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The Personal Pronouns of The Mehri Language as Spoken in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract:

Mehri is one of six Modern South Arabian languages spoken in southern Arabia. These languages have been noted for their retention of Semitic phonological and grammatical features that have disappeared from other Semitic languages. Mehri is spoken in Oman, Yemen, in parts of southern and eastern Saudi Arabia, and in some of Gulf States. Mehri is classified by UNESCO as "definitely endangered". Previous studies of Omani and Yemeni Mehri exist, but there have been no studies on Mehri that are used in Saudi Arabia. Morphologically, the dialect groups of Mehri differ in that eastern Yemeni Mehri, also known as Mahriyōt, distinguishes gender in the second person singular independent pronouns, whereas Omani Mehri, Mehreyyet, and western Yemeni Mehri do not. However, Mahriyōt and Mehreyyet differ from western Yemeni Mehri in that they exhibit dual pronouns and dual verb inflections. This study examines number/gender marking in the dependent and independent pronouns of the Mehri spoken in Dammam in the eastern region of Saudi Arabia. Twelve hours of recordings were made during interviewing eleven Mehri speakers (seven males and 4 females) who are living in Dammam. Some of the informants were born in Dammam and others had moved there in different years.

Keywords: Mehri, pronouns, dual, endangered language, Modern South Arabian Languages (MSAL).

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Introduction

Throughout human history, languages have always become extinct. Currently and due to processes of globalization, languages are disappearing at an accelerated rate. Less frequently spoken languages may disappear over time and be replaced by the more commonly spoken languages. Many languages are no longer being learned by new generations of children or by new adult speakers; these languages will become extinct when their last speaker dies. Krauss's call to face the impending language endangerment crisis was first delivered at 1991 in the Endangered Languages Symposium annual meeting of the Linguistic Society of America; see Simons & Lewis (2013: 3). Krauss (1992) surveyed the global situation and estimated that only 10% of languages seem safe in the long term, up to 50% may already be moribund, which means they are in the way of loss, and the remainder are in danger of becoming moribund by the end of this century (Simons & Lewis, 2013:3).

UNESCO's Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages suggests that a language becomes endangered when its speakers stop using it, use it in a reduced number of communicative domains, and do not transmit it from one generation to the next. In other words, there are no new speakers, adults or children. A language may still be endangered if children are no longer learning it and speakers are shifting to the use of national languages in place of local languages even though that language has tens of thousands of speakers. In contrast, a language with only a small number of speakers might be considered very much alive if it is the primary language of a community and is the first (or only) spoken language of all children in that community.

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Loss of languages is a matter of some concern because it also equates to a loss of cultural diversity. Language loss can be perceived as a natural process that should not be counteracted; moreover, people may view the loss of their native language as a positive development, and using a majority language is likely to decrease social stigma and increase economic opportunities for their society. However, the vast majority of speakers of endangered languages consider the loss of their language to be a harmful rupture with their cultural identity and tradition and many works actively to counteract the impending language loss, often liaising closely with linguists in revitalization projects, see (Hoffmann, 2009:14,18).

The ways to avoid language loss are summed up in different points ranging from rescue and documentation. Among the ways that may be used to avoid languages loss and protect them from endangerment are encouraging researchers to study and document such languages at all levels. Organize periodic scientific conferences on these languages beside creating professorship chairs in universities and research institutions specialized in the study of such languages will support the researchers and maintain the endangered languages

For this reason, some projects exist globally, aiming at preventing or slowing language loss. These include projects to revitalize endangered languages and promote education and literacy in minority languages. Many countries across the world have passed specific legislation that aims to protect and stabilize the languages of indigenous speech communities. There are some stories of success where endangered languages have been preserved or revived such as Modern Hebrew, Irish, and the Maori in New Zealand. Currently, there is an increasing number of workshops, conferences, and publications like what we have on Mehri and the other five Modern South Arabian languages as will be discussed below. The current study, among others, is a step in order to document Mehri language which we hope will lead to further studies in the future.

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Mehri:

Mehri, the language at the heart of the present study, is one of six endangered languages in the south of Arabia. These languages are Soqo□ri, spoken exclusively on the Yemeni island of Soqotra; Shahri, also known as Jibbāli, spoken within Dhofar in Oman; □arsūsi, spoken in Jiddat al-□arāsīs in Oman; Hobyōt, spoken in a small area straddling the border of Yemen and Oman; and the highly endangered Ba□□ari (Watson, 2012:1). These languages vary in their level of endangerment. Mehri is considered by UNESCO to be definitely endangered (UNESCO, 2003). Some of the causes that are threatening the South of the Arabian Peninsula languages, leading to their isolation and endangerment, are these languages inability to keep up with the Arabic Language, the dominant language in those areas. A major cause is that all of these languages lack written forms as they depend on oral speaking.

