

Phonological adaptation of Spanish loanwords in Northern Moroccan Arabic

The long contact situation between Spanish and Arabic in Northern Morocco has led to the incorporation of hundreds of Spanish loanwords in the Arabic dialect spoken in the region that was once known as Spanish Morocco (1912-1956). The purpose of this study is to describe the different processes of phonological adaptation of these words including changes introduced both at the suprasegmental and segmental levels such as stress shift (1a) and vowel lowering (1b), instances of deletion (1c), and also cases of preservation (1d) and less frequently epenthesis (1e).

- (1)
 - a. /sa.bá.na/ 'sábana' (sheet)
 - b. /ti nígru/ 'té negro' (black tea)
 - c. /sansur/ 'ascensor' (elevator)
 - d. /blusa/ 'blusa' (shirt)
 - e. /lmisa/ 'mesa' (table)

Analysis of these processes will include discussion of how Northern Moroccan Arabic in borrowing Spanish words follows the rule of violating less frequently the Markedness than the Faithfulness constraints as established in Optimality Theory (Prince and Smolensky 1993). Although Optimality Theory has been applied more often to determine the constraints that govern the possible changes from the underlying lexical forms to their corresponding output targets within the same language, in this study it will be used to predict the constraints that govern the changes from output representations in one variety (Andalusian Spanish), given that we are dealing with a contact situation, to their phonological adaptation in another variety (Northern Moroccan Arabic). The corpus of data analyzed consists of a list of loanwords extracted from written sources (Ben Aziz Hakim 1950, Heath 1989, Ghailani 1997, and El Harrak 1998) and also from conversations recorded in the region in summer 2003.

References

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