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The *Beja Dictionary (Beja-English-Arabic/English-Beja-Arabic)*, which is more precisely a lexicon than a dictionary, is the result of the joint efforts of seven contributors from Germany, Eritrea, where the late German SIL linguist Klaus Wedekind was based in 1996-2003, and Sudan. It includes some 6,000 entries from Beja varieties spoken in Eritrea, Sudan and Egypt. The more precise dialectal distribution, in particular between the three main dialects (Northern, Central and Southern, all represented in Sudan, but not in the other two countries) is not mentioned. However, what is duly mentioned in the foreword is that the entries were checked with Bishaari speakers, that is, speakers of a Northern variety. So, one may assume that this dialect is at the core of the lexicon, as most entries indeed suggest, in particular the presence of a short vowel *u*, typical of this variety. This dictionary is meant, primarily, for Beja speakers in Eritrea.

The short foreword by Klaus Wedekind, and the postscript by Charlotte Wedekind and Jonah Wedekind, briefly explain the circumstances under which the dictionary was compiled. The trilingual introduction by Mohammed Talib and Feki Mahamed provides succinct information about the Beja people, their language and its dialects, and the Latin-based alphabet used in the lexicon, which is the official orthography in Eritrea (the sole country where Beja has official status and is taught in schools) and which was adopted by the Beja Cultural Studies Center of the Red Sea University in Sudan for its publications.

The basics of the morphology of the language, which, for a large number of the lexemes, is templatic, i.e. consisting of consonantal roots to which various patterns are applied, are not provided. The reader is referred to the course for beginners by Wedekind *et al.* (2007). The organisation of the dictionary and the entries is not explained, but should, at least to some extent, be self-evident to Beja speakers. Below are clarifications and comments about this issue.

The lexicon is organized in a strict alphabetical order, without cross-references to the derived forms of a root or to suppletive roots: e.g. the verb *hiya* 'give' and its action noun *miyaaw* 'giving', or the verb *abika* 'keep, seize' and its causative-derived form, *s'abika* 'fasten', are not linked in the dictionary. There are no column breaks or spaces between groups of entries starting with different letters, and headers indicating which initial letter a page contains are missing. The headwords starting with the letters *dh* (/ɖ/) and *th* (/ʈ/) are mixed with their non-retroflex counterparts *d* and *t*, between the last word starting with *de-* and the first word starting with *di-*, and between *te-* and *ti-*, respectively.

Verb entries are provided with the inflectional morpheme of the imperative singular masculine (*-a*). Noun and adjective entries are usually provided with their indefinite enclitic article (which only surfaces for some patterns in the masculine). The reader needs to be aware that a final *-b* or *-t* does not necessarily belong to the lexical root but to the article of a headword, e.g. nouns and adjectives in *-eeb/t, -iib/t, -oob/t* and *-uub/t* all end in a final *-i* with the definite proclitic article, and those ending in *-aab/t* take a final *-a* when definite. There are some unexplained exceptions to the rule of presenting nouns with their indefinite article, such as *bidhaawi* 'Beja' (or more precisely 'Beja language'), which is an unpredictable *bidhaawje:t* with the indefinite article, or *eed'ar* 'marrying', provided with the accusative definite plural article *ee-*, a plural also found in Sudan, not only in Eritrea and Egypt, and which is also mentioned under the entry *d'ar* with the meaning 'wedding'.

Plurals of nouns and adjectives, which follow various, partly unpredictable patterns, are not provided. The sole exception is when singular and plural belong to different roots. However, without cross-references, it is not obvious for a non-Beja speaker to know which lexemes are concerned, and to guess, for instance, that the plural of *takat* 'woman' is *m'at* 'women'. Singulative forms (marked

as "sg") occur in an entry that is separate from the collective forms (marked as "pl"), e.g. *birtikwaan* 'orange, m. pl', *birtukaaniyaayt* 'orange, f. sg'.