Mehri and the other five Modern South Arabian languages (MSAL) belong to the Semitic language family and are believed to be either southern members of the west Semitic branch (Rubin, 2010:7) or eastern members of the south Semitic branch (Faber, 1997:6); see Watson, (2012:1).

Mehri is spoken in different dialects across Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Eastern Yemen, and in parts of Saudi Arabia. The number of Mehri speakers is difficult to estimate, partly because Mehri is spoken in a number of different countries, and partly because the number of speakers is not equal to the number of Mehri tribal members; many Mehris no longer speak Mehri, and those who do speak it often lack competence in the language. However, the estimated number of Mehri speakers ranges from 100,000 – 180,000 (Rubin, 2010:1; Watson, 2012: 1).

Mehri is an entirely oral, unwritten Semitic language with several different dialects. Rubin (2010:7) divides Mehri in Oman and Yemen into two basic dialect groups: the western group spoken in Yemen, which can be called Yemeni Mehri; and the

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Eastern group, which can be called Omani Mehri, Dhofari Mehri, or, natively, Mehreyyet. Johnstone (1975a: 2) distinguishes two main varieties including the Mehri of the Yemen, and a northern Mehri dialect (Dhofar Mehri). Simeone-Senelle (1997:378,379) states that "there is a very clear distinction between the variety of Mehri language spoken in Dhofar and in the far east of the Yemen and the western variety." She adds that "within the same dialectal area there are differences between Bedouin varieties and city or village dwellers varieties".

The Yemenite Mehri speakers distinguish two groups among the Mehri dialects. They refer to Mehriyyet for the variety spoken in the western part between ras Fartak and the wadi Masila, and to Mehriyot for the variety spoken in the far-eastern part of Mahra until the border with Oman (Simeone-Senelle 2010: 3). In Oman the language as a whole is named Mehriyyet (Ibid). In this regard, I should point here that these varieties when were divided were given different names in the references, some of them are confusing. Alfadly (2007:19) has suggested that Mehrjuut, as he writes, is a variety of the Mehri language spoken in Dhofar (referred to as Eastern Mehri or Nagdi). The other variety is Mehrjiit, which, according to Alfadly, is spoken in the far eastern part of Yemen (referred to as Western Mehri).[1]

In Yemen, the Mehriyyet variety used in the ancient historical capital of Qishn in Mahra appears frequently in traditional literature, essentially in poetry (Alfadly, 2007:19). Mehri has no official status in either Oman or Yemen. Arabic is the language used for official communication (e.g., administration, school, or trade). Arabic is used as a Lingua Franca for Arabic and Mehri speakers, or for Mehri native speakers and native speakers of other MSALs in which the differences are sufficient to prevent, sometimes, mutual understanding. For example, when

1 I would like to thank Muhammad Musallam Al-Mahri, whom I have contacted about this confusion. He made it clear that the Mehriyyet is the name of the variety used in Oman while Mehriyot is a variety used in Yemen as well as Mehriyyet.

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a Mehri speaker in Qishn meets a Jibbali or Hobyot native speaker, they usually resort to Arabic. Native speakers use their mother tongue for private purposes, in the family circle and with other speakers of the same language. They also use their mother tongue to pass on the traditional literature (poetry, stories) to the younger generation. However, it should be noted that although poetry is an important literary genre and poetical sparring matches are still practiced by older Mehri people, this has decreased among younger generations (Simeone-Senelle, 2013:3). These factors mean that Mehri speakers are concerned about the future of their language. The growing use of Arabic for communication is affecting the Mehri language and could cause the loss of some of its features.

