



## THE SITUATION OF ARABIC LANGUAGE IN AWEIL TOWN IN SOUTH SUDAN AT THE DAWN OF THE SECESSION

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**Abstract-** This paper aims at exploring the situation of Arabic language in Aweil Town, South Sudan. It focuses on the use of Arabic language in different domains: home, public domains and folklore. The use of Arabic is investigated according to a number of independent demographic variables, including, age, gender, and level of education, and it is examined among the three generations. The study uses the descriptive-analytical method. It essentially rests on primary data collected through a questionnaire and in-depth interviews in 2009-2010; the questionnaire includes nineteen questions and is administered to 846 respondents while the in-depth interviews are carried out with 10 persons of different ages, jobs and ethnic backgrounds at Aweil. Descriptive statistics is used to describe the data. Univariate statistics is the initial data analysis. It consists of simple frequency distribution that shows the numbers and percentages of values of one variable. Bi- or multivariate methods as cross-tabulation is used when the relationship between two or more variables have to be estimated. The results of the study revealed that Arabic is used sometimes at home, public places and in storytelling and carries out some of the ethnic languages' functions. However, one cannot assume that the society is undergoing a tangible process of language change that may lead to language shift to Arabic as is the case in some regions of the Sudan (e.g. the Nuba Mountains); this is especially after the secession of the South Sudan in 2011.

**Keywords:** language behaviour, language use, Arabicization

### I. INTRODUCTION

From its introduction during the Turco-Egyptian rule of the Sudan (1821-1882) to the signature of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, Arabic has continued to spread steadily in South Sudan despite the colonial policies to curtail its use, and the negative attitudes of southern elites towards it. Arabic has persisted owing to its role as the sole lingua franca that has been facilitating communication between ca. 10 different ethno-linguistic communities.

The secession of the South Sudan in 2011 and its emergence as an independent state ushered a new era in its history. This new situation is expected to negatively impact the spread of Arabic language in the newly born state and may even jeopardize its maintenance in the long run. Therefore, this paper endeavours to document the situation of this language in South Sudan at the dawn of its secession after ca. 175 years of its introduction and spread, taking its situation in Aweil Town in Bahr el-Ghazal State as an example. The data on which the paper is based may also serve as basic source of information against which change in Arabic language situation in the independent state of South Sudan can be investigated in future studies.

This paper is based on research data collected through a field language survey conducted in the area under study in 2009-2010. Therefore, the information provided below applies to the period between the signature of CPA (Comprehensive Peace Agreement, 2005) and the South Sudan secession/independence in 2011; i.e. five years after CPA and one year before the secession/independence.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>- However, as the data analysis was completed in 2014, comments are made here and there that relate to the period after the secession. In addition, the data of the present study have been updated till the present time through the co-researcher's observations during her visits to South Sudan (2011- 2017) and the many interviews conducted in both Juba and Khartoum.

It is to note that the paper is not concerned with the structural forms (pidgins/creoles) of Arabic as spoken in South Sudan; this is rather a sociolinguistic survey that deals with Arabic within the frame of its communicational functions, including its acquisition, degree of knowledge and use in different domains.

We are aware that surveys done in schools among students cannot be considered as a solid means of reflecting the reality of language uses, but still it provides some preliminary data that can be later on checked with anthropological participants' observation and it reflects people's language ideology, at least the explicit one. In addition, the situation in South Sudan was politically sensitive and it was not safe for the researchers, and in most cases the people there were skeptic and conservative, especially at the beginning of the data collection; so, for many reasons schools were so far the only suitable choice.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodology tackles pre-field preparation, data collection and data management. It includes description of the tools used in collecting the data: a questionnaire and an interview.

### Study design

Descriptive, cross-sectional school-based and analytical study is the design of this research.<sup>2</sup>

### Sampling technique and size

Stratified cluster<sup>3</sup> sampling method is used in the present study. The sample size is calculated according to the following equation:

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq * deff}{d^2}$$

$$n^4 = (1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5 \times 2 = 768$$

$$(0.05)^2 \text{-----}$$

The sample size will be increased by 10% for non-response, so the sample size will be:

$$n = 768 \times 10\% = 846.$$

### Sample selection

The inclusion criterion for the study is students of age group 7-25 years.

### Tools of data collection

This includes the setup of groups that aided the researchers in collecting the data, the equipment and the techniques they followed; besides, the structured interviews taken by the investigator, the focus group discussion and participant observation (Babiker 2001).

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<sup>2</sup>- Descriptive study involves the systematic collection and presentation of data to give a clear picture of a particular situation. Survey is an investigation aiming at describing accurately the characteristics of a population for specific variables. Surveys are categorized as cross-sectional or longitudinal, depending on the time/period covered by the observations. A cross-sectional survey provides information about the situation that exists at a single time (*Manual* 2003: 27-39).

