PHD in Asian, African and Mediterranean Studies

LANGUAGE DOCUMENTATION OF HADRAMI DIASPORA COMMUNITIES IN INDONESIA

Scientific-disciplinary sector to which the project refers:

L-OR/21 - LINGUE E LETTERATURE DELLA CINA E DELL'ASIA SUD-ORIENTALE;
L-OR/12 - LINGUA E LETTERATURA ARABA

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July 7, 2021

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Abstract

This project is aimed at the documentation and description of the language spoken by the Hadrami Arab communities in Indonesia in the areas of Surabaya, Madura and Sumbawa, where an extensive use of both Indonesian-Malay and Hadrami Arabic is expected to be found. Hadrami Arabic is a poorly documented Old South Arabian language spoken by the people living in Hadramawt, now part of the Republic of Yemen. Following the Yemenite diaspora, this language has spread to the coasts of East Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia. Through the expertise of Professor Riccardo Contini on Hadrami Arabic and Professor Antonia Soriente's unparalleled research experience on linguistic documentation in Indonesia, the department of Asian, African and Mediterranean Studies at University of Naples "L'Orientale" would grant me with the research tools that this project demands.

Since the spreading of Islam, Hadrami Arabs have settled throughout the Indonesian Archipelago, however their presence rather intensified during the first half of the last century. The most recent data about the overall Hadrami population in Indonesia dates back to 1930 when De Jonge (2004) estimates the presence of 70,000 individuals. At the present time, large communities are found in Ambon, Jakarta, Bali, Lombok, Surabaya and Madura. Jacobsen (2009) attested the presence of 8000 individuals in the island of Sumbawa who show a certain level of bilingualism in local varieties of Indonesian-Malay and Hadrami Arabic. This group, along with the communities in the city of Surabaya and the island of Madura represent the focus of this project.

In recent Years, the revival of Political Islam in Indonesia and the armed conflict in Yemen have fostered academic interest on Hadrami communities across the world, in order to preserve their endangered cultural heritage. Nowadays, the debate on Hadrami Arabs in Indonesia is mainly focused on identity issues and covers a range of subjects such as Islamic roles, kinship networks, integration and renewed links to the homeland.

Scholarship on Hadrami Arabs has substantially proved the historical importance of this community in the Indonesian Archipelago and in the contemporary political dynamics of Indonesia. Yet there is little and contradictory information as to the language they speak. Some argue that Arabic is preserved just in family names (Istiqomah 2020), others state that this community presents a peculiar way of speaking Indonesian-Malay (Arai 2004; Athoillah 2018), and some others claim that Arabic is still used for interaction on a daily basis (Al-Saqqaf 2017). In conclusion, Scholarship on linguistic contact between Arabic and Indonesian has often pointed out the possible involvement of Arabic speakers from South Arabia to explain specific features of loanwords of Arabic origins in the Indonesian language (Van Dam 2010). Each of these views may prove to be correct, but all lack the solid linguistic evidence that this project intends to provide.

In this light, I aim to build a comprehensive visual, aural and written record of the language spoken by the Hadrami Arabs in Indonesia, through the methods of language documentation and the theoretical framework of Interactional Linguistics. The corpus will include both planned and unplanned speech events, in order to collect and describe the language within different contexts and genres ranging respectively from social gatherings and ceremonies, as well as collective and personal narratives. The language description system will be designed with the software Elan-CorpA and based on a template, that I developed, which allows two sets of tiers linked to the audio-visual data. The first set is dedicated to annotating comments, collection names and notes, whereas the second one is dedicated to participants' speech and includes tiers for the annotation of practical orthography, detailed translation, morpheme boundaries, interlinear gloss, literal translation and free translation. The corpus will be made available on *The Language Archive* database with approximately 15 hours of transcribed and analyzed recorded speech.

This PhD project, if granted, will contribute to shed light on many aspects of language change and variation which would form an important input to sociolinguistics, historical linguistics, general phonology and morphology. It will enrich the debate on the relation between heritage language and ethnicity by contributing to the documentation of Indonesia's language diversity. Ultimately, it will be of great value and impact for the legitimization of both Hadrami Arabs in Indonesia and Hadrami Arabs across the globe who are presently experiencing a moment of political uncertainty and military turmoil in their homeland.