The entries are not illustrated with examples, but for a few entries, a short untranslated comment or phrase in Beja or in Arabic is added. For instance, *aagreeb* 'maturity, women' has the comment "(*m'atee tehaay*)" '(something) that belongs to women'. In some cases, the Arabic comment is odd and does not relate to the meaning of the entry, e.g. *batehaat* 'measles' (not only found in Eritrea, as mentioned, but also in Sudan) is not translated into Arabic but has the comment:

طبيعة تركيب شيء ما وترتيبه كالدولة والهيئات المختلفة

'the nature of the structure of something and its disposition, such as the state and different bodies'.

Most often, one or two simple translations into English and Arabic are provided. However, polysemous words are not always treated in the same way: Some appear as one entry, others as two or more, e.g. there is one entry for *birirt* 'battle', and a second one for *birirt* 'fighting, war, war song'. Sometimes they even occur once without the indefinite article and the second time with it, as *beerana* 'traveller' and *beeranaab* 'nomad'. Moreover, some meanings are missing, and some translations are not accurate enough. For instance, *hasuuy*, a masdar, is given with its figurative meaning of 'concupiscence', but the literal meaning 'being sharp, sharpness' is missing; *biir* is simply given in the masculine gender and translated as 'palm', while it actually refers to the 'male date palm', and its use with the feminine gender is lacking ('young date palm; young doum palm'). The exact meaning of pluractional and intensive-derived verbs (whose exact morphological categories are not mentioned) is not systematically reflected in the translations, e.g. the base verb *fidiga* and its intensive form *faadiga* are both translated as 'untie' (in addition to 'open' for the former), but *aabika* is duly translated as 'catch many, repeatedly' (from *abika* 'keep [sic], seize').

The country or countries of origin are specified for each lemma. There are, however, oversights. For instance, *lagad* 'leg, foot', the diminutive form of *ragad,* is not only used in Eritrea and Egypt, but also in Sudan; *dhibsamaa* 'allow', mentioned for Eritrea only, also occurs in Sudan, albeit with a different meaning: 'to get on with s.o.; to agree with s.o.'. Sometimes the origin of a lemma as either "Arabic", "Semitic" or "Cushitic", with no further specification, is provided, but this is unsystematic, and sources, if any, are not mentioned.

Grammatical categories are mentioned in a very broad, and sometimes inaccurate, way. Verbs, whose paradigms belong to two unpredictable morphological classes, are just labelled "V". Derived verbs are also simply glossed as "V". Nouns are glossed as "N", but only some masdars are labelled "N V" (for "nominalized verb"). In particular, the frequent masdar pattern Ci/aCuuC is almost never marked as "N V". Manner converbs are regularly marked as adjectives, and some postpositions are marked as adverbs (e.g. the comitative postposition *haay*, also mistranslated as 'with it'). Noun phrases (and compounds) are glossed as "Phr", but there are some omissions, e.g. *ayafiraab* is simply glossed as "N", not "Phr", but is actually made up of two manner converbs, *aya* 'dead' and *firaa* 'having given birth', or *gwababkinaab* 'agent, agent of something bad', glossed as N, is in fact made up of *gwabab* 'misdeed' and *kina* 'owner'.

The Beja-Arabic-English part is followed by a reverse lexicon starting with the English translations. No equivalent is provided with Arabic as a starting point.

Compiling lists of vocabulary is a long and painstaking enterprise, for which the authors are to be thanked, but no bilingual or multilingual dictionary is perfect, and this one is no exception. Nevertheless, used with caution, it is a very welcome addition to our knowledge of the Beja lexicon, and to the already existing wordlists, lexicons and dictionaries (Almkvist 1881-1885; Reinisch 1895; Roper 1928; Hudson 2012; Wedekind *et al.* 2007), and the forthcoming dictionary by Vanhove and Hamid Ahmed (in preparation). It also must be acknowledged that it is the first lexicon of Beja that provides systematic translations into (classical) Arabic, a most welcome novelty.

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