

Benjamin Hary, Sarah Bunin Benor (Eds.)  
**Languages in Jewish Communities, Past and Present**

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# Languages in Jewish Communities, Past and Present



Edited by  
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This book is dedicated to the last generations of those who speak endangered languages and to the new generations of those who speak thriving languages. May this volume spark intergenerational and international conversations and collaborations.

מכל מלמדיי השכלתי ומכל חבריי למדתי  
From all my teachers I have benefited and from all my friends I have learned

To Ursula, David and Ofer (from Benjamin Hary)      לאורסולה, לדייויד ולעופר

And to Solomon Birnbaum and Max Weinreich, pioneers of the field  
(from Sarah Bunin Benor)



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David M. Bunis

# Judezmo (Ladino/Judeo-Spanish): A Historical and Sociolinguistic Portrait

## 1 Brief introduction

The interaction in medieval Iberia of Jews, Christians, and, from 711, Muslims, led to the rise of Jewish varieties of medieval Ibero-Romance. Since the largest group of Sephardim, or medieval Iberian Jews, was concentrated in Castile, the variety of Jewish Ibero-Romance having the largest number of speakers was Jewish Castilian. In addition to its adaptations of Castilian elements used by local non-Jews, sometimes in unique forms, it incorporated elements of Hebrew-Aramaic, Jewish Greek/Latin, Jewish Ibero-Arabic, and non-Castilian Hispanic origin. With the expulsions of the Jews from Castile and Aragon in 1492, their varieties of Ibero-Romance were transported with them to the places in which they found refuge. The greatest numbers made their way to the Ottoman Empire, at the invitation of Sultan Bayezid II (1447–1512); others settled in North Africa, Italy, and other parts of the Mediterranean basin. The descendants of the medieval Spanish Jews who re-established themselves in the Ottoman Empire, as well as those who remained in the region after the empire gave way to new nation-states, continued to use evolved forms of their distinctive, principally Ibero-Romance Jewish language into the 21st century. The present chapter is devoted to the language of the Jews of the Ottoman Empire and its successor states and the literature created in it, with additional information about pre-expulsion Iberian and post-Ottoman Judezmo.

### 1.1 Names of the language

In their writings in Hebrew, the Jews of medieval Iberia, as well as their descendants throughout the world, into the modern era, referred to their language by the same name used by Jews throughout the Romance-speaking regions to denote their local varieties of Jewish Romance: *la'az* or *lo'ez*, which in the Bible (Ps. 114:1) denoted the speaking of a 'foreign language' – in that context, specifically Ancient Egyptian. In the Mishnah, *la'az* denoted Greek, and in the Middle Ages, it came to designate Romance or Jewish Romance (perhaps influenced by the phonological proximity to Romance *LATINUS* or 'Latin', from which the Jews knew that Romance varieties derived). In order to distinguish their variety of Romance

from varieties used by Jews in other regions, the Sephardim sometimes called it *la'az sēfaradi* or 'Sephardic/Spanish La'az'.

In their writings in the language itself, the Jews of the 16th century Ottoman Empire continued to use Romance-origin names, which they presumably had used in Spain and which were also in use among medieval Spanish non-Jews (Bunis 2008a), e.g., *ladino*,<sup>1</sup> from LATINUS, an allusion to its popular Latin origin; *romanse*, from ROMANICE, further demonstrating an awareness of its Romance origins; *espanyol*, from HISPANIOLUS, specifying that this version of Romance was that used in HISPANIA, or Spain.

Although it has been argued that *Ladino* properly denotes only the 'archaizing' calque variety used in the literal translation of sacred texts (e.g., Sephiha 1973), many texts in the language demonstrate that the word in fact has many meanings, among them, 'translation', 'meaning', and especially 'the vernacular of the Sephardim (in its diverse written and spoken varieties), particularly as opposed to Hebrew' (in Hebrew writings this opposition is denoted by *la'az* vs. *lēšon ha-qodeš* 'Holy Tongue'; and in the vernacular itself by *ladino* vs. *lashón [akódes̄h]*). Devoid of the negative connotations (e.g., 'sly', 'shrewd') which the word *ladino* has in Spanish, as well as of those acquired after the Spanish conquest of Latin America (e.g., 'mestizo', 'Spanish-speaking Indian'), *ladino* has enjoyed widespread use as a linguonym throughout the history of the language.

That the Ottoman Sephardic masses began to lose cognizance of the Iberian origins of their language is suggested early on by other names they used to denote it. For example, one of the linguonyms used by the first generation of Sephardim born in the empire and used by some speakers into the 20th century, but which evidently had not been used by medieval Spanish non-Jews, was *franko*, meaning 'Western European language'. Perhaps this was a Jewish adaptation of Turkish

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<sup>1</sup> Except when using I.P.A. transcription symbols enclosed within square brackets [ ], or angular < > brackets enclosing text originally appearing in Latin letters, Judezmo citations are here transcribed from sources originally in the traditional Hebrew-letter Judezmo alphabet, using a modification of the romanized orthography proposed by the Israel National Authority for Ladino Culture (for a summary see *Aki Yerushalayim* 35: 96 [2014]: 2). Note the values of the following special symbols: *ch* = [tʃ]; *d̄* = [ð]; *dj* = [dʒ]; *ġ* = [ɣ]; *h* = [χ]; *i* = [i] or, usually preceding a vowel, [j]; *j* = [ʒ]; *ny* = [ɲ]; *r* = flapped [r] or trilled [r̄] (depending on the particular word and the regional Judezmo dialect being cited); *rr* = trilled [r̄]; *s* = [z] before a word-initial voiced phone, otherwise [s]; *sh* = [ʃ] before a word-initial voiced phone, otherwise [ʃ]; *s·h* = [sχ]; *u* = [u] or, usually preceding a vowel, [w]; *v* = [v]; *y* = [j] (usually word-initially or finally or between vowels); *z* = [z]. The stress in words ending in a vowel or *n* or *s* is generally penultimate, and that in words ending in other consonants is ordinarily ultimate; exceptional stress is indicated by an acute accent mark. Unless otherwise noted, the references are to Modern Judezmo.

*Frenkçe*, a generic name used among the Turks to denote a language spoken by *Frenkler*, or the peoples of *Frengistan* ‘Christian Western Europe’, seemingly demonstrating a local perception of the Jews’ language as originating in the west, from whence they had reached the empire. By the 18th century another distinctive linguonym arose among the Jews, which demonstrated their geographic reorientation and self-perception: *levantino* ‘Levantine language’ or ‘language of the Levant’, showing that by then the Ottoman Sephardim saw the Levantine Basin as their home.

By the first half of the 18th century, the Ottoman Sephardim were using the word *djudezmo* – originally meaning ‘Judaism’ (cf. Sp. *judáismo* < Lat. IUDAISMUS) – in the sense of ‘Jewish language’. It was used to translate Hebrew *yěhudit* ‘language of the Judaeans’, ‘Jews’/Jewish language’ in the vernacular Bible translation published by Avraham Asa in Constantinople in the early 18th century (e.g., II Kings 18:26, 1743); by the early 19th century, it appeared textually in the specific sense of ‘vernacular of the Ottoman Sephardim’, which its speakers and their non-Jewish neighbors perceived as the local ‘Jewish language’ (e.g., in Turkish it was called *Yahudice* ‘Jewish language’).<sup>2</sup> As illustrated in native writings in the language and as documented by scholars belonging to the community, the use of *djudezmo* – along with *djudiό/djidiό*, also meaning ‘Jewish’ – to denote the language of the Ottoman Sephardim was widespread into the 20th century (Bunis 2011a). From the late 19th century, with the intensification of Haskalah and later, western academic influence on the speaker community, the names *djudezmo* and *djudiό/djidiό* lost ground to pseudo-scientific names such as *djudeo-espányol* ‘Judeo-Spanish’ and simply *espányol*, the latter widely used today among popular speakers, who thereby fail to mark any distinction between their own language and the Spanish language. Nevertheless, *djudezmo* still enjoys some popular use among native speakers and is the name preferred by many Jewish-language scholars – as a unique innovation arising within the speaker community; because of its designation of the language as a ‘Jewish language’, sharing terminological parallels with some other Jewish languages (e.g., Yiddish); and as a memorial to major Judezmo-speaking communities, such as those of Salonika, Bitola (Monastir), and Rhodes, many of whose everyday members called their language *djudezmo* until they were annihilated in the Holocaust.

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<sup>2</sup> Among Spaniards, Spanish is often called *cristiano* ‘Christian’ – a reminder of the fact that Christian Spaniards associated Spanish with Iberia’s Christian population, in opposition to the Arabic used by Muslims. But it is unclear whether this Spanish Christian practice had any influence on the use of *djudezmo* as a linguonym among the Ottoman Jews.

## 1.2 Linguistic affiliation

As was already noted, Judezmo first arose in medieval Iberia, and most of its linguistic raw material, including its lexicon, morphology, and syntactic structure, has always derived from Ibero-Romance, particularly popular Jewish Castilian, with additional elements apparently adapted from other varieties of popular Jewish Ibero-Romance, such as Jewish varieties of Leonese, Andalusian, Galician, Portuguese, Aragonese, and Catalan. Thus the language is of great interest to Hispanists and Romanists in general for the light it sheds on medieval Ibero-Romance, and on the distinctive, partially unique patterns of development which evolved over half a millennium in this Jewish variety of Ibero-Romance, as used in its Ottoman and post-Ottoman locales – places in which other varieties of Ibero-Romance never enjoyed prolonged use. Since the incipient varieties of Judezmo used in medieval Iberia also incorporated material from Hebrew-Aramaic and Ibero-Arabic, and post-expulsion varieties of Judezmo developed in contact with Arabic and Jewish Arabic in parts of the Middle East and North Africa (see section 1.3 below), the language is also of interest to Semitists. Its contact over centuries with Turkish and Balkan languages, and consequent extensive borrowing from those languages, also makes Judezmo intriguing for Turkish and Balkan linguists (Stankiewicz 1964; Gabinskij 1996; Friedman and Joseph 2014), and offers a basis for comparative studies with other Balkan languages, as well as with heavily Arabic-influenced *Ḥaketía* (another Spanish-based Jewish language) in Spanish Morocco (Bunis 2008b, 2011b, 2012.).

## 1.3 Regions where languages is/was spoken

Jews used varieties of Ibero-Romance in all of the numerous cities and towns of medieval Christian Iberia in which they resided. In each area the Hispanic component of the Jews' language appears to have borne a closer resemblance to the Ibero-Romance used by the local non-Jews than to varieties used by Jews in distant communities. Since Castilian enjoyed special prestige in medieval Spain, and the majority of its Jews resided in Castile, it is likely that cultured Jews in other parts of Iberia also had some knowledge of Castilian as used by Jews. With the expulsions of the Jews from Castile and Aragon in 1492 and from Portugal in 1497, the Jewish exiles to the Ottoman regions brought their diverse varieties of Jewish Ibero-Romance first to the major port cities in which they settled, primarily Constantinople and Salonika and their environs, as well as to parts of the Middle East, such as the cities of the Land of Israel sacred to the Jews (Jerusalem,

Hebron, Safed, Tiberias), Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt. Later, Jews migrated – of their own volition, in search of new markets for their skills and merchandise, or through royal edict, as part of the Ottoman *sürgün* population transfers – to more distant parts of the realm, leading to the establishment of Judezmo speaker communities throughout Anatolia and Rumelia, in regions that, with the dismemberment of the empire, were to become Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Romania, as well as daughter communities in parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, such as Vienna and Budapest, and in Italy.

From the middle of the 19th century, education in schools established by the governments of the nation-states carved out of parts of the Ottoman Empire led Judezmo-speaking children to start replacing Judezmo with the local language: Turkish, Greek, South Slavic languages, Romanian. From the second half of the 19th century, the network of Jewish and non-Jewish colonialist-oriented educational institutions established in the Ottoman regions by organizations such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU; founded in Paris, 1860) and Società Dante Alighieri (founded in 1889) drew young Judezmo speakers into the linguistic and cultural spheres of the primary languages of instruction in their schools – primarily French and Italian. Teachers in these institutions encouraged pupils to abandon Judezmo, indoctrinating them to perceive the language as of low prestige and little cultural value or practical utility. Branches of the Zionist movement which were established in various Sephardic communities motivated their students to adopt Hebrew, with the aim of immigrating to the Land of Israel. From the late 19th century, increasingly difficult economic and social conditions, conscription into the local armed services, and a desire for a better life led Judezmo-speaking young men to leave their families' centuries-old places of residence and immigrate to Western Europe, the Americas, European possessions in Africa, such as the Belgian Congo, and far-flung parts of the British Empire, such as Australia. After settling in, husbands sent for their wives and children, and bachelors established families. The immigrant generation continued using Judezmo in the home and synagogue but gradually acquired the local language; the next generation understood Judezmo, and some could also use it actively, but adopted the local language as its primary language; subsequent generations usually had little or no command of the language.