1 State of the Art

The History of Hadrami Arabs has been studied mainly by historians and anthropologists who addressed the massive waves of migrations that led them to Europe, North America, the coasts of Africa and South East Asia (Ulrike Freitag and Clarence-Smith 1997; Ho 2006; Manger 2010).

In Indonesia they constitute one of largest non-native minorities, who identify themselves as Hadrami Arabs, *Orang Arab Indonesia* or *Orang Yaman*, consider Hadramawt their homeland and are mostly Sunni Muslims (Jacobsen 2009). Although, Hadrami Arabs had been travelling to what is today Indonesia since long before Europeans landed in the 16th and 17th centuries, the majority of the migrants arrived between the 19th and 20th centuries (Athoillah 2018; Bajudin 1996; De Jonge 2004). By 1930 the population's number was at 71,355, with 41,730 in Java and Madura, reaching approximately 80,000 by the time of the Japanese occupation (De Jonge 1997). In response, the Dutch colonial rule created special districts known as *Kampung Arab* (Arab districts) where *Orang Arab* still live today (Jacobsen 2009). As Mobini-Kesheh (1999) points out, they have had an active role in the promotion of Islam, through the construction of mosques and the institution of important religious associations such as *Jamʿiyyat al-Khayr* and *al-Irsyad*.

Studies on the Hadrami Arabs in present-day Indonesia cover a range of subjects which varies from Islamic roles (Clegg 2005), kinship networks (Hafizhah 2007), integration (Yasmine Zaki 2005b; 2005a) and renewed links to the homeland (Chalida 2005) but give us very little and contradictory information about the spoken language. Jacobsen (2009) analyzes aspects of religious syncretism and cultural integration in Bali, Surabaya, Lombok and Sumbawa. The author points out that the Hadramis did not fully assimilate to local societies and maintained some elements of a distinct cultural identity. Anyhow, his informants generally spoke Bahasa Indonesia to stress their national belonging to Indonesia, in contrast with non-Hadrami neighbours who spoke other local languages at home. Arai (2004) informs us about the composition and social stratification of the early Hadrami migrants up to the 1950s and states that this community presents a peculiar way of speaking Indonesian-Malay. Athoillah (2018) reports something similar about Hadrami Arabs in Jakarta speaking Malay or Betawi, with features perceived as markers of Hadramitic identity. Conversely, the ethnography by Istiqomah (2020) on the Hadrami Arabs of Ambon suggests that the Arabic language is only preserved in family names.

al-Saqqaf and Hayaze's contribution at the International Conference on the Dynamics of Hadramis in Indonesia stands out stating that Hadramis in Indonesia preserve their own variety of Arabic, although they speak local vernaculars. This is the only work that provides an insight of the integration of Hadrami Arabic in Indonesian-Malay utterances[1]. Nevertheless, the aforementioned literature is suffering the shortage of solid linguistic data that this project intends to provide.

Furthermore, the debate on the fate of Hadrami-descents' Arabic language reaches Historical Linguistics and scholarship on Arabic loanwords in Indonesian-Malay. Van Dam (2010) argues that the prevalence of loanwords derived from literary Arabic (3111 entries[2]) led to underestimate the influence of vernacular Arabic on the Indonesian language. The author further stresses that the strong standardization of the Indonesian language has obscured terms of clear colloquial origin such as: *yahana* (to pretend) probably derived from the Hadrami Arabic *yakhannuh*; kaʿal (penis) probably from the

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[1] E.g. (a)*Wallah iki sawak angel tenan* (Swear by the name of God this is **really** difficult!); (b)*Gahwe-nya ajib gile* (This **coffee** is really **amazing**); (c)*Kemarin ada orang di-gitil* (yesterday, there was someone **killed**); (d) *Hasan yang ngantar makanan ke baytak siapa?* (Hasan, who delivered the meal to **your house**?); (e) *Tadi ukhti ente yang antar.* ("It was **my sister** you who delivered)

[2] http://sealang.net/indonesia/dictionary.htm.

