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## **Proverbs in a Threatened Language Variety in Africa**

**Abstract.** Dongolawi Nubian (hereafter DN) is an endangered language variety spoken in Sudan. In such sociolinguistic situations, the collection and development of glossaries, proverbs, riddles, stories, and other artistic works associated with threatened languages would be, among other vital linguistic activities, a valuable contribution to the overall efforts to document and revitalize them. Documentation is also a key element in the preservation of an important component of the cultural resources of the speakers. Hence, the purpose of this paper is to examine the nature, function, and major themes of some common proverbs used by native speakers of DN. These proverbs cover many general themes, including marriage and family issues, advising and warning, collaboration, and greed, among others. DN proverbs, often performed by the elderly, provide guidance, particularly to the young speakers. They generally recommend the adoption of the soundest course of action in life (as it pertains to the Nubian culture), and they warn of the consequences of bad and/or unreasonable choices. Many of the proverbs are also used as educational devices as they reflect life experiences and wisdom.

**Key words:** Sudan; Nubian; proverbs; language endangerment.

## **Introduction**

In recent years, the issue of language endangerment has received much attention from sociolinguists and other language scholars. Sociolinguistic literature in this area indicates a general consensus that of the world's approximately 6000-7000 languages, at least half will disappear or be on the verge of extinction by the next century (Grenoble & Waley, 2006; Batibo, 2005; Dalby, 2003). This means that the current cultural and linguistic diversity of the world itself is threatened with loss. One such endangered language variety, as I have indicated elsewhere (Taha, 2010) is DN, which belongs to the Nilo-Saharan Family (Bender, 1997). Currently, there are some proposals/efforts to develop a writing system for the Nubian varieties, a challenging project that requires commitment, resources, and collaboration at different national and international levels. This paper is a contribution to the efforts in documenting one aspect of the Dongolawi Nubian linguistic heritage, namely traditional proverbs and popular sayings. However, to understand and appreciate the proverbs, it is pertinent to give a brief sociolinguistic and cultural background of the context in which they are used

### **2.0. A Sociolinguistic and Socio-cultural background**

The Nubians have inhabited the Nile valley for a very long time. Their history, according to Bianchi (2004), "goes back to some 300,000 years" (p.2). The question of where, when, or how they ended up on the banks of the river Nile is still debatable. Linguistically, the predecessor of the Nubian varieties spoken today in Egypt and in Sudan, including DN, was Old Nubian. According to Browne (2002), it was "the principle language of the kingdoms of Nobadia, Makuria, and Alodia, roughly the area of modern Sudan and southern Egypt ... [it] is the only indigenous African language whose development we can trace for over a millennium" (p. 1). Adams (1982) also claims that contemporary Nubian varieties are "remnants of what was a continuous

distribution, extending from the Nile valley westward across the steppe lands of Kordofan and Darfur” (p. 12). The Nile Nubians speak a variety of dialects: two in southern Egypt (*Faddicha* and *Motoki*) and two in northern Sudan (*Mahasi* and *Dongolawi*.) In addition, they use Arabic the official language in both countries. Unlike old Nubian, contemporary Nubian varieties are not written. Furthermore, all, including many other Sudanese vernaculars, are considered endangered or threatened by extinction, for there is a gradual shift in favor of Arabic. And, in the absence of clear language policies regarding minority languages, Nubian varieties are further threatened. As Batibo (2005) has rightly observed, “Most countries in Africa have not had any systematic language planning, as they have not given much priority to language questions” (p.128).

Culturally, the Nile Nubians are almost all Muslims. As it was traditionally the case with most ethnic groups in Sudan, and probably in many other parts of Africa, endogamy was widely practiced among the Nubians. And although this custom is dying out, many still maintain it. As Dafa’alla (1975) has observed, “Nubians never marry their girls to non-Nubian men, although they have no objection to their men marrying non-Nubian girls” (p. 62). This particular tradition may be explained in terms of cultural and linguistic maintenance rather than anything else. It may also be the result of their relative geographical isolation. In fact, endogamy may be considered one of the social mechanisms that work in favor of language maintenance. This may be the case with Nubians living in the areas where they were born and raised, but not with those who migrated to the capital (Khartoum) or to other urban centers where interethnic marriage and intermingling is now very common. Another element of Nubian culture is that, as Muslims, many of them, particularly those who can afford it, practice polygamy. Like many other ethnic groups in Sudan, they celebrate birth rites, naming of babies, marriages, and circumcision of boys, among others. Circumcision of girls, though widely practiced in the past, is now gradually diminishing.