For those who remained *in situ* in Greece and what was to become Yugoslavia, the Holocaust brought a tragic end to the Judezmo speaker communities. The survivors, and most of the Judezmo speakers who remained in Turkey, Bulgaria, and Romania, immigrated to Israel, where they learned Hebrew and their children adopted Hebrew as their primary language.

## 1.4 Present-day status

Although still enjoying a speaker community of perhaps several thousand individuals, most of them over 60 and living in Israel, Turkey, the Balkans, the United States, and France, Judezmo is today an increasingly endangered language, with no new generations acquiring it as their primary or even secondary language. However, there are some attempts being made to revitalize Judezmo, research and teach it in universities and local community centers, and maintain cultural vitality and foster creativity through the publication of new and re-edited fictional and non-fictional works, reference materials, and recordings, as well as governmental and grassroots encouragement of performances by musical ensembles and theater troupes. In Israel, much of this work is sponsored by the Israel National Authority for Ladino and its Culture, established by the Knesset in 1996. Judezmo also enjoys a virtual homeland on the Internet (see section 4.2).

## 2 Historical background

Medieval Jewish writings in varieties of Ibero-Romance have survived from various parts of Iberia and constitute representations of some of the diverse regional, social, and stylistic varieties used by medieval Iberian Jewry. Shortly after their arrival in the Ottoman Empire following the expulsions, Jews established printing presses; from around the middle of the 16th century, the presses began to publish works entirely or partly in Judezmo or approximations of it. Numerous works – including books, pamphlets, and, in the 19th century, periodicals – were published in all of the major and several minor Judezmo-speaking population centers of the Ottoman Empire and its successor states and in immigrant centers (for an extensive listing see the *Bibliography of the Hebrew Book* [[http://aleph.nli.org.il/F?func=find-b-0&local\\_base=mbi01](http://aleph.nli.org.il/F?func=find-b-0&local_base=mbi01)]). Original Judezmo works continue to appear, primarily in Israel, Turkey and the Balkans, and the United States. This rich textual corpus provides a glimpse into Judezmo in its regional, social, and stylistic variations from the pre-expulsion period into our own times.

In some of the documents in the ‘Sephardic La’az’ which first arose in medieval Iberia, one already sees some of the salient features which continue to characterize Judezmo to this day (see section 3 below). With the expatriation of Sephardic La’az and its speakers to the Ottoman Empire, and the virtual detachment of the language from the varieties of non-Jewish Ibero-Romance which subsequently evolved in Iberia and Latin America, Judezmo gained its developmental independence, with free reign granted to its internal tendencies



and trends, an increasing incorporation of elements from Hebrew-Aramaic, and a selective openness to elements found in the indigenous contact languages. From the mid-19th century, the profound influence of colonial languages such as Italian, French, and German led to significant structural changes and especially relexification. During all phases, the etymologically diverse and ever-evolving elements together constituting Judezmo formed unique, structurally cohesive linguistic entities. However, especially from the early 20th century onwards, the tendency of the speakers to acquire and then give preference to other languages as their major language led to symptoms of language mixing, loss, and demise, leading to the critical condition in which the language is to be found today.

## 2.1 Speaker community: settlement, documentation

The documentation of pre-expulsion Sephardic La‘az and the extensive corpus exemplifying the use of Judezmo in the Ottoman regions enable us to form an impression of the writers of the texts, their intended audience, and the speaker community at large over the course of the language’s development. With few exceptions, the texts surviving from medieval Iberia suggest that they did not reflect the everyday, popular language used by the rank-and-file Jews of the peninsula, but were the creation of an elite sector of educated individuals who were familiar with the evolving variety of literary Spanish becoming normative during that period and who saw that variety as a model for their own writing, at least with respect to its Hispanic component. The popular sectors of Iberian Jewry, who undoubtedly comprised the majority group, must have used linguistic varieties, the Hispanic component of which bore a closer resemblance to the popular varieties used by their non-Jewish neighbors than that found in the ‘elitist’ writings.

The significant gap which must have existed between the ‘elitist’ language exemplified in most of the pre-expulsion texts, and the more popular language which many everyday Jews must have used in medieval Iberia, is hinted at by the language used in texts directed at the popular reader which began to be published in the middle of the 16th century in Constantinople and Salonika – the principal immigration centers of the speaker group during the century following the expulsions from Iberia. Comments by the authors of such works suggest the existence of an education-level division of the 16th century speaker community into: (a) *talmidē hahamim* or ‘rabbinical scholars’, all of whom were proficient in Hebrew, some of whom could use varieties of Judezmo close in their Hispanic component to the emergent non-Jewish Spanish norm, and at least some of whom were familiar with Turkish as well; (b) the *vulgo* or *amón am* ‘popular sector’, who constituted the majority, and who lacked fluency in Hebrew and, according

to authors' comments, could best cope with Judezmo if printed in the vocalized Square (*merubá*) letters ordinarily used in the Hebrew Pentateuch and daily prayer book (although Judezmo-speaking merchants were said to be proficient in so-called Rashí and cursive Judezmo characters); and (c) the women of the group, most of whom were illiterate during this period and would continue to be so into at least the late 19th century. The language used in 16th century texts meant for the popular reader incorporated more elements of Hebrew-Aramaic and perhaps also Ibero-Arabic origin than many of the 'elitist' pre-expulsion texts contained, and their Hispanic components themselves display some unique features (e.g., the inflection *-ásh/-ésh/-ísh*, widely used to denote the second-person plural present indicative in verb conjugations, as opposed to Spanish *-áis/-éis/-ís*).

Already exemplified sporadically from the 16th century, Judezmo rabbinical prose and poetry flourished from the 18th century, perhaps partly in an attempt to provide attractive religious reading material for less educated speakers of the kind who had been attracted to the cult surrounding Sabbatai Zevi (1626–c.1676), the false messiah of Izmir; popular rabbinical Judezmo literature continued to appear into the early 20th century. Reflecting significant changes in the popular language as used by its intended readers, such works offer a glimpse into Judezmo as it developed in the diverse regions of the Ottoman Empire throughout that period.

From the middle of the 19th century, novel varieties of literary Judezmo began to compete with the popular rabbinical variety for literary dominance. One was the Western Europeanized language of the incipient Judezmo periodical press (Sephiha 1976), with its extensive incorporations from Italian and French (and in Vienna, from German), first exemplified in the newspaper *Ša'are mizrah* or *Puertas de Oriente*, edited by Rafa'el 'Uzzi'el in Izmir, 1845–1846 (Bunis 1993). The variety of language illustrated in such periodicals was actually employed in speech by some members of the community who had been educated in Western European-style schools, such as those of the AIU, and who were imbued with a strong orientation toward Western Europe and secular humanism.

From the late 19th century, linguistically alternative periodicals employing as their base the popular language of the region of publication, rather than Western Europeanized Judezmo, began to appear in the major Judezmo speaker centers; more than any other printed source of the time, such periodicals reflected the highly distinctive features of popular regional speech at their time of publication (Bunis 1982).

In addition, throughout the phases of the language Judezmo speakers cultivated a rich oral literature, including proverbs and sayings (for native terminology see Bunis 2015b), riddles, popular songs, epic ballads, and liturgical poetry, each genre characterized by certain linguistic idiosyncrasies (for an overview of

diverse varieties of Judezmo literature see Romero 1992). Some of this corpus of folk literature is documented in the press and in chapbook collections of songs, tales, and proverbs (see for example Armistead and Silverman 1971a, 1971b). Much more was preserved through oral transmission, and some of this corpus has in recent years been committed to writing by members of the community and scholars devoted to documenting their traditions (e.g., Armistead and Silverman 1986; Alexander-Frizer 2008).

## 2.2 Phases in historical development

The criteria relevant for the division of Judezmo into historical phases include shifts in the names for the language; in orthography; in phonological, morphological, and syntactic structure; and in the lexicon. Comparing the intonation contours of contemporary Judezmo and Spanish, it is clear that Judezmo also underwent changes at this level, probably under local influence, but it seems impossible to assign these changes to specific historical phases.

The earliest stage in the language may be called the **Old Sephardic La'az** – or in retrospect, **Old Judezmo** – phase. Its proto-phase began with the earliest interactions between the Jewish immigrants who first arrived in Romanized Iberia, perhaps with the Roman armies, and the local non-Jewish Romance speakers whose languages developed into early Ibero-Romance in its diverse regional forms. From 711, Jews in Spain under Islam used Jewish varieties of Arabic, and, in some contexts, probably Romance as well. Later, the varieties of Castilian used by the Jews of Castile once again under Christianity exhibited influences from their earlier Jewish Ibero-Arabic. It was during this stage that the fusion of elements was initiated, including distinctive elements from Jewish Castilian (e.g., *el Dio* ‘God’, cf. Sp. *Dios*) and other Ibero-Romance varieties (e.g., *burako* ‘hole’, cf. Pt. *buraco*), Hebrew-Aramaic (*haham* ‘rabbinical scholar’, cf. Heb. *ḥakam*), Jewish Greek/Latin (*meldar* ‘to read’, cf. Gk. *meletaō*, J.Lat. *meletare*), and Jewish and non-Jewish Ibero-Arabic (e.g., *alhad* ‘Sunday’, cf. Ibero-Arab. *al-ḥadd*). This established a model for the synthesis of native and contact elements which was to continue in the Ottoman Empire and other locales to which Judezmo would later be carried.

The **Middle Judezmo** phase (1492–c.1796) began with the arrival of the Jewish exiles from Iberia in the major seaports of the Ottoman Empire and the beginnings of interaction with more veteran Jewish residents, such as the Jewish Greek-speaking Romaniotes, as well as the non-Jewish majority, including Turks, Greeks, South Slavs, Albanians, Armenians, and others, with whom they came to communicate primarily in Turkish, as an Ottoman lingua franca. **Early Middle**

the internal tendencies toward analogical levelling and simplification of the grammatical system (e.g., *-tes* as the second-person singular preterite indicative marker, from Old and Early Middle Judezmo *-ste* through Late Middle *-stes*; cf. Sp. *-ste*) reached their peak. The **Late Modern Judezmo** phase (1845–present) is characterized by considerable lexical innovation and expansion resulting from novel uses of pre-existing linguistic raw material (e.g., *hazindad* ‘illness’, *enhazinar-se* ‘to grow ill’ < *hazino* ‘ill’ + substantivizing *-dad*, verbalizing *en-* *-arse*); and further incorporations from Hebrew-Aramaic (e.g., *purimlik* ‘Purim gift’ < Heb. *purim* + Tk. substantivizing *-lik*) and local contact languages (e.g., *kolayladear* ‘to simplify’ < Tk. *kolayladi* [*kolay* + *-la-* *-di*] + Jud. *-ear*) and their fusion into a modern linguistic entity distinct at all levels from non-Jewish varieties of Spanish. It is also in this period that the profound influences on Judezmo of colonial languages such as Italian, French, and – in communities under Austro-Hungarian cultural sway – German became increasingly apparent, as a result of direct interaction with merchants, school teachers, and other users of those languages locally, and through the influence of the written literature and journalism in those languages to which Judezmo speakers were exposed in colonial-oriented schools, newly-established community libraries, and periodicals sold at newsstands. From the late 19th century, and especially following World War II, some Judezmo speakers came into contact with Spanish politicians, scholars, and merchants; the scholars demonstrated an interest in Judezmo for the light it could shed on the history of the Spanish language and Spanish oral traditions, but the Spaniards also saw the Judezmo speaker community as a bridge which could assist them in gaining entrée into the Ottoman Empire in order to advance their own commercial and political interests. As a result, some Judezmo-speaking intellectuals advocated bringing their communal language into closer alignment with Spanish or replacing Judezmo with Spanish outright; but such proposals had little echo in the larger speaker community, and the demonstrable impact of Spanish on the language of most Judezmo speakers has remained insignificant.

