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## **The influence of Dongolawi Nubian on Sudan Arabic**

**Abstract.** Dongolawi Nubian, a Nilo-Saharan language variety spoken in Sudan, and Colloquial Sudanese Arabic, an Afro-Asiatic/Semitic variety, particularly the variety used in the Northern region, have been in close linguistic contact for centuries. This contact, albeit substratum in nature for DN<sup>1</sup>, has nonetheless resulted in many cases of linguistic borrowing of lexical items and other discourse features from DN into Sudan Arabic. The purpose of this paper is to systematically investigate and document the impact of DN on Arabic in Sudan. Initial examination of data from Sudan Arabic (SA) indicates many borrowings, particularly in the field of agriculture, irrigation, farming tools and implements. Another area where DN has left its impact on SA is place names and geographical features. Also, many nick names originally used in DN are transferred to and used by Arabic speakers in Sudan. A further influence of DN on Arabic is in the current use of certain DN discourse features, including certain calques and loan translations and the phenomenon, known as animism, of treating inanimate objects as animates.

**Keywords:** Sudan Arabic; Dongolawi Nubian; borrowing; place names; agricultural terms; animism.

### **1.0 Introduction**

The Nubians contact with Arabic initially started after the advent of Islam in the seventh century and the subsequent coming of the Muslim Arabs to North Africa through migration and conquest.

However, some scholars and historians maintain that the contact of Arabs with the northern and eastern parts of Africa go earlier to pre-Islamic era (Qasim, 1965). They claim that early contact took the form of small migrations and trade links across the Red sea and the horn of Africa.

Linguistically, this is also clear from the fact that Old Nubian, the predecessor of current DN,

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<sup>1</sup> Abbreviations: Ar.= Arabic; CA = Classical Arabic; DN = Dongolawi Nubian; MSA= Modern Standard Arabic.; H = (High) variety, L = Low variety according to Ferguson's diglossia model; SA= Sudan Arabic.

included words of Arabic origin (see Browne, 2002). After the downfall of the Nubian Christian Kingdoms, however, the contact intensified through marriage, Islamization, and political/social pressure. Consequently, over the centuries DN as the substratum variety in the region borrowed extensively from Arabic (see Taha, 2012, in this issue). That linguistic borrowing was not completely unidirectional. This is because Arabic in Sudan also borrowed from DN. When the Arabs came to the new territories in Africa, they found a new and different land characterized by a well established civilization on the Nile valley. Hence, the climate, the landscape, and the ecology and environment were a great departure from what they had experienced in the Arabian Desert. And as is the case in many historical contact situations, they took over the ready-made words of Nubian place names, implements, and tools that they heard in the speech of the native Nubians.

This type of borrowing by dominant linguistic groups upon arrival through migration or conquest is common in the history of many languages of wider communication today, including English, for example. The history of English tells that upon the invasion of the Germanic tribes (the Anglo Saxons, the Jutes, the Angles, and the Frisians) of the British Isles in the middle of the fifth century, they borrowed place names such as London, Cumberland, and Kent from the Celts. They also took over names of Rivers, such as the Thames, geographical features such as hills and valleys, *cumb* and other popular words including *bin* ‘crib’, *bratt* ‘cloak’, for example (Baugh & Cable 2002; Graddol, et al, 2007). This same process of borrowing in the history of English was repeated upon the arrival of the European settlers and their establishment of colonies in North America in the seventeenth century. Bach & Cable (2002) summarize that early experience: “when the colonists from England became acquainted with the physical features of this continent they seem to have been impressed particularly by its mountains and forests---and the result was a whole series of new words like *bluff*, *foothill*, *notch*; *moose*, *raccoon*, *skunk*;

*hickory and live oak; tomahawk, canoe; hominy, tapioca*" (p. 362).

## **2.0 The Two Language Varieties in Contact**

The two language varieties that this paper addresses are Sudan Arabic and Dongolawi Nubian, two genetically unrelated varieties spoken in Sudan.

