Sinhala in Contact with Arabic: The Birth of a New Pidgin in the Middle East

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This report presents a new Arabic-based language born out of the linguistic contact between Sinhala and Arabic. Twelve of what seem to me to be the most remarkable of this language's morpho-synactic features are outlined below. I shall refer to it as Pidgin Madam and present it as a pidgin because it is constructed by means of pidginization, and because it is recognized by the community speaking it as having a norm different from standard Arabic.

Pidgin Madam is a language born out of the contact between Sri Lankan female domestic workers and their Arab employers in many coutries of the Middle East.[1] I chose to call this language Pidgin Madam because it is mainly spoken between Arabic-speaking "Madams" (as maids refer to their female employers) and their maids. "Madam" is also the apostrophe most frequently used by the maids answering their female employers. In Arabic countries, this language is referred to by the name of "Sri Lankan maids' Arabic", or simply " Maids' Arabic".

The data presented here were gathered in Lebanon, thus, the Arabic involved in this specific contact is Lebanese Arabic. While in Sri Lanka this phenomenon of domestic migration towards the Middle East is common for women from both Sri Lankan main linguistic communities, Tamil and Sinhala, in Lebanon most of the Sri Lankan maids are Sinhala-speaking. On the other hand, although Sri Lankan Sinhalese maids are not the only ones to head for the Middle East and to learn Arabic informally, this language, known in Lebanon as "Sri Lankan Arabic", is typical of them.[2] Ethiopians and Philippines are the two largest female domestic servant communities after the Sinhalese one in Lebanon, and neither of them speak Pidgin Madam. This is probably due to the fact that Ethiopians, for instance, speak Amharic, a Semitic language very close to Arabic, and pidginization develops only between languages from distant families. Ethiopians end up speaking a form of Arabic that is much closer to the target language than that of Pidgin Madam. On the other hand, domestic servants from the Philippines usually speak English with their Arabic

employers, which is a good context for the development of an English-based pidgin.

Pidgin Madam is therefore a contact language that has developed in a context where only two linguistic communities are involved. In that sense, it is different from the extensively studied major pidgins which were born in a multilingual context, and where there was a need for a lingua franca between different substrate languages. This is not a novelty, since other pidgins with only one substratum are attested: one can mention for instance Pidgin Delaware (Goddard 1996) which was first born in the contact between the Delawares and the Dutch, before it was used by other European linguistic communities, and the Ndyuka-Trio pidgin (Huttar and Valentie, 1996), a contact language between Ndyuka and Trio.

Whatever conditions are necessary leading to the birth of a pidgin, it is important to highlight the fact that the term "pidgin" used here is understood in the sense of "a process of pidginization" being recognized as a norm (Hymes 1971 : 84: "A pidgin is the result of such a process [pidginization] that has achieved autonomy as a norm".) The difference that distinguishes a pidgin from a process of pidginization is, therefore, not relative to a bigger complexity that would make it more "real" as a language, but rather to the social reality of its acceptance as a norm by a given community. A pidgin is thus a communication means that is judged as being a "sufficient competence stage" by its own speakers.

THE TWO LANGUAGES IN CONTACT [3]

Sinhala is a special case amongst Northern Indo-Aryan languages: it has been separated from other languages of the same family, and has long been in contact with a Dravidian language, Tamil. Sinhala is also known to be a clearly diglossic language, the so-called "literary" or "formal" language (Gair 1998) being taught at school. Almost all the Sri Lankan maids who come to Lebanon (although they are from very poor villages) have received elementary education at school, and are familiar with the more complex grammar of the "literary" language. Their mother tongue and everyday language is, however, Colloquial Sinhala (CS). Thus, all references to Sinhala in this paper concern CS.

The main aspects of CS that will be mentioned in this report are the following: the existence of a prenominal relative clause using the present or past participial forms of verbs (CSa). The various uses of the Sinhala conjunctive participles: alone in a sentence where a sequence of actions is

expressed (CSb), the conjunctive participle indicating all actions preceding the final and main verb (the subject of which can be, as in Tamil, different or identical to that of the preceding actions), or followed by the inanimate existential verb *-tiyenavâ-* denoting experience (CSc). It is important to remind the reader that CS has no verb-agreement, and no feminine-masculine gender. Sinhala has animate-inanimate gender, however.