### 2.3 Sociolinguistic description, community bilingualism, public functions

From its earliest appearance, Sephardic La‘az or Judezmo, like other Jewish languages, has existed in a diglossic relation with Hebrew and Aramaic – the languages of the sacred texts and formal liturgy of its speakers – and with the languages and linguistic varieties used by the neighboring Jewish subculture groups and non-Jewish ethnic groups. At various stages in medieval Iberia, the latter included Arabic speakers, and Christians and Muslims using somewhat

different varieties of Ibero-Romance. Following the expulsions, the languages with which Ottoman Judezmo speakers were in contact included Jewish languages such as the Jewish Greek of the Romaniotes, and the Jewish Arabic of Musta'arabim ('Judeo-Arabic-speaking Jews of the Middle East') in parts of the Middle East, such as the Land of Israel and Syria; in addition, they had contact, in much smaller numbers, at various points in the development of the language, with speakers of Yiddish, Jewish Italian, and others. They were also in frequent contact with non-Jewish speakers of local languages such as Greek, South Slavic languages (e.g., Bosnian, Serbian, Bulgarian), Romanian, and especially Turkish. Rabbinical responsa demonstrate that Judezmo speakers – both men and women – commanded Turkish to a certain extent from the 16th century on, although, before the proclamation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, their Turkish was perceived by Turks as being spoken with a 'Jewish' (i.e., Judezmo) accent and not necessarily using normative Turkish grammar. In cities in which members of diverse Jewish subculture groups met, such as in Old Yishuv Jerusalem, Judezmo served as a kind of Jewish lingua franca, especially among non-Ashkenazim; but even Yiddish speakers in Jerusalem borrowed lexemes from Judezmo (Kosover 1966). Throughout the Ottoman Empire, Judezmo was considered to be the indigenous Jewish language, and was referred to, in Turkish and other state languages, as 'the Jewish language'. As stipulated in the 1911 regulations concerning the governing body of the Jews of the Ottoman Empire, representatives of the Jewish community in the Ottoman government were required to know how to "*avlar i eskrivir el djudezmo*" 'speak and write Judezmo' (Gran Rabinato de Turkia [1911]: 5), and community documents, such as those regulations, as well as public circulars and communications from the Chief Rabbinate and other Jewish communal institutions, as well as the Ottoman regime, included a Judezmo version. Thus, a postcard in Turkish commemorating the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 included an inscription in Judezmo, as well as the other major non-Jewish languages of the empire. Judezmo was used as the language of instruction in traditional Jewish educational institutions (which mostly taught religion), and as the language of public discourse in synagogues and other Jewish venues, and of literature and periodicals directed toward the popular Jewish reader.

From the Modern Judezmo phase, Judezmo had competition from Hebrew as the language of the incipient Zionist movement; and from French and Italian as the languages of foreign merchants in Ottoman cities and the language of instruction in colonialist-oriented schools attended by children from Judezmo-speaking homes. As the empire gave way to new nation-states, each with its own official language, Judezmo speakers in each state strove to master the local language; among the younger speakers, this generally led to a state of bilingualism, to the mixing of Judezmo with the local non-Jewish language, and, especially after World

War I, to the demise of Judezmo and its replacement by the local state language. Although there are still thousands of Judezmo speakers today, most are over 60, none seem to be monolingual speakers, and, at least as a group, the younger generations of descendants of Judezmo speakers, both in the traditional speech territory and in centers of immigration, are not being taught the language through natural transmission within their families, but only in courses which began to be introduced in universities and community and cultural centers in the 1970s.

Throughout its history, Judezmo was spoken in diverse ways according to various social variables, such as age, gender, religiosity, profession, and so on. For example, individuals – especially males – with a more religious orientation tended to employ more elements of Hebrew-Aramaic origin than their more secular, religiously less-educated counterparts; while males whose professions or trades brought them into close contact with the local non-Jewish population tended to incorporate in their speech more local borrowings than those less in touch with non-Jewish neighbors. Younger speakers who acquired French and Italian through commercial contacts or formal schooling tended to relexify their Judezmo, replacing traditional elements of Hebrew-Aramaic and Turkish-Balkan origin with Gallicisms and Italianisms, leaving those speakers unfamiliar with the European prestige languages baffled by the younger generation's *nuevo lenguaje* 'new language' (Bunis 2014). As the speech of westernized/Europeanized/secularized males became enriched through borrowings from French and Italian, and depleted of 'eastern' elements of Hebrew and Turkish origin, the language of females lacking a western education began to seem more old-fashioned and conservative, with greater preservation of 'eastern' elements, and even more traditional, popular forms of Hispanisms than used by males, who now tended to alter the forms of their Hispanisms under French and Italian influence (e.g., *muestro* > *nuestro* 'our', under the influence of French *notre*, Italian *nostro*). In general it may be said that, in the late 19th and 20th centuries, the encounter with diverse new language attitudes, some originating among the local non-Jews, others among local representatives of European Jewish language-related social movements, such as the Haskalah and political Zionism, caused Judezmo speakers of all orientations to introspect about their language and effect changes in it.

### 3 Structural information

As in other regions in which Jewish languages arose, the need to maintain one's livelihood and ensure physical security necessitated that the earliest Jewish immigrants in Spain have knowledge of their non-Jewish neighbors' everyday

language. On the other hand, the religious and ethnic culture which set the Jews apart from their neighbors led to their intracomunal use of elements of language reflecting their distinctiveness; such elements often derived from their oldest ancestral and sacred languages, Hebrew and Aramaic (e.g., popular pronunciations of Hebrew *šabbat*, such as *sabad*, to denote the Sabbath, preferred over *sábado*, used by Christians). Further distinctive linguistic material used by the Jews of Iberia derived from the Jewish Greek and Jewish Latin that the ancestors of the community had used, especially in sacred study, before the migration to Iberia (e.g., *Ayifto* [cf. Gk. *Aígyptos*] ‘Egypt’). The Muslim conquest from 711 of parts of Iberia led some Iberian Jewish communities under Islam to adopt Arabic in a Judaized form; centuries later, with the return to Christendom of those regions, Jewish Ibero-Romance again became the primary language of their Jewish residents, but now their Romance included some elements preserved from Jewish Ibero-Arabic (e.g., [*a*]d*afina* [cf. Ar. *ad-dafina*], one name for the traditional Sabbath lunch stew, kept warm overnight). The Romance component of Jewish Ibero-Romance in Iberia, too, had distinctive features as a result of phonological idiosyncrasies (e.g., the tendency to realize historical word-final vowel + *is* as vowel + *š*, as in *sešh* instead of *seis* for ‘six’), and a propensity for fusing morphemes of diverse etymological origins into innovative coinages absent from non-Jewish speech (e.g., *enheremar* ‘to excommunicate’, from *hérem* [Heb. *herem*] ‘excommunication’ + Hispanic-origin verbalizing *en-ar*), as well as the selective rejection or alteration of words and forms used by the co-territorial non-Jews (e.g., Jewish *djudezmo* vs. Spanish *judaísmo* ‘Judaism’).

With the expulsions from Iberia, interaction with new neighbors of diverse ethnicity led to contact with and selective adoption of material from new languages, principally Turkish, Greek, South Slavic, German, and, in parts of the Middle East, Arabic. When Western European languages such as Italian and French began to have an impact on the ethnic groups of the Ottoman Empire, in response to the Ottomans’ desire for aid from the Western Europeans and their willingness to grant the Europeans trade capitulations in return for that aid, Judezmo underwent significant modification under the influence of those languages – in the case of French, in good measure through the efforts of the AIU school network established throughout the empire by agents of the Jews of France. With the replacement of the Ottoman Empire by new nation-states, each of which sought to establish the language and ethnicity of the local predominant group at the state level, Jews made strides in acquiring those languages; to the detriment of Judezmo, its speakers eventually adopted the state languages for everyday, intracomunal use, increasingly curtailing the use of Judezmo to occasional intimate interactions within the family and among friends. In each phase



of its development, from its medieval antecedents through the varieties still used in the 21st century, the structure of Judezmo reflected linguistically the dynamism of the speaker community within its own communal borders and in interaction with its neighbors.

### 3.1 Relationship to non-Jewish varieties (isoglosses, related dialects)

The predominance of Castilian in medieval Iberian Jewish communities is illustrated in forms attested in Hebrew-letter Jewish texts from the 15th and 16th centuries and still in use in regional Judezmo, such as מוּחֹ/ *mucho* ‘(m.g.) much’ and אַיֵּחֹ/-ֵ/ *(f)echo* ‘(m.sg.) done’, corresponding to Old Spanish *mucho* and *fecho* (Mod.Sp. *hecho*), as opposed to correspondents such as Aragonese and Portuguese *mucho* and *feito*, Galician *moito* and *feito*, and Catalan *molt* and *fet* (cf. Lat. *MULTUM, FACTUM*).

Throughout the history of Judezmo, its phonological system has shared much with that of Old Castilian, as distinct from that of Modern Spanish. For example, Judezmo has distinct /b/ vs. /v/ phonemes, as opposed to the single Modern Spanish /b/ phoneme, which has the positional allophones [b] and [β]. The Judezmo phoneme corresponding to the phonemes represented graphemically in Old Spanish by <z> and intervocalic <s> is /z/ (e.g., OSp. <dezir> ‘to say’, <casa> ‘house’, realized in Old Spanish as [deˈðir], [ˈkaza] = Mod. Jud. דיזיר [deˈzir], קאזא [ˈkaza]), as opposed to Modern Spanish /θ/ in [deˈθir] (in Castilian) or /s/ [deˈsir] (in Andalusia and Latin America) (<decir>), and /s/ in pan-Spanish [ˈkasa] (<casa>). Also agreeing with Andalusian and Latin American Spanish, the Judezmo correspondents of Old Spanish <ç> [ts] and <s-, -ss-> [s] are both reflected in Judezmo as /s/ [s], e.g., סינקו / *sinko* ‘five’, פאסאר / *pasar* ‘to pass’, as opposed to Modern Castilian, which distinguishes them as [θ] (*cinco* [ˈθiŋko]) vs. [s] (*pasar* [paˈsar]). Word final <s> was reflected in Old Spanish as voiced [z] when preceding a voiced sound (e.g., a vowel), and Judezmo preserves this feature, e.g., OSp. <las oras>, Jud. לאס אוראס / / *las oras*/, realized phonologically as [laz ˈoras] ‘the hours’; Modern Spanish instead realizes this as voiceless s [las ˈoras]. Old Spanish had a /ʒ/ phoneme, probably having the positional allophones [dʒ] and [ʒ] (or perhaps simply [ʒ]), as well as a /ʃ/ phoneme, realized as [ʃ]; all of these merged in later Spanish in an /χ/ phoneme, realized as [χ] or [h]; but Judezmo still retains the earlier sounds, as the distinct /dʒ/ [dʒ] vs. /j/ [j] vs. /ʃ/ [ʃ] phonemes; e.g., OSp. <gente>, Jud. גֵּנְטֵי / *djente* [ˈdʒente] ‘people’, OSp. <mujer>, Jud. מוּזֵיר / *mujer* ‘wife’, OSp. <baxo>, Jud. באשו / *basho* [ˈbaʃo] ‘short’.



