

The aim of this study is to offer a complete insight into the current situation of the Judeo-Spanish linguistic variety of Thessaloniki, a language that evolved within the community of Sephardic Jews that settled in the city from 1492, as a direct consequence of their expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula.

This study is divided into three parts, each of them dedicated to a different aspect of this specific Judeo-Spanish variety.

The first part examines Judeo-Spanish as a language of the Jewish Diaspora, in the broader context of the general theory of evolution of Jewish languages. Judeo-Spanish is depicted here as a distinctive language which, although based largely on Medieval Castilian and other Romance varieties spoken by the Jews prior to their expulsion from the Peninsula, consequently evolved after their transfer to the Eastern Mediterranean into a specific linguistic system.

An extensive chapter is dedicated to the history and characterisation of the term Sepharad, which I consider of great importance not only for the elucidation of the circumstances of birth and evolution of the Judeo-Spanish language, but also for a better understanding of its current critical situation.

This is followed by an introduction into the different functional and geographical varieties of Judeo-Spanish, as well as of related terminology. A separate chapter is also dedicated to the description of the different systems of transcription with illustrative examples of each graphic system in use.

This section is concluded by a general characterisation of the main phases of evolution of the Judeo-Spanish of Thessaloniki, especially from the point of view of its perception by its speakers and with reference to the contemporary Spanish norm.