Hausa

1. INTRODUCTION

Most scholars who speculate on the origin of the Hausa agree that the Hausa’s ethnic composition includes a Hamitic element. If Palmer’s (1967:95) view is taken as reasonably true, the Hausa people developed from a mixture of groups migrating from the central Sahara (due to desertification) to the central savanna in the south during the 1st millennium C.E. The new group which emerged out of that contact was relatively more sophisticated and later on absorbed a number of other small ethnic groups, all constituting together one cultural and linguistic entity, with the Hausa language as a unifying factor. Therefore, the term ‘Hausa’ is in actual fact more a linguistic than an ethnic term, and the Hausa people can be regarded as a nation rather than a tribe.

Spoken by well over 80 million people, the Hausa language is the first lingua franca of West Africa. The Hausa migrations for the purposes of trade, pilgrimage, and preaching of Islam led to the spread of their language beyond the original homeland (Hausaland: present Nigeria and Niger Republic). Hausa also has a significant presence in Ghana, Togo, Chad, Cameroon, Central African Republic, southern Libya, and Sudan, and is known as far as Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia.

In Nigeria, Hausa exists in two major dialects: the eastern (or Kano) and the western (or Sokoto) dialects. Each of them comprises a chain of further subdialects and geographically extends to the neighboring parts of the Niger Republic. Although the eastern dialect has been affected by more phonological and morphological erosion and simplification than the western dialect, it is still the variety on which Standard Hausa is based.

2. HAUSA AND ARABIC

Hausa is one of the few languages that enjoys a strong relationship with Arabic at three distinct levels: common descent (i.e. genetic relationship), indirect contact through literary traditions (in West Africa), and direct contact through human migrations to Arabic-speaking lands (e.g. Sudan, Libya, and Saudi Arabia).

With regard to the first level, it is now unanimously accepted among Africanists that Hausa shares a common descent with Arabic. The two languages are classified as members of the old Hamito-Semitic family reorganized and renamed by Greenberg (1966) as ‘Afro-Asiatic’: Arabic as Semitic and Hausa as Hamitic (Meinhof 1912) or Chadic (Greenberg 1966). The Ethnologue (www.ethnologue.com 2000) lists it as Chadic, West.

The common linguistic heritage of the two languages is reflected in various elements. Examples of the most salient of these include:

i. (V+)t as a feminine marker: Hausa ya/'ta zo, Arabic ji/'a/ja 'at 'he/she came'

ii. Some object and possessive pronouns: Hausa ya ba ni/ka/kik/ku, Arabic 'a/t ni/ ka/kik/kum 'he gave me/you [sg. masc.]/[sg. fem.]/[pl.]; Hausa gidan/kik/ku, Arabic baytuka/kik/kum 'your [sg. masc.]/[sg. fem.]/[pl.] house'

iii. Some forms of broken plural: Hausa doki (<dawu')kikik 'horse/horses', Arabic zafraq/zawariq 'boat/boats'

iv. The morpheme m-V for derivation of noun of agent, place, or instrument: Hausa rubutal/marubuchi 'to write/writer', Arabic qatatal/muqatil 'to fight/fighter'

v. A few cognates: Hausa 'bashe 'bone', Arabic qas 'chest bone'; Hausa afa 'to put in the mouth', Arabic fâ 'mouth'; Hausa tofa 'to spit', Arabic taffa 'to spit'; Hausa yau 'today', Arabic yawm 'day'

When studying the Arabic loanwords in Hausa, their common heritage should be taken into consideration, and inherited features should be left out of the discussion. Note that the Nigerian Hausa orthography, which does not
mark vowel length, is used for the language examples.

3. Contacts between Arabic and Hausa

The indirect contact between Hausa and Arabic in West Africa (through commercial transactions, literary traditions, and intermediary languages) extends over six centuries, during which the Hausa language borrowed and integrated a considerable corpus of words and concepts from the Arabic. Arabic loanwords in Hausa have been historically identified and registered to varying degrees in all the Hausa dictionaries (Mischlich 1906; Robinson 1913; Bargery 1934; Abraham 1962; Newman 1977; McIntyre and Meyer-Bahlburg 1991), in addition to a few research papers and monographs.