## 3.2 Particular structural features (unique to the Jewish variety)

### 3.2.1 Phonology

Although the phonological systems of all varieties of Modern Judezmo share certain features with Old Castilian, they also diverge from both medieval and modern varieties of Spanish in various ways. For example, the Judezmo correspondent of the Old Spanish sound denoted orthographically as <ll> is neither the palatalized [ʎ] once characteristic of medieval Castilian (and still used in some varieties of Spanish) nor the [dʒ], [z], or [j] phones of contemporary varieties of Spanish, but simply the glide *y* [j], e.g., Sp. <llamar> (Old Spanish [ʎa'mar], Modern Spanish [ʎ-/dʒ-/z-/ja'mar] = Jud. ייאמאר/*yamar* 'to call'); the same Judezmo *y* [j] sound also corresponds to Spanish <y>, which is generally realized as [dʒ], [z], or [j] in modern varieties of Spanish, e.g., Sp. <y> [dʒ-/z-/jo], Jud. ייו/*yio* [jo] 'I'. As opposed to the single Old Spanish phoneme /h/ (often reflecting Latin *f*-, or Arabic *f*, *h*, *x*, or *ħ*, through earlier Old Spanish *f*-), Old Judezmo evidently had distinct /h/ vs. /χ/ (and perhaps also /ħ/) phonemes, partly in reflection of lexemes derived from Hebrew-Aramaic and (Jewish) Ibero-Arabic, e.g., OSp. <haragán> [hara'yan], Mod.Sp. [ara'yan] = Jud. חאראגאן/*haragán* [χara'yan] 'lazy'; OSp. <hondo> [from earlier *fondo*] ['hondo], OJud. פ־הונדו ['f-/hondo] (earlier *fondo*), yielding Mod.J. פ־אונדו ['f-/ondo]. Also as a result of the incorporation of elements from these Semitic languages, the privilege of occurrence of certain phones differed in the two languages; for example, Judezmo speakers could distinguish *m* from *n* word-finally, while the only nasal permitted in final position in Spanish was *n*, e.g., Jud. ירושלים/*Yerushaláyim* 'Jerusalem', Sp. *Jerusalén*; Jud. אמן/*amén*, Sp. *amén* 'amen'). In certain words, especially those relating to Judaism, Old Judezmo showed popular phonological developments expected in Castilian, whereas Old Spanish showed some more conservative or otherwise divergent forms, e.g., OJud. ג־ודיגו/*djudego* vs. OSp. *judaico/judiego* 'Jewish, Judaic'. There were also some divergences in stress, e.g., OJud. ג־ודיו/*djudió* vs. OSp. *judío* 'Jew'.

Judezmo texts produced in the Ottoman Empire revealed further divergences from the sound system known for Old Spanish; some or all of these may already have existed in Old Judezmo, but were perhaps considered by the 'elitist' Jewish writers in medieval Iberia to be of too popular or non-standard a nature for literary use. Three of the most widespread of these divergences are the breaking of a medial *ue* [we] diphthong into two syllables separated by *ğ*, e.g., ג־וגיב־יס/*djuğeves* 'Thursday' (cf. Sp. *jueves*), and the shifts *nue-* > *mue-*, e.g., מואיס/*mues* 'walnut' (cf. Sp. *nuez*), and *sue* > (*e*)*s-hue-*, e.g., א־יסחואיגרו/*(e)s-huegro* 'father-in-law' (cf. Sp. *suegro*). (For some other divergences, see the section on regional dialects below.) At the supra-segmental level, Modern Judezmo correspondents

of words having antepenultimate stress in Spanish often have final stress, e.g., Sp. *sábana* = Jud. סאַבאַנאַ/*savaná* ‘sheet’.

### 3.2.2 Morphology and lexicon

Judezmo morphology shows a propensity for analogical leveling and the simplification of paradigms. For example, in the conjugation of the verb, we find numerous present-tense stems in stressed position lacking the *e* > *ie* and *o* > *ue* vowel breaking typical of Modern Spanish, e.g., Jud. אַמפּעסוֹ/*empeso* vs. Sp. *empiezo* ‘I begin’ (cf. Jud. infinitive *empesar*, Sp. *empezar*), Jud. *djuǵo* vs. Sp. *juego* ‘I play’ (cf. Jud. infinitive *djuǵar*, Sp. *jugar*). On the other hand, in the conjugation of some verbs, Salonika and its environs show vowel breaking throughout the paradigm, e.g., Salonika Jud. *kieremos* vs. Sp. *queremos* ‘we want’ (cf. Salonika Jud. infinitive *kierer*, Sp. *querer*). All varieties of modern Judezmo show innovative leveling in the inflections marking the preterite indicative, e.g., first-person singular *-í* in *djuǵí* ‘I played’, *komí* ‘I ate’, *salí* ‘I went out’, vs. Sp. *jugué*, *comí*, *salí*; first-person plural *-imos* in *djuǵímos* ‘we played’, *komimos* ‘we ate’, *salimos* ‘we went out’, vs. Sp. *jugamos*, *comimos*, *salimos*; (under the influence of the *-s* representing the second-person singular in other tenses:) Jud. second-person singular *-Vtes* in *djuǵates* ‘you played’, *komites* ‘you ate’, *salites* ‘you went out’, vs. Sp. *jugaste*, *comiste*, *saliste*, and second-person plural *-Vtesh* in *djuǵátesh* ‘you played’, *komítesh* ‘you ate’, *salítesh* ‘you went out’, vs. Sp. *jugasteis*, *comisteis*, *salisteis*. Influenced by the *v-* of the imperfect indicative inflection *-ava* (cf. Sp. *-aba*) of the quantitatively predominant *-ar* verb conjugation group (e.g., Jud. *djuǵava*, Sp. *jugaba* ‘s/he was playing’), the historical *-ía* inflection of less frequent *-er* and *-ir* verbs became *-iva* in some verbs in various modern dialects, e.g., Belgrade Jud. *komiva* vs. Sp. *comía* ‘s/he was eating’. Alternative forms of the gerund and past participle are composed of stems deriving from the preterite rather than the infinitive, e.g., *tuviendo* ‘having’, *tuvído* ‘had’ < *tener* ‘to have’; cf. Sp. (and alternative Jud.) *teniendo*, *tenido*. Probably under the influence of the initial [m] in object and reflexive pronouns denoting the first person singular (*me*), the possessive (*mi*), as well as the first person plural inflectional endings with *-mos*, the first-person plural subject and object pronouns are usually *mozotros* and *mos*, respectively, and, together with the influence of the following bilabial glide [w], the possessive is *muestro* (cf. Sp. *nosotros*, *nos*, *nuestro*, but also popular forms with *m-* resembling those in Judezmo).

On the other hand, Judezmo shows some conservatism when compared with Spanish, often opting for alternate forms which existed in Old Spanish but were rejected in the emerging literary standard. For example, substantives ending in

-or as well as certain others are feminine in Judezmo, corresponding to variants in Old Spanish (e.g., Mod.Jud. f. *la kolor*, *la mar* vs. Mod.Sp. m. *el color*, *el mar* ‘the color’, ‘the sea’). Other forms which became obsolete in Spanish but continue to enjoy use in Judezmo include *ağora* ‘now’ (OSp. *agora*, Mod.Sp. *ahora*), *bushkar* ‘to look for’ (OSp. *bus-/buxcar*, Mod.Sp. *buscar*), and many others. Finite verb forms which in Old Spanish existed as variants and were later rejected in Spanish are preserved in Judezmo as the sole, normative forms, e.g., *vo* ‘I go’, *so* ‘I am’, *vide* ‘I saw’; cf. Mod.Sp. *voy*, *soy*, *vi*.

Judezmo lexemes (and their plurals) often resemble analogues in popular, as opposed to normative, Spanish, e.g., Jud. *adelantre* vs. Sp. *adelante* ‘forward’; Jud. *veluntá(d)* vs. Sp. *voluntad* ‘will’; plural *piezes* (cf. sg. *pie* + pl. *s* + *-es*) vs. normative Sp. *pies* ‘feet’. Some Judezmo lexemes are reminiscent of regional, non-Castilian forms of Ibero-Romance, e.g., Jud. *alfinete*, Port., Gal. *alfinete* vs. Sp. *alfiler* ‘pin’, Jud. *djinoyo*, Cat. *genoll* vs. Sp. *rodilla* ‘knee’, *indo* ‘going’, Port., Gal. *indo* vs. Sp. *yendo*. Some forms seem to be internal innovations, e.g., *lap* ‘pencil’ (cf. Sp. *lápiz*, with final *-iz/-is* reanalyzed by Judezmo speakers as a plural marker).

### 3.2.3 Regional dialects

From its earliest beginnings, Ottoman Judezmo has shown evidence of subdivision into regional dialects. The principal subdivision is between Northwest Judezmo (=NWJ), spoken essentially in the region which was to fall under the linguistic and cultural sway of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, constituting the former Yugoslavia, Western Bulgaria, Romania, and Austria, and Southeast Judezmo (=SEJ), comprised essentially of the dialects spoken in present-day Turkey and Eastern Bulgaria, with Istanbul as its focal area, and the dialects of Salonika and its environs constituting a transitional or medial zone, showing mostly Southeastern features, but also some typical of the Northwest.

The major phonological isoglosses separating the two major dialect regions are the Northwest *f*- vs. Southeast phonological zero reflection of Old Judezmo (and Old Spanish) word-initial *f*- (< Lat. *F*-, and Arabic *f*- and sometimes velar consonants), e.g., NWJ *fazer* vs. SEJ *azer* ‘to do’ (cf. OSp., Port. *fazer*, Mod.Sp. *hacer* < Lat. *FACERE*); the metathesis of historical *-rð-* as *-ðr-* in the Southeast (including Salonika), but its preservation as *-rd-* in the Northwest, e.g., SEJ *taðrar* vs. NWJ *tardar* ‘to delay’; and the raising of nonstressed (especially word-final) historical *e* to *i* and *o* to *u*, respectively, in the Northwest, versus the tendency for the historical vowels to be preserved in the Southeast, e.g. NWJ *dienti*, *oju* vs. SEJ *diente*, *ojo* ‘tooth’, ‘eye’ (cf. Sp. *diente*, *ojo*). Note that in these respects, Salonika

and its environs resemble the Northwest in preserving old *f*, but the Southeast in tending to show *-ðr-* metathesis and the preservation of historical nonstressed *e* and *o*. At the syntactic level, the Northwest dialects (as well as Salonika) posit object and reflexive pronouns before verbal infinitives when following prepositions, e.g., *para mos dar* ‘in order to give us’, while the Southeast dialects prefer to post-posit them after the infinitive, e.g., synonymous *para darmos*. Lexically, the Northwest dialects prefer using *loké?* and *premi* to express ‘what?’ and ‘one must’, respectively, while the Southeast (including Salonika) dialects prefer *kualo?* and *kale*.

There is also some subdivision within the two major dialect regions. For example, in Salonika and its environs (e.g., Bitola), the gerund doubles as the second-person plural imperative form, e.g., *viniendo/-u!* ‘come!’, while most of the Southeast dialects instead use the historical imperative having *-Vð* (the *ð* may also drop), e.g., *veni(ð)!* ‘come!’ Within the Northwest, Bitola, and some nearby dialects show the raising of historical nonstressed word-final *a* to *e*, e.g., Bitola *kaze* vs. Salonika *kaza* ‘house’; and Sarajevo shows the lowering of stressed *e* to *a* when preceding *r* + consonant or, historically, a trilled *rr*, e.g., Sarajevo *puarta* vs. Salonika *puerta* ‘door’, *puarus* (< *puarrus*) vs. *pueros* ‘leeks’. Influence from the divergent local contact languages also resulted in some additional phonological isoglosses distinguishing Northwest from Southeast Judezmo (see 3.4 below).

### 3.3 Lexicon: Hebrew and Aramaic elements

As documented in texts in ‘Old Sephardic La‘az’, elements of Hebrew-Aramaic origin have always constituted a significant part of Judezmo, helping to set it apart from its non-Jewish correlates. The phonology of the Hebrew-Aramaic component in Modern Judezmo derives directly from that used among the Jews of medieval Christian Iberia. The distinctive characteristics of the traditional Hebrew-Aramaic phonology of Judezmo speakers in Salonika, as compared with the traditions of Ashkenazim, Jewish Arabic speakers, and other Jewish subcultures, include the following realizations of the letters (as they are known in Judezmo): א/*álef* = phonological zero (e.g., *goel* גואל ‘savior’), ב/*ved* = [v] (e.g., *gevir* גביר ‘rich man’), pointed ג/*gémal* = [g] (e.g., *gemará* גמרא ‘Talmud volume; booklet’), unpointed ג/*yémal* = [ɣ] (e.g., *meḡilá* מגילה ‘scroll of Esther’), pointed ד/*dáled* = [d] (e.g., *din* דין ‘religious law’), unpointed ד/*dáled* = [ð] (e.g., *adar* אדר ‘month of Adar’), ה/*e* = phonological zero (e.g., *afará* הפטרה ‘Haftarah’), ח/*hed* = [χ] (e.g., *hazán* חזן ‘cantor’), ט/*ted* = [t] (e.g., *perat* פרט ‘detail’), י/*yod* = phonological zero after and often before a front vowel (e.g., *geinam* גיהנם ‘hell’, [*y*]eshivá ישיבה ‘study hall’),

otherwise [j] (e.g., *yorésh* יורש 'heir'), *y/ayn* = phonological zero syllable-initially (e.g., *meará* מערה 'cave'), phonological zero/[χ] syllable-finally (e.g., *rashá[h]* רשע 'evil person'), *v/sadi* = [s] (*sadik* צדיק 'righteous man'), *k/kof* = [k] (e.g., *pasuk* פסוק 'Torah verse'), *sh/shin* = [ʃ]/[s] (e.g., *sh-/salom* שלום 'peace'), pointed *t/tav* = t (e.g., *torá* תורה 'Torah'), unpointed *t/tav* = [t] syllable-initially, [ð]/[θ] syllable-finally (e.g., *badkol* בת קול 'celestial voice; echo'). The vowels *seré*, *segol* and *shevá naá* are generally realized as *e*, e.g., *arel* ערל 'uncircumcised man, Christian', *pésah* פסח 'Passover', *berahá* בְּרַחָה 'benediction'; *kamés* and *patah* are *a*, e.g., *kavod* כְּבוֹד 'honor', *amsaá* הַמְצָאָה 'ruse'; and *holem* חֹלֵם and *katan* קָטָן are *o*, e.g., *olam* עוֹלָם 'world', *orlá* עֶרְלָה 'foreskin'. Consonants with a *dagesh hazak* are generally not geminated (e.g., *maká* מַכָּה 'plague'). The place of stress generally corresponds to that in Hebrew and Aramaic.