Economically, the Nubian region is relatively poor; the cultivatable land constitutes a tiny belt that runs along the Nile with the Nubian Desert to the east and the *Atmour* desert to the west and south (*Atmour* desert is part of the great Sahara). This fact has contributed to the long tradition of emigration to other parts of the country and abroad in search of better opportunities. Therefore, it is very common for those who left the area to send money to help support their family members and relatives who were left behind.

### **3.0 Proverbs**

An extensive body of research has been published on proverbs and their sources. Many studies on proverbs have recognized the difficulty surrounding their exact definition, although many attempts have been made in this regard. For example, according to Mieder (2004), “a proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorable form and which is handed down from generation to generation” (p. 3). For Taylor (1996) “a proverb is a saying current among the folk” (p.1). On the other hand, Schipper (2003) describes proverbs as “short, pithy sayings, ingeniously embodying an admitted truth or cherished belief” (p. 9). In Webster’s New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, proverb is defined as “a short, traditional saying that expresses some obvious truth or familiar experience; a dage; maxim” (p. 1083). As it is clear from the above definitions, it seems difficult to have an all encompassing definition, since the various definitions offered depend of the particular proverb scholar’s perspective, focus, and research orientation. Without adding to the already published definitions, suffice it to say here that proverbs seem to exist in all cultures and languages around the world. However, from the above definitions and from my own observations, proverbs and other popular sayings share several features that include, but are not limited to the following:

They tend to be very short statements (“like father, like son”; “all that glitters is not gold”). Another feature of proverbs is their traditionality; there is much debate on this feature, however as Arora (1995) has rightly observed, “probably the most consistently accepted generalization concerning proverbs, in virtually any language, is that they are “traditional,” and that it is their traditionality – the sense of historically-derived authority or of community-sanctioned wisdom that they convey – that makes them ‘work.’”(p. 1). This particular feature is also reflected in the actual performance of the proverb. To indicate a sense of authority, legitimacy, and historicity many proverbs are introduced by words and phrases such as “as my grandfather used to say,” “as old people would say” or “as my grandmother says”. This is also the case with many DN proverbs, as will be demonstrated below.

Stylistically, proverbs tend to have a quadripartite structure; they may also include figures of speech such as metaphors, similes, personification, among others; for example, “birds of a feather flock together”. Furthermore, some proverbs may include lexical repetitions, for example, “garbage in, garbage out”. Many proverbs also reflect wit, and wisdom, and some make use of stereotypes. From a conversational analysis perspective and as Charteris-Black (1995) has indicated, “proverbs adhere to the four [Gricean] maxims of the co-operative principles: quantity, quality, manner and relation” (p. 1).

Proverbs are also characterized by anonymity; indeed, no individual knows who created them, the time of their creation, or how long they have been in use. Generally, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to trace their origins, particularly in oral cultures. However, on the origins of proverbs, Taylor (1996) believes that “proverbs are invented in several ways: some are simple apothegms and platitudes elevated to proverbial dignity, others arise from the symbolic or metaphoric use of an incident, still others imitate already existing proverbs, and some owe their existence to the

condensing of a story or fable” (p. 1).

Regardless of their sources, proverbs are used in all cultures and languages. They generally reflect human experiences and observations, and they give fascinating clues and insights into the linguistic and socio-cultural beliefs and norms of the societies or communities in which they are used. The fact that many proverbs, with more or less the same idea, are replicated in many cultures is quite interesting. For example, the English proverb “birds of a feather flock together” reflects the same notion of the DN proverb “*kawirtay tibri tabay*” (a bird looks for its kind) which is similar to the Arabs proverb “*altoyour a’alla ashkaliha taga’a*” (alike birds flock/get together). And although many think that proverbs and their uses are things of the past or that their use is deteriorating, they still continue to be used in almost all cultures and languages in daily interactions. Not only that, but the fact that new proverbs continue to be created that reflect new human experiences, is a testimony to their continuity and vitality.

