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Studies on Arabic Dialectology and Sociolinguistics Proceedings of the 12th International Conference of AIDA held in Marseille from May 30th to June 2nd 2017

Institut de recherches et d'études sur les mondes arabes et musulmans

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DOI: 10.4000/books.iremam.4478

Publisher: Institut de recherches et d'études sur les mondes arabes et musulmans

Place of publication: Aix-en-Provence

Year of publication: 2019

Published on OpenEdition Books: 24 January 2019

Serie: Livres de l'IREMAM

Electronic ISBN: 9791036533891



<http://books.openedition.org>

Electronic reference

GUERRERO, Jairo. *Amin SO9RAT: a Moroccan Rapper from the North-Eastern Region* In: *Studies on Arabic Dialectology and Sociolinguistics: Proceedings of the 12th International Conference of AIDA held in Marseille from May 30th to June 2nd 2017* [online]. Aix-en-Provence: Institut de recherches et d'études sur les mondes arabes et musulmans, 2019 (generated 12 janvier 2021). Available on the Internet: <<http://books.openedition.org/iremam/4478>>. ISBN: 9791036533891. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.iremam.4478>.

This text was automatically generated on 12 January 2021.

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Introduction

- 1 This paper aims at providing some data on the main features shown by the Arabic dialects spoken in North-eastern Morocco. Furthermore, it seeks to explore how regional identity helps preserve the local dialect. Our study is mainly based on the linguistic analysis of a corpus of rap songs composed by Amin So9rat, a Moroccan artist from Berkane, a north-eastern Moroccan city standing out for its singular location in a border context. This thriving agricultural centre lies just 23 km from Algeria and 97 km from the Spanish enclave of Melilla. Furthermore, Berkane is located within the eastern confines of the Tarifit-speaking area¹. In Morocco, the town is renowned for its oranges and for the jokes about its people who are always featured as fools².
- 2 We are fully aware of the risk involved in using musical material as linguistic evidence for the description of dialects. Thus, the features found in song lyrics may not necessarily correspond to those of the singer's dialect. Nevertheless, we have good grounds for believing that the dialect of So9rat's songs contains typical Eastern Moroccan features. This assumption is supported by the fact that many of the traits to be found in So9rat's songs fit well with what we know thus far of north-eastern Moroccan Arabic. Moreover, the artist himself states he chose to sing in what he calls *l-lahža š-šarqīyya* 'the Eastern dialect'.

1. The rap singer Amin So9rat

- 3 After the emergence of the so-called Arab spring in 2011, new rappers arrived on the scene with protest songs against their political leaders. So9rat, though, is not one of those newly-arrived rappers, as he allegedly started singing rap in 1996, in the city of Melilla, where he lived for a few months at a shelter for unaccompanied minors:

*fə-səttə w-təsʃin ʃād šəddīt l-mīkro, fə-Mlīya byexa³ ktəbt āna wāhəd l-Intro ʃla n-nās
lli ʃāʃīnha l-əl-litro w-d-drāri ʃ-ʃ^wgār lli mərmiyyīn f-əs-sentro
Adracadabra (2013)*

'it was in 1996 that I first held a microphone, in Melilla's old city I wrote an intro about the people who drank 1-liter beer bottles and the kids that were sprawled in the shelter'.

- 4 Although his songs are by no means as explicitly critical of the system as those of other Moroccan rappers such as Mouad El Haked or Madi, they have acquired a clearer political colour since the Arab spring. I could not find much information on So9rat's life and background. Named Amin, he uses three main stage names: *Soqrāt* 'Socrates', *Imbraṭor* 'Emperor', and *l-məskūn* 'the possessed one'. He was born in the city of Berkane where he has lived most of his life. Besides a short stay in the Spanish enclave of Melilla, he also spent some time in southeastern Spain in 2003:

fə-Almerya kūt nəddābəz ġir b-əl-būnya, fə-došmiltreš dxūlt āna ʃla Mursya, Torre Pačekə, kartaxena ʃəndi stūrya, fə-Torrebyexa kānt ʃəndi n-nobyā, l-gāwriyya rəgdət mʃāya f-əz-zūbyā, f-əl-bərd w-ʃlāʃ lina lāžūbyā, tlāqa ʃoşyo mʃa la-propya, wəllit propr w-ħyya wəllāt ʃoşya, ġilt nwəlli l-əl-blād nəddi wāhda ʃrūbiyya tāʃrəf tṭāyyəb l-biṣāra w-l-lūbyā.

