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Saudi Dialects: Are They Endangered?

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Abstract: Krauss, among others, claims that languages will face death in the coming centuries (Krauss, 1992). Austin (2010a) lists 7,000 languages as existing and spoken in the world today. Krauss estimates that this figure could come down to 600. That is, most of the world's languages are endangered. Therefore, an endangered language is a language that loses its speakers within a few generations. According to Dorian (1981), there is what is called "tip" in language endangerment. He argues that a language's decline can start slowly but suddenly goes through a rapid decline towards the extinction. Thus, languages must be protected at much earlier stage. Arabic dialects such as Zahrani Spoken Arabic (ZSA), and Faiifi Spoken Arabic (henceforth, FSA), which are spoken in the southern region of Saudi Arabia, have not been studied, yet. Few people speak these dialects, among many other dialects in the same region. However, the problem is that most of these dialects' native speakers are moving to other regions in Saudi Arabia where they use other different dialects. Therefore, are these dialects endangered? What other factors may cause its endangerment? Have they been documented before? What shall we do? This paper discusses three main different points regarding this issue: language and endangerment, languages documentation and description and Arabic language and its family, giving a brief history of Saudi dialects comparing their situation with the whole existing dialects. Then, it shows the first hints of the decline providing the main reasons which may lead to the dialects' death.

Keywords: Saudi dialects; Language endangerment; Description; Documentation.

1. Introduction

This paper aims to describe how it is important to document Saudi dialects such as the dialect of Arabic called Zahrani Spoken Arabic (henceforth, ZSA) and Faiifi Spoken Arabic (henceforth, FSA) which are spoken in the southern region of Saudi Arabia. These varieties have never been used in writing or any other forms. Few people speak these dialects. Most speakers are moving to other regions in Saudi Arabia. Thus, they start using dialects other than Zahrani or Faiifi which may lead to the disappearance of their own dialects.

Therefore, such research is timely for many reasons. Firstly, as far as I know, these dialects remain undescribed and receive less attention from researchers in Saudi Arabia. Another important reason is that any dialect spoken in Saudi Arabia is possibly comprehensible to some extent. However, some dialects are not like any other dialects found in Standard Arabic due to their unusual structure and vocabulary as well; speakers of other varieties of Arabic sometimes cannot understand even a very short dialogue in Zahrani or Faiifi. Finally, these dialects are highly endangered as some other dialects in Saudi Arabia because of urbanization.

2. Language and Endangerment

2.1. What is an Endangered Language?

Michael Krauss, as many others, claims that languages will face death in the coming centuries (Krauss, 1992); (Hale, 1992). Austin (2010a) lists 7,000 languages as existing and spoken in the world today. Krauss estimates that this figure could come down to 600. That is, most of the world's languages are endangered. Therefore, an endangered language is a language that loses its speakers within a few generations.

Apart from the death of a language's speakers, any noticeable decline in the transmission of the language to children in the community is a clear sign of endangerment, too. Dorian (1981), claims that there is what is called "tip" in language endangerment. He argues that a language's decline can start slowly but suddenly goes through a rapid decline towards the extinction. Thus, languages must be protected at much earlier stage.

2.2. What Causes Endangerment?

As a result of the previous studies and claims, one could take into consideration what factors or reasons cause endangerment:

At one hand, the number of living speakers of a language is the best indicator of endangerment. It can also include the number of children learning the language. For example, Classical Arabic (henceforth, CA) shows the situation where the death of its native speakers did not lead to its death for various reasons. One is that generations especially Muslims teach their children CA as the only media to understand The Holy Quran as the main source of their religion. Another cause is that some ceremonies and /or speeches and classes' lessons are offered by CA. A third important reason is that some universities such as King Saud University in Saudi Arabia have established institutions through which they teach CA for non-native speakers of Arabic and holds annual global conferences to support preserving the language.

Geography and immigrants languages are another factor when determining whether or not a language is moving towards endangerment. Algerian Arabic is one best example where most its native speakers are shifting by using french instead of their first language in the country and the neighboring countries. Consequently, younger generations will expose to French to be their first language.

Another related example is Saudi dialects (ZSA and FSA) which are the focus of this paper. Old native speakers are dying and their children are shifting and using other different dialects. Moreover, inhabitants in the southern region were all Zahrani or Faify but it is becoming multicultural regions now. Hence, the importance of the early documentation of an endangered language becomes urgent.

3. Languages Documentation and Description

3.1. What is Language Documentation?

Language documentation is something different from language description as will be discussed in the following sections. Being different subfields, they serve various goals and are based on different methodologies while data collecting and analyzing. So, what is language documentation after adopting this assumption?

According to [Austin \(2010a\)](#) and [Himmelmann \(2006a\)](#), among many others, Language documentation or documentary linguistics is a subfield of linguistics that is dealt with a lasting multipurpose record of any natural language or any of its varieties. Language documentation is concerned with various disciplines due to its multidisciplinary nature (see [Woodbury \(2010\)](#) for more details).

