## New Perspectives in Iberian Dialectology / Nouvelles perspectives en dialectologie ibérique

David Heap, Enrique Pato, and Claire Gurski (eds.)

Twelfth International Conference on Methods in Dialectology (Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada, 1st – 5th August 2005)

# Spanish / Catalan Contact in Historical Perspective: 18th Century Documents from Majorca

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#### 1. Introduction

The study of the Spanish varieties spoken in Catalan-speaking territories has yet to reach mature development (cf. Sinner 2004). Specifically, in the case of the Spanish varieties spoken in the Balearic Islands, the research to date is scarcely more than preliminary as it is limited to the works of Moll (1961), Serrano (1996), Pieras (1999), and Romera (2003). Furthermore, the study of the varieties of Spanish in Catalan-speaking territories has yet to be performed from a diachronic perspective. Historical studies have mostly ignored the question of Spanish contact with Catalan, and if they do so consider such contact, they present it as a synchronic block, attending solely to aspects of the current variety (cf. Blas Arroyo 2004), or they mainly fix upon external aspects (e.g. linguistic legislation, demographics, "language conflict", language planning, education policy, etc.) from a Catalan perspective. As a result, there is little linguistic data on the Spanish spoken in the Catalan-speaking territories during the 18th and 19th centuries.<sup>2</sup>

It is difficult to explain the scarce interest that Spanish dialectology has shown for the analysis of Spanish language varieties in contact with Catalan. As for the significant lack of research carried out from a diachronic perspective, two reasons can be ventured. First, work in Spanish historical linguistics has been traditionally confined, almost exclusively, to the study of the medieval and classical periods, leaving aside the period that extends from the 18th century onward (cf. Wright 1993); yet it is precisely during the last three centuries that a significant number of Catalan speakers became bilingual in Spanish, resulting in increased contact of Spanish and Catalan. The second reason, which is partly a consequence of the first reason above, is the lack of trustworthy document sources that are easily accessible to historical linguists to study these varieties from a diachronic perspective.

In an attempt to remedy this situation, in the following pages I will explain some of the important questions that arise when developing appropriate methodological tools to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This is a revised English version of a paper read at the XV Congreso Alemán de Hispanistas (Bremen, March of 2005) that is due to appear under the title "Materiales para la historia del castellano hablado en Mallorca: El archivo epistolar de Pedro de Santacilia" in the following volume: Carsten Sinner and Andreas Wesch (eds.) *El castellano de las regiones catalanohablantes de España*. Frankfurt: Iberoamericana / Vervuert.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Aside from Cala Carvajal's (2000) analysis of 58 19<sup>th</sup> century letters written by semi-learned Catalans living in Cuba I don't know of any corpus-based historical study of Spanish in contact with Catalan. Some information can be gleaned from indirect sources, such as the errors attributed to Catalan speakers in Spanish prescriptive grammars (cf. Solà: 1980).

<sup>2</sup> 

study the diachrony of the Spanish variety spoken in Majorca. The majority of the reflections that follow come from my experience selecting, transcribing, and editing Majorcan documents for the project "Edición y estudio del epistolario de Pedro de Santacilia y Pax". The Epistolary Archive of Pedro de Santacilia (henceforth APS) contains nearly 8,000 documents written during the 17th and 18th centuries, mostly in Catalan and Spanish. The majority are letters addressed to Majorcan nobleman Pedro de Santacilia y Pax (1592-1668) but also to his descendents and to other persons linked to his house. The examples that appear in the pages that follow have been extracted from file 6 which contains nearly 250 documents (mostly letters) dated between 1739 and 1788; these documents are linked to Cecilia Zaforteza y Berga, Marquise of Vilafranca (ca. 1722-1788?). Occasionally, I will refer to examples from other documents, such as those compiled by Martínez i Taberner (2000), and Vibot (2005).

This study is organized as follows. The first section includes a brief discussion of the different ways in which a diachronic perspective can contribute to a better understanding of the phenomena that characterize the Majorcan variety of Spanish. In the next section, I present certain aspects related to the composition of a diachronic corpus, in particular the question of which texts present the greatest interest for obtaining linguistic data. Finally, in the last section, I will present questions related to the methodology used in the transcription and editing of documents. Although the reflections that follow are made in connection to the diachronic study of Spanish spoken in Majorca, in reality much of my commentary can be extrapolated to the study of the historical varieties of Spanish in other Catalan-speaking territories.

