Modern South Arabian: Language and Nature

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Outline

The Modern South Arabian languages
Documentation of continental MSAL
Climate of Dhofar
Language and nature
Children’s e-books on nature for revitalisation of language and nature
اللغات العربية الجنوبية المعاصرة
MODERN SOUTH ARABIAN
Retraction of area

Endangerment factors

Unwritten languages

A literary, high-prestige, national language, Arabic

Urbanisation and education

Population movement – immigration, emigration, tourism

Communication – media, roads, airports, technology

Less prestigious MSAL (Hobyot, Harsusi & Bathari) losing out to more prestigious Mehri & Śḥerēt
MSAL documentation project

Watson (PI), Miranda Morris (St Andrews), Domenyk Eades (Melbourne), Alec Moore (fauna consultant, Chester), Alex Bellem (Durham), Saeed al-Mahri, Ali al-Mahri, Ahmad Hardan, Abdullah al-Mahri & other local RAs

Collection of over 200 hours of audio, 10 hours audio-visual data from Modern South Arabian (MSAL), backed by still photographs

Archive of annotated audio, audio-visual and photographic material in ELAR, SOAS (London)

340-lexeme comparative cultural glossary of MSAL for publication with *Journal of Semitic Studies*
Community documentation of biocultural diversity in al-Mahrah, Yemen

Funded by Endangered Languages Documentation Programme, SOAS: October 2017 – September 2018


Working with Mehri Center for Research and Studies

Conductive educational approach to community training in documentation, ethical methods, data sharing, annotation, translation

Aims: produce archive of c. 20 hours of audio and audio-visual recordings relating to the human – nature relationship

Annotate and translate c. 20% of material
Semantic fields

• Personal
• Environmental – water, land, toponyms, flora, fauna, directions
• Occupational – livestock husbandry, frankincense, fishing, construction
• Trade – weights and measures, bartering
• Material culture – use of environment in creation of material culture
• Stories – stories and metaphors relating to the environment
SALIENT LINGUISTIC FEATURES IN THE LANGUAGES

3/31/2018

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اقدم لغات سامية حية؟

Three plain sibilants – s, š, š – one of which is lateral
Dual pronouns for all persons
akay ‘me & one other’, atay ‘you & one other’, hay ‘s/he & one other’
kluh-ki ‘both you/me & one other’, klay-hi ‘both him/her & him/her’
syar-k ‘I/you m.s. went’, syar-ki ‘we/you & one other went’, sīr-oh ‘they m. dual went’, sīra-t-oh ‘they f. dual went’
gihm-ōna ‘m.s. will go’, gihm-ōni ‘m. dual will go’, gihm-īta ‘f.s. will go’, gihm-awti ‘f. dual will go’
LANGUAGE AND NATURE
المناخ
Climate
الفصول الأربعة
Four seasons
الأمطار والنجوم
Rains and stars
اللغة والبيئة - الأسماء

Language and nature: Names

الإبل – حيقيتن ويجريتن وسيحيتن ورمليتن ونعديتن

Camels – coastal, mountain, gravel desert, sand desert

تسمية الأماكن بمفردات لغوية محلية حسب التشبيه

Naming of places according to appearance

تعابير ملك الأراضي والمياه – حوز وحيكر

Terms of land and water possession – Hawz and Haykar
اووقات النهار والليل بالمهرية

Measurement of time: Mehri

كفيجر
فهج ذحيوم
كپرق – پرق ذحيوم
باد پرق
صوابيح
كصوبح
ذئوبن
ذواليبن
نهورن
كلعصر
كلئيني
غسروّن
غساريّن
کابصر - باد اجزاء
حاويل داصر
بحلّي
نهديت داصر
فقح داصر
تولي داصر

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حساب السنوات حسب الحوادث البيئية

Working out years and ages according to climatic events

• سنيت ذالحيمير
• سنيت ذاغرقايت
الاتجاهات

Reference points and direction

Topographical – direction of the flood waters, sea, mountains, desert

플 안 이고라브 랡락 من العمرأ لا 'so-and-so doesn’t know upstream from downstream'

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صناعة كتب رقمية للأطفال باللغات العربية الجنوبية المعاصرة

Production of children’s e-books in MSAL

• http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/info/125219/modern_south_arabian_languages/2376/resources
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