Adracadabra (2013)

'In Almeria I used to fight with my fists, in 2003 I got to Murcia, Torre Pacheco and Cartagena. I have stories to tell from the time I was there. (When I was) in Torrevieja I had a girlfriend, the Christian girl slept with me in a dump, it was cold and we got caught in the rain. A "dirty boy" met a "clean girl", but I became clean and she became dirty, so I said to go to my country and marry a bumpkin girl who knows how to cook dried fava bean soup and beans'.

- 5 It was probably during this period that he learnt some Spanish, a language which he often uses in his songs.
- 6 If we believe what he says in his lyrics, he must be nearly 31 years old as he was aged 10 when he arrived in Melilla in 1996:

w-āna mūl ʃāšra snīn ʃād bāqi pekenyo

'I was 10, I was still young'

Adracadabra (2013)

- 7 So9rat boasts about representing the Eastern Morocco region and singing with a rural accent⁴:

*ma ʃəndi-š l-fārḡ la bīn hāda w la hāda, kīma nās Ahfir kīma nās tāʃ r-rəggāda, kūllna wlad š-šərq tṛəbbīna fə-lə-ħdāda, kīma lə-brākna kīma l-wzāda, nəqtāʃ lsāni ʃla ġilt həḡra zyāda ʃəndi kīma Tāwrirt ki lə-ʃyūn kif žrāda, r-rāp dyāli yṛprezenti l-minṭaqa š-šarḡiyya, la hḡart ʃla Bərkān rāni hḡart ʃla l-bāqīyya
ma3ndich lfar⁹ (2012)*

'To me there is no difference between this and that, between the people from Ahfir and the people from Reggada, we are all from the East, were brought up in the borders. The people from Berkane are the same as the ones from Oujda, I will cut my tongue off if I say more than I should. The people from Taourirt are the same as the ones from Laâyoune and Jerada, my rap represents the Eastern region, when I talk about Berkane I also mean the rest of the cities in the East'

rap el berkani za3za3 el mamlaka (2013)

r-rāp lli ka-nṛāpi rāp ʃrūbi ntāʃ l-ʃrūbiyya, n-nağma hārša w-ʃ-tariqa bīldīyya

'The rap I rap is a rude rap from the countryside, the melody is harsh and the style is rural'.

Q paSa (2013)

- 8 So9rat engages with sociopolitical topics in his lyrics. Issues dealt with range from drug abuse to political corruption. So9rat sings about substance abuse among young Moroccans, prostitution, smuggling across the Algeria-Morocco border or from Melilla into Morocco and bribery amongst other social issues. So9rat holds conservative views about women's emancipation and most of his songs contain misogynistic messages. He is also against freedom for homosexuals and usually calls into question the manhood of politicians. Manliness often appears in So9rat's songs as an attribute of old Arabs which is rarely found nowadays.
- 9 Regarding political issues, we may mention the following: linguistic policy (the spread of foreign languages such as French or Spanish at the expenses of Arabic and Berber), the political enmity between Morocco and Algeria, the Arab spring and the new Moroccan constitution.

2. Linguistic study

- 10 In what follows I will point out some of the significant linguistic features to be found in So9rat's songs with the goal of comparing them to what we know from north-eastern Moroccan Arabic. Currently we have interesting data on the dialects of Oujda (Elbaz 1980; Heath 2002; Benítez 2017, Behnstedt & Benabbou 2002, Lafkioui 2013) and Ain Beni Mathar in the Jerada province (Gutova (draft paper)). Besides these, other works covering various north-eastern Moroccan localities are: Behnstedt & Benabbou 2005, Behnstedt 2002, Heath 2002.