#### 2. The importance of a diachronic perspective

Undoubtedly, a detailed historical analysis of Majorcan Spanish's origins and evolution will contribute to a stronger understanding of the phenomena that characterize the Majorcan variety of Spanish today. The reason is that, in many cases, a diachronic perspective is crucial to identifying the causal mechanisms through which a given structure has been incorporated into a specific linguistic system. That is, diachronic factors may be of great value whenever we want to move from describing the phenomena that characterize the variety being studied to explaining them. As an example of how a diachronic perspective can help one better understand a synchronic phenomenon, consider the use of the preposition en to express "direction to" in the Spanish spoken in Majorca (e.g. llegamos en Barcelona, salimos en la calle). Moll (1961: 472) attributes such non-standard preposition use to the fact that the distribution of a and en is not as clear in Catalan as it is in Spanish, which purportedly causes confusion for bilingual speakers. But this explanation is at best incomplete: if Majorcan Catalan uses a for situation and direction (som a Palma / vaig a Palma), one would expect that in their

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The publication of the archive, sponsored by Sa Nostra (Caja de Ahorros y Monte de Piedad de Baleares), is being carried out in collaboration with Antonio Bernat Vistarini (Universitat de les Illes Balears) and Tamás Sajó (Editorial Studiolum).

Spanish utterances Majorcans would overuse the preposition a, not en, to express spatial relations. As I have explained in greater detail in Enrique-Arias (2005), there are a number of synchronic and diachronic factors that help explain the existence of this structure in the grammar of bilingual Majorcans. A relevant piece of data is that the directional uses of en are common in the varieties of Spanish that come in contact with other languages, such as the Spanish spoken in Galicia (Rojo 2004: 1097), Paraguay (Choi 2001), Texas (García 1982) or Equatorial Guinea (Granda 1988). This suggests that we are dealing with a phenomenon motivated by the tendency toward simplification and restructuring of grammatical rules that is common in language contact situations. It should also be noted that this area of grammar is particularly vulnerable to change, since the uses of a and en have fuzzy limits within monolingual varieties of all the Romance languages (cf. examples in Choi 2001: 188-193). For instance, in standard Spanish, en may be used to express direction (entraron en el portal), while a in certain cases may express static location (esperaban a la puerta de su casa). Thus, the contact situation has the effect of extending to more contexts a structure that already existed in general Spanish.

A diachronic perspective complements the synchronic factors outlined above, unveiling other circumstances that may have contributed to the introduction of the directional uses of en in Majorcan Spanish. Unlike present-day Catalan, in the language of the 18th century en was frequently used to express direction, as documented in the APS: aura de passar en Vich [20b/1743], arriba lo dia de pasqua en Madrit [52a/1756]. Spanish letters from the same period written by Majorcans also use en to express direction: llegamos en esse Puerto [70a/1759], passaré en Palma [199b/1788]. It may well be that the current directional uses of en in Majorcan Spanish are the continuation of a structure that was already firmly established in the Spanish used in Majorca in the 18th century. In turn, this feature of Majorcan Spanish would have been encouraged by the existence of a parallel construction in the Catalan of the 18th and 19th centuries. In any case, a diachronic perspective allows one to obtain a more complete analysis of the different factors that may have played a role in the introduction of this construction into the grammar of Catalan / Spanish bilinguals in Majorca.

Another characteristic of Majorcan Spanish for which a diachronic perspective provides valuable information, is the use of pedir in the sense of 'preguntar'. In the APS there is one clear example: que passasse á verla [...] por pedir me, de Juana, si es de buena gente [159/1780]. Likewise, a judicial statement from 1833 (cf. Vibot 2005: 66) states: pidióle si contava la verdad que havia dicho a su mujer bruta. The studies carried out from a purely synchronic perspective (cf. Moll 1961: 471; Serrano 1996: 384-85) miss the fact that the use of pedir, in the sense of 'preguntar', was not a rarity in 18th century Spanish; in fact, in Real Academia's 1737 dictionary, and all its subsequent editions through 1852, pedir is defined in its second meaning as "preguntar o informarse de otro de alguna cosa" (cf. s.v. pedir in Real Academia Española's Nuevo Tesoro

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The examples are transcribed respecting the spelling and punctuation of the original documents except for the abbreviations which have been expanded (the expanded text appears in italics). The code between brackets that follows the examples from file 6 of the *APS* corpus indicates document number and year. For the examples extracted from other sources I provide the reference.

