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Lotfi Sayahi

University at Albany, State University of New York, lsayahi@albany.edu

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The Spanish language presence in Tangier, Morocco: a sociolinguistic perspective¹

by Lotfi Sayahi

Introduction

While research on the presence of the Spanish language outside Spain and the Americas has made considerable advances in recent years, it has concerned itself primarily with the Philippines (Quilis 1992, Lipski 2001), Equatorial Guinea (Granda 1991, Lipski 1985), and less frequently with other regions where Spanish is acquiring importance as a foreign language (Quilis 2000). North Africa, on the other hand, has failed to attract similar attention in spite of its close geographic and historical links with Spain and the uninterrupted presence of the Spanish language there since the 15th century. Few references signal such presence (Heath 1989, Silva-Corvalán 1995, Quilis 2002) but detailed studies are still lacking. Moreno Fernandez's 1992 article on Spanish in Oran and later his brief review "*El español en el mosaico lingüístico del Magreb*", represent two of the few contemporary contributions on the topic. Another contribution is Tarkki's 1995 analysis of Spanish as it is spoken by the Saharawi refugees in Tinduf (Algeria). As for Northern Morocco, current research is often in the form of unpublished doctoral dissertations (Amzid 1997, Ghailani 1997, El Harrak 1998) or other unedited projects produced mainly at *L'Université Abdelmalek Saadi* (Tetouan) where the only department of Spanish in former Spanish Morocco is located. Much of this investigation, however, is often limited to the identification of Spanish lexical and semantic borrowings into local varieties of Moroccan Arabic.

Hence, the object of this article is to explore the presence of Spanish in Northern Morocco from a distinct angle by analyzing the case of Tangier, a city where this language is still an important part of the local linguistic market (Bourdieu 1991). Through a sociolinguistic survey, I will describe the different levels of competence, the structural variation in Tangerine Spanish, and the speakers' attitude towards its use. In the conclusion, I will synthesize the findings and explore their implications for future research on Spanish in Northern Morocco and North Africa as a whole.

Method

One serious difficulty in carrying sociolinguistic research in large North African cities concerns the strong variation in the socioeconomic and educational backgrounds of the population. In the case of Tangier, in addition to its long multicultural and multilingual history, the city has witnessed important demographic and economic changes during the last few decades with far-reaching effects. Since the Moroccan independence in 1956, there has been a dramatic descent in the number of European and Jewish residents accompanied by the arrival of waves of rural non-Spanish speaking immigrants. As a result, the distribution of competence in Spanish shows strong irregularities according to the speakers' personal histories rather than social groups making systematic sampling difficult and unproductive. Therefore, I have opted for a judgment sampling method rather than random sampling (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 30) since the latter could be misleading in this city with a growing population of more than half a million people.

The classification I am proposing in this study makes a distinction among three groups of Spanish speakers according to their level of competence: native speakers (including Tangerine Spaniards, temporary Spanish residents, and Sephardic Jews), proficient Moroccan speakers (including balanced-bilingual speakers and advanced learners), and finally non-proficient Moroccans (including uneducated speakers and non-Tangerine Moroccans). Data from the three groups were collected both through ethnohistoric investigation and fieldwork research. Through semi-directed interviews, audio recording of spontaneous natural speech, and participant-observation over two summers in Tangier, I collected data on the knowledge and use of Spanish from forty-one subjects. In the case of native speakers, fourteen informants, ten males and four females, were contacted in Spanish-related settings including *La Casa de España*, *El Instituto Cervantes*, the Spanish high school, and private businesses. There are fifteen informants in the second group, twelve males and three females, who were also contacted at Spanish-related settings and through a local consultant. Finally, for the third group, six males and six females

were directly contacted by the author in a wide set of public and private settings. In all three groups, there was a considerable degree of variation along the typical social variables such as age, social class, and education (Chambers 1995), which will be signaled in the analysis and included in the discussion.

Variation in levels of competence

The results of the data analysis revealed that the city’s history, the geographical proximity of Spain, and the current Moroccan language policies have determined the learning and use of the Spanish language within the Tangerine society today. Within each of the three groups defined above, I have identified different levels of competence ranging from native to little or no knowledge at all.