By thinking deeply in the above definition, one finds out that language documentation involves several significant characteristics¹ (see also [Himmelmann \(2006a\)](#)):

- a. Primary data: language documentation focuses on collecting and analyzing primary data after which will be available for other linguists. Collecting data is not enough for protection a language. A comprehensive work to analyze data starting from transcribing and ending with archiving is required.
- b. Accountability: establishing open archives for primary data makes evaluation of linguistics analyses possible and expected.
- c. Long-term storage of primary data: one important feature in language documentation is the existence of archiving for primary data to last and be available for different users.
- d. Not only endangered languages: language documentation has been provided to protect, in particular, those endangered languages all over the world. However, it is still possible to apply this kind of practice to any language whether or not endangered.
- e. Cooperation and involvement of speech community: this type of project relies on the cooperation between the researchers and the community members.

3.2. Why is Language Documentation Important?

Several different reasons exhibit the importance of language documentation projects([Austin and Grenoble, 2007](#); [Woodbury, 2003](#)):

- a. Language endangerment: definitely the main reason, why there is shift to language documentation by linguists, is that a substantial number of the world's languages, which exist today, are endangered and facing extinction (See [Krauss \(1992\)](#); [Grenoble and Whaley \(1998\)](#); [Hagege \(2000\)](#); [Crystal \(2000\)](#); [Bradley and Bradley \(2002\)](#) cited in [Austin \(2010\)](#) or [Austin \(2007\)](#) for more details and discussion regarding language endangerment).
- b. Different view: there has been a change to focus on language in use regardless of its grammatical system.
- c. Research funding: in the past fifteen years, language documentation has emerged. It has been noticed that number of students, researchers and funding bodies, who have been attracted by this field, has increased considerably. So, language documentation is not just a fad ([Austin, 2010](#)). Rather, it is a change in the discipline. This change occurred as result of the extensive funding allocated to such kind of research and projects by which a great influence on the linguists' topics, research and methods is seen. In the same time, new technological developments in digital recording equipment, computer equipment, storage devices, software programs and many other helped in recording and analyzing a huge amount of data accurately and easily (see [Austin \(2010\)](#) for more details and figures about research funding).
- d. Research economy: language documentation is not a single purpose practice as mentioned earlier in the previous section. However, it is an essential resource for well structured and formatted data storage as well as language maintenance. That is why it is defined as a lasting multipurpose record.

¹ See section 2.3 below for differences between language documentation and language description.

3.3. Language Documentation Vs. Language Description

Is language documentation just like language description plus technology or it is something different? It was suggested that language documentation and language description are the same but they are not when it comes to the methodologies and the activities. They also differ from each other in terms of aims, areas of interests, workflows and outcomes (Austin, 2010).

Language documentation and language description differ in terms of the aims. In documentation projects, the aim is to record the linguistics practices and traditions of a speech community. In contrast, language description projects aim to record a language. Having these different aims put forth, it influences the next procedures with regard to the collection process where a specific kind of data is chosen, and the recording and presentation of data where different analyses need different type of data with different qualities.

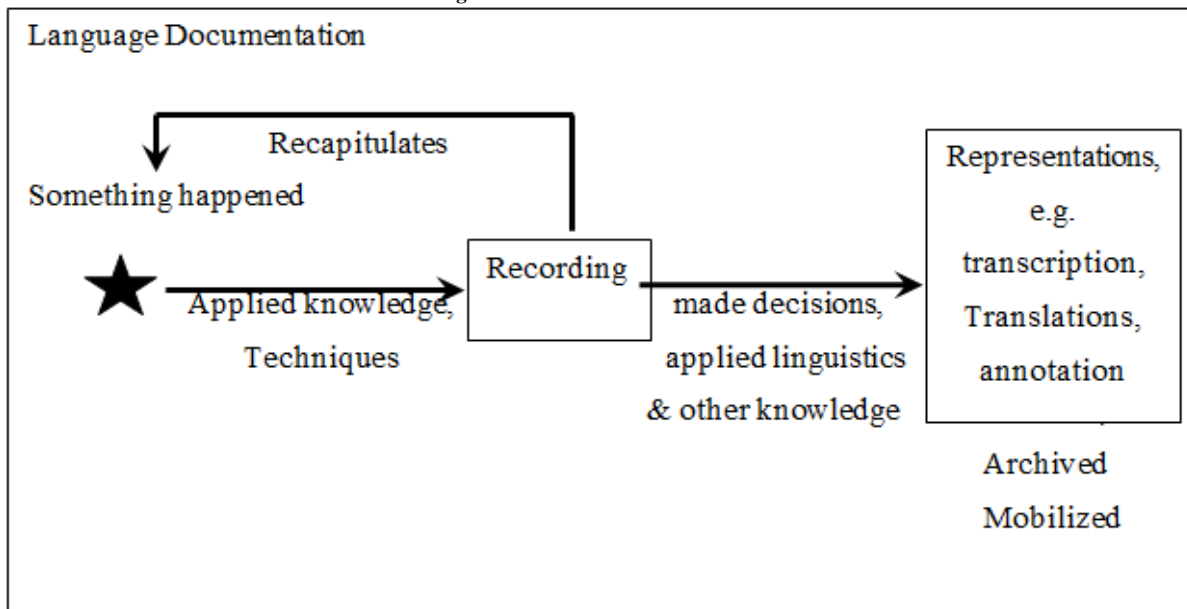
Language documentation and language description may share the task of recoding of the endangered languages in which two main activities are required. The first one is the collection of primary data including transcription and translation, followed by the second where primary data is analyzed. However, these activities are different with regard to the methods and the results (see Himmelmann (1998) for more details). From the descriptive point of view, they prefer to neglect the differences between the two activities. On the other hand, in documentation projects, it is important to differentiate between these two activities in order to distinguish between language documentation and language description.