The most comprehensive lists of these loans are those of Greenberg (1947) and Baldi (1988), comprising 455 and 1,245 items, respectively. The large discrepancy in size between the two lists may be attributed partly to the difference in sources from which each author drew his data and partly to the time span separating the compilation of their lists (35 years).

Arabic words are borrowed into Hausa from both written and oral sources, directly from the target language and indirectly through other intermediary lingua francas, mainly Berber and Kanuri. The phonological features of a substantial number of these loans, coupled with some extralinguistic evidence, indicate that the North African (Maghrebi) dialects of Arabic were the major suppliers of the orally borrowed words. In fact, the North African factor in Hausa Islamic culture is very significant. This is in addition to the early commercial links which existed between Hausaland and North Africa, reflected in the many loanwords denoting North African commodities, such as susiya < susiya 'purple cloth or thread' (from Sousse in Tunisia), za'afaran < za'farân 'saffron', zaitun < zaytûn 'olive'. Another piece of evidence is that of words borrowed with the undoubtedly North African contracted definite article al. This article is usually realized in the North African dialects as li- before plosives and l- before continuants. Thus, the Standard Arabic form al-kitâb 'the book' becomes liktâb, and al-xayma 'the tent, umbrella' becomes lxayma. The form of these two words in Hausa and the different phonological changes they underwent are as follows: Arabic al-kitâb > North African dialect liktâb > Hausa liktabi > liktafi > littaфи (addition of the vowel suffix -i, change of b into f, and regressive assimilation of k to l); Arabic al-xayma > North African lxayma > Hausa laima (deletion of x to avoid a consonant cluster in a word-initial syllable).

Relying on their phonetic behavior vis-à-vis their Arabic etyma and on other cultural evidence, Greenberg (1947) assigned all Arabic loanwords in Hausa to two major groups. Loans in Group I were borrowed earlier than those of Group II, and mainly from colloquial sources, whereas those of Group II were more recent and borrowed mainly from written sources. The characteristics of Group I can be summarized as follows:

i. Loans display irregular treatment of the Arabic sounds: e.g. Arabic b rendered by Hausa f, as in aljifu < al-jayb 'pocket'; t and d represented by t and d, as in talata < tulatâ 'Tuesday'; dara'a < dirâ 'cubit'.

ii. The definite article is usually borrowed with the noun in a contracted form l- or li-, as in the above examples of laima and littaфи.

iii. They comprise terms of everyday life, trade, and technology and elementary aspects of Islamic religion.

Loans of Group II, on the other hand, are characterized by the following:

i. They display more regular treatment of the Arabic sounds, e.g. Arabic b > Hausa b, as in abi < 'ayb 'fault, defect'; t > s, as in wasiika < watîqa 'letter'; d > z, as in zamba < danb 'fraud, swindling'.

ii. The article, if borrowed with the nouns, is in its complete form, al, as in alkali < al-qâdi 'judge'.

iii. They include words that refer to the more recondite aspects of Islam and technical terms of pseudosciences (grammar, astrology, etc.).

The characteristics of these groupings exhibit a high degree of regularity, but exceptional cases can also be encountered. A few loans may be detected with characteristics of both groups, e.g. aljifu < al-jayb 'pocket', with the complete
form of the article *al* (Group II) and the representation of *b* by *f* (Group I).

4. **Intermediary languages**

Many loans, especially those identified by unusual treatment of the Arabic sounds, reached Hausa through intermediary languages. This is why Wexler (1980) emphasizes the role of African lingua francas in the diffusion of Arabic loanwords in Central and West Africa, and the importance of this fact in retracing the different paths followed by these words into the recipient languages. With regard to Hausa, three intermediary languages have been shown to provide loans: Berber, Kanuri, and Fulfulde. Loans passed through Berber can be recognized by the Berber feminine marker *ta-* as in Hausa *tad'a* *awa* < Berber *tadaat* < Arabic *daw'at* 'inkstand', and replacement of *s* by *z* as in Hausa *azarfa* 'silver' < Berber *azref* < Arabic *as-saf* 'changing money [formerly in silver]'. Kanuri, on the other hand, contributed loans such as Hausa *kasuwa* < Kanuri *kasuwu* < Arabic *as-suq* 'market', and Hausa *sirdi* < Kanuri *sirdi* < Arabic *sarji* 'saddle'. Finally, in words such as Hausa *hubbare* < Arabic *gubba* 'tomb of a religious leader', the class suffix *-re* speaks for Fulfulde as an undoubted intermediary channel.

