

The Translation of Family and Kinship Terms in Arabic Societies

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Abstract:

The study of kin terminology in Arabic has always been a major focus of Arab legal scholars, sociologists and philologists. The main events of Human life are birth, marriage and death tend to occur within kin units in most societies. Though there are universal features of kin category, the expression of these features varies from culture to culture. It is culture in nature rather than a biological given. The goal of present study is to refer to the relations built up from links between father - grandfathers and their male children, blood relation which donates the relation from the mother in addition to the milk - kin in two distinct dialects the Maslawai and the Kuwaiti dialects. In this paper we present to non-Arabic readers the Maslawi and Kuwaiti dialect as examples of how Arabic societies kinship divide, showing some similarities and difference in terms of kin terms themselves to enrich the investigations that prove the richness of Arabic language upon other languages used worldwide.

Keywords: Connection by Blood, Consanguinity, Sponsorship Suckling, Kuwaiti, Maslawi Kinship Terms

1. Introduction:

The word kinship refers to the cultural system of recognized family roles and relationship. It is the identification tool for addressing and describing relatives as well (Edmonson, 1957). In addition, it is the relation that makes the father responsible for the family, each member of the family is related by blood relation, and whenever he/she shares the same house, they are considered of a close relation and such kind of membership form the small family. However, Arabic societies respect this

kind of relation and gave it the priority. The kind of relationship among family members didn't change even within the advent of new concepts and with the modern life aspects, that is what was prohibited in the old times still be followed until now a days. In general, Arabic societies follow the same distribution of most societies kinship classification, they classify it according to the blood relation, and this includes: father, mother and sister, brother and the parent's brothers and sisters, the other kind of kinship involved in the relation of marriage which is acquired by members of family who get married (Nasab).

In this paper, the concept of kinship terms, then the Arabic kinship terminology will be pointed out, while in the third section, where did the word family come from will be showed,

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how the Arabic societies get the word family, family's pattern and kinship relation will be then explained as they are parts complement each other, further, we will go through, the so-called relation by "Ridaʿ" "breast feeding" relation. Next, we will compare the Maslawi Arabic and Kuwaiti Arabic as they seem to be the most distinctive dialects.

2. Literature Review:

2.1 The Concept of Kin Terms

For most languages, it is not difficult to describe terms that can be hard in other languages. Though that difficulty is the main reason for linguistic and cultural differences, kinship terms are one of these cultural differences, kinship refers to the state of being related to a family, being a member of it. The importance of such terms doesn't only arise from the fact that they refer to an individual when indicated to the addressee but as if the only way of address, (Hudson, 1984), (Levinson, 1983). For instant, prostates societies, before the urban revolution of 5000 years ago, to control the social product, was ultimately through kin. As a result, kinship terms play an important role in understanding societies with no class and continue to have this importance role even now a days (Wardhaugh, 1986).

Worldwide, people adapted their life aspects as sleeping, cooking and child care from the family, but family function and form were not the same, they vary from one society into another.

For some societies, kin terms, the social relation between people among those who are related by marriage or adoption. Thus kinship goes beside the meaning of relationship in the frame of family only but in to the relation of people that built later in life, connected together at least from the society point of view.

2.2 Kinship Terminology in Arabic Society

Arabic societies as in many other societies, make difference between male and female when indicating nephew, cousin, uncle and aunt. People there distinguish also the relatives from mother and father sides. They use the prefix "Ibin" to indicate

the "son of" referring to a male more specifically, while the suffix "h" indicating "daughter of" "Ibnah". Therefore, kinship terms play a vital role for scholars and philologists as well.

In most societies, the life main concerns such as birth and death have to do with kin unites. Arabic kin terminology studied under two labels either descriptive or class factionary, the descriptive refers to one kind of relation, while the class factionary refers to many types of relationships as the words of "maret ammi" may refer to father brother's wife or the "husband mother" in Arabic society. It should be noted that what is descriptive in one society may be class factionary in other society, for instance, the word cousin in Arabic has descriptive meaning, it has only one meaning to refer to "my father's brother son". Kinship terms in Arabic are of two types: abstract "kin terminology and marriage", the other is concerned with the person's position in the relation, (blood) relation as an example.