In Saudi Arabia, Mehri is used in the Empty Quarter, particularly in Kharkheer. Some communities moved to Al-Wasee', Najran, Sharoorah, and the suburb of Al-Ahsa; and there is a small community in Dammam. Interestingly, Mehri people tend to know each other even though they are scattered across different cities and even countries. The Mehri in Dammam live in a relatively small and closed immigrant community. The first Mehri people settled in Dammam approximately 40 years ago. Mehri people in Damman mainly work in small businesses and usually have large families. Their children go to school, although some do not continue beyond grade twelve. Most Mehri people, especially men and the younger generations, speak Arabic. Older Mehri people can communicate with Arabic speakers to some extent. We should mention here that during collecting the data, some younger speakers had to refer to older speakers for confirmation which indicates that younger speakers are missing some features. Generally, people enjoy family gatherings, socializing with each other, and telling stories that often chronicle Mehri history of travelling in search of a better life.

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Previous Studies:

There are a few sources in Arabic on the Mehri language although many studies of Mehri have been published in other languages. Most of the material in Arabic is confined to noting the difficulty that the Mehri language presents to outsiders and to remarking on its peculiarity and other selected characteristics. The literature in Arabic also includes Arabic collections and translations of stories and poems originally in Mehri, Shahri, and Soqatri, see Al-Mahri (2007), Al-Ma'shani (2014).

Extensive research has also been carried out on Mehri in languages other than Arabic (Johnstone, 1970a, 1970b, 1973, 1975a, 1975b, 1987; Al-Aidaroos; 1996, 1999; Sima, 2005, 2009; Stroomer 1999, 2004; Watson 2012, 2014; Watson & Al-Azraqi, 2011; Watson & Bellem, 2010, 2011; Watson & Rowlett, 2013; Bittner, 1909,1911,1913,1914; Liebhaber, 2007; Bellem & Watson 2014; Jahn,1902,1905; Stein, 2011; Thomas, 1937). Watson (2012) recently studied the Mehri dialects of Mehreyyet and Mahriyōt. In 2008, Watson and Bellem worked on the phonetics and phonology of Mehri emphatics (Watson & Bellem, 2010). Several studies have gathered and analysed Mehri lexemes, see Rubin, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010; Al-Qumairi, 2003; Alfadly, 2007. The present study is the first study on the Mehri personal pronouns used among Mehri speakers living in Dammam.

The Aim of the Study:

The present study aims to shed light on the use of personal pronouns in the Mehri variety used in Dammam, Saudi Arabia. It examines the pronouns in this variety and compares them with pronouns used in other Mehri varieties used in Oman and Yemen. Mehri used in Dammam has not previously been studied as far as I know. This might explain the difficulty encountered in the research in convincing people to provide audio data. Many Mehri people consider their language as a social identity and are wary therefore about sharing it with non-Mehri people.

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Methods:

Eleven people (seven males and four females) participated in this study as informants. Their ages ranged from fourteen to sixty-seven. Some of the informants could read and write in Arabic, whereas other participants spoke Arabic but could not read or write in Arabic. Some of the informants had moved from Kharkheer in al-Rub'al-Khali (the Empty Quarter) to Dammam and others were born and raised in Dammam. Some older people were not educated at the school level, but they had joined continuous education programs in the evening. Some young people did not continue their education, see table (1).

Table (1) The participants' social details

speaker	Sex	Age	Length of stay in Dammam	Years of education
1	Female	14	14 (born in Dammam)	7 years and still in school
2	Male	16	16 (born in Dammam)	10 years and still in school
3	Female	20	20 (born in Dammam)	13 years and still in university
4	Female	23	20 (moved to Dammam at age 3)	12 (finished high school)
5	Male	28	23 (moved to Dammam at age 5)	11 years (quit school)
6	Male	34	15 (moved to Dammam at age 19)	5 years (night school)
7	Male	35	17 (moved to Dammam at age 18)	4 years (night school)
8	Male	40	21 (moved to Dammam at age 19)	5 years (night school)
9	Male	44	26 (moved to Dammam at age 18)	4 years (night school)

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10	Male	53	24 (moved to Dammam at age 29)	5 years (night school)
11	Female	67	29 (moved to Dammam at age 38)	-

Twelve hours of audio recording were taken using Marantz PMD620MKII. The audio files were saved as WAV format. The recording took place during informal interviews. A previously planned questionnaire was used to manage the interview. What's App was a good tool to answer questions between the researcher and the participants when needed.

Results and Discussion:

Personal pronouns used among Mehri speakers in Dammam include independent and dependent pronouns and exhibit the same morphological categories of number and gender as nouns, plus a three-way grammatical person distinction as discussed below.

Independent Subject Pronouns:

Independent subject pronouns occur in context as a subject or a predicand and indicate number, gender, and person. Mehri pronouns indicate first, second, and third person; singular, dual, and plural number; plus, masculine and feminine as shown in Table (2).