<sup>3</sup>- Stratification is a process of grouping members of the population into relatively homogenous sub-groups (stratum) before sampling; the strata should be mutually exclusive. This method improves the representativeness of the sample by reducing sampling error. Cluster is the group of population elements constituting the sampling unit instead of a single element of the population (Cochran 1977).

<sup>4</sup>- n: the desired sample size. z: 1.96 (95% confidence level under the normal curve). P= 0.5 (proportion of students who has language shift from mother language to Arabic language). q: 1-p = 0.5 (proportion of students who have no shift from mother language to Arabic language).d: 5% (the desired marginal error, i.e. the degree of accuracy desired).deff = 2(design effect).

## Questionnaire

The questionnaire was drafted in both Arabic and English.

### The interview

Interview was administered to ten people, including both sexes. Their ages ranged from seventeen to over eighty years. Their educational backgrounds varied from illiterate to university level.

## III. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents data for the frequency of the use of Arabic language in different domains. Investigating the domains of language use is significant for the information it provides on the role played by language in people's day-to-day communication. The first sub-section presents the use of Arabic language by respondents and their family member at home.

### 3.1 The use of Arabic at home

In the situations of ongoing language shift, the home is the last domain in which the conflict between the spreading and receding languages is introduced. Therefore, language use at home becomes an important indicator of the current tendencies and direction of language shift. Studying the use of Arabic by respondents and their family members at home is important. It may provide insights into the situation of the Arabic language. The use of Arabic at home is examined among three generations: younger brothers and sisters (children), elder brothers and sisters (youth), parents and grandparents (old). The starting point will be its use by respondents at home.

#### 3.1.1. The use of Arabic by respondents and their family members most of the time at home

The use of Arabic by respondents with their family members at home is described in the following paragraphs. The question concerning the use of Arabic by respondents with their family members at home can be phrased as follows:

How often you and your family members speak Arabic at home?

1. Most of the time [ ] 2. Not used [ ]

Table 1 below provides information on the use of Arabic by respondents and their families most of the time at home.

**Table 1:** The use of Arabic at home

Generations		Arabic	Not used	Total
Respondents	Frequency (F)	96	750	846
	Percentage (%)	11.3	88.7	100
Younger brothers and sisters (children)	Frequency (F)	120	726	846
	Percentage (%)	14.2	85.8	100
Elder brothers and sisters (youth)	Frequency (F)	182	664	846
	Percentage (%)	21.5	74.5	100
Parents (adults)	Frequency (F)	144	702	846

	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	17.1	82.9	<b>100</b>
<b>Grandparents (adults)</b>	<b>Frequency (F)</b>	69	777	<b>846</b>
	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	8.1	91.8	<b>100</b>

Table 1 shows that the majority of the respondents (88.7%): children (85.8%), youth (74.5%), parents (82.9%), and grandparents (91.8%) do not use Arabic most of the time at home. This limited use of Arabic in the home domain by the respondents and their family members suggests that Arabic does not assume a significant role in inter-family communication. However, Arabic is limitedly introduced in the home domain. This result supports a fact that there is no indicator of a language change in the concerned society, in accordance with Maḥmūd's assumption (1983:120). The step of language change, which is a step towards language shift, is identified in this assumption by the language pattern: vernacular plus Arabic. But the shift, according to this claim, would be the least in the present study compared with the studies in Sudan. It is found that an exclusive use of Arabic or bilingualism in an ethnic language and Arabic at home is evident among the speakers of Sudanese local languages in most of the studies conducted in the Sudan (see Nashid 2014: 112-166).

Shift towards Southern Sudanese Pidgin-Creole Arabic is not revealed in this study. This may be due to many reasons, among which is the growing negative attitude towards it as noted by Nashid (2014). This is while Juba Arabic in Greater Equatoria has gradually begun to be acquired as a first language; it has long been a vehicular medium widely used in inter-ethnic exchanges as found out by Manfredi and Petrollino (2012: 55). It became an important linguistic means for expressing a new super-tribal South Sudanese identity (see Miller 1991: 159, cited in Manfredi and Petrollino 2012: 55). According to Batibo (2013), although Arabic was seemingly imposed in South Sudan, the emergence of Juba Arabic could be seen not as a liability, but an asset. He (1992, cited in Batibo 2013:113) also added that efforts could be made to develop Juba Arabic and empower it to be an effective *lingua franca* in the country and be owned by the speakers as a re-born indigenous language.