2.3 The Origin of the Word Family in Arabic

Originally, the word family consists of what is called Sulala (genealogy), Asl (origin), Nasab, Hasab, Asbat, Ahfad, and Salaf (predecessors) and Khalaf (successors) as well. The word Nasab stands for ancestor from the father side, while the word Hasab stands for ancestor of mother side. On the other hand, Asbat stands for ancestor from daughter, while Ahfad is ancestor from son side. These terms may describe members or groups, a group or even the individual may have or don't have what is called Asl, Nasab, and Hasab (Al-Jarf, 2017). So, to have these features means a person in highly status in the society, while to dismiss one of these feature, means a person with low status in the society. Ethnographically, Arabic culture shows that high states is common among nomads, city dwellers, for instance, in Bahrain, one of the Arabic countries, people divided into Ansab, la ansab and Bani Khdair. However, when people speak about someone who has Asl, they mean he has power, generosity, capacity and honestly and referred to as "Sahab Asl" "highly status in the society".

On the other hand, the individual who doesn't have any of these features, he is of low status referred in Arabic "Bila asl" no origin to refer to his family. Arabic society related the word

Asl with the property, in specific, a person who has the property of camels and horses. Salaf and Khalaf are similar in a way they indicate transmission of cultural origins and habits from group into the other, whereas Asbat and ahfad traditionally indicate religion or features inherited by mother; likewise, ahfad indicates individuals having highly respected status in the society. (Ahmad, 2008).

2.4 Family and Kin Patterns in Arabic

Arabs always known by their cultural factors, family, religion, and language. Thus, no understanding of Arabic society can be established without these features. Arabic social structure consists of a family, it is the core element of the society. Similarly, Kinship relation plays important role side by side with the family that is, kin is the vital group formulated through the family. Arabic sociologists and religion legislators focused on the importance of family. The system of the family is much strict, the family follows certain roles, that is, children live with parents until they become adults and those adults then take care of their parents (Ahmad, 2008).

Traditionally, the father is the one who is responsible for the family, while the wife become part of her husband kin group, children carry their father's name while the wife keeps her family's name. This kind of relation makes hierarchical structure, that is, the father will be in the top. In general, Arabic family structure consists of three: Al-Ahhel or Al-beit, literally (the house) includes "father, mother, brother, and sister", where the family share the same house. The second unit, alsaela includes larger family of not only father, mother, brother, and sister, but also son's wives and children. The relation in the first unit is blood relation, all members are related by blood while the second unit relation, is of blood relation plus marriage relation (Nasab), as it includes the whole family who is related by blood plus the wives and children of the sons.

The third unit is Al-ashira (clan), where the man and the woman descended from, originally known as "Qabila" (Al-Sahlany and Al-Husseini, 2010). The system of Arabic society tends to be inherited, families used to name their children of their father or mother, grandfather or grandmother names, to

revive the memorandum of their families. Further, Arabic societies and as a kind of respect, used to call the father or the mother of their first child name as "Ibin Someone" literally "son of", while among individuals, they used to say "ibin al sam" regardless of the this person is closely related or not, that is, any person of his clan, and because of this shared respected, they tend to promote relatives marriage.

2.5 Kinship by Milk

In Arabic societies, there is sort of social ties besides those of birth, milk or breast-feeding which institutes kind of kinship relation (Ridaʿ). What is interested about this kind of relation, is being part of other family relation in terms of prohibition. Islamic law prohibits the marriage of individuals who are related by Ridaʿ, that is the woman cannot be married of a man from "al murdaʿ" a woman who conducted al Ridaʿ "breast feeding", she is the sister of the woman's son by Islamic law. Arabic anthropologists indicated to this kind of relation as "elective kinship". Traditionally, when women live in the same house they can feed (breast feeding) each other child when needed. While now a days, it is rare to find such kind of relation.

3. Comparison between Kinship Terms in Maslawi and Kuwaiti Arabic:

3.1 Maslawi Dialect

Maslawi is a dialect spoken in Mosul city, in the northern parts of Iraq. It is one of the closer dialect to MSA (modern standard Arabic), Maslawi is one as the most distinctive dialect among other Iraqi varieties, it is the dialect of "qeltu" as most of its words include the uvular "q". In Maslawi also the alveolar "r" sound is changed into the velar "ɣ" as in maraa (woman turns to maya), while the words indicate feminine show long vowel endings as in "Madrsa" (school) turns into "Madersi"(i). This is in turn affects the way speakers of Maslawi talk as they change some sounds in respect with other Iraqi varieties.