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Table (2). Independent subject personal pronouns.

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1	*hoh*	*kay*	*nhah*
2m	*hīt*	*tay*	*tīm*
2f			*tīn*
3m	*hīh*	*hay*	*hīm*
3f	*sīh*		*sīn*

Dual pronouns are used in in this variety, however it is not exhibited for both genders for all three persons. For example, hīh □ab□ī i.e. "he is my son", hoh denyyī i.e "I am pregnant".

Alfadly (2007:220) confirms that his data verify the fact that only the nominal dual is still alive in the Mehri of Qishn. Johnstone (1975a:118) claimed that the dual is obsolete in the Modern South Arabian languages, except in Soqotri. However, Simeone-Senelle (1997:401) confirmed the existence of the nominal dual in Mehri in Qishn. Moreover, she claimed that in the Mehri language of Qishn and the surrounding area, there are no dual pronouns, i.e., pronominal and verbal duals are obsolete.

The first person and third person singular pronouns final /h/ were clear because they were clearly articulated by the participants of the current study. Rubin (2010:31), following Johnstone (1975a:118), gives the first person and third person singular pronouns without a final /h/. In Watson's (2012: 66) data, the final /h/ was not always realized in either Mehreyyet or Mahriyōt in fast speech but was realized where a vowel-final word would be expected to be glottalised. This final /h/ also features when native speakers of Mehreyyet and Mahriyōt write in Arabic. hay, the third person dual pronoun, is placed in brackets by Rubin (2010:31) due to the lack of evidence for its use offered in the texts of Johnstone (1975a). This pronoun is attested in the Mehri dialect spoken in Dammam.

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Dependent Pronouns:

Similar to Arabic, dependent pronouns are suffixes and prefixes attach to verbs or nouns. They function as object, subject, or possessive pronouns. Object pronouns are suffixes attach to verbs or nouns. As subject pronouns, they attach as prefixes and suffixes to verbs in both the perfective and imperfective aspect. Different dependent subject pronouns are used with verbs in the perfect aspect from those used in the imperfect aspect, see Watson (2012: 84-87) for Mehreyyet and Mahriyōt.

Dependent Subject Pronouns suffixes (Perfect Aspect)

The perfect is inflected with subject pronoun suffixes. Syncretism between 3ms and 3fpl is exhibited in the variety of Mehri used in Dammam as well as in Mehreyyet and Mahriyōt.

Table (3) Dependent subject pronouns in perfect aspect

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1	-(i)k	(i)ki	-in
2m	-(i)k		-kim
2f	-(i)š		-kin
3m	-	(ū)h	(i)m
3f	-(ū)t		-

As an example, consider the occurrence of the free independent pronouns with the verb "to dress" in the context "independent pronoun + verb + dependent pronoun". The free independent pronouns here function as the subject. A nominal phrase can function as a subject in this context as well. as shown in table (4) below.

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Table (4) Independent Pronoun + verb + dependent pronoun for the verb "to dress" in the perfect aspect

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1	*hoh barlibsi**k*** I dressed	*kay barlibs**k**i* We dressed	*nhah barlibs**in*** We dressed
2m	*hīt barlibsi**k*** You dressed	*tay barlibs**k**i* You dressed	*tīm barlibs**kim*** You dressed
2f	*hīt barlibsi**š*** You dressed		*tīn barlibs**kin*** You dressed
3m	*hīh barlībis* He dressed	*hay barlibsū**h*** They dressed	*hīm barlibs**im*** They dressed
3f	*sīh barlibs**ūt*** She dressed		*sīn barlībis* They dressed

Dependent Subject Pronouns Prefixes (Imperfect Aspect)

The imperfect is inflected by person–gender prefixes and number suffixes. as shown in table (5) below.

Table (5) Subject Dependent Pronouns prefixes (imperfect aspect)

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1	a-	a-*	v(a)-
2m	t(a)-	t(a)-	t(a)-
2f			
3m	y(a)-	y(a)-	y(a)-
3f	t(a)-	t(a)-	t(a)-

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The singular, dual, and plural take a common prefix in the second person in this variety of Mehri, which is similar to the findings of Watson (2012) in relation to both Mahriyōt and Mehreyyet. For example, hīt ttēw ħirīz, tay ttoyūh ħirīz, tīm titawyan ħirīz i.e. "you are eating rice". y(a) is used as a prefix in the singular, dual, and plural to indicate the third masculine person. Syncretism is exhibited between 3fs and 2m/fs in singular, between 3fd and 2m/f/d in dual and between 3fpl and 2fpl, in plural.