Literary proverbs, or proverbs that appear to be derived from literary sources such as Holy books or other written texts, have the advantage of being kept and circulated as they probably initially appeared in the original source. They may also spread to other languages and cultures. In fact, they can still be used in different languages long after their original source language is dead. A clear case of this is the many proverbs that are used in the Romance languages and other European languages after the extinction of Latin. Unfortunately, unwritten or oral languages that constitute the majority of human languages today do not have the opportunity to maintain proverbs in a similar fashion. The continuity of use of proverbs in such languages depends solely on oral transmission from generation to generation. Word of mouth is the only available mechanism through which proverbs, riddles, and other stories are kept and handed to future generations. And although all proverbs are subject to slight changes as they are used by the different speakers of a

particular language, the chances of changes occurring are greater in the case of oral proverbs.

#### 4.0 Dongolawi Nubian Proverbs

As indicated earlier, DN is not written although its predecessor (Old Nubian) was a written language (Browne, 2002). Therefore, to my knowledge, the DN proverbs discussed in this paper probably have never appeared in written texts before. The exception to this is one DN proverb that was cited by Schipper (see below). Hence, no trace of a written document exists that reflects how, when, or by whom they were originally created. In the case of oral (unwritten) languages, it is almost impossible to give even approximate date for proverbs, and the DN situation is no exception to that.

Proverbs in DN culture, as it is the case with most if not all oral cultures, have an important purpose and function. Generally, many of them are employed as educational devices or codes for establishing models or standards in behavior and conduct. For example, on the issue of proper upbringing of children, when a grandfather tells his son to start taking care of his children (grandsons) early in their lives he would say *Korssay jawern murtigay* or ‘knot the frond of palm-date tree while it is still green’. Here the grandfather is advising his son to teach, train, and enforce good moral conduct in the grandsons while they are still young and flexible. The frond of a palm-date tree in the proverb stands for the grandchildren. Although on the surface the literal meaning of the proverb is straightforward (that the dry frond of a palm date tree can’t be tied), the use of personification makes it more significant. This use of figures of speech is quite interesting, and in fact, in these proverbs such features are used widely in many languages around the world, including DN as shown in the next sections.

Another example of this type of proverb in Nubian culture is *Kam ten korengi nalmon* ‘The camel can not see its hump’. Another version of it says, “The camel cannot see its crooked neck”.

I have heard this proverb several times growing up in a Nubian community. This proverb is widely used, particularly by the elders, both males and females, to warn against rushing to judge or belittle a person. It is a reminder to those types of people who point out the weaknesses and drawbacks of others, while at the same time ignoring their own weaknesses or drawbacks. The assumption is that no one is complete. It is similar to saying something like “he/she who picks on others, can’t see his/her own defects”. An English proverb with the same meaning would be “people in glass houses shouldn’t throw stones”.

The proverb is usually preceded by a proverb marker or indicator. Most users of proverbs in DN tend to employ preambles such as, “as Sheikh Osman or Sheikh Satti, etc. used to say” or “as my grandfather used to say,” which give the listener an indication of the statement that follows.

It is important to note that many traditional proverbs and /or popular sayings in DN, as indeed in many other languages and cultures around the world, tend to reflect traditional male-dominated perspectives and world views (Crystal, 2006; Schipper, 2003). This masculine bias, though gradually diminishing, still exists in many DN proverbs. Therefore, since the purpose of the present paper is to document the proverbs as they are actually used, no changes or editing is made to the original words. DN proverbs can be categorized thematically into several groups.

#### **4.1. Proverbs used for advising and warning**

Father to his son who wants to get married to a particular woman and starts to dream about his life with her: *Ya waladi ambab aa wayko tokon kojirki kokimen hanu jamenin* ‘son, as my father used to say, don’t insert *kojir* in the ground to tie the donkey before you buy it’<sup>(1)</sup>. And since the son has not yet formally asked for the woman’s hand, he doesn’t know whether she will accept him as a husband or not. The proverb is used to advise people not to rush to carry on an act prematurely. The proverb, ‘Don’t count your chickens before they are hatched,’ expresses the same idea. This



is particularly the case with those who embark on doing something and go on dreaming about it before they first know whether they can afford it or not or whether the outcome would be positive or negative. Thus, such proverbs provide guidance for people's lives.