5. **Phonology**

The phonological adaptation of the Arabic loanwords in Hausa relates basically to the process of altering the Arabic sounds that do not exist in Hausa and the unusual behavior of those that do exist in Hausa. The variations concern only consonants, since all the Arabic vowels (in terms of quality as well as quantity) exist in Hausa and therefore do not undergo any significant change in the recipient language, with the exception of a few isolated cases.

Hausa and Arabic share 17 consonants: *b t d k f h s z š j m n r l w y*. There are 11 consonants in Arabic that do not exist in Hausa: *t d q t d s g h* , while Hausa includes 14 consonants that do not exist in Arabic: *b d c t k kʷ kʰ k kw g gʷ* 'y r. In terms of their treatment in Hausa, Arabic sounds can be divided into three categories:

i. Sounds that do not exist in Hausa and that are usually replaced by the phonetically nearest Hausa sounds. These include *q t d ำ s x g h* and '. Examples:

- *q > k or k: kabila* < *qabila* 'tribe', *fasiki* > *fasiq* 'profligate'
- *t > s or t: wasika* < *watiga* 'letter', *talata* < *tulata* 'Tuesday'
- *d > z or d: kazafi* < *qadfi* 'false accusation', *idan* < *idí* 'if'
- *ş > z: azahar* < *ad-zuhr* 'noon (prayer)'
- *x > b or O: *hatimi* < *xátim* 'seal, stamp', *lahira* < *al-áxira* 'the hereafter'
- *g > g: gaihi* < *gayb* 'the unknown'
- *b > h: hajj* < *hajj* 'pilgrimage'
- *s > s or z: nasiha* < *nasha* 'advice', *azumi* < *as-sawám* 'fasting'
- *' > : jamá'a* < *jamáa* 'the public, crowd, community'

ii. Sounds that do not exist in Hausa and are replaced by phonetically less related Hausa sounds. These include *t* and *d*. Examples:

- *t > d* (alveolar voiced implosive) or *ts* or *y* (dialetal variations): *dibbu*/*sibbu*/*yibbu* < *tibb* 'medicine', *dahara* < *tabara* 'ritual purity'
- *d > l: la'if* 'sexually impotent' < *da'if* 'weak', *alkali* < *al-qādī* 'judge'

According to the description by the Arab grammarians, these two sounds are realized as lateral (→ *dád*) and voiced, respectively. As such, their nearest Hausa correspondents are indeed *l* and *d*, respectively (and not *d* and *l* as expected).

iii. Sounds that do exist in Hausa and yet sometimes are also replaced by phonetically less-related Hausa sounds. These include *b m n s r j*. Examples:

- *b > f* (intervocalic): *aljífu* < *al-ayb* 'pocket'
- *m > b* (one instance): *albashi* < *al-ma'as* 'salary, wage'
- *s > š* (before front vowel): *numfashi* < *nafas* 'breath'
- *n > k* (from a Sudanese dialect through Kanuri): *lakadan* < *naqdan* 'in cash'
- *r > n* (one instance): *albarini* < *al-barir* 'silk'
- *j > d* (from a Sudanese dialect through Kanuri or *z* (through Fulfulde): *sirdi* < *sarji* 'saddle', *zuweira* < *juwariyya* [female's name]

The irregular behavior of some Arabic sounds in Hausa primarily reflects the intermediary languages, but in some cases it is the result of phonological constraints in Hausa, e.g. Hausa *t > c* (before front vowel), hence *lokaci* < *al-waqt*
time’; or of internal sound shift, e.g. b shifted to w, hence allura (< allura) < al-’ibra ‘needle’. In other cases it is the result of dialectal variations, e.g., f in the eastern dialects is realized as b in the western dialects, hence sahu < saff ‘row, a line of people’.

