The Substratum Effect of language Contact into Algerian Arabic Pattern Construction

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Abstract

The ultimate outcome of the prolonged contact situation in Algeria of the consecutive presence of Turks, Spanish (especially in West Algeria), and mainly French have wrought many changes in all spheres of life in Algeria, the Algerians and their language and/or language varieties, too. Due to this language contact situation Arabic, certainly; knew a variety of linguistic changes and structural modifications and the incorporation of an important amount of loanwords into Algerian Arabic (henceforth AA) dialect as a case study and it is used in Sidi Bel Abbès city- a contiguous town to Oran in West Algeria. The linguistic system of AA is to be considered as a recipient language, while, Spanish and French are to be considered to be donor languages.

The present paper will examine some morph-phonological processes that led to internal structural modifications that affect the linguistic patterns of loans as appearing in our dialect to answer a main issue do loanwords still exist in the speech of youth or not?

Keywords : Borrowing, loanwords, language contact, language change

1.Introduction

The integration of loanwords from a given linguistic system L_1 to another one L_2 is not a random phenomenon. But it submits to, first, a natural aspect which is in itself an external factor or social i.e., language contact situation. Second, it submit to other internal factors which can be determined inside the language/ or language variety (= dialect) as assimilation be it progressive or regressive. In addition to other mechanisms of phonic and

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morphological interferences of all sorts of linguistic elements that is: consonants, vowels, syllables and patterns among others.

The present paper has for a main objective to detect the linguistic matrix where the phonological and morphological integration of some Spanish and French loanwords into AA take place, and how they operate to make the AA linguistic system as used by distinct age groups to be affiliated under the same social entity using these loans or a distinct one and not using the loans.

Our aim, meanwhile, rely upon the study of loanwords to see whether they are used by youths or not. So, they are strong and resist to language change. Then, if they mark their absence in the speech of youths so, language change is occurring.

2. Methodology

Any scientific study that draws conclusions about a large group when only selected members of that group have been observed must be concerned with *representativeness*. Indeed, the strength of the conclusions one can draw depends on how accurately the sample represents the larger population. To reach this aim we thought that dividing the whole population into three main groups young, elders and old will be significant to best satisfy our requirements.

Furthermore, our sample made of 153 informants, males and females. All of them are residents in Sidi-Bel-Abbès speech community. They are divided into three main categories: young group (+15), elder group (+30) and old group (+50) as it is shown in the following figure:

Figure: Distribution of the Informants
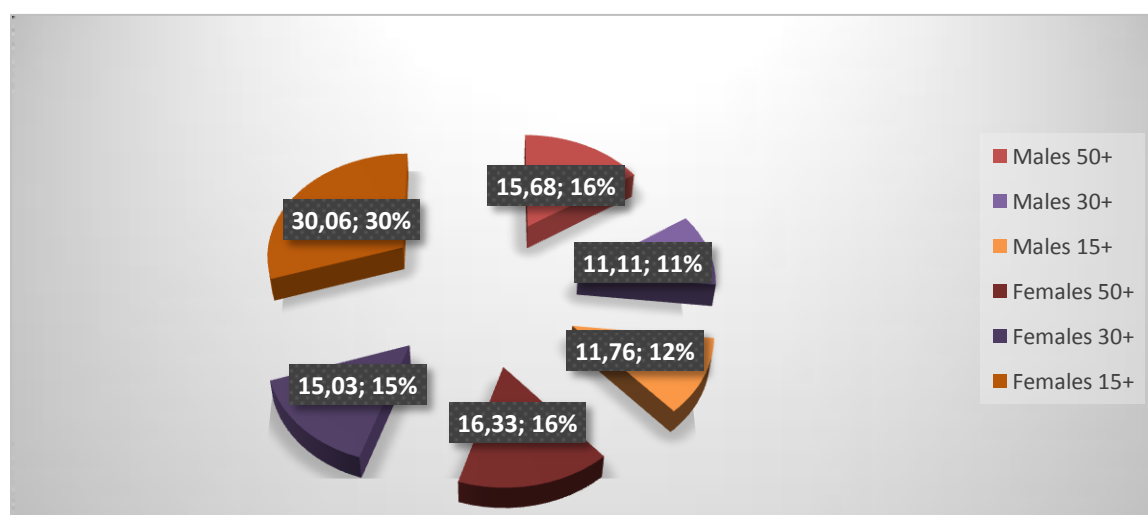
The present study, therefore, opted for a variety of methods and procedures to collect data. First, a useful method is *the Participant Observation*. As an insider in the speech community of Sidi Bel Abbes, this helped me to be integrated in many social interactions to observe language use and consequently select some appearing linguistic variables.