Hadrami Arabic *k'ˉal* (testicles) (Van Dam 2010)[3]. Al-Saqqaf (2009) argues that many other loanwords may betray Hadrami origins given the importance of Hadrami Arabs in Indonesia. On the debate about Hadrami-descents in Indonesia, views on the language seem to be very conflicting. Some argue that Arabic is preserved just in family names (Istiqomah 2020), others state that this community presents a peculiar way of speaking Indonesian-Malay (Arai 2004; Athoillah 2018) and some others claim that Arabic is still used for interaction on a daily basis (Al-Saqqaf 2017). Each of these views speculates without the solid linguistic evidence that this project intends to provide. In conclusion, a linguistic approach to the study of the Hadrami diaspora in Indonesia is needed to illuminate the subject in new ways.

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[3] The verb *yalamlam* ('the stage in the pilgrimage where the pilgrims assume the pilgrim's garb'), derived from the Yemeni colloquial Arabic verb *lamlam, yilamlim* 'to collect' is mentioned in (Stevens 2004)

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2   Project description

2.1   Primary focus of documentation

This project is intended to be a comprehensive documentation of the language spoken by Hadrami-descents in the areas of Surabaya, Madura and Sumbawa. It will embody a representative sample of communicative events recorded in natural settings, and annotated textual representations such as transcriptions and translations, along with ethnographic details of the speech context. In order to understand to what extent Arabic is used in inter-Hadrami interactions and whether we can talk of Indonesian-Malay varieties, I will be looking at phonetics, morphology and lexical aspects through the conventional means of language documentation's methodology. With regard to syntax and semantics I intend to rely on an Interactional Linguistics' perspective and the approach of Conversation Analysis, which take into account contextual, cultural and situational aspects of language in use. The project will be implemented on a database created with the integrated use of ELAN-CorpA and FLEx (FieldWorks Language Explorer) software, that permit to make queries and navigate textual representations linked to the audio and video recordings. As a comprehensive audio, visual and written record of speech events in daily interaction and gathering events, the output will be both a resource for researchers of any discipline of humanities and for those who wish to preserve, investigate and value Hadrami cultural heritage. In summary, this sort of documentation is thought to be essential, given the lack of linguistic data affecting research on Hadrami Arabs in Indonesia.

2.2   Data collection

During my BA and MA at University "L'Orientale", I had the opportunity to study and research in Indonesia in the areas of North Sulawesi, North Sumatra and North Kalimantan, for a period of six months each time. In fact, for my MA thesis research I collected data on verbal interaction in the island of Tarakan, North Kalimantan, Indonesia. On these occasions I found it striking how the Arabic language is used to evoke stances connected to a wide range of identities, not only religious, in many different contexts both formal and informal. Therefore, the project aims to investigate the language in a highly variety of genres, ranged along a continuum from unplanned to planned communicative events, which will require both elicitation and recording of natural speech events.

Elicitation will be carried out through interviews to collect identity narratives, events related to religious matters, market transactions and language of occupation. These collections will enable me to observe the emergence of specific vocabulary as well as to understand whether the language is associated with particular cultural aspects. Elicitation will include the use of "The Jackal and the Crow picture task" which represents an easy tool of comparison between different varieties for descriptive aims (Carroll, Kelly, and Gawne 2011). This task is widely used to compare Indonesian-Malay varieties and constitutes a way to record rich data about a wide range of categories relevant to psycho-social cognition.

Natural speech events will include everyday conversations in daily interaction such as family talks, conversations among friends, and formal talks such as speeches in gathering events. This kind of data is most valuable to this research because it will enable me to investigate the language used in the actual interaction allowing a more punctual description within the theoretical framework of Interactional Linguistics. However, collecting this kind of data is somehow controversial. To guarantee its validity a specific fieldwork experience is required. I intend to use the strategies developed during my MA thesis's

fieldwork which allowed me to collect data as more naturalistic as possible. These strategies consist of a combination of participant observation and non-invasive recording techniques. Among others, major precautions should be: (1) using very light recording equipment and deleting the first 15 minutes of the recording since it appears to be highly affected by the equipment, (2) asking and arranging informed consent and data collection schedule one or two days in advance, rather than right before the session, (3) participants will only be informed about the general aims of the research project in order for them not to perform any *stylisation* of specific features, (4) The ultimate but vital imperative of developing solidarity and complicity with each informant by taking part in social practices.

Since for Hadrami Arabic available documentation is deficient, in the data collection particular attention will be given to Hadrami proverbs and idiomatic expressions of politeness and impoliteness, both the focus of ethno-linguists for other Arabic varieties.