Phonological processes characteristic of Judezmo in general apply equally to elements of Hebrew-Aramaic origin, e.g., two adjacent vowels often collapse to one, e.g., *maminím* (< *maamimín* מאמינים 'believers (esp. in the false messiah, Sabbatai Zevi)'; there is metathesis of *-rð- > -ðr-*, e.g., *Modroháy* (< *Mordoháy*) מרדכי 'Mordechai'; word-final *-ð/-θ* and certain other fricatives are often deleted, e.g., *Daví(d)* דוד 'David'; and word-final voiced consonants are often devoiced, e.g., *raf* (< *rav*) רב 'rabbi'.

Many elements of Hebrew-Aramaic origin used throughout the history of the language denote concepts central to the Jewish religion, culture, and civilization, e.g., *kipur* כיפור 'Yom Kippur', *moed/mued* מועד 'Jewish holiday', *kal* קהל synagogue, *bedahé/bedahaim* בית החיים 'cemetery (literally, 'house of life)'; but others are more abstract, or are grammatical elements lacking any direct connection to Judaism, e.g., *zemán* זמן 'time, era', *dor* דור 'generation', *zakén* זקן 'elderly man', *afilú* אפילו 'even', *mehamá(d) de* מחמת / 'on account of'. Words of Hebrew-Aramaic origin supply many of the lexemes used in humorous, ironic, or cryptic contexts; e.g., emotive words for 'money' or 'cash', such as *perahim* 'coins, money' (cf. Heb. *perahim* פרחים 'flowers', Ital. *fiorini* '[literally flowers] florins'), *gasim* 'coins' (cf. Heb. *gasim* גסים [literally, 'heavy ones']), *hatahás* 'coins, money' (cf. Heb. *hatixa* חתיכה (literally, 'piece [of silver, etc.])). Elements of Hebrew-Aramaic origin are also the main ingredient in the secret register used in the presence of non-Jews who might understand Judezmo; e.g., *No diburees, ke es yodéah lashón!* 'Don't speak (in Judezmo) because he knows the language!' (cf. *diburear* 'to speak (esp. a foreign language)' < *dibur* דיבור 'speech', *yodéah lashón* יודע לשון 'knows the language').

The gender of Judezmo nouns of Hebrew-Aramaic origin sometimes diverges from the norm in the source language; for example, nouns ending in a consonant tend to be masculine, e.g., *el lashón* (לשון) 'the language; Hebrew', whereas those ending in *a* are generally feminine, e.g., *la shevá* (שווא) 'the schwa'. Fusions

combining stems of Hebrew-Aramaic origin and derivational morphemes of Hispanic origin are known from the Middle Ages on, e.g., pre-expulsion *enheremar* ‘to excommunicate’ (< *hérem* חרם ‘excommunication’ + Hispanic-origin verbalizing *en-* *-ar*), post-expulsion *gaviento* ‘haughty’ (< *ga[a]vá* גאוה ‘pride’ + Hispanic-origin adjectivizing *-ento*), *mazalozo* ‘lucky’ (< *mazal* מזל ‘luck’ + adjectivizing *-ozo*), *kaf-rador* ‘Jewish heretic’ (< *kaf-rar* ‘to deny the existence of God’ < *k-f-r* כ-פ-ר actor-denoting *-dor*); *badkamiento* ‘search (esp. for leavened food before Passover)’ (< *badkar* ‘to search < *b-d-q* ב-ד-ק + substantivizing *-miento*).

Before the expulsions, substantives of Hebrew-Aramaic origin sometimes pluralized with the addition of Hispanic-origin plural markers; e.g., *eskavás* ‘memorial prayers’ (cf. *eskavá* השכבה [Heb. *haškava*] + Hispanic-origin *s*). Following the expulsions, fusion forms also included other inflectional elements of Hispanic origin added to stems of Hebrew origin, e.g., femininizing *-a* in *samasa* ‘wife of the synagogue beadle; extra candle used to light the Hanukkah lamp’ (cf. Heb.-origin *samáš* שמש [šammaš] ‘beadle’); as well as inflectional endings of Hebrew-Aramaic origin added to stems of other origins, e.g., the Hebrew-origin masculine plural marker *-im* ים used in forms such as *ladroním* ‘thieves’ (< Hispanic-origin *ladrón* ‘thief’); plural markers of both Hebrew and Hispanic origin appearing in tautological plurals such as *berahodes* ‘benedictions’ (cf. Hebrew-origin sg. *berahá* ברכה + *-od* [Heb. ירת + Hispanic-origin *-es*]); and abstract nouns such as *haraġanud* ‘laziness’ (< Ibero-Arabic-origin *haraġán* ‘lazy’ + Hebrew-origin abstract substantivizing *-ud* [ית]). Hypocoristic forms of personal names were often created by suffixing morphemes of Hispanic origin (e.g., *-iko* [Sp. *-ico*]) to Hebrew names, e.g., *Avramiko* (< *Avram* אברהם) and *Sarika* (< *Sará* שרה); probably, such forms had already been used before the expulsions, but most are apparently first documented in Ottoman rabbinical responsa from the 16th century.

Elements of Hebrew-Aramaic origin deriving from passages in the sacred literature also include lexicalized phrases and examples of metonymy displaying semantic shifts, e.g., (*[f]azer*) *oséshalóm* ‘(to make a) get-away’ (cf. *osé shalom* עושה שלום, literally, ‘makes peace’, an allusion to the three steps backward made at the conclusion of the *amidá* (עמידה) or ‘silent devotion’ prayer); *mashemeha/-o* ‘Ashkenazi Jew’ (cf. *ma shemeha* מה שמך ‘what is your name?’ [Gen. 32:27], used in early interactions between Judezmo speakers and Ashkenazi immigrants in the Ottoman Empire, who often had no common language except a stilted Hebrew based on verses in the sacred sources) – the latter term later yielding the ironic language-name *mashemehesko* ‘Yiddish’ (cf. Jud. *-esko* [Sp. *-esco*], added to ethnonyms to create linguonyms). Interaction with speakers of local languages in the Ottoman Empire led to further innovations in the use of elements of Hebrew-Aramaic origin.



### 3.4 Language contact influences

From the Early Middle Judezmo phase, contact with local languages in regions under Ottoman domination had a significant influence on Judezmo at all linguistic levels. In the Northwest region, the influence of the phonological systems of varieties of South Slavic, Italian, and German led to the collapse of the Old Judezmo /d/ versus /ð/, /g/ versus /ɣ/, and /r/ versus /r/ phoneme oppositions, respectively, as occlusive /d/, /g/, and flapped /r/, whereas all six phonemes survived in the Southeast region, with /ð/ and /ɣ/ perhaps reinforced under the influence of neighboring Greek: cf. NWJ [na'dar] vs. SEJ [na'ðar] 'to swim' (Sp. *nadar* [na'ðar]), NWJ [pa'gar] vs. SEJ [pa'ɣar] 'to pay' (Sp. *pagar* [pa'ɣar]), NWJ *para* 'for; grape-leaf' vs. SEJ *para* 'for' vs. *parra* 'grape-leaf' (Sp. *para*, *parra*). Under the same local influences, in word-final position, the /d/ (< /ð/) phoneme underwent devoicing to /t/ in the Northwest; e.g., NWJ *sivdat* vs. SEJ *sivdad* 'city' (cf. OSp. *civdad/-th*). On the other hand, the interaction with the contact languages in the Northwest region led to the introduction in its dialects of the phonemes /d͡z/ (e.g., *podzu* 'well', cf. Sp. *pozo*, It. *pozzo*) and /ts/ (e.g., *natsión* 'nation', cf. It. *nazione*, Ger. *Nation*), which are essentially absent in the Southeast. In contact with Turkish and Balkan languages, Judezmo in various regions acquired palatalized *k'*, e.g., *k'irá* (alternating regionally with *kyirá* and *chirá*) 'rent' < Tk. *kira* (also Bosn. *ćirija*).

The earliest interactions between Jewish immigrants from Iberia and speakers of Balkan languages, such as the Jewish Greek of the Romaniote Jews and especially popular Turkish, led to borrowings reflecting the new realia the Jews encountered in the empire, e.g., terms of Ottoman origin (often borrowed into Turkish from other languages, such as Persian, Arabic and Greek) found in Judezmo texts of the mid-16th century. Such borrowings referred to local culinary traditions, e.g., *sherbet* 'fruit sherbet' (cf. Tk. *şerbet* [< Per. *sherbet* < Ar. *sharbat*],<sup>3</sup> Gk. *sermbéti*) and *hoshap* 'cold fruit compote' (cf. Tk. *hoşap*, Gk. *hosáfi*), costume terms such as *feradjé* and *anterí* 'types of long, loose-fitting Ottoman-style coats or robes' (cf. Tk. *ferace*, *entari*), institutional and architectural terms such as *han* 'inn' (Tk. *han*) and *taván* 'ceiling' (Tk. *tavan*), and names for local ethnic groups such as *ermenís* 'Armenians' and *arnautes* 'Albanians' (cf. Tk. *ermeni*, *arnavut*). But prolonged contact with the local languages also led to the replacement of native lexemes by new borrowings, e.g., *elefante* (Sp.) > *fil* (Tk.) 'elephant', *mono* (Sp.) > *maymón(a)* (Tk. *maymun*) 'monkey'.

<sup>3</sup> Henceforth, only the direct Ottoman etyma of the Judezmo borrowings will be cited.

Especially after the 16th century, the deep-level borrowing of elements from the local contact lexicons belonging to all word classes and semantic spheres is reflected in Judezmo rabbinical and, later on, secular texts. Such borrowings include substantives such as the color term *maví* ‘blue’ (Tk. *mavi*), adjectives describing physical characteristics such as *shishko* ‘fat’ and *kyosé* ‘beardless’ (Tk. *şısko*, *köse*), verbs such as synthetic *emzalear* ‘to sign, authorize in writing’ (cf. Tk. *imza* [*<* Ar. *imza* ‘signature’] + denominal verbalizing *-la-*) and analytic (*f*) *azer shematá* ‘to cause a commotion’ (cf. Tk. *şamata et-*), adverbs such as *mahsús* ‘intentionally’ (Tk. *mahsus*), and interjections such as *ayde!* ‘come on!’ and (*a*) *bré!* ‘hey!’ (Tk. *haydi*, *b[i]re*). By the Early Modern Judezmo phase, Judezmo contained thousands of such local borrowings. The use of some words and forms tended to be confined to particular dialects or regions; but most were universal, e.g., *parás* ‘money’ (cf. Tk. *para* ‘para coin, money’ + Hispanic-origin plural marker *s*), *boyá* ‘paint’ (Tk. *boya*), *udá* ‘room’ (Tk. *oda*), *kavé* ‘Turkish coffee’ (Tk. *kahve*), *bel* ‘waist’ (Tk. *bel*), *kolay* ‘easy’ (Tk. *kolay*), *bit(i)rear* ‘to finish’ (Tk. *bitir*), *konushear* ‘to converse’ (Tk. *konus*).