Lexicográfico de la Lengua Española, online at www.rae.es). Therefore, in this case, Catalan contact has resulted not so much in the introduction of an innovative structure, but in the preservation of a language usage that existed in general Spanish.

Furthermore, adopting a diachronic perspective allows one to distinguish between those linguistic phenomena that are documented early on from others that represent more recent innovations. For example, Romera (2003: 374-75) suggests that yeismo, an usual phenomenon in Majorcan Spanish today, has been encouraged by the arrival, in the last 50 years, of Spanish-speaking immigrants that largely come from yeista areas of southern Spain. Romera's view seems to be supported by 18th-century data from the APS, as the archive presents no examples of yeismo in documents written by Majorcans (the only example, haye 'halle' [42a/1748] appears in a letter written by a non-Majorcan and dated in Madrid). On the other hand, there are linguistic phenomena documented in 18th century texts –like the tendency to pronounce as [s] the Spanish sound  $[\theta]$ , and to use [k] for [x]— that today are restricted to sectors of the population with very limited competence in Spanish (cf. Moll 1961: 470). In 18th century data extracted from the APS, the indications of non-distinction between [s] and  $[\theta]$  appear regularly in documents written by Majorcans of all social classes. The non-distinction between [k] and [x], although less frequent, is also present (quenio 'genio' [41c/1748], sajaría 'sacaría' [121b/1773]). The historical data therefore allows us to observe how the Majorcan variety has converged with general Spanish, certainly due to the progressive castilianisation of the population that has been accelerated by the implementation of universal public education, the access to Spanish-language mass media, and the massive arrival of a Spanish-speaking immigrant population.

Lastly, there are phenomena that, in principle, seemingly cannot be attributed to Catalan influence. For instance, APS documents offer quite a few examples of laísmo and leísmo (*la doy repetidas norabuenas y parabienes* [124b/1776], *el desconsuelo de V.S. le considero correspondiente á tan gran pérdida* [40a/1748]), uses that are rather uncommon in the Spanish spoken in Majorca today. The uses of laísmo and leísmo in the corpus seem to be motivated by the influence of Castilian prestigious uses through reading and education: in contrast to the current situation, prescriptive grammars were rather permissive and even encouraging of leísmo well into the 19th century.

#### 3. The Constitution of the Corpus

The general objective in compiling a diachronic corpus of Majorcan Spanish is to place at the scholar's disposition documentation in which one can appreciate traits of colloquial speech that approach as much as possible the Spanish spoken in Majorca during the different periods represented in the corpus. Obviously, the written language tends to mask the traits most typically associated with the colloquial register, but it is also possible to select those non-official, and, to a certain extent, spontaneous documents that allow a glimpse into the language varieties spoken daily. Personal letters, because they

are frequently written in a familiar and intimate tone, constitute particularly valuable documents.<sup>5</sup>

Inevitably, the vision of a given period gleaned from written documents will always be partial since the language is filtered by conventions that define the textual typology of the document in question. In letters, not only the formulae used in greetings and salutations, but also the discourse, lexicon and syntax structure, can be strongly subject to pre-established usage. For instance, in the APS there are several condolence letters received by Cecilia Zaforteza concerning the passing away of her husband, and in these letters, as one can judge from the examples that follow, the different authors use practically identical structures and repeat very similar formulae:

Y considerando el pesar que justamente âflije á V.S. en tanta perdida, suplico á la Divina Magestad consuele á V.S. como lo necessita Y No pudiendo Yo dexar de tener su alma muy presente en mis pobres oraciones [35/1748] Y considerando el justo y natural pesar que aflije a V.S. en tanta perdida pido muy de veras á la Divina Piedad, assista y consuele á V.S. como necessita No pudiendo yo dexar, por muchos motivos de cumplir con la obligacion de tener su Alma muy presente [36/1748]

Therefore, to ensure that we are characterizing the language of the period being studied, and not text types, it is important to vary as much as possible the types of documents and the themes treated therein, and to cover an extensive diachronic period. In this regard, the correspondence of Cecilia Zaforteza archived in file 6 of the APS, constitutes a corpus of great linguistic interest because of the variety of participants (113 writers, including nobles, members of the clergy, and servants, both men and women) and because of its varied typology, with official letters, as well as business, political, personal and familiar letters. In certain cases, we even have drafts of responses written on the backs of letters, through which we can somehow reconstruct the interaction between the writers. Of special value are informal notes such as those exchanged between Cecilia Zaforteza and her nephew, where one finds the following example:

- (1) a. me ha dicho Dn. Josef Jalon iva a la cualcada con un Adrezo que V.S. le havia dejado... [205a/no date].
  - b. Sobrino la primera noticia de calon es la que tu me acabas de dar [205a/no date].