Table 1 above shows that Arabic is used only by 21.5% of the 815 South Sudanese elder brothers and sisters (youth). Although 21.5% is a low percentage compared with other Sudanese groups, it is the highest one within South Sudanese ethnic group. This finding contradicts what is stated by Mugaddam (2002: 141) in his study of ethnic minority groups in Khartoum that "[...] the Southern youth have shown the strongest resistance to the process of language shift". May be, this resistance was necessary because it was their means of maintaining their identity, culture and heritage in the Arabic-speaking community (of Khartoum) and is also related to their negative attitudes towards Arabic language. When they returned to their homeland, they found themselves free to use this language without fear of losing their identity. Besides, 66.1% (559/846) of the respondents were IDPs, mainly in Sudan and, about 29.4% (219/846) of them were born outside South Sudan, also mainly in Sudan.

The influence of ethnic origin on the respondents' language use at home is shown in the following Table:

**Table 2:** The use of Arabic language or SSL+ Arabic by respondents at home most of the time according to ethnic origin

<b>Language patterns</b>		<b>Ethnic origin</b>				
		<b>South Sudanese</b>	<b>Sudanese immigrants</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Not used</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Arabic</b>	<b>F</b>	63	15	<b>78</b>	<b>768</b>	<b>846</b>
	<b>%</b>	7.4	1.8	<b>9.2</b>	<b>90.8</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>SSL<sup>5+</sup> Arabic</b>	<b>F</b>	3	10	<b>13</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>846</b>
	<b>%</b>	0.3	1.2	<b>1.5</b>	<b>98.5</b>	<b>100</b>

Ethnic groups behave differently in respect with the use of Arabic language most of the time at home; 'Arabic alone' is the pattern used most of the time by only 7.7% (63/815) of the South Sudanese respondents, and 44.1%(15/34) of the Sudanese immigrants. For South Sudanese, this could be considered as an indicator of MT maintenance which is supported by many of the studies on Southern Sudanese migrants at Khartoum. The use of mother tongue (MT) at home is preferred by a group with a highly ethno-linguistic vitality as stated by Rasinger (2003). Half of the Sudanese immigrants use Arabic, which could be their first language (L1) or MT.

The following table shows the influence of both sex and age on the use of Arabic language by respondents most of the time at home.

**Table 3:** Respondents who use Arabic most of the time at home according to sex and age

Language patterns	Sex	Age groups			Total		Not used		Total
		<12	12-18	19-25	F	%	F	%	
Arabic	Male	11(1.9%)	27(4.9%)	12(2.2%)	50	9.1	501	90.9	551 (100%)
	Female	1(0.3%)	19(6.4%)	8(2.7%)	28	9.5	267	90.5	295 (100%)
	Total	12(1.4%)	46(5.4%)	20(2.4%)	78	9.2	768	90.8	846 (100%)
SSL+ Arabic	Male	1(0.2%)	3(0.6%)	9(1.6%)	13	1.5	538	97.6	551 (100%)
	Female	0	1(0.3%)	1(0.3%)	2	0.2	293	99.3	295 (100%)
	Total	1(0.1%)	4(0.5%)	10(1.2%)	15	1.7	831	98.3	846 (100%)

<sup>5</sup> SSL: stands for Southern Sudanese Languages.

Males, females and age groups are not equally represented in the study sample. Males represent 65.1% (551/846) and females represent 34.9% (295/846). About 90.9% (501/551) of the male respondents and 90.5% (267/295) of the female respondents do not use Arabic language at home. Thus, there is no difference according to gender. However, males use SSL and Arabic to a slightly higher degree (11.4% and 10.2% of each gender, respectively).

With regard to age groups, the number of respondents in the less than 12-year age-group represents only 5.2% (44/846) of the total number of the respondents. Otherwise, the majority of the respondents (71.9%, 473/846) fall within the 12-18 age-group. The remaining 38.9% (329) fall within the age group 19-25. All age-groups were recorded in the primary schools. This reflects the unlimited minimum age for enrollment in school, on the one hand, and the socioeconomic circumstances that make people keep continuously registering and dropping out at all age levels, on the other hand. Males of the age-group 12-18 use South Sudanese language and Arabic more than their female counterparts.

The effect of level of education and father's occupation on the use of Arabic language by respondents most of the time at home is presented in the following Table.