2.2.1 Data processing and analysis

The audio-visual recordings will be acquired in WAV format through a small voice recorder equipped with two high-fidelity microphones and digitized using the ELAN-CorpA software developed by the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics. ELAN-CorpA format allows to use what in Conversation Analysis is generally referred as "partiture transcription", which enables to take less analytical decisions compared to Jeffersonian-like ones. The text will be annotated and presented in a ELAN template that I developed during my Master thesis research. The template includes two sets of tiers and a total number of eight participants. In the first set, tiers are time-aligned to the audio and independent from one another. This set is dedicated to annotate comments, collection names and notes. The second set is allocated to participants and includes the following tiers: po (practical orthography), dt (detailed translation), mb (morpheme boundaries), gl (interlinear gloss); tl (literal translation), tf (free translation). Nevertheless, all transcriptions of natural speech events will also be converted into a Jeffersonian-like format for future publication which best suits printed editions. Ethnographic data will be digitized using FLEx (FieldWorks Language Explorer) software developed by SIL International. Furthermore, the overall data will be comprehensive of linguistic analysis, participants information, language situation, sociolinguistic context, and contextual comments. Ultimately, metadata will be generated using the IMDI Editor, developed by the ISLE Metadata Initiative, and stored in *The Language Archive* (TLA).

2.3 Theoretical framework

Interactional linguistics arose at the end of the twentieth century and is aimed specifically at the study of language in interaction. It distances itself from approaches that study language structures regardless of speakers' usage and that theorize *a priori* the forms that language should have. Interactional Linguistics embraces a broad spectrum of disciplines such as: discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and anthropological linguistics (Couper-Kuhlen and Selting 2001) encompassing scholars who, despite different approaches, share the idea that linguistic structures should be described starting from their function subservient to the social purposes of the spoken language. Interactional linguists use elements of Conversational Analysis which emphasizes the active role of speakers in the co-construction of structures and meanings in the unfolding of the conversation in real time. Recent studies on Indonesian-Malay vernaculars (Goebel, Cole, and Manns 2020; Ewing 2018; Djenar, Ewing, and Howard 2017) have demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach when looking at referentiality (e.g. subject, object and pronominal forms), syntactic structure and semantics. In conclusion, the study of vernacular

varieties requires such an approach in order not to follow into misleading pre-established categories that may overshadow aspects evident only through the analysis of data extrapolated from conversations.

2.4 Schedule of activities

The research agenda will include fieldwork activities for data collection and analysis consisting of fifteen hours of recording, the creation of searchable database through ELAN-CorpA, and finally the thesis writing. These activities will be carried out over a period of three years.

2.4.1 First year

With the help of *Menara study and research center of Arab descents in Indonesia* and Professor Al-Saqqaf from Dhofar University in Salalah, I have located and circumscribed the areas of interest in the *Kampung Arab* of Surabaya, Madura and Sumbawa. Given the geographical proximity, the first step will take place in the city of Surabaya and the island of Madura. I will record and process five hours of material during an estimated four-month fieldwork, on a full-time basis, in the communities around the Alawiyya and Ampel Melati mosques founded by Hadrami-descents. Within this initial phase, data will be transcribed, organized and commented. Simultaneously, two Hadrami consultants will be hired as proofreaders to guarantee the consistency of each transcription. Subsequently, a short period in Jakarta will be necessary to deal with bureaucratic issues, strengthen the ties with Menara institute and to do research in their archives. Finally, before returning to Naples a ten-days survey on the island of Sumbawa is foreseen.

