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‘İše in light of her idiolect**Abstract**

The aim of this article is to characterize some lingual traits of the dialect spoken by ‘İše with regards to some selected socio-cultural aspects. ‘İše is a woman of more than one hundred years old, living in one of the villages of Testour district in North West Tunisia, accidentally discovered by a Tunisian TV program in 2018. The examination being conducted here shows before all how ‘İše’s idiolect is strongly rooted in her geo-cultural environment, lingually and socially. Both similarities and differences between ‘İše’s idiolect and the General Tunisian as well as some other Tunisian dialects are also observed. What is more, ‘İše’s idiolect, living and intelligible beyond the boundaries of Tunisia up to present days, has stood thus the communicative test of time.

Keywords: Tunisian Arabic, General Tunisian, Tunisian Dialect, Northwest Tunisian dialect, ‘İše’s dialect, Idiolect



1. Introductory Remarks

‘Iše¹ iğ-Ġlāšiyya² (عيشة الجلاصية) was discovered during Ramadan in June 2018 by a Tunisian TV program called *bila-kinaa* (bilā qinā ‘بلا قناع) [without a mask]. This program, dealing with various social problems in Tunisia, visited many families in remote villages forgotten in this country to show how the people are doing during Ramadan and to give them some help. One of the persons who received such help from this program was ‘Iše.³

‘Iše had a short speech on TV and automatically her image moved viewers. On the one hand, she was an old woman who, despite her age and the intense heat, was fasting during Ramadan.⁴ She looked still strong although she was very tiny and very slim. She was very proud of herself and she spoke as if she was used to the camera although she was not conscious of the fact that they were recording her. The journalist (who recorded all the episodes of the program with her) asked at the end of the recording: Do you know that you are now in TV? She answered with a big smile: You are joking and playing with me as an old woman.⁵ On the other hand, she was very

¹ The names ‘*Ayša* and ‘*Iša* which are inherited from the Arabic word ‘*tša* (the condition of a person in his life) are very famous in Tunisia especially in the villages and small towns. The name ‘*Ayša* (< Arabic ‘*Ā*’*iša*) is also in use. All these names are derived from the verb ‘*āša* (to live).

² See internet source (10).

"ناي تونسية وجلاصية... ناي جلاصية حرة".

nāya tūnsiyya wi-ġlāšiyya... nāya ġlāšiyya ħurra.

‘*Ġlāšiyya*’: Family name relative to the name of the Berber tribe Ġlāš (عرش جلاص). It is spelled also *Zlāš* (زلاص) and *Zlās* (زلاس). This tribe has been Arabized. Its members are numerous and they have always lived in the region of Kairouan.

³ See internet source (1).

"نواصلو في تستور والمرة هذي في عمق أريافها. الحالة لولى مرا مسنة بشبوشة محلها رغم قساوة الدنيا عليها. الدنيا قاسية والظروف صعبة خاصة في الشهر الفضيل. ورغم الفقر كل واحد يقول جاري يستحق الإعانة قبلي. مشاهد مؤلمة والصبر هو شعار الكل".

nwāšlu fi-tastūr wi-l-marra hađi fi-'umq aryāfha. il-ħāla lūla mra musinna bašbūša maħlāha raġm qasāwit id-dinya 'liha. id-dinya qāsyā wi-z-zurūf š'iba ħāššatan fi-š-šahar il-fđil w-raġm il-faqr kul wāħid yqūl ġāri yistħaq il-i'āna qabli. mašāhid mu'lma wi-š-šabr huwa š'i'ār il-kul.

⁴ See internet source (1).

"صايمة في سيدي رمضان؟
صايماته. صايماته رمضان كامل للي نكملة إنشاء الله بأيامه.
ما تقطرش؟
ما تقطرش".

šāyma fi-sīdi rumdān?

šāymātu šāymatu ramdān kāmil lilli nkamlah inšālla b-ayyāmah.

mā tufturuš?

mā nufturuš.

⁵ See internet source (1).

"في بالك إنك إنت تو نتكلمي في التلفزة؟
راو باش نصر ففك بكف".

fi bālik innik inti taw titkallim fi-t-talvza?

rāw bāš nšar fšk b-kaf.

poor.⁶ As a result, not only Tunisian society but also the neighboring countries were touched by the image of 'Īṣe, especially by her way of speaking and her strong mental condition in comparison with her age.⁷

Because of the large number of people who were interested to know more about 'Īṣe, the program *bila-kināa* returned in the winter of 2019 to 'Īṣe to record a new episode with her. The program showed a considerable part of 'Īṣe's life in the present and from her past. Her material situation but especially her personality had an effect on viewers. They liked her and they were interested to know more about her.⁸ From that time, a series of episodes were recorded with 'Īṣe and she became a famous person on social media. The program *bila-kināa* is the only source of data used for this article.⁹ In spite of her very difficult situation¹⁰ she never asked for help. Her wishes were only to repair her dwelling which was very old and almost broke down.¹¹ Thanks to the help of private people, the house of 'Īṣe was repaired and now she is happy there.

Throughout the series 'Īṣe appears as a healthy, strong woman. She has a strong character, and, at the same time, she is clever and funny. She looks sometimes naïve, a person with a simple knowledge as she had no schooling.¹² For example, she does not know how much money she has and how to distinguish the

⁶ See internet source (1).

"شعاملة في سيدي رمضان. شكون بصرف عليك؟
بصرفوا علي ولادي. كل شي من عند ولادي مونة دخان".

š'āmla fī-sīdi rumḍān. škūn yuṣṣuf 'lik?
yuṣṣufu 'liyya wlādī. kul šay min 'and wlādi mūna duḥḥān.

⁷ See internet source (1).

"والى يفطر سيدي رمضان أش تقول عليه؟
يدبر راسه... لا حسيبهم ملاهم باش نحاسبهم ناي والله ياسيدي. لا إلی يفطر مطلوبة فيه. كحاسبه أنو العالی يحاسبه. نهار آخر عاد يعرف
روحه".

wī-l-yuṣṣuf sīdi rumḍān aš tqūl 'lih?
ydabbir rāsu. la ḥsībhum mulāhum bāš nḥāsibhum nāya wallahi yā sīdi. la l-yuṣṣuf maṭlūba fīyah. kiḥāsbah ānu
il-'āli yḥāsbah. nhār āḥur 'ād ya 'rif rūḥu.

⁸ See internet source (2).

"أم عيشة جميلة في كلامها ورائعة في أخلاقها. أحبها التونسيون ويتساو عن أحوالها. كل من عرفها أو شاهد حوارها التلفزيوني."
umma 'īša ḡamīlatun fī kalāmihā wa-rā 'i'atun fī-aḥlāqihā. aḥabbahā at-tūnisiyyūna wa-yatasā' alū 'an aḥwālīhā.
kullu man 'arifahā aw šāhada ḥiwārahā at-tilfiẓiyūni.

⁹ To have a complete image of 'Īṣe I had to see all the episodes of the program and to choose the necessary material to write a coherent text.

¹⁰ See internet source (2).

"عويشة تنفرج ساعة ساعة في التلفزة؟
لا عندي تلفزة لا عندي حتى شي كان ربي العالی".

'wīša tifarraġ sā'a sā'a fī-t-talwza?
la 'andi talwza la 'andi ḥatta šay kān rabbi il-'āli.

¹¹ See the series of the program *bila-kināa* recorded with 'Īṣe.

¹² See internet source (3).

"ماقر يتش خلاص حتى نهار ولا طبيبتها ولا نعرفها وين تتلفت".

mā qritiš ḥlāš ḥatta nhār w-lā ṭabbīthā w-lā na 'rifhā wīn titlaffīt.

banknotes.¹³ She refuses to go to the sea because she believes that the water can take her¹⁴ and refuses to wear (or use) glasses because she thinks that her eyesight would worsen.¹⁵ Nevertheless, she is able to communicate also with the younger generation without problems. One of the episodes of the program was in the form of questions given to ‘Iše. She was able to hear, understand and answer all the questions which were addressed to her from men and women in different ages and who used different dialects. But sometimes we can observe that some people (specially the young generation) have some difficulties to understand some words or expressions used by ‘Iše because they are not anymore in use in General Tunisian or in some particular dialects and some people are not familiar with them.

Her speech is as pleasant as her character.¹⁶ She is very proud and it was very difficult to convince her to change her traditional look, to speak an other language than her own language or to be even in Tunis,¹⁷ the capital of the country and which is the dream of every Tunisian to be there. Her stories amount to a lecture concerning life, woman status, traditions, the relationships in the family and in village society,¹⁸ in particular her own village¹⁹

¹³ See also internet source (3 and 4).

"حتى ورقة كيف من أذي ماندريش عليها إلا مانوريها باش يفرقوها لي ويعطوها لي. ناي نعرف حسابات؟ ما نعرفش."
ħattā warqa kif min aḍiyya mā ndrīš 'līha illa ma nwarriha bāš yfargūhāli w-ya 'tūhāli. nāya na 'rif ħsābāt?
mā na 'rifiš. (3).

"مليون قداش من ورقة؟"
 ماندريش عليه. ونا نعرف اللوراق"

malyūn qaddāš min warqa?
mā ndrīš 'līh w-nā na 'rif il-lawrāq. (4).

¹⁴ See internet source (4).

"تو مامشيس في الشهاولي... كان يهزني البحر عاد بيها بيها... تو شهاولي وأنا نفز بالسيف وساعة ساعة ندعثر. بولدي قتلك دبر على روحك لا نمشي للبحر لا نمشي حتى لبلاصة."
tawwa mā nimšīs fi-š-shāwīli... kān yihzani il-bħar 'ād bīha bīha... tawwa šhāwīli wa-nā nfiž bi-s-sīf w-sā'a sā'a nidda 'tīr. yā wilḍi gutlik dabbir 'la rūħik la nimši li-l-bħar lā nimši ħatta li-blāša.

¹⁵ See internet source (4).

"لا لا ماتركيش لي مرابات زيد نعي بيها بيها. نا نمشي أكاك."

lā lā mā trakkīš liyya mrāyāt zīd na 'ma bīha bīha. nā nimši akkāka.

¹⁶ See internet source (2).

"أم عيشة جميلة في كلامها ورائعة في أخلاقها."

umma 'īša ġamīlatun fi-kalāmiha wa-rā'i'atun fi-aħlāqīha.

¹⁷ See internet source (4).

¹⁸ See internet source (5).

"العجاء كانت تحب بعضها؟"
 تحب بعضها برشة... ماو مشوا عاد الكبار إلي بيهم الحاجة ادفنوا. تو كراجل كبير وبحكم يجي واحد باش يشكي يحلف عليهم أبيك علي بيطل مايشكيش... ماقدنتش حنانة كيما بكري."

il-'bād kānit ḥib b'adha?
ḥib b'azha barša... māw mšu 'ād il-kbār illi būhim il-ħazza iddifnu. tawwa kirāġil kbīr w-yuħkum yġi wāħid bāš yiški yihlif 'līh ubbayik 'liy ybaṭṭil mā yiškīš... mā ga 'ditiš ħnāna kīma bikri.

¹⁹ See internet source (5).

"عقارب حنوشة؟"
 لا عقارب لا رينا حتى شيء... السخانة قتلنا السخانة القوة لربي... هاني قاعدة والعرق هامل."

'gārib ħnūša?

lā 'gārib lā rīna ħatta šay... is-šhāna gitlitna is-šhāna il-quwwa l-rabbi... hāni gā'da w-il-'rag hāmīl.

and other matters which are transmitted in a special language. We can without doubt confirm that her stories are rich data concerning the history of Tunisia. Her stories are the stories of a person in relation to society, its language and its culture. 'İŝe is Life drawn by pictures and words.

Taking into consideration the intransient beauty and the relevance of the message, the author is of the opinion that the material recorded with 'İŝe is rich and deserves to be seriously studied in terms of theoretical linguistic and cultural qualities. What is more, listening to the recorded material was rather tedious because of the constant change of topics, of people and the way they spoke. The creation of a coherent text by the author required an amount of time to sensibly order the often chaotic transmission. The choice of the material was not random but illustrated a collection of lingual problems with regards to cultural questions discussed in Chapers 2, 3, 4 and 5.

The main aim of this article is to discuss some lingual features of 'İŝe's dialect taking in consideration the general lingual system of Tunisia. In particular, there will be a brief examination of selected issues regarding: vocabulary, phonetics, morphology and phraseology in sight of the linguistic and sociolinguistic/cultural theories. From the first observations we can say that the lingual system shows some characteristics which are true for General Tunisian and which are not true for some Tunisian dialects, in particular the dialects of Tunis, Sfax and the Sahel. We can also say that 'İŝe's dialect belongs to the rural group of dialects and not to the urban group. And we can conclude that 'İŝe's language is not only deeply rooted in her geographical and cultural environment to which it belongs but it is also deeply connected to the personality of 'İŝe. Belonging to a large communicative community, it succeeded in being a part of the lingual situation in Tunisia in the past and in the present.

In this preliminary approach to the dialect used by 'İŝe the author will mainly focus on the following two points:

- (i) The phenomenon of 'İŝe as an image of a lingual and cultural situation in Tunisia.
- (ii) An analysis of some features of the dialect used by 'İŝe with regards to some cultural and lingual aspects and in relation with the general characterization of Tunisian dialect.