Native speakers

As mentioned above, native speakers of Spanish in Tangier include Moroccan-born Spaniards, temporary

residents, and Sephardic Jews. As for native Tangerine Spaniards, they are the descendents of the Spanish immigrants who settled in the city between the 1830s and the 1950s. The official Spanish emigration census indicates that the overall number of Spaniards residing in the area of Tangier totals 1,410 people (Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores 2002: 7); however, it does not specify who is a native Tangerine and who is not. It is important to signal at this point that all Moroccan-born Spaniards are Spanish nationals as are some Moroccans who received Spanish citizenship. Taking this fact into consideration and based on my interviews and direct observation, I estimate the number of Moroccan-born Spaniards still residing in Tangier to be much less than the figure reported in the census. The majority of the speakers who form this group are above the age of forty since the younger generations, with a few exceptions, have been leaving to study in Spain and do not tend to settle back in Tangier.

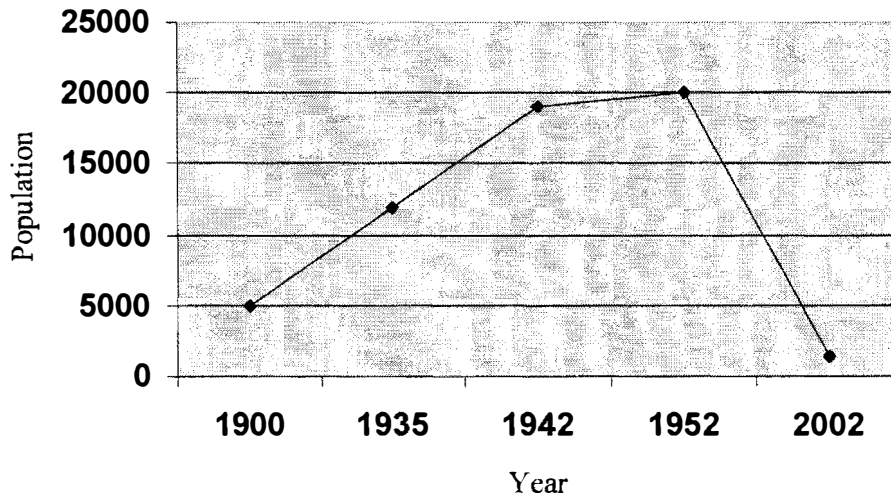


Figure 1: Evolution of the Spanish population in Tangier during the 20th century.

Source: M'rabet 2002 [1986]; Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores 1946 and 2002.

Tangerine Spaniards are all native Spanish speakers with a varying knowledge of Arabic that ranges from very limited to bilingual competence. The immigrants who arrived in the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th needed to develop knowledge of Arabic because they had to interact closely with the Moroccans with whom they shared workplaces and dwellings. During the internationalization of the city, however, Spain consolidated its economic, cultural, and linguistic presence and as a result the Spaniards who were born in Tangier or arrived there between the early 1920s and the late 1950s did not have the same need to learn

Arabic. This was the case of a 60-year male speaker who informed me that while his father, a construction worker who was born in Tangier in 1908, spoke Moroccan Arabic fluently, he, on the other hand, did not develop a significant competence as he was born and raised during the height of the Spanish presence in Tangier. He later worked in a bank where all his coworkers, including the Moroccans, spoke Spanish.

“Mi padre hablaba bien árabe, árabe marroquí. Hablaba perfecto. [...] No hablo mucho [el árabe]. ¿Sabes por qué?. Por eso, todo español, es difícil aprender así [...]

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los marroquíes aprendían el español. Yo sé algo [de árabe] me gustaría pero no me dio por estudiar'. 'My father spoke Arabic well, Moroccan Arabic. He spoke it perfectly. [...] I do not speak much Arabic, you know why? Because of this, everything in Spanish, it is difficult to learn this way [...] Moroccans would learn Spanish. I know some Arabic, I would like to speak better but I did not get to learn it'.

After the Moroccan independence, the Tangerine Spaniards became a small minority again and could no longer limit their social networks to Spanish speakers. As a result of the need to interact on a daily basis with Moroccans, many of whom now spoke little Spanish if any, Tangerine Spaniards started developing higher levels of competence in Arabic. A different informant who was born in Tangier during the early years of the International Administration described how although his own knowledge of Arabic is basic, his children and grandchildren have native-like competence.

