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Classical Arabic Lexicographical Tradition as a Part of Language Policy (case study: Ibn Manzur's "Lisān al-'arab")

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Introduction

The Classical Arabic lexicographical tradition with its considerable diversity spanning a vast number of onomasiological or semasiological lexica demonstrates the continuous development of the tradition among the Arabs. However, in addition to its discipline-specific features, it is of particular interest to examine the historical context and linguistic circumstances in which classical Arabic dictionaries were compiled. Specifically, whether the language situation influenced the direction of lexicographical endeavors and to what extent did Arabic dictionaries contributed to the implementation of a specific, in the modern sense, language policy.

To investigate this, one of the most notable dictionaries of the Arabic lexicographical tradition, Ibn Manzur's "Lisān al-'arab" ('*The Language of the Arabs*') will be examined, with particular emphasis on its introductory part in a light of the historical/social context and language situation in which the dictionary was compiled.

The author's introduction accompanies almost all major classical Arabic dictionaries, except the cases when the introduction has not reached to us (e.g., Al-Shaybani's „Kitāb al-jīm"). In general, the authors' introductory parts in the Arabic lexicographical tradition primarily focus on outlining the structure of the dictionary, a characteristic most notably evident in the first dictionary of the Arabic lexicographical tradition, Al-Khalil's "Kitāb al-'ayn". However, in later periods, alongside the discussion of the structure of the dictionary, there was an increasing emphasis on the language situation prevailing at the time of its compilation. This shift enables us, to some extent to regard dictionaries as a certain, in the modern sense, instrument for language policy implementation. It is in this context that the introduction of "*Lisān al-'arab*" becomes particularly significant, as it offers an opportunity to examine the extent to which the language situation was reflected in the lexicographer's work and whether it can be considered part of a broader language policy.

Ibn Manzur (1233–1311), the author of "Lisān al-'arab" expressed his concern over the decline of the Arabic language. This period is characterized by a recurring portrayal of the decadent state of the language. For instance, Ibn Battuta, visiting Basra in 1327, described hearing a preacher committed serious grammatical mistakes while delivering his sermon. When he informed the qadi

of the incident, the qadi answered: "In this town there is not one left who knows anything about grammar." Basra, where the mastery of grammar reached its height, had no preacher capable of speaking Arabic without breaking grammatical rules (Cheijne 1969: 82-83).

The aforementioned language situation was itself a consequence of broader historical and social developments. Over time, the Arabic language gradually declined and lost its prestige and power. Consequently, before delving into the introduction of "Lisān al-'arab" it is essential to provide a brief overview of the historical and social context, the linguistic environment, and the language policies implemented in response to these circumstances from the establishment of the Caliphate to the period during which "Lisān al-'arab" (completed in 1290) was compiled.

The present paper will attempt to answer the following questions:

a) How did historical/social context affect early Arabic linguistic activities? Can it be considered part of a language policy?

b) Lexicographer as the implementer of language policy – in what historical/social and linguistic situation and for what purpose did the author compile "Lisān al-'arab"?

By answering these questions, the paper will contextualize "Lisān al-'arab" within the broader history of Arabic linguistic activities and examine how lexicographical work can be a part of language policy.

Language Policy Elements in Early Arabic Linguistic Activities

When examining the early traces of language policy with the Arabs and the linguistic initiatives to implement this policy, three key stages can be identified: the period of the first four Caliphs, the Umayyad and Abbasid eras, and the post-Abbasid period.

The beginnings of language-related activities in the Arab world are closely linked to the rise of Islam and the early period of the Caliphate. During the 7th and 8th centuries, particularly from the reign of caliph Umar (634-644) (see for more, Gelovani & Sanikidze 2009), the expansion of the Caliphate led to a more multiethnic and multilingual society. As territories grew, language contact increasingly influenced the Arabic language. Ibn Jinni's "Al-ḥaṣā'iṣ" and Ibn Khaldun's "Al-muqaddima" both contain numerous references to the gradual infiltration of non-Arabs Arabic into the language habits of the Arabs themselves, contributing to the adoption of solecisms and other linguistic peculiarities. The vernaculars spoken in urban areas were viewed as more distorted compared to the language of the Bedouins, who lived in relative isolation from foreign influences on the Arabian Peninsula. This linguistic situation prompted the Caliphate to address language-related issues at the highest levels.

