

INDO-IRANIAN LANGUAGES IN OMAN

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ABSTRACT: *The coexistence of a number of minority languages with Arabic language in Oman has recently been cited in literature. Distant from the latter Semitic language, the former belong to three main language families: Indo-Iranian languages, Modern South Arabian languages and Bantu languages. Due to several factors such as speakers' base, restricted domain of use and ineffective intergenerational transmission, they fall into different categories concerning their language vitality. The former language family (i.e. Indo-Iranian) includes several languages some of which are indigenous to Oman while others are spoken by other communities in some neighboring countries. The mainstream of these languages are associated with ethnic groups that identify with them as their ethnic languages whereas some are not categorically associated with certain ethnicities per se. This paper is an attempt to examine lexical resemblance among these languages using the Swadesh's one hundred word list as its framework. Findings show that lexical resemblance is considerably high among these languages as the vast majority of lexical items in the list formed one, two, or three cognate groups in all or most languages as opposed to very few lexical items that happened to be so distinct in all languages under investigation that they did not form any cognate group of their own.*

KEYWORDS: Indo-Iranian, Oman, Baluchi, Kumzari, Lawati, Zadjali,

INTRODUCTION

Distinctive among its neighboring countries, the Sultanate of Oman exhibits a range of local languages spoken by minority ethnic groups spread in different parts of the country. Their genetic affiliation falls into three main language families: Indo-Iranian languages (Baluchi, Kumzari, Lawati, & Zadjali), Modern South Arabian languages (Bathari, Harsusi, Hobyot, Jabbali & Mehri) and Bantu languages (Swahili) (Al Jahdhami, 2013, Al Jahdhami, 2015). The big bulk of these languages are linked to Omani tribal communities that converse in them chiefly in the home domain in addition to Arabic, the national language of the country. Other speech communities, however, use some of these languages in countries other than Oman signifying that some of these languages have been brought to the Omani context via the migration of its speakers to Oman several decades ago (Peterson, 2004). Still some of these languages are indigenous languages having Oman as their only and solo homeland. Just like their genetic affiliation, they vary in the number of their speakers with thousands of speakers in the majority of them to few hundred speakers in some very critical cases, a fact that intrigues a question regarding their vitality in the course of time. Assessing them based on their speakers' base, domain of use and extent of intergenerational transmission, they seem to fall into three main groups: definitely endangered, severely endangered, and critically endangered languages (AlJahdhami, 2015).

Unlike Modern South Arabian languages spoken in the southern part of Oman, Indo-Iranian languages reside in the northern part of the country. With a number of speakers that exceeds

one billion dispersed over several countries, the latter family group branches from the bigger Indo-European language family (Khansir & Mozafari, 2014). In the Omani context, languages belonging to this family (i.e. Baluchi, Kumzari, Lawati, & Zadjali) are connected with ethnicities that identify with them as ethnic group languages. Noteworthy, other Indo-Iranian languages, namely Farsi, Urdu and Sindhi, happened to be spoken in Oman though with less number of speakers than the four aforesaid languages. Contrary to the former four languages, speakers of the latter are not definitely associated with one ethnic group per se. As a matter of fact, resemblance among these languages stands behind the fact that some speakers may use some of them as lingua franca to communicate with speakers of languages within the same family, a point that facilitates learning such languages to speakers of these languages though with different extents. This paper, hence, aims to explore lexical relatedness among these seven languages by means of the Swadesh's one hundred word list as the framework to this effect.

Overview

Before endeavoring into investigating lexical resemblance among these languages, the underneath section gives an overall view of each language listing them alphabetically.