In this type of document, an informal note, spontaneous vernacular traits are reflected, such as the use of /k/ for /x/ (calon for the surname Jalón). In a similar document, also written by Cecilia Zaforteza, we find an instance of code switching used to exploit the expressive possibilities of a Majorcan set phrase without an immediate Spanish equivalent: lo que importa es no fiar de nadie ni omitir passo ni perder tiempo

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The relative proximity between letters and oral speech is reflected in the commentary of a Jesuit friend of Cecilia Zaforteza who refers to the letter that he is writing as *esta mi conversasión escrita* [182c/1783].

<sup>©</sup> Enrique-Arias, Andrés (2006): "Spanish / Catalan Contact in Historical Perspective: 18th Century Documents from Majorca". In D. Heap, E. Pato, and C. Gurski (eds.), *New Perspectives in Iberian Dialectology / Nouvelles perspectives en dialectologie ibérique*. London: University of Western Ontario [online edition: www.uwo.ca/linguistics/methodsxii].

perque es confiats van Infern, y cuydarse despatche dentro el termino que se á señalado [187a/1785].

Judicial statements that reproduce direct discourse are also of great interest. As illustrated in the following testimony fragment, taken from an 1805 court case archived in Buñola, it is possible to reconstruct the oral exchanges made between the participants involved (cf. Vibot 2005: 55-6):

y quando fuimos en las casas del predio Raxe y preguntan(tan)do al muchaco que te queria hazer este hombre y nos respondio me queria horcar y respondio el reo tu no sabes lo que dizes mira que te tengo de espeñar con un garrotaso y el muchacho dixo y otra cosa que no esta bien decirla [...] y dixo me queria coder por fuerza y porque no lo quizo consentir me queria horcar y visto todo esto enbie al Bayle porque enbiase para levarlo ala Carsell y este, este es quanto sabe y puede decir en verdad.

Inventories and descriptions included in judicial procedures constitute another area of special interest. The use of clarifying expressions in Catalan next to Spanish words gives us insight into the lexical gaps in the Spanish of the Majorcans to whom the document is directed. For instance, in a trial from 1804, there is a list of stolen goods that includes the following: dos casajas vulgo chimarras; un chaleco vulgo guardapits de paño (cf. Vibot: 2005: 51). The writer, feeling the need to clarify the meaning of casaca and chaleco, inserts the Catalan expressions chimarra and guardapits. The writer's unfamiliarity with the term casaca is reflected in the spelling casaja, demonstrating the confusion between /k/ and /x/ in Majorcan Spanish.

One may also obtain interesting information by comparing documents of similar content written in Spanish and Catalan. As Martinez i Taberner (2000: 103 and ff.) points out, after the publication of a royal provision in 1768, the town councils were forced to perform administrative work in Spanish. However, drafts of minutes that have been preserved show that town councils continued to hold their meetings in Catalan, and later they would translate their drafted minutes into Spanish to satisfy the legal requisite. For instance, documents dated from 1779, belonging to the Town Council of Calvià (cf. Martínez i Taberner 2000: 118-119), show both the Catalan draft and the Spanish final version of a contract written for the town doctor. The Catalan version reads: *y en ocazio que no age melals no pugue ser impedit si vol anar en Ciutat o a altre part fora vila*. The Spanish version reads: *y en caso que no haya ningun enfermo no sera inpedido si quiere irse en Palma o en otra parte fuera del presente districto*. With these two versions, one can contrast the use of prepositions and see how in the Catalan text en and a alternate (anar en Ciutat o a altre part), while in the Spanish version the exclusive use of en is preferred (irse en Palma o en otra parte).

