The Use of Photo-Elicitation Interview in Sociolinguistics: The Case Study of Awareness about the Use of Borrowings in Tlemcen Speech Community Algeria

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to show how photo-elicitation, which is embedded with ethnographic work, is used to collect sociolinguistic data. It also aims at showing how these data have demonstrated Algerians’ awareness about the use of borrowings from French and how these borrowings are adapted to the mother tongue i.e. Algerian Arabic. The study was conducted in Tlemcen speech community in a stratified sample population of 57 informants whose age ranges from less than 15 to more than 60 years. In the research, the photos were not taken but were downloaded from the internet. The informants were asked to identify each of the 50 photos in the mother tongue, i.e. Algerian Arabic then, to give the plural form of each. This allowed us to compare the way in which adaptation was made according to age, gender, and level of education. On the other hand, this technique enabled to describe the way in which nouns inflect from singular into plural form. The analysis of the results enabled to discover the factors under which such or such form is chosen.

As Algeria was long colonised by France, almost all Algerians are bilingual; their everyday speech is characterized by code-switching and by the use of borrowings from French. In that respect, the present study shows that the informants are conscious that the words they were using in the dialect were in fact derived from French, except for some words. Even children showed that they were conscious that they used words which originate from French.

Keywords: Photo-elicitation interview, sociolinguistics, borrowings, awareness, inflections.