Baluchi

Baluchi makes the first widely spoken Indo-Iranian language in Oman in comparison with its other Indo-Iranian counterparts with thousands of speakers in total. Apart from Oman, Baluchi is spoken in other countries such as Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan known as the Baluchistan area in addition to other dispersed zones (Spooner, 2012). It is known of having six different dialects that branch from its two main dialects, eastern and western dialects. It developed a writing script based on both the Arabic and Roman scripts after it formerly existed in a spoken form only (The Omani Encyclopedia, 2013). In the Omani context, Baluchi is mainly spoken in Muscat and AlBatina provinces besides smaller number of speakers in other spread areas in the country. Baluchi of Oman seems to have two main dialects that exhibit some lexical and phonological differences between Baluchi spoken in Muscat and the one spoken in AlBatina. Speakers of Baluchi are mainly members of the Baluchi tribe in addition to speakers from other ethnic groups like Zadjalis who are arguably considered a subgroup of the Baluchi ethnicity (Al Jahdhami, 2017).

Farsi

Farsi or Persian (as known to some speakers) is genetically affiliated with the Iranian group of the Iranian language family. It is spoken in several countries like Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan though with different varieties. Farsi spoken in Oman is not confined to an ethnic group per se, but rather spoken by speakers that could belong to different ethnicities such as Ajams, Baluchs, Lawatis, and Zadjalis with different numbers of speakers in each ethnicity. Exact number of Farsi speakers in Oman is not known; speakers of Farsi give an estimate of few hundred speakers in total. Lexically, Arabic language has contributed immensely to the making of Farsi lexicon in different spheres of life which in turn has influenced several Indian languages (Khansir & Muzafari, 2014). Though Farsi spoken in Oman is nearly the same as Farsi spoken elsewhere, it exhibits some slight differences both in lexicon and articulation.

Kumzari

Kumzari is a member of the Iranian language group, precisely the Southwestern subgroup (Thomas, 1930; Anonby, 2003; Ozihel, 2011). It is spoken by the Kumzari tribe in the Musandam Peninsula in the northern part of Oman. Kumzari speakers are estimated to be around more than five thousand speakers with the highest concentration in the coastal village of Kumzar in addition to smaller number of speakers scattered over other cities of Musandam such as Khasab and Bukha. Arabic and Persian have contributed a great deal to Kumzari in addition to other languages such as Urdu, Portuguese, Hindi and English (Thomas, 1930; The Omani Encyclopedia, 2013). Speakers of Kumzari believe that their ancestors were monolingual speakers of Arabic descending from the Shihi tribe. Due to the strategic coastal location of their homeland village, they had to mingle with speakers from several other languages and cultures which, in turn, has played a significant role in creating a language mixed of several languages, the nowadays so-called Kumzari (Al Jahdhami, 2013).

Lawati

Lawati is affiliated with the Indo-Aryan family group. It is spoken by the Lawati ethnicity whose big bulk resides in Muscat in addition to smaller number of speakers in AlBatina province with an estimated total number of few thousand speakers (Salman & Kharusi, 2011). Its appellation among its people is 'Khojki' originating from the Persian word 'xawaja' (The Omani Encyclopedia, 2013). Still it is referred to by some people as the language of 'xoja' coming from the same original word 'xawaja'. Though Lawati has a wider speakers' base as opposed to some other minority languages in Oman, speakers with high language proficiency in Lawati are mainly part of the elderly age group. In addition to having lexical resemblance to those found in other Iranian languages, Lawati has various lexical items borrowed from Arabic (The Omani Encyclopedia, 2013).

Urdu

Urdu is a member of the Indo-Aryan group of the Indo-Iranian language family. It is the official and national language of Pakistan as well as the lingua franca used among Pakistanis. It is also one of the official languages recognized in India. It is said that Urdu was born out of the interaction between Persian, Arabic and other languages, and its name is derivative from the Turkish term 'Ordu' which literally means 'the army'. Both Arabic and Persian have contributed significantly to the production of Urdu which happens to be the situation of having several languages that amalgamated into making this language (Sohail, 2012). Omani speakers of Urdu are usually Baluchs who have some sort of connection with Urdu speakers in Pakistan and India either as relatives or acquaintances. Numbers of these speakers cannot be vindicated; speakers, however, estimate their number to be very few hundred speakers residing mainly in Muscat.