One fundamental issue in this regard is with relation to the analysis of primary data which only help to create grammars, dictionaries and collections of texts in language descriptions. That is, data collections receive less interest than data analysis, at one hand. So, the production and the materials are produced and written in a way to be accessible by only linguists in the other hand. In other words, in language description, the analytical statement is the heart of the project whereas it is primary data in regard to language documentation.

However, language documentation (as seen in sections 2.1 and 2.2 above) attracts the interest of different groups from different disciplines whether or not linguists. Primary data, in language documentation, is made available and accessible to those different groups, which means that data collections receive more attention in language documentation than in language description. According to Austin (2008); (Austin, 2010); (Woodbury (2003); Woodbury, 2010); (Himmelmann, 1998), documentation has to do mainly with discourse. In the same time, description and analysis in language documentation can be developed and changed over time due to accountability of primary data. Therefore, language documentation and description is based on the application of theoretical and descriptive linguistics techniques to guarantee the best practice (Austin and Grenoble, 2007) (see section 2.4 for best language documentation and description practice).

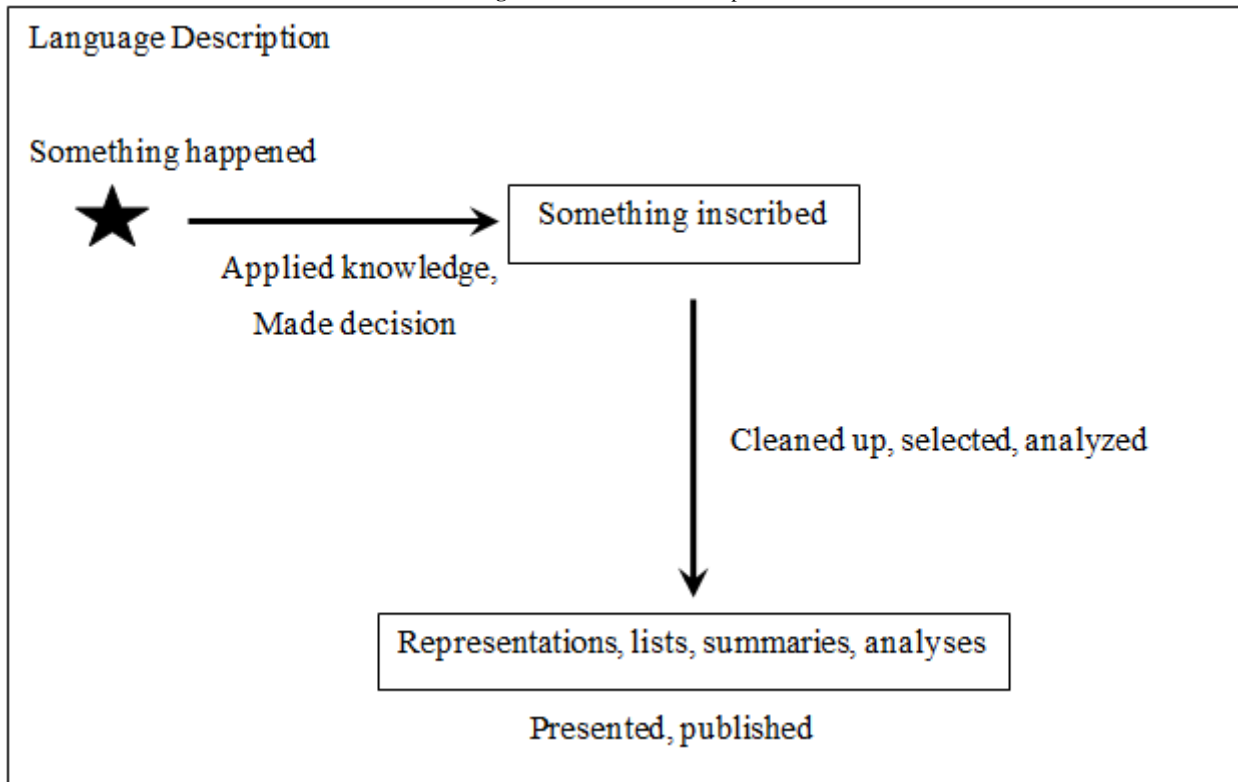
Furthermore, language documentation and language description are different in regard to workflow. Consider the following Figures:

Figure-1. Workflow in documentation



(Adopted from Austin (2010))

Figure-2. Workflow in description



(Adopted from Austin (2010))

In the above figures, it is clearly show the points of differences between language documentation and language description. They differ in the procedures, interests and the outcomes.