Thus, after having a clear eye view about the language use in the chosen speech community of our investigation; a list of words was developed for the aim to construct a

simple questionnaire to be submitted to random sample of informants. Though, because our sample contains old, illiterate people we, therefore, shifted this procedure to an oral questioning. We relied a lot upon the questionnaire, because of the important advantages that it provides, particularly, to obtain statistically analyzable data about our selected variables i.e., loanwords, and to collect a large amount of data in a relatively short space of time without even sometimes the direct involvement of the investigator. As well as, it is manageable i.e., many copies can be completed in a day by many informants.

3.   Borrowing

The study of language contact situation is becoming the province of sociolinguistics, which *discerns strong impulses both from social concerns and from developments in language studies* (Appel et al, 2005: 4).

Focusing their attention to the diversity in language use, linguists attempted to study a variety of linguistic processes and phenomena in their social context, a case in hand, is linguistic borrowing. Speaking about borrowing is rather referring not only to the internal structure of languages which requires the incorporation of foreign components into a language, but to explore and explain the social and cultural determinants that embody its occurrence.

It is convenient to accept that any language can borrow words freely in many contact situations and it is clear that these loanwords do not travel but they are brought into existence in a way or another by direct contact with its speakers or users.

According to scholars, borrowing is widespread, particularly, in different situations in which extensive contact between languages and their users has taken place, in different parts of the world. Weinreich (1953, in Appel et al.) gives a number of reasons why words may be borrowed:

1)   Through cultural influence,

2)   Rare native words are lost and replaced by foreign words,

3)   Two native words sound so much alike that replacing one by a foreign word resolves potential ambiguities,

4)   There is a constant need for synonyms of affective words that have lost their expressive forces,

5)   Through borrowing new semantic distinctions may become possible,

6)   A word may be taken from a low-status language and used pejoratively,

7)   A word may be introduced almost unconsciously through intensive bilingualism.

It is significant to attempt to explore the socio-cultural evidence of the so-mentioned motivations above. As far as our context is concerned, we may agree on the fact that it is due to the prolonged language contact situation that provided that the phenomenon to emerge, in addition, the 1st and the 7th reasons suit best our linguistic situation.

All in all, borrowing which is the substratum effect of language contact takes place, in effect, in many distinct social and cultural contexts. Considerably, according to (Appel et al, ibid.) in situations which knew:

- Invasions,
- Conquest and domination by a major culture,
- Limited culture contact,
- Limited immigration and economic dependence,
- Coexistence in a colonial setting.

Therefore, the sociolinguistic aspects may differ, too.

In the present study, we are focusing our attention on the phenomenon of borrowing as stated along this study; the latter will be tackled from a synchronic angle without

referring to the previous states of the language (-in De Saussure's terms *état de langue*) in question. Importantly enough, according to Haugen's claim this technique would seem to be the most useful in dealing with previously unwritten languages as dialects. Besides, Hudson (1996:55) says that:

[A]nother way in which different languages may become mixed up with each other is through the process of borrowing. At this point, however, we are shifting our view from speech to language systems. Whereas code- switching and code mixing involved mixing languages in speech, borrowing involves mixing the systems themselves, because an item is "borrowed" from one language to become part of the other language.

Another definition provided by Sapir (1964) who states that *of the linguistic changes due to the more obvious types of contact the one which seems to have played the most important part in the history of language is the borrowing of words across linguistic frontiers.*

Other linguists, in addition to define borrowing they clearly explain its factors and types. Haugen (1950) and Weinreich (1953) say that borrowing falls within two main categories: *importation* and *substitution*. It is meant by importation, that the word is transferred from the borrowing language into the recipient one. And the integration of a given word can be: none, partial or complete. While by substitution, it is meant that there is a reproduction of a concept or meaning from one language into another.

