

On the emergence of contact varieties: the Spanish of Mallorca from a historical perspective

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This presentation aims to explore the linguistic, cognitive and social processes involved in the emergence of contact varieties through the historical analysis of a number of linguistic phenomena in the variety of Spanish spoken by Catalan bilinguals in Mallorca (henceforth Mallorcan Spanish or MS). Several phenomena of Mallorcan Spanish (the verb *pedir* ‘ask for something’ with the semantic and syntactic structure of *preguntar* ‘ask a question’, the preponderance of synthetic *cantaré* over periphrastic future *voy a cantar*, use of preposition *en* to express direction of movement) are used as case studies in order to emphasize the relevance of a historical perspective in the study of contact varieties. The historical analysis reveals that the aforementioned phenomena, which at first sight seem to be contact-induced changes, are better analyzed with alternate explanations: the directional uses of *en* would represent residual variation after a process of convergence with the monolingual standard; the distribution of the futures is a case of inhibition or slowing down of a change, and the uses of *pedir* meaning ‘ask a question’ would be a case of retention of an older variable. Historical analysis is thus a fruitful way to arrive at a better understanding of how a contact variety is formed.