In language documentation, linguistics knowledge and techniques are needed to make the audio and video recordings that recapitulate the event in the real world which is of interest. Then, linguistics knowledge, decision-making and other knowledge occur to make the representation in the form, for example, of transcription which is the main focus and interest of the researchers, among many others. After that, it may be archived and mobilized. So, one could say that language documentation has more than one focus and/or interest. One is regarding the recordings and another of the representations.

On the other side, in language description, the linguistics knowledge and the decision-making occur somewhere before the inscription which has no interest except for being a source for audio recordings. Then, they are selected and analyzed to present the outcome consisting of representations, lists, summaries and analyses which are considered the main focus and interest. After that, these outcomes can be presented and published to interested users, who may be only linguists.

3.4. Language Documentation: Best Practice

From the previous sub-sections, language documentation is known as a linguistics project, in particular, which contains two main focuses: archiving and the preservation of the recordings and the representations that follow. So, it is the creation of corpora of a well formatted audio and video data.

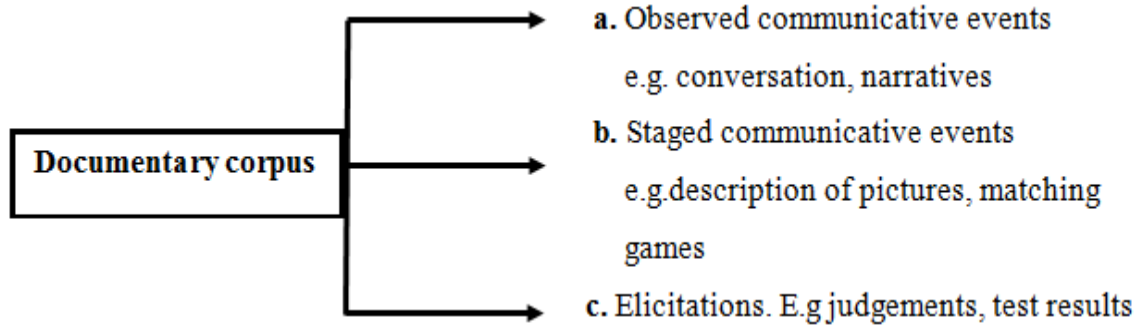
3.5. Who is Interested?

Being aware of language documentations' clear aims mentioned earlier, one is able to set the best plan to achieve these goals. It is also important to keep in mind that such kind of project is shared by different parties including the funders, research teams, speaker community, archivers, users and general public (Woodbury, 2003). Each party has its own interest. Thus, it can specify its needs, responsibilities, roles and rights depending on its expectations.

3.6. Different Formats of a Project

Language documentation projects show its emphasis to document the linguistic behavior which is manifest in communicative events. It involves every single action in everyday's life actions, i.e., and the whole linguistic behavior. So, the core intention in language documentation is based on formulating a comprehensive and representative sample of natural communicative events (see Himmelmann (1998) for more details). Himmelmann (1998) produces three different kinds of communicative events resulting from various methods of data collection. Consider the following figure:

Figure-3. Different communicative events when data collecting²



Himmelman (2006a) presents basic and extended format for a language documentation project. Consider the following tables:

Table-1. Basic format of language documentation

| Primary data | Apparatus | |
|---|--|---|
| | Per session | For documentation as a whole |
| Recordings/ records of observable linguistics behavior and metalinguistics knowledge (possible basic formats: session and lexical database) | Metadata³ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time and location of recording - Participants - Recording team - Recording equipment - Content descriptors | Metadata <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Location of documented community - Project team(s) constituting to documentation - Participants in documentation - Acknowledgement |
| | Annotations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transcription - Translation - Further linguistics and ethnographic glossing and commentary | General access resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction - Orthographical conventions - Ethnographic sketch - Sketch grammar - Glossing conventions - Indices - Link to other resources |

(Adopted from Himmelman (2006a))

Table-2. Extended format of language documentation

| Primary data | Apparatus | |
|--|--|--|
| | Per session | For documentation as a whole |
| Recordings/ records of observable linguistics behavior and metalinguistics knowledge | Metadata <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transcription - Translation - Further linguistics and ethnographic glossing and commentary | Metadata <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction - Orthographical conventions - Glossing conventions - Indices - Link to other resources |
| | | Descriptive analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ethnography - Descriptive grammar - Dictionary |

(Adopted from Himmelman (2006a))

² See Himmelman, 1998, 2006a for details.

³ See Himmelman (2006a, p:11-14) for more discussion about the metadata and its functions.