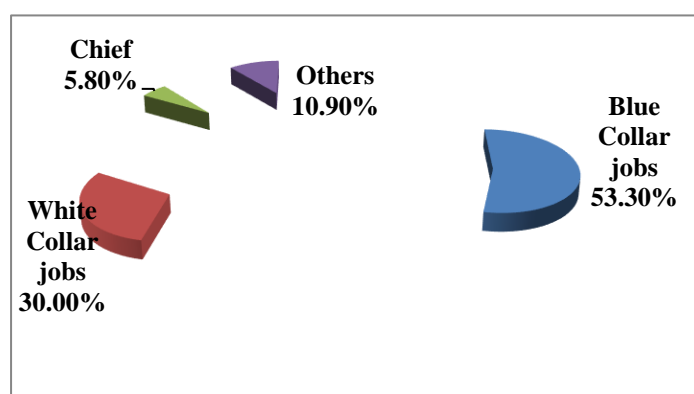
**Table 4:** The use of Arabic most of the time at home by respondents' family members according to ethnic origin and father's occupation

Generations	Ethnic origin	Father's occupation				Total		Not- used		Total
		Blue Collar jobs	White Collar jobs	Chief	Others	F	%	F	%	
Younger brothers and sisters (children)	South Sudanese	29	50	4	12	95	13.3	720	88.4	815 (96.3%)
	Sudanese immigrants	13	7	0	1	24	77.4	7	22.6	31 (3.7%)
Elder brothers and sisters (youth)	South Sudanese	51	72	7	19	149	17.9	666	81.7	815 (96.3%)
	Sudanese immigrants	12	10	1	3	26	83.9	5	16.1	31 (3.7%)
Parents (adults)	South Sudanese	18	17	1	8	44	5.4	771	94.6	815 (96.3%)
	Sudanese immigrants	8	5	0	4	17	54.8	14	45.2	31 (3.7%)

Respondents reported 41 jobs as their fathers' occupations. Jobs are categorized into blue collar jobs, white collar jobs, chief and others,<sup>6</sup>as shown in the following figure:

<sup>6</sup>The blue-collar job category includes blacksmith, carpenter, cattle/cow keeper, cultivator, driver, farmer, shop keeper, trader, worker and businessman. The white-collar job category includes account manager, administrative officer, airport officer, director of the ministry of education, employee, engineer, head trade committee,

**Figure 1: Father's occupation**



As shown in Figure 1 above, 53.3% (451/846) of the respondents' father's occupation falls within the 'blue-collar jobs' category. The main jobs included within this category are 'farmer' and 'cattle/cow keeper'. This high percentage reflects the topographic characteristics of the study area, in which the main economic activities of its inhabitants are agriculture and animals' raising. In addition, the majority of the Sudanese immigrants are found within this category and this may be due to that it includes 'trader' (representing 27.6% of the blue-collar jobs and 8.3% of total). It is the job practiced by most of the Sudanese immigrants.

As far as father's occupation is concerned, the use of Arabic language is found to be more frequent among South Sudanese children, youth, and adults with fathers belonging to white collar jobs, which indicates the influence of parent's occupation on people's language behaviour. Arabic was the language of administration before South Sudanese independence in 2011, now it is replaced by English. Therefore, one can argue that English, which is the official language of the country, language of education and administration, will assume a great role in the sociopolitical life of South Sudan. Arabic language will be negatively affected by the South Sudan's new language policy after its secession.

Generally, we notice that the Sudanese immigrant ethnic groups use Arabic so frequently at home most of the time (77.4% (24/31) with younger brothers and sister; 83.9% (26/31) with elder brothers and sisters; and 54.8% (17/31) with parents), which is most probably due to the fact that they already spoke Arabic before coming to Aweil. But the question: Why do they speak Arabic with their parents less frequently than they do with their brothers and sisters? This may be due to the fact that the mothers of more than 58% (16/31) of the Sudanese immigrants are South Sudanese.

The use of Arabic language at home being presented, the following part includes representation of language use in public domains.

### **3.2 The use of Arabic language in public domains**

The question on the use of Arabic language in public domains aims at identifying the extent of Arabic language use at workplaces, schools, streets, marketplaces, and government offices. The question is general, and it is explained to respondents. It would be better to ask several questions on its use in each place separately, but the questionnaire would become too extensive. In addition, it is sufficient for the aim and scope of the study to ask such a general question. The replies of the respondents on the use of Arabic by the respondents and their family members in public domains are shown in Table 6 below.

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journalist, judge, *mamuur*, manager, member of SPLA (Sudan People Liberation Army), military staff, minister, nurse, officer, physician, police, politician, professional staff, soldier and teacher. Chief category includes chief, court chief, ex-chief, goal leader, sub-chief and *sultan*. Others category includes student, unemployed/ jobless and the dead.