2.1. Phonetic features

2.1.1. /q/-/g/

- 11 Regarding the reflexes of OA *qāf*, the dialect under study shows an alternation between the voiceless stop /q/ and the voiced stop /g/. However, it should be noted that Hilali /g/ is over-represented in the selected data: *ygūl* 'he says', *gūfda* 'sitting', *gəṭṭrān* 'tar', *gālb* 'heart', *rgəð* 'he slept', *gūddām* 'before, in front of', *yṭərrəg* 'he pounds', *ygəṣṣ* 'he cuts', *ṭrīg* 'way, road', *fūg* 'up, on, above'⁵. Below one may find some of these items used in their context.

lli gālbū bārəd w-lli gālbū mqāṣṣāḥ

'the one whose heart is cold and insensitive'

yṭərrəg b-əl-məṣmār w-ygəṣṣ b-əl-mənzār

'he pounds nails with a hammer and cuts with a saw'

āna mgāṭṭāf gəddāmhum w-hūma k-yqāllbu fī la l-lībra

'I was ripped open before them while they were looking for a needle (to stitch my wounds)'

2.1.2. Realization of */ǧ/

- 12 OA */ǧ/ usually arises as the voiced alveo-palatal fricative /ʒ/ in the dialect used by So9rat. It is worth mentioning that chuintant /ʒ/ is by far the most common reflex of */ǧ/ among Maghrebi Bedouin dialects. Examples from our corpus are: *zbal* 'mountains', *fī la zāl* 'because of', *sūzāda* 'prayer rug', *zədd* 'grandfather'. As usually occurs in Moroccan dialects, OA *ǧīm* is rendered by /g/ in stems containing a following sibilant:

gzāra ‘butchering’, *gəzzār* ‘butcher’, *məgzāra* ‘slaughterhouse’, *gābbāš* ‘plasterer’, *gləst* ‘I sat down’. According to Behnstedt & Benabbou (2005: 24-25) this trait is found throughout North-Eastern Morocco.

- 13 Interestingly enough and as occurs in most Algerian dialects, there are no instances of right-to-left sibilant harmony. This phonetic phenomenon whereby the voiced sibilant /z/ assimilates to a subsequent /ž/ is considered to be a distinguishing feature of the major Moroccan dialects. Thus, in So9rat’s songs we find *zūž* ‘two’ instead of pan-Moroccan *žūž*:

ālfāyn w-wāḥəd fūwwətha āna ġir sbāsa, ālfāyn w-zūž žəṛṛāw ʕlīyya m-əl-mədrāsa
 ‘I spent 2001 smoking hash pipes. (Then), in 2002 I got expelled from school’.

2.1.3. Interdentals

- 14 Like many dialectologists carrying out research on Moroccan Arabic, I have always claimed in my papers that interdental phonemes are nowadays absent from the phonemic inventory of Moroccan dialects. But such a statement is not true for the North-Eastern region, where some dialects still display interdental fricatives⁶.
- 15 Generally speaking, the preservation of old interdental fricatives is a common feature of Bedouin Arabic dialects. As pointed out above, only north-eastern varieties seem to have maintained them. In the rest of Morocco and even in Bedouin dialects, /t̪/, /d̪/ and /ð̪/ have merged with their occlusive counterparts. A similar fate is forecast for some North-Eastern varieties such as Oujda, a city where these phonemes have already started to fade out⁷. This is also true for the dialect used by So9rat. In his songs, the only interdental fricative which shows a certain stability is the emphatic voiced dental fricative /ð̪/, e.g.: *mandār* ‘landscape’, *ḏāhru* ‘his back’. Moreover, this phoneme also occurs for the old emphatic voiced dental stop /ð̪/: *māḏi* ‘sharp, crafty, wise’, *biḏāfa* ‘goods’, *wāḏəḥ* ‘clear’, *bāyḏa* ‘egg’. Concerning the two other interdental fricatives, I came across a sole example of /t̪/ and no instances of /d̪/: *hāḏi* ‘this (f.)’, but *dənb* ‘fault, sin’, *tāni* ‘also’, *tlāta* ‘three’. Dialect levelling and koineisation seem to be responsible for this gradual loss of interdentals, but sociolinguistic factors may also have played a role in it as this Bedouin pronunciation is often perceived as crude by city-dwellers and therefore looked down upon.