It is clearly seen in table 1 and table 2 above that the two different format⁴ (i.e. the basic format and the extended one) differ in regard to the addition of a complete descriptive analyses on various levels which replaces the ethnographic sketch and sketch grammar.

3.7. Compiling Language Documentation

There are four stages involved in compiling language documentation⁵:

- a. Making a decision about what kind of data required to be in the documentation.
- b. The real recording of the data.
- c. The follow up procedures (e.g. transcription) (see section 2.4.2.2).
- d. Availability and accessibility, i.e. presentation.

The person who will go through these stages should be familiar with the situation and be ready for the whole circumstances around the process. The fluency of the language and previous knowledge about the culture and traditions are required. He should live in the community for enough period of time.

3.8. Corpus and Its Design

One basic feature of language documentation is that its data is available and accessible, as mentioned earlier, for any further analysis and/ or progressing. So, a session⁶ (document) contains:

- Data represented in various forms: transcription, audio and/ or video.
- Data translated in a word by word (interlinear) translation and free translation.
- Notes providing additional information about everything took place when recording. These notes may consist of information about the speech community, the language, the fieldwork (e.g. the methodologies) and the contents (Himmelman, 1998).

Any documentary corpora are made, in particular, to provide a project with a language data by which specific research aims are met and achieved and to focus on the language use in any speech community.

There are features which determine the best quality of documentary corpora. A good corpus should be diverse, huge, available and accessible, transparent, preservable and portable and ethical (Woodbury, 2003). These six features of good documentary corpora result from the definition of language documentation as having a lasting multipurpose record, as mentioned earlier.

4. Arabic Language and Its Family

4.1. Semitic Languages

Arabic is a Semitic language, which is of a wider group of languages –namely Afro-asiatic and it is also known as Hamito-Semitic (Greenberg, 1952). This group is divided into six sub-families: Tamazight, Egyptian, Chadic, Cushitic, Semitic and Omotic (Brown and Ogilvie, 2009).

Semitic Languages are group of languages spoken by peoples native to North Africa and the Middle East and forming one of the six branches of the Afro-Asiatic language family. The Semitic languages are divided into three sub-branches on grounds of their structural features and geographical territories: North West Semitic (including Hebrew, Aramaic, and Eblaite), North East Semitic (consisting of Akkadian) and Central and Southern Semitic (including Arabic, South Arabian, and Ethiopic).

Arabic is related to a number of other languages spoken in the Middle East and Ethiopia. Biblical Hebrew, Akkadian, Aramaic and many other languages are examples of ancient Semitic languages. Languages such as Modern Hebrew (Zuckermann, 2009)⁷, Modern Aramaic, Amharic and Tigriniya, Maltese among many other south Arabian languages including the one that is spoken in Saudi Arabia⁸, are modern Semitic languages. Consider the following figure:

⁴ See Himmelman (2006a, p: 20-25) for more details.

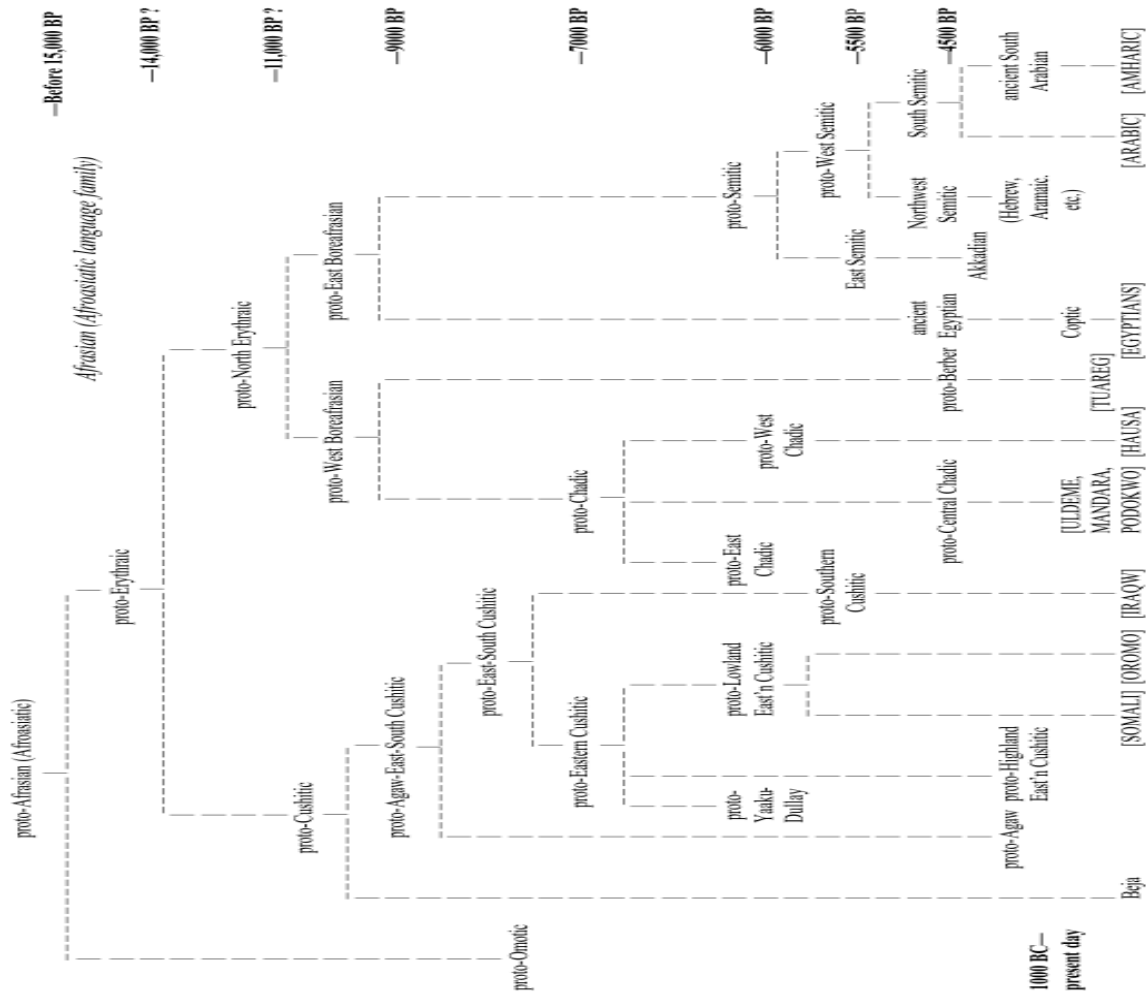
⁵ See Himmelman, 1998 for details.