Besides, types of borrowed words that fall within the above categories, notably, are: *loanwords, loan blends* and *loan shift*. Thus, the way one can capture these words in the oral production may differ from one study to another according to various linguistic and extra-linguistic factors that construct the general methodological framework of an investigation.

4.   The Dialect of Sidi Bel Abbes

Works on Arabic dialectology in general, and on Algerian dialects in particular was coined to an important body of researchers and scholars. Caubet (1999, 2001) reported in her *questionnaire*[1] that interest into the study of Arabic dialects emerged when researchers from the Maghreb started a work about *A Linguistic atlas*. The first research was held in Tunisia entitled *L'Atlas Linguistique de la Tunisie* by T. Baccouche, in 1998. Then, another group of researchers from exactly west Algeria called for a project in (*CERBAM-INALCO*) by F. Bouhadida and H. Meliani, Oran 1999. A year after, in 2000, P. Behnskedt and M. Benabbou had tackled a large program to Morocco; J. Heath, too, had brought a project in 1980's. Nevertheless, no work –cited so far- coped with the whole Maghreb.

Caubet, adds the idea to propose a "questionnaire" is to take up again the previous works carried out by Marçais, cohen, and cantineau among others. The main scope of the questionnaire upon which the present study is based on is a purely linguistic goal. It is meant to linguists, and basically, it attempts to detect and find out areas where variation exists.

Besides, it is agreed among scholars that the Algerian Arabic dialect spoken in Sidi-Bel Abbès city is, naturally a Bedouin dialect. It is marked by conservation, from Arabic, with the presence of some borrowings, and an important lexical stock from the Berber substratum. Some words which indicate the Bedouin dialects are: nnaw (rain), /da:r/ (to do), /ʃa:f/ (to see), and /jamas/ (yesterday).

It is remarkable that these words still exist in the present day speech of the individual speakers. The form under which Algerian Arabic is constructed is, actually used

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[1] For which I was a respondent as a postgraduate student preparing a Magister degree in ILE, Es-Senia in ORAN in 1998- 1999.

in the informal online communication either using Arabic script or Latin alphabets to write SMS, Blogs, emails, or any other form of messages.

In fact, to begin presenting some linguistic aspects that may stand sometimes peculiar to this vernacular or may other times be shared to other Algerian varieties, it is crucial to present the phonological inventory system. Therefore, Algerian Arabic vernacular as used in Sidi-Bel-Abbès consists of 34 *consonants* as shown in the following *VPM table* or *consonants chart*. This vernacular exhibits, too, three main basic short *vowels* a, I and u, in addition to o, ə and æ. The formers, when they are elongated they become a, i:, and u:.

A)   Consonants

The set of consonant that constitute the phonological inventory system of Algerian Arabic spoken in Sidi-Bel-Abbès is composed of:

ʔ (أ), b (ب), t (ت), θ (ث), ʒ (ج), ħ (ح), x (خ), d (د), ð (ذ), r (ر), z (ز), s (س), ʃ (ش), ṣ (ص), ḍ (ض), ŧ (ط), đ (ظ), ʕ (ع), ɣ (غ), f (ف), q (ق), k (ك), m (م), l-† (emphatic l) (ل), n (ن), h (ه), w (و), j (ي), g (ڤ), v- (in loan words), p- (in loan words), ŋ (occurs in the environment of the velar consonants /k,g/ as in /maŋgu:ʃ/ (earrings) and /maŋq:ʃ/

Table 1: Consonants chart of Sidi Bel Abbes Dialect

	Bilabial		Labiodental		Dental		Alveolar		Palato-Alvedar		Palatal		Velar		Uvular		Pharyngeal		Glottal	
NE Plosive E	P	b			t	d							k	g	q				?	
					t	d														
NE Affricate E									tʃ											
NE Fricative E			f	V	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	3			x	ɣ			ħ	ʕ	h	
							ş	ẓ												
NE Nasal E		m						n												
NE Lateral E								l												
									ɬ											
NE Flap E									r											
									ɼ											
NE Approximate E		w											ɟ							

NE : Stands for non-emphatic consonants.
E: Stands for emphatic consonants.
The consonants which are on the right are voiced,
and those which are on the left are voiceless.