Before the analysis proper, for the sake of clarity, the author would like to provide the following information:

- (i) The texts from the program *bila-kinaa* are available only in oral version. The author transcribed it into Arabic script and in transliteration as applied to Modern Standard Arabic, with some adjustments however, in order to approximate phonetic transcription. As of yet, there is no agreement among Arabists on the transliteration of dialect texts. These fragments will not be translated here to English since their meanings are illustrated in the main text but we have to consider these fragments together with the main text as a coherent text and without reading these fragments the understanding of the goal of the present article is not complete.
- (ii) The notation of Arabic names (cities, towns, villages, authors, artists) will be given in Arabic script for administrative purposes, and also in transcription.

- (iii) In notating the Arabic names of authors and artists two methods are applied:
- If they use a romanization of their names in publications, then these forms are used in the present article.
 - If the names of authors and artists are given in the Arabic script, then their names are transcribed by the system used in this article.

2. ‘Īṣe, Path to Life

‘Īṣe, the life, is unforgettable name, known as *ommī ‘Īṣe* [mother] or *ḥālī ‘Īṣe* [aunt] but very famous in the program as *‘Wīṣe* [diminutive name from ‘Īṣe]. ‘Īṣe is an old Tunisian woman of more than one hundred years old.²⁰ Some people say that she is 112 years old and others say 104.²¹ She does not know herself how old she is. To the question of the journalist ‘*qaddāṣ ‘umrik*’ [How old are you] her answer was ‘*la nidri ‘la ‘umri giddīṣ. barra qayyid inta*’, ‘*mā ndrīṣ. ‘umri nāya mḡaydātah*.’²² [I do not know how old I am. Do you think I wrote my age somewhere? You can write whatever you like.] But ‘Īṣe has an identity card and based also on the information gathered from her family, in the year 2020, ‘Īṣe is 113 years old.

‘Īṣe is living in a mountainous village²³ in Ouled Slama (Wlɛ:d slɛ:mɛ أولاد سلامة) in the district of Testour (Tɛstɔ:r تستور) in the Beja Governorate (Bɛ:ǧɛ باجة) in the North West of Tunisia.²⁴ Despite her advanced age, ‘Īṣe can hear, speak and see normally. She is able to walk and to carry out daily tasks without help.²⁵

²⁰ See internet source (2).

"أم عيشة معمرة تونسية عمرها أكثر من مائة وإثنا عشر سنة".

umma ‘īṣa mu‘ammira tūnisiyya ‘umruha aḡtar min mi‘atin wa-‘iṭna ‘ašara sana.

²¹ See internet source (1).

"هام قالولي عمرك 104. كيفاش ها الحكاية هادي؟
ماندريش عليه. عمري أكك ماندريش عليه".

hām qālūli ‘umrik 104. kifāṣ ha l-ḥkāya hādī?

mandrīṣ ‘līh. ‘umri akkāka ma ndrīṣ ‘līh.

²² See internet source (1 and 5).

"لاندرى على عمري قداش. بر قيد إنت".

la nidri ‘la ‘umri giddīṣ. barra qayyid inta. (1).

"قداش عمرك؟"

"ماندريش. عمري ناي مقيداته!"

qaddāṣ ‘umrik?

mā ndrīṣ. ‘umri nāya mḡaydātah! (5).

²³ See internet source (1).

"الجبل إلى بجيننا إيش اسمه؟"

"جبل جلاص بو عيشة خنق مور".

iǧ-ǧbal illi bi-ǧnabna iṣ ismu?

ǧbal ḡlāṣ bū ‘īṣa ḥnag mūru.

²⁴ See internet source (2).

"تظن أرياف عمادة أولاد سلامة من معتمدية تستور باجة".

taḡtunu ariyāfa ‘imādata wlād slāma min mu‘tamdiyyat tastūr bāǧa.

²⁵ See internet source (2).

"امرأة رغم كبر سنها مازالت تقوم لوحدها بشؤون منزلها".

imra‘atun ruǧma kibari sinnihā māzālat taḡūmu liwaḥdihā bi-ṣu‘ūni manziliha.

'Īše iġ-Ġlāšiyya²⁶ was born in Kairouan (il-Qirwē:n القيروان). Her family is from Kairouan but they were nomads. They arrived in the countryside of Testour and settled there for a relatively long time. Her father gave her to a man from this region and from that time 'Īše had to stay in the village where she was married until the present day.²⁷ Although times have changed, as a traditional Tunisian woman 'Īše still wears her *malya* (ملية)²⁸ that she used to from *iṣ-šoġrā* (من الصغرى) [childhood]²⁹ tying it with an old *hlāla* (خلالة),³⁰ covering her head with her colorful *mḥārim* (محارم)³¹ in which she made a *šorra* (صرة)³² to hide small *flīsāt* (فليسات)³³ and her *naffa*³⁴

²⁶ See internet source (10).

"ناي تونسية وجلاصية... ناي جلاصية حرة".

nāya tūnsiyya wi-ġlāšiyya... nāya ġlāšiyya ḥurra.

²⁷ See internet source (8).

"جيت من القروان لهنا؟
 !. جيت لهني وبي معاشر لهني وقعد باسر لهني و عطاني. كتب المكتوب عطاني بالسيف".

ġīt mi-l-qirwān lihna?

i. ġīt lihniy wi-bbay m'āsir lihniy wi-g'ad yāsir lihniy wi-'tānī. ktib il-maktūb 'tānī bi-s-sīf.

²⁸ 'malya' or 'hrām' is a traditional Tunisian dress that is shared by women in several regions of Tunisia, despite its different colors. Malya is a multi-colored quilt worn by women and is known especially in the northwest, center and southern regions, particularly in the countryside. The colors differ from one region to another, so Mahdia and Djerba are known for their magical black cloak, with a golden yearbook that added to them a magical luster. The red color is used in the Malya often for weddings, events and religious days. This traditional dress is only used for the countryside because the women of the city have another dress like 'fūta wi-blūsa' and 'taryūn' that they wear during occasions and weddings.

²⁹ See internet source (10).

"من الصغرى تلبسي في الملية؟
 من الصغرى ملي مزلت عناق... ملي مزلت نص عنيق ناي نلبس في نص ملية في دارنا".

mi-š-šugra tilbsi fi-l-malya?

mi-š-šugra milli mazzilt 'nāg... milli mizzilt nuṣ 'nayyig nāya nilbis fi-nuṣ malya fi-dārna.

³⁰ 'hlāla': famous in Tunisia as 'hlāla' or 'hlāl'. In Moroccan Darja is called 'bazīma', 'hlāla' and 'katfiyya'. But between the Souss tribes in the South of Morocco the 'hlāla' is called 'tarazwit' or 'tazarzit' and between the Riff tribes the 'hlāla' is called 'tisighnast' as it is called among most speakers of Amazigh languages. In Algeria between the Kebylie it is known by the name 'afzīm' or 'abzīm'. The 'hlāla' is a fibula or brooch with symbolic significance for the Amazigh heritage. Its use is widespread among numerous North African tribes. Its exact form varies from tribe to tribe, but consists essentially of a triangle under the ring or semicircle.

³¹ 'mḥārim', the singular 'mḥarma' (< Arabic maḥruma (handkerchief)). It is also called 'fūlār', plural 'fūlārāt'. The mḥarma or fūlār is a scarf worn by women in Tunisia, and it carries flowers in bright colors. Also, the Tunisian mḥarma has symbolism during celebrations of marriage, success, or the return of a relative from al-Hajj as it is attached to the entrance of the house or above it as an indication of joy.

³² 'šorra' (< Arabic šorra): a bundle. The rural woman used to tie a bundle in her headscarf to put some small money or something that she was afraid of losing.

³³ 'flīsāt'/'flaysāt': a small amount of money. The old women usually kept the small money they had with them. They would hide it in their clothes.

³⁴ 'naffa': a kind of tobacco famous in Tunisia and other Arabic countries, especially among poor people. 'naffa' is known in some countries by other names as 'šamma' in Algeria and 'kāla' in Morocco. It is part of the Arab collection of mood altering substances. It is an anesthetic from the tobacco family. It is made from tobacco leaf mixed with the ash of the desert 'ramtha' herb. It is often consumed by the miserable, elderly and young men.

(نفة).³⁵ On her face there are beautiful *wšām* (وشام)³⁶ that have accompanied her for

Among the users, especially in rural areas, even the women consume it without embarrassment. It may be strange that the conservative rural women (especially the elderly), consume it without embarrassment. It was initially used as a pain reliever for molars, and later turned into addiction. The way to use it begins with preparing a small circular piece of black flower, then a piece is placed between the jaw and lips, between ten minutes and half an hour, before spitting, and sometimes for a longer period.

³⁵ See internet Source (3 and 9).

"نشري النفة نشري الدخان التاي وأكه.
 ياعويشة شنو الدخان؟ تتكيف ياخي؟
 لا، نفف.
 وعلاش تنف؟
 نفف. من صغري نفف. هاهي الحكمة... العيشة النفة والتاي".

nišri in-naffa nišrī id-duḥḥān it-tāy w-akkahu.
yā 'wīša šnuwwa id-duḥḥān? tītkayyif yāḥī?
lā. innif.
wa'lāš tñif?

innif. min šuḡri innif...hā ḥiya il-hukka...il-'īša in-naffa wi-t-tāy. (3).

"أذيك راي كالم الحينة وننسى الدنيا الكل ننسها والنفة لا، أبي ننسها ويم ننسها والنفة ماننساهايش. أذيك الروح متعي.
 شكون علمك النفة؟
 علمتها للروحي.

قداش عندك من عام تنفي؟
 ملي في بيتنا.
 طفلة صغيرة وتنفي في النفة.
 إ، نفيتها في بيتنا.
 وراجلك كفاق بيبك عندك النفة أش عملك؟
 بطلت ووليت إليها بالدرقة".

aḍīka rāy ki-l-lum laḥnīna w-nansa id-dinyā il-kul nansāha wi-n-naffa lā. ubbay nansāh w-yumma nansāha
wi-n-naffa mā nansāhīs. aḍīka ir-rūḥ mta 'i.

škūn 'almik in-naffa?

'allimtha li-r-rūḥi.

qiddās 'andik min 'ām tñiffi?

milli fi-bīna.

tufla sḡīra wi-tñif fi-n-naffa.

i. naḥḥītha fi-bīna.

w-rāḡlik kifāq bīk 'andik in-naffa āš 'mallik?

baḥḥīlt w-wallit ilha bi-d-durga. (9).

³⁶ 'wšām' (tattoos): In Tunisia, tattoos appeared with the Berbers, the indigenous people of the country, as it is considered a long-standing and deeply rooted heritage in Berber culture and part of its identity. It is called in the Amazigh language 'tikaz', and it was mainly associated with women and to lesser degree by men. The majority of Berbers women have tattoos. A tattoo is considered one of the most important means of decorating a woman during her life, as she is tattooed at adulthood to announce through forms, symbols, and drawings that she has entered adulthood. She puts tattoos in different areas of her body, such as the face, arm, hand, chest, breasts, legs, and sensitive areas of her body. The men, only put some tattoos on the hands, arms, and legs. One of the most famous drawings known between Berbers is a plus sign (+), which is drawn on the cheek and arms, the letter T from the Berbers letters, which is an abbreviation of the word 'tamtout', which means a beautiful female. Among the most widely used symbols are bee, snail, snake, wheat ears, sun, scorpion, stars, olive branch, and other symbols bearing many meanings, some of which symbolize the location of each Berber tribe. The Amazighs also practiced tattoos for medical purposes, as they believed that it cured diseases and required fertility for a barren person, protected people from envy of the evil eye, and epidemics.

many years,³⁷ walking with her *zollāṭ* (زلاط)³⁸ or sitting, warming in front of the *kānūn* (كانون),³⁹ cooking her *tāy* (تاي)⁴⁰ and drinking it from the small *kās ṭrābilsī* (كاس طرابلسي). With this picture, 'Īše suddenly appeared on TV moving between places and people while telling her story.

At a young age she was forced into marriage by her father.⁴¹ 'Īše did not want to be married because '*kunt sḡīra*,⁴² [I was very young] like she said, and she does not even know how old she was at that time⁴³ but '*bikri aḏāka obbay illi 'tāni bi-s-sīf*.⁴⁴ [in that time it was my father who gave me by force to a man] She got married although her mother and brother were against this marriage. They were forbidden to say no: '*yomma*

³⁷ See internet source (7).

"لا لا أخي ماتحيش وشامي عليه؟ ماكينتش مازلت بعقلي. وشامي في خدي نمشي نحيه. لا شيبيني؟...شني نعمل بيه؟ أذاك يزين الوجه. باش تتفرز من المرا من الرجال...أذاكم ناس بكري".

lā lā uḥḥay mā nnaḥḥīš wšāmī. 'līh? mā klibtiš mazīlt b-'aqli. wšāmī fī ḥaddī nimši nnaḥḥīh. lā šbīni?...šniyya na 'mil bīh? aḏāka yzayyin il-wiḡh. bāš tūfriz mi-l-mrā mi-r-rāḡil...aḏākum nās bikri.

³⁸ '*zollāṭ*': walking stick, cane. There is another word used in all Tunisia ('*ṣā* عصا) but the word *zollāṭ* is used only between the natives of the villages, especially the older generation.

³⁹ '*kānūn*': hearth oven, traditionally in Tunisia made from clay. Used for burning wood or coals. It was used for heating and cooking. It was not just a way of heating, it was much more than that, it was a heritage and a way of life that only those who lived that experience and sat with their family around the '*kānūn*' knew. The most prominent advantage of the '*kānūn*' was the gathering of the whole family around it. So whenever someone moved away from the '*kānūn*' he would feel cold even if was in the same room, so he was forced to sit close to it and in the absence of the TV the family would exchange talks, jokes, and gossip about evry thing.