⁶ Himmelman (2006 a) links between the sessions and various sets known depending on parameters like medium, genre and naturalness.

⁷ Zuckermann (2009), prefers the term Israeli to Modern Hebrew. He claims that "Israeli is a Eurasian (Semitic- European) hybrid language: both Afro-Asiatic and Indo-European".

⁸ Those languages which are spoken in the southern Arabia are also called Himyaritic languages.

Figure-4. Afroasiatic language Family (from <http://www.mghamdi.com/SaudiID.jpg>)



4.2. Brief History of Arabic

Arabic language went through six different stages. The earliest ones are called Old Arabic, which are documented from the seventh century BC to around the third century AD. These stages are little-known due to the shortage of the written records.

The second period is the Early Arabic period, which was from the third century to the fifth century. During these centuries, there was a cultural and commercial interaction between the Arabs and others, where hints about Classical Arabic (henceforth, CA) were seen. The sixth century is considered the real start of CA (Holes, 2004). It was seen clearly in the poetic language.

The next period (the seventh century) is a great transition because it is the period of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). During this period the revelation of the Holy book (called Qura'n), from that period on, Arabic became one of (if not the first) priority of every Muslim all over the world whether or not Arab. The Qura'n was protected by being written in the Caliph Uthman. These periods (from the seventh century to the twelfth century) are the periods of the strength and the spread of Arabic from the Iberian Peninsula in the west to Central and South Asia in the East. This expansion of the Islamic world was the source through which Arabic gained its importance.

The next era, between the thirteenth century and the eighteenth century, is another important. It is also called Middle Arabic (Versteegh, 2004). During these periods, CA continued to be the literary language but there was a noticeable change in the spoken language to regional variations.

Another important period in Arabic history from the end of the eighteenth century until now is generally known as Modern Standard Arabic (henceforth, MSA) (Ryding, 2005). During these times, CA was influenced by being exposed to Western writings and styles (see section for the differences and similarities between CA and MSA).

As a result to that change, a great amount of dialects and diversities exists all over the Arab world which by the end comes under the overall umbrella of either CA or MSA.

4.3. Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic

Arabic is a Semitic language with more than 200 million speakers (Gordon, 2005). It has gone through many different stages, and there are many different varieties.⁹

⁹ See, for example, Ryding (2005) for more details about the history of Arabic.

Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic are two varieties of Arabic that are together called SA. They share similar phonological, morphological and syntactic features (Badawi *et al.*, 2004; Harrama, 1983; Ryding, 2005), however, they differ to some extent with regard to lexical items. For example, it is seen that the result of the global changes and exposure to other languages such as English (Harrama, 1983), MSA has acquired new lexical items and loan words such as *kimbuter* “computer”.