3.1.1 Maslawi Kinship Terms

Maslawi kinship terms act as other Arabic varieties, they distinguish two kinds of relation either by marriage or by

blood. The way Maslawi speakers pronounce the words may reflect different words for the hearer of other varieties. However, the first generation in terms of kinship in Maslawi, is the grandparents, for instance, the grandfather referred to as “d̤zeddu” as “grandfather” and “d̤zedda” as “grandmother”, these two terms are also known for other Iraqi varieties, but the word “Sita”, “Nana” (grandmother), and “Sido” for (grandfather) are restricted to Mosul city speakers, and such terms for direct address. On the other hand, if the speaker of Maslawi talk indirectly, mainly to someone else about his grandfather or grandmother, he uses “d̤zadditi” and “d̤zaddi” in addition to the colloquial names as “ʔum ammi” (my mother’s mother) or “ʔbu abuuyi” (my father’s father). “ʔum abuuyi” (my father’s mother) and “ʔbu ammi” (my mother’s father). It is clear from the words above that all of them end with the “I” vowel, which indicated possession. And if referring to my father’s brother personally, the word “ʔmmu” is used, while “xalu” is my mother’s brother, on the other hand, in indirect speech, “ʔmmi” and “xaali” are respectively (my father’s and my mother’s brothers). My father sister is “ʔmmi”, while my mother’s sister is “xaali” and they both become “ʔmmti” and “xaliti” in indirect speech. Relatives by marriage includes, my father’s brother’s wife is “mayʔt ʔmmi” and my mother brother’s wife is “mayʔt xaali”. Whereas, my mother sister’s husband is “zood̤ʔ xaalti”, and my father sister husband is “zood̤ʔ ʔmmti”.

However, Maslawi indicates other type of kin term, the Ego terms which include, my brother “axuuy” and “auxti” my sister, those two words in addition to be use between family members, they can also use in the general concept, that is, when referring to a woman that a man doesn’t know before, he can simply indicates her by “auxti” showing kind of respect; likewise a woman can indicated a man didn’t know before as “axuuy” and again as a kind of respect. However, my father bother’s son referred to as “ʔbin ʔmmi” and “bint ʔmmi” for my father brother’s daughter, in Maslawi, those two terms cannot only refer to my father and mother brother’s sons but also members of clan, referring to them as related to the person by blood tie, they can be my grandfather brother’s son or daughter, the idea is that they belong to the same clan. Moreover, my mother brother’s son is “ʔbin xaali” and my

mother brother’s daughter is “bint xaali”, and we can indicate the same relation as the above, referring once to my grandfather from mother side brother’s son and daughter as long as they are of the same clan. To refer to my father sister’s son “ʔbin ʔmmti” and “bint ʔmmti” for my father sister’s daughter, on the other hand, my mother sister’s son is “ʔbin xaalti” and “bint xalti” for my mother sister’s daughter. In child generation, Maslawi kin terms include, my son and daughter and their sons and daughters, for instance, Maslawi use the term “ʔbni” my son and “baibi” for baby, while for child people indicate someone else child as “sagair” which means “small” literally. My daughter is “binti”, while my brother’s son is “ʔbin axuuy” and “ʔbin auxti” for my sister’s son, further, my brother’s daughter is “bint axuuy”, while “bint auxti” to indicate my sister’s daughter. The other group of Maslawi is the grandchild generation which includes, my son and daughter and their sons and daughters, for instance, the term “hafidi” refers to son of my daughter or my son, both have the term “hafidi”, similarly “hafiditi” for daughter whether of my son or my daughter also.

For Maslawi speaker and while speaking with someone, he or she can simply refer to “hafid” as “ʔbin ʔbni” son of son, or “ʔbin binti” son of daughter; similarly, “bint binti” my daughter’s daughter and “bint ʔbni” my son’s daughter. However, the affinal kinship terms in Maslawi are highly respected. The wife shows her loyalty and respectful to her husband’s family, the wife in Maslawi referred to as “zawd̤ʔa”, “kanni” or “mayʔt” whereas “duya” as co-wife for someone wife. One the other hand, the husband’s family includes, first, “hamai” or “ʔammi” my father in law, and second “hamati” my mother in law can also be referred by “mama” to show that the mother in low as close as her mother or “xaliha” for some families. The other members of the family are “bint hamai” my sister in law, “ʔbin hamai” or “selfi” my brother in law. For my brother’s in law wife “selfti”. The husband refers to the husbands of the wife sister as “ʔddil” or and usually there is kind of strong relation between them, they can work together in term of business or they can travel somewhere as being part of each other family. Kinship in Maslawi as a unit, they belong to each other in some way, and to be a member of a family, is to be responsible for the family in terms of loyalty and

respectful, no matter what kind of relation in which one belong to the family.