Sindhi

Just like Urdu, Sindhi belongs to the Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-Iranian language family with millions of speakers in Pakistan and India (Mahar & Memon, 2009). Speakers of Sindhi in Oman are mainly linked with the Baluchi ethnicity whose relatives are speakers of Sindhi or who have some sort of contact with Sindhi speakers from both Pakistan and India. Exact number of Sindhi speakers in Oman is indeed hard to approximate. The language happens to share some lexical items with Zadjali which is erroneously considered, by some people, a

dialect of Sindhi. Mutual intelligibility between the two languages, however, is impossible despite the lexical resemblance between them (Al Jahdhami, 2017).

Zadjali

The name of the language is believed to be derived from the word 'Zadjal or Zadghal' meaning 'the language of the ancestors'. Zadjali is genetically affiliated with the Indo-Iranian language family group. Its immediate connection, however, is disputed as some believe that it is very close to the Kutchi language (Peterson, 2004) while another perspective stipulates that languages such as Baluchi, Persian and Sindhi have contributed to the making of Zadjali. Similarly, some speakers of Zadjali as well as of other Indo-Iranian languages opine that Zadjali is a dialect of Baluchi and/or Sindhi on the ground that it shares lexical items with both languages. Research, however, shows that mutual intelligibility to Zadjali to speakers of these two languages is impossible showing that it is a language of its own despite such lexical resemblance (Al Jahdhami, 2017). The exact number of Zadjali speakers is not known, but an estimate gives the total number of a few hundred speakers most of whom are from the elderly age group mainly found in Muscat.

METHODOLOGY

Native speakers of Baluchi, Farsi, Kumzari, Lawati, Urdu, Sindhi, and Zadjali were recorded providing the equivalents to the Swadesh's one hundred word list in their ethnic languages. Lexical items were phonemically transcribed and analyzed as shown in the underneath table.

Findings

Comparison of lexical items across all languages shows that lexical resemblance among them is significant exhibiting a wide range of lexical items that form lexical cognates though with different extents depending on the lexical item beforehand. Out of the one hundred lexical items, ninety happened to be shared (forming cognates groups) by at least two or more of these languages as opposed to ten completely different ones in all seven languages under investigation.

Lexical items that form cognate groups are marked in the table. Those that make one cognate group are shown in bold. Those forming a second cognate group, other than the one shown in bold, are italicized, and those that make a third cognate group are underlined. Lexical items that do not fall in any cognate group are kept in normal typeface. It should be noted that speakers of other dialects/ varieties of these languages elsewhere might exhibit some lexical and phonological differences in the provided list due to dialectal differences.

Table 1: The Swadesh's one hundred word list in Baluchi, Farsi, Kumzari, Lawati, Urdu, Sindhi and Zadjali, respectively