In personal letters from the APS, there are also cases where a single topic is written in two languages, as the following two letters where Cecilia Zarfoteza discusses the death of her husband:

ab lo coreu pessat no vatx tenir hanima de ascriurer á V.M. de ma propia per trobarme hocupedissima, y ab la aflicsió que pot V.S. pensar, y no gens bone de una carrega a nel pit bestant forte [41/1748].

poniendo quatro palabras solamente de mi puño pues no me pude alargar mas por estar ocupadisima, traspassada del vehemente dolor que corresponde a tal desgracia, y nada buena, por tener un resfriado muy fuerte [228/1748].

It is evident that the author is more familiar with the person to whom she is writing in Catalan, whereas the letter in Spanish has a more official and distant tone. To describe her grief, we have, in the Catalan version, *y ab la aflicsió que pot V.S. pensar*. Here, the writer seeks sympathy from her correspondent. However, in the Spanish version, the writer uses greater linguistic complexity and adopts a more objective perspective, resulting in greater distance between writer and reader: *traspassada del vehemente dolor que corresponde a tal desgracia*.

One of the advantages of a corpus like the APS is that to a great extent it is possible to situate each document in its proper social, geographic and chronological context. For the researcher's benefit, in the edition of the APS each document is accompanied by a filing card that contains concrete details about the document (sender, date, addressee, place of issue, language) as well as other relevant information. Of special note, the corpus allows one to contrast data in Spanish letters written by bilingual Majorcans with letters written in Spanish by monolingual speakers in Spanish speaking territories, and, at the same time, consult contemporary documents written in Catalan. The result is a corpus that, within the limits imposed by the written medium, offers linguistic data that reflect the social stratification and the geographic diversity of language in the 18th century.

#### 4. Transcription, editing and search tools

I have already pointed out that research on the diachrony of the varieties of Spanish in Catalan-speaking territories has been limited by the lack of trustworthy historical sources accessible to the researcher. In reality, this is a deficiency that accompanies other more general ones, such as the belated creation of diachronic corpora in the world of Spanish linguistics. The creation of several easily accessible diachronic corpora in the last few years has helped to remedy the situation, but the atomism and the lack of uniformity in the criteria of selection and presentation of texts place us far from the ideal situation.

In organizing the publication of the APS, we strived to fulfill the expectations not only of linguists working from different perspectives (dialectology, paleography, phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicology) but also of scholars working in other disciplines, and of the general public. To achieve our goals, we turned to the proposals of Sánchez-Prieto Borja (1998) and deemed it crucial to offer three levels of access to the text: facsimile, paleographic transcription, and an edited version with normalized punctuation and spelling. The publication is being prepared using the program Folio Views, which allows one to combine high-quality digital photographs of the documents with their corresponding transcriptions. The publication also incorporates

a powerful search tool that allows the user to make simple searches or filter searches according to various parameters such as sender, date, addressee, place of issue, and language. The normalization of spelling allows one to perform searches using current spelling practices so that the corpus may be used by persons who are not familiar with the spelling conventions of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Paleographic transcriptions of the corpus texts provides researchers with all possible linguistic information at the phonetic / phonological level. In the transcription, the original spelling and punctuation of the texts are meticulously reproduced (the only exception being the abbreviations that are expanded out to facilitate reading but with the expanded text indicated in italics), leaving the linguist the choice to decide the phonetic value of the original spelling. This results in texts that allow one to clearly evaluate phenomena present in Majorcan Spanish (many of which are yet to be studied), such as rhotacism of the intervocalic /d/: poria 'podía' [121b/1773]; confusion between unstressed /a/ and /e/: estimeremos 'estimaremos', [7b/1741], diletados 'dilatados' [17/1742], sare 'seré' [31/1748], entesesores 'antecesores' [121a/1773], racato 'recato' [126b/1777], axaminó 'examinó' [193/1785]; uses of <v> for <f> that suggest a labiodental pronunciation of Spanish /b/ < Latin v, -b-: beativicaciones [195/1786]; or antihiatic, epenthetic segments (especially in the conjugation of verbs whose root ends in a vowel): seya 'sea' [13369/no date], desseyo 'deseo' [127c/1777], recaien 'recaen' [192a/1785], havora 'ahora' [121a/1773].