"Hablan español, francés, y árabe. Mis hijos todos hablan el árabe la mar de bien, mejor que yo porque resulta que en mis tiempos cuando yo era pequeño los marroquíes que había aquí en Tánger hablaban español, todos. [...] Tánger era como una provincia de España igual, todo el mundo hablando aquí español y eso fue lo que a mí no me ha ayudado a hablar el árabe bien". 'They speak Spanish, French, and Arabic. All my children speak Arabic wonderfully, better than I do because it turns out that when I was little the Moroccans who were here in Tangier they spoke Spanish, all of them. [...] Tangier was just like a Spanish province, everybody here used to speak Spanish and that was what did not help me to speak Arabic'.

Significantly enough, the Tangerine Spaniards' identity is an unusual case of bilingualism and biculturalism in an immigration setting. While they completely identify themselves as Spaniards who have preserved their language, nationality, and religion, they always confirm their identity as Tangerine and some of them in spite of not having any family left in the city do not plan on leaving as in the case of this 60-year old male.

"Familia mía aquí no tengo nadie. Ahora estoy yo solo. Yo tengo aún mi casa aquí. Yo en España voy y la verdad me aburro. Nada más que la familia, no conozco a nadie. Y además cuando yo estoy aquí, estoy como en mi casa, no sé". 'I do not have any family left here. Now I am alone. I still have my house here. I go to Spain but the truth is that I get bored; I do not know anybody else besides the family. Moreover when I am here, I don't know, I am at home'.

With regard to the grammar of the Spanish spoken by Tangerine Spaniards, it presents little variation from Andalusian Spanish, but without forming a uniform

local dialect as such². The reason for this similarity is the geographical proximity that led to a linguistic and cultural continuum between Tangier and Andalusia. The short distance that separates them has always facilitated the bi-directional movement of people and allowed the Tangerine Spaniards to be taken under the cultural and linguistic umbrella of Andalusia. Moreover, the demographic history of the Spaniards in Tangier lacked the necessary continuity and witnessed several dramatic changes over the 20th century, especially immediately after the Spanish civil war (1936-1939), thus impeding the emergence of a homogenous local dialect comparable to the ones identified in different areas of Andalusia (Villena Ponsada 2000).

In phonological and phonetic terms, three major distinctive features of Andalusian Spanish described by Mondéjar (1991) can be found in Tangerine Spanish as well: aspiration, gemination, and *seso*. In my data there are examples of aspiration of initial h- [hase], /x/ in intervocalic position [le^hano], less frequently in word-final /s/ [kaso^h], and word-final /r/ [sali^h]. There are also examples of consonant gemination which occur after the aspiration of syllable-final /s/: [e^hppanole^h; Xu^httifikante]. Finally, the *seso*, or the lack of phonemic distinction between /s/ and the interdental voiceless fricative sound /θ/, is also generalized in words such as [soko], [parsela], and [sinkuenta]. Other distinctive features include the realization of the affricative /tʃ/ as a fricative [ʃ] as in [koʃe], [dereʃo], and [korʃo] and the elision of /d/ in word-final and intervocalic positions. In addition, Tangerine Spaniards are *yeístas* which means that they do not make the distinction between the palatal lateral liquid [ʎ] and the palatal glide [y] in words such as *pasillo* and *suyo*. Finally, they also tend to lax the vowels before elided word-final consonants, most commonly /s/, as it is usually the case in Eastern Andalusian Spanish (Mondéjar 1991: 285).

On the lexical level, the contact with Arabic did not lead to any significant number of borrowings into Spanish. The only word in the corpus that was not familiar to native speakers from the Peninsula is the word *bakkal* (small grocery shop) from Arabic /baqa:l/. However, the use of Arabic interjections and world-level code-switching are more common and include examples such as *safi* (ok.), *walu* (nothing), *shuf* (look), and *inchallah* (God willing). On the whole, Tangerine Spaniards do not usually code-switch complete clauses within the same sentence given the fact that usually their Moroccan interlocutors possess a higher level in Spanish than they do in Arabic. In some of the examples I collected, brief switches from Spanish to Arabic occurred for clarification purposes only (Gumperz 1982).

“Veinte dirhams te voy a dar, anda, *Ṣšireen dirham*”.
 ‘Twenty dirham I am going to give you, come on,
twenty dirhams’.

Some Tangerine Spaniards possess knowledge of French as well and they may switch from Spanish to French occasionally as in the following example.

“Cada uno *se débrouille comme il peut*”. ‘Every one
manages as he can’.