**Table 5:** The use of Arabic by respondents and their family members in public domains<sup>7</sup>

Frequency		Arabic	Dinka+ Arabic	Arabic+ English	Total	Notused	Total
<b>Most of the time</b>	<b>F</b>	170	8	3	<b>181</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>846</b>
	<b>%</b>	20.1	0.9	0.4	<b>21.4</b>	<b>78.6</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>F</b>	443	3	3	<b>449</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>846</b>
	<b>%</b>	52.4	0.4	0.4	<b>53.1</b>	<b>46.9</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>F</b>	139	13	3	<b>155</b>	<b>691</b>	<b>846</b>
	<b>%</b>	16.4	1.5	0.4	<b>18.3</b>	<b>81.7</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents reported the use of Arabic by their family members at public domains: 21.4% most of the time, 53.1% sometimes and 18.3% occasionally. The dominance of MTs (especially Dinka) in public domains, as has been observed by the co-researcher, indicates the significant role it plays in intra-group communication. This is due to the demographic weight (dominance) of the Dinka in Aweil that enable them to communicate in Dinka in public domains.

South Sudanese are very conservative and tend to avoid contact with people outside their ethnic communities, as explained by Mugaddam (2002: 148) in his study of migrants in Khartoum. The result presented in Table 5 above differs from the findings of most of the studies conducted in Sudan (see Nashid 2014: 112-166) that found that Arabic is the most dominant language in public domains and is increasingly used by youth and outside home (Mugaddam 2002: 146-147). This is a clear indication of MT shift among Southern Sudanese young migrants in Khartoum with respect to the languages used in intra-group communication and it may be due to that Arabic dominates all domains of communication, as mentioned by Mugaddam (ibid). About 43.3% of the old Southern Sudanese migrants in Khartoum have their languages well represented in their language behaviour outside home and this indicates a strong resistance to MT shift among old generations (Mugaddam 2002: 147).

The use of Arabic language by the respondents' family members in public domains is examined in relation to ethnic origin and father's occupation in Table 6 below.

<sup>7</sup>The languages are calculated each time they are mentioned, as when Arabic, e.g., is mentioned in the three alternatives by the same respondents. Each alternative (most of the time, sometimes, and occasionally) is supposed to be 100% in the Table.



**Table 6:** The use of Arabic most of the time at public domains according to ethnic origin and father's occupation

Language patterns	Ethnic origin	Blue Collar jobs				Total		Not used		Total
		Blue Collar jobs	White Collar jobs	Chief	Others					
		F	%	F	%	F (%)				
Arabic	South Sudanese	57	66	4	22	149	18.3	666	81.7	815 (96.3%)
	Sudanese immigrants	13	6	1	1	21	67.7	10	32.3	31 (3.7%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>79.9</b>	<b>846 (100%)</b>
SSL+ Arabic	South Sudanese	6	5	0	0	11	1.3	804	98.6	815 (96.3%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>76</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>78.6</b>	<b>846 (100%)</b>

As shown in Table 6 above, Arabic is used most of the time in public domains by only 20.1% (170/815) respondents' family members. It is used by 18.3% (149/815) of the South Sudanese ethnic groups. Relating the use of Arabic language in public domains with parent's occupation reveals that 'Chief' is the least occupational group in the use of Arabic at public domains by its family members. In the contrary, 'white collar jobs' is the group among which the highest degree of use of Arabic (and English) in public domains is obtained. This may be due to the nature of their parents' jobs which requires knowledge of both Arabic and English. Arabic was the official language of Southern Sudan before 2005 and it is English at the present time. One can assume that there will be an increasing use of English since it is one of their jobs' requirements, the country's official language, and the language of education and administration.

To sum up, the use of Arabic most of the time in public domain is more frequent among family members with 'white collar jobs' fathers. Besides, it is the occupational group with the least use of South Sudanese language in public domains by its family members. One can assume that South Sudanese languages are used for communication in public domains when communicating with people who belong to the same ethnic group and Arabic is used in inter-group communication. Besides, English is used in government offices.

The role played by residential areas on language use at public domains is shown in Table 7 below.

**Table 7:** The use of Arabic in public domains most of the time by respondents' family members according to the family's residential area

Language patterns	Family residential area		Used		Not used		Total
	Inside Aweil	Outside Aweil	F	%	F	%	
			F (%)				
Arabic	139	31	170	20.2	670	79.8	846 (100)
South Sudanese Language + Arabic	4	7	11	1.3	835	98.7	846 (100)

About 80.6% (682/846) of the respondents live inside Aweil Town<sup>8</sup> and the remaining 19.4% (164/846) reported their residence outside Aweil Town. Family residential areas may be among the factors affecting language use at public domains, i.e. urban-rural dichotomy. In this context the expression inside Aweil is used to denote urban areas and outside Aweil is used to denote rural areas.