As mentioned earlier, CA originated in the sixth century (Holes, 2004). It is the language of the Holy Qura'n¹⁰ and pre- and post-Islamic literature, whereas MSA, which originated in the eighteenth century, is the standard variety of Arabic that is used throughout the Arabic-speaking world for official purposes, education, published materials, and formal speeches.¹¹ CA is not a spoken language these days, except that it may be learnt by non-native speakers as part of their education. This applies to MSA also: few people speak the language as their mother tongue, and mostly it is learnt and spoken by non-native speakers. Instead, a modern colloquial Arabic or regional spoken dialect such as ZSA or FSA is used by native speakers rather than the standard language (i.e. MSA). (Zuckermann, 2009).¹²

Some authors (e.g., Cowell (2005)) claim that CA and modern colloquial Arabic should not be considered distinct although there are significant differences between the two. In addition, modern colloquial Arabic differs significantly from one region to another (Abd-el-Jawad, 1992; Davies and Bentahila, 2012; Feghali, 1997; Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). From a linguistic perspective, these differences are best considered in terms of a dialect continuum across the Arabic-speaking region (Al Barrag, 2013). The most distinct forms of spoken Arabic are the varieties used at the western end of the continuum, especially in Morocco and Algeria (*Maghrebi* or “Western” Arabic), Western Africa (*Hassaniya*), and the varieties spoken in Yemen, at the South-Eastern end.

4.4. The Saudi Dialects

According to most commentators, Saudi Arabia has five main dialects. Almalki (2012) and Ingham (2006) mentioned that there are four main dialects in Saudi Arabia spread on the five main regions in the country, as illustrated in Map 1 (Alzahrani, 2009). This division is based on the linguistic categorization of the main features of each group as well as the geographic location of its native speakers, for example, FSA which is spoken in the same geographical boundaries differs from ZSA in many ways. This also applies to many other dialects in the same area.

Saudi dialects which are spoken in the southern region such as ZSA and FSA, among many others, are colloquial Arabic dialects spoken only in the southern region. Native speakers of these dialects differ from each other according to tribal membership as well as their permanent and/or recent place of residency. These dialects are just some of many other colloquial Arabic dialects that belong, to some degree, to the SA language. However, colloquial Arabic such as ZSA and FSA differ from SA in lexicon, style, phonology, morphology, syntax, and sociolinguistic function.

In contrast the dialects in the southern region of Saudi Arabia, Saudi dialects such as NA and HA are spoken throughout the country regardless of their native speakers' residency—that is, one can understand and communicate with speakers of different dialects using either of these major dialects. This is not possible with native speakers of ZSA and/or FSA for two reasons. First, ZSA and FSA do not carry the importance that HA has for all Muslims who need to visit the Makkah region; and, second, they do not have prestige, unlike NA for example, which is both the dialect spoken in the capital city of the country and the dialect spoken by the royal family. HA and NA are standard varieties, used in education in Saudi schools and universities.

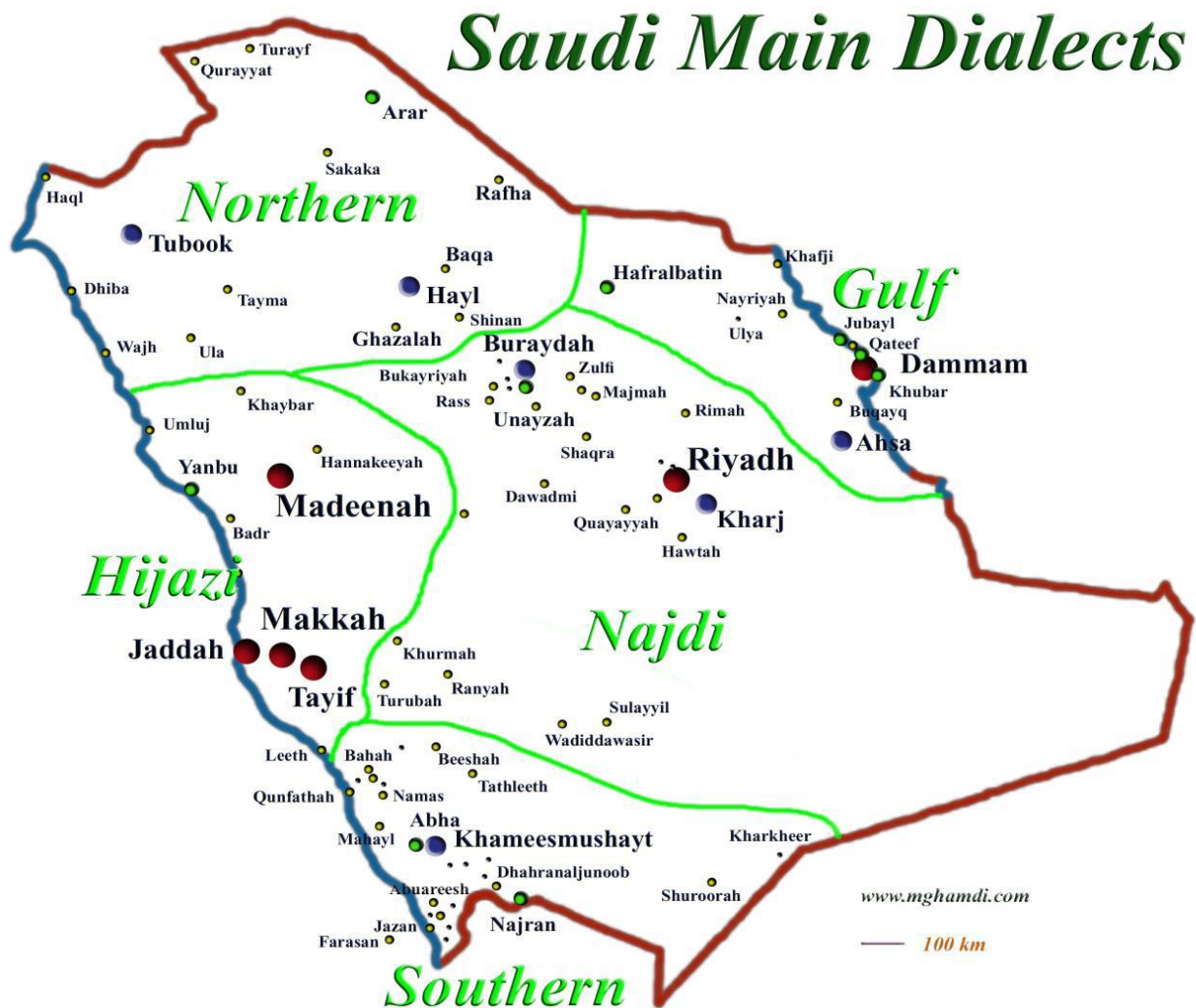
¹⁰ See Alsurf (2013) for more details about what he calls “Qura'nic language”.