Dependent Subject Pronouns Suffixes (imperfect aspect)

In the imperfect aspect,- ī/ay (2fs) is the only suffix exhibited in dialect as a singular pronoun. -(ū)h is the dual suffix which is used commonly to refer to the first, second, and third persons 1p. is not exhibited in this dialect as shown in table (6) below.

Table (6) Subject Dependent Pronouns Suffixes (imperfect aspect)

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1	-	*-(ū)h*	-
2m	-		*-(a)m*
2f	*-ī/ay*		*-(a)n*
3m	-		*-(i)m*
3f	-		*-(a)n*

As an example, one can consider the independent pronouns + verb + dependent subject pronouns in the imperfect aspect of the verb "to dress". as shown in table (7) below.

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Table (7) verb + dependent subject pronouns in the imperfect aspect of the verb "to dress"

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1	*albūs* I am dressing	*ðalbis**ūh*** we are dressing	*nalbūs* we are dressing
2m	*Talbūs* You are dressing	*talbis**ūh*** You are dressing	*talbīs**am*** You are dressing
2f	*Talbays**ī*** You are dressing		*Talbūsa**n*** You are dressing
3m	*yilbūs* He is dressing	*ðiyilbs**ūh*** They are dressing	*ðiyilbīsi**m*** They are dressing
3f	*talbūs* She is dressing		*talbūsa**n*** They are dressing

Dependent Subject Pronouns suffixes (Imperative)

There are four dependent pronouns used in the imperative, as shown below:

Table (8) Subject Dependent Pronouns Suffixes (imperative)

	Singular	Dual	Plural
2m	-	*ūh-*	*am-*
2f	*i-*		*an-*

As an example, consider the verb + dependent pronoun for the verb "to dress" in the imperative. as shown in table (9) below.

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Table (9) verb + dependent subject pronouns in the verb "to dress" in the imperative

	Singular	Dual	Plural
2m	*lbūs*	*lbis**ūh***	*lbīs**am***
2f	*ilbays**ī***		*lbūs**an***

Dependent Object Pronouns suffixes

Dependent object pronouns are suffixes attached to the verb to function as objects, or to the noun to function as possessive pronouns, or to preposition to function as objects to prepositions . Rubin (2010) referred to them as suffixed pronouns. This variety of Mehri exhibits dual dependent object pronouns, including dual verbal subject/object pronouns, which is also the case in both Mehreyyet in Oman and Mahriyōt in Eastern Yemen. as shown in table (10) below.

Table (10) Dependent Object Pronouns

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1	*ī /ay-*	*kī-*	*a/i)n)-*
2m	*i)k)-*		*kim-*
2f	*i)š)-*		*kin-*
3m	*a)h)-*	*hī-*	*him-*
3f	*a)s)-*		*sin-*

These pronouns used as, for example, possessive pronouns, as in ġerfētī "my room", as shown in table (11).

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Table (11) Possessive Pronouns ġarfēt "room"

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1	*ġerfētī* My room	*ġerfat**ki*** Our room	*ġerfētan* Our room
2m	*ġarfat**k*** Your room	*ġerfat**ki*** You room	*ġarfat**kim*** You room
2f	*ġarfat**š*** Your room		*ġarfat**kin*** Your room
3m	*ġarfata**h*** His room	*ġarfat**hi*** Their room	*ġarfat**him*** Their room
3f	*ġarfat**s*** Her room		*ġarfat**sin*** Their room

As suffixes, they are also used as objects of preposition as "with" in a sentence as šay "with me" as shown in table (12).

Table (12) Objects of the preposition ša "with"

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1	*š**ay*** With me	*ši**ki*** With us	*š**īn*** With us
2m	*š**ūk*** With you	*š**īki*** With you	*š**īkim*** With you
2f	*š**ayš*** With you		*š**īkin*** With you
3m	*š**īh*** With him	*š**īhi*** With them	*š**īhim*** With them
3f	*š**īs*** With her		*š**īsin*** With them

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Conclusion:

The Mehri used in Dammam which is one of the six endangered languages spoken in southern Arabia has been noted for its retention of Semitic phonological and grammatical features. Morphologically, it exhibits independent and dependent personal pronouns. These pronouns have the same morphological categories of number and gender as nouns, as well as a three-way grammatical person distinction. Personal pronouns are independent where they function as subjects; and dependent where they attach to verbs or nouns and function as subjects, objects, or determiner. They indicate number, gender, and person.