Our data revealed that, Arabic alone is used in public domains by 20.4% of respondents and members of their families living inside Aweil Town, whereas it is used in the same context by 18.9% of respondents and members of their families living outside Aweil Town. The above difference is too small to be easily acceptable, as Arabic is expected to be far more used in urban than in rural contexts. This is unless 'outside Aweil' is understood by the respondents to stand for the town's outskirts and not distant villages; in fact, one can hardly expect the pupils to trek daily from distant villages to attend school in Aweil Town. If this assumption holds, the above small difference matches well with the small difference of sociolinguistic milieus between the town and its outskirts.

However, when reverting to the percentages of Arabic use in combination with South Sudanese languages in public domains in the two contexts (urban/rural), we come out with the logically acceptable result: Outside Aweil, up to 22.6% of its residents use Arabic in combination with South Sudanese languages in public domains, whereas inside Aweil only 0.6% of its residents use Arabic in combination with South Sudanese languages in the same context, which means that South Sudanese languages are far more used in public domains outside than inside Aweil Town.

The use of Arabic language by parents and grandparents in storytelling are presented in the following subsection.

### 3.3 The use of Arabic language in storytelling

Folklore genres (folktales, songs, etc.) are the most resistant domain to language change. They are mostly performed in the MT, since they are verbal arts in which language is interwoven into their very fabric. A new language can be introduced to this domain if it is increasingly used in the home domain. When this language reaches a high level of linguistic complexity to become part of the traditional verbal arts, it replaces ethnic language as the vehicle of performance of verbal arts (Mahmud 1983: 104).

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<sup>8</sup> Only 11.6% (79/682) of the respondents reported their residence in some of the 19 neighborhoods or 'hay' of Aweil Town. The remaining 88.4% (540/846) of the 80.6% (682/846) mentioned 'Aweil' as their place of residence and this may include areas at the peripheries or areas belonging to other Counties.

The use of Arabic language by respondents' parents and grandparents to tell stories to children is presented in the following Table.

**Table 8:** The use of Arabic by parents and grandparents in storytelling<sup>9</sup>

Frequency		Arabic	Dinka+ Arabic	Arabic+ English	Total	Notused	Total
Most of the time	F	61	3	1	65	781	846
	%	7.2	0.4	0.1	7.7	92.3	100
Sometimes	F	320	1	1	322	524	846
	%	37.8	0.1	0.1	38.1	61.9	100
Occasionally	F	113	8	2	123	723	846
	%	13.4	0.9	0.2	14.3	85.5	100

Respondents reported the following use of Arabic in storytelling by their parents and grandparents: 7.7% most of the time, 38.1% sometimes and 14.3% occasionally as shown in Table 8. Let us assume that all the Sudanese (originally Arabic speaking) immigrants use Arabic in storytelling; these immigrants constitute only 4% (34/846) of the total sample of this study. If they are deducted from the above figures, still we find that 3.7% of the Southern Sudanese use Arabic most of the time in storytelling; 34.1% of them use it sometimes; and 9.4% use it occasionally. However, Dinka is the most dominant language used in storytelling as expressed by interviewees and observed by the researchers during their stay in Aweil (2009-2010). This result indicates that Dinka language plays a significant role in carrying South Sudanese folklore and shows resistance to MT shift. However, both Arabic and English find their way to South Sudanese folklore genres. The penetration of Southern Sudanese Pidgin-Creole Arabic into this domain of language use, as assumed by Maḥmūd (1985: 127), is due to that these Arabic varieties have reached a high level of linguistic complexity to become part of the traditional verbal arts due to its spread in the home domain. Therefore, Southern Sudanese have to make use of these Arabic varieties in order to overcome the limitation of vernaculars in expressing the ethno-linguistic diversity of Southern Sudan (ibid). In addition, the use of these Arabic varieties to carry Southern Sudanese folklore may be seen as a means of achieving national cohesion by supporting common public knowledge as argued by Maḥmūd (1985: 128). His claim is based on the role played by folklore in creating cohesive national feelings as a result of having a lot in common and also based on the universality of human cultural experience. Although Arabic is introduced to this domain of language use, one cannot assume that Maḥmūd's assumption can be true in the area under study since a South Sudanese language (Dinka) appears to play this role and the use of Arabic is relatively limited. The languages used by parents and grandparents in telling stories to children are shown in the following Table in relation to ethnic origin:

<sup>9</sup>The languages are calculated each time they are mentioned, as when Arabic, e.g., is mentioned in the three alternatives by the same respondents. Each alternative (most of the time, sometimes, and occasionally) is supposed to be 100% in the Table.