S.No	Swadesh	Baluchi	Farsi	Kumzari	Lawati	Urdu	Sindhi	Zadjali
1	I	ma:/man	mæn	meh	<i>a:m</i>	me	mənki	<i>a:h</i>
2	you	ta:/tə:	ʃumə	tu	tə:	tom	təhan	tu
3	we	ma/sadzi	mə	mah	<i>asa:</i>	ham	<i>asan</i>	<i>asi</i>
4	this	eh	in	jah	hi	je	hən	jə:h
5	that	a:	un	an	<i>hu</i>	<i>wə:h</i>	<i>təh</i>	<i>hə:h</i>
6	who	kaj/kaja	ki	aɪ	ker	kə:n	dʒə	ker
7	what	tʃi	tʃi	tʃeja	korə	kja:	tʃa	sə:h
8	not	na:	næ	na:	na	nahi	nah	mna
9	all	kəl/ drə:	hæmi	ammu	<i>sibbi</i>	<i>sab</i>	<i>sab^h</i>	ʃada:h
10	many	ba:z	χili	xitaɟah	gana/gan u	bə:hə:t	kitranʔi	gahta
11	one	jak	jeki	jak	hakku	ek	hak	hokɟəh
12	two	du/də:	dutə:	də:	<i>ba:</i>	də:	jah	<i>ba:h</i>
13	big	məzan/maza n	buzə:rk	dʒəp	wadu	ba:ra:	wadi	wadə
14	long	dra:dʒ	dirəz	d.ɟa:z	<i>digu</i>	lamba:	<i>dag^h</i>	<i>dəgə:h</i>
15	small	kəsən/kasa: n	kutʃik	tʃik	nandu	tʃə:ta:	naniɾə	nadkə:h
16	woman	dʒenən / dʒan	χə:nə:m	zank	ba:jri	awrat	awrat	za:lah
17	man	marden/ma rdan	ʔəpə	məɟtak	mard	a:dmi	insa:n	marda gə:h
18	person	bəmarɟ/ma rdəm	<i>fæχs</i>	a:dimi	ma:ru	<i>faxs</i>	<u>ma:ŋhə</u>	<u>mahanu h</u>
19	fish	ma:hi/ ma:hig	məhi	mej	matʃi	matʃli	matʃi	matʃi
20	bird	mərg	pæræn de	teɟah	dʒilk ^h ri	par mda:	paki	kapədar
21	dog	kotʃik/ kotʃek	<i>sæg</i>	<i>sə:k</i>	kottu	kota	kato	kətə:h
22	louse	bə:t/ bə:d	bæʃah	qəɟə	dʒujn	bɪɟdʒ	banhah	bə:d
23	tree	dratʃk	diræxt	ʃidɟtah	naxil	dʒha:r	<i>waŋ</i>	<i>wan</i>
24	seed	təm	hæste/ tə:χm	baɪ	da:nu	big	badʒ	tə:həm
25	leaf	ta:g	bærg	waɟqat	ka:gir	pi:ti	pepar	ban
26	root	agənd	riʃe	ʔəɟaq	ta:ri	dʒar	pa:ɾ	pa:ra
27	bark (of a tree)	pəst	pust	daɪ	nes	kidziha: l	ɟ ^h aɪ	puhand
28	skin	pəst	pust	pə:st	dʒa:mrɪ	<i>dʒild</i>	<i>galdʔi</i>	<i>dʒild</i>
29	flesh	gəɟɟid/ gə:ʃt	guʃt	dʒə:fat	gə:ʃt	gə:ʃ	gə:ʃt	boɪ
30	blood	hə:n	χun	xweim	<i>raɟ</i>	xə:n	<i>rat</i>	<i>raɟ</i>

