Title:

Cøllø (Shilluk) in South Sudan and Nobiin Nubian in Sudan: How Do the Teaching Situations Differ?

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Abstract:

This study deals with the teaching situations of two Nilo-Saharan languages in order to identify benefits that teachers of each language might derive from a greater understanding of the procedures of the other. Extensive teaching materials have been developed both for Cøllø (Shilluk) in South Sudan and for Nobiin Nobiin in Sudan. However, the context for teaching these two languages is dramatically different.

On the one hand, a three-year course for teaching the local language Cøllø is now proceeding at the Kings’ Academy of Languages and Translation (KALT) by staff who also hold faculty positions at Upper Nile University. Teachers are also involved with training students to master the English language for business and government in the South Sudan. Particular attention will be given to any advantages or disadvantages that may arise from the dual commitment of teachers to Cøllø and English.

On the other hand, Nobiin Nubian is not normally supported by the educational system of Sudan as a result of the policy of Arabicization (ta’rib) generally followed in Sudanese educational institutions, although there have been exceptions such as the Yusuf al-Khalifa Centre for Writing Languages in Arabic Letters at the International University of
Africa in Khartoum. Nobīn is widely recognised as an historic language of culture and especially the creative arts involving songs and poetry.

The development of materials for teaching Nobīn has been the concern of the Centre for Nubian Studies and Documentation, the DAL Group in Khartoum and Nubian scholars such as the late Muḥammad Mitwalli Badr, who was a senior educator in the school system of Egyptian Nubia and who produced in 1955 a Nubian grammar which is still in use today. Language teaching has received some support from generous Nubian philanthropists. However, there is also a perceived threat that even Nobīn may require greater support if it is ultimately to survive.

Both Nobīn and Cōllō are considered to be languages of high culture with a great history. The present project will compare and contrast the situations in which they are taught for the mutual benefit of the teachers involved and, if possible, to benefit teachers of other Nilo-Saharan languages as well.