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Diglossia and Language Contact

This volume provides a detailed analysis of language contact in North Africa and explores the historical presence of the languages used in the region, including the different varieties of Arabic and Berber as well as European languages.

Using a wide range of data sets, it provides a comprehensive analysis of the mechanisms of language contact under classical diglossia and societal bilingualism, examining multiple cases of oral and written code-switching. It also describes contact-induced lexical and structural change in such situations and discusses the possible appearance of new varieties within the context of diglossia.

Examples from past diglossic situations are examined, including the situation in Muslim Spain and the Maltese Islands. An analysis of the current situation of Arabic vernaculars, not only in the Maghreb but also in other Arabic-speaking areas, is also presented. This book will appeal to anyone interested in language contact, the Arabic language, and North Africa.

LOTFI SAYAHI is Associate Professor of Linguistics and Chair in the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at the State University of New York at Albany, where he teaches courses on sociolinguistics, bilingualism, and language contact.

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Diglossia and Language Contact

Language Variation and Change in North Africa

Lotfi Sayahi
State University of New York, Albany

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Frontmatter
More Information

For my parents
and
for Halimah, Mariem, and Salma.

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Lotfi Sayahi
Frontmatter
More Information

Contents

List of figures *page* ix
List of tables x
Series editor's foreword xi
Preface xiii
Transliteration symbols xvi
Abbreviations and acronyms xvii

1 Introduction 1
1.1 Defining diglossia 1
1.2 Diglossia extended 6
1.3 Diglossia and language contact 8

2 The languages of the Maghreb 15
2.1 Introduction 15
2.2 The Berber languages 17
2.3 Classical Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, and the Maghrebi dialects 20
2.4 French in the Maghreb 38
2.5 Spanish in the Maghreb 46
2.6 The other languages of the Maghreb 50
2.7 Arabization and language planning 51
2.8 Conclusion 54

3 Diglossia and bilingualism in the Maghreb 55
3.1 Introduction 55
3.2 Arabic diglossia 55
3.3 Bilingualism 69
3.4 Conclusion 75

4 Language contact under diglossia and bilingualism 77
4.1 Introduction 77
4.2 Diglossic code-switching 80
4.3 Bilingual code-switching 95
4.4 Language contact under diglossia across the lifespan 119
4.5 Conclusion 122

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CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-0-521-11936-8 — Diglossia and Language Contact
Lotfi Sayahi
Frontmatter
More Information

5 Lexical borrowing under diglossia and bilingualism 123
5.1 Introduction 123
5.2 Lexical change in the L variety: loanwords in vernacular Arabic 127
5.3 Lexical change in the H variety: loanwords in Standard Arabic 151
5.4 Lexical change in the autochthonous languages: loanwords in Berber and Iberian Romance 155
5.5 Lexical change in colonial languages: loanwords in French and Spanish in the Maghreb 161
5.6 Conclusion 164

6 Diglossia and contact-induced language change 166
6.1 Introduction 166
6.2 Convergence 169
6.3 Structural borrowing 189
6.4 Conclusion 200

7 Diglossia and the emergence of new varieties 202
7.1 Introduction 202
7.2 The case of Maltese 203
7.3 Mozarabic and Aljamía: transitional contact varieties 209
7.4 The development of Castilian Spanish 215
7.5 Conclusion 220

8 Conclusions 221
8.1 Introduction 221
8.2 The role of contact 221
8.3 Religion and diglossia 223
8.4 Renewed diglossia 224
8.5 Writing the L variety 225
8.6 Conclusion 227

References 228
Index 248

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CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-0-521-11936-8 — Diglossia and Language Contact
Lotfi Sayahi
Frontmatter
More Information

Figures

Figure 2.1 Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. *page* 16
Figure 3.1 Ceuta, Melilla, and northern Morocco. 71
Figure 4.1 Functions and categories of written diglossic switching. 90
Figure 4.2 Written bilingual advertisement *mabru:k l-oral* "Congratulations on the oral [exams]." 113
Figure 4.3 Written bilingual advertisement *nʒiħ fi l-écrit* "He passed the written [exams]." 113
Figure 4.4 Written bilingual advertisement *di:ma sport mʕa Tunisiana* "Always sport with Tunisiana." 113
Figure 4.5 Code-switching on a football forum. 115
Figure 7.1 The Maltese Islands. 203
Figure 8.1 Profile image of the Facebook page "I speak Tounsi." 226

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CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-0-521-11936-8 — Diglossia and Language Contact
Lotfi Sayahi
Frontmatter
More Information