### **2.1 Dongolawi Nubian**

The Nubian varieties are classified as part of the Eastern Sudanic branch of the Nilo-Saharan. The varieties spoken along the Nile valley include *Dongolawi Nubian* in Sudan and its closely related variety *Kenzi (Matoki)* in southern Egypt. The other Nubian varieties used along the Nile are *Fadicha* in southern Egypt and *Mahasi* in Northern Sudan. Nubian varieties spoken in the west of Sudan, in Darfur region in particular, include *Midob* and *Birgid* which is nearly extinct (Bender, 1997). Another group of the Nubian varieties are spoken in the Nuba Mountain area in Kordofan region, also refers to as Hill Nubian. This group of language varieties includes "eight dialects with many local varieties named after locations in the northern and northwestern Nuba mountains, central Sudan" (Bender, 1997, p. 26). All of these Nubian varieties, including those spoken in Egypt are threatened with extinction. In Dongolawi Nubian variety itself, one can observe slight phonological/pronunciation and to a lesser extent lexical variations between the speakers of the language variety in the southern part (south of Dongola, the capital of the northern province ) and those in the north (north of Dongola).

### **2.2 Arabic Language**

Arabic, like Hebrew, is a Semitic language; it is also classified as an Afro-Asiatic language that includes Ancient Egyptian, Ethiopian (Amharic, Tigre, etc.) (Bateson 1967; Bakalla 1983). On the other hand, DN is a Nilo-Saharan as indicated above. The roots of the Arabic language are in the Arabian Peninsula. Its beginnings go back in history to the pre-Islamic era when the Court of Hira used to be the gathering place for poets. This is believed to be the place where the language

of poetry was developed; however, the origins of that koine is debatable. Some trace it to the province of Najid in central Arabia, others believe it was originally the language of the Quraysh tribe (the tribe to which Prophet Mohamed belonged), and still others suggest that it was a mixture of various dialects spoken in Arabia. (Rabin 1960; Bateson 1967). However, there is general agreement that by the late sixth century A. D. it was purely a literary, super-tribal variety that was distinct from all spoken idioms (Ferguson 1959b.)

The colloquial or spoken varieties used today in Sudan and in other Arabic speaking countries known as (*Dariji* or '*Aami*'), referred to as (low) by Ferguson 1959a, are acquired naturalistically, in contrast to the (high) variety or Classical Arabic (*FuSHa*) or Modern Literary/Modern Standard Arabic, which is taught in a formal classroom situation. Modern Arabic dialects differ from Alarabiyya al FuSHa (CA) in many ways, including syntax, grammar, phonology and lexicon; however, they do have a great number of lexical items in common. These Modern Arabic dialects are generally more open to borrowing from foreign as well as other native languages spoken in the regions where Arabic spreads (e.g. Berber, Nubian, and Beja, among other groups in Africa).

### **3.0 Arabic in Sudan**

In a large country, such as Sudan, characterized by geographical, ecological, ethnic, and linguistic diversity, it is very difficult to speak of one homogenized variety of Arabic used by all speakers. Just as there are immense variations in the uses of Arabic all across the Arabic speaking countries, there are also variations within the borders of Sudan. These variations cross tribal, nomadic, sedentary, urban, and rural lines. This variation is also enhanced by the influence of the indigenous Sudanese vernaculars that spread all over the country, particularly in the East, West, North, South, South West and South East parts. And although several varieties or forms of Arabic are spoken in the country, including pidgins and a creolized variety in the newly seceded

South Sudan, the dominant variety in Sudan is spoken in the central region (in Khartoum, the capital and the most populated city in the country). This variety is also spreading beyond the capital due, in part, to the recent developments in means of transportation, communication, trade and the construction of a network of highways linking the capital city with other regions. The media also plays a major part in the spread of Khartoum Arabic.