⁴⁰ '*tāy*': (< Arabic *šāy*). In Tunisia, in general is pronounced '*tāy*'. This may be a direct Arabization of the pronunciation of its suppliers in the world and in Tunisia also, whether from French "*thé*" or the English "*tea*". In some interior Tunisian regions it is pronounced '*it-tāhī*' and '*iš-šāhī*'. The effect of the popular use among the people of Tripoli and Libyan immigrants spread throughout the Tunisian country. The spread of tea consumption in Tunisia began in the early twenties through Libyan immigrants. That was in the beginning of 1911, that is, during the Italian invasion of Libya and the mass migration and immigrants who were distributed in various regions of the country. Maybe this explains why the Tunisians, to this day, call the small cup used to drink tea '*kās ṭrābilsī*' (Traboulsi cup). Tunisians, especially in the countryside, have a great fondness for consuming the tea. They start and end their day with it and they see it as a necessary tonic for work. So the '*barrād*' (teapot), the '*kānūn*' (hearth) and the '*kīsān*' (glasses for tea) are among others the tools for work.

⁴¹ See internet source (5).

"بكري أذاك أبي إلي عطاني بالسيف.

كيفاش خذيت راجل بالسيف؟

إ. والله عطاني بالسيف. يم كلت طريحة وخوي كلا طريحة وقلهم إنتم أبياتي تحكمو في. عطاني بالسيف".

bikri aḏāka obbay illi 'tāni bi-s-sīf.

kīfāš ḥḏīti rāḡil bi-s-sīf?

i. wallahi 'tāni bi-s-sīf. yomma klit trīḥa w-ḥūja kla trīḥa w-gālhum intum obbayyāū tuḥkmu fiyya. 'tāni bi-s-sīf.

⁴² See internet source (5 and 12).

⁴³ See internet source (12).

"وقت إلي عرست إنت قداش عمرك؟

والله ماندري عليه".

waqt illi 'arrasti inti qaddāš 'umrik?

walla mā nidri 'līh.

⁴⁴ See internet source (5).

"بكري أذاك أبي إلي عطاني بالسيف".

bikri aḏāka obbay illi 'tāni bi-s-sīf.

klit trīḥa [my mother was beaten] and *‘hūya klā trīḥa* [my brother was beaten] by the father because they wanted to help and save the daughter shouting *‘intom obbayyātī toḥkmū fīyya*.⁴⁵ [are you my parents to say to me what I have to do?]

The man was *šāyib* [old], significantly older than she was and *‘māḥu zūz nsāwīn il-guddīm*.⁴⁶ [he had been married twice before] He sent his first wife back to her family because she could not have children. The second one died and she left a young boy and ‘Īṣe considered him and still considers him as her first son.⁴⁷ Her husband was planning also to be married to a fourth woman but *‘klīṭlu rāsu*.⁴⁸ [he died] Of course, ‘Īṣe could not stop his plan and could not have an opinion about this subject: *‘nākul iz-zollāt*,⁴⁹ [I will be strongly beaten if I will try].

‘Īṣe was married in a traditional way.⁵⁰ It was a marriage with *ṭabbāl* (طبال)⁵¹ and *ḡnā* (غنا)⁵² accompanied with the sound of *mgārīn* (مقارين).⁵³ But *iz-zdāg*

⁴⁵ See internet source (5).

"كيفاش خذيت راجل بالسيف؟
 "الله عطاني بالسيف. بم كلت طريحة وخوي كلا طريحة وقلمهم انتم أبياتي تحكمو في. عطاني بالسيف."

kīfāš ḥdīti rāḡil bi-s-sīf?

i. wallahi ‘tānī bi-s-sīf. yomma klit trīḥa w-ḥūja kla trīḥa w-gālhom intom obbayyātī toḥkmu fīyya. ‘tānī bi-s-sīf.

⁴⁶ See internet source (12).

"ماو شابب هو ماخو زوز نساوين القديم...نا الثالثة".

māw šāyib huwa māḥū zūz nsāwīn l-guddīm...nā it-tālta.

⁴⁷ See internet source (3 and 5).

"كبرتهم وهام خذوا نساوين...لربعة خمسة بعلي. كل واحد وبيته".

kabbarthum w-hām ḥdū nsāwīn...larb’a ḥamsa bi-‘liy kul wāḥid w-bītu. (3).

"قداش عندك من صغير عيشوشة؟
 علي هذاك أمه من سيدي مسعود...جبت لقينته صغير".

qaddāš ‘andik min zḡīr ‘ayšūša?

‘liy ḥadāka ummu min sīdī mas‘ūd...ḡīt lḡītah šḡayyir. (5).

⁴⁸ See internet source (3).

"خذنا ثلاثة نسا...مازال باش يكمل وحدة أخرى لكن كليته راسه".

ḥdā ḡlāta nsā...māzāl bāš ykammil waḥda uḥra lakin klīṭlu rāsu.

⁴⁹ See internet source (5).

"اننت ثقيل راجلك ياخو أربعة نسا؟
 ولا نا نحكم...ناكل الزلاط".

inta taqbil rāḡlik yāḥu arb’a nsa?

w-la nā nuḥkum...nākul iz-zollāt.

⁵⁰ See internet source (5).

"عرس بالطبال ونساوين تغني...ومقارين تلطح".

‘irs bi-t-tabbāl wi-nsāwīn ṭḡanni...wi-mgārīn tlatṭiḥ.

⁵¹ *‘ṭabbāl* (< Arabic ṭabbāl): drummer. Derived from the name of the instrument in Arabic *‘ṭabl*, in Tunisian it is called *‘ṭbal* or *‘ṭbla*. *Ṭabla* is a Tunisian folk music instrument that consists of a circular wooden frame that pulls a piece of skin on either side of it with a rope or leather tendon. The *ṭabla* is carried by a leather band. To hit the *ṭabla*, a wooden stick with a spherical head is held by the right hand and with the left hand holds a thin stick without a head. In the countryside, the drummer had to be present at all happy occasions, especially at weddings.

⁵² *‘ḡnā* (< Arabic ḡinā’): singing. In Tunisia this term is also used to denote the folk songs but also to denote a genre of tunisian folk songs called *‘ḡnā* or *‘ḡnā bi-t-ṭwīl*.

⁵³ *‘mgārīn*, singular *‘magrūn*. It is called also in Tunisia *‘mukḥla* (plural *‘mkāḥil*): hunting gun. The tradition of shooting on wedding occasions is a long standing Arab tradition. Most Arab societies, from the Far East to the Far

(الزداق)⁵⁴ [the marriage contract] took place many years later,⁵⁵ after she gave birth to all her children.⁵⁶ The government organized an action to officially register married people.⁵⁷ In the case of 'Īše and other families it happened in the house of *obbayyik* 'liy⁵⁸ [our father 'Liy].⁵⁹ Her husband registered her as someone who has no one in the family, no brother, no uncle.⁶⁰

West, share this tradition. In Tunisia, especially in rural areas, a number of horseman who attend weddings still fire some gunshots with the traditional hunting rifle called '*al-magrūn*' or '*al-mukħla*'. The '*magrūn*' is filled with a kind of gunpowder called '*kuskūs*' and lunched high into space under the '*zġārīd*' (ululation) of the women, making sure to avoid hurting and attending the '*maħfal*' (the people gathered in the marriage).

⁵⁴ '*iz-zdāg*' (< Arabic: aṣ-ṣadāq): a dowry. In Tunisia is used more in the meaning of the marriage contract which is in Arabic '*aqdu az-zawāġ* (عقد الزواج) and for the word 'dowry' the word *mahr* (مهر) is used more.

⁵⁵ See internet source (5).

"يابنتي مثبتة صححت في الزداق؟
 إي صححت بصبيعي.
 في ورقة؟
 في ورقة."

ya binti mtabta ṣaħħahti fi-z-zdāq?

iy ṣaħħaht b-ṣub 'i.

fi-warqa?

fi-warqa.

⁵⁶ See internet source (12).

"إنتم عرسنوا قبل وبعد كتبنا الزداق؟

ياولدي الشناتة الكل جبتهم بلاش زداق... نحنا ماتا نجر من قبلة معاشرين وساكنين وبي عطاني بالسيف."

intum 'arristū qbal w-ba'd ktibtū iz-zdāq?

yā wildī iṣ-šnāta il-kul ġibthum blāṣ zdāg...naħna māna nġū min gibla m'āsrīn w-sāknīn wi-bbay 'īānī bi-s-sīf.

⁵⁷ See internet source (5).

"جات حملة قيديت الزداقات.

حملة من الدولة؟

!. حملة من الدولة مالا شنية".

ġāt ḥamla qaydit iz-zdāgāt.

ḥamla mi-d-dawla?

i. ḥamla mi-d-dawla māla šniyya.

⁵⁸ '*obbayyik*' (< Arabic ab): Father. In the countryside the people used to do not call the old people by their name but by calling them '*obbay*' (father), '*am*', '*ħāl*' (uncle), '*om*' (mother), '*amma*', '*ħāla*' (tante).

⁵⁹ See internet source (5 and 12).

"في ورقة. لابلدية لا شي. لهنّا في بيت أبيك علي قيدنا الزداقات."

fi-warqa la baladiyya la šay. lihna fi-bīt obbayyik 'liy qayyidna iz-zdāgāt. (5).

"طريقة جو صدفة أكاك عدنا بيت أبيك علي. فم مش مقيدة مشني ناي برك. جت كالحقة... قيدنا الزداقات برك ومشت."

ṭrīġa ġū akkāka ṣudfa'adna bīt obbayyik 'liy. famma miš mqayda mišni nāya barka. ġit ki-l-ħafla...qayyidna iz-zdāgāt barka wi-mšit. (12).

⁶⁰ See internet source (5).

"قيدني جاهلة... قلو عندهاش خالها. قلو عندهاش. قلو عندهاش خو. قلو ما عندها حي في الدنيا.

هاذا وقت إللي عرسنا؟

ه."

qayyidni ġāhla...gallu 'andhāš ḥālha. gāllu mā 'andhāš. gallu 'andhāš ḥu. gallu mā 'andha ḥay fi-d-dinya.

ḥāda waqt illi 'arristi?

hi.

From what she has said it seems that ‘Īṣe did not love her husband and does not have good memories of living with him⁶¹ because he was very difficult and ‘*ḍarbu ḥār*,’⁶² [he was strongly beating her] and he did not pay a lot of attention to the family. He did not care to get a copy of the *zdāg*. The *zdāg* is registered in the office of Testour but till now ‘Īṣe does not have a copy.⁶³ The husband did not think anyone would want to have it.⁶⁴ He did not even care about registering his children in the office although it was possible in that time in Tunisia to do so: ‘*ḥallāhom il-kol blāš taqyīd*.’⁶⁵ This situation among others did not enable the children to attend school.⁶⁶ The children registered themselves and got their birth certificate when they became older.

⁶¹ See internet source (12).

"ما كنتش تحبه إنت راجلك؟
هأه...ماو قتلك عطاني بالسيف ماو شايب هو ماخو زوز نساوين القديم...نا الثالثة".

mā kuntiṣ ḥibbu inti rāḡlik?

hi'h...māw gutlik 'ṭāni bi-s-sīf māw šāyib huwa māḥu zūz nsāwīn l-guddūm...nā it-tāliṭa.

⁶² See internet source (5).

"يضرب؟
أ شومي...
يضرب برشة؟
أيب أيب
ضربه حار؟
حار...يا ولدي ساعة على ساعة نبقي غضبانة شهر ولا أكثر من الشهر.
يجي يرجعك يردك؟
يجوني ناس خرين ويرضوني من العرش. خاتي هو".

yaḍrab?

ā šūmī...

yaḍrab barša?

abbib abbib

ḍarbu ḥār?

ḥār...yā wildi sā'a 'la sā'a nabqa ḡazbāna šhar welle aḡtar mi-š-šhar.

yḡī yraḡḡ'ik yruddik?

yḡūnī nās ḥrīn wi-yrazzūni mi-l-'arš. ḥāṭi huwa.

⁶³ See internet source (12).

"الزداق خلاه في تستور والله لتو لاجبته لاعيني بيه...مانعرفوش".

iz-zdāg ḥallāh fi-tastūr walla l-taw lā ḡibtah lā 'īni fih.

⁶⁴ See internet source (5 and 12).

"الزداق ماو في تستور ماياش يجيبه. قيد الزداق وخلاه غادي في تستور ماياش يجيبه".

iz-zdāg māw fi-tastūr mā bāš yḡībah. qayyid iz-zdāg w-ḥallāh ḡādi fi-tastūr mā bāš yḡībah. (5).

"قتله طلع طلع الزداق. قلني أش عندي فيه أنو عند الدولة".

gutlah ṭalla' ṭalla' ṭalla' iz-zdāg. galli aš 'andi fih ānu 'and id-dawla. (12).

⁶⁵ See internet source (5).

"خلاه الك بلاش تقبيد. مايجيش يقيد. يجيب ويصقلط ويخلي".

ḥallāhom il-kul blāš taqyīd. mā yḥibbiṣ yqayyid. yḡīb wi-yṣaḡliṭ wi-yḥalli.

⁶⁶ See internet source (12).

"خلاهم بلاش تقبيد. تقيدوا وقت إلي خش بورقية...حتى القراية ماقرينهمش".

ḥallāhum blāš taqyīd. tqaydū waqt illi ḥaš bürgība...hatta il-qrāya mā qarrīthumus.