Tables

Table 2.1	Growth of the Tunis population between 1936 and 2004	*page* 29
Table 2.2	Migration per district in Tunisia (1989–2004)	30
Table 4.1	Frequencies of code-switching in a twelve-speaker sample	104
Table 4.2	Frequencies of code-switching in the *kharjas*	110
Table 5.1	Examples of loanwords in Tunisian Arabic and northern Moroccan Arabic	139
Table 5.2	Examples of loanwords from the field of auto-mechanics	140
Table 5.3	Color names in Tunisian Arabic, monolingual speaker	141
Table 5.4	Color names in Tunisian Arabic, bilingual speaker	142
Table 5.5	Maintenance of the Arabic article *al-* in Spanish words	159

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CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-0-521-11936-8 — Diglossia and Language Contact
Lotfi Sayahi
Frontmatter
More Information

Series editor's foreword

The series *Cambridge Approaches to Language Contact* (CALC) was set up to publish outstanding monographs on language contact, especially by authors who approach their specific subject matter from a diachronic or developmental perspective. Our goal is to integrate the ever-growing scholarship on language diversification (including the development of creoles, pidgins, and indigenized varieties of colonial European languages), bilingual language development, code-switching, and language endangerment. We hope to provide a select forum to scholars who contribute insightfully to understanding language evolution from an interdisciplinary perspective. We favor approaches that highlight the role of ecology and draw inspiration both from the authors' own fields of specialization and from related research areas in linguistics or other disciplines. Eclecticism is one of our mottoes, as we endeavor to comprehend the complexity of evolutionary processes associated with contact.

We are very proud to add to our list Lotfi Sayahi's *Diglossia and Language Contact: Language Variation and Change in North Africa*, which, we hope, will become a standard reference even for students of language contact outside the Maghreb, the Middle East, and other Mediterranean polities where Arabic was or is also spoken as a vernacular or as a lingua franca. The book starts informatively with an account of the historical layers of language coexistence and competition both produced by population movements in the circum-Mediterranean world from the time of the Phoenicians' long-distance trade expeditions to that of the colonization of North Africa by Europe and, now, the involvement of the region in modern-style worldwide economic globalization. The reader is thus engaged in a comparative approach to diglossia and the ways in which this sociolinguistic phenomenon varies according to the specific population structure of each polity at particular phases of its history. In those polities where more than two languages or language varieties coexist, one can also learn about the variable ways in which diglossia applies, identifying ethnographic differences between the rural and urban environments and between educated and non-educated speakers, as well as between members of different ethnic groups.

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Lotfi Sayahi
Frontmatter
More Information

Equally noteworthy is the role that European colonization played in articulating the ethnographic statuses of the different languages and in determining asymmetries between the influences that the languages or language varieties can exert on each other in the "spacetime" of the national overlapping diglossias. Some readers will wonder whether some Africanists were justified in speaking of "triglossia" in such cases. The book is rich in theoretical considerations which are applicable to research about cases of diglossia not involving Arabic and with different histories of language contact, chiefly regarding the direction of code-switching. It is a piece of scholarship that will prompt the reader to address, along with the author, the question of whether diglossia contributes to language speciation and how.

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Frontmatter
More Information

Preface

Within the growing body of research on the linguistic situation in North Africa, there is a theoretical and methodological disconnection between those who study the aspects of Arabic diglossia and those who investigate bilingualism in the region. The two research areas seem to have progressed separately rather than jointly, with studies on diglossia lagging behind in the application of current contact linguistics theories. Contact between Maghrebi Arabic vernaculars and other languages has been the subject of a fair number of studies. In contrast, contact between the different Arabic varieties themselves has not been satisfactorily explored. The fact that diglossia, as defined by Charles Ferguson in his seminal 1959 article, has yet to be fully exploited as a framework for language contact studies is a major gap that needs to be addressed.

In this book, I examine the linguistic situation in the Maghreb using various sets of data and focusing on four main aspects of the subject matter: (a) I present the reader with a review of the historical presence of the languages used in the region, including the different varieties of Arabic, Berber, and the European languages; (b) I submit a comprehensive analysis of the mechanisms of language contact under classical diglossia and societal bilingualism, examining multiple cases of oral and written code-switching; (c) I describe the processes and outcomes of contact-induced change that transpire under these conditions, specifically which linguistic varieties are more open to change and at what levels; and (d) I discuss the possibility of the appearance of new varieties from within a context of diglossia. For comparative purposes, I draw on the past to explain how other diglossic situations were resolved and the role language contact played in the resolution process and the final outcome. Post-diglossia varieties, such as Maltese and the Romance languages, provide valuable information about the current situation of Arabic vernaculars, not only in the Maghreb but also in other Arabic-speaking areas.