In the 16th century, Turkish lexemes composed of Turkish-origin stems and semantically discrete suffixes were borrowed freely; by the 18th and 19th centuries, the suffixes were also used productively with stems of non-Turkish origin, in fusion constructions such as *pizmondjí* ‘singer of Jewish religious hymns’ (cf. Heb.-origin *pizmon* פִּימון ‘hymn’ + Tk. agent suffix *-ci*), *hanukalik* ‘Hanukkah present’ (cf. Heb.-origin *hanuká* חנוכה ‘Hanukkah holiday’ + Tk. *-lik*, denoting something associated with the object referred to by the stem), *vedróli* ‘greenish’ (cf. *vedre* [Sp. *verde*] ‘green’ + Tk. adjectivizing *-li*), *hahamhaná* ‘offices of the chief rabbinate’ (cf. Heb.-origin *haham* חכם ‘rabbinical scholar’ + Tk. *hane* ‘building’), and many others. By the 18th century, Judezmo formally distinguished between masculine and feminine forms of nouns and qualifiers of Turkish origin, e.g., m.sg. *estambolí* vs. f.sg. *estambolía* ‘resident of Istanbul’ (cf. Tk-origin *-li* + Sp.-origin femininizing *-a*). A further sign of the deep-level incorporation of material from contact languages is the occasional attraction to substantives of local origin of inflectional endings such as the Hebrew-origin plural marker (masculine) *-im* (ים) to lexemes such as *papás* ‘priest’ (cf. Tk. *papaz*, Gk. *papás*), yielding *papazim* ‘priests’, and (feminine) *-od* (ית) to nouns such as *kasabá* ‘small town’ (Tk. *kasaba*), giving plural *kasabod*. Hypocoristic suffixes of (Jewish) Greek origin were borrowed by Judezmo speakers early on; feminine examples are attested in 16th century rabbinical responsa; e.g., feminine *-oula* occurs in names such as *Simhula* (*<* Heb.-origin *Simhá* שמחה), *Rozula* (*<* Hispanic-origin *Roza* [Sp. *Rosa*]). Examples, mostly masculine, with *-achi* (cf. Gk. *-áki*) are attested from the late 19th century, e.g., *Avramachi* (*<* Avram אברהם).



Turkish also had a significant effect on Judezmo at the level of the idiomatic expression; numerous phrases of Turkish origin are used in full or partial translation, e.g., *De ke?* ‘Why?’ < Tk. *Neden?*; *Ke haber?* ‘What’s new?’ < Tk. *Ne haber?* And just as idiomatic expressions of Hebrew origin were used as an integral part of Judezmo – e.g., *Haham haham shetiká!* חכם חכם שתיקה! ‘A smart man keeps quiet!’, so too, numerous Turkish sayings and proverbial expressions were incorporated into everyday Judezmo, either in Judezmo translation, in the original Turkish, or both, e.g., *Son pishmán, faydá etméz* – *Después ke akontese una dezgrasia, repen-tirse no aze ningún provecho* (‘After a mishap occurs, regretting what might have been does no good’). Repetition of a concept using referents both of Turkish and Hispanic origin is used for emphasis, e.g., *Ich nada!* ‘Absolutely nothing!’ (cf. Tk. *hiç*, Sp. *nada*, both meaning ‘nothing’); elements of Hebrew origin are also employed in such constructions, e.g., *Adonay Dio!* ‘My God!’ (cf. Heb. *Adonay* ׁ, Sp. *Dios*).

Turkish and other local contact languages seem not to have made a profound impact on the syntax of Judezmo until the late 19th and especially 20th and 21st centuries, when speakers of Judezmo and their descendants increasingly adopted Turkish or other state languages as their primary language and restricted their use of Judezmo to the home and synagogue, leading to symptoms of language mixing and language demise. But, especially in certain regions, there appears to have been some syntactic influence. For example, the use of the subjunctive seems to have weakened in areas in which Judezmo speakers were in prolonged contact with speakers of South Slavic languages. In Turkey, Turkish constructions such as *çok para* ‘much money’, with *para* in the singular because it follows a qualifier denoting plurality, began to be mirrored in Judezmo constructions such as synonymous *muncha pará*, with both the adjective and noun in the singular, whereas in Spanish, analogous constructions (e.g., *\*mucho ducado*) are impermissible. Since the turn of the 20th century, possessive constructions of the type *el ombre su padre* ‘the man’s father’, reflecting Turkish *adamn babası*, are documented, if rarely (cf. older/usual Judezmo *el padre del ombre*, as in Spanish).

## 4 Written and oral traditions

### 4.1 Writing systems

As in the case of other Jewish languages which arose before the modern era, Old Sephardic La‘az or Old Judezmo was written primarily in the Hebrew or Jewish alphabet (a practice known as *soletrear* or ‘transcribing Judezmo sounds in

Hebrew letters', cf. Bunis 2008a: 431), using the various cursive scripts characteristic of the Jews of Iberia, which came to be called *ḥaṣi qolmos* in Hebrew and, by at least the 16th century, referring both to their cursive and printed forms, *letras provensalas* or *letras de Rashí* in the language itself. The reference to Rashí derived from the fact that the first printed edition of Rashi's commentary, published in Reggio di Calabria in 1475, was printed in a font modeled after the Iberian Jewish cursive; henceforth, the font was popularly known as *Rashí* characters. With the advent of Jewish printing in the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century, the earliest Judezmo texts meant for a popular audience were printed in the vocalized Square (or *merubá*) letters familiar to popular readers from the Hebrew Bible and daily prayer book; but subsequent Judezmo printing most commonly appeared in the *Rashí* font without vocalization, the Square letters being reserved in such prints for titles and as a kind of bold face. From the 19th century, some Judezmo printing was also realized in unvocalized Square letters, especially in immigrant communities (e.g., New York) where *Rashí* type may have been difficult to obtain. Also from the 19th century on, the Judezmo cursive script was commonly denoted as *soletreo*.

The traditional Hebrew-letter writing system underwent modifications during the various historical phases of Judezmo. The representation of the vowels and diphthongs have remained rather similar throughout the historical development of Judezmo: word-initial and -medial *a* = א, word-final -*a* = primarily ה; both *e* and *i* = ם, and *o* and *u* = ו, all four vowels being preceded by silent א when in word-initial position; the *y* [j] glide was denoted by single ם when preceding *e* or *i*, and by double ם when preceding or following *a*, *o*, or *u*; the *u* [w] glide was denoted by ו. The consonants generally have been represented as follows: /b/ [b] = ב; /ch/ [tʃ] = ח; occlusive /d/ [d] = ד; fricative /d/ [ð] = ד, as well as syllable-final ן in Hebrew-Aramaisms, or, especially from the 18th century, ם; /dj/ [dʒ] = ח; /f/ [f] = פ-ם, ם; occlusive /g/ [g] and fricative /g/ [ɣ] = primarily ג; /j/ [ʒ] = pre-modern ם and, especially from the late 18th century, ם, which became the modern norm; /k/ = ק (also כ in some words of Hebrew-Aramaic origin); palatalized /k' / [kʰ] (in post-expulsion Judezmo) = קי or ק; /l/ = ל; Old Judezmo /ʎ/ (or at least the Old Judezmo sound corresponding to Old Spanish ʎ) = ם, and from the 18th century its reflex, /y/ [j], was often denoted by the variants ם ~ ם; /m/ [m] = מ-ם, ם; /n/ [n] = ם, ג; /ny/ [ɲ] = ם; /p/ [p] = פ; flapped /r/ [r] = ר; trilled /rr/ [r̄] = ר, and from the late 19th century, variant רר; /s/ [s], or word-finally, before a voiced phone, [z] = Old Judezmo ש (corresponding to OSp. <s-, -ss-, -s>), ס, and rarer ש-ם, ש (corresponding to OSp. <z-, ç, -z>), Middle Judezmo ש/ש, Modern Judezmo ש (the Middle and Modern forms corresponding to both OSp. <s, ss, s> and OSp. <ç, z, z>); /sh/ [ʃ] = ש/ש; /t/ [t] = ט (also syllable-initial ן in some Hebrew-Aramaisms); /v/ [v] = Old and Middle Judezmo ם-ם-ם-ם-ם-ם, Modern Judezmo ם; /h/ [χ] = ח (also כ, and syllable final ם, in some Hebrew-Aramaisms); /z/ [z] = Old Judezmo

-w- (corresponding to OSp. <s->), † (corresponding to OSp. <z>) and Middle and Modern Judezmo † (corresponding to both OSp. <s-> and <z>). As noted, the letters  $\aleph$  and  $\eta$  were positional variants for /a/, but in words of Hebrew-Aramaic origin had zero phonological value;  $\psi$  had zero value in syllable initial position but /h/ [χ] or zero syllable finally. In Northwest Judezmo, the regional phoneme /dz/ [dʒ] was represented by  $\psi$ ד (e.g., פודזו *podzu* ‘well’); and the /ts/ [ts] phoneme by  $\psi$ -צ (e.g., נאציין *natsiön* ‘nation’).

From the mid-19th century, when some Judezmo-speaking children began to attend foreign-language, colonialist-oriented schools such as those of the AIU, and local state schools such as those in Serbia and Bulgaria, some younger speakers became more proficient in the use of the Roman or Cyrillic alphabet than the traditional Hebrew-letter Judezmo alphabet. From this time, and especially following World War I, there was a gradual shift away from the Hebrew-letter system to Roman orthographies based on French, Serbian, and romanized Turkish, and to the Bulgarian Cyrillic orthography. In 1979, Moshe Shaul, editor of the Jerusalem Judezmo periodical *Aki Yerushalayim*, proposed an early version of the romanization, which has now become the standard system advocated by the Israel National Authority for Ladino and Its Culture; it is used in Judezmo periodicals, *Aki Yerushalayim* and *El Amaneser*, on Internet sites such as Ladinokomunita and the Judezmo section of eSefarad.com, and among everyday native speakers and some scholars. A compromise between Turkish, French, English, and Spanish romanizations, the salient graphemes of this romanization, often called *Aki Yerushalayim* spelling, are: *ch* = [tʃ], *dj* = [dʒ], *h* = [χ], *i* = [i] and [j] (the latter, especially when preceding a vowel), *j* = [ʒ], *k* = [k], *ny* = [ɲ], *r* = [r], *rr* = [r̄], *s* = [s], *sh* = [ʃ], *u* = [u] and [w], *y* = [j] (in initial, final, and certain medial positions), *z* = [z].

## 4.2 Literature

The writings in Sephardic La‘az surviving from pre-expulsion Spain are somewhat limited; they include Hebrew-letter personal correspondence, business contracts, community records and regulations such as the *taqqanot* or ordinances set down by the rabbis in Valladolid in 1432, prayers in translation with instructions, original poetry (e.g., *Koplas de Yosef Asadik*; *Proverbios morales* of Shem Tov of Carrión), and transliterations of Spanish literature in Hebrew letters, such as the moralistic drama, *Danza general de la muerte*. The registers and styles employed in most of this pre-expulsion material probably diverged considerably from the everyday language used by most Jews of Spain. There are also a few volumes of religious instruction in the Latin alphabet, apparently meant for crypto-Jews

posing as Christians who dared not keep Hebrew-letter writings in their homes for fear of discovery by the Inquisition, and who were perhaps no longer familiar with the Hebrew alphabet.

Following the expulsions, Judezmo enjoyed extensive written documentation in the Hebrew alphabet, from the mid-16th into the 20th centuries, and from the late 20th through 21st centuries, in romanization. Publications from the Early Middle Judezmo phase included renditions of rabbinical court testimony incorporated in Ottoman responsa collections; calque translations of sacred Hebrew and Aramaic texts, such as the so-called Constantinople Pentateuch of 1547, Ethics of the fathers, and the women's siddur, *Seder našim*; poetic and dramatic pieces; and rabbinical writings of several types and in several styles, which might collectively be called *djudezmo de hahamim* or 'rabbinical Judezmo' (e.g., *Šulhan ha-panim ... Meza de el alma*, an adaptation of parts of Yosef Karo's *Šulhan 'aruk*, by Me'ir [Benveniste], Salonika 1568).

From the Late Middle phase, Judezmo rabbinical literature expanded to include original volumes of biblical exegesis such as volumes of *Sefer Me-'am lo'ez* by Ya'aqov Khulí (Constantinople, Genesis, 1730; Exodus, 1733) and his successors, and collections of *ko(m)plas* or rhymed couplets on religious and moralistic themes such as *Koplas de purim* by Avraham de Fes (Constantinople, c.1720) and *Šorke šibbur* by Avraham Asa (Constantinople, 1733). There were also translations and adaptations of Hebrew texts and original rabbinical treatises.