The existence of the Caliphate as a state formation in a multiethnic environment necessitated an effective governance system capable of managing the entire territory through a centralized administration. Language issues played a pivotal role in achieving this goal from the outset. It appears that shortly after the Caliphate's establishment caliphs recognized the importance of a unified, standardized language. Standardized language, as a tool of authority, assisted to sustain a strong, cohesive governance structure, which in turn facilitated the effective implementation of the Caliphate's policies and ensured the smooth functioning of its administration, as well as the peaceful coexistence of its diverse, multilingual, and multiethnic population. This need for linguistic unity was further compounded by the sacred status of the Arabic language as the language of the *Qur'ān*, which heightened the necessity of establishing and formalizing linguistic norms. One of the earliest instances of implementing language policy in this context can be traced to the preparation of the final and standard version of the *Qur'ān*. The first caliph, Abu Bakr (632-634) is credited with collecting the scattered material, and it fell to caliph Umar (634-644) to put the *Qur'ān* in book form. Since the first edition

contained some variations the third caliph, Uthman (644–656) took the initiative to standardize this version. The new edition became the final and standard version (Cheijne 1969: 58).

Numerous accounts indicate that the rulers actively called upon grammarians to preserve the pure Arabic language from foreign influence. In response, grammarians started to pinpoint the errors (*laḥn*) of urban speakers. In formulating linguistic norms, they predominantly relied on the speech of isolated Bedouin speakers (Miller 2007: 7). According to Ibn Al-Anbar's "Nuzhat al-'alibbā'" the ruler of Iraq, Ziyad ibn Abihi (d. 673), concerned with the corruption of the language due to foreign influences, requested the assistance of Abu l-Aswad Al-Du'ali (d. 688). In some versions the central role in the foundation of grammar is assigned to the fourth caliph, Ali (656–66) (Versteegh 1997: 2). Both Al-Duʾali and Sibawayhi are said to have been prompted to investigate grammatical and language-related issues following the occurrence of *laḥn* (Baalbaki 2014: 170).

During the subsequent Umayyad period (661–750), considerable emphasis was placed on the importance of eloquent speech, good speech was considered as a mark of nobility. Good Arabic was even considered as a criterion for succession to the rule. During their less than one century of rule (661–750), the Umayyads succeeded in disseminating the Arabic language (Cheijne 1969: 61-64). One of the most decisive and impactful measures in this direction was implemented by caliph Abd Al-Malik (685-705) to secure the dominance of Arabic throughout the Caliphate as he had declared Arabic as the official language. As some view, Abd Al-Malik's reforms contributed to the linguistic conquest of Arabic in a wide territory (Cheijne 1969: 64). Abd Al-Malik's Arabization program's immediate effect was the demand for Arabic as a prerequisite of imperial service, which compelled non-Arabic speakers to learn Arabic and teach it to their proteges. It became unavoidable for them to articulate their claims in Arabic in order to negotiate their interests with the ruling powers (Yücesoy 2015: 385-386). Accordingly, the Arabization reforms of Abd al-Malik further embedded Arabic as a unifying force within the diverse population of the Caliphate.