2.1.4. Labiovelarization

- 16 Another typically Bedouin feature which has been observed in our corpus of songs is a dominant trend towards labiovelarization: *š^wġār* ‘small ones’, *x^wbār* ‘news’, *š^wkāra* ‘bag, pouch’, *x^wdāma* ‘knives’, *fāš m^wa kān nəxdəm w-ma nəbqā-š g^wāʕəd* ‘I would rather do any job than stay seated’. This phenomenon has also been recorded by Benítez (2017: 6) and Behnstedt & Benabbou (2005: 20).

3. Morphosyntactic features

- 17 **3.1.** The passive voice is expressed by means of the prefix *n-* and to a lesser extent *t-*: *yəndār ~yətdār* ‘it is done’, *txlāqīt* ‘I was born’, *nḏārrīt* ‘I got hurt’, *həḏra ma təngāl-š* ‘words which must not be said’, *llāh yənfəl žədd l-moro lli yəttəšra b-əl-māṛūxa* ‘may God curse the grandfather of the Moroccan who is bought off with a Maruja chocolate bar’. This feature is also attested in Oujda, cf. Behnstedt & Benabbou 2005: 28⁸.

- 18 **3.2.** The most common present marker is pan-Moroccan *ka-*: *hādu hūma wlād l-blād lli ka-nəbǧīhūm* ‘these are the fellow countrymen I want’, *s-səlfā ka-tədxūl b-əž-žəmla mən l-ālžeri: z-zīt w-d-dǧīg w-l-fārīna w-vāškīri* ‘large quantities of goods are introduced (into Morocco) from Algeria: oil, flour, refined flour and *The Laughing Cow* cheese’. On the other hand, there are also several cases where verbs are used without any present marker, e.g.: *nəstāf rəf bəlli ybəkəkəf ʃ-šūbh* ‘I think highly of those who get up early in the morning’, *ma nəhḏār-š frənʃe* ‘I do not speak French’⁹.
- 19 **3.3.** The main future marker is *ǧādi*, which is also attested on the other side of the Algerian border, e.g.: *kūll šī ǧādi yfūt* ‘everything will pass’, *ǧādi ngūl lək* ‘I am going to tell you’. This particle is morphologically the active participle of *ǧda*, *yaǧdu*, a verb meaning ‘to go’ which is nowadays absent from the lexicon of Moroccan Arabic.
- 20 **3.4.** Regarding defective verb inflection, it is worth mentioning the paradigm reconstruction in the imperfective plural forms (*-īw*), which alternates with the *-u* forms characteristic of Bedouin dialects: *yərmīw* ‘they throw it’, *l-ǧārro də-šāka hna ma ka-nəkmū-š* ‘we do not smoke tobacco from the government-licensed-tobacconist’s shop’, *nāf qəl f la hādi šhāl n-nās kānu yəbǧūni* ‘I remember that formerly people used to love me’, *tnəssīni hāža wāhda ysəmmūha la doz* ‘there is only one thing they call dose that makes me forget’, *l-wlād wāšta yəbǧīw lə-bnāt wāšta yḥābbu?* ‘what do boys love and what do girls love?’¹⁰.
- 21 **3.5.** A striking feature of many central and western Algerian dialects is the use of consonant gemination as a device to preserve short vowels when in non-final open syllable (W. Marçais 1902: 61; 1908: 76; Grand’Henry 1972: 45; Guerrero 2015: 225). This phenomenon of *ressaut* occurs in several north-eastern Moroccan dialects¹¹ and in our corpus of songs as well, e.g.: *yāf fārfu* ‘they know’, *ka-nāf fārfu* ‘we know’, *k-yəssəm fūni* ‘they hear’, *ma nərrəhmū-š* ‘I will not take pity on him’, *təkkārhi* ‘you (fem.) hate’, *k-yəddūxlu* ‘they enter’. As one can see in these examples, it is always the first radical of the stem that is geminated. Furthermore, this way of resolving triconsonantal clusters by gemination may also apply to nouns in construct with a V-initial possessive suffix, for instance: *l-maxzən dār xəddəmtu* ‘the Police did their job’, *rūkkəbti* ‘my knee’. Though it currently occurs in several sedentary Algerian dialects, *ressaut* may be regarded as a genuine Bedouin feature.
- 22 **3.6.** The active participle of the verb *kla*, *yākūl* ‘to eat’ is *kāli*, which also shows up in the Algerian dialects of Oran and Saïda¹². In the main core of Moroccan Arabic, this active participle is *wākəl*.
- 23 **3.7.** The commonest genitive particles used in So9rat’s songs are *ntāf* and, to a lesser extent, *dyāl*¹³: *d-drāri ṭālqīn d-dīsk dyāli f-əl-kārreṭera* ‘the boys play my disc on the road’, *r-rāp ntāfi rāp ntāf ʃ-šāhḥ ma-ši rāp ntāfi čataṛra* ‘my rap is true rap, it is not crappy rap’.
- 24 **3.8.** The 3rd masc. sing. pronoun is *-u*: *lli šəftu lli dərtu* ‘what I’ve seen, what I’ve done’, *yzīd l-rāsu ǧi dnūb* ‘he will only accumulate sins’, *šāhbu* ‘his friend’.

