

## Remarks on the negative system in the Arabian Peninsula: the case of Omani /-ši/.

The literature on negation in Arabic individuates two main isoglosses that divide the Arabic-speaking world into two parts: the western dialects (e.g. Moroccan, Egyptian, Tunisian), which combine some variants of /mā/ and /-š/, and eastern dialects (e.g. Syrian, Kuwaiti, Gulf), which use /mā/ and other particles (Brustad 2000: 277).

In the Arabian Peninsula itself there is a wide range of forms of negation: in Ṣan‘ānī Arabic we found *miš* / *maš*, *mā* and *lā* (Watson 1993); in Gulf Arabic, Holes (1990: 71-76) reports *mā* (to negate perfective and imperfective verbs), *lā* (to negate the imperative), *lā...wila* (for coordinated clauses) and *mū* and its variants; in Najdi Arabic, Ingham (1994: 44) reports only the forms *mā* and *lā* to negate verbal sentences.

Thus, what about Omani Arabic?

Davey (2016: 217), on the one hand, states that in Dhofār the main negation markers are *mā* (to negate verbs and existentials) and *lā* (for the imperative). Holes (2008:485), on the other hand, reports a few other negation markers for Omani Arabic, such as *mā*, *māb* (in the Šarqīyya region), *mu* / *muhu* (in Bedouin dialects of the Bāṭina), and *lā* (for the imperative).

However, Carl Reinhardt (1894: 282) considers widespread a different negative marker: the enclitic /-ši/, that can be suffixed directly to the word it negates. This marker is used to negate exclusively lexical items, because the verbal forms are negated by *mā* or *lā* (*ibid.*). The peculiarity of this negative structure is that the enclitic /-ši/ is used by itself, whereas in other dialects is always found in construction with *mā* (cf. Brustad 2000). Lucas (2018: 2) considers a few dialects that show this kind of pattern, however until now no evidences of its use have been found anywhere in Oman.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the negative markers in the Arabian Peninsula, including some more recent research findings in the al-‘Awābī district (northern Oman) that show evidences of what Carl Reinhardt stated more than a hundred years ago. Moreover, the paper will outline the different forms of negation in this district, considering noun, verb, and prepositional phrases.

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