**Table 9:** The use of Arabic by respondents' parents and grandparents in storytelling according to ethnic origin

Language patterns	Ethnic origin		Total		Not used		Total
	South Sudanese	Sudanese immigrants					
			F	%	F	%	F (%)
Arabic	44	17	61	7.2	785	92.8	846 (100)
Arabic+ European Language	1	1	1	0.1	845	99.9	846 (100)
Southern Sudanese Language+ Arabic+ European Language	2	2	2	0.2	844	99.8	846 (100)
South Sudanese Language+ Arabic	4	0	4	0.5	842	99.5	846 (100)

As shown in the Table 9 above, Arabic is used exclusively or in combination with other languages in the storytelling by only 8% of parents and grandparents in the total sample. In more details, 5.4% (44/815) of South Sudanese children are told folktales in Arabic, 0.5% (4/815) in European language and 0.9% (7/815) in South Sudanese language in combination with Arabic and European language. Besides, it is used alone or in a combination with other languages by 58.8% (20/34) of the Sudanese immigrants in storytelling.

#### IV. RESULTS

The use of Arabic is examined among respondents at home, and among respondents' younger brothers and sisters, elder brothers and sisters, parents and grandparents at home. The study also examined the use of Arabic by the respondents' family members in public domains and in storytelling. Some of the findings are reduced as follows:

- Arabic does not assume an important role in inter-family communication; it is used in the home domain by only a few respondents (9.2%) most of the time as shown in Table 2.
- Table 3 and Table 4 show that respondents' demographic characteristics (e.g. age, sex and ethnic origin) appear to have effect on the respondents' use of Arabic at home.
- South Sudanese ethnic groups use Arabic at home the least compared to other groups. Arabic is used at home by half of the immigrant ethnic groups as Table 5 shows.
- The most dominant pattern of Arabic use most of the time at home is monolingualism, since Arabic in combination with SSL is used much less (Table 2). The use of more than one language (Arabic + SSL) is reported more frequently among the males of age groups 19-25 (Table 4).
- As far as father's occupation is concerned, the use of Arabic and a European language is found to be more frequent among children with white collar jobs' fathers, which indicates the influence of parent's occupation on the individual's language behavior as shown in Table 4.
- South Sudanese grandparents are the group that use Arabic at home the least (Table 4).

- Table 6 shows that the use of Arabic and a European language at public domains is more frequent among family members with 'white collar jobs' fathers, which is the occupational group that use a South Sudanese language the least in public domains by its family members. In addition, it is the group among which the highest degree of use of both Arabic and a European language in public domains is obtained.
- Arabic alone is used in public domains inside and outside Aweil at almost equal rates, but it is used in combination with South Sudanese languages more outside than inside Aweil (Table 7).
- Some South Sudanese children are told folktales in Arabic and a European language. The mere fact that these children are told stories in Arabic indicates that this language has penetrated into a domain that is, otherwise, exclusive to mother tongues (i.e. the vernaculars) as Table 9 shows.

When the results of the present study are compared with the results of the two studies conducted in Southern Sudan (i.e., Ismail and Mahmud (1978); Mahmud (1983)), five studies conducted among migrants in Khartoum (i.e., Miller and Abu-Manga (1992), Mugaddam (2002), Idris (2007), Jabr al-Dār (2009) and Jāhallah (2012)), and studies conducted in different areas in the Sudan (e.g., Jernudd (1979), Sid-Ahmad (1979), Zumrawi (1980), Maḥmūd (1985), and Bell (1995)), one can conclude that:

The findings of the two linguistic surveys conducted by Ismail & Mahmud (1978) and Mahmud (1983) in Southern Sudan came up with many results. The reasons that contributed to the promotion and spread of Arabic as a *lingua franca* in Deim Zubair (Ismail and Mahmud 1978) were migration, the contact with Islamized groups of Darfur, education and the status of Arabic as a resource for educational, economic, and, ultimately, social mobility and political advancement. In Juba (Mahmud 1983), the spread of Arabic occurred as a result of structural socio-economic transformation in the pre-existing modes of production and not as a consequence of mere contact between different social formations (Nashid 2014: 135-136). Among the factors which affected the use of Arabic in the present study are displacement, immigration, education and ethnic origin.

The studies on migrants in Khartoum showed that a majority of the Southern Sudanese migrants were bilingual, and the most common pattern was a local language plus Arabic. In addition, the studies indicated the Southern Sudanese proficiency in their ethnic languages. According to Idris (2007:169), most of the Southern Sudanese migrants in Khartoum were multilingual to a higher degree. This may be because of education, which leads to more knowledge of Arabic and English. For Miller and Abu-Manga (1992), the common pattern for 60% of the Southern Sudanese respondents was vernacular plus vernacular plus Arabic. This is confirmed by the result of the present study, in which knowledge of Arabic is 3.409 times higher for the displaced respondents than the non-displaced ones. So, the non-displaced ethnic groups are the groups that use Arabic the least at home, in public domains and in storytelling.