At a time when global communication media are sweeping across the rapidly changing countries of North Africa, a closer look at the different facets of language contact, e.g. diglossic code-switching vs. bilingual code-switching, provides a good basis for understanding current linguistic behavior and predicting tendencies in future language change. In addition, given how the interpretation of

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Lotfi Sayahi
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the term *diglossia* has widened over the past few decades, to the extent that it has become practically synonymous with any case of societal bilingualism with some ranking of the functions of the varieties in contact, my aim in this book is to refocus the notion of CLASSICAL DIGLOSSIA to make it more relevant to contact linguistics. It can thus contribute substantially to our understanding of language ecology and language evolution in general.

The completion of this project has been facilitated by the help and support of many people. First, I owe a debt of gratitude to the series editor, Salikoko Mufwene, for his guidance and for his support of the project since the time it was just a proposal. Throughout the process, he took the time to provide me with countless comments and stimulating suggestions on each chapter. His advice and enthusiasm are truly appreciated. I am also grateful to Helen Barton of Cambridge University Press for her patience and help from the beginning of the project, and to the anonymous reviewers of the initial book proposal.

I am equally indebted to my friend and longtime colleague Maurice Westmoreland for reading an early draft of the book and suggesting useful editorial improvements. Thanks to Juan Antonio Thomas who also read an earlier draft and shared his insightful comments about language contact in Muslim Spain. Together we co-authored a paper on code-switching in the *kharjas* which I cite substantially in the book. Zouhir Gabsi likewise read parts of the typescript and shared some of his data from Tunisian Berber, in addition to offering thought-provoking comments about the changing language situation in Tunisia. I am grateful to Alan Jones, who kindly shared with me the image of the kharja A 22 reproduced in Chapter 4. Many thanks also to Bernard Comrie for sharing some of his work in progress on the Maltese lexicon and to Nic DePaula for his help with the maps, as well as to Patrick Lawrence for the long hours he worked as my research assistant at the University at Albany.

I first presented some early ideas from this book in a talk that I gave as part of the Linguistics Speaker Series organized by the graduate students at the University of Pennsylvania's Department of Linguistics. My thanks go to the (then) students for their invitation and to Gillian Sankoff for her stimulating comments.

Many people have provided support and shared ideas and comments with me in different venues: JoAnne Neff-van Aertselaer, Jacqueline Toribio, Barbara Bullock, John Singler, Gregory Guy, Clancy Clements, Jonathan Holmquist, Gerardo Augusto Lorenzino, Jorge Guitart, Michael Newman, Ricardo Otheguy, James Collins, Keith Walters, John Lipski, Carol Klee, Shana Poplack, and Abdessattar Mahfoudhi. I sincerely thank each one of them.

I am very thankful to all the informants I interviewed over the years in Tunisia, Morocco, Spain and the United States. Many welcomed me into their homes and shared with me hours of conversation even when the recorder was not on. Part of the data collection for this project was supported by generous

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Lotfi Sayahi
Frontmatter
More Information

grants from the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI), the American Institute for Maghreb Studies, and The University at Albany's Faculty Research Awards Program.

Most of all, I am grateful to my family for their patience over the last few years. Without their unwavering support and the time I took away from being with them, this project simply would not have been possible.

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Lotfi Sayahi
Frontmatter
More Information

Transliteration symbols

Arabic	IPA	transliteration
أ	ʔ	ʔ
ب	b	b
ت	t	t
ث	θ	θ
ج	ʒ	ʒ
ح	ħ	ħ
خ	x	x
د	d	d
ذ	ð	ð
ر	r	r
ز	z	z
س	s	s
ش	ʃ	ʃ
ص	$s^ʕ$	ṣ
ض	$d^ʕ$	ḍ
ط	$t^ʕ$	ṭ
ظ	$ð^ʕ$	ḍ
ع	ʕ	ʕ
غ	ɣ	ɣ
ف	f	f
ق	q	q
ك	k	k
ل	l	l
م	m	m
ن	n	n
ه	h	h
و	w	w
ي	j	y
ـَ	a	a
ـُ	u	u
ـِ	i	i

ḍ is used to transliterate both /$ð^ʕ$/ and /$d^ʕ$/ since they merge in Tunisian Arabic.
ɛ is used to represent the open-mid front unrounded vowel in Tunisian Arabic.
: is used to indicate a long vowel.
Double consonants are used in cases of gemination.

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Lotfi Sayahi
Frontmatter
More Information

Abbreviations and acronyms

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ACC	accusative
AdjP	adjectival phrase
CS	code-switching
DEF	definite
DU	dual
FEM	feminine
GEN	genitive
H variety	high variety
IMP	imperative
Interj	interjection
L variety	low variety
M	masculine
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic
N	noun
NP	noun phrase
NOM	nominative
PL	plural
PrepP	prepositional phrase
PRO	pronoun
PROG	progressive
PRS	present
SG	singular
SPP	subject personal pronoun
SVO	subject-verb-object
TA	Tunisian Arabic
VP	verb phrase
VSO	verb-subject-object

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