She gave birth to seven children and she gave them typically Tunisian traditional names: five sons (In-Nāšir الناصر, Mḥammad محمد, 'Izdīn عز الدين, Munğī منجي and one she did not name) and two daughters (Rūsiyya عروسية, and Fāṭma فاطمة). Three of them died (Munğī, the boy that she did not name and Fāṭma). She considers 'Liy (علي), as her son although she is not his biological mother.⁶⁷ Like all the women of *bikri* [in the past], she gave birth to all of her children at home and never went to the doctor.⁶⁸

'Iṣe does not know how old her children are. She remembers only that she was giving birth to her children in the time of president Bourguiba (بورقيبة).⁶⁹ Her husband died and he left her with five sons and one daughter.⁷⁰ She does not know how old they were when her husband died but she remembers that they were very young and that her son Munğī, who died after the death of her husband, was a baby 'yarḍa' *fi-l-bazzūl*' [breast feeding] at that time.⁷¹

⁶⁷ See internet source (3 and 5).

"كبرتهم وهام خذوا نساوين...لربعة خمسة بعلي. كل واحد وبيته".

kabbarthum w-hām ḥḍū nsāwīn...larb'a ḥamsa bi-'liy kul wāḥid w-bītu. (3).

"قداش عندك من صغير عيشوشة؟

علي هذاك أمه من سيدي مسعود...جبت لقنيته صغير".

qaddās 'andik min zḡīr 'ayšūša?

'liy ḥaḍāka ummu min sīdī mas'ūd...ḡīt lḡītah sḡayyir.

"عز الدين ومحمد أدوكم هوم التالين والناصر أكبر منهم".

'izdīn wi-mḥammad aḍūkum hūma it-tālīn wi-n-nāšīr akbir minhum.

"منجي خلاه يرضع. أذاك توفي بعده".

munğī ḥallāḥ yarḍa'. aḍāka twaffa ba'du. (5).

⁶⁸ See internet source (12).

"نولدو في ديارنا بكري...الكل جيتهم ما قابلتش طبيب وما مشيتلوش خلاص خلاص".

nūldu fi-dyārna bikri...il-kul ḡibthim mā gābilitš ṭbīb w-mā mšītlūš ḥlāš ḥlāš.

⁶⁹ See internet source (7).

"نا خدمت عليهم من وقت إلی خش بورقيبة وكبرتهم واليوم خذوا نساوين وولادهم عطوا بناتهم وبناتهم خذت".

nā ḥḍimt 'līhim min waqt illī ḥaš būrgība w-kabbirthom wi-l-yūm ḥḍū nsāwīn wi-wlāḍhum 'īū bnāthum wi-bnāthum ḥḍit.

⁷⁰ See internet source (12).

"راجلك قبل كمت قداش خلاك صغار؟

خلالي خمسة ولاد...والطفلة".

rāḡlik qbal kimāt qaddās ḥallālik sḡār?

ḥallāli ḥamsa wlād...wi-t-ṭufla.

⁷¹ See internet source (3 and 5).

"خلاهملني التالي فيهم يرضع في البزول".

ḥallāhumlī it-tālī fīhim yarḍa' fi-l-bazzūl. (3).

"راجلك مات قداش الصغار في عمرهم؟

والله ماندرني عليهم. خلاهم بلاش تقيد. أكاك ماندريش عليها.

شئو بلاش تقيد؟

rāḡlik māt qaddās iṣ-sḡār fi-'murhum?

walla mā nidri 'līhim ḥallāhom blāš taqyīd. akkāka mandriš 'līha.

šnuwwa blāš taqyīd?

She also does not know how old she was when her husband died, but she was young.⁷²

Today, ‘Īṣe is a grandmother and grand grandmother.⁷³ She loves her family and she knows all of them. All of her children are living in the same village near ‘Īṣe. They are also very poor but they take care of her as best as they can.⁷⁴ Her relation with her family is very strong.⁷⁵ Her daughter ‘Rūsiyya who is almost 60 years old did not get married and is living with her.

ماو بقوا أكاك بلاش عمریات. طلعا لرواحهم عمریاتهم.
معناها وليداتك خلاهمك صغيرين؟

کیرتھم. تو خذوا نساوین. وینهم بولادهم.
بالثنوي بالثنوي. أصغر واحد وقت إلي مات الحاج قداش عمره؟
ندري عليه. عز الدين ومحمد أنوکم هوم التالین والناسر أكبر منهم.
یا عیشوشة عز الدين وقت إلي مات بوه قداش خلاه عمره؟
نا قدلك ماندریش عليها. ماهمش مقیدین. ماو يلعب ندري عليه. صغير. منجي خلاه یرضع. اذک توفی بعده".

māw bqu akkāka blāš 'umriyyāt. ṭal 'u lirwāḥḥum 'umriyyāthum.

ma'nāha wlīdātik ḥallāhumlik ṣḡayrīn?

kabbarthom. taw ḥḍu nsāwīn wīnhum būlādhum.

bi-š-šway bi-š-šway aṣḡir wāḥid waqt illi māt il-ḥāḡ qaddāš 'umru?

nidri 'līh. 'izdīn wi-mḥammid aḍūkum hūma it-tālīn wi-in-nāṣir akbir minhum.

yā 'ayšūša 'izdīn waqt illi māt būh qaddāš ḥallāh 'umru?

nā gudlik mā nidrīš 'līha. mā humš mḡaydīn. māw yal'ib nidri 'līh. ṣḡayyir. munḡī ḥallāh yarza'. aḍāka twaffa ba'du. (5).

⁷² See internet source (5).

"قداش عمرک یا عیشوشة وقت مات الحاج؟
ماندریش عليه".

qaddāš 'umrik yā 'ayšūša waqt māt il-ḥāḡ?

ma ndrīš 'līh.

⁷³ See internet source (7).

"نا خدمت عليهم من وقت إلي خش بورقبة وكيرتهم واليوم خذوا نساوین وولادهم عطاو بناتهم وبناتهم خنت".

nā ḥdimt 'līhim min waqt illi ḥaš būrgība w-kabbirthom wi-l-yūm ḥḍū nsāwīn wi-wlādhum 'ḡū bnāthum wi-bnāthum ḥḍit.

⁷⁴ See internet source (1).

"شعاملة في سيدي رمضان. شكون يصرف عليك؟
يصرفو علي ولادي. كل شي من عند ولادي مونة دخان".

š'āmla fi-sīdi rumḍān. škūn yuṣṣuf 'līk?

yuṣṣufu 'līyya wlādī. kul ṣay min 'and wlādī mūna duḥḥān.

⁷⁵ See internet source (5).

"ياھين معاك كئابنك؟

كلن باھين لرواحهم وكان خايبين لرواحهم. هاني ناكل ونشرب وش عندي فيهم.
والي موش عاقلة بالعصا؟

لا. مانكلمش حتى وحدة. لا. مانضربش حتى وحدة".

bāhīn m'āk knāyīnīk?

kān bāhīn li-rwāḥḥom w -kān ḥāybīn li-rwāḥḥom. hānī nākul w-nuṣrub wiš 'andī fīhim.

w-illī mūš 'āqla bi-l-ṣā?

lā. mā nκallamš ḥatta waḥḍa. lā. mā nuṣrubuṣ ḥatta waḥḍa.

3. 'Īṣe in her Village Socio-Lingual Environment⁷⁶

'Īṣe spent all her life in the village where she is living till now and she does not want to move to another place.⁷⁷ She came as a very young girl to this village. Despite the difficulties she had with her husband she was well accepted in the 'arš (عرش) [big family/tribe]. They supported her and she felt safe with them. They played many roles in her life as the ones who protected her from her husband,⁷⁸ the ones who treated her as one of them even after the death of her husband,⁷⁹ the ones who helped her

⁷⁶ See among others the internet source (4).

"الناس الكل نحكيو على عيشوشة. عيشوشة المرا البشوشة المرا المزينة المرا الي هي نموذج بالحق لامهاتنا نموذج للتضحية نموذج للصبر. فم برشة قيم نجمو نتعلموهم من وراء الحديث مع عيشوشة. تعرفوها هي أرملة منذ أكثر من ثلاثين سنة لكنها ضحكات وكيرت صغارها. عيشوشة برشة كلام نجمو نحكيوه معاها وبرشة استفادة هذاي خاصة كنعرفو أنها مرا معناها عصامية التكوين تسكن في جبل وحدها بعيدة".

innmās il-kul nahkīw 'la 'ayšūša. 'ayšūša il-mra il-bašūša il-mra il-mizyāna il-mra illi hiya namūdaḡ bi-l-ḥaḡ li-ummahātina namūdaḡ li-t-taḍḥiya namūdaḡ li-ṣ-ṣabr. famma barša qiyam nnaḡmu nit 'almūhum min wrā il-ḥdīt m'a 'ayšūša. ta 'rfūha hiya armla munḡu aḡtar min ṭalātīn sana lakinha ḍaḥḥāt w-kabrit ṣḡārha. 'ayšūša barša klām nnaḡmu nahkīyīw m'āha w-barša istīfāda ḥaḍāya ḥāṣṣatan kina 'rfu inha mra ma'nāha 'iṣāmiyyit it-takwīn tuskun fi-ḡbal waḥḥadha b'īda.

⁷⁷ See internet source (2).

"تقطن في منطقة جبلية وعلى جبينها أصالة وحب لمكان عيشها رغم ظروفها الاجتماعية البسيطة".

taqtun fi-miṭṭaqatin ḡabaliyya wa-'ala ḡabīniha ašāla wa-ḥub limakāni 'ayšīha ruḡma ṣurūfiha al-'iḡtimā'iyya al-bašīta.

⁷⁸ See internet source (5).

"يضرب؟
أشومي!
يضرب برشة؟
أبب أبب!
ضربه حار؟
حار...يا ولدي ساعة على ساعة نبقى غضبانة شهر ولا أكثر من الشهر.
يجي يرجعك يردك؟
يجوني ناس خرين ويرضوني من العرش. خاتي هو".

yaḡrab?

ā šūmī!

yaḡrab barša?

abbib abbib!

ṣarbu ḥār?

ḥār...yā wildt sā'a 'la sā'a nabqa ḡazbāna shar welle aḡtar mi-š-shar.

yḡt yragḡ 'ik yroddik?

yḡūnī nās ḥrīn wi yrazzūnī mi-l-'arš. ḥāṭi huwa.

⁷⁹ See internet source (5).

"ماخطبوكش جملة؟"

هاه. ماخطبونيش وشكون يمس ماو ياكلها. لهننا واحد مايمسنيش في العرش أبدا. فلك غير تكبر لينا الشناتة بركة. أعط ما تهجش تمشي لخرها كيم مانقولو يعطيها ولا حاجة. تلمنا شناتانا وتكبر هم. مزيتها فوق راسنا".

mā ḥaḡbūkiš ḡimla?

hi'h. mā ḥaḡbūnīš wi-škūn ymis māw yākulha. lahnā wāḥid mā ymisnīš fi-l-'arš abadan. gallik ḡir tkabbir līnā iṣ-šnāta barka. a'ṭi mā thiḡḡīš timši l-ḥūha kīm māngūlu ya'ṭiha welle ḥāḡa. tlimminnā šnātāna wi-tkabbarhom mziyyiṭha fūḡ rāsna.

to feed her children,⁸⁰ the ones who accepted that her sons will be married with their daughters.⁸¹

Since she got married, ‘Īṣe had to work very hard and took care of her family. She worked inside and outside the home. She cleaned, cooked and played with her children, at the same time as she was doing hard work like *nḥaṭṭib* (نحطب) [getting wood] and *namlā* (نملي) [getting water] from difficult mountainous places. She played the role of woman and man and the role of the mother and the father.⁸² For her children she was ready to do the toughest daily obligations and work in everything also in agriculture, like working in the harvest of pines.⁸³

⁸⁰ See internet source (5).

"عايشين عايشين في وسط عرشهم الكل لا يابس علاهم...لبيت أبيك علي نجيب شكاره القمح ونروح. قلك غير تلمد لنا شناننا برك".
 'āyṣīn 'āyṣīn fi-waṣṭ 'arṣhum il-kul lābās 'lāhum...l-bīt obbayyik 'liy ngīb škārit il-gamḥ wi-nrawwah...gallik
 gīr tlammid līna šnātānā bark.

⁸¹ See internet source (5).

"وسط عرشي إلى نمشيله مقبولة...مايكلمنيش حتى واحد. إلى بصير ينال. نا كبرتهم وخذيتلهم نساوين وهوم بيدير روسهم".

wuṣṭ 'arṣī illi nimšīlah maqbūla...mā ykallamnīs ḥatta wāḥid. illi yuṣbur ynāl. nā kabbarthum wi-ḥḏūtilhim
 nsāwīn w-hūma ydabbir rūshum.

⁸² See internet source (8).

"بكري نحطب ونملي ونفرح...ونمشي للجبل نجيب حزمة الحطب ونروح...نحمي بيها الطابونة".

bikrī nḥaṭṭib w-namlī wi-nfarrah...w-nimšī l-ḡ-ḡbal ngīb ḥizmit il-ḥṭab wi-nrawwah...niḥmī bihā iṭ-ṭābūna.

⁸³ See internet source (5).

"شنو خدمت عليهم صغارك عيشوشة؟
 ماتدريش علي. إلى يجي قدامي نخدم...خدمت الكرت...الكرت إلى في الصنوبراية ونفرعوه ونبيعوه زقوقو... من الجبل...ننفضو ونحطه ونروه
 بيه ونزريه ونسومه ونبيعه.
 فلوس الخدمة شنو تعمل بيها؟
 نوكل بيها شناتي.
 شنو شناتيك؟
 ياكلو بيها الشناتة مقرونة دودة.
 عيشنتهم وحدك يا عيشوشة؟
 عيشنتهم للروحي. كبرتهم للروحي والحمدالله ياربي".