Although Arabic in Sudan is generally characterized by diversity – as in other parts of Arabic speaking world – it is equally characterized by a certain degree of unity. That unity is reflected in the fact that it now functions as an “unchallenged lingua franca” (Jernudd 1979); It serves as the primary means of communication across the different ethnolinguistic groups in the country. It is the official language, the main language used in trade, commerce, travel, the media, and education. In addition to being the first language (mother tongue) of the majority of the population, it is also acquired as a second or even third language by those who speak the many other Sudanese vernaculars.

The colloquial varieties of Arabic spoken in Sudan differ from the standard language in areas of grammar, phonology, and lexicon. Although both share a great number of cognates, the former are very rich in foreign words of different sources. For example, the colloquial varieties used in Sudan include a great deal of borrowed items from English, Turkish, local Sudanese vernaculars such as Nubian (as will be shown below), among others. The differences between the standard variety and the colloquial varieties include the following examples:

In the area of phonology, for example, the inter-dental fricative (*th*) sound as in English think or in MSA word *thaman* ‘price’ is often realized as (*t*); hence *thaman* is pronounced *taman*, and MSA word *thalatha* ‘three’ is pronounced *talata* in SA. Also, the MSA uvular q or *qaaf* as in *qalam* is produced (*g*), hence *galam*. Word order in Classical/MSA is usually VSO, whereas in Sudan Arabic SVO is more common. Another difference, among others, between MSA and SA

is the absence of the short vowels in *tenween* in SA. Absence of case endings that appear in CA/MSA are generally absent in Sudan Arabic, as is also the case in Arabic dialects elsewhere.

In describing Arabic in Sudan, it is difficult to define a distinct variety of Sudanese colloquial Arabic. This is because, as already indicated, there is no single dialect used by all speakers of the language in the country. Every region, town, and almost every village has its own version of the so-called (umbrella term) Sudanese Arabic. This variation can sometimes affect mutual comprehensibility. For example, “some Kordofani [Arabic] dialects are barely intelligible to the users of the same language in the central Sudan” (Abdalla, 2008, p. 26). Sudan is not unique in this regard, for this is also the case in the rest of Arabic speaking countries where we find several varieties of spoken Arabic in addition to the literary standard (CA/MSA).

Some studies on Arabic sociolinguistics have, however, attempted to focus on one variety, usually the capital city or that of some other large urban center. For example, Cairo Arabic (Egyptian Arabic) (Mitchell 1978), Damascus Arabic (Syrian Arabic) (Kaye 1970); similarly some writers refer to Khartoum Arabic (Hurriez 1978). But usually and more generally, urban, rural, and Bedouin varieties are identified. For the purposes of this paper, the Arabic variety referred to is the dialect spoken by the Arabic speaking groups close to or surrounding the DN area including the Shaigiya and Kababeesh in particular. It should be noted here that ordinary conversations are usually carried out in several local varieties which have more in common with each other than say Egyptian Arabic or Syrian Arabic, for example.

If we take Ferguson’s (1959a) classic model of diglossia and apply it to the linguistic situation in Sudan, the relation between the high and low varieties would be some what similar to what Fasold (1984) called “double overlapping diglossia” or what Mkilifi (1978) referred to as “triglossia” in describing the Tanzanian linguistic situation. The difference is that while their model recognizes three main varieties (English, Swahili, and Vernacular languages), the situation

in Sudan includes four varieties (CA/MSA, English, SA, and DN/other vernaculars). And while they recognize only English as (H) in relation to Swahili (L) which in turn becomes the (H) in relation to vernaculars (L), the situation in Sudan may allow two distinct (H) varieties (CA/MSA on the one hand and English on the other). Sudan Arabic is the (L) variety in relation to both CA/MSA and English, but it is also the (H) with regard to DN and other Sudanese vernaculars.

This characterization of the linguistic situation can be represented as follows:

H-----Classical/MSA—(English)-----H  
 L-----SA-----H (in relation to DN)  
L-----DN (including all other

Sudanese vernaculars)

In other words, SA would be the (L) variety in relation to both CA/MSA and English (H), but it would also be the (H) variety in relation to DN and other Sudanese vernacular languages. Such characterization will allow us to include all the indigenous varieties in addition to the ex-colonial and international language, English. It remains to be said that the two varieties (H & L,) originally identified by Ferguson (1959a), do not always exist in total complementary distribution. In fact, in certain cases, as Fasold (1984) maintains, the overlap between the two contexts of use for (H & L) is very common, for there are always instances in which one variety “leaks” (Fasold, 1984) into the functions reserved for the other.

