

The Origin of the Direct Object Marker /l-/ in Andalusí Arabic

Abstract

Grammaticalization and contact-induced language change have traditionally been described as two independent language change phenomena, where the former represents an internal language change process, while the latter is a product of particular historical events (Heine & Kuteva, 2003). However, some linguists suggest that these two domains might not be in fact mutually exclusive as it has been largely discussed in the past (Matras, 2011), (Heine & Kuteva, 2003). Nevertheless, the relationship between language contact situations and grammaticalization raises many questions as reliable reconstructions of the historical contexts, where language contact situations might have produced grammaticalization processes, have proven to be extremely difficult due to the lack of available data.

For the purpose of this paper, I have chosen to study a possible case of contact-induced grammaticalization between Romance and Andalusí Arabic in the period that followed the arrival of the Arabic language to the Iberian Peninsula in the year 711. There are two main motivations that lead me to select this historical event as the focus of my study. First of all, we preserve a vast amount of documentation about the sociolinguistic context of the Iberian Peninsula, as many linguists and dialectologists have dedicated themselves to the study of several aspects related with the linguistic inferences between Romance and Arabic. Secondly, but not least, the inferences between Romance and Arabic in the Iberian Peninsula, even though largely studied and discussed, have not yet been approached from the perspective of contact-induced grammaticalization.

This study aims to shed some light on the debate about contact-induced grammaticalization and the challenges it currently faces. More specifically, I will examine the case of the direct object marker /l-/ in Andalusí Arabic. In previous literature, the direct object marker in Andalusí Arabic has been presented as an example of the Romance inference in this variety of Arabic (Ferrando, 1995). Additionally, it has also been discussed as an instance of contact-induced grammaticalization between Romance and Andalusí Arabic (Heine & Kuteva, 2005). However, I believe that these claims have not been supported with enough linguistic evidence and further study of this linguistic occurrence is needed.

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