šnuwwa ḥdimt 'līhim ṣḡārik 'ayṣūša?

mā tidrīs 'liyya. illi yḡī guddāmi niḥdim...ḥdimt il-kart...il-kart illi fi-ṣ-ṣnūbrāyā wi-nfarg 'ūh wi-nbī 'ūh zgūgū...
 mi-ḡ-ḡbal ī...nunfḏū wi-nḥuṭṭah wi-nrawwah bīh wi-nḏarrīh wi-nsawmah wi-nbī 'ah.

flūs il-ḥidma šnuwwa ta 'mil biha?

nwakkil biha šnatiyya.

šnuwwa šnatiḥ?

yāklū biha iṣ-ṣnāta maqrūna diwwīda.

'ayyaṣṭkom waḥdik yā 'ayṣūša?

'ayyaṣṭkum lirrūḥī. kabbarthom lirrūḥī wi-l-ḥamdūlla yā rabbī.

Being *hağğāla* (هجالة) [widow] after the death of her husband,⁸⁴ she completely cut herself off from any idea of re-marriage⁸⁵ and decided to devote her life to raising *wlādha* (ولادها) [her children].⁸⁶ With her strong character she could save her *šnāta* (شناة) [children] and with the help of God, like she said, she managed to raise her children and protect them, helped them get married and start their own families. She is very satisfied and proud of what she accomplished on her own.⁸⁷ Now, in her age, 'Īše is not able

⁸⁴ See internet source (5).

"قداش عمرك يا عيشوشة وقت مات الحاج؟
"ما ندریش عليه... عندي قداش. خدمت عليهم وكبرتهم وخذيتلهم نساوين. الحمد لله ياربي."

qaddāš 'umrik yā 'ayšūša waqt māt il-ḥāğ?

mā ndrīš 'līh... 'andi qiddāš. ḥdīmt 'līhum w-kabbarthum wi-ḥḍītilhim nsāwīn. il-ḥamdulla yā rabbī.

⁸⁵ See internet source (5).

"علاش ماخذيتش راجل آخر؟
لا. ما نحيش. علاش نسلم في ولادي ونمشي ناخذ راجل آخر.
ماخطبوكنش جملة؟

هأه. ماخطبونيش وشكون يمس ماو ياكلها. لهنأ واحد مايمسنيش في العرش أبدا. فلك غير تكبر لينا الشناة بركة. أعط ما تهجش تمشي لخواها
كيم مانقولو يعطيها ولا حاجة. تلمنا شناةنا وتكبرهم. مزيتها فوق راسنا!"

'lāš mā ḥḍītiš rāgil āhar?

lā. mā nḥibbiš. 'lāš nsallim fi-wlādi w-nimši nāḥīd rāgil āḥir.

mā ḥaḥbūkiš ġimla?

hi'h. mā ḥaḥbūniš wi-škūn ymiš māw yākulha. lahnā wāḥid mā ymišniš fi-l-'arš abadan. gallik ġir tkabbir līnā iš-šnāta barka. a'ḥi mā thiğğiš timši l-ḥūha kīm mā ngūlu ya'fīha welle ḥāğ. tlimminā šnātāna wi-tkabbarthum mziyyiitha fūğ rāsna.

⁸⁶ See internet source (5).

"شنو خدمت عليهم صغارك عيشوشة؟

ماتدریش علي. إلي يجي قدامي نخدم...خدمت الكرت...الكرت إلي في الصنوبراية وفرقعوه ونبيعوه زقوقو... من الجبل...ننفضو ونحطه ونزوه
بيه ونذريه ونسومه ونبيعه.

فلوس الخدمة شنو تعمل بيها؟

نوكل بيها شناةي.

شنو شناةيك؟

ياكلو بيها الشناة مقرونة دويده.

عيشتهم وحنك يا عيشوشة؟

عيشتهم للروحي. كبرتهم للروحي والحمدالله ياربي."

šnuwwa ḥdīmt 'līhim šğārik 'ayšūša?

mā tidriš 'liyya. illi yğī guddāmi niḥdim...ḥdīmt il-kart...il-kart illi fi-š-šnubrāyā wi-nfarg 'ūh wi-nbī'ūh zğūgū... mi-ğ-ğbal ī...nuḥḥdū wi-nḥuḥṭṭah wi-nrawwah bīh wi-nḍarrīh wi-nsawmah wi-nbī'ah.

fīlūs il-ḥidma šnuwwa ta'mil bīha?

nwakkil bīha šnātiyya.

šnuwwa šnātik?

yāklū bīha iš-šnāta maqrūna diwwīda.

'ayyaštum waḥdik yā 'ayšūša?

'ayyaštum lirrūḥī. Kabbarthum lirrūḥī wi-l-ḥamdulla yā rabbī.

⁸⁷ See internet source (3 and 5).

"نا هجالة علي ولادي وكبرتهم وهم خذوا نساوين والله خلاهملي التالي فيهم يرضع في البزول لربعة خمسة بعلي. كل واحد وبيته."

nā ḥağğāla 'la wlādi w-kabbarthum w-hām ḥḍū nsāwīn walla ḥallāhumlī it-tālī fīhim yarḍa' fi-l-bazzūl larb'a ḥamsa bi-'liy. kul wāḥid w-bītu. (3).

to do as much as she did in the past. She takes care only of her tea⁸⁸ but her daughter cooks for her mother and she helps her also in some other daily activities. Also, her sons and their families do not forget their mother.

‘Iše had never been outside of her village before the program. Her behaviour and her language strongly express this status. The words used by her are related especially to the nature of her village and the way of life. From these words there are words concerning daily activities, food and clothes. She was never in Testour city. She never went to the *sūg* (سوق) [popular market].⁸⁹ She never was to the *tbīb* (طبيب) [doctor] or in the hospital and she never tried the *iz-zrārig* (الزرارق) [injections].⁹⁰ She does not watch TV because she does not even have a television. She has nothing, only *Rabbī il-‘ālī* (ربي العالي) [My God Almighty].⁹¹

She deeply loves her village, her *malya*, her *wšām*, her *naffa*, her *tāy* and her *zollāṭ*. She does not want to change anything which has been a part of her for many years. She is asking: Why should I have to change my *malya* and this is the only dress I know all my life since I was small girl. She believes that *Rabbī* [God] created her in this way and

"نقعد على شنتي نكبرهم نوكلهم ونشربهم. نساوين يتحدثو علي أنا نلبسلهم سروال طويل.
كيفاش عملت باش عيشت صغارك؟

عائشين عائشين في وسط عرشهم الكل لابس علام... لبيت ابيك علي نجيب شكاره القمح ونروح. فلك غير تلمد لينا شناتانا برك".

nug 'id 'la šnātiyya nkabbarhum nwakkalhum wi-nšarrabhum. nsāwīn yithadhū 'liyya anā nilbsilhum sirwāl ṭwīl.
kīfāš 'malt bās 'ayyašt šgārīk?

'āyšin 'āyšin fi -wasṭ 'aršom il-kul lābās 'lāhum...l-būt obbayyik 'liy ngīb škārit il-gamḥ wi-nrawwah...gallik
gīr tlammid līna šnātānā bark. (5).

⁸⁸ See internet source (7).

"نطيب التاي ونفطر وذاك هو. مالا شنعمل؟ ماش نمشي نحطب ونملي؟ لا. البراد قدامي نطيب التاي ونفطر وذاك هو".

nṭayyib it-tāy w-nuṭṭur wa-dāka hu. māla šna'mil? māš nimšī nḥaṭṭīb w-namli? lā. il-barrād guddāmi nṭayyib
it-tāy w-nuṭṭur wa-dāka hu.

⁸⁹ See internet source (4 and 12).

"مانعرفش نا السوق خلاص ومانسوقش ولا نمشي".

mā na 'rifš nā is-sūg ḥlāš w-mā nissawwigš welle nimšī. (4).

"ما نطباش خلاص السوق...يقضولي ولادي".

mā nṭubbās ḥlāš is-sūg...yaqḍūli wlādi. (12).

⁹⁰ See internet source (4, 6 and 7).

"لا نعدي في طبيب لا نمشي".

lā n'addi fī-ṭbīb lā nimšī. (4).

"لاباس الحمد الله مانعديش خلاص نايا...ديمة الوقت لانعدي ولاشي. الزرارق مانعرفهاش خلاص".

lābās il-ḥamdulla mā n'addīš ḥlāš nāya...dīmit il-waqt lā n'addī w-lā šay iz-zrārig mā na 'rafhās ḥlāš. (6).

"ياولدي مانعديش خلاص...جبت ولادي الكل هادا الطبيب مانعرفوشي".

yā wildī mā n'addīš ḥlāš...ḡibt wlādī il-kul ḥāda iṭ-ṭbīb mā na 'rfūši. (7).

⁹¹ See internet source (2).

"عويشة تنفرح ساعة ساعة في التلفزة؟"

"لا عاد عطيتيهاالي التلفزة...لا نعدي تلفزة لا نعدي حتى شي كان ربي العالي".

'wīše titfarriḡ sā'a sā'a fī-t-talfza?

lā 'ād 'iṭḥāli it-talfza...la 'andi tawza la 'andi ḥatta šay kān rabbi il-'āli.

today she has only this dress and she has to dress this way.⁹² She considers the idea of removing the *wšām* [tattoos] from her face as *klab* (كلب) [rabies], *ǧnūn* (جنون) [mad] and she will never agree to this shameful idea as long as she has not lost her mind. The *wšām* has a lot of connotations both aesthetic and social. It was the native way of *nās bīkrī* (ناس بكرى) [people in the past] to make the difference between *il-mrā* (المرا) [woman] and *ir-rāǧil* (الراجل) [man].⁹³ For her the *tāy* and the *naffa* are *il-ʿīše* (العيشة) [the life]. They are the cause of breathing and good mood.⁹⁴ They are more important than bread and without *naffa* there is no life. In some regions in Tunis old woman also smoke *naffa* which is unusual in a traditional society. ʿIše used to smoke *naffa* for a long time, before getting married. She had to hide this from her family and later from her husband. With the time she became addicted to it to the point that she considers it as *lom laḥnīna* (لم الحينة) [a loving mother] like she said and she is able to forget all the life, even her father and mother but never will forget the *naffa*. Her children had to tolerate this unusual tradition and they buy the *naffa* for ʿIše the same way they buy *it-tāy* and food for her. The *naffa* is *ir-rūḥ* (الروح) [the soul] for her.⁹⁵ With her *zollāt* she feels more sure of her steps. It was very difficult to convince her to make any changes or to leave her village which she loves. She does not see any other place to live and die, only

⁹² See internet source (10).

"نا ديما الملية.
وش تعملي بيها؟
هكاك خلقتي ربي في الملية نبقى في الملية".

nā dīmā il-malya.
wiš ta'mli bīha?
hakkāka ḥlaqni rabbi fi-l-malya nabqa fi-l-malya.

⁹³ See internet source (7).

"لا لا أخي ماتحيش وشامي عليه؟ ماكلبتش مازلت بعقلي. وشامي في خدي نمسي نحيه. لا شيني؟...شني نعمل بيه؟ أذاك يزين الوجه. باش تنفرز من المرا من الراجل...أذاكم ناس بكرى".

lā lā aḥī maḥišiš wašami ʿalīh. mā klbtš mazīlt ba-ʿaqlī. wšāmī ft ḥaddī nimšī nnaḥḥīh. lā šbīnī?...šniyya na'mil bīh? aḍāka yzayyin il-wiǧh. bāš tūfriz mi-l-mrā mi-r-rāǧil...aḍākum nās bīkrī.

⁹⁴ See internet source (3).

"نشري النفة نشري الدخان التاي وأكه.
ياعويشة شنو الدخان؟ تتكيف ياخي؟
لا. ننف.
وعلاش تنف؟
ننف. من صغري ننف. هاهي الحكمة...العيشة النفة والتاي".

nišrī in-naffa nišrī id-duḥḥān it-tāy w-akkahu.
yā 'wiše šnuwwa id-duḥḥān? titkayyif yāḥī?
lā. innif.
wa'lāš tinf?
innif. min šuǧrī innif...hā ḥiya il-ḥukka...il-ʿīša in-naffa wi-t-tāy.

⁹⁵ See internet source (9).

"أذك رأي كالم الحينة وننسى الدنيا الكل ننساها والنفة لا. أبي ننساها ويم ننساها والنفة ماننساهايش. أذك الروح متعي.
aḍīka rāy ki-l-lum laḥnīna w-nansa id-dinyā il-kul nansāha wi-n-naffa lā. obbay nansāh w-yomma nansāha wi-n-naffa mā nansāhīs. aḍīka ir-rūḥ mta'ī.

her remote village. All her simple wishes, which she summed up in a few words, are eternally connected to her village in life and after death.⁹⁶ Her speech which represents an individual distinguished language is full of stories and events firmly held in her heart and memory.

4. ‘Iṣe in the Socio-Lingual Tunisian Environment

The aim of this section is to characterize some aspects of the lexical system of the dialect used by ‘Iṣe with regards to General Tunisian. Some aspects of it were analysed and exemplified with the corresponding material in chapter 2. and 3. Generally, we can say that the words used by ‘Iṣe are understandable for a large number of recipients belonging geographically not only to Tunisia but also to other countries and nations although there appear local words which are used frequently only in this region and in neighboring regions. These words are integrated into the phonetic, morphological and lexical system of General Tunisian. The author did not notice words from French origin as is the case in other idiolects.⁹⁷ Below, selected examples will be given.