31	bone	had	ustuxun	xaxan	hadu	haddi	bɔ:n	hadɔ
32	grease	pig	ʒukæn	pi	tʃarbi	dʒikna:i	ɔ:sa:	pig
33	egg	heg	tuχmæ mɔ:rk	xa:jadʒ	a:nu	anda:	ana:	a:nu
34	(animal) horn	kənt	ʃɒχ	qarn	sɪŋ	sɪŋ	sɔ:r	kənt
35	tail	bənd/ dɔm	dɔm	dɔm	butʃ	puntʃ	dɔm	dɔm
36	feather	ba:l	pir	pɔ:ɹ	pɔ:r	pank ^h	kanab ^h	faŋ
37	hair	pɒt/ mɪd	mu	mu	wa:ra	ba:l	wa:r	wa:r
38	head	sar	sɔr	saɹ	mat ^h u	sar	sar	matɔ:
39	ear	gɔʃ/ gɔ:f	guft	dʒɔ:f	k ^h an	ka:n	kan	kan
40	eye	tʃam	tʃeʃ	tʃɔm	ak ^h i	a:nk ^h	a:k ^h	akah
41	nose	pɔ:z	dɔmɔ:χ	nɒxɹat	ɲak	na:k	nak	nak
42	mouth	daf/ dam	dɒhæn	ka:ɹah	wa:t	mu	wa:t	wa:t
43	tooth	dantɔn/ danda:n	dændu d	dna:n	dandɔ:	da:t	dand	dand
44	tongue	zɔɔ:n/ zɔba:n	zæbɔn	zwa:n	ɟib	zoba:n	zba:n	dim
45	fingernai l	mɔrdɔ:naŋ/ na:kun	ænguʃt / dæst	linkɪt	nɔ:	uŋli	a:ŋɪr	nu
46	foot	pa:d	pɔ:	pa:	paɟ	pir	da:min	perɔ
47	knee	kənd/ kən	zɔ:nu	ɹɔkbat	munu	ɡɔtna:	ɡɔdɪn	kɔ:da
48	hand	dast	dæst	dɪst	hat ^h	ha:t	hat	hat
49	belly	la:f	ʃikæm	ʃkam	beɫ ^h	pet	aɫ ^h a:rdʒ ɪn	ped
50	neck	gardan	ɡærdæ n	gaɹdan	gardɪn	gardan	ɡ ^h ɪtʃɪm	kand
51	chest	ɡwa:r	sine	sinah	tʃa:ti	sina:	sɪnɔ	hiki
52	heart	dɪl	qɒlb	dal	dɪl	dɪl	dɪl	he
53	liver	dʒɛgar/ dɪgar	dʒɪɡɔr	dʒɔ:kaɹ	beɫu	kaledʒa: :	dʒɪgar	dɪgar
54	drink (V)	wa:rt/ waragɪ	nuʃɪdæ n	ʃaɹabagɪd ɪʃ	bjetu	pina:	pia:ŋ	bjesɔ
55	eat (V)	wa:/ waragɪ	χɔ:rdæ n	xɔ:dɪʃ	karto	ka:na:	ka:ɪŋ	kaisɔ
56	bite (V)	ɡartʃɪ/kasɪ	ɡɔ:zbɪz æn	xajdɪʃ	tʃ ^h akto vɪdʒɛ	ka:tna:	kitʃb ^h ɪn la	dandale sɔ
57	see (V)	tʃa:ɹɪ/ tʃa:ragɪ	didæn	dʒɪɪʃ	ɲja:retu	deɪkna:	dʌsɪŋ	nahares ɔ
58	hear (V)	ɛʃkɔ/ɪʃkanag ɪ	ʃnidæn	ʃnudɪʃ	sɔnetu	sɔnna:	batɪŋ	bɔndes ɔ
59	know (V)	zɔ:/ za:nagɪ	dænst æn	da:ndɪʃ	ʃɔdʒetu	dʒa:nn a:	xabar	da:nɛs ɔ
60	sleep (V)	wɛpt wapsagɪ	χwæbɪd æn	xuʃt	sɔmmet u	sɔ:na:	nandkar ŋ	sɔmme sɔ
61	die (V)	mɔ/ maragɪ	bremɪr dæn	mɔɹd	maretu	marna:	marŋ	maresɔ