In Livorno, 1778, David Atías published a pioneering educational manual for Eastern Sephardim planning to visit Western Europe; entitled *La guerta de oro* (The Golden Garden), it exhibited an innovative fusion of rabbinical, popular, and novel Western Europeanized linguistic features and marked the inception of Judezmo literature of a less specifically religious nature. A further reflection of growing western cultural influences among the Ottoman Sephardi communities from the mid-19th century was the rise of a periodical press. The earliest surviving Judezmo newspaper was *Ša'are Mizraḥ*, published by Rafa'el 'Uzzi'el in Izmir, 1845–1846; its appearance was followed by over 300 Judezmo newspapers, published in Vienna and throughout the Mediterranean Sephardi diaspora, including Jerusalem, Constantinople, Salonika, Izmir, Edirne, and later Sarajevo, Belgrade, Plovdiv, Ruse, Sofia, Rhodes, Paris, New York, and elsewhere. In Salonika, the Hebrew-letter Judezmo press continued to flourish until the Nazis closed the Jewish presses. In the 1930s, the Judezmo press of Istanbul began to appear in Turkish romanization. Especially after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, massive immigration from cities such as Salonika and Istanbul led to a revival of the Judezmo press – now in romanization – in Tel Aviv–Yafo. At the same time, diverse material of the kind presented in the periodical press was also published in pamphlets and books in Istanbul and Tel Aviv.

Many of the newspapers and books of the Late Middle phase were written, edited, and published by Sephardi graduates of the AIU and participants in the programs of the Italian Società Dante Alighieri. Although many of the journalists used the highly Europeanized variety of Judezmo first richly documented in 'Uzzi'el's *Ša'are Mizraḥ*, from the late 19th century some writers rejected this highly Gallicized and Italianized *djudezmo frankeado* (Western Europeanized Judezmo), preferring instead to imitate the popular, natural *djudezmo kabá* or 'common Judezmo' spoken by the masses, which they used in noteworthy periodicals featuring fiction and satire, such as *El Meseret* (ed. Alexandre Benghiatt, Izmir, 1897–1922), *El Djugetón* (ed. Elia R. Karmona, Constantinople, 1909–1933), and *El Kərbach* (ed. Moïse Levy, Salonika, 1910–1917).

In more recent years, an appreciation of Judezmo as an independent Jewish language which evolved naturally as a result of the interaction of its speakers – especially those of the less elite echelons – and their neighbors, has led to the growing use in the 21st century of a compromise between the folk and Europeanized varieties in the periodicals *Aki Yerushalayim* of Jerusalem (founded 1979) and *El Amaneser* (founded 2005, continuing *Šalom*, founded 1947) of Istanbul, in messages appearing in the pioneering Ladinokomunita social network site, in Internet sites such as eSefarad.com, which publish news and features in the traditional language (in romanization), and in the brief daily Judezmo (or Djudeo-Espanyol) program of Radio Kol Israel of Jerusalem. Gifted writers such as Moshe Shaul, Matilda Koen-Sarano, Avner Peretz, Moshe Aelion, Eliezer Papo, Roz Koen, Margalit Matitiah, Klara Perahya, Karen Şarhon, Yehuda Hatsvi, and others continue to employ varieties of the traditional idiom for artistic self-expression, re-creating the vibrant life of Judezmo-speaker communities of the past, erecting monuments to the communities that perished during World War II, and carrying the innovative use of Judezmo into the 21st century.

### 4.3 Performance (theatre, film, etc.)

Historians of the Turkish shadow theatre (Karagöz) have suggested that Jewish immigrants from Iberia with theatrical experience helped establish that theatrical form in the Ottoman Empire and Judezmo texts from the 16th century create the impression that dramatic presentations were known in the empire from that century. The earliest full performance text we have is the Joseph story, Avraham Toledo's *Koplas de Yosef Asadik* (Constantinople, 1732), in which various figures participate in the re-enactment of the biblical narrative using rhymed verse, enhanced by Ottoman classical music (Perez 2005).

Judezmo dramatic works in the prose format more widely known in Western European theatrical literature began to appear in the Balkans and Ottoman regions in the mid-19th century. One of the earliest pieces was *Piesa de Yaakov Avinu kon sus ijos* (Bucharest, 1862), composed by Moshe Shēmu’el Kofino for the pupils of the Sephardic religious elementary school in which he taught in Giurgiu (Romania). The dramatic genre proved to be popular among Judezmo speakers in the Ottoman Empire and its successor states. Many of the published plays – often conveying politico-ideological messages such as those of the Haskalah, Zionism, and Jewish nationalism, or meant to enrich the celebration of Jewish festivals and highlight the talents of the pupils in Jewish schools – were performed in schools, community centers, and local theaters by pupils and troupes of amateur actors.

Commercial recordings of Judezmo songs, performed in traditional styles by some of the speaker community’s finest singers, had begun to be released early in the 20th century; some, e.g., those by Isaac Algazi and Haim Efendi, have enjoyed re-release in recent years (Seroussi 2002, 2008). Recordings of Judezmo music are still popular – but today the pieces are often performed in styles diverging widely from those traditionally used by native speakers of earlier times, ranging from the medieval and baroque (e.g., recordings of *Voice of the Turtle*) to heavy rock (e.g., recordings of Sarah Aroeste).

From the founding of the Jewish State, Judezmo theater troupes in Israel, usually organized by immigrants from a particular city or country, have entertained their compatriots with plays and musicals, as part of a broader attempt to maintain and revitalize the Judezmo language and cultural traditions. Similar efforts have been made by Judezmo speakers who remained in the countries of origin, such as Bulgaria, Turkey, and the former Yugoslavia. “Sephardic Romancero” (1968) and “Bustan Sephardi” (Spanish Garden, 1970), two highly popular Hebrew musicals by Yitzhak Navon, Israel’s fifth president and himself a native Judezmo speaker, incorporated Judezmo songs and scenes from Sephardic life in the Land of Israel of the 1930s.

Since World War II, Judezmo (or approximations of it) have also been incorporated in films of fiction touching on the lives of Judezmo speakers in Israel, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and elsewhere, such as the Moshe Mizrahi films *The House on Chelouche Street* (1973), starring Israeli actors Shaike Ofir and Gila Almagor, and *Every Time We Say Good-bye* (1986), starring Tom Hanks and the Spanish-accented Cristina Marsillach. More recent years have seen documentaries focusing on Judezmo speaker communities of the past and present, such as the historical travelogues of Yehoram Gaon (1988), Yitzhak Navon (2006), and Eliezer Papo (Ángel Nieto 2002), films recounting the Sephardic immigrant experience in the United States, such as “Arvoles Yoran por Luvias” (Trees Cry for Rain), by Bonnie Burt and Rachel Amado Bortnick (1989), treatments of the

complex interactions between Jews and non-Jews in the traditional Judezmo homeland, such as “A Turkish-Jewish-Muslim Tale,” by Güler Orgun, the autobiographical “The Key From Spain,” by Flory Jagoda (c.2000), and slices of Sephardic life, past and present, related by rank-and-file Judezmo speakers and uploaded to YouTube and other websites.

## 5 State of research

Judezmo language and literature have drawn the attention of scholars since the late 19th century, with the result that there is an extensive research literature on these subjects. Studemund (1975), Sala (1976), and Bunis (1981) provide bibliographical details through their years of publication; subsequent updates have appeared in various sources, such as the MLA International Bibliography and the journal *Sefarad*. Schwarzwald (2002) offers a précis of the development of the field. A valuable bibliography of Sephardic studies, including Judezmo language, linguistics, and literature, is the *Bibliografía Sefardí Comentada* of CSIC’s Sefardiweb ([www.proyectos.cchs.csic.es/sefardiweb/bibliografiasefardi/](http://www.proyectos.cchs.csic.es/sefardiweb/bibliografiasefardi/)).

### 5.1 History of documentation

An interest in the Jews of medieval Iberia among the early Haskalah historians, as well as non-Jewish historians of the 19th century, led to a “re-discovery” of the Sephardim of the Ottoman Empire, their history, cultural traditions, and language. The late 19th century saw the publication of pioneering books and articles focusing on topics in Judezmo language and folk literature which were to captivate philologists, linguists, and folklorists into the 21st century. Topics included the distinctive characteristics of the language, especially compared with Spanish; regional dialects; the special language of translations of Hebrew and Aramaic sacred texts; the question of Jewish linguistic distinctiveness in Iberia; the Hebrew-letter writing system; the linguistic components of non-Hispanic origin in the Ottoman regions; Judezmo as a member of the family of Jewish languages; the diverse linguistic varieties used in Ottoman Judezmo literature; and the corpus of proverbs, popular songs, ballads, and other oral folk genres cultivated by Judezmo speakers in the empire and its successor states. The late 19th century also saw the budding of Judezmo lexicography, with early attempts at scientific lexicography appearing after World War I, and a flurry of bilingual, mostly ‘practical’ dictionaries appearing from the 1970s. Since the 1970s, university-level



courses introducing Judezmo as a foreign language and focusing on facets of its structure, history, and literature were introduced in institutions of higher education in Israel, parts of Europe, and the United States; and textbooks enabling this instruction were created.

## 5.2 Corpora

The advent of the Internet has enabled scholars to advance analysis of written Judezmo with the establishment of fully searchable online corpora and lexical databases, reflecting early literary texts originally in Hebrew letters and now transcribed in romanization, and material of more recent vintage created directly in digitized romanization (e.g., Busse 2001). Online corpora include *El Amaneser* ([sephardiccenter.wordpress.com/el-ameneser/](http://sephardiccenter.wordpress.com/el-ameneser/)), Collections de Corpus Oraux Numériques ([cocoon.huma-num.fr/exist/crdo/meta/crdo-COLLECTION\\_JSFA](http://cocoon.huma-num.fr/exist/crdo/meta/crdo-COLLECTION_JSFA)), Corpus Wiki (<http://www.corpuswiki.org/index.php?action=select&id=23>), El Corpus MemTet (<https://ladino.unibas.ch/proyectos/entre-tradicion-y-modernidad/el-corpus-memtet/>), and Perez N.d.

## 5.3 Issues of general theoretical interest

The considerable discrepancy between the various linguistic registers documented in Iberia before the expulsions and the popular Judezmo published from the mid-16th to 21st centuries in the Ottoman Empire raises the question: Do the pre-expulsion texts actually reflect the contemporaneous linguistic habits of the majority of everyday Jews, or are they essentially the artificial creations of a scholarly elite whose literary model was Spanish as used by Christian literati? Another fundamental question, with broad theoretical implications for the development of minority and enclave languages in general, is: Which internal and external historical, social, and linguistic dynamics were at work in the synthesis of the diverse varieties of incipient Ottoman Judezmo reflected in texts from the 16th and 17th centuries into the unique, relatively cohesive structural whole that constitutes modern Ottoman and post-Ottoman Judezmo? What roles did the shifting ethnic and ideological self-perceptions of members of the speaker community play in the considerable structural and especially lexical reorganization which the language underwent over the course of its historical phases, and how do these shifts tie in with the instability over time of linguistic elements relating to ethnic and linguistic identity, such as names for the language, the alphabet used to write it, its component structure, the relation perceived by members of the



speaker community between Judezmo and Spanish, and the speakers' thoughts regarding the future of the language.

## 5.4 Current directions in research

In recent years, the field of Judezmo language research has drawn a significant number of young researchers to its coterie of veteran scholars. Current researchers diverge considerably in their approaches and interests; some lean toward Hispanic studies, others toward comparative Jewish language research, still others toward general or Romance linguistics, sociolinguistics, or philology. Something of the diversity of interests in current research in the field may be seen in the collective volumes devoted to Judezmo and allied studies – some broad-ranging, others devoted to specific themes – which have seen the light since 2002, including Gatenio 2002; Bürki, Schmid and Schwegler 2006; Guastalla 2007; Molho 2008; Romero, Hassán and Izquierdo Benito 2008; Bunis 2009a; Díaz-Mas and Sánchez Pérez 2010; Molho, Pomeroy and Romero 2011; Romero and García Moreno 2011; Busse and Studemund-Halévy 2011; Bürki, Cimeli and Sánchez 2012; García Moreno 2012e; Bürki and Sinner 2012; Bürki and Romero 2014. The present section will touch on the most prominent topics in Judezmo language research since the beginning of the 21st century.