The second group of native Spanish speakers in Tangier consists of the temporary residents. This group is formed of Spaniards with no previous contact with the city; it includes diplomatic, educational, and professional staff members who request a transfer abroad and might end up in Tangier. In the case of the diplomatic and educational staff they are there for a maximum of six years after which they return to Spain. Generally they have very limited contact with the Tangerine Spaniards as confirmed by the Director of *La Casa de España*.

“Muchos profesores que vienen aquí ni los conocemos”.
 ‘Many of the teachers who come here, we do not even
 know them’.

Although it is a heterogeneous group as far as their place of origin in Spain is concerned, normally they have a higher educational level and tend to use normative peninsular Spanish with the corresponding regional dialectal variation. Some of them may also be competent in one of Spain’s autonomous languages, or even French, but very few do possess any type of competence in Moroccan or Standard Arabic. Their children do not learn Arabic either since they pursue their studies at the Spanish educational institutions and as soon as they enter the university the whole family usually returns to Spain.

It is possible to argue that given the temporality of their stay in Tangier, their unbroken ties with Spain, and their lack of involvement with local Spanish speaking groups, these speakers do not have any significant influence on the frequency of use and the structural features of Spanish in Tangier. However, the fact that they spend a relatively long period of time in the city without having the need to develop knowledge of the local language is in itself a proof of the validity of Spanish as an unmarked code in Tangier. In addition,

the city’s sociolinguistic situation allows the temporary residents to play a certain role in fomenting the use of Spanish and encouraging its learning. For many young Moroccan speakers, interacting with the temporary residents and their children is a first-rate opportunity to practice Spanish. The significance of this group, hence, consists in indirectly encouraging the Moroccans who work with them or those looking for a job with Spanish companies to develop and maintain competence in Spanish. In reality, while some of these temporary residents express their disappointment at the fact that they do not have the chance or the real need to develop some knowledge of Arabic or French as part of their experience in Tangier, the majority seem to appreciate that it is easier for them and their children to adapt to an area where Spanish is an adequate communicative code and a city that is just a few miles away from Spain.

The last group of Spanish native speakers still present in Tangier today consists of the few remaining Sephardic Jews. This community, which had managed to maintain the use of Moroccan Judeo-Spanish, or *Hakitía* as it is often referred to, until the first half of the last century (Benoliel 1926), shifted to the use of modern Spanish following the establishment of the Spanish Protectorate in Northern Morocco (Chetrit 1985: 268, Heath 1989: 14). The process of linguistic assimilation, together with heavy Jewish immigration after the Moroccan independence, led to the dramatic reduction of the Judeo-Spanish speakers in Tangier. According to Hernández Fernández (2001: 296), in 1992 there were less than one hundred Sephardic Jews in Tangier, a fact confirmed by Serels (1996: 306) who concludes his detailed study of the Tangerine Jewish community by claiming that only old people are left. Although it is difficult to have the exact figures, all the indicators now point towards the disappearance of Judeo-Spanish from Tangier and its replacement by more standard Spanish among the few Tangerine Jews left (Alvar 1996).

Proficient Moroccan speakers

The most balanced Spanish/Arabic speakers are the Moroccan students who attend the Spanish pre-elementary, elementary and high schools. In fact, the majority of the students at the High School Severo Ochoa are not Spanish but Moroccan, as illustrated in Table 1.

Spanish	Moroccan	Other	Total
100	223	14	337

Table 1: Numbers of students according to their nationalities at the Spanish High School Severo Ochoa during the 2001-2002 academic year. Source: Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte (2001).

Since the language of instruction for all subjects is Spanish, these students possess a bilingual competence that allows them to be able to interact in both languages without difficulties by the time they reach higher grades. Since the Moroccan university system employs Arabic and French as languages of instruction, the greater part of the Spanish high school graduates move to Spain, namely to Granada, to pursue a university degree. One of my informants, a high school female Spanish student, complained that the Spanish government often awards scholarships to Moroccans rather than to the Spaniards who graduate from the same school. Not only are those scholarships the most practical way the Spanish/Arabic bilinguals can continue their studies, but they also form part of the Spanish policy to maintain a certain influence in the regions surrounding Ceuta and Melilla even though few university graduates eventually return to Morocco.