### **3.1 DN Influence on Arabic in Sudan:**

### **3.2 Influence on Vocabulary:**

One of the most common linguistic outcomes in contact situations is borrowing. Other outcomes may include the development of bilingualism/multilingualism and the linguistic phenomena associated with it, such as code switching and code mixing. In this paper the focus is on borrowing by a dominant language variety (Arabic) from the substratum variety (DN) in contact

with it. Another interesting linguistic feature that the Arabic speakers have apparently adopted from DN is the use of animism, a distinctive feature of Nubian thought. For the purposes of this paper, the DN loan words in the local Arabic varieties spoken in the area/ region are categorized into fields, mostly associated with agriculture, cultivation/farming, and irrigation. Others are related to the environment, culture, place names, and food and drink.

#### **4.0 Water-Wheel and Related Terms:**

As Nicholson (1935) noted, “As might be expected in a country like the Northern Sudan, where extensive cultivation of the (river) land has been the main occupation of the people for centuries, and especially where so much of this cultivation involves an elaborate system of artificial irrigation, there has grown up a large vocabulary of specialized terms” (p. 314). This particular stock of specialized terms is primarily associated with water wheel or *kolay* (in DN) or *saqia* in Arabic; the Arabic word *doulab* is also sometimes used. Up until the early 1980s of the last century, the water wheel was the major mechanism/implement used to draw water from the river Nile for irrigation and cultivation purposes. And although this device (*kolay*) itself has virtually disappeared, as it has been replaced with modern mechanized equipment, its vocabulary became part of the Arabic used in the region and beyond through borrowing; however, many of these vocabulary items (as shown in Taha 2012, this issue) have become archaic. The water wheel itself consisted of over sixty pieces, each with its native DN name, and was assembled by special craftsman. Nicholson (1935) observed, “the new-comer in a ‘Saqia’ country is liable to be somewhat overwhelmed by the specialized vocabulary in use, and, as many of the words are of Dongolawi origin, they cannot be found in the Arabic dictionary” (p. 314)

The DN word *kolay* is a term which also refers to the land plot irrigated by it (Nicholls, 1918). The specific individual or *baser*, literally ‘person with good vision’, who assembles the water wheel, was usually paid in cash or in kind (crops). He was the person to be called to repair



or fix any problems with the waterwheel. Below are some examples of the borrowed DN terms used in Arabic:

*kolaytod* < DN *kolentod* ‘the small water wheel that feeds the larger water wheel *kolaydul*’.

*kodaig* < DN *koday* ‘a big hole dug in the river bank, beneath the water wheel, from which water is drawn by the WW’.

*gawati* < DN ‘hole dug in the *kodaig* (see above) in which the water jars dip’

*arwati* < DN *ewiratti* ‘driver of the water wheel’

*argadentod* < DN *argaden tod* ‘the small/vertical cog wheel’

*tukum* < DN *tuhum* ‘pole slanting from upper part of horizontal cog wheel, pulled round by cattle working the water wheel’. The driver of the water wheel usually sits on its forked lower end.

*toraig* < DN. Toray ‘horizontal axle/driving spindle of wheel raising water; on its other end is the smaller cog wheel or *argadentod*’

*tattig* < DN *tatti* ‘watch of duty of about six hours in farming/cultivating an irrigable land plot’

*aalas* < DN *alas* ‘a very thick rope/cable made out of palm date fiber; on a pair of them running parallel water jars (buckets) are fixed’; the pair dips the jars in the river and brings them up over *atti* ‘vertical wheel’

*sablog* < DN *sablo* ‘large trough through which water flows’. Also see place names below.