Another such proverb is *Kub erwaski komenil kiddi* 'a boat without a boat-man [captain] is doomed'. Literally, the proverb warns against jumping in a boat full of people but lacking the boatman [captain] who is experienced in sailing up and down the River Nile. Metaphorically, it is employed in all situations that require leadership and experience. Interestingly, there is another proverb that seems to contradict this one, a feature that characterizes many proverbs which exist side by side in the same culture/community. It says *erwass owwi kubki kiddykida* or 'two boatmen [captains] overturn/sink the boat'. Here again the proverb endorses leadership roles and full responsibility, but usually exercised by only one individual to avoid conflict that might lead to disaster. A synonymous proverb is the Turkish 'You can't have two heads under one hood' (Schipper, 2003, p. 25). The same proverb also contradicts the DN proverb cited below on "having two wives."

Another DN proverb that fosters and sanctions appropriate ethical and moral behavior and at the same time warns against the consequences of lying and deception is *mursin iri urtina* 'the rope of lying is short'. In other words, no matter how far or long one tries to lie about something, eventually the truth will come out. This proverb is commonly used by different members of the society, particularly parents/fathers and mothers to warn their children of the consequences of lying. The proverb *katray oloki ko* 'the wall has ears' exists in many other languages and cultures. In DN it is used as a precautionary device, particularly against those who gossip extensively or talk about others carelessly and excessively. The Ashanti has a similar proverb, 'a path has ears' (cited in Mieder 2004, p. 89).

Another proverb that indicates the importance of people who give advice and guidance concerns elderly people. In DN society, age is highly respected and old people are generally highly regarded. They are considered the embodiment of experience and wisdom, and when they speak people listen and take their advice and guidance very seriously. Therefore it is not surprising to find many proverbs that highlight their important role in community. I remember my own father, on many occasions, used to remind me using the proverb *dulgi komenil dulgi jaani* ‘he/she who has no elder, buys one’. The literal meaning is simple, straightforward, and very effective. This proverb reflects some of the important stylistic devices that characterize many proverbs, both in DN and in other languages. These devices, as the proverb shows, include both a quadripartite structure and repetition, which makes the proverb easily memorable.

#### **4.2. Proverbs on Cooperation and Collaboration**

Since River Nile Nubians are traditionally farmers, they rely on cultivation of a variety of crops, both for cash and for consumption. Palm dates and other cash crop such as beans, wheat, millet, corn, and other crop are grown in the area. Farmers usually help each other in the process of farming and gathering the crop. And since agriculture is not mechanized, collaboration and cooperation are key factors in the community’s survival. Although farming is not as popular as it used to be because of several factors, including emigration to the capital and other urban centers in the country to look for better opportunities, many people still pursue the occupation as their only source of income. Hence, many DN proverbs reflect the value of working together and praise collaborative effort. And Dongolawi Nubians try to keep this tradition alive and instill it in the young generation. It is not only in farming that people work together, but in all kinds of activities in their daily lives. So the metaphorical proverb that urges people to pool their efforts together says: *Ei were olli jomun* ‘one hand can’t clap’. The Yoruba have a similar proverb that says, ‘Two heads

are better than one' (Owomoyela 2005, p. 8).

#### 4.3. On Marriage and family issues

As indicated earlier, DNs are Muslims; and since polygamy is permitted in Islam, some people marry more than one wife (up to four). Of course the religion makes certain stipulations for those who intend to marry more than one wife, including financial eligibility and the proper and equal treatment of the wives. However, in reality that is not always the case, and jealousy and other conflicts are bound to happen, even beating one's wife. As Crystal (2006) has observed, "a remarkable number of proverbs, in many countries, also reflect unpalatable notions, such as the desirability of beating one's wife to ensure obedience" (p. 12). One DN proverb that deals with this issue is *aingi twrigay jom* 'beat the 'unruly' wife with another one'. According to A. Shouk (a seventy four year old DN speaker, the Nubian legend behind the proverb goes like this:

Once upon time a man was walking in a neighborhood, and suddenly he heard a woman crying and screaming in a house. And since he happened to know the owner of the house, he knocked on the door and walked in to find the man beating his wife. He shouted at the wife beater "stop, stop, you can't beat your wife," and then went on to say, "beat the wife with another wife". In other words when the wife becomes 'disobedient', don't beat her physically, but punish her by marrying another one.

(Personal communication, 7/15/2010)<sup>(2)</sup>

As with all kinds of legends that are handed down from generation to generation and that are believed to have some historical basis, it is very difficult to verify the legend. Interestingly, this is the only Dongolawi Nubian proverb that I have come across in a publication. It has recently been cited as an example of traditional portrayal of women in proverbs in Mineke Schipper's book *Never Marry a Woman with Big Feet*. Schipper translated the proverb as follows: "Flog the bad

wife with a new wife” (Schipper, 2003, p. 116).