SELECTED WORDS	EXAMPLES IN USE
Nouns and Adjectives	
<i>bazzūl</i> : breast. This word is used in all Tunisia. Sometimes the word <i>ṣdir</i> is used.	<i>ḥallāhumlī it-tālī fīhim yarda’ fī-l-bazzūl</i> (internet source 3) He died and he left young children, the last child was still breast feeding.
<i>maqrūna diwwīda</i> : a very thin variety of Italian pasta known as capellini. It is very famous in Tunisia and in the past it was the only pasta sold in the small shops especially in villages and small towns.	<i>yāklū bīha iṣ-ṣnāta maqrūna diwwīda.</i> (internet source 5) With the money I could buy pasta for my children.
<i>mūna</i> : stores, supplies. In the use of ‘Iṣe it was more for the meaning of food, domestic necessities as is the case in General Tunisian.	<i>yušrfu ‘līyya wlādī. kul šay min ‘and wlādī mūna duḥḥān.</i> (internet source 1) My children take care of me. Everything is from them, food, tobacco.

⁹⁶ See internet source (3).

"مشني ماشية.. نموت هني نحبي هني نموت لبرا نحبي لبرا ناكل نشرب حتى نموت يديفوني وأكه.

mišnī māšya...nmūt hniy nahyā hniy nmūt l-barra nahyā l-barra nākul nušrub ḥattā linmūt yidfnūnī w-akkahu.

⁹⁷ As a form of teasing the journalist tried many times to test ‘Iṣe by asking her to repeat some words in French such as the word “Paris” but she had some difficulties with the pronunciation.

SELECTED WORDS	EXAMPLES IN USE
Nouns and Adjectives	
<p><i>wliyya</i>: a poor woman. Used only in some rural dialects especially between old, not educated people. Not more in use by the young generation.</p>	<p><i>gullu rāy wliyya gatlik šallaḥli il-bīt. (internet source 2)</i> Say to him that she is a poor, weak woman asking for help to repair her house.</p>
<p><i>duḥḥān</i>: in General Tunisian <i>duḥḥān</i> (smoke, cigarette, tobacco cigarette, naffa (a special kind of tobacco)), 'Īṣe used the word <i>duḥḥān</i> in the meaning of naffa.</p>	<p><i>yusrfu 'liyya wlādī. kul šay min 'and wlādī mūna duḥḥān. (internet source 1)</i> My children take care of me. Everything is from them, food, tobacco.</p>
<p><i>haḡḡāla</i>: a widow. This word is used in all Tunisia. Other words and expressions are used: <i>mrā māt rāḡilḥā</i>, especially rarely <i>armla</i>.</p>	<p><i>nā haḡḡāla 'lā wlādī w-kabbarthum w-hām ḥdū nsāwīn. (internet source 3)</i> I am a widow. I did not get married. I stayed with my children and raised them and now they are married.</p>
<p><i>iz-zdāg</i>: a dowry. In Tunisia is used more in the meaning of the marriage contract which is in Arabic 'aqdu az-zawāḡ (عقد الزواج) and for the word dowry the word <i>mahr</i> (مهر) is used more.</p>	<p><i>lihna fī bīt ubbayyik 'liy qayyidna iz-zdāqāt. (internet source 5)</i> Here in the house of father 'Liy the marriage contract was written. <i>iz-zdāg māw fī-tastūr mā bāš yḡībah. (internet source 5)</i> The marriage contract is in Testour. He did not want to get it.</p>
<p><i>iz-zollāṭ</i>: a stick, cane. In Tunisia this word is used mostly in villages but the word 'ṣā (عصا) is more in use.</p>	<p><i>inta taqbil rāḡlik yāḥu arb'a nsā?</i> <i>w-la nā nuḥkum...nākul iz-zullāṭ. (internet source 5)</i> You accept that your husband has four wives? Is it me who decides... I will be beaten.</p>
<p><i>zgūgū</i>: the grains of Aleppo pines, 'zougou', not to be confused with pine nuts, stone pines, or pinus armandii. The typically Tunisian use of <i>zgūgū</i> is to make the desert 'šīdat iz-zgūgū prepared for the <i>Mouled</i>. The picking of <i>zgūgū</i> is a seasonal work, very difficult for men and women. It requires them to spend some days and nights outside their homes. It is one of the main source of livelihood in the mountainous villages.</p>	<p><i>ḥdimt il-kart...il-kart illi fī-ṣ-ṣnūbrāyā wi-nfarg'ūh wi-nbī'ūh zgūgū. (internet source 5)</i> I worked in the harvest of pine cone...pine cone is in the pine tree. We open the pine cone and we get from it the pine nuts.</p>
<p><i>iz-zrāriḡ</i>: a medical syringe, medical injection. This word is in use in all of Tunisia.</p>	<p><i>iz-zrāriḡ mā na'raḥḥāš ḥlās. (internet source 6)</i> I have never had an injection in my life.</p>

SELECTED WORDS	EXAMPLES IN USE
Nouns and Adjectives	
<p><i>iš-šnūbrāya</i>: Pinus pinaster. The maritime pine or cluster pine, is a pine native to the Mediterranean region. It is a hard, fast growing pine containing small seeds with large wings.</p>	<p><i>il-kart illi fi-š-šnūbrāyā</i>. (internet source 5) The pine is in the pine tree.</p>
<p><i>šnāta</i>: a sane mature person. (< Berber šintī (sg), šnāta (pl)): In General Tunisian it is used in meaning of young children. From the example given we can see that this word is not understandable for all Tunisian people and it is not more in use especially among the younger generation. The word <i>šgār</i> and <i>wlād</i> are more in use in Tunisia.</p>	<p><i>nwakkil bīha šnātiyya. šnuwwa šnātk?</i> (internet source 5) I use it to feed my ‘šnātiyya’ [children]. What does it mean ‘šnātiyya’?</p>
<p><i>škārit il-gamḥ</i>: wheat bag. (< Berber škāra (bag)), <i>gamḥ</i> (< Arabic qamḥ). In Tunisia two pronunciations exist <i>qamḥ/gamḥ</i>. <i>Il-gamḥ</i> represents the main cereal products in Tunisia. It is grown especially in the northern regions in Tunisia. Wheat is also the main food in Tunisia. In the past when the people asked for help they asked for a bit of wheat. <i>Il-gamḥ</i> is a main product in the culture of the Tunisian kitchen.</p>	<p><i>l-bīt ubbayyik ‘liy nḡtb škārit il-gamḥ wi-nrawwaḥ</i>. (internet source 5) To the house of father ‘Liy I get the bag of wheat and I am back to my home.</p>
<p><i>yomma</i>: Mother. In Tunisia another word is more in use <i>ummī</i> in cities and villages. The word <i>yomma</i> is also pronounced as <i>yamma</i>. The two versions were used more in the villages. The young generation does not use it.</p>	<p><i>yomma klit triḥa</i>. (internet source 5) My mother was beaten.</p>
<p><i>kānūn</i>: a traditional stove. Very famous in all Tunisia till today as a traditional clay stove used for cooking or as a source of heating.</p>	<p><i>āš ‘āmil ftk iš-štā?</i> <i>il-kānūn mā yitnaḥḥāš min guddāmī. dīmā niddaffā. hānī marra niḡaṭṭā</i>. (internet source 2) How are you in this cold winter? To keep warm, the stove is all the day in front of me. Sometimes I sit under a blanket.</p>
<p><i>il-kart</i>: a pine cone.</p>	<p><i>ḥdimt il-kart...il-kart illi fi-š-šnūbrāya</i>. (internet source 5) I worked in the harvest of pine cones... a pine cone is in the pine tree.</p>

SELECTED WORDS	EXAMPLES IN USE
Nouns and Adjectives	
<p><i>il-ḥidma</i>: service, work. In Tunisia this word is in use in the meaning of work, job and from it is the verb <i>ḥdim/yiḥdim</i> (to work/works). In other Arab countries the word '<i>amal</i>' is in use.</p>	<p><i>šnuwwa ḥdīmt'lihim sḡārik 'ayšūša? mā tidriš 'liyya. illi yḡt guddāmi niḥdim. (internet source 5)</i></p> <p>What kind of work did you do to raise your children?</p> <p>This you can not imagine. I did every work that was available to me.</p>
<p>'<i>arš</i>: roof. In Tunisia it is used in the meaning of clan or a big family. The value of the person was of the value of the family. The person melts into the family which represented a bond for the person.</p>	<p><i>fi-waṣṭ 'aršhom il-kol lābās 'lāhum. (internet source 5)</i></p> <p>Between their family all of them are fine.</p>
<p>'<i>āfya</i>: fire. (< Berber i'fit, il-'āfit). Used in all Tunisia with the same meaning. It is also used in other Maghrebian countries. The word <i>nār</i> is also known in Tunisia but it is more in use in Mašriqi dialects.</p>	<p><i>in-nhār kāmil bārka niddaffā fi-l-'āfya. (internet source 2)</i></p> <p>All the day I am sitting in front of the fire to warm up.</p>
<p>'<i>omriyyāt</i>: a birth certificate. This word was known more in the villages. Today, there are other words more in use in Tunisia <i>šhādāt il-milād, šhādāt il-wilāda</i>. Another word usually used with '<i>omriyyāt</i>' is <i>taqyīd</i> (< Arabic <i>taqyīd</i> (registration)). <i>Taqyīd il-'omriyyāt</i> was a big event in the history of Tunisia in the 1950s. Before this, the family did not register their children and when they initiated this program many people gave the age of their children based on their memory which related to some national or local events.</p>	<p><i>māw bqu akkāka blāš 'omriyyāt. tal'u lirwāḥḥum 'umriyyāthum. (internet source 5)</i></p> <p>They were without registration. They themselves extracted their birth certificates.</p>
<p><i>obbay</i>: father. In Tunisia another word is more in use <i>bābā</i> in cities and villages. The word <i>obbay</i> was used more in the villages. The young generation does not use it.</p>	<p><i>bikri aḏāka obbay illi 'tāni bi-s-sīf. (internet source 5)</i></p> <p>In that time it was my father who forced me to be married.</p>

SELECTED WORDS	EXAMPLES IN USE
Verbs	
<p><i>nidrī</i>: to know. <i>nidrī</i> in ‘Iše use is in the meaning ‘I know’, ‘I have an idea’, ‘I recognize’. It is in General Arabic and General Tunisian.</p>	<p><i>'raftnīs āna škūn?</i> <i>lā 'raftik lā nidrī 'līk. (internet source 2)</i> Did you know who I am? I did not recognize you and I did know who you are. <i>'omrī akkāka mā ndrīs 'līh. (internet source 1)</i> I don't know how old I am.</p>
<p><i>niddaffā</i>: I am sitting near the stove to warm up. In Tunisia, especially in the country side, the people usually made a fire in the stove and sit around it to cook the food, prepare the tea and warm up. In a cold winter the weather in the mountains is very difficult and without fire the old people cannot survive the winter.</p>	<p><i>ās 'āmil fik iš-štā?</i> <i>il-kānūn mā yitnaḥḥās min guddāmī. dīmā niddaffā. (internet source 2)</i> How are you doing in winter? To keep warm, the stove is all day in front of me.</p>
<p><i>niḡaṭṭā</i>: I am covering myself.</p>	<p><i>ās 'āmil fik iš-štā?</i> <i>il-kānūn mā yitnaḥḥās min guddāmī. dīmā niddaffā. hānī marra niḡaṭṭā. (internet source 2)</i> To keep warm, the stove is all the day in front of me. Sometimes I sit under a blanket.</p>
<p><i>nfarg'ūh</i> (< Arabic farqa'a aš-šay'a): (to pop something and hear its sound). This verb and the next following six verbs show all the stages of work with this agricultural product, from picking to selling. This process is known by working with other types of grains, such as wheat, which are popular in these regions of Tunisia.</p>	<p><i>ḥdimt il-kart...il-kart illi fi-š-šnūbrāyā wi-nfarg'ūh wi-nbī'ūh zgūgū...mi-ḡ-ḡbal ī... nonfḍū wi-nḥoṭṭah wi-nrawwah bīh wi-nḍarrīh wi-nsawmah wi-nbī'ah. (internet source 5)</i></p>
<p><i>nonfḍu</i>, <i>nfaḍ iš-šay</i>: to shake something.</p>	<p>I worked in the harvest of pine cones... a pine cone is in the pine tree. We sell it as grain of pine. It is in the mountains. I shake it and I put it in bags and I take it home. I purify it</p>
<p><i>nḥoṭṭah</i>, <i>ḥaṭṭa iš-šay</i>: to put something somewhere.</p>	<p>(filter the grain from the crusts), than I clean it very good, than I sell it.</p>
<p><i>nrawwah bīh</i>, <i>rawwaḥa bi-š-šay</i>: to enter, to put, to bring something to the home.</p>	
<p><i>nḍarrīh</i>, <i>ḍarrā aš-šay'a</i>: to purify. In this operation the grains are filtered out from the crusts by exposing them to the wind.</p>	
<p><i>nsawmah</i>, <i>sawwam aš-ša</i>: to separate something from something else. In this operation the small grains are separated from the last impurities.</p>	