It seems that the comparison between the results of the studies conducted among the Southern Sudanese migrants at Khartoum and that of the present study may not be appropriate due to the different sociolinguistic milieus, but it is important for many reasons. There are no studies of such kind on the area under investigation; besides, as mentioned before, 66.1% (559/846) of the respondents were internally displaced people (IDP), who lived and/or were born in the Sudan; thus, some of them were migrants at Khartoum. The most dominant pattern of language use at home among migrants at Khartoum was the use of both Arabic and an ethnic language, as explained by Miller and Abu-Manga (1992), Idris (2007) and Jāhallah (2012) in his study at Māyo. The dominant pattern used by the children and youth respondents was vernacular plus Arabic and there was an exclusive use of vernacular by old generation respondents, as explained by Mugaddam (2002). For him, this result ensures that Southern Sudanese children and youth respondents have shown the strongest resistance to the process of language shift and the Southern Sudanese old migrants appears to be more committed to the use of their vernaculars. This may be due to their negative attitudes towards Arabic language and their desire to maintain their native languages as their means of maintaining their culture, heritage, and ethnic identities. This contradicts the result of the present study in which the highest use of Arabic is obtained among South Sudanese youth. To Jāhallah (2012), there was no exclusive use of vernacular among the three generations. This suggests that the rate of language shift increased since the last study by Idris (2007).

Many sociolinguistic surveys have been conducted in different areas in the Sudan: Abu-Manga (1978), Ismail and Mahmud (1978), Ismail (1978; 1984), Ismail (1978; 1984), Jernudd (1979), Sid-Ahmad (1979), Zumrawi (1980), Maḥmūd (1985), Bell (1995), Aḥmad (1996), Ṣāliḥ (1997), Ḥammād (1998), Jāhallah (2001; 2005; 2010; 2012), Idris (2007), Berair (2007 and 2010), Jabr al-Dār (2009), Mugaddam (2002; 2006), and Garri (2012). They came out with the result that the different ethno-linguistic groups in the Sudan have undergone a process of language shift mostly towards Arabic language and this is due to a

number of factors, among which is the Sudan language policies and planning, which encourage the spread of the Arabic language taking place at the expense of the Sudanese local languages. This contradicts with the result of the present study in Aweil Town: Arabic is the least used by South Sudanese ethnic groups at home, in public domains and storytelling. This is while Arabic is dominant at home, in public domains and in storytelling among Sudanese immigrant ethnic groups.

## V. CONCLUSION

As it is well known, the Pidgin form of Arabic has been functioning as a *lingua franca* for the entire South Sudan since the early decades of the last century after the failure of the colonial language policy (based on the Rejaf Conference, 1928) to develop a local language for that purpose. Yet, the present survey revealed that the degree of Arabic spread and use in Aweil Town is not that significant, not only at home but also in public domains. In fact, Arabic has lost grounds even among the immigrants from different parts of the Sudan other than South Sudan, who are expected to have acquired it before their immigration.

As mentioned earlier, the area under study witnessed decades of displacement affecting ca. two thirds of the respondents in the survey. The greater majority of these (or their parents or grandparents) were definitely displaced to the northern parts of the former unified Sudan and many of them grew up in a sociolinguistic milieu where Arabic dominates. But the results of the survey hardly reflect a significant positive effect of the returnees vis-à-vis the degree of Arabic use in the area under study, leave alone cases of language shift to Arabic. Is it because of the relatively ethnically homogeneous nature of the area, with the Dinka speakers constituting an overwhelming majority (not only in this area but in the entire South Sudan)? Is it because the Dinka are so proud of and loyal to their language and culture? Is it because of the negative attitude towards what they regard as imposed language and culture (i.e. Arabic), which was one of the drivers and results of the longest civil war in Africa? It may be a combination of all these factors.

Now, the civil war between the North and the South, in all its facets, has come to an end and South Sudan has designed its language policy independent of Arabic. But its displaced citizens are returning not only from the north but also from other neighboring countries, mainly Kenya and Uganda, some of them speaking the languages of these countries, thus, adding to the already existing big number of mutually unintelligible languages. Knowledge of English in South Sudan is confined to the educated elite. What will then be the public inter-group language in the newly born state of South Sudan? Is it another post-Rejaf Conference language problem that is reoccurring? Will the solution also be the same; i.e. persistence of Arabic by necessity? Otherwise, what can we understand by the suggestion made by Tabab Lo Liong concerning standardization of the Juba (Pidgin) form of Arabic, writing it in Roman script and adopting it as the language of South Sudan?

At the moment, we may describe the area under study as being in a linguistically transitional situation. It is expected to undergo a great linguistic change in the next two decades whose trajectory can run either in favour of Arabic or to its detriment.

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