Sociolinguistics of the Arabic-speaking World: Session 6, 24 July

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Plan for today
1. Assignment for Thursday
2. Quick review of last Thursday’s discussion
3. Small group discussions about today’s readings
4. Today’s readings & funding opportunities
5. (I haven’t forgotten Bentahila and CS)
Assignment for July 27

We’re going to read two articles by Atiqa Hachimi focusing on internal migration in Morocco and its linguistic and social consequences.

1) “Social Reinterpretation of an old Maghreb urban dialect in Casablanca” (2011). (I’m posting both the English translation and original French version of this article in case you want to see the original.)

2) “The urban and the urbane: Identities, language ideologies, and Arabic dialects in Morocco” (2012).
Quick Review from Thursday

1) Discourse analysis is an umbrella term incorporating a number of different techniques and perspectives on discourse. Some of these like Conversation Analysis are quite focused with respect to method; others are more diffuse. This range of methods defines (relevant) context in very different ways.

2) All assume some notion of a (discourse) community in the two senses Fernback noted: i) an entity to be studied and ii) the process of negotiated meaning and ultimately culture.
3) Even when people are disagreeing, they are still, at some level creating community. Refusing to interact is a sign of a community in trouble—a useful lesson for the US at this point in its history.

4) Language in use is always social action—speech acts,, and most of what is communicated about identity and membership is communicated indirectly through stances, acts, and activities—all of which (can) involve speech, writing, or signing.
5) Tools discourse analysts currently use in thinking about identity include indexicality, stance, positioning, research on lg. ideologies, and Bucholtz & Hall’s tactics of subjectivity.

6) New technologies ultimately create new social hierarchies, privileging some groups & individuals while disadvantaging others.
7) A range of factors influence the choices lg. users might make when using these technologies: the affordances of the technology (which scripts are available?), the ease of doing certain things (e.g., switching scripts), and the shifting social meanings of the choices that the lg. user has.

8) Younger users of Arabic are using all the resources available to them in certain electronic contexts, opening up new possibilities for creating complex identities.
9) At the same time, in other contexts, interactions follow conventional notions about writing—the preference for the fushaa, though sometimes one that is locally inflected in particular ways.

10) English (often with CS into Arabic) plays a major role in the creation of transnational Muslim communities.
Check-in

1) How was today’s reading?
2) How much of the info in these articles was new to you?
3) Did these perspectives call into question anything you’d assumed, been taught, or experienced?
4) Which aspects of the articles did you find especially interesting?
5) Which aspects of the articles would you like to know more about or discuss further?
Some terms/concepts from today’s readings

1) interference vs. positive/negative transfer
2) attrition: usually posited of individuals vs. loss/shift: usually posited of communities
3) key issue: attrition vs. partial acquisition
4) 3-generation pattern of lg. shift (Fishman):

i) Immigrants—1\textsuperscript{st} generation: Eng as L2

ii) US-born children—2\textsuperscript{nd}—bilingual (often English dominant)

iii) US-born grandchildren—3\textsuperscript{rd}—English is clearly dominant with ltd., if any, knowledge of heritage lg.

(Complication: Gen 1.5 speakers)

What factors encourage this pattern?

What situations might disrupt it?

What has been your experience with lg. shift?
Terms used to discuss lg. endangerment, death, and attrition
Bale (2010)
1) What are the main take-aways from Bale’s article? What did you learn that you didn’t already know?

2) What does Bale mean by “lg. as proxy”? How does this notion relate to discussions of lg. ideologies and of indexicality?

3) What role might publications in the heritage lg. play? Religious services? What do such uses of lg. tell us about a community?

4) Bale notes there is no centralized org. devoted to lg. maintenance? Is this unusual in any way?
5) Bale discusses a number of contextual factors related to US society that have had consequences for the maintenance and possibility of Arabic (& other lgs.) in the US, resulting in (a) the NDEA (National Defense Education Act) (1958), (b) the Civil Rights Act (1964), (c) the Bilingual Education Act (1968) and “No Child Left Behind” (2002), and (d) the National Security Lg. Initiative (2006). What were the consequences of these laws, and what do they help us understand about the need for sociolinguists to know the social history of the communities they study?
Albirini (2014)
1) How does Albirini’s description of the Arabic linguistic situation as involving the fusʕhʕaa and the ʕaamiyya (mis)represent that situation (p. 733)?

2) Can you think of potential problems with using words/minutes as measure of fluency?

3) What challenges might there be in using report data to analyze patterns of lg. socialization? What alternatives, if any, can you imagine to using report data? Does Albirini treat report data as such?
4) Wrt ftnt. 9, what do we learn about how Albirini treated one-word switches? And these vs. borrowings?

5) Why should we be surprised that mixed marriages reduce heritage lg. acquisition?

6) What do we learn about the sociolinguistics of heritage learner acquisition from Albirini’s study?

7) Let’s talk a bit about feminine sing. agreement with plural animate nouns as well as the use of plural agreement with animate plurals in the dialects.
8) If you have stats questions, I can try to answer them. It appears to me Albirin made wise choices, using non-parametric stats to analyze the data.
Funding opportunities
Bentahila: Questions

1. In some bilingual communities, one is far more likely to swear in “the other” language rather than the native one? Why might this be?

2. As MS might put it, what did Arabic and French seem to index for these Moroccans?

3. Did you see instances of what MS would term unmarked switches in the article? marked switches? CS as unmarked choice?
4. What do studies like Bentahila’s, which enumerate the possible/likely functions of CS within a specific community, tell us? What are their limitations?

5. Monolinguals often ask why bilinguals engage in CS. Bilinguals often wonder why people who are bilingual in the same pair of lgs. wouldn’t. What might account for the differences in perspective?