*aaqloq* < DN *aglo* ‘cross wooden-strips attached in *alas* “thick rope” and on which individual jars (buckets) are tied’

*mushig* < DN *mushok* ‘vertical axle put under the larger cog wheel to stop the water wheel’

*aniskak* < DN *esikak* ‘a lage supporting horizontal beam upon which most of the water wheel parts are assembled’

*islam* < DN *islem* ‘yoke of the cattle’

*sawi* < DN *sooyi* ‘platform on which cattle (usually a bull and a cow) walk’

*sillataig* < DN *silattay* ‘coarse grass used as a wind shield to protect the WW from strong wind and to build *zreba* or sheds for cattle’

## 1.2. Other DN Loans Associated with Farming, Cultivation, and Irrigation

In addition to the DN *Kolay* (water wheel) terms, Arabic used in the area and beyond has borrowed from DN many words ( implements and tools) related to farming. The following list includes some examples in this field.

*Samad*<DN. Samad (chief cultivator of land who heads the farmers)

*Torbal*<DN. Torbar (cultivator/laborer, supervised by *samad*)

*Toddan*<DN. Todar (share/division of crop produced by the cultivated land)

*Albil*<DN. Elbil (long-handled toothless rake for leveling land for irrigation; also used for covering seeds)

*wasog* < DN *wasu* (leveler, toothless rake for leveling land, larger than *elbil*; usually operated by two/three farmers, the *samad* and two other farmers)

*nureg* < DN *nuray* (threshing wheat with donkeys or bulls)

*marraig* < DN *maray* (millet, sorghum; *dura* is also used in Arabic)

*faza'a* < DN *feza* (group of voluntary helpers in cultivation, harvest, cleaning land, etc.) The Arabic word *nafir* is also used.

*barjoug* < DN. *barjo* (land that is difficult to cultivate/irrigate and not very fertile)

*karkarati/karkati* < DN *korkorati* (slit cracked by sun after the river withdraws following inundation)

*bur* < DN *bur* (land that is left uncultivated)

*nator* < DN *natur* (agricultural land boundary mark)

*roka* < DN *urok* (land or crop held in undivided shares)

*wartab* < DN *wartay* (bundle of stubble of millet)

*'ashmaig* < DN *ashmay* (fiber from bark of date palm- also known as *leaf* in Arabic)

*maroug* < DN *maro* (manure, fertilizer)

*amkanj* < DN *amkanj* (barriers/obstacles to irrigation such as bushes, sand, etc.)

*konshibir* < DN *koshibir* (a rough basket made out of palm date leaves or dome tree leaves used for moving/carrying soil)

### **Place Names:**

Another area of DN contribution to the Arabic varieties used in Sudan is place names. They include names of many islands and villages spread in the region and beyond. In fact, place names of DN origin are found as far as areas of the Blue Nile region (Hussein, 2012, p. 7). The DN word for 'island' *arti* is usually suffixed to another word to constitute a compound name of an island. For example the proper name *abdalla* is suffixed to the DN word *arti* to produce *abdallanarti*, the name of small Island north of Dongola (the state capital) of the Northern Province. Other examples of such place names include:

*ashrafinarti* – an island about twelve miles south of Dongola

*bashanarti* – an island about seven miles north of Dongola

*bunnarti* – an island to the western end of Argo island—12-15 miles north of Dongola

*artigasha* – an island north of Argo

*sellenarti* – lit. the central/middle island, an island (now joined to the left bank of the Nile) near Old Dongola

*marawarti* – a small island west of Argo

*kolun-miseed* – lit. the stone mosque, a village on the west bank of Nile about 15 miles north of Dongola

*bokkibul* –lit. ‘the hidden’, a village on the right bank of the Nile, above Old Dongola

*gurunti* – lit. ‘newly formed alluvial land’

The sixth cataract in the River Nile is called *shalaal al sabaloga* (from DN word *sablou* referred to earlier under 4.1.1). This is the last of the six cataracts in Sudan; it is just a few miles north of the capital, Khartoum.