¹¹ Versteegh (1997a, 2004) claims that MSA is used as a sign of respect.

¹² See Zuckermann (2009) for more details about the disappearance of Modern Hebrew, too.

The distribution of the principal regional varieties of colloquial Arabic spoken in Saudi Arabia is shown in Map 1.

Map-1. Saudi Main Dialects (from <http://www.mghamdi.com/SaudiD.jpg>)



4.5. Documentation projects in Saudi Arabia

Studying a colloquial dialect of Arabic is essential because there has been a tendency to focus predominantly on the Standard dialect in most studies of the Arabic language to date. Therefore, a description of colloquial dialects such as ZSA or FSA will be an important step both towards documenting the dialect itself and highlighting some of the linguistic differences between ZSA and/or FSA and Standard Arabic (SA), as well as other spoken varieties in the region, especially in the southern region of Saudi Arabia.

In the past, native speakers of dialects like ZSA or FSA spent the whole day with each other in their fields farming. They did not seek work outside the region or even among neighbouring tribes. Some lived in the mountains, which are rarely visited and difficult to live in, and some lived in the valleys, where they had contact with other travellers or temporary residents—that is, some of them were isolated in their tribes whereas others were exposed to people who spoke other dialects. Probably some of these factors—the isolation in particular—has helped to preserve the dialect.

The number of speakers of ZSA or FSA is not big, the youngest speakers being now around 45 years old and the oldest aged 90 years. The older speakers (e.g., over 60 years) who have never left the region speak only ZSA or FSA. Most of the younger speakers are moving or have moved to other urban regions in Saudi Arabia seeking jobs and/or education, where they are forced to use other dialects. The most common dialects now spoken in Saudi Arabia are either Hijazi Arabic (HA), spoken in the western part of the country, and Najdi Arabic (NA) spoken in the central part. Due to contact by younger speakers with other dialects, especially HA and/or NA, the ZSA or FSA dialect is now quite endangered. New technology such as the internet and other media, which uses Standard Arabic and/or English, may also contribute to the disappearance of the dialect because only the more dominant dialects and the Standard language are used in these forms of modern communication.

It is particularly noticeable that native speakers of ZSA or FSA who have moved to other areas do not use their own dialect while communicating with others, mainly due to its difficulty to non-native speakers. They also borrow

words and structures from other dialects spoken in the areas where they now live, causing changes in the ZSA or FSA dialect (Al Wer and Rudolf, 2009). Nevertheless, some native speakers still believe they speak the dialect as it was spoken by their ancestors, and the native speakers who contributed to this study were unaware of any changes in their language. In these circumstances, therefore, it is very important to document and preserve these unique dialects.

5. Conclusion

The death of a language's speakers or any noticeable decrease in the transmission of the language to children in the community is a clear sign of a language endangerment. It may happen slowly or it can be what Dorian (1981), called "tip" in language endangerment.

Language documentation is something different from language description through which different formats of projects can be made. However, it is made clear that language documentation involves various disciplines due to its multidisciplinary nature. It is the creation of corpora of a well formatted audio and video data in which four stages involved in compiling language documentation: making a decision about data required the real recording of the data, transcription and presentation and making data available and accessible (i.e. presentation). So, the best known characteristic of language documentation project is to contain diverse, huge, available and accessible, transparent, preservable and portable and ethical corpus.

Semitic languages including Arabic show a decline in the transmission of the language to children in the community of some Arabic dialects such as Saudi dialects particularly in the southern region of Saudi Arabia. It happened due to the nature of the dialects besides the location where they are spoken as being isolated. Therefore, urgent documentation projects should take place to protect those dialects.

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