

**From Lingua Franca to Native Language.
Arabic in south western Nuba Mountains (Sudan)**

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The Nuba Mountains are widely known as one of the most linguistically heterogeneous areas in Africa. Nonetheless, the arrival of Arabic-speaking groups at the end of the eighteenth-century set about a complex process of Arabization that differentially affected local communities. At the present time, in consequence of the Arabization policies repeatedly perpetuated by the central state, Nuba groups largely acquire Arabic as native language. This paper focuses on the Arabic language as spoken by a small linguistic community in south western Nuba Mountains, the Logorí. The Logorí speak a Nilo-Saharan (Daju) language; even though, they can well be considered a bilingual community in course of assimilation where Arabic is passing from the status of second language to that of major native language.

The first part of the paper reassumes the modalities of Arabization of the Logorí drawing particular attention to their socio-economic relations with Baggara Arabs. A detailed analysis of the structural features of the Arabic language as spoken by Logorí follows. The study covers phonological, morpho-syntactic and lexical categories. Besides, it investigates the individual variation characterizing Logorí speakers in the light of basic social variables (age, gender, residence, literacy). The paper points out that the structural variation related to the use of Arabic as Lingua Franca is rapidly decreasing and that the acquisition of Arabic as native language among the Logorí also results in a stronger exposition to Sudanese Standard Arabic.