62	kill (V)	kəʃ /kəʃaɪ	kuʃtæn	kɪʃtɪʃ	ma:retu	ma:rna	ma:rɪ	ma:res o
63	Swim (V)	dʒɒnʃɒtʃe/za ʃɔ:dagɪ	ʃɪnɔ:kæ rdæn	ʃna:wɪd ɪʃ	veɪndʒetu	ti:rna	tɪrɪ	ʊŋh ^h res o
64	fly (V)	ba:lɪkə/ba:lk anagɪ	brepɔrv ɔ:z	pɔ:ɪd	udetu	ɔ:rna:	adɑ:minɪ	ba:rkar esɔ
65	walk (V)	ɛra: / laha:lawagɪ	rɔ:h ræftæn	mɪʃɡɪdɪʃ	langetu	tʃalna:	dɔ:ɾan	ɡɔresɔ
66	come (V)	a:tk/ pedai	æmdæ n	a:mad	atʃetu	a:na:	itʃi	atesɔ
67	lie (down) (V)	blet	diɾɔzkʃi dæn	kaɪdɪdɪʃ ɔ:	letetu	letna:	hi ^h leɪp ɔɪ	somme sɔ
68	sit (V)	bnɪnd / nendagɪ	nɪʃtæn	nɪʃt	vjetu	betna:	wihan	bəhesɔ
69	stand (V)	ɛtʃa:θ/ ɔ:ʃtagɪ	ʔɪstædæ n	seɪdɪʃxɔ:	ubjetu	ɔ:tna:	pihan	pɛjesɔ
70	give (V)	da:θ/ deagɪ	dedæn	da:ɪʃ	dʒeto	dena:	dɪn	deso
71	say (V)	watʃɪ/ ɡɔ:ʃagɪ	ɡuftæn	ɡɪʃtɪʃ	tʃ ^h ejtu	bɔ:lna:	tʃɔ:n	tɔesɔ
72	sun	rutʃ	ɔ:ftɔ:b	ɪntaf	sɒd	d ^h up	sag	sezza
73	moon	ma:h	mɔ:	mitu	dʒand	tʃa:nd	tʃand	tʃa:n
74	star	ɛsta:r/ sɛtarəh	setɔ:re	sta:ɪdʒ	ta:rɔ	sɪta:ra:	ta:rɔ	ta:rɔ
75	water	a:f/a:p	ɒb	a:w	pa:ni	pa:ni	pa:ɪni	pa:ni
76	rain	ha:wɔr/ hɔ:r	bɔ:run	ba:ɪm	mi	ba:rɪʃ	minhan	mi
77	stone	dɒk/ dɔ:g	sæŋ	bɒd	bat ^h ar	patar	pɪɾar	mɒdkɔ
78	sand	ha:k	ræml	dʒɪɪ	ra:j	ret	w:ari?	reka
79	earth	dɛgar/ zamin	zæmin	zɑmja	zɪmin	zamin	zɪmin	zamin
80	cloud	ɪstin/ karkar	æbr	nam	wa:dja	ba:dal	kakar	dʒamba r
81	smoke	kɛʃɪ	dut	dɔ:ɪ	ɒuh	dhowa :	dɒnhɔ n	tɔh
82	fire	a:s	ɔ:tɪʃ	a:tʃ	t ^h a:du	a:g	pa:hah	derɔ
83	ash	pɔr/ pɔ:r	χɔ:kɪst æ r	xaɪʃtɪn	pɒlja:r	ra:h	ra:h	sa:r
84	burn (V)	sɒtk/ asɾɔkaragɪ	bresɔ:χt æn	ħaɪaqaɪ dɪʃ	ba:retu	dʒa:la:	sa:ɾan	ba:res o
85	path	rɛh/ ra:hah	rɔ:h	tɪrah	rastu	ra:sta:	wa:t	sallɔ
86	mountain	kɔh/ kɔ:h	kuh	kɔ:	dɒŋɡɔr	paha:r	dʒabal	tsabbar
87	red	sɔhr/ sɔ:hɔ:r	sɔ:rɪ	sɪɪx	raɪu	la:l	ɡa:ɾhɔ	ɡahaɾɔ
88	green	sabz	sæbz	sɔ:z	sa:w	hara:	sa:ʔɔ	ʃɪnz
89	yellow	zard	zærd	zɑɪd	hajdu	pi:la:	pɪɔ	pɪɾɔ
90	white	speθ/ sapɛt	sefid	spiɪ	atʃu	safed	a:tʃɔ	dahuɾɔ
91	black	sja:h	sɪjɔ:h	sih	ka:ru	ka:la:	ka:rɔ	ka:rɔ

