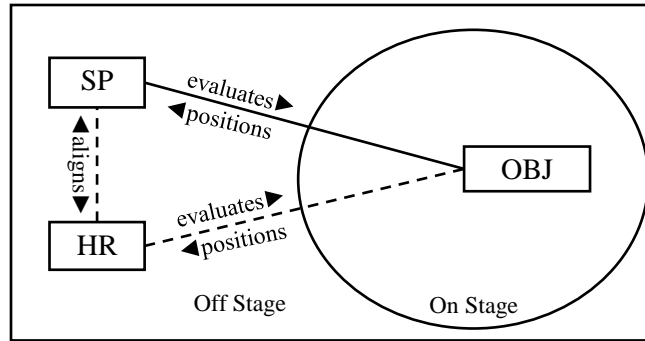
Figure 3 – The Stancetaking Stage Model

To ensure success, speakers may make certain verbal or non-verbal choices in order to manipulate the viewing arrangement on stage. In this way, they may manipulate the hearer's perspective and what she or he could and should see or attend to. One such choice is the optional *you* we examined in the previous section. As Figure 4 schematically illustrates, by using an optional *you*, the speaker places the hearer on stage, makes her or him part of the foreground, and anchors to her or him the object (OBJ) or the main message of the utterance, along with any evaluation linked to it. By doing so, the speaker attributes a certain identity to the hearer and invites her or him to view the object from this perspective. In this sense, optional *you* functions as a perspectivizer, rending the object a perspectivized thought (Verhagen 2010).
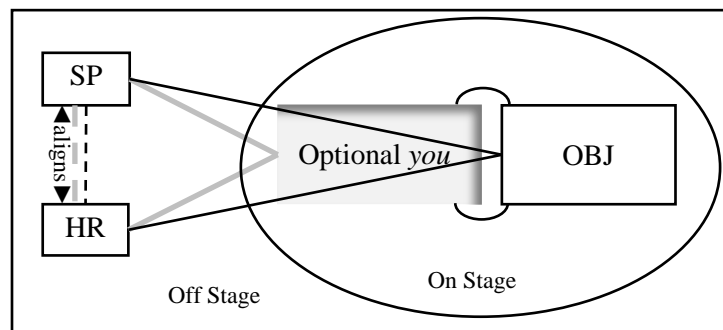

Figure 4 – The Stancetaking Stage Model of Optional *You*

The solid lines that connect the hearer off-stage to optional *you* and to the object in Figure 4 indicate that the speaker marks the object, the new identity that she or he attributes to the hearer, and her or his evaluation of both as a part of the hearer's view of reality and thus as already accepted by the hearer. In this way, the speaker makes it harder for the hearer to align negatively with her or him. If the hearer chooses to disagree with the speaker with regard to any of the elements on stage, she or he will have to get unanchored first, as Figure 5 illustrates. That is, the hearer will need to reject the identity attributed to her or him and the claim that the content of the speaker's utterance is part of their shared experience. One way to do so is by questioning or outright rejecting the use of optional *you* as in (9) above.
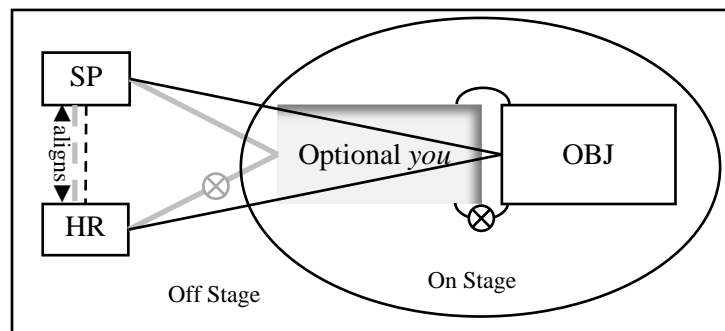
Figure 5 – The Stancetaking Stage Model of Optional *You* - Unanchored

4.   Conclusion

When we communicate with others, it is usually in our best interest to get them to agree with us and to adopt our views of reality, along with any values or beliefs we may have, as theirs as well.[4] The more people we are able to influence in this way, the more legitimate these views, values, and beliefs become. Such legitimation is important because it promotes our way of life

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[4] An exception, of course, is when we say something to intentionally offend others; e.g., a racial slur. In this case, we want our hearers to align negatively with us, with the goal of alienating them.

and our sense of who we are (i.e., our identity) from individual to communal status, rendering them a normality rather than an anomaly or an exception. Also, by getting as many people as possible to agree with us and share our views, we are able to stand stronger against different others. To ensure success, we often present the content of our utterance in a way that we believe will influence the hearer's decision or reaction. Words matter, and our choice of words make a difference. This chapter has focused on one linguistic choice that is available to speakers of Levantine Arabic: optional *you*. By using an optional *you* in the form of a dative pronoun, Levantine Arabic speakers anchor the content of their utterance, along with any implied value or belief, to their hearer. Optional *you* functions as a perspectivizer that invites the hearer to view the content of an utterance and any evaluation linked to it as shared. In this sense, an optional *you* invokes a shared identity, making the speaker's goal to solicit the hearer's assent more attainable.

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Ɂaħmar bi-l-xatˤ l-ˤari:dˤ 'a red line with a thick stroke,' talk show, Season 5, *hiya Ɂaydˤan sˤayyidat l-qara:r* 'she too has the right to make decisions,' directed by Elie Abi Aad, Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International, 2014.

ba:b l-ħa:ra 'the neighborhood gate,' soap opera, Season 1, Episodes 15, directed by Bassam al-Mulla, Aj Co. for Art Production and Distribution, 2006.

Nazl l-suru:r 'the Surour Inn,' play, directed by Ziad al-Rahbani, 1974.