4. Lexical features

- 25 It is at the lexical level that the “Algerian” colour of the dialect under study is more remarkable. Interestingly enough, one may also observe how sometimes typically western Algerian terms alternate with Moroccan lexical items¹⁴.

- 26 **4.1. Prepositions and adverbs:** The most remarkable prepositions and adverbs are: *kīf* ~ *ḥāl* 'like'¹⁵, *b-əṣ-ṣāḥḥ* ~ *b-əl-ḥāqq* 'but', *ḍrūk* ~ *dāba* 'now', *ḥlaṣān* ~ *ḥīt* 'because of, for'¹⁶; *bālāk* 'perhaps'¹⁷, *ḡōdda* 'tomorrow', *šəlla* 'a lot of'¹⁸, *wāh* 'yes', *bārka* 'enough', *ḡāya* 'well; good'. These four adverbs are also very common in Algerian Arabic. Unlike Moroccan *baraka*, *bārka* may take a suffixed pronoun, e.g.: *bārkaḵūm mən nifāq w-lə-kdūb* 'stop being hypocrites and telling lies'.
- 27 **4.2. Interrogatives:** *wāšta* ~ *wāš* 'what'¹⁹, *ḥlāš* 'why', *kifāš* 'how', *fəyn* 'where'. Among these interrogatives, it is worth noting that *wāš* is typically Algerian, while *wāšta* is characteristic of the Bedouin dialects spoken in a region extending from Berkane in Morocco to Algiers in Algeria²⁰.
- 28 **4.3. Algerian vocabulary:** Typically western Algerian terms are: *xīr* 'better', *fūwwət* 'to pass, spend', *tšəffaf* 'to feel sad about sth.', *rgəd* 'to sleep', *zūbya* 'rubbish dump', *xwən* 'to steal', *ḡābət* 'to chat up', *xməž* 'dirt', *stənnna* 'to wait', *ma ḥla bālī-š b-* 'I do not care about'²¹, *xūdmī* 'knife', *tūmər* 'to struggle, to have a tough time of it', *ḡḥəd* 'to sit down' (alongside *ḡləs*), *ḥāsi* 'well', *bəllāḥ* 'to close' *kāren* 'a certain pie made of mashed chickpeas', *sāqša* 'to ask', *ṣra* 'to happen'²², *ṣwāləḥ* 'things, stuffs'²³, *ḥəbbəl* 'to drive crazy', *ḡāšī* 'people'.
- 29 **4.4. Northern Moroccan terms:** The dialect under investigation shows a certain number of lexical items which are likely to have been borrowed from northern Moroccan varieties. An example of this is the expression *šənni ḥāndək?* (together with Algerian *wāš bīk?*) 'what is wrong with you?' which is usually rendered by *ma lək?* in the Moroccan koiné. Another example is *bība!* a Spanish loanword (<*viva*) which is used as a formula to say "thanks" or "bravo"²⁴. Further loanwords from Spanish have been found in So9rat's songs, a fact that may be accounted for by the proximity of Berkane from the Spanish enclave of Melilla. Besides this, it should be recalled that Berkane is not far away from the area occupied by the Spaniards during the colonial period.
- 30 **4.5. French loanwords:** As regards the vocabulary, another aspect worth pointing out is the presence of numerous French loanwords, e.g.: *ynāvīḡi* 'he gets by' (<*naviguer*), *ytrāḥīki* 'he traffics' (<*trafiquer*), *baṭwār* 'slaughterhouse' (<*abattoir*), *trīsīti* 'electricity' (<*électricité*), *zālāmeṭ* 'matches' (<*les allumettes*), *yriški* 'he risks' (<*risquer*), *dəṛwa* 'law' (<*droit*), *tbāša* 'to suffer, to be taken to a police station' (<*passer*).