6. Morphology

Like most African languages, Hausa words as a rule end in open syllables. Therefore adaptation of Arabic loanwords in Hausa involves opening the final closed syllables through attachment of the vowel suffix -i for masculine substantives (e.g. alkalam-i < al-qalam ‘pen’) or, in a few cases, the nominative case marker -u, as in sahu < saff ‘row, line of people’, especially with Arabic proper names (umaru, bashiru, etc.) Final closed syllables can also become open through the deletion of the final consonant, as in albasu < al-basal ‘onion’. Feminine nouns are borrowed with their feminine ending -a, which is identical with the Hausa feminine marker (common heritage). Otherwise, nominals systematically attach -i when masculine and -a when feminine, as in jai’ir-il’ai’a-r < jai’ir ‘a shameless man/woman’. Non-final closed syllables, too, sometimes become open through insertion of an epenthetic vowel, as in lakadan < nagdan ‘in cash’. The Hausa nominalizing morpheme -ci is suffixed to loan adjectives to derive nouns, as in ha’inci ‘dishonesty’ < xa’in ‘dishonest’, or to loan nouns for their further integration, as in hukunci < hukm ‘judgment, verdict’. Likewise, the verbalizing morpheme -ta is attached to loan nouns to derive verbs, as in hukunta ‘to pass judgment’ < hukm ‘judgment, verdict’. Some Arabic verbs are used in Hausa as nouns, as in kaddara ‘fate’ < qaddar ‘to destine’. Derived verbs behave like proper Hausa verbs; they receive their tonal patterns in accordance with their assimilation to one or the other Hausa verbal classes or grades; e.g. bayyana (Grade II) ‘to make clear’ < bayyana. The root then takes various affixes and tonal changes, such as ya bayyana ‘it appeared’, ya bayyana mishi ‘he explained to him’, bayyana mishi ‘explain to him!’. However, assignment of tone to nominals follows a different pattern in that the stressed syllable of the Arabic word is often (though not always) assigned a high tone and the following (but not necessarily the preceding) syllable always carries a low tone.

7. Semantics

Arabic loanwords in Hausa cover a wide range of semantic fields and touch upon almost all aspects of the life of Hausa Muslims. However, more than half of the loanwords recorded by Greenberg and Baldi derive from the Islamic religion in its broad sense, i.e. as a way of life embodying not only a system of belief but also a series of social institutions. Therefore, this macrosemantic field can be detailed in a number of related fields, such as social, political, and legal domains. Other important semantic fields include trade, literacy, and sciences, as well as numerals and time reckoning.


vii. Numerals and time reckoning: ashirin < ?isirin ‘twenty’, and all decimal numbers up to ninety; la’asur < al-asr ‘late afternoon (prayer)’, and all prayer times; asabar < as-sabt ‘Saturday’, and the rest of the days of the week.

Other minor fields include: household utensils, e.g. sabani < sabn ‘plate’; tools, e.g. allura < al-’ibra ‘needle’; warfare items, e.g. bindiga <
bunduqiyya ‘gun’; and a large number of miscellaneous items such as abstract concepts, e.g. annashawa < an-naswa ‘joyful feeling’, niyya < niyya ‘intention’, ni’ima < ni’ima ‘bounty’.

A few cases of reborrowing have also been recorded whereby the same loan exists in two morphological forms indicating different sources and times of borrowing, either with the same or with a slightly different meaning. Examples of these are cazbücearbi and tasbah < tasbih ‘rosary’; lissaf ‘calculation’ and bisabi ‘astrology’ < (al-)bisah ‘calculation’.

Most loanwords are used in Hausa with their original Arabic meanings, but some have undergone varying degrees of semantic modifications: (a) by semantic extension, e.g. attajiri ‘trader; wealthy man’ < at-ta’ij ‘trader’; alba i ‘pilgrim; socially distinguished personality’ < al-bayy ‘pilgrim’; (b) by semantic shrinking: bid’a ‘innovation in religious practices; merymaking; drumming’ < bid’ah ‘innovation in religious practices’; sunna ‘prophetic tradition; sexual intercourse with a wife’ < sunna ‘prophetic tradition’; la’ifi ‘sexually impotent’ < da’if ‘weak’; (c) by semantic intensification: alkawari/al-kawali ‘solemn promise’ < al-qawil ‘word, promise’; (d) by semantic devaluation: wasika ‘letter’ < wa-tiq ‘document’; fitina ‘sedition, troublesomeness’ < fitna ‘sedition’.

Unlike the above modifications, which developed spontaneously, the choice of an item such as daqika < daqiga ‘minute’ to stand in Hausa for ‘second’ is the direct result of a decision by the Hausa Language Board established in the mid-1970s at Bayero University, Kano (for ‘minute’ Hausa uses the English loan minti). Arabic taniya (expected to be realized in Hausa as saniya) ‘second’ seems to have been excluded to avoid confusion with Hausa saniya ‘cow’.