During my interviews with a group of six students from the Spanish high school, including Spaniards and Moroccans, I was able to observe the strong similarities between both groups in their use of the Spanish language not only in terms of structural features, including the generalized use of the sound /θ/ and similar choices of lexical items, but also the overall communicative and discursive strategies. The only non-native speaker feature that might persist in some Moroccan students is the word-final stress that is very common in Moroccan Arabic and may be transferred to Spanish. Given the fact that the Spaniards were not fluent in Arabic, the few word-level switches by Moroccans to that language were immediately translated. These instances of code-switching were limited to highly culturally-bound concepts such as the word *harraga* (illegal immigrants). Nevertheless, longer code-switched utterances were more frequent during in-group conversations between Moroccan students only.

A second group of proficient speakers is comprised of the Moroccans who have developed an advanced competence in Spanish through alternative processes. Some of them have relatives who are native Spanish speakers, others have spent extended periods of time in Spain, and the rest have studied Spanish at one of the institutions that offer classes for adults. Recently, the last option has become the most common. For example, in the academic year 2001-2002, there were 2,021 students registered for Spanish classes at *El Instituto Cervantes* in Tangier. Although this group's competence in Spanish is lower than that of the balanced bilingual group, they are the ones who have a better control of the four most commonly used languages in the city: Moroccan Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, French, and Spanish.

While the advanced speakers' oral skills in Spanish are very developed, their writing ability tends to be

rather limited especially in the case of those who have been learning the language without any type of formal instruction. In spite of this variation in the learning process and the role of individual factors, these speakers share a series of common linguistic features, in addition to the idiosyncrasies typical of adult second language learners. Common phonetic realizations include vowel raising ([bisino] for [besino]; [rikunkista] for [rekonkista]), vowel reduction and elision ([uropea] for [europea]; [bente] for [beinte]), and the realization of /r/ as a voiced alveolar multiple vibrant even in intervocalic position, among other features. However, because they were exposed to French phonology early enough, these speakers are able to distinguish between the voiced bilabial stop /b/ and the voiceless /p/ unlike the uneducated speakers. In addition, data showed that there are examples of both *seseo* and northern-central peninsular articulation of the voiceless interdental fricative even though the latter does not exist in Moroccan Arabic. This fact can probably be explained by its existence in Modern Standard Arabic which the speakers learn at school. It is particularly noteworthy, however, that some speakers presented instances of intra-speaker variation by using both pronunciations in the course of the same conversation.

At the morphosyntactic level, errors common to advanced learners of Spanish as a foreign language can be identified including problems in the use and sequencing of tense, aspect, and mode (for example there is an overuse of the present perfect instead of the simple past probably as a strategy to avoid its complex verb paradigms: "*He estado allí nueve años y al terminar me he ido a estudiar en un colegio privado*"), verb morphology (*si te pedimos que clasificas* instead of *si te pedimos que clasifiques*), incorrect use or omission of the prepositions (*decidir de un territorio* instead of *decidir sobre un territorio*; *lo que debo estar seguro es estar bien* instead of *de lo que debo estar seguro es estar bien*) and instances of lexical imprecision (*la diplomática* for *la diplomacia*; *los andalucés* for *los andaluces*).

With regard to the domains where they employ Spanish, it depends strongly on their occupation and the number of Spanish speakers in their social network as described by one of the informants:

"[Hablo español] con parte de la familia, con mis amigos, unos amigos que trabajan aquí en una empresa española. Hay unos españoles y otros marroquíes". "[I speak Spanish] with part of my family, with my friends, some friends who work in a Spanish company. Some of them are Spanish and some are Moroccans'.

Tourism and the growing presence of Spanish companies provide contexts where Spanish is one of the unmarked codes, if not the only one, given the fact that

Arabic is of limited use with non-Moroccans. It is also to be signaled that these speakers feel confident in their competence in Spanish and eager to improve as they seize every occasion to use it. They perceive their knowledge of Spanish and Arabic/Spanish code-switching as part of their Tangerine identity that distinguishes the North from the rest of the country and more significantly it distinguishes native Tangerines from rural immigrants in a society where regionalist feelings can be very strong.

“Sobre todo lo que hacemos nosotros, los tangerinos si llegamos a la escuela, la mayoría que está allí no son de Tánger; hablan muy bien el francés y el árabe pero el español no. Lo que hacemos nosotros es hablar de ellos o de algo en español. Todos los tangerinos lo hacen”. ‘Most usually what we Tangerines do when we get to school where the majority of those who are there are not from Tangier; they speak French and Arabic very well but not Spanish. What we do is to speak about them or about something else in Spanish. All Tangerines do it’.