92	night	faf	fæb	faw	<i>ra:t</i>	<i>ra:t</i>	<i>ra:t</i>	<i>ra:t</i>
93	hot	garmə/ garm	də:b	ga:jam	garm	garam	garm	kəsuwɪ
94	cold	sa:rt/ sard	særd	sajd	t^hadu	t^hand	b^had^h	kaɖɪ
95	full	pəre/ porri	pə:r	pala	dzakka:r	makmal	makmal	variwɪ
96	new	nə:kɪ	dʒædid	nə:	naw	naja:	naʔun	nawwɪ
97	good	sa:re/ farri	χub	ma:l	uptfu	atfa:	satu	gegi
98	round	girdə/ gard	gerd	hawtɪt	tʃ^haklɪ	gɔ:l	lakin	gɔ:l
99	dry	həʃkə/ həʃk	χɔ:ʃk	aɖɪ	sokku	kɔ:ʃk	sokɪ	sok^howɪ
100	name	nəm/ na:m	ism	nam	na:lv	na:m	na:lv	la:lv

DISCUSSION

As far as lexical resemblance is concerned, examined lexical items exhibit the following patterns:

One Cognate Group

Shared lexical items in this group form one cognate group only. Lexical items that do not fall into this cognate group do not form a (second) cognate group of their own, but rather sound different from all other lexical items. Such lexical items are marked as none cognate words (henceforth NCW). Languages that have NCWs distinct from the cognate group are mentioned beside each lexical item. This one-cognate group has the largest number of lexical items out of one hundred as it comprises fifty lexical items in total as presented below.

you (NCW in Farsi & Sindhi), this (NCW in Farsi, Lawati & Sindhi), who (NCW in Kumzari & Sindhi), what (NCW in Lawati, Urdu and Zadjali), negation marker 'no'/'not', one, big (NCW in Baluchi, Farsi, Kumzari & Urdu), small (NCW in Baluchi, Lawati, Urdu, Sindhi & Zadjali), woman (NCW in Baluchi, Farsi, Kumzari, Lawati & Zadjali), man (NCW in Farsi, Urdu & Sindhi), fish, bird (NCW in Baluchi, Kumzari, Lawati, Sindhi & Zadjali), louse (NCW in Farsi, Kumzari, Lawati, Urdu & Sindhi), seed (NCW in Kumzari, Lawati, Urdu & Sindhi), root (NCW in Baluchi, Farsi, Kumzari, Lawati & Urdu), bark (of a tree) (NCW in Kumzari, Lawati, Urdu, Sindhi & Zadjali), flesh (NCW in Zadjali), bone (NCW in Farsi, Kumzari & Sindhi), grease (NCW in Farsi, Lawati, Urdu & Sindhi), egg (NCW in Baluchi, Farsi, & Kumzari), feather (NCW in Baluchi, Urdu, Sindhi & Zadjali), nose (NCW in Baluchi, Farsi & Kumzari), mouth (NCW in Baluchi, Farsi Kumzari & Urdu), tooth, tongue (NCW in Lawati & Zadjali), fingernail (NCW in Baluchi, Farsi, Kumzari, Urdu & Sindhi), neck (NCW in Sindhi & Zadjali), chest (NCW in Baluchi, Lawati & Zadjali), heart (NCW in Farsi & Zadjali), liver (NCW in Lawati & Urdu), know (V (NCW in Baluchi, Lawati, & Sindhi), sleep (V) (NCW in Baluchi, Farsi, Kumzari, Urdu & Sindhi), die (V) (NCW in Farsi), lie (down) (NCW in Baluchi, Farsi, Kumzari, Sindhi & Zadjali), sit (V) (NCW in Baluchi, Lawati, Urdu, Sindhi & Zadjali), say (V) (NCW in Baluchi, Lawati, Urdu, Sindhi & Zadjali), stone (NCW in Baluchi, Farsi, Kumzari & Zadjali), earth, cloud (NCW in Farsi, Kumzari, Lawati, Urdu & Zadjali), smoke (NCW in Baluchi), fire (NCW in Lawati, Sindhi & Zadjali), ash (NCW in Baluchi, Farsi, Kumzari, Lawati & Zadjali), burn (V) (NCW in Baluchi, Farsi, Kumzari, Urdu & Sindhi), mountain (NCW in Lawati, Urdu, Sindhi & Zadjali), red (NCW in Lawati, Urdu, Sindhi & Zadjali), green (NCW in Kumzari, Lawati,