The Abbasid dynasty (750–1258), though unable to establish the centralized government or political unity that characterized the Umayyads, nonetheless witnessed a significant socio-intellectual revolution that profoundly impacted the Arabic language. During this period, an active intellectual movement (for instance, the movement called *aš-šuʿūbiyya* formed by neo-Muslims) had a leading role in shaping the intellectual landscape, as well as translation movement enriched the language (Cheijne 1969: 64-68). It was also during the Abbasid era that *Al-Kitāb* by Sibawayhi (760–796) was completed, a normative grammar that the Muslim world needed (Fleisch 1994: 172) (although Sibawayhi's fame dates from a later period, about a century after his death (Versteegh 2015: 203)). In about 840, the transition of the Basrans and Kufans from the exegetico-grammatical traditions to that of purely grammatical schools began, and in the period of 890–930, Basra and Kufa become established grammatical schools (Owens 1990: 218-219). In addition, the emergence of Baghdad School further enriching the intellectual landscape of the Abbasid period.

Despite this intellectual flourishing, the internal division of the Islamic Empire in the 9th and 10th centuries brought serious consequences in the 11th century. One of the major factors contributing to the decline and intellectual stagnation of Arabic lied in recurrent invasions of Muslim lands by East Asiatic hordes, as well as the Mongol invasions in the 13th century with culminating in the fall of Baghdad, the city of peace, in 1258. Despite shifting center of activities to Egypt, North Africa and Spain, signs of decline were becoming visible (Cheijne 1969: 81-82).

The decline of the Caliphate during this period significantly impacted the language situation. While earlier periods, such as the reigns of the first four caliphs, the Umayyads, and to a certain extent the Abbasids, saw the state actively engaged in implementing linguistic reforms, by the second half of the 13th century, such efforts were no longer feasible. This is where "Lisān al-ʿarab" stands out. Ibn Manzur, the author, emerges as a solitary figure dedicated to defending the Arabic language, stepping in where state-led linguistic initiatives had faltered.

Ibn Manzur's "Lisān al-'arab" as a Language Policy Implementer

Completed in 1290, with the exception of the much later "Tāj al-'arūs", "Lisān al-'arab" is the most comprehensive Arabic lexicon. As Baalbaki notes "Lisān al-'arab" may truly be described as an encyclopedic dictionary which contains a vast amount of materials related to the various fields. Most importantly, Ibn Manzur's work overshadowed most earlier lexica and became the most authoritative and comprehensive source of classical Arabic usage (Baalbaki 2014: 385-391).

Beside the discipline-specific features, it is of particular interest to examine the historical context and linguistic circumstances in which "Lisān al-'arab" was compiled and to which extent the language situation was reflected in lexicographer's work. To address these issues the introduction of the dictionary will be analyzed.

Completed his dictionary in a period of historical instability the author expresses his concern over the decadent state of the Arabic language. In the introduction of "Lisān al-'arab" Ibn Manzur compares his work to Noah's Ark suggesting that it serves to preserve the language from the linguistic "flood". Having this in mind, our aim is to determine how the linguistic situation was reflected in the introductory part of the dictionary and examine the author's individual efforts to preserve the Arabic language.

When analyzing the introduction of "Lisān al-'arab", our focus will be on the following aspects:

a) Passages revealing the language situation during the compilation of the dictionary;

b) The author's assessment of the language situation;

c) What creates a linguistic "flood" for the author – increased linguistic errors or in addition to it the question of the prestige and status of Arabic was arisen?

d) Lexicographer as the implementer of language policy – in what historical/social and linguistic situation and for what purpose did the author compile "Lisān al-'arab"?

Ibn Manzur's (1232-1311) "Lisān al-'arab", completed in 1290, was compiled at a time when the Arabic language had already witnessed a significant decline. This decline was not only evident from a purely linguistic perspective but also from a social standpoint. In addition to linguistic solecisms, the incorrect speech of non-Arabs, and the growing influence of urban variants on the language habits of the Arabs, by the second half of the 13th century, concerns extended beyond mere linguistic errors. The prestige of the Arabic itself was increasingly at risk, and it became necessary to defend both its purity and status. This concern is clearly articulated in the introduction of "Lisān al-'Arab".

