**Adding a little Romance: Lone French nouns in Tunisian Arabic discourse**

Reports on language mixing in language pairs involving Arabic often qualify that language as resistant to constraints found to operate elsewhere (e.g. Belazi 1992, Bentahila and Davies 1983, Boumans 1998, Davies et al. 2013, Nortier 1995). Close inspection of the results of those studies, however, shows that they fail to situate the purported violations with respect to the recipient language, the donor language, or even the remainder of the mixed data. As a result, it is impossible to ascertain whether the contentious forms are exceptional code-switches or ordinary borrowings, let alone whether they are isolated cases or represent robust patterns.

In this study, we address these issues through analysis of a rich corpus of Tunisian Arabic (TA)/French (FR) language mixing collected from a network of 12 bilingual speakers. Taking a variationist approach, we adopt the "comparative sociolinguistic method" (Poplack & Meechan 1998), involving systematic comparisons of the behavior of lone other-language items (here, FR-origin nouns; N=867) with their counterparts in the recipient (N=1711) and donor (N=143) languages. Our analyses focus on *conflict sites,* areas where the grammars of two languages differ, in rate and/or conditioning. This enables us to determine which grammar is operative at the moment the other language is accessed. The six conflict sites we examined cover various levels of linguistic structure: morphophonological (assimilation of definite determiners to the initial segment of the following noun), morphological (plural formation), morphosyntactic (marking of possession) and syntactic (placement of quantifiers and demonstratives).

Quantitative analysis of the behavior of FR nouns on each of these diagnostics in donor, recipient and mixed-language contexts reveals that despite a higher-order community resistance to morphological inflection of other-language items, lone FR nouns are treated in a manner consistent with the (variable) grammar of TA and different from that of FR: 1) they surface with post-posed demonstratives (i) and quantifiers (ii) and appear in double determiner combinations (iii), consistent with TA; 2) definite determiners modifying them are assimilated to the following noun-initial coronals, as in TA (iv); 3) possessive relationships are categorically expressed by TA-specific strategies (a suffixed pronominal possessor (v), or an analytic construction involving the genitive exponent *mtɛ:ʕ* (vi)), and 4) plural French nouns are treated like their TA counterparts (vii). The TA grammatical features displayed by these lone FR-origin nouns indicate that they have been *borrowed* into TA, and not *code-switched* into FR.

(i) xa:yfa min l-***médecin*** hɛðɛ:ka. (006/122)
afraid of DEF.ART-doctor DEM.3SG.M
'I'm afraid of <u>that</u> **doctor**.'

(ii) tʕaddi:naʕa l-***grammaire*** l-<u>kol</u>. (012/12)
went over DEF.ART-grammar DEF.ART- all
'We went over <u>all</u> the **grammar**.'

(iii) ɛʃnyya <u>ha</u> l-***bac***? (012/44)
what DEM DEF.ART-diploma
'What's <u>this</u> **diploma**?'

(iv)  ∫nuwwa  d-***différence***? (011/135)
      what     DEF.ART-difference
      'What's <u>the</u> **difference**?'

(v)   famma  nɛːs   yaʕni  b-***diplômɛ*:tha**. (011/96)
      LOC      people means  with-degrees.3PL.POSS
      'There are people I mean with <u>their</u> **degrees**.'

(vi)  xðiːt     d-***diplôme***        mtɛːʕi. (003/162)
      took      DEF.ART-degree         of.1SG
      'I got <u>my</u> **degree**.' Lit.: 'the **degree** of <u>mine</u>'

(vii) l-***machinɛ*:t**PL (001/32)
      'the **machines**.'

Applying the same accountable methodology to the contentious FR DET+N sequences ("constituent insertions") shows that most are integrated in the same way as their lone counterparts. These too are treated as (compound) borrowings, largely motivated by the semantic imperative of expressing plurality while eschewing inflection. As borrowings, they do not constitute exceptions to code-switching constraints, confirming that the status of mixed items cannot be determined in isolation; they must be contextualized with respect to the remainder of the bilingual system, including donor, recipient, and other mixed-language elements.

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