In DN society, traditionally a man ready to get married was encouraged to marry from within the same or extended family or tribe, and only if he didn't find an eligible or suitable wife would look elsewhere. Therefore, an elderly person in the family (such as a grandfather or a grandmother) would advise a to-be- bridegroom *Ogij ten kubay tagiri* <sup>(3)</sup> ‘a man should cover his own vessel/jar’. Here again the use of a figure of speech (personification) is very effective.

In Nubian communities, as indeed in some other traditional societies, elderly people, males and females, have encouraged endogamous marriage. At a time when women relied on their husbands as the sole providers, this was particularly the case. Other reasons for such practices were related to ethnic and linguistic or cultural survival and continuity. However, with recent cultural changes and education, this practice is gradually dying out. Moreover, social mobilization, patterns of migration to urban centers, and intermingling has certainly changed peoples' attitudes towards this custom.

Interestingly, although polygamy is practiced by some (usually well off individuals), some proverbs warn against having two (or more) wives, particularly when one (usually the first wife) is mean tempered, and the second is also known to have the same temper. Hence the proverb, *kag kon ichingon werwakonon nogmona* ‘the snake and the scorpion don't go together’. So the proverb warns against the consequences of having two bad tempered ‘wives’; it is also used in reference to any two individuals who are not likely to get along. Note that this proverb seems, in a sense, to contradict the one on beating one's wife. This feature of proverbs exists in many cultures where it is common to find contradictory proverbs side by side, each with its own context. The proverb makes use of a familiar scene and turns it into a metaphor that conveys a much deeper message.

Again on the theme of marriage and family affairs, there are some proverbs that encourage females to get married, to accept or say “yes” to the first man who comes along, regardless of his financial status, qualification, or eligibility. Again like other marriage or gender related proverbs it would be considered sexist by today’s standards. The proverb says, *ogij nolli walla katray nolli* ‘a man’s shadow/shade is better than a wall’s shadow/shade’. In other words, it is in the best interest of an eligible woman to get married, even if the prospective husband is not particularly good.

Traditionally, in Nubian culture many families used to allow the marriage of very young females. Although this practice is gradually disappearing, it still exists in certain cases. Many believed that ‘young girls could still be big enough to be married’. Hence the proverb, *ain ogij nogir dollanin* ‘the girl/young woman grows up on her husband’s chest’. A similar proverb is used by the Oromo of Ethiopia. It says, ‘A girl and a clay pipe are never too small’ (cited by Schipper, 2003, p.21).

The proverb *Essi kuttankin, welli tubiran* ‘when the water [river] becomes shallow, dogs trample’ is used in different contexts with different meanings. For example, it could be used to reflect the state of a disintegrating family with constant fighting among the members, which gives opportunity for other people, particularly ill wishers, to intervene in the family’s affairs and further aggravate the situation. It could also be said of a woman of immoral and or bad reputation/behavior. who ends up promiscuous. In this sense, dogs personify the promiscuous men who trample on and violate her, because she became ‘shallow’ or loose/promiscuous. In other words, the proverb cautions against such behavior and highlights the importance of family integrity.

#### **4.4. On jealousy and greed**

Some DN proverbs denounce greed and encourage modesty and humbleness; *karay berkin*

*essirton waray belli* ‘when the fish eats its fill, it jumps out of water [river]’, is such example. The metaphor of *karay* ‘fish’ and the rich and greedy/arrogant person on the one hand, and *aray belli* ‘jumping out of water’ on the other hand is very effective. In effect, the proverb warns against being too greedy and arrogant and encourages modesty and humbleness.

Another proverb that reflects jealousy, particularly by relatives of a wealthy person, is used often by DN. In Sudan, as indeed in many other African countries and others cultures, it is very common for people to help each other financially, particularly family members who are in need. It is quite normal for Nubian sons and daughters who migrate and get jobs elsewhere (i.e. in the capital or abroad) to send monthly stipends to their family members who live in the villages. And if the sons and daughters spend their money on other non-family members, the relatives would get jealous. Hence the proverb, *Hambu warri norkirin* ‘the *dom*-palm tree shelters the far away’. This particular tree throws its shade away from its immediate stem and surrounding area. *Hambu* ‘*dom* tree’ here signifies the individual who would rather spend his/her money on other than family members and relatives. Again this an effective use of figure of speech as a proverb device.