Many other DN place names include the word *tod* lit. ‘child, boy, offspring, male child, and son’ depending on context of use; when said of animals it also means ‘young, small, with diminutive connotations’, for example, *birtintod* ‘small, young, or kid of a goat’. Some place names that end in *tod* include *kabtod*, a village on the left bank of the Nile, about 4-5 miles north of Dongola; *sortod* or *sortot*, a village on the left bank of the Nile, about 7-8 miles south of Dongola. For other uses of *tod* with proper names (see Taha 2010).

Abdel-Rahman of the Department of Archeology, university of Khartoum (cited in Hussein (2009) indicates that the DN influence in the area of place names extends to many areas and regions in the country. He claims that this influence in place names go as far south as the upper Nile area where place names of DN origins like *dambo* and *gager* are to be found.

### 4.3. Nicknames

The use of nick names is very common among Nubians. In fact, sometimes, the person is called by his/her nick name all the time; in fact, many people may not know their actual proper name.

Different types of nicknames are used among Dongolawi Nubians; some relate the person to his/her home region/village, his/her family's craft, job, etc. For example, a blacksmith may be nick named Ali *tabid* Ali the blacksmith; a person from the village of *agaday* may be nick named *agadawi*, a person from the village of *orbi* may be called *orbawi*, etc. A blacksmith's son may be nick named *tabin-tod* son of the blacksmith. In fact *tod* 'son of, kid' is always tagged at the end of personal names to turn them into nick names. Such nick names are usually taken by Arabic speakers who use them all the time.

#### 4.4 Food and Drink

The Nubian region in northern Sudan is known for growing and producing different types of dates. Traditionally, date trees constituted the backbone of the Nubians local economy; selling dates was the only reliable source of cash return, therefore they took extra care of these trees. There are several types and names for dates. These names are Nubian and they were taken by and used widely by different groups of Arabic speakers in the country. These names include:

*jaw* – a commercial type of date, primarily grown for cash)

*nafeesh* – cheap type of date similar to *jaw*, usually not very profitable)

*abetamoda* – one of the best types of dates, very sweet, and normally grown for consumption and/or cash

*akondala* – gondalla in Arabic; like *abetamoda* it is one of the best types of dates; very expensive relative to other types.

*abeta* – grown mainly for cash (the Arabic word *barakawi* is also used by Arabic speakers).

One of the traditional DN food items is *kabid* or *kabida*; some Arabic speakers in Sudan refer to it as *kabida* while others use the word *quraasa*. It is one of the main ways of preparing wheat dough for eating, and it is widely used in many parts of the country. It is a small flat circular type of loaf prepared from wheat or millet dough, about 1-1.5 inches thick. It is eaten with different kinds of vegetables (e.g. dry okra), meat or chicken gravy. The traditional DN dish that goes with it is called *Tarkeen* (*Tarkin* or *muluha* in Arabic). *Tarkeen* is made of very small fish that usually

appear just before the rising of the Nile; the salt sauce and paste made of it is eaten with *kabid*. It was referred to as part of a song that was included in the former Sudanese primary school geography curriculum known as *Subul kasb al 'aayish fi al sudan* 'Means of Earning a Living in Sudan'. In the area of beverages, some of the traditional drinks made of dates alone or mixed with millet include *dakai* and *nabeet*. In addition, one of the very strong liquors that apparently originated in the region is the now banned *aragi*, which was widely used in the country before it was prohibited in the mid 1980s. Nonetheless, some people still make it.

#### 4.5 Other loan words

Other DN words that are used in the local variety of Arabic in the area include names of certain birds, plants, etc.:

*elum-tussoud* – A very small bird; it cleans the crocodile's mouth when it leaves water and stays on the bank of the river

*tushi* – small plant with narrow leaves of bitter taste eaten by cattle only; (sort of weed) that farmers usually get rid of when preparing land for cultivation, in Arabic rendered as *tushayk* or *tushaig*

*tussaba* 'mongoose' or *herpestes* – In Arabic it is pronounced the same way (tussaba).