Urdu, Sindhi & Zadjali), hot (NCW in Farsi & Zadjali), cold (NCW in Lawati, Urdu, Sindhi & Zadjali), new (NCW in Farsi), good (NCW in Baluchi, Farsi, Kumzari, Sindhi & Zadjali)

Two Cognate Groups

Unlike the aforementioned cognate group, shared lexical items here fall into two main cognate groups. Lexical items that do not fall into these two cognate groups do not form a (third) cognate group of their own but rather make NCWs that are different from all lexical items in the two groups. Thirty seven lexical items belong to this group as revealed below.

I (NCW in Sindhi), we (NCW in Urdu), that (NCW in Baluchi), all (NCW in Baluchi & Zadjali), two (NCW in Sindhi), long (NCW in Urdu), dog, tree (NCW in Kumzari, Lawati & Urdu), skin (NCW in Lawati), blood, horn (of an animal) (NCW in Farsi, Kumzari & Sindhi), tail, hair (NCW in Baluchi & Urdu), head, ear, eye, hand, belly (NCW in Baluchi, & Sindhi), drink (V) (NCW in Baluchi, Farsi & Kumzari), hear (V) (NCW in Baluchi, Sindhi & Zadjali), kill (V), swim (V) (NCW in Baluchi, Lawati & Zadjali), come (V) (NCW in Baluchi, Urdu & Zadjali), give (V) (NCW in Baluchi, Farsi & Kumzari), moon (NCW in Kumzari), star, water, rain (NCW in Baluchi & Sindhi), path (NCW in Kumzari, Sindhi & Zadjali), yellow (NCW in Lawati), white (NCW in Zadjali), black, night, full (NCW in Kumzari, Lawati & Zadjali), round (NCW in Kumzari, Lawati & Sindhi), dry (NCW in Kumzari), name (NCW in Farsi).

Three Cognate Groups

This group includes shared lexical items that form three distinct cognate groups in the languages under investigation. Lexical items that belong to none of these three groups make no cognate group of their own and are marked as NCWs. This group has the lowest number of lexical items having three lexical items in total as shown below.

person (NCW in Kumzari), foot (NCW in Sindhi), eat (V) (NCW in Baluchi)

None Cognates

Contrary to the three previous groups, this group includes lexical items that do not form any cognate group in all seven languages as they are completely different in all languages beforehand; each language has its own lexical item that is distinct from those used by other languages. This groups has ten lexical items in total shown underneath.

many, leaf, knee, bite (V), see (V), fly (V), walk (V), stand (V), sun, sand.

Shared lexical items in many cases exhibit slight consonantal and/or vocalic phonemic discrepancy with more differences exhibited in vowels than those in consonants. There are cases of shared lexical items that form minimal or near minimal pairs exhibiting one or two segmental differences respectively. In few cases, shared lexical items do not exhibit any slight difference across different languages, for they are literally identical. Even NCWs in various cases share some phonemes with those that form cognate groups especially consonants occurring word initially which shows some sort of resemblance among these languages though it is in the phonemic level. Such lexical resemblance exhibited in the different cognate groups ranging from exact cognates, minimal and near minimal pairs to resemblance in the segmental level shows the extent of the huge connection and similarity

among these languages that belong to the same language family and are spoken more or less at the same proximity.

CONCLUSION

The paper examined the extent of lexical resemblance among seven Indo-Iranian languages spoken in the Sultanate of Oman, namely Baluchi, Farsi, Kumzari, Lawati, Urdu, Sindhi and Zadjali. Recordings of the equivalents to the Swadesh's one hundred word list in these languages show that the majority of these items are shared by most of these languages with ninety words forming lexical cognates in at least two or more languages as opposed to ten lexical items that are completely different in all seven languages as they do not seem to form any cognate group. Such apparent disproportion between the number of lexical items shared by these languages compared to those unshared ones demonstrates the enormous lexical resemblances among them.

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