B)   Vowels
Possible vowels that can exist in the Arabic spoken in Sidi-Bel-Abbès are:
[a] in / tamma/ (there)
[a:] in / fa:r/ (mouse)
[æ] in /ħæq/ (right)
[ə] in /bənt/ (girl)

[ɪ] in /bakrɪ/ (ancient time)

[ɪ:] in /wɪ:n/ (where)
[o] in /ṣofor/ (yellow)
[u:] in /ħu:t/ (fish)

C)   Diphthongs

Are composed by a combination of the short vowels (a, ɪ, ə) with j or w. the possible combinations to get diphthongs are:
[aw] – /ʕawd/ (horse)
[aj] – /majda/ (table)
[eJ]– /bneJtɪ/ (my little girl)
[ɪJ]– /KɪJtɪ/
[aj]– /haJħ/ (wall)

5.   Linguistic Analysis of Some Loanwords
In this section, our main concern is to examine, namely, the phonological and morphological integration of some French and Spanish loanwords into Algerian Arabic. We distinguish a variety of loanwords into Algerian Arabic by means of a process of importation for which Algerian Arabic is the *recipient language*.

✦   *Unassimilated loanwords*, this type of words is generally kept intact which means that they are integrated into AA system, instances of these are: /labo/, /park/
✦   *Partially assimilated words*, first, we can consider that the general linguistic process through which loanwords are used is, in fact, by the integration of one part of the word as unchanged, and the other is altered to the extent that it is adapted to the phonological system of the recipient language/ or language variety. Second, here we may find that the loanwords are completely assimilated and submit to many linguistic processes and altered in many ways to suit easily the daily uses. These show a partial phonemic integration in a way that one syllable does not submit to the morpho-phonological rules of the Algerian Arabic system and the other is altered so that it is easily adapted and consequently changed to be integrated into the structural construction of Algerian Arabic, examples are the following:

Lampe (a lamp)   ————————→   /ɫamba/

A shift of /p/ to /b/; because the /p/ does not exist in phonological inventory system of Arabic. The /l/ is altered to a darl /ɫ/ and an addition of /a/ finally to mention the feminine case.

Electricité (electricity)   ————————→   /trisinti/

The main processes are a dropping of the syllable

————   #elec#   ——   ∅

that occurs initially in the original form, what remains

——   #tricité#   CCVCVCV   or $C_1C_2V_1C_3V_2C_{4V3}$

to become a *truncated* word. Analysing the following structure :

————————
————————   #trisinti#
    #$C_1C_2V_1C_3V_2C_4C_5V_3$#

One can notice that in the original form there already exists a cluster C_1C_2. The changes are an *addition* of /n/ sound between V_2 and C_4 to have

———————— $\# C_1C_2V_1C_3V_2nC_5V_3\#$

Another cluster is obtained in the *final environment*.

Table (a table) ⟶ /ṭabḷa/

Again, slight differences marked the word, for which the addition of the /a/ vowel finally is meant to form the case of feminine, leads to a *dissimilation* of /t/ to the emphatic /ṭ/ and a *progressive assimilation* occurs to have a pharyngealised /ḅ/ and dark /ḷ/.

Thus, *phonological integration* of loanwords is productive in Algerian Arabic, just because of seeking easiness of pronunciation or may be because the sound does not exist in our phonological inventory system. This integration is also known by the replacement of sounds: consonants and vowels.

e.g. /v/ ⟶ /f/

Valise (a suitcase) ⟶ /faliza/

/n/ ⟶ /l/

Cinema (cinema) ⟶ /silima/

Morphological integration is constructed by a variety of linguistic processes such as *prefixation* and *suffixation*.

Prefixation of {m-} to indicate the person carrying the action /or the doer

e.g. *douche* (shower) ⟶ /m-dawwaʃ/, in addition to a geminated /w/ sound inserted within √d ʃ

Suffixation to form one plural form, the suffix {āt} added at the end of a noun, for instance:

Singular in French			Plural in AA	
e.g.	*Auto*	(a car)	⟶	/ ɫotojāt / (cars)
	Camion	(a lorry)	⟶	/kamjūnāt/ (lorries)
	Banque	(a bank)	⟶	/bankāt/ (Banks)
	Ballon	(a ball)	⟶	/ḅoɫitāt/ (Balls)

6. Some Toponyms Representing Borrowed Words

Linguistic borrowing is a very common phenomenon to most languages as it is eminently studied by linguists such as Bloomfield (1930), and Weinreich (1953). *Probably no language whose speakers have ever had contact with any other language is completely free from borrowed words.*(Campbell, 1998:57.) As exemplified by Campbell (1998:58) a loanword is an item that has been borrowed from another language, a word which originally was not part of the lexis of the recipient language but was taken from some other language and became part of the borrowing language's vocabulary.