Not all documented loanwords in Hausa are commonly used. In fact, these loanwords range from being dormant to being very current. Generally, words are used with varying degrees of frequency according to the relevance of their semantic field to the actual conditions of life of Hausa speakers. Therefore, a number of loanwords recorded in the early Hausa dictionaries have now become obsolete because of the disappearance of the context in which they were used, e.g. hindi < hindi ‘a type of [Indian] sword’, adda’ira < ad-da’ira ‘small dependent kingdom’. The largest number of infrequently used loanwords belong to the specialized vocabularily used among narrow scholarly circles or small social sectors, such as traditional scholars or medicine men. Most of the loans relating to the areas of grammar, astrology, minerals, and precious stones fall in this category, e.g. l’i’irabi < al-’i’rāb ‘decension’, zaharatu < Zubra ‘Venus’, zabarajad < zabarajad ‘topaz’. Some loans have been replaced by other words, either native or borrowed from other languages, mainly English (or French), e.g. munzari < mijndar ‘eyeglasses’, replaced by tabara; albhangir < al-xinzerir ‘pig’, replaced by alade; gahawa < qahwa ‘coffee’, replaced by kofi.

With the spread of the Western type of education toward the end of colonial rule in the Hausa-speaking states (Nigeria and Niger Republic), Arabic was relegated to third place, behind English and French, as a source of borrowing for Hausa, but it was not completely displaced. After these states achieved independence in the 1960s, Arabic resumed its role, operating on an almost equal footing with English and French. From that time, borrowing from Arabic into Hausa has been, to a large extent, monitored by academic institutions (e.g. the Center for the Study of Nigerian Languages at Bayero University, Kano) and other relevant bodies, especially the Hausa Language Board and Hausa radio stations. Thus, many words have recently been borrowed from Arabic into Hausa within this framework to meet the needs of some new semantic fields. These include, for example:

i. The modern political system: jamhuriyya < jumhuruya ‘republic’, kuri’a < qur’a ‘vote’, milkin mallaka < mulk at-tamalluk ‘colonization’

ii. The modern system of education: jami’a < jami’a ‘university’, dalibida, dibi’ tali’ib ‘male/female student’


iv. Other fields: lahuni ‘harm, damage’ < lahn ‘tune; distortion in pronunciation’, na’ura < na’u ‘machine’, annoba < an-nawba ‘epidemic, plague’

The recent borrowings display minimal phonological and morphological changes in the recipient
language. From the semantic point of view, loans such as basasa ‘civil war’ and kalu-bala ‘challenge, confrontation’ show clearly that they were introduced by literate and knowledgeable people and endorsed by specialized (academic) institutions.

8. Direct contacts between Arabic and Hausa

The third type of relation between Hausa and Arabic is that of close or direct contact, where speakers of the two languages live in contiguous proximity under conditions favoring close and active interaction. This is the situation under which Hausa communities in some Arab countries such as Sudan, Libya, and Saudi Arabia are found. Such a situation leads to the emergence of various sociolinguistic phenomena: bilingualism, intensive borrowing, interference, loan translation (calques), code-switching, and language shift (to Arabic). In some cases the recipient language undergoes a kind of pidginization — though never creolization — before the total shift of its speakers to Arabic.

In Sudanese Hausa, for instance, all the above-mentioned phenomena have been observed among its speakers to varying degrees according to a number of variables: place of living (urban/rural area), age, level of education, profession, etc. However, the great majority of the Sudanese Hausa can be said to be bilingual in their mother tongue and Arabic, irrespective of the above variables.

At the phonological level, Sudanese Hausa speakers differ from speakers in West Africa in the way they realize individual Arabic sounds. As a rule, all emphatic Sudanese Arabic consonants are replaced by their non-emphatic correspondents (t > t, d > d, s > s, d’ > z). But this pattern is not always regular because not all Sudanese Hausa speak Arabic with the same degree of fluency and perfection. So, their realization of these sounds may vary from the above pattern to perfect pronunciation and even to hypercorrection. Thus, for a Sudanese Arabic loanword such as ‘adas ‘lentil’, one may hear ‘adas, ‘adas, or even ‘adas.