To compare to the introductions of other dictionaries (e.g., "Kitāb al-'ayn", "Mujmal al-luġa", „Tahḏīb al-luġa", „Al-muḥīṭ fī l-luġa", „Jamharat al-luġa", „Tāj al-luġa wa-ṣiḥāḥ al-'arabiyya", „Al-qāmūs al-muḥīṭ"), Ibn Manzur's introduction stands out in its emphasis on the value of the Arabic language. He presents it as a clear and eloquent language, as well as the language of the *Qur'ān* and the inhabitants of Paradise:

"فإن الله سبحانه قد كرم الإنسان وفضله بالنطق على سائر الحيوان، وشرف هذا اللسان العربي بالبيان على كل لسان، وكفاه شرفا إنه به نزل القرآن، وأنه لغة أهل الجنان."

"Indeed, Allah, the Exalted, has honored and preferred human beings over all
other living creatures by granting them speech, and has ennobled this Arabic language
with clearness/eloquence above all other languages. It is enough of an honor that the

Qur'ān was revealed in it, and that it is the language of the people of Paradise." (Ibn Manzur, Lisān al-'arab, 11).

As the Caliphate weakened, the decline in the status of the Arabic coincided with a growing tendency to adopt foreign languages. In light of this, it is understandable that Ibn Manzur would begin the introduction of his "Lisān al-'Arab" by praising Arabic and asserting its superiority over other languages. By stressing the sacredness of the language and its central role in Islamic identity.

While referring to the purely language-related issues, the author observes that, by the time his dictionary was being compiled, solecisms and grammatical mistakes were widespread:

"قد غلب في هذا الأوان من اختلاف الألسنة والألوان، حتى لقد أصبح اللحن في الكلام يعد لحنا مردودا، وصار النطق بالعربية من المعايب معدودا."

"In this time, the diversity of languages and colors [people] has prevailed to such an extent that errors in speech have come to be deemed a reproachable mistake, and speaking in Arabic has been counted among the defects." (Ibn Manzur, Lisān al-'arab, 13).

However, Ibn Manzur goes beyond merely addressing linguistic errors. Namely, he discusses no less profound issue – the weakening of Arabic's prestige and status, especially in light of a growing tendency to adopt foreign languages:

"وتفاصحوا في غير اللغة العربية."

"[People] have sought eloquence in languages other than Arabic." (Ibn Manzur, Lisān al-'arab, 13).

The introduction, therefore, highlights the linguistic challenges of a time when Arabic's traditional role as the dominant language was under threat. Thus, Ibn Manzur demonstrates the urgency of his work, reflecting both the linguistic and social challenges of his time.

In addition, Arabic, once the language of prestige seems to have lost much of its former status:

"فجمعت هذا الكتاب في زمن أهله بغير لغته يفخرون."

"So, I compiled this book at a time when its people prided themselves on   languages other than its language [language of the book, i.e., Arabic]." (Ibn Manzur, Lisān al-'arab, 13).

As mentioned earlier in this paper, since the period of the first four caliphs and throughout the Umayyad's rule and early period of Abbasid era, Arabic was regarded as a language of prestige, social advancement and political unity. Most importantly, it was seen as the sacred language of the *Qur'ān*. However, by the 13th century, especially after the fall of Baghdad ("Lisān al-'Arab" was actually completed 32 years after the siege of Baghdad), and as mentioned above in this paper, despite shifting the center of activities from Baghdad, signs of decline were becoming increasingly visible.

Ibn Manzur's references to the language situation indicates that the prestige of the Arabic language had reached its lowest point. What once served as a symbol of power, cultural identity, and religious sacredness had been undermined by a combination of social, political, and linguistic factors. Arabic's everyday prestige and functional dominance had waned. Ibn Manzur's concerns, therefore, were not just about preserving the linguistic purity of Arabic, but also about restoring its cultural and social prominence, which had been severely diminished by the end of the 13th century.