Importantly enough, how could distinct systems be intermingled to constitute a mixed language variety? In fact, the long contact situation, especially with speakers of the language of colonizers, conquerors who show their superior state or prestige in any society, leads to a considerable amount of borrowing.

Made explicitly, just as societies experience both *social change* and *social evolution,* languages are in a continuous state of change. As far as our society is concerned, Algeria knew several dynamic contact situations the most important of which began as early as 1830's, when the French settled in the country. Prior foreign contact was with the Turks, and the Spanish. So, with their consecutive presence and due to the substratum effect of their languages, enhanced consequently the linguistic borrowing that pervaded the vernacular. Consequently, the presence of distinct peoples in Algeria had an impact not only on the linguistic aspects, but also on the cultural and social spheres e.g., toponyms that were used in the colonial era, they are still be used in the independent Algeria. Those are so strong as to appear indelible. Instances of these are the following:

Table 2: *Some Loan Words showing Toponyms in Sidi-Bel-Abbès[2]*

Type of place	Toponyms used in colonial era	Toponyms substituted in post independence era	Colonial toponyms retained in belabesians' language use	Colonial toponyms substituted by belabesians' language use
Cities	*Faubourg Thiers*	*Sakia l hamra*	✓	✓
	Crampel	*MimounAbdelkeder*	✓	✓
	Mont plaisir	*Hai zaytoun*	✓	
	Maconnais	*Maconnais*	✓	
	Gambetta	*Kheiranebia*	✓	
Streets	*Alfred de Musset*	*Bougourineboucif*	✓	
	Gambetta	*c. Ferradj*	✓	
	Voltaire	*Larichsohbi*	✓	✓
	Catinat	*s. bendimered*	✓	✓
	John Jack Rousseau	*Ben Ali Bekhaled*	✓	
	La cayasol(spanish) rue de soleil (french)	*Rue de soleil(French) Tarik chams(Arabic)*	✓	
Places	*Place Carnot*	*Place 1er Novembre*		
	/3nān l bājlak/(Turkish)	*garda(n)*	✓	✓
	Cinema Vox	*Cinema Vox*	✓	
	LaCoupole(le marché ouvert)	*La Coupole / lqubba/*	✓	
	Marceau	*Amir abdelkader*	✓	✓
	Thiers(fille, garçon)	*Ibn badis---frereszaoui*		✓

Linguistically speaking, most of the previous toponyms are modified by some linguistic processes. This is due mainly to the illiteracy factor of Algerian people who were unable to utter as rightly as possible these words.

7. Conclusion

Therefore, the present study is a preliminary observation of how loanwords from Spanish and French operate significantly into the AA linguistic system (=dialect) by means of importation and substitution. These loanwords are massively incorporated in the AA linguistic system, instances of these names of fish: "*calamar, sardine, sipya, and bonito*"…. Though the language varieties are typologically distinct and show no mutual intelligibility, they tend to form an orderly logical pattern. The linguistic outcome formation shows clearly that linguistic elements from the donor language are flexible enough to be integrated and submit to the grammatical rules of AA as a recipient language. Most if not all loans submit, for instance, to the plural formation in AA, in: "loto- lotoyaat" (car- cars), "stylo- styloyaat" (pen-pens)…this "-yaat"is the marker of the plural case in AA as spoken in Sidi Bel Abbes. So, the structural modifications of loanwords are numerous which require an exhaustive investigation, but one can conclude that case marker is an Arabic bound morphemes added to an intact or adjusted free morpheme of the donor language. In addition, phonological

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[2] This figure was mentioned in an earlier study about the aspect of toponymy in 2014.

substitutions are presumably numerous as coined to the older generation who are illiterate speakers. Eventually, from the analysis of our data, one can notice that:

- Less use of loanwords by youths.

Does it mean that our young group is giving up loanwords in their language use? Is it because, they tend to hypercorrect or is it because they shift their ideological thought looking for another identity. All in all, language change is driven by youth rather than their elders.

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