The history of Judezmo linguistics, and Sephardic Studies in general, were reviewed (e.g., Riaño López 2001; Schwarzwald 2002; Berenguer 2011a), and some of the diverse scholarly approaches to Judezmo were examined (e.g., Hassán 2006). Recent structural introductions to the language include Hetzer 2001; Schmid 2006a; Busse 2011b; Marín Ramos 2014. Broad general overviews of the problematics of the language are provided in Busse 2004; Gabinskij 2011; Minervini 2013; Bunis 2016a. The pedagogical use of Judezmo to teach Hebrew was discussed by Gomel (2006).

Of especially recent vintage in the field of Judezmo are studies devoted to topics in Judezmo syntax (e.g., Berenguer 2002, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2014a, 2014b; Varol 2002a; García Moreno 2003, 2006a, 2012a; Barco 2004; Barme 2004; Montoliu and Van der Auwera 2004; Berenguer, Cerezo and Schmid 2006; Bürki and Schmid 2006; Stulić-Etchevers 2008; Varol 2008, 2009; Schlumpf 2009, 2012a, 2012b, 2014, 2015; Bürki 2012a; Tabares Plasencia, Sinner and Hernández Socas 2012; Von Schmädel 2012; Vuletić 2011; Shafran 2014). Other areas of structure considered include the distinctive features of the language's phonology and morphology (e.g., Bürki 2001; Stulić, Vučina and Zečević 2003; Bunis 2004b, 2006–2007, 2007, 2012a; García Moreno 2006a, 2012a, 2012b; Bradley 2007a, 2007b, 2009; Varol 2008, 2011a; Bradley and Smith 2011; Hualde and

Şaul 2011; Hernández González 2012b); the lexicon (including anthroponyms, and expressions of time and space), lexicography and the use of glosses (e.g., Busse 2001; Varol 2003; Bunis 2006–2007, 2007, 2011e, 2013a, 2015b; García Moreno 2006b, 2010, 2012d, 2013b, 2013c, 2013d, 2013e, 2014; Sanchis i Ferrer and Vuletić 2008; Schwarzwald 2008a, 2011; Stulić-Etchevers 2008; Mancheva 2009; Busse and Studemund-Halévy 2011; Díaz-Mas and Romeu Ferré 2011; Kohring 2011; Platikanova 2011; Quintana 2011a; Studemund-Halévy 2011; Vučina Simović 2011; Bürki and Sinner 2012; Rieder-Zelenko 2012, 2014; Sánchez and Wieland 2012; Von Schmädel 2012; Twardowska 2013; Zečević-Krneta 2013; Hernández Socas, Sinner and Tabares Plasencia 2014); semantics and metaphor use (e.g., Münch 2007; Bürki and Sinner 2012; Hernández González 2012a). Studies of the language's Hispanic and non-Hispanic components (see Busse 2011a; Varol 2011b), continue to draw attention: on Slavisms: Bunis 2001; Grecisms: Symeonidis 2002; Mavrogiannis 2006–2007; Hebrew-Aramaisms and the Whole Hebrew of Judezmo speakers: Münch 2004, 2007; Bunis 2005c, 2006–2007, 2007, 2009b, 2013c, 2013e, 2013f; Rieder-Zelenko 2006; Benaim 2008; Schwarzwald 2013a; Turkisms: Romeu Ferré 2004; Şahin Reis 2005; Bunis 2006–2007, 2008b, 2013b, 2013h; Rieder-Zelenko 2006; Varol 2011a; Vuletić 2011; Gallicisms: Barme 2004; Hispanisms: Papo 2007; Mancheva 2008b; Quintana Rodríguez 2009; Italianisms: Minervini 2008b, 2014; Arabisms: Neuman 2006–2007; Minervini 2011a; Bunis 2017; Germanisms: Papo 2013. Judezmo borrowings in other languages have been noted (e.g., in Greek: Mavrogiannis 2006–2007; in Modern Hebrew: Schwarzwald and Gomel 2001; Schwarzwald 2013b). Judezmo orthographic systems in the Hebrew, Roman, and Cyrillic alphabets have been examined, in their historical development and as identify markers (e.g., Busse 2003, 2005; Salvador Plans 2003; Sephiha 2003; Kohring 2004; Bunis 2005a; Schwarzwald 2005; Neuman 2006–2007; Hassán 2008; García Moreno 2012c; Budor 2013; Studemund-Halévy 2013; Díaz-Mas 2014); and the transcription systems used by scholars to romanize Hebrew-letter Judezmo texts have received attention (Varol 2002b, 2003; Schmid 2006b).

Attempts continue to be made to demarcate the salient phases in the historical development of pre- and post-expulsion Judezmo (e.g., Minervini 2006, 2008a; Quintana Rodríguez 2006b, 2006c, 2007, 2008, 2011b; Bunis 2013h); and to focus attention on particular phases, their characteristic features, and representative texts (e.g., Bunis 2004a; Arnold 2006; Quintana Rodríguez 2006b, 2007, 2008, 2014a; Schmid 2007; Vårvaro and Minervini 2007; Benaim 2008, 2011; Ayala 2010; Vårvaro 2012; Berenguer 2014b). The geographic dispersion of Judezmo has also been examined (e.g., Weis 2000; Symeonidis 2002; Gerson Şarhon 2006; Quintana Rodríguez 2006a, 2014b; Schmid 2007; Studemund-Halévy and Collin 2007; Bossong 2008; Bunis 2008c, 2010a, 2012a, 2013d, 2013i; Varol 2008; Soler 2009;

Ayala 2010; Vuletić 2011, 2012; Studemund-Halévy, Liebl and Vučina Simović 2013; Twardowska 2013; Vučina Simović 2013a, 2013b, 2013c).

Various topics relating to Judezmo sociolinguistics and register/style divergence have been addressed. The rise and manifestations of popular Judezmism (or *Djudeoespanyolizmo*, as denoted by journalist Sam Levy of Salonika), as an independent movement and in cognizance of other modern Jewish and non-Jewish language movements such as Modern Hebrew revivalism and Yiddishism, were examined (Bunis 2010b, 2011g, 2012b; Vučina Simović 2013a, 2013b, 2013c), as were the rise of an Ottoman Judezmo culture and its linguistic and literary manifestations (e.g., Bunis 2005b; Borovaya 2012), Judezmo as a homeland (e.g., Díaz-Mas and Romeu Ferré 2013), and issues of language and identity (e.g., Weis 2000; Varol 2011b), and standardization (e.g., Quintana Rodríguez 2012). Scholars have pondered the linguistic outcome of the encounter of Judezmo speakers with modernization and with the languages of Western European colonialism; the effects on Judezmo of the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of local nationalism; the reality of medieval and Ottoman Sephardic multilingualism; and the connection between language, identity, and other societal factors in the Judezmo speaker community, especially as reflected in the Judezmo press and other primary sources (e.g., Altabev 2003; Bunis 2003; Ayala 2006; Ayala and Busse 2006; Ayala and Djaen 2006; Quintana Rodríguez 2006c; Díaz Mas and Sánchez Pérez 2010; Bürki and Sinner 2012; Romero 2012; Bürki 2013; Gutwirth 2013; Sánchez and Bornes-Varol 2013, 2015; Selony and Sarfati 2013; Şaul 2013), as well as in Spanish sources (e.g., Díaz-Mas 2012). Scholars have focused on the names of Judezmo (e.g., Bunis 2008a, 2011a); native and non-native perceptions of and attitudes toward the language (e.g., Altabev 2003; Papo 2009a; Bürki 2010a, 2010b; Schmid 2010; Bunis 2011c, 2011g, 2014, 2016c); and other features distinguishing Judezmo as a Jewish language (e.g., Bunis 2011f, 2013g); as well as contacts between speakers of Judezmo and other (Jewish) languages (e.g., Vučina Simović 2013c). Judezmo within the context of Hispanism has also been discussed (e.g., Hassán 2002, 2006), as has the use of approximations of Spanish by Judezmo speakers (e.g., Varol 2010a). Scholars have also compared distinctive features of Judezmo with those of *Ḥaketía* and other Jewish languages (e.g., Bunis 2006, 2007, 2008a, 2008c, 2011c, 2012a; Schwarzwald 2008b), as well as of medieval Muslim Ibero-Romance (e.g., Bunis 2015a), of Spanish in its regional and historical variation (e.g., Penny 2000; Quintana Rodríguez 2010), and of Balkan languages (e.g., Friedman and Joseph 2014). The use of Judezmo among victims of the Holocaust was commemorated (e.g., Sephiha 2002; Santa Puche N.d.).

Topics in stylistics and discourse analysis include the language of conversation and literary representations of conversation (e.g., Cerezo 2006; Sánchez 2008b, 2013, 2015; Bunis 2011d), written representations of diverse social and

literary registers and genres – including age, gender, and social-level and professional divergence in language use – as well as the registers used in the novel, and autobiographical and dramatic writing (e.g., Varol 2003–2004, 2010b; Barco 2004; Bürki 2006, 2010, 2012b, 2014; Schwarzwald 2006–2007, 2010b; Valladares Ruiz 2007; Sánchez 2008a, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014; García Moreno 2011a; Bunis 2012c, 2013d, 2013g; Valentín del Barrio 2012); and code-switching (e.g., Held 2009). Calque Judezmo Bible glosses and translations and their distinctiveness vis à vis Christian Spanish Bible-translation traditions, have been treated (e.g., Quintana 2008a; Schwarzwald 2010a, 2011, 2012c; Bunis 2017), as has the calque language of liturgical-text translations for women (Schwarzwald 2012a, 2012b).

Attempts at language maintenance, language planning, and revitalization within the speaker community, in universities, and by the Israeli government, as well as symptoms of Judezmo language death, have been discussed (e.g., Hetzer 2003; Gerson Şarhon 2006, 2011; Harris 2006; Mantcheva 2006, 2008a; Quintana 2006d; Shaul 2006; Vučina Simović 2009, 2011, 2013a); nor has the role of Judezmo in the contemporary print and radio-broadcast media (e.g., Shaul 2004, 2007) and the internet (e.g., Busse 2001; Benveniste 2005; Schmid 2007; Brink-Danan 2011; Bunis 2016b, forthcoming) been neglected.

Numerous scholars, mostly of the Hispanist school, have re-released editions of Judezmo texts originally appearing in the Hebrew alphabet – mostly in romanization, sometimes accompanied by the original Hebrew-letter text and/or Hebrew parallels, and including translations of sacred texts, original rabbinical tracts, correspondence, poetry, periodicals, fictional works, and folk remedies – prefaced by linguistic analysis and complemented by glossaries of words unfamiliar to Spanish speakers (e.g., Lazar 2000a, 2000b; Riaño López 2000; Schmid and Bürki 2000; Collin 2002; Asenjo Orive 2003; Studemund-Halévy Studemund 2003, 2010; García Moreno 2004, 2011a, 2013a; Overbeck de Sumi 2005; Ayala and Busse 2006; Varol and Itzhaki 2006; Von Schmädel 2007, 2011; Albarral 2010a, 2010b; Berenguer 2011b; Minervini 2011b, 2012; Muñoz Molina 2011, 2014; Romeu Ferré 2011; Von Schmädel 2011; Papo 2012; Schwarzwald 2012a, 2012b; Šmid 2012; Bunis 2013d; Platikanova, Busse and Kohring 2014; Sánchez Pérez 2014; Studemund-Halévy with Collin 2014; Studemund-Halévy and Stulić 2015). The challenges of electronic text edition and metadescription were pondered (e.g., Soufiane Roussi and Stulić 2006, 2013).

Considerable efforts have been devoted to the development of tools facilitating the study of Judezmo and its literature. Joseph Nehama's *Dictionnaire du judéo-espagnol*, published posthumously in 1977, provided the foundation for numerous bilingual dictionaries, of varying scope and quality (e.g., Perez and Pimienta 2007; Perahya 2012; Hazan 2013), including internet word-lists and

concordances (e.g., “Diksionario de Ladinokomunita” [<http://ladinokomunita.tallerdetinoco.org/>]; and *Trezo de la Lengua Djudeoespanyola* [<http://folkmasa.org/milon/pmilonh.php>], edited by Avner Perez). Recordings of Judezmo speech have been issued (e.g., Liebl 2009), and large-scale oral documentation projects are underway (e.g., Mavrogiannis 2013).

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