3.2 Kuwaiti Arabic

It is a small Arabic country located in the northern edge of eastern Arabia at the tip of Arab Gulf. Kuwaiti kin terms are

sub classes of nouns. Kinship terms formulated in Kuwaiti in terms of gender, generation and consanguineal factors (Yassin, 1977). Table 1 of Kuwaiti kinship in terms of ego generation, one descending generation and two ascending generation

Table 1. Diagram of Yassin (1977)

Kuwaiti formal kin terms	Translation into English	Reference kin terms	Translation into English	Addressive kin terms	Translation into English
Yadd	Grand father	Wild ʕmmi	My father brother's son	Axuuy	My brother
Yadda	Grand mother	Bint ʕmmi	My father brother's son	Auxti	My sister
Ab	Father	Wild ʕmmti	My father sister's son	Wildi	My son
Umm	Mother	Bint ʕmmti	My father sister's daughter	Binti	My daughter
Zooja or mara	Wife	Bint xaali	My mother brother's daughter		
Durra	Co-wife	Wild xaali	My mother brother's son		
Wild	Son	Wild xaalti	My mother sister's son		
Bint	Daughter	Bint xaalti	My mother sister's daughter		
Ax	Brother	Bint auxti	My sister's daughter		
Uxt	Sister	Wild auxti	My sister's son		
Zooj	Husband	Wild axuuy	My brother's son		
Xaala	Mother's sister	Bint axuuy	My brother's daughter		
Xaal	Mother's brother				
ʕmm	Father's brother				
ʕmmati	Father's sister				
Wild al-ʕmma	Cousin (father sister's son)				
Bint-ʕmma	Father sister's daughter				
Wild al-ʕmm	Father brother's son				
Bint al-ʕmm	Father brother's daughter				
Wila al-xaal	Mother brother's son				
Bint al-xaal	Mother brother's daughter				
Wild al-xaala	Mother sister's son				
Bint al-xaala	Mother sister's daughter				
Wild al-ax	Brother's son				
Bint al-ax	Brother's daughter				
wild al-auxt	Sister's son				
Bint al-auxt	Sister's daughter				
Abu zijiti	Wife's father				
Umm zoojiti	Wife's mother				
Hammati	Mother in law				
Abu zooji	Father in law				
Hamaay	Father in law				

Table 1. shows some similarities between the Maslawi dialect and the Kuwaiti one as well as some differences, for instance, they both indicate the brother as “axuuy” and the sister as

“auxti”, and they both share the term “bint” for daughter, and the terms “ʕmmi” my father's brother and “xaali” my mother's brother, “xaalti” for my mother's sister and ʕmmati for my father's sister, in addition to “amati” and “hammai” my mother

and father in law respectively” in Maslawi, and “Hamaay, hammati, “my father and mother in law respectively in Kuwaiti dialect’ ”, while they do differ in the use of the word “wild vs ʔbini in Maslawi to refer to the son, and “Yadd and yadda (my grandfather) and (my grandmother) vs. dʒeddu and dʒedda (my grandfather and my grandmother) in Maslawi, the use of ‘j’ instead of dʒ in zooj (husband) in Kuwaiti vs. zoodʒ in Maslawi. However, Kuwaiti divides kin terms into three ways, either structural or functional and situational. In terms of structure, kin terms in Kuwaiti can be classified depending on the lexeme number; that is, either mono lexic as “ab” father or dilexic “wild al-ʕamma” father sister’s son and triplexic as, “ab wild al-ʕamma” husband of father sister’s son. Finally, Kuwait distinguishes two types of kinship, one in terms of address as “yubba” my father and “Yumma” my mother, the other in terms of reference as “ummi” my mother and “abuuy” my father or “wild ammi” my father brother’s son, and “bint ʕammi” my father brother’s daughter. It can be illustrated through the above diagram and the reference and addressive kin terms are not identical.

4. Conclusions:

Arabic kin ship terms as the relation between the members of the same family considered as a highly respected tie in which members are related by blood or marriage tie. People in Arabic societies or even in other societies consider kin terms as the only way of address, they adapted their life aspects of eating and sleeping according to the family, whose form and function can be varied from society into another. In Arabic societies, people distinguish their relatives from both mother and father sides. In Arabic, the word family came from the family which was originally derived from Asl, Ahfad and Nasab etc., whereby to be “Sahib Asl” means to have property and good family reputation. Consists of the previous members within the family relation, father gives the priority, he is the responsible for the family, whether it is “ʕaela” including father, mother, son and daughter, son’s wife and children, or “ahhel”, father, mother, brother and sister. However, in Arabic societies also, there is specific kind of relation that of breast-feeding relation, it is emerge whenever a woman feed “by breast feeding” a child to be her or his son according to the Islamic law. Finally,

the Maslawi and Kuwaiti dialect are examples of how Arabic societies kinship divide, showing some similarities and difference in terms of kin terms themselves.

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