However this eagerness to identify with the Spanish language is contrasted with a feeling of mistrust towards Spain, its foreign policies, and immigration laws. This makes the proficient speakers stand midway between the bilingual Moroccans who have developed very strong ties with Spain through its institutions and the non-proficient speakers who have a lower educational background and perceive Spain as an ideal host country for the type of occupation they have. The proficient speakers, on the other hand, express a disinterest in emigrating to Spain as opposed to the rest of Western Europe or North America, which can be explained by their fears to be identified with the non-Spanish speaking, unskilled illegal immigrants poorly represented in the Spanish Media.

“Estudiar allí si me gustaría, hacer turismo allí me encantaría, estar de ida y vuelta a España me gustaría, vivir definitivamente allí o sea ser inmigrante, eso no me gustaría nada”. ‘I would like to study there, I would love to go as a tourist, I would like to come and go to Spain, but I would never like to live there indefinitely and become an immigrant’.

Non-proficient Moroccan speakers

The first group of non-proficient speakers comprises those who were born and raised in Tangier but who did not have any type of instruction in Spanish or the chance to interact closely with Spanish speakers. Yet, thanks to their intermediate knowledge of French and constant exposure to Spanish television programs they develop acceptable comprehension skills in Spanish. The lack of practice, on the other hand, seriously hinders the development of their speaking skills beyond basic levels. They admit that the real use they make of Spanish is to understand Spanish television

programming which makes their case fall under what Haarmann calls (1989) “mass media multilingualism”.

“Tenemos que aprender español para entender los programas, las noticias y todo eso”. ‘We have to learn Spanish to understand the programs, the news and all that’.

In addition to the classes of errors already mentioned in the case of proficient speakers, these low-competence speakers show additional aspects of interference from Arabic and French, lack of syntactic maturity, limited vocabulary and a very marked foreign accent. One of the most recurring difficulties concerns copulative constructions not only because of the existence of two semantically-contrasted copulative forms in Spanish, *ser* and *estar*, but also because Arabic does not have a copula as such. Gender errors are also common especially when there is no agreement between Arabic and Spanish or when the Spanish word does not follow the rule of final –a for feminine and final –o for masculine (*las zonas españolas; el francés es la segunda idioma*).

A salient feature at the phonetic level is the incorrect stress placement. Since stress in Moroccan Arabic usually falls on the last or penultimate syllable, this group tends to place it on one of these two in Spanish as well producing examples such as: [pe.li.ku.lás] for [pe.lí.ku.las]; [a.rá.be] for [á.ra.be]; and [de.mo.kra.sí.a] for [de.mo.krá.sia].

A second group of non-proficient speakers are those who through direct contact with the Spaniards during and soon after the International Administration period in Tangier developed basic knowledge of Spanish through a naturalistic acquisition process. As it would be expected, it is a group formed of old speakers of Moroccan Arabic, and frequently Berber, some of whom were domestic servants, agrarian workers, or lower ranking members of the Spanish military. They are either originally from Tangier or have moved there from other neighboring areas in the north of Morocco.

Although they are able to get their message through, these speakers employ a simplified version of Spanish that contains repeated cliché utterances and presents serious problems with its morphosyntactic structure including tense, aspects and mode errors, subject/verb agreement, and gender and number errors. All this in addition to an easily-noticeable marked foreign accent and serious interference from the native language, particularly the lack of differentiation between the two bilabial stops.

Although the base language of the conversations with the subjects I interviewed was Arabic, they freely switched to Spanish, especially when the topic had to do with Tangier in the past, Spanish Morocco, or Spain.

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"ana kunt inħajim hadi il liħya wa ini *verde* wa nahder esbaniyola wa naħmil *gorrita bonita, gorrita liso* makanish iqulu inta imnin *y entra en el barrio 'sí señor, sí señor'* wa kada wa kada". 'I would shave my beard, and since my eyes are *green*, I would speak Spanish and wear *a nice hat, a smooth hat* nobody would ask me where I came from and [I would] walk into the neighborhood "yes sir, yes sir" and this and that'.

Since the conditions for the development of this type of competence disappeared almost fifty years ago, there are no younger speakers of this type as their number gradually declines.