5. Conclusions

- 31 From our study we can draw the following conclusions:
- 32 **5.1.** The features of the dialect used in So9rat's songs fit well with the existing data we have from north-eastern Moroccan dialects.
- 33 **5.2.** Many of these features may be regarded as typically Algerian which goes along the same line as Heath's claim (2002: 25) that Oujda Arabic is an extension of western Algerian dialects:
- 34 "The core dialect of Wj-M is an extension of western Algerian dialects, and it is a historical accident that Wj is separated by the border from its natural hinterland. However, in recent decades the border has been closed more often than not, and with excellent transportation connections to the major Moroccan cities to the west, M residents of Wj have become partially koiné-ized. A more thorough investigation, including some work in the villages nearby, would bring out more substantial

“Algerian” features, but even my urban data show some cases of “ressaut” (3.7.1.) a common feature of western Algerian dialects”.

35 5.3. On the other hand, as hinted at by Heath and as I mentioned previously, several linguistic facts suggest that the so-called Moroccan koiné is gaining ground in north-eastern Morocco at the expense of local varieties:

- Loss of the voiceless dental fricative /t/ and the voiced dental fricative /d/ in some localities. The only interdental fricative which still seems to survive in most north-eastern dialects is emphatic /d̥/.

- Alternation between prefixes *n-* and *t-* to express the passive voice.

- Alternation between *-īw* and *-u* suffixes in the imperfective plural forms of defective verbs.

- Use of both *dyāl* and *ntāf* to express possession. I think that *ntāf* is the original genitive particle in north-eastern Moroccan Arabic, whereas *dyāl* may be regarded as a borrowing from the dialects of the central urban belt.

- As far as the vocabulary is concerned, we note the alternation between western Algerian lexical items and others belonging to the lexicon of the Moroccan koiné: the occurrence of *ḍrūk* ‘now’ alongside *dāba*, *kif* and *fhāl* for ‘now’, *b-əṣ-ṣāḥḥ* ‘but’ along with *b-əl-ḥāqq*, or *gʕəḍ* ‘to sit down’ together with *gləs*.

36 To sum up, the Moroccan imprint on the north-eastern Moroccan varieties is becoming increasingly noticeable as a consequence of dialect levelling and koineization. Nevertheless, there seems to be evidence that the main core of the local dialects is still resisting the spread of the national koiné. Such an assumption is particularly true at the lexical level with an important number of items being shared by western Algerian dialects. The intricate relationship between regional belonging and linguistic identity might be among the reasons for this attachment to the local dialect. This is confirmed by So9rat himself who always stresses his belonging to the so-called “Eastern region” (*l-minṭaqa š-šarqīyya*), boasts of representing it and is proud of using the “Eastern dialect” (*l-lahža š-šarqīyya*).