The introduction of "Lisān al-'Arab" reinforces the language situation previously discussed in this paper. Ibn Manzur's observations highlight the critical issues confronting the Arabic language at the end of the 13th century. These issues can be identified as follows:

a) The prevalence of linguistic solecisms and errors particularly in urban areas where the influences from other languages were common.

b) The weakening of the prestige, power, and status of Arabic – Arabic, once the language of prestige seems to have lost much of its former status.

c) The shift of linguistic prestige from Arabic to other foreign languages – the prestige of Arabic seems to had increasingly shifted to foreign languages. This shift in its turn contributed to the erosion of Arabic's dominance.

d) The absence of a state system to protect the language – The weakening of centralized power meant that there was no longer a strong, unified state structure with the resources or political will to protect and promote the language. Unlike earlier periods when the caliphs actively supported and participated in the standardization of the language, there was no such institutional backing for Arabic at the time of Ibn Manzur.

The above mentioned issues itself reflect the profound challenges faced by Arabic at the time. In light of this, Ibn Manzur's dictionary can be considered as a response to this crisis, attempting to preserve the language and restore its prominence in a time of linguistic and social instability.

In the introduction of his dictionary Ibn Manzur resembles himself to Noah, who built the ark to save the mankind from the flood. In a similar vein, Ibn Manzur describes his dictionary, "Lisān al-ʿarab" as an "ark" designed/compiled to preserve the Arabic language in the face of the overwhelming linguistic flood.

"وصنعته كما صنع نوح الفلك وقومه منه يسخرون، وسميته "لسان العرب"".

"I made it as Noah made the ark, while his people mocked him, and I named it "Lisān al-ʿarab"[The language of the Arabs]" (Ibn Manzur, Lisān al-ʿarab, 13).

As the author says he named his "ark" *lisān al-ʿarab* (*The language of the Arabs*) using the term *Lisān*. To clarify the sense in which the word is used in Arabic heritage, *lisān* was more frequently used to indicate 'language' to compare the term *luġa* used more often to indicate dialectal varieties of Arabic, and which in Modern Standard Arabic has come to mean '(foreign) language', for which in Classical Arabic the term *lisān* was used more often (for detailed information see: Hassanein 2006; Iványi 2006).

Just as Noah's ark was a vessel of salvation, Ibn Manzur views his work as a means of preserving the Arabic language, protecting it from further decline and ensuring its continued survival for future generations. The use of this analogy highlights the urgency and significance the lexicographer attached to his work. In the comparison of his work to Noah's Ark, Ibn Manzur subtly reveals an individual initiative that can be understood as a form of "language policy." His primary goal was to collect and preserve the linguistic material of Arabic to protect it from the "linguistic flood" that was threatening the language. As we have seen, the status of Arabic had declined both linguistically, with increasing errors and influences from other languages, and sociolinguistically, with decline in prestige and status. Ibn Manzur's work was intended to serve as a tool for implementing language policy aiming both to preserve the language and restore its prestige. "Lisān al-ʿarab", then, can be viewed as a response to this situation – a determined effort to protect the language from further decline.

Conclusion

As we have seen above, the emergence of the Caliphate as such made it urgent to pursue an appropriate language policy. As the territories grew, the Caliphate became even more multiethnic and multilingual. Language contacts increasingly influenced the Arabic language, and Arabic filled with non-Arab speakers' solecisms influenced the language habits of the Arabs in later periods. The situation was sufficient for the Caliphate to be interested in language issues even at the level of the Caliphs and to develop a certain language policy (if we evaluate it in the modern sense). From the period of the first four Caliphs, throughout the period of the Umayyad and initial period of Abbasid rule, the Arabic language was one of the means of prestige, public welfare, and advancement at the Caliphate's court, and most importantly, as the language of the *Qur'ān*, it carried religious sacredness. However, in the wake of the weakening of the Caliphate, the situation changed and the decadent state of the language was gradually visible.

As the Caliphate weakened, the Arabic language experienced a corresponding decline, both linguistically and socially and, more crucially, there was no longer an opportunity to formally enact a language policy. During this period, the author of the dictionary, through his work emerged as a solitary defender of the language.