SELECTED WORDS	EXAMPLES IN USE
Verbs	
<p><i>ḥallāhom</i>: He left them. to leave someone/thing. The verb <i>taraka</i> is in use in other Arabic dialects.</p>	<p><i>ḥallāhom blāš taqyīd</i>. (internet source 5) He left them without registration.</p>
<p><i>nfiz</i>: I stand up, standing up. The verb <i>faz</i> is in use in Tunisia in the meaning of to wake up, to get up. In some dialects or idiolects the verb <i>qām</i> is in use like it is the case in other Arabic dialects.</p>	<p><i>is-shāna hāy gātlitnā... dīmā rāgda... nfiz w-norgod</i>. (internet source 4) The heat killed us... Always asleep...I wake up than I go to sleep. <i>tawwa shāwīlī w-ānā nfiz bi-s-sīf w-sā'a sā'a nidda'tar</i>. (internet source 4) Now there is a big heat and I had difficulties to get up and sometimes I bog down.</p>
<p><i>rāgda</i>: to sleep. <i>rāgda</i>: sleeping, sleepy. The verb <i>rgid</i> is in use in Tunisia. In other Arabic dialects the verb <i>nām</i> is more in use.</p>	<p><i>is-shāna hāy gātlitnā... dīmā rāgda... nfiz w-norgod</i>. (internet source 4) The heat killed us... Always asleep...I wake up than I go to sleep.</p>
<p><i>gā'da</i>: sitting. In Tunisian dialects the verb <i>g'ad</i> is in use in the meaning 'to seat', 'to stay'. It is also used in Libyan dialect. In others Arabic dialects the verb <i>galasa</i> is more in use. <i>gā'da</i> is in use in the meaning in the middle of doing sth.</p>	<p><i>hānī gā'da w-il-'rag hāmīl</i>. (internet source 4) Look I am sitting and sweating.</p>
<p><i>nšūf, šāf</i>: to see, to look at. This verb is in use in Tunisian dialect in the meaning 'to observe' or 'to get an idea'.</p>	<p><i>nšūf rūhī</i>. (internet source 4) I will get an idea/make a plan.</p>
Others	
<p><i>bikri</i>: the beginning of something in the past. In Tunisia it is used in the meaning of 'in the past', 'early'.</p>	<p><i>bikri adāka obbay illi 'ṭāni bi-s-sīf</i>. (internet source 5) In the past it was my father who gave me to a man by force/In the past, it was my father who forced me to be married.</p>
<p><i>willē</i>: or. Used in all Tunisia in the same meaning.</p>	<p><i>gutlik ṭayyaḥā wi-bnīhā willē iz-zullāṭ</i>. (internet source 7) I told you that you can demolish the old house and build it again, otherwise I will beat you with the stick.</p>

SELECTED WORDS	EXAMPLES IN USE
Others	
<p><i>tawwa/taw</i>: the present moment, now. Used in all Tunisia in the same meaning.</p>	<p><i>tawwa mā nimšīš fa-š-šhāwīlī</i>. (internet source 4) Now, in this warm weather, I will not go. <i>taw trīgil id-dār</i>. (internet source 2) Now you have to repair the house.</p>
<p><i>škūn</i>: who. Used in all Tunisia in the same meaning.</p>	<p><i>nidrī ‘līh nā ra’īs tūnis škūn</i>. (internet source 1) Do I know who is the president of Tunisia! <i>škūn ymis</i>. (internet source 5) Who can touch me? (Who could try?/Who could have this idea?)</p>
<p><i>kīfās/kīfāh</i>: how. Used in all Tunisia in the same meaning.</p>	<p><i>kīfās ‘lās tbūs fiyya! sallimt ‘liyya sallimt ‘līk. āš tālibnī</i>. (internet source 2) What does it mean why I kissed you! You greeted me, I greeted you. What do you want from me! <i>māla kīfāh!?</i> (internet source 10) So, how is this possible?</p>
<p><i>āš</i>: what. <i>Āš</i> is the result of compound of two words <i>ayyu</i> and <i>šay’</i>. ‘Īṣe uses also only <i>š</i> in some positions. In Tunisia there are also other words that have the same meaning in use, such as <i>šū</i>, <i>āšnihī</i>, <i>šinhī</i>, <i>wiš/wāš</i>.</p>	<p><i>āš tālib?</i> (internet source 3) What do you want (from me)? <i>š’andī fīk!</i> (internet source 3) What I want from you! I do not care about you! <i>šbīk?</i> (internet source 2) What is wrong with you? <i>āšnihī labās?</i> (internet source 2) What is happening, is everything okay? <i>wāš tālib taw?</i> (internet source 2) Now, what do you want from me? <i>wiš ‘indī fīhim nāya</i> (internet source 2) I have no problem with them.</p>
<p><i>ḡādī</i>: there, far, away. Used in all Tunisia in the same meaning.</p>	<p><i>‘īb ‘līk! ug’ud ḡādī!</i> (internet source 2) Shame on you! Stay there!</p>

SELECTED WORDS	EXAMPLES IN USE
Others	
<p><i>akkāka</i>: like this, so-so. Used in all Tunisia in the same meaning.</p>	<p><i>labās 'līk?</i> <i>hānī akkāka. (internet source 2)</i> How are you? I am so-so/I am not so bad. <i>bqū akkāka blāš 'omriyyāt. (internet source 5)</i> They stayed like this without registration. <i>n 'īš akkāka. (internet source 3)</i> This is how I live.</p>
<p><i>wīn</i>: where. <i>fīn</i> is in use in the same meaning. There are other words related to it, <i>mnīn/immnīn</i> (from where), <i>l-fīn</i> (to where).</p>	<p><i>wīn nidrī 'līk! (internet source 2)</i> I can not know what you want/I can not read your mind.</p>
<p><i>'lāh</i>: why. In General Tunisian the pronunciation <i>'līh</i> is more popular.</p>	<p><i>'lāh ḡāy? (internet source 10)</i> Why would he come?</p>
<p><i>blāš</i>: without some thing, for free. Used in all Tunisia in the same meaning.</p>	<p><i>ḡallāhom blāš taqyīd. (internet source 5)</i> He left them without registration. <i>blāš 'omriyyāt. (internet source 5)</i> without birth certificates.</p>
<p><i>bāhī</i>: good, nice, beautiful. Used in all Tunisia in the same meaning.</p>	<p><i>nidrī 'līh bāhī willē ḡāyib! (internet source 10)</i> How can I know whether he is good or bad!</p>
<p><i>ḡlāš</i>: never, at all. Used in all Tunisia in the same meaning.</p>	<p><i>mā na 'rifš nā is-sūḡ ḡlāš. (internet source 4)</i> I do not know the market at all. <i>mā n 'addīš ḡlāš. (internet source 7)</i> I never go to the doctor.</p>
<p><i>bark/barka</i>: blessing, enough. Used in all Tunisia in the same meaning.</p>	<p><i>ḡallik ḡīr tkabbir līnā iš-šnāta bark. (internet source 5)</i> They said it is enough that she stays and takes care of the children.</p>
<p><i>bīšway</i>: step by step. In Tunisian is also known the word <i>šway/šwayya</i> (little, few).</p>	<p><i>ḡāy ḡatlī mā nūḡḡ 'ikiš wi-nsā 'dik bīšway bīšway. (internet source 7)</i> She (the dentist) told me that she would not hurt me and that she will do it very careful/slowly.</p>
<p><i>akkahu</i>: only, just. Used in all Tunisia in the same meaning.</p>	<p><i>ḡidlī id-dār barka akkahu. (internet source 3)</i> Just repair/fix me the house and this is all.</p>

5. Other Aspects of ‘Īṣe’s Idiolect

The main aim of this section is to discuss some other lingual features of ‘Īṣe’s dialect which, because of the lack of space, have not been inquired into sufficiently in the above chapters. The treatment of these features in a separate chapter is before all for the sake of the transparency of the information. This section shows also how the lingual system and the cultural system are strongly related to each other and how one automatically influences the other. These features confirm also the fact that ‘Īṣe’s dialect belongs to the rural group. The intention here is not to describe the whole grammatical and phonological system but only selected questions will be addressed and examples will be given from ‘Īṣe’s dialect.

5.1. Phonology

Despite the age of ‘Īṣe, generally speaking it is **not** specially difficult to establish the inventory of phones for the dialect used by her. However, there is doubt concerning the quality of some phones. This observation holds true more for vowels than for consonants. Here only the following phones will be discussed:

- (i) The phone [g],
- (ii) The phone [ʔ],
- (iii) The vowel [a], [ā],
- (iv) Diphthongs.

5.1.1. The Phone [g]⁹⁸

Here only some of the words which have been collected will be listed with some comments.

Ex:

golt (I said), *gāl* (he said), *ngūl* (I say, I am saying), *gotlik* (I said to you), *gālitnā* (killing us), *rāgda* (sleeping), *norgod* (I sleep, I am sleeping), *gidma* (a part of bread), *sūg* (market), *nissawwig* (I go to the market), *giddūlhā* (make for her!), *gidlī* (make/do for me), *mgarbaʔ* (not smart, mad), *torgos* (you dance, you play), *yigris* (he gets cold), *gārib* (scorpions), *gitlitnā* (it killed us), *il-ʔrag* (the sweat), *iz-zdāg* (the marriage contract), *mgārīn* (guns), *giddāš* (many, much), *lgītah* (I found it), *fūg* (over), *nogʔod* (I stay, I sit), *gāb* (the rest of something), *bilgdā* (as it should be, very, well), *mrīgīlīn* (well, fine), *nāgša* (not complete).

- Based on the list of words, it can be stated that the use of the phone [g] is a distinctive feature in this dialect.

⁹⁸ [g] justifies the sociolinguistic interpretation of some scholars and their distinction between sedentary and Bedouin dialects in Arabic Tunisia. In Tunisia this distinction is called also city-community and village community. The former is the *qāla* dialect and the latter is the *gāla* dialect.

- The use of [g] is most related to the verb *qāl* (to say) with its forms of conjugation *golt*, *gāl*, *ngūl*.
- The phone [g] appears also in words pronounced in all Tunisia with [g] *mgarba'*, *torgos*.
- In comparison with the phone [g], the phone [q] appears sporadically. And this is observed in the spelling of some words of Arabic origin which are pronounced by 'Īše with [q] as in all Tunisia even in *gāla* dialect such as *qrā* (he studied, he read), *qārya* (educated), *qrīt* (I attended school), *qor'ān* (Quran), *qarn* (a century), *taqyīd* (registration), *mḡaydātah* (I registered it, I noticed it), *mḡaydīn* (they are registered), *qayyidnā* (we registered), *qillīlit rabbī* (very poor), *maqḡūla* (accepted), *warḡa* (paper) although I found *wargāt* (banknotes/papers).
- Taking in consideration these examples it can be said that the dialect used by 'Īše belongs to *gāla* dialect and not *qāla* dialect.

5.1.2. The Phone [ʔ]

The ancient glottal stop [ʔ] called *hamza* is not preserved in the dialect of 'Īše in words of Arabic origin. This observation is true of hamza in initial, medial and final position and it is true for both nouns and verbs.

Ex:

rās (< Arabic ra's): head

nākul (< Arabic 'a'kulu): I eat

ḡdū (< Arabic 'aḡdū): they got

smā (< Arabic samā'): sky

Exception:

ra'īs (< Arabic ra'īs): chief, president

5.1.3. The Vowel [a], [ā]

In General Tunisian the phoneme /a/ is realized [a] and [ɑ] and the phoneme /ā/ is realized as [a:] and [ɑ:] especially in the environment of the emphatic phones and q. The former phoneme is also realized as [æ] or [ɛ] and the latter phoneme is also realised as [æ:] or [ɛ:]. This allophonic variation is caused by the process of *imāla* which results from the raising of a and ā towards i and ī respectively. This process is a characteristic feature of General Tunisian.⁹⁹

Ex:

[æ:š]: what

[hæ:ni]: I am

[ʔækæ:kæ]: like that, so-so

[be:š]: will, that, in order

⁹⁹ For more details concerning *imāla* in Tunisian dialect see also Giulino Mion, *Le vocalisme et l'imaala en arabe tunisien*, 2008.

[gudde:mi]: in front of me

[ħætte:š]: untill

[nɛ:jæ]: I

[ħæ:lɛ]: what

[ħæ:ǧɛ]: matter, something

[ʔæ:kɛ]: that

[tɛw] / [tɛwwɛ]: now

[wɛllɛ] / [willɛ]: or

[tɛlwzɛ]: television

5.1.4. Diphthongs

In the idiolect of ‘Išɛ the absence of the ancient Arabic diphthongs [aj] and [aw] can be observed and they are replaced respectively by /i:/ and /u:/ as is the case in most of Tunisian dialects. The dialect of Sfax and Tunis is known mostly for its preservation of the Arabic diphthongs [aj] and [aw].

Ex:

dīma: always

bi-s-sīf: by force, with difficulties, hardly

fūg: on

bīt: house, home

ħi:r: good

5.2. Morphology

5.2.1. Personal Pronouns

5.2.1.1. Separate Personal Pronouns

5.2.1.1.1. The Personal Pronoun *nā* [nɛ:/nāya [nɛ:jæ] Personal Pronoun

The use of *nā* and *nāya* for the first person singular is attested. This observation is also true for some idiolects in the north west of Tunisia but not true for example for the dialects of Tunis, Sousse and Kairouan which are characterized respectively by the use of *āna*, *āni* and *yāna* for the first person singular.

Ex:

mā na ‘rifš nā is-sūg ħlāš (I don’t know the market, I don’t know what the market looks like.)

w-nā na ‘rif il-lawrāq? (Do I know the papers?)

w-lā nā nuħkum? (Do you think I have any authority on him?)

‘umrī nāya mqaydātah! (Do you think I registered my age!)

nidrī ‘līk nāya mnīn (Do I know where you are from?)

nāya ngullik ħāla ħāla ħāla muħāla (I say to you the situation is very difficult/impossible.)