Similar to Mehreyyet in Oman and the Mehri spoken in western Yemen, but unlike Mahriyōt, the Mehri used in Dammam does not distinguish the second person singular independent pronouns by gender. Moreover, this dialect exhibits dual pronouns, including dual verbal subject pronouns, which is what has been found in both Mehreyyet and Mahriyōt (Watson 2012: 66, 68; Alfadly 2007:220; Simeone-Senelle 1997:401, 2013:5). Dual pronouns are not exhibited in the Mehri of western Yemen (Watson, 2012:65).

In the Mehri used in Dammam, dependent pronouns attach to verbs or nouns in a similar fashion to Arabic. They function as subject, object, or determiner. Object pronouns attach to verbs, nouns, and particles. Subject pronouns attach as prefixes and suffixes to verbs in both the perfect aspect and the imperfect aspect. The perfect is inflected by subject pronoun suffixes. Syncretism between 3ms and 3fpl is exhibited in the variety of Mehri used in Dammam as well as in Omani and Yemeni Mehri. The imperfect is inflected by person–gender prefixes and number suffixes. The dual takes a common second person in this variety of Mehri, which is similar to the findings of Watson (2012) in relation to both Mahriyōt and Mehreyyet. In the plural, syncretism is exhibited between 3fpl and 2fpl. In the

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imperfect aspect, the suffix 2fs is exhibited in this dialect and the dual pronouns are common across first, second, and third persons. 1p is not exhibited in this case. Dependent pronouns function as object pronouns, possessive pronouns and objects of preposition. For the dual grammatical number, no distinction is made between the first and second person, which is also the case for both Mehreyyet and Mahriyōt.

We should mention here that during collecting the data, some younger speakers had to refer to older speakers for confirmation. This is, indeed, shows how some pronouns are being lost among younger speakers. Further sociolinguistic studies are needed to examine and document the changes occurring within the speech community.

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الضمائر الشخصية للغة المهرية المستخدمة في السعودية: توثيق صفات مهددة بالانقراض

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الدمام - المملكة العربية السعودية

ملخص البحث:

المهرية هي واحدة من ست لغات عربية جنوبية حديثة مستخدمة في جنوب شبه الجزيرة العربية. وقد لوحظ احتفاظ هذه اللغات بالصفات الصوتية والنحوية السامية التي اختفت من اللغات السامية الأخرى. تستخدم اللغة المهرية في عمان، واليمن، وفي أجزاء من جنوب وشرق المملكة العربية السعودية، وبعض دول الخليج. وتصنف اللغة المهرية من لدن اليونسكو على أنها بالتأكيد معرضة للانقراض. هناك بعض الدراسات السابقة عن المهرية المستخدمة بعمان واليمن ولكن لا يوجد دراسات عن المهرية المستخدمة بالمملكة العربية السعودية. وعلى المستوى الصرفي، فاللهجات في المهرية تختلف فيما بينها. فالمهرية اليمنية الشرقية والتي تعرف بالمهريوت تتميز بوجود فرق بين المذكر والمؤنث للضمير المفرد المخاطب. بينما المهرية العمانية والتي تعرف بالمهرييت والمهرية اليمنية الغربية لا يوجد بها هذه الفروق. كما أن المهريوت و المهرييت تختلف عن المهرية اليمنية الغربية في أنها تفرق بين صيغ الضمائر والأفعال المثناة. وهذه الدراسة تبحث في علامات العدد والجنس في الضمائر المتصلة والمنفصلة في المهرية المستخدمة في شرقي المملكة العربية السعودية. لعمل هذه الدراسة، تم تسجيل (12) ساعة خلال مقابلات مقننة تمت مع (11) شخصاً يتكلمون اللغة المهرية كلغة أولى. يعد بعض المشاركين من المهاجرين الأولين ممن نزحوا من الربع الخالي الى الدمام بالمنطقة الشرقية من المملكة العربية السعودية والبعض الآخر من الجيل الأول الذين ولدوا وترعرعوا بالدمام.

الكلمات الدالة: المهرية، الضمائر، المثنى، اللغات المهددة بالانقراض، اللغات العربية الجنوبية الحديثة.

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