It is important to note, however, that written documents do not directly reflect actual speech since in script language always appears through the filter of writing conventions. Thus, simply because a given phenomenon does not manifest itself in the writing of a particular time does not mean that such a phenomenon did not exist for speakers living during that time period. For instance, although devoicing of -/d/ in absolute final position is a generalized phenomenon today in the Spanish of Catalan speakers (cf. Moll 1961: 469), in file 6 of the APS documents there are only three cases of <t> spellings where we would expect <d>: salut (twice) and amistat. The scarce appearance of this phenomenon should not be surprising since Spanish spelling conventions exclude the use of <t> in word final position. That is, it is perfectly possible for those speakers that systematically devoice their final /d/, to never show any traces of this trait in their writing. The sporadic occurrences found in the corpus seem to be the result of either absent mindedness or precarious knowledge of writing conventions on the part of the writer.

Another difficult phenomenon to assess in written documents, due to the lack of conventional writing mechanisms in Spanish, is the possible geminated articulation of intervocalic /tʃ/, a characteristic trait of the Catalan of Majorca (Pradilla Cardona 2002: 303). In the corpus there are three examples of the spelling <tch> (muchos, mutcha [121b/1773], despatche [187a/1785]), which might be an attempt to represent a geminated pronunciation /tʃ:/. One piece of data that supports this interpretation is that in every case the <tch> spelling appears in post-tonic, intervocalic position, which is the context that most favors the elongated pronunciation in the Catalan of Majorca.

New Perspectives in Iberian Dialectology / Nouvelles perspectives en dialectologie ibérique. David Heap, Enrique Pato, and Claire Gurski (eds.). 2006. London: University of Western Ontario. [online edition < https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cgi/siteview.cgi/id>]

Assessment of this phenomenon is hindered by the belated progress of synchronic studies regarding Majorcan Spanish. To date, the transfer of this trait to the pronunciation of /tf/ in the Spanish of bilingual Majorcans has not been researched.

The transcription also respects separation of words, as well as all the processes of sandhi, contraction, or vocalic reduction exhibited in the documents, since these phenomena bring us nearer to the spoken language. Likewise, line changes present in the original are scrupulously maintained, since they can provide information on how speakers conceived certain phonological units like the syllable, or grammatical units like morphemes: *á compano* 'acompañó' [39/1748], *cuanto estimado* 'cuánto he estimado' [161a/1780], *adecer* 'ha de ser' [173/1780], *queste* 'que esté' [175a/1781].<sup>6</sup>

Editing texts in paleographic transcription also involves maintaining errors, hesitations, and corrections in the writing, since all these elements can throw light upon possible changes underway. Errors contain documental value for the diachrony of a language since they indicate the sensitization of a speaker to a linguistic structure, which is a clear sign of the existence of the variation that is necessary for a change to arise (Labov 1972: 92-93). As Company indicates (2001: 212-14), the primary goal of the publication of textual data for linguistic purposes is to produce a text that reflects a state of language. This implies conserving the heterogeneity and instability inherent in a text, and letting the scholar decide the linguistic interest of the phenomena reflected in it. Thus, in the sentence lo que de ansiosamente desseyo [41b/1748], we maintain the word that has been crossed out, because this allows the scholar to recognize that the writer first tried to use the more natural verb + adverb order (deseo ansiosamente) but later corrected herself and changed the sentence to a stylistically marked order (ansiosamente deseo). The writer's hesitation has value because it reveals the process involved in the creation of the statement: between the two possibilities available to the speaker, one is more spontaneous and the other requires more introspection.

#### 5. Conclusion

In these pages, I have discussed the methodology for selecting, transcribing, editing, and making accessible to scholars documents of linguistic interest for researching the diachrony of the variety of Spanish in contact with Catalan in Majorca. The main objective in assembling such a corpus is to create the necessary infrastructure to advance the study of Majorcan Spanish through the use of linguistic data that is useful, trustworthy, and easy to access. Hopefully, the experiences and reflections found here

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> According to Romera (2003: 374-75) vocalic contraction is a habitual phenomenon in Majorcan Spanish which can possibly be attributed to the fact that vocalic reductions are common in the Catalan of Majorca. In the corpus of the *APS* these reductions appear as much in the writings of monolingual Castilian speakers as in those of Majorcans and thus they seem to be a trait associated with colloquial register rather than attributable to contact with Catalan.

<sup>10</sup> 

will benefit researchers examining other geographic areas where there are similar Spanish-Catalan contact situations.

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