*fatna keraing* – a small, dark, long-legged insect

*gusayba* < DN *gussa* – a 6-8 foot bin made of clay used to keep different types of crops after harvest (e.g. corn, wheat, dates, etc), now itself rarely made; archaic.

### 5.0 Other influences on Arabic Discourse

#### 5.1 Animism

One of the salient features of DN language variety is the animism that pervaded it historically and that is still reflected in DN. Armbuster (1960, p.29) defines it as “the attribution of life and personality to inanimate objects and natural phenomena” (p.29). He believes this mode of thinking and expression is most likely inherited from Old Nubian from which the contemporary variety is derived. Since it does not exist in other Arabic varieties spoken in Sudan or in other countries, it is likely that Arabic speakers in the area picked it (as a loan translation) from the

speech of Nubians. This particular mode of expression is different from the use of figures of speech such as the personification of nature or abstractions usually used for specific purpose or effect by poets. A common verb root in DN that tends to be used frequently in expression animism is *an*, that apparently in ON signifies “having the intention of, having the inclination” (Armbuster, 1960, p. 29). For example:

*kubid kuskatirangi monosko* – lit. the door refuses to be opened!  
*gelli halsarangi monosko* – lit. the work/job refuses to be finished!

These structures are rendered in Arabic respectively as:

*al bab aba yitfatih* – the door refuses to be opened)\  
*al shughul aba yintahi* – the work/job refuses to be finished

Moreover, in the variety of Arabic spoken in the area (e.g. Kababish Arabic), the following structures are widely used, which seem to have their origin in DN:

*al awlad ga'adeen fi batin al bait* – lit. the boys are ‘sitting’ in the belly of the house (< DN)  
*bitani kan-tour agran* – the boys are ‘sitting’ in the belly of the house, for expressing ‘the boys are in the house’  
*al awlad fi batin al bahar*, < DN *bitani esn-tour daburan* – the boys are in the belly of the river, for the saying ‘the boys are (swimming) in the river’

## 5.2 Loan Translations/Calques

Other Arabic phrases and expressions that seem to be cases of calques or loan translations are related to the use of certain words to express masculine/feminine distinction in DN. While Arabic makes gender distinctions, DN has no grammatical gender (genderless). Therefore, it uses the words *ondi* and *kari* to express masculine and feminine distinction respectively. Hence, when Arabic speakers use *ondi* and *kari*, the words are rendered as *Dakar* and *intaya* respectively in the context of phrases expressing animism. So the SA phrase *al jadwal al dakar* – (lit. the masculine water conduit), is a loan translation of DN phrase *multi-n-ondi* ‘lit. the masculine water conduit’.

The same goes for structures like the following:

*al nakhala al dakar* < DN.*bentin-n-on*di ‘lit. the male date tree’

On the other hand, when DN speakers talk of animates such as a male camel they would say *kam-n-nondi* ‘male camel’, whereas the Arabs have many different terms (*jamal, nagga, ba`aeer*, etc.) that distinguish not only male/female camel, but also the age and breed of the animal, for example. Equally, in the example of *multi-nondi* above, usually the expression *al gadwall al ra?issi* or the main water conduit is used in other parts of the country.

## 6.0 Conclusion

Borrowing of different linguistic elements, including words, phrases, and other linguistic features is a common phenomenon in all contact situations. All spoken varieties of Arabic, whether Egyptian, Moroccan, Syrian, Iraqi, or others, have borrowed vocabulary items from other languages, including European and African languages. This is also the case with regard to Sudan Arabic in its different forms. SA has borrowed vocabulary items from a variety of languages including, but not limited to, European languages such as English, French, Italian; it also incorporates many words of Turkish origin. In addition, it has borrowed from other Sudanese vernacular languages, including DN. As this paper shows, DN has contributed to the enrichment of the local varieties spoken in Sudan, particularly those used in northern Sudan. Many vocabulary items associated with agriculture, irrigation system, food, and place names of DN origin are used by Arabic speakers. Furthermore, DN discourse features such as regarding as living inanimate/natural objects and treating them as living are taken by Arabic users.

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