On my return to Naples, previous published and unpublished work will be further explored. Concurrently, two Indonesian language and Arabic language students from the DAAM department will be helping me to convert ELAN-format transcriptions into Jeffersonian-like transcriptions. Over the same period, I will attend the first part of the monographic course on Hadramutic, a variety of Old South Arabian that has territorial continuity with Hadrami Arabic, that Professor Contini intends to give during the 2021-2022 academic year. This way, I will deepen my knowledge of Hadramaut's History and its exploration by European travelers. A short visit to the Omanite Dhofar University in Salalah is desirable to foster a fruitful collaboration with Professor Al-Saqqaf, who is willing to become my external advisor giving me the chance to deepen my expertise on Hadrami Arabic *in loco*. In summary, the project development after one year will be: five hours of audio-video recordings fully represented on different linguistic levels, genres and styles as described in previous paragraphs. A first insight of Hadrami-descents' language practices will be available, my knowledge of Hadrami Arabic will be deepened, and finally, part of the data will be stored and published in the *The Language Archive* (TLA) developed by the Max Planck Institute

2.4.2 Second year

The second year of the project will implement documentation and description activities, during a fieldwork of four months on the island of Madura. Moreover, I will initiate the documentation of Hadrami communities on the island of Sumbawa, where Jacobsen (2009) estimated the presence of 8,000 individuals. The overall corpus will be expanded with additional five hours of recordings transcribed, organized and commented following the same process described for year one. In the same way, on my return to Naples activities with Indonesian and Arabic language students will be implemented. Part of the data will be stored and published in *The Language Archive* (TLA) and results will be presented in the form of papers and conferences. The project development after year two will

mainly consist of an expansion of the existing dataset with five fully transcribed and commented hours of recordings, further language description and additional publication of data in *The Language Archive* (TLA), and finally presentation of findings on papers and conferences.

2.4.3 Third year

The third year of the project shall crown the preparation of the thesis dissertation after the expansion of the corpus from ten to fifteen hours of recordings on the island of Sumbawa. Data transcription and analysis will be completed, the database will be checked in its integrity, stored in *The Language Archive* (TLA) and be available for any possible use.

2.5 Thesis layout

Here follows a conditional outline of the thesis internal organization. The final work shall be divided into six parts, not including the introductory and conclusive sections. (1) The first section constitutes the literature review, the discussion of the theoretical framework of Interactional Linguistics in General Linguistics and in the documentation of Indonesia's language varieties. I will discuss the central concepts of Interactional Linguistics such as language superdiversity, semiotic registers, hierarchy of semiotic registers, intersubjectivity, style and stance. Furthermore, the linguistic resources available to Hadrami Arabs in Indonesia will be introduced. The final part of the first section will be dedicated to research questions and methods. (2) In the second section, I will discuss the historical background of the study starting from the "Homeland Hadramaut" and its socio-political structure over the last century, the patterns of migration that led contemporary Hadramis to Indonesia, up to their social contemporary dynamics. In addition, the focus of the research will be introduced through a survey of the present-day Hadrami Arab in the areas of interest. (3) The third section will be dedicated to the language ecology in the areas under study. In this section, I will also discuss to what extent Arabic is used and whether we can talk of an Indo-Malay variant. (4) The fourth section will be dedicated to the data collection and methodology. First, I will discuss the methodology and the contextual information of data acquisition. Second, I will describe the composition of the searchable database which constitute the main output of the project. (5) In the fifth section, I will discuss the corpus going through the kind of data collected and the discussion of the peculiar features of the data collected. Through the theoretical framework of Interactional Linguistics, I will describe aspects of morphology, phonology, syntax and semantics of the language. (6) The final section will be dedicated to the connection between language ideology and identity. Specifically, I will look at Arabic as a non-western international reference alternative to English in Indonesia. I will discuss new generations' practices and Islamic discourse tied to Hadrami identity.

3 Expected results and application effects

The project will produce a comprehensive database of the language spoken by Hadrami-descents in Indonesia completely accessible for both academic and non-academic purposes. It is expected to have a great impact on the valorization of Hadrami-descents' cultural heritage in Indonesia and to contribute with consistent linguistic data to the debate on Indonesian Hadrami's language and identity. Moreover, it will constitute the first research on the variety of Arabic spoken in the diaspora of Arabs in Indonesia. In addition to that, it will shed light on many aspects of language change and variation which would form an important input to sociolinguistics, historical linguistics and general phonology providing tools

to enrich the debate on the role of Hadrami Arabs in the introduction of vernacular Arabic loanwords into Indonesia-Malay varieties. Furthermore, this research will implement the documentation of languages spoken across the Indonesia-Malay Archipelago. Ultimately, it will be of great value and impact for the legitimization of both Hadrami Arabs in Indonesia and Hadrami Arabs across the globe who are presently experiencing a moment of political uncertainty and military turmoil in their homeland.