Finally, there are speakers with very limited familiarity with the Spanish language and who can be divided in two groups: non-Tangerine immigrants and uneducated native-Tangerines. The rapid growth of the Tangerine population in the last decades has not only been a result of the increase in birthrates but also of waves of intense rural exodus. Thousands of immigrants from regions that traditionally have been out of the linguistic influence of Spain moved to Tangier, generally without bringing with them any type of competence in Spanish. This is a very large group that ranges from unskilled illiterate workers to French-speaking university graduates. They cannot maintain a basic conversation in Spanish and even the exposure to Spanish media does not help them develop any type of knowledge given their advanced age. However, it is interesting to note that they also employ Spanish loanwords borrowed into Moroccan Arabic. Some of the speakers I interviewed had arrived in Tangier a few years ago and still have their families in Southern Morocco. When asked if they knew any Spanish they produced some of the words that are commonly used in Northern Moroccan Arabic. Some of these borrowings include examples such as *andando, camarero, camiseta, carretera, panadería, persiana, plaza de toros, playa, té Negro*, and many more. In addition, these speakers were able to recognize basic words such as greetings, numbers, and some expressions used for self-introduction.

As for the Tangerine uneducated informants, they did not have the type of contact with the Spaniards that other speakers had, nor were they able to develop any type of knowledge of Spanish exclusively from the mass media without possessing literacy in French. The high rate of illiteracy and how it varies according to age groups makes non-Spanish speakers a very large group indeed. In 1994, 33% of the total Tangerine population was illiterate but for those at the age of 50 and above the percentage was two times higher, 78.7%. As it is expected in postcolonial societies, this sector is formed of members of the lowest socioeconomic class and especially women who tend to have yet fewer chances

of exposure to foreign languages outside the educational system.

Conclusion

This study has shown that at the present moment there are three levels of Spanish competence in Tangier. The speakers in the first level are the native speakers who due to a series of sociohistoric changes during the second half of the 20th century saw their numbers reduced drastically. The peculiarity of this group consists in the maintenance of Spanish as their sole native language, excepting the Sephardic Jews, while living in a country where Spanish does not have an official status. It is surprising that some of them have lived all their lives in Tangier but without developing acceptable knowledge of Arabic. Unlike what studies of second and third generation immigrants have proven, the Spanish native speakers in Tangier have not experienced a language shift towards the majority's language, as it would have been expected. The second level of competence describes proficient Moroccan speakers who have developed high competence in Spanish either through Spanish educational institutions or undirected language learning. Although French is the second language in Morocco, Spanish enjoys high prestige in Tangier both as a marker of the Tangerine identity and also as a social and economic capital (Heller 1999). It is true that Spain's proximity and its strong cultural presence in the region play an important role in the desire of young Tangerine Moroccan to learn Spanish, but it is also the prospects of professional advancement both in Tangier and in Spain that encourage them to reach higher proficiency levels. Finally, the competence of the speakers at the third level, the non-proficient speakers, is a result of the influx of Spanish immigrants to Tangier in the past and Spain's political domination in the region during the first half of the last century, especially in the case of older speakers. For younger generations with low educational background, their intense exposure to Spanish mass media plays an important factor in the levels of competence they develop.

In summary, the high variation in the degree of competence, domains of use, and attitudes towards Spanish in this region can be explained by the geographical proximity with Spain, especially the effect of Ceuta and Melilla, historical events namely the Protectorate period, and the changing socioeconomic realities on both sides of the Gibraltar Strait including emigration and tourism. It is an important fact that although the number of native Spanish speakers in Northern Morocco is decreasing, the number of Moroccans who learn this language is on the rise. Thus this situation is still a unique context where the contact between Spanish and Arabic can be investigated in detail. In addition to studies of code-switching and

borrowing, future research should attempt to account for the different processes of acquisition of Spanish and the determining role mass media is playing in them. Finally, studies of language ideology and linguistic attitude could be very useful in proving how in spite of the dwindling number of native speakers, a minority language can still be maintained in spite of the lack of local supportive language policies.

SUNY-Albany

Notes

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²Andalusian Spanish here is understood in its widest sense described in the following definition by Mondéjar (1991: 131): "El Andaluz o español meridional es una variedad o modalidad lingüística que ocupa el Sur de la Península Ibérica, desde el mediterráneo oriental almeriense hasta el río Guadiana, frontera político-administrativa entre España y Portugal".

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