The introduction of "Lisān al-'arab" offers valuable insights into the linguistic environment at the time of the dictionary's compilation, highlighting the challenges facing the Arabic and the broader sociolinguistic context that contributed to its decline. Notably, it addresses the proliferation of linguistic errors, the erosion of Arabic's prestige, power, and status, the shift in linguistic prestige toward foreign languages, and the absence of a state system to protect the language.

Ibn Manzur's evaluation of the linguistic situation is crucial for understanding the urgency underlying his work. His concerns reflect both the linguistic and historical shifts of the time, providing a comprehensive reflection on the state of the Arabic and how the language was perceived. Ibn Manzur identifies the growing prevalence of linguistic errors as one of the central issues, though his concerns extend beyond mere solecisms, encompassing broader issues of the language's state, prestige, and status. In comparison of his work to Noah's Ark, Ibn Manzur reveals an individual initiative that can be understood as a form of "language policy." It is evident that his efforts were not solely scholarly but also political in nature. The compilation of the dictionary can be interpreted as a response to the pressing need for a unified linguistic resource, aimed at reinforcing Arabic's status and addressing the linguistic fragmentation of the period. Ibn Manzur's concerns, were not just about preserving the linguistic purity of Arabic, but also about restoring its cultural and social prominence, which had been severely diminished by the end of the 13th century. "Lisān al-'arab" was thus conceived as a tool for language preservation during a time of historical, social and linguistic instability. This proves the immense significance of "Lisān al-'arab" and the classical Arabic lexicographical tradition in general, in the process of studying, teaching, and preserving the Arabic language, both from a purely linguistic and an extralinguistic perspective.

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Ibn Manzur, Lisān al-'arab = دار المعار، القاهرة: *لسان العرب*، ابن منظور

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კლასიკური არაბული ლექსიკოგრაფიული ტრადიცია, როგორც ენობრივი პოლიტიკის ნაწილი
(იბნ მანზურის "ლისān ალ-'არაბ"-ი ნიმუშად)

საკვანძო სიტყვები: არაბული ენა, ლექსიკოგრაფიული ტრადიცია, იბნ მანზური „ლისān ალ-'არაბ"-ის

მოხსენების ინტერესის საგანს წარმოადგენს არაბული ლექსიკოგრაფიული ტრადიცია და მისი როლი არაბული ენის სტანდარტიზაციასა და დაცვაში. კერძოდ, როგორ ვითარებაში იქმნებოდა კლასიკური არაბული ლექსიკონები, ადრევდა თუ არა შესაბამისი ისტორიულ-სოციალური ფონის შედეგად მიღებული ენობრივი ვითარება გარკვეულ მიმართულებას ლექსიკოგრაფთა აქტივობებს და რა დოზით მონაწილეობდა ლექსიკონი, თანამედროვე გაგებით რომ ვთქვათ, „ენობრივი პოლიტიკის" გატარებაში.

მოხსენებაში მიმოხილული იქნება არაბული ლექსიკოგრაფიული ტრადიციის ერთ-ერთი გამორჩეული ლექსიკონი, იბნ მანზურის (1232-1311) "ლისān ალ-'არაბ"-ი (*არაბ.* ენა არაბთა). კერძოდ კი, ლექსიკონის ავტორისეული შესავალი.

ზოგადად, ავტორისეული შესავალი ნაწილები არაბულ ლექსიკოგრაფიულ ტრადიციაში ლექსიკონის სტრუქტურასთან ერთად აქტიურად მიმოიხილავს ენობრივ ვითარებას, რომლის საპასუხოდაც შეიქმნა ლექსიკონი, რაც განაპირობებს კიდეც მოცემულ შემთხვევაში მის აქტუალობას მოხსენებისთვის. უფრო კონკრეტულად, ჩვენი მიზანია, გავარკვიოთ რამდენად ჰპოვა ენობრივმა ვითარებამ ასახვა ლექსიკოგრაფის ნაშრომში და შეიძლება თუ არა ჩავთვალოთ იგი გარკვეული ენობრივი პოლიტიკის ნაწილად. ამისთვის მიმოხილული იქნება:

ა) სახალიფოს არსებობის საწყისი პერიოდიდან ენობრივი პოლიტიკის გატარების საკვანძო შემთხვევები, დაწყებული მართლმორწმუნე ხალიფების პერიოდიდან, ვიდრე ომაიანთა და აბასიანთა და უშუალოდ "ლისჰნ ალ-‘არაბ"-ის შექმნის პერიოდამდე;

ბ) არაბული ენა ზემოთხსენებულ პერიოდში, ისტორიული მოვლენების გავლენა ენის მდგომარეობაზე;

იბნ მანზური „ლისჰნ ალ-‘არაბ“-ის შესავალში წუხილს გამოთქვამს არაბული ენის დამცრობის გამო, საკუთარ ლექსიკონს კი ნოეს კიდობანს ადარებს, ისახავს რა ენის ხსნას მომმდლავრებული ლინგვისტური წარღვნისგან. "ლისჰნ ალ-‘არაბ"-ის ავტორისეული შესავალი ნაწილის დამუშავებისას ჩვენ მიერ ყურადღება გამახვილებული იქნება შემდეგ საკითხებზე:

ა) პასაჟები, სადაც იკვეთება ლექსიკონის შექმნის პერიოდის თანადროული ენობრივი ვითარება;

ბ) ენობრივი ვითარების ავტორისეული შეფასება;

გ) რა ქმნის ავტორისთვის ლინგვისტურ „წარღვნას“ — მომმდლავრებული ენობრივი შეცდომები, თუ, ენობრივ შეცდომებთან ერთად, არაბულის, როგორც ენის, პრესტიჯისა და სტატუსის საკითხიც დადგა?

დ) ლექსიკოგრაფი, როგორც ენობრივი პოლიტიკის გამტარებელი — როგორ ისტორიულ-სოციალურ და ენობრივ ვითარებაში და რა მიზნით ქმნის ავტორი "ლისჰნ ალ-‘არაბ"-ს?

სახალიფოს, როგორც ასეთის, წარმოშობამ აქტუალური გახადა შესაბამისი ენობრივი პოლიტიკის გატარება. ტერიტორიების ზრდის კვალდაკვალ სახალიფო კიდევ უფრო მრავალეთნიკური და მრავალენოვანი ხდებოდა. ენობრივი კონტაქტები სულ უფრო მეტ გავლენას ახდენდა არაბულ ენაზე, არაარაბების სოლექიზმებით უხვმა არაბულმა შემდგომ პერიოდებში თვით არაბთა ენობრივ ჩვევებზეც იქონია გავლენა. შექმნილი ვითარება საკმარისი აღმოჩნდა, რომ სახალიფო ხალიფების დონეზეც კი დაინტერესებულიყო ენობრივი საკითხებით და, თანამედროვე გაგებით რომ შევაფასოთ, შემუშავებულიყო გარკვეული ენობრივი პოლიტიკა. არაბული ენა მართლმორწმუნე ხალიფების პერიოდიდან, მთელი ომაიანთა და აბასიანთა მმართველობის თავდაპირველ პერიოდში იყო პრესტიჯის, საზოგადოებრივი კეთილდღეობის, სახალიფოს კარზე დაწინაურების ერთ-ერთი საშუალება; ასევე, და, რაც მთავარია, როგორც ყურანის ენა, საკრარულობის მატარებელიც. მაგრამ, სახალიფოს დასუსტების კვალდაკვალ, ვითარება შეიცვალა და ენაც პრობლემების წინაშე დადგა. საბოლოოდ, მოხსენებაში "ლისჰნ ალ-‘არაბ"-ის შესავალი ნაწილის ფონზე იქნება განალიზებული არაბთა სახალიფოში არაბული ენის მდგომარეობასა და ენობრივ პოლიტიკასთან დაკავშირებული საკვანძო საკითხები.