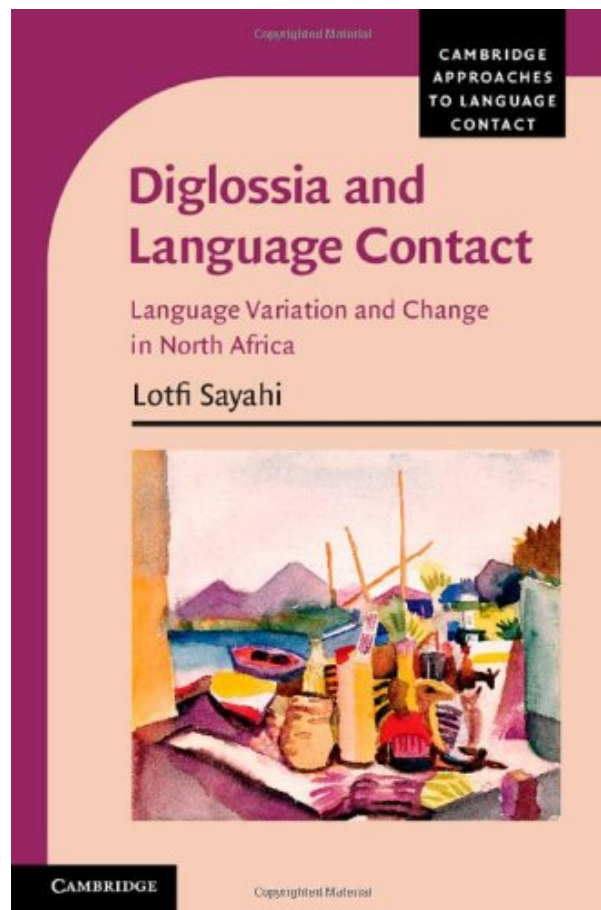


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# Diglossia and Language Contact

Language Variation and Change  
in North Africa

Lotfi Sayahi



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"Sayahi's fascinating history of the collision of languages in the Maghreb reclaims the original definition of diglossia and will transform the way linguists conceptualize its role as a mechanism of language change."

Barbara E. Bullock, Professor, University of Texas at Austin

"Combining synchronic and diachronic research on Arabic and the languages with which it has been in contact around the western Mediterranean, this book masterfully demonstrates the role diglossia can play in language change."

Keith Walters, Professor, Portland State University

## About the Author

Lotfi Sayahi is Associate Professor of Linguistics and Chair in the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at the State University of New York, Albany, where he teaches courses on sociolinguistics, bilingualism, and language contact.

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This volume provides a detailed analysis of language contact in North Africa and explores the historical presence of the languages used in the region, including the different varieties of Arabic and Berber as well as European languages. Using a wide range of data sets, it provides a comprehensive analysis of the mechanisms of language contact under classical diglossia and societal bilingualism, examining multiple cases of oral and written code-switching. It also describes contact-induced lexical and structural change in such situations and discusses the possible appearance of new varieties within the context of diglossia. Examples from past diglossic situations are examined, including the situation in Muslim Spain and the Maltese Islands. An analysis of the current situation of Arabic vernaculars, not only in the Maghreb but also in other Arabic-speaking areas, is also presented. This book will appeal to anyone interested in language contact, the Arabic language, and North Africa.

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