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NOTES

1. Cf. Kossmann 2013: 34.
2. On the agricultural production of Berkane and its famous oranges, see The Oxford Business Group 2014: 230. On the jokes about the people of Berkane, see White 2006.
3. A borrowing from Spanish *vieja* 'old'.
4. It should be noted that the Eastern region of Morocco is often regarded as a rural area in the Moroccan collective imagination.
5. /g~/q/ variation with prevalence of the former is also found in Oujda (Benítez 2017: 5) and Huwwāra (Behnstedt & Benabbou 2005: 26).
6. On the preservation of the triad of interdental in Morocco, see Heath 2002: 132.
7. Cf. Behnstedt & Benabbou 2005: 24; Benítez 2017: 5.
8. This is also true for the neighbouring Algerian dialects of Saïda (1908: 97) and Oran (Guerrero 2015: 226).
9. Note that the absence of present markers is characteristic of western Algerian dialects, cf. Guerrero 2015: 226.
10. This variation -u / -iw has also been recorded elsewhere in north-eastern Morocco by Behnstedt & Benabbou 2005: 28.
11. Cf. Benítez 2017: 6; Behnstedt & Benabbou 2005: 27.
12. Cf. Guerrero 2015: 226.

13. A similar alternation is also found in Oujda, cf. Benítez 2017: 7.
14. Apart from this, we may point out some interesting terms which seem to be characteristic of the Berkani speech: *šin* 'ugly' (instead of *xāyəb*), *zīn* 'beautiful, handsome' (instead of *zwīn*), *ḥdāḍa* 'borders' (instead of *ḥudūd*).
15. E.g.: *ḥta āna kifī kifkūm* 'me either, I am like you'
16. E.g.: *bdīt f-ər-rāp nǧānni ma-ši ʔlašān š-šuhra* 'I started singing, (but) not because of the fame', *ʔlašān āna ma škit ki dərḃūni bə-lə-x" dāma* 'because I did not complain when they stabbed me'.
17. A Turkish loanword which is quite frequent among Algerian dialects. E.g.: *bālāk hādi ġīr ši wāḥda mən l-ʔššāqa* 'perhaps she is just one of (my) lovers', *bālāk rāk ʔəštu* 'maybe you lived it'.
18. E.g.: *šəlla mu?minīn tərku dīnhūm* 'many believers left their religion'.
19. E.g.: *l-maḥḍār wāšta ygūl w-f-əš-šikāya wāšta gālu* 'what does the Police report say and what did they say in their claim?', *xāššni nəʔrəf wāš bǧāw, ʔlāš lǧāw?* 'I have to find out what they want, why did they call (me)?'.
20. See for instance the dialect of Oujda (Benhstedt & Benabbou 2005: 30), that of the outskirts of Tlemcen (W. Marçais 1902: 174) or the one spoken in the Algerian Tell (Ph. Marçais 1977: 201).
21. E.g.: *ma ʔla bālī-š b-əl-ḥukūma* 'I don't care about the government'
22. E.g.: *gūl li kifāš šrāt lhūm ḥātta šərḗāwk* 'tell me how it happened that they sought you'.
23. E.g.: *bāʔd n-nās lli ma bǧāwnī-š ngūl ši šwāləḥ gūlthūm* '(this is a reply to) some people who do not want me to say some things I have said'.
24. E.g.: *bība l wəld blādi, rāk ʔzīz ʔlīyya bəzzāf* 'bravo to my compatriot! I hold you dear'.

ABSTRACTS

Rap has become among the most cultivated musical genres in the Arab world. This is particularly true for the post-Arab spring Maghreb. As their counterparts in other countries, Moroccan rappers usually boast of representing their towns and/or regions. Given that dialect is an important element of regional identity, many of these rappers strive to sing songs in their own local accent. As regards the so-called Eastern Region of Morocco (*l-minṭaqa š-šarqīyya*), its most popular rapper is probably Amin So9rat, a committed youngster from the city of Berkane. The present paper aims at analyzing So9rat's songs in order to provide some data on the main features of what the rapper himself calls *l-lahza š-šarqīyya* 'the Eastern Moroccan accent' and, more specifically, on the spoken Arabic of Berkane. Furthermore, we will comment on the main topics dealt with in the lyrics.

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Keywords: Rap, Morocco, North-eastern Moroccan Arabic, Berkane Arabic

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