Borrowing of Sudanese Arabic words is intensified through social and cultural assimilation whereby entire groups of words pertaining to certain adopted customs or professions are borrowed wholesale. For example, the speech of those Sudanese Hausa communities that have adopted the Arab marriage system includes Arabic loanwords such as xattuba < x attic ‘engagement (gifts), sheba < šela ‘marriage gifts’, darira < darira ‘plaster of local perfume applied on the head of the bridegroom’, azuma < ‘azuma ‘feast’, shabur al-asal < šābūr al-asal ‘honeymoon’. Such intensive use of Sudanese Arabic words in Sudanese Hausa extends over a number of grammatical categories, including:

i. Verbs: ya xataba < xatab ‘he got engaged’, ya jaddada ruwxarsa < jaddad ruwxassahu ‘he renewed his (driving) license’
ii. Adjectives: awira < awira ‘foolish [fem.]’, mu’addaba < mu’addaba ‘polite [fem.]’
iii. Adverbs: koyis < koyis ‘well’, tawwali < tawwali ‘ahead, immediately’, aslu < aslu ‘in fact, actually’
iv. Prepositions: labaddi < labaddi ‘until’
v. Conjunctions: lakin < lakin ‘but’, ‘aw < ‘aw ‘or’
vi. Interrogative pronouns: malu < mālu ‘why’?
le < leh ‘why’

Some of these words have already been well integrated in Sudanese Hausa, whereas many others appear merely as cases of interference on the way to integration.

Another remarkable phenomenon characterizing Sudanese Hausa is loan translation (calques), whereby Arabic concepts are expressed by Hausa words (literal translation). Even if such an expression does not contain any Arabic loanwords, it may still be difficult or even impossible for the West African Hausa speaker to understand the message. Loan translations involve mostly idiomatic expressions, such as bude mishi, translated from astah lōhu lit. ‘open for him’, i.e. ‘forget about him, just neglect him’.

A kind of pidginized Hausa has been observed in the speech of educated Hausa speakers, especially females, living in urban centers, exemplified by utterances such as ku faddala su cikin salun, ku gaddama musu sharbat da balawa (Arabic words underlined) ‘Welcome them in the sitting room and offer them soft drinks and sweets’. In families where Hausa is spoken in this way, one usually finds the children speaking Arabic as their first language, and the succeeding generations may be expected to shift completely to Arabic.
The adjective 'Himyarite' was coined by traditional Arab and Islamic scholars and grammarians who preserved and transmitted a limited number of words and a small corpus of short texts that they had heard (proverbs, sayings, and conversations from daily life) or read (epitaphs), in order to emphasize the strange-ness of this language to an Arab ear. The term 'Himyari' can also be applied to two inscriptions of pre-Islamic Yemen.

I. Before Islam

For the pre-Islamic period, the term 'Himyarite' cannot be used without being defined and explained. According to author or context, it possesses a political meaning (texts coming from the kingdom of Himyar) or a linguistic one (written evidence exhibiting certain morphological and lexical features, as well as a specific syntax). Even in the latter sense, the adjective may refer to different varieties. One must keep in mind that in the pre-Islamic period the terminology was not yet fixed. The confusion is the result of a rather complex situation. Although the Himyarites left a great number of inscriptions, sometimes of considerable length (Gajda 1997), these inscriptions were written in Sabean, the language of the kingdom of Saba, of which the Himyarites considered themselves the rightful heirs. However, the Sabean language used by the Himyarites was not perfectly regular. Even a superficial examination reveals lexical, morphological, and syntactic particularities that were infrequent before the 4th century C.E. and became increasingly common later on (Robin 1991:96). The Sabaic dictionary (Beeston a.o. 1984) uses a special symbol for inscriptions of the 380–560 C.E. period. To add to the confusion, authors apply various names for the Sabean used by Himyarites: 'Himyartic', 'Raydānītic' (after Dū Raydān, the name of the tribal confederation formed by the princes of Himyar, whose name is derived from the Raydān palace in Zafār), 'Sabaeo-Himyartic', or 'Sabaeo-Raydānītic'.

Two inscriptions discovered in Himyarite territory are not written in Sabean. They come from peripheral areas (Qānīya and Sirāj, located 100 and 150 kms, respectively, from Zafār, in the territory of the tribes of Radmān and Madḥā). It is therefore difficult to assess to what extent these inscriptions accurately reflect the language