5.2.1.1.2. The Personal Pronoun *inta* [inte]/*inti* [inti]

The gender distinction between *inta/inti* ('you' sg m/f) which is observed in General Tunisian is preserved in 'Išē's idiolect and thereby the occurrence of two forms for the second person singular *inti* (feminine)/*inta* (masculine) as is the case in northwestern, southeastern and southwestern dialects against *inti* for both genders in other Tunisian dialects (Tunis, Sfax and the urban Sahil, Kairouan) which are known for not marking the second person gender and no feminine marking is used in verbs.

Ex:

šūf inta (You (sg m) can see, see!, check!).

mšīt m'āk inta (I went with you (sg m))

5.2.1.1.3. The Personal Pronoun *naḥnā/naḥna* [neḥne]

The use of *naḥnā/naḥna* for the first person plural is observed.

Ex:

naḥna mānā ngū min gibla m'āsrīn w- sāknīn (We we arrived from the East and we were settled here for living).

5.2.1.1.4. The Personal Pronoun *intum* [intom]

The use of *intum* for the 2nd person plural masculine and feminine as is mostly in use in General Tunisian.

Ex:

yomma klit triḥa w-ḥūya klā triḥa w-gālhom intum obbayyātī tuḥkmū fiyya (He beat my mother and my brother and he told them are you my parents to control me/to decide for me.)

5.2.1.1.5. The Pronoun *hūma* [hūme]

The use of *hūma* for 3rd person plural masculine and feminine as in most Tunisian dialects.

Ex:

'Izdīn w-Mḥammid aḍūikum hūma it-tālīn ('Izdīn w-Mḥammid those ones are the next.)
nsāwīn yithadṭū yhiḥā ḥūhā ya 'ṭihā l-rāḡil...šār hūma yithadṭū 'liyya ānā nilbsilhim sirwāl ṭwīl (Women were telling her brother will take her and marry her to someone... So they are speaking about me! I will put on long pants [in the sense I will become a man.]

5.2.1.2. Attached Personal Pronouns

In the idiolect used by 'Išē it can be noted that the personal pronoun, as it is the case in Standard Arabic, is always attached to the end of the word. This word can be a noun, a verb or a preposition.

tal'ib 'liyya!? (You are having fun!)

mā gotlik hādā ir-rāḡil mā 'inīs bth (I told you already, I do not want a man in my life.)

'liy iš-šāyib wily nzūrū fth ('*liy iš-šāyib*' is a holy man whom we visit regularly.)

5.2.1.3. mā +Personal Pronoun+š

Ex:

mā humš mqaydīn (They are not registered.)

mīšnī māšya l-bīt rabbī. hāwīnī bīt rabbī. tsālīnī! (I will not go to the house of God. There is the house of God (she pointed to the sky). Do you want to decide for me?)

5.2.2. Demonstrative Pronouns

Ex:

aḏāka twaffā ba'du (That one died after him.)

'izdīn wi-mḥammid aḏūkum hūma it-tālīn ('Izdīn and mḥammid those they are the next.)

5.2.3. Verbs

5.2.3.1. The 'n' prefix

The use of the prefix 'n' in the conjugation of the verb with the first person singular in the present tense which is a common feature for all Tunisian dialects.

Ex:

nfiḏ (I get up, I wake up), *nurgud* (I sleep), *nimšt* (I walk, I go), *nitsawwig* (I go to the market.)

5.2.3.2. The conjugation of the irregular verb

- The appearance of *t* and *ā* in the present tense with the first person singular.

Ex:

n'addt (I go to the doctor), *nimšt* (I walk, I go), *nitḡaṭṭā* (I cover myself).

- The occurrence in the 3rd person plural of *-ū* Perfectum and Imperfectum with the irregular verbs against *t* and *ā* respectively in other Tunisian dialects.

Ex:

nsāwīn yithadṭū (Women they were telling/they are telling.)

yimšū 'rāya? yilbsū is-srāwīl (Do they (pl f) have to be naked? They can wear trousers.)

mīšnī fī wostḥum nāya? n'ayyiṭ 'la mḥammid yḡī n'ayyiṭ 'la ḥbīb walla ma yḡū yigḡārū il-kul (You forget that I am living among them? When I ask help from 'Mḥammid', 'Ḥbīb' or any one, they will run to help me.)

5.2.3.3. The structure mā [m:] +Imperfectum+š

Ex:

mā ndrīš (I do not know.)

mā na'rifš is-sūg ḥlāš (I do not know the market at all.)

mā nissawwigš (I do not go to the market.)

tawwa mā nimšiš fi-š-šhāwīlī (Now, in this warm weather, I cannot go/I do not want to go.)

5.2.3.4. The structure *bāš* [bɛ:š]/*miš*+Imperfectum

The structure *bāš/biš* + Imperfectum is used in General Tunisian to denote before all the future. This structure occurs in ‘Iše’s dialect but sporadically. Mostly *miš* instead of *bāš* appears.

Ex:

giddūlī il-bīt biš iṭṭīh ‘*liyya* (repaire/fix me the room! It will fall on me.)

miš niškī bīk li-l-ḥaras (I will complain about you to the police.)

In some other examples *bāš* is also used in the meaning of in order to.

Ex:

hānī ‘īṭu kās tāy bāš yrīgil l-amūr, yrīgil l-bīt (I gave him a cup of tea in order to organize the things, to repair the house.)

5.3. Phraseology

Here, only some selected examples will be given. First, the literal meaning will be given and then the translation to English. The meaning presented here is only related to the context in which it was presented in the collected language material. The intention of the following examples is also to reflect on the double meaning of the phrases used by ‘Iše which convey in addition to literary meaning also an idiomatic one. The latter meaning is deeply rooted in the social and cultural communicative environment of the society ‘Iše has been belonging to all her life.

Ex:

(5.3.1) ‘*w-hāna akkāka. marra l-fūg w-marra lūṭa w-ḥattāš ya‘mil rabbi*’
 (lit. We are so. Once to the top and once to the bottom until does my God)
 We are living like this. One day good and one day bad until God dissolves the situation.

(5.3.2) ‘*a‘milli ḥāga. l-bīt bāš iṭṭīh ‘liyya*’
 (lit. do thing. The room will put down on me.)
 Find a solution/do something because the room will fall down on me.

(5.3.3) ‘*nāya kān birkīl ‘liyya nmūt*’
 (lit. me if it will collapse on me I die)
 If the room falls down on me, I die.

(5.3.4) ‘*in-nhār kāmīl bārka niddaffā fi-l-‘āfyā*’
 (lit. all the day I am glued, I warm up the fire)
 All the day/Every day I am sitting near the fire to warm up.

(5.3.5) ‘*taw ḥdū nsāwīn*’
 (lit. now, they took/got women)
 Now, they got married.

- (5.3.6) *'būlādhum'*
(lit. with their children)
They have children.
- (5.3.7) *'nwakkil bīhā šnātiyya'*
(lit. I feed with it my children)
I use the money to get food for my children.
- (5.3.8) *'yāklū bīhā iṣ-šnāta maqrūna'*
(lit. they eat with it children macaroon)
With the money the children could eat pasta.
- (5.3.9) *'nākul iz-zullāf'*
(lit. I eat the stove)
I am beaten with the stove/He beats me with the stove.
- (5.3.10) *'darbu hār'*
(lit. his beating is spicy)
His beating is violent/He beats very hard.
- (5.3.11) *'tānī bis-sīf'*
(lit. He gave me with sword)
He obliged me to be married/He gave me to a man by force.
- (5.3.12) *'anā nfiṣ bi-s-sīf'*
(lit. I get up with sword)
I hardly get up.
- (5.3.13) *'klit trīḥa'*
(lit. She ate a beating)
She was beaten.
- (5.3.15) *'mā nkallimš ḥattā waḥda'*
(lit. I do not speak to any one)
I do not make problems for no woman/I do not interfere in the affairs of any woman.
- (5.3.16) *'ydabbir rūshum'*
(lit. It manages their heads)
They have to decide alone for their affairs/They have to manage their affairs by themselves.
- (5.3.17) *'baddil 'liyya iṣ-ṣhan'*
(lit. Change for me the plate)
Change the subject!

6. Some Concluding Remarks

In the past, during Ramadan, it was a tradition that people crowded in the coffee shops or in the city squares and the children gathered in front of the grandfathers, grandmothers, fathers and mothers to listen to the old stories to have fun and to take

lessons from them. In Ramadan 2018, the people sat in front of the television and waited what it would show and what it would tell. Unexpectedly and without introduction *ommī* ‘Iše [mother ‘Iše] or ‘Wīše, as some Tunisians like to call, her appeared.

‘Iše iğ-Ġlāšiyya appeared from behind the mountains of Ġlāš bū’īša *ħnag mūru*¹⁰⁰ in her old patchwork *malya* and on her head She wore many colorful *mħārim*, one on top of the other, and holding tightly her old *zollāt* between her tired fingers. Her face, which is tinted with time marks, said everything before she even opened her lips to speak. The hearts of the spectators started to beat strongly for her from the moment they saw her.

She talked, she related, she attracted the listeners and they became attached to her, waiting for her and asking eagerly about her when she was not on television for a long time. *Ommī* ‘Iše was speaking in a simple language that the old and the young, the men and the women, the educated and the non-educated, understood. The people inside all of Tunisia understood her and they understood her also in the neighboring countries of Tunisia. They reacted very positively to her stories and everyone expressed in their own way their love for her. Her *nāya* [I], *škūn* [who], *šinhī* [what], *’līh* [why], *tawwa* [now], *bikrī* [in the past], and *mā ndrīs* [I do not know] among others added only beauty to the beauty of her speech and distinguished her dialect different.

Ommī ‘Iše, a woman of more than one hundred years old, spoke and spoke as she is racing against the past, the present and maybe the future, and forcing them to speak. She let them be a witness of an image that was, that is and maybe will be. The voice of the old, weak woman echoed between the mountains and penetrated all the deaf ears after many years when she had to live far away from the city and its life. In the years when she had to live in the place where she was not born and she did not choose to live in, but was obliged to, with the passing of time she became familiar with it and learned to love it. She found in its ‘*arš* her family and she made its trees, its plants and its animals her relatives.

Ommī ‘Iše is a woman who accepts what *Rabbi* [God] had written for her and what fate brought her. She thanks and praises God for the children that she was able to have and she thanks God for the health she has. But from time to time a deep sigh or a gentle smile expressing her pain and sorrow is coming out. Sometimes her voice thunders loudly saying: *lā, lā, lā* [no, no, no], other times she keeps silent and at other moments she escapes by choosing to look away.

Ommī ‘Iše appeared, as if from out of nowhere, for the first time in Ramadan 2018 and her television stories lasted many months, even for more than one year. ‘Iše’s stories are before all the stories of the ‘Iše [The Life] of an old woman but they are actually the stories of life, culture and language. They are the stories of a country, of Tunisia.

¹⁰⁰ See internet source (1).

Ommī 'Īṣe was able, thanks to her individual character, to her strength and decency which she could easily combine, to become used to TV and being in front of the camera. She agreed to go to the doctor and to put in new teeth although she had never gone to the doctor before. She agreed to go to Mekka and make the Umrah and she is the one who was never out of her village before. She threw in the mountains of Arafat her old *zollāt* which carried her for many years and changed it for a new cane. She also took the chance to try tasting a banana and yogurt after her weary mouth was tired from the taste of *il-kisra il-yābsa*¹⁰¹ [crustly bread] and *il-kusksī il-bāyit*¹⁰² [old cooked couscous]. *Ommī 'Īṣe* is bigger than any light, bigger than any challenges. Only Time could challenge her.

Is Time able to understand what *Ommī 'Īṣe* said and what she did not say? Could it be the right time to take a picture of her slowly stepping while dancing in her beautiful *malya*, could one record her trembling hand pouring the *tāy* [tea] from her old *barrād*? [tea thermos].¹⁰³ Was Time quick enough to take a picture of her while as she deftly put a piece of *naffa* with her finger in her mouth to have a nice mood? Will Time understand 'Īṣe, if she will speak, in the days to come?

'Īṣe's language is 'īṣe and 'īṣe is the people, the place, the history, the tradition since 'Īṣe's stories are simply an accurate mirror of the world which is partially vanishing into the past together with all its unrepeatability. Unfortunately, the author of these lines is the powerless witness of the unfortunate disappearance of one of the Tunisian communicative communities.

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¹⁰¹ 'kisra': in Tunisian and some Maghrebi countries this word is used to denote the traditional home made bread.

¹⁰² 'kusksī': couscous is one of the most famous ancient dishes that distinguish Tunisia and various Maghrebi countries, but the way of preparing it and the ingredients that are used in its preparation differ from one country to another and from province to another. This dish has many benefits, as it provides energy as well as cooking it with vegetables provides an integrated meal, in addition to that it is one authentic Tunisian food that is easy to cook and simple in ingredients. Despite the different ways of preparing the couscous is often served in a giant bowl studded with meat, chickpeas and raisins. Couscous is also the meal of the poor that fills their stomachs during weddings as it is the meal offered during weddings and the promise that people offer to the righteous saints. According to the researchers in culture, this dish is essential in the Tunisian culture food, and goes back to the Amazigh origins. This idea is confirmed by research after finding vessels, including 'kaskās' (one of the main pots for cooking couscous) belonging to the Amazigh king Amazighi Masinissa.

¹⁰³ 'barrād': a Tunisian word that means 'a pot to cook the tea'. It seems to be derived from the old Maghrebian word 'barrāda' which means a kind of jar used to cool wine.

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