The Nubians are generally known for their generosity and hospitality. As Dafa’alla (1975) describes them, “in spite of the hardship and poverty of their area, the Nubians are among the most friendly tribes in the Sudan. They are generous and courteous to aliens and foreigners ... the guest of one person in particular is essentially the guest of the whole village” (p. 50). Hence, the proverb *goroton ajingi osy* ‘he/she makes dough out of the ant’ uses exaggeration, one of the features that characterizes many proverbs, to show the extent of stinginess of a person in an otherwise very generous community, subjecting such an individual to scorn in a witty and humorous manner by the use of exaggeration.

#### 4.5 Other DN Proverbs:

In addition to the above themes, there are DN proverbs that do not fit clearly into those categories, so I simply categorize them as “other DN proverbs”. In a culture where the illiteracy rate was traditionally very high, though it has relatively improved in the past thirty years or so, enlightened and educated people are generally highly regarded and respected. In fact even the semi educated or functionally literate is respected. I remember that in the early sixties and seventies in the Nubian community where I grew up only a few people could read and write. And illiterate people who got letters from relatives used to go to those few functionally literate individuals to read to them or write their letters. A Nubian proverb related to these few people says *goshko dungurin berer ghali* ‘a one-eyed person among the blind is valuable’. *Goshko* as a metaphor for the semi-educated, is very effective, whereas *dungurin* stands for the illiterate masses. The proverb is also used to refer to a person who claims/pretends to ‘know it all.’

Some DN proverbs also offer reflections on adversities that people encounter or face in their lives. One such proverb says, *gur digirkin kandi digrani* ‘when the bull is down, butcher knives are abundant’. The proverb likens a person who used to be strong and powerful to a bull, and the knives to the bad people who flock around the fallen individual to make a bad situation worse. In other words, when such a person falls in trouble, jealous people bring out all his weaknesses and problems. So the proverb reflects the problem of jealousy.

Standing firm in the face of obstacles and difficult situations in life is a quality that many people cherish and admire. The importance of tenacity and persistence in the face of obstacles is a characteristic of many Nubians. The importance of this quality is reflected in some Nubian proverbs, for example, *sab ichi dormenkin nadinen* ‘when the cat can not reach the milk, it says it is too bitter/sour anyway’. Metaphorically the cat stands for any person and *ichi* ‘milk’ stands for

a goal in life (present or future). It encourages people not to give up or withdraw from a particular situation when it seems unattainable or difficult to achieve. It discourages excuses for abandoning certain tasks or achieving a certain goal. I heard the proverb said by a forty-seven-year-old father to his son who dropped out of a trade school. When the father asked him why he stopped going to school, the son said, "it is a trade school anyway!" The father immediately recited the proverb.

### **5.0 Conclusion:**

In the case of DN language variety and other similar sociolinguistic situations where an indigenous language is threatened with extinction, there is an urgent need for linguists, folklorists, paremiologists, paremiographers, and other concerned scholars to pool their local, national, and international efforts to collect, study and document these languages. In particular, the collection and documentation of proverbs, riddles, songs, poems, stories, and other forms of artistic and folkloric nature will ensure that future generations of these languages/cultures will at least know vital parts of their linguistic heritage.

DN proverbs, like most proverbs in other cultures, are generally anonymous. In DN society they serve a didactic function. They offer advice, guidance, and warnings about the consequences of certain behavior and or conduct. Like most proverbs in general, DN proverbs make use of a variety of stylistic devices, such as figures of speech, to convey important messages related to the Nubian culture and society. Therefore, in addition to identifying their important functions, the documentation of these folkloric genres helps in the maintenance of a significant linguistic and cultural resource of the speakers of the language.



**Notes**

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- (1) *Kojer* or peg is a pointed piece of wood (sometimes metal) usually knocked in *zareba* ‘animal’s place’ by farmers to keep their donkeys and or other animals tied with a rope.
- (2) Shouk, A. (2010). Personal Communication, 7/15/2010.
- (3) *Kubay* is a big clay jar (earthenware) traditionally used for mixing, preparing, or keeping dough. It was also used for preparing and keeping traditional drinks, such as *marrisah*.

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