(CSa) *mama   hadana/hadapu   bat*
        me   made(pr.part)/ have made (ps.part)   rice
        The rice that I cook/ that I have cooked.

(CSb) *gedara gihin,   bat   kâlâ,   nidâgattâ,*
        house go (conj.part) rice eat(conj.part), sleep (past)
        I went home, had something to eat, and slept (or: having
    gone home, having eaten rice, I slept)

(CSc) *sudu   nônâ   lankâva-Ta   gihin   tiyenavâ*
        white madam Lanka-dative go (conj.part) there is(inan.)
        The Western lady has already been to Sri Lanka.

Lebanese Arabic (LA) belongs to the Eastern dialects of Arabic, a Semitic language. Arabic is also a diglossic language. Although in Lebanon everyday issues are expressed in the Lebanese dialect, a lot of life issues are often dealt with in the so-called "literary" or "standard" Arabic (Ferguson 1960) : serious TV programmes, news, announcements, or even any serious learned discussion between friends about politics or philosophy tend to be on a linguistic continuum going from formal to informal forms of Arabic. Due to this diglossia, Sri Lankan maids, upon arriving in Lebanon (or for that matter, to any other Arab country), encounter thus a further difficulty making sense out of everything they hear around them.

The main aspects of the LA language that will be mentioned in this report are the following: LA has a sharp feminine-masculine gender distinction apparent in demonstratives, adjectives, pronouns (even for 2nd person singular), and verbal agreement. Pronouns can be either independent or suffixed. When suffixed, they can be added to nouns (LAa) denoting the possessor of the element expressed by the noun, to verbs (LAa), to prepositions (LAa), and to particles denoting intention *badd-* (LAa), and capacity *fî-*. The main characteristic of the verbal system is its aspectual distinction, where imperfective implies any action that has not yet been completed, and perfective denotes an action that has been completed. In the imperfective

form, one can differentiate between: imperfective (LAb), and modal imperfective (here glossed as m.impf. Modal imperfective is constructed by omitting the prefix *b-* from the imperfective form). The prohibitive expression (LAc) and the imperative (LAd) mode are constructed on the modal imperfective verbal base.

(LAa) *ebn-ik   badd-o   yHabr-ik   chi   ɣann-e*
    son-your(fs) intention-his tell(impf.3sm)-you(fs) thing about-me
        Your [feminine addressee] son wants to tell you something about me.

(LAb) *b-y-êkol,   b-t-êkol,   b-têkol,   b-t-êkl-e.*
  eat (impf.3ms), eat (impf.3fs), eat (impf.2ms), eat(impf.2fs)
        He eats, she eats, you (mas) eat, you (fem) eat.

(LAc) *ma y-êkol.   ma   t-êkol.   ma   t-êkle*
  neg eat (m.impf.3ms), neg eat(m.impf.2ms), neg eat(m.impf.2fs)
      Let him not eat. Don't eat (m). Don't eat (f.)

(LAd) *kôl,   kele,   kelo*
        eat(imp.2ms), eat(imp.2fs), eat(imp.2p)
        Eat (to man), eat (to a woman), eat (to plural)

SOME GRAMMATICAL FEATURES OF THE PIDGIN MADAM

What follows is not a grammatical sketch of the language as much as it is a brief presentation of what seem to me to be some of its most remarkable features (listed below from 1 to 12). The examples presented here are all glossed according to LA grammar, so as to show the degree of difference between both languages.

(1) Pidgin Madam shows an extensive usage of Arabic imperatives as verbal stems. The Sri Lankan maid uses imperatives for her affirmative present or past tenses. That is, instead of saying "I'm going to sleep" or "I went to sleep", she would say "I, do go to sleep"(1a). However, although these verbal forms (that are imperatives in LA) are quantitatively the most current in the Pidgin Madam, other verbal forms do occur: LA modal imperfetive aspect (used in the construction of the prohibitive expression) does also occur, giving sentences like "me, don't you eat anything today", instead of saying "I haven't eaten anything today" (1b). LA perfective forms denoting past accomplished actions in Arabic are very much less frequent but they do occur (10b, c, d).

(1a) *ana   rûyi   nêmi*
     me go(imp.2sf) sleep(imp.2sf)
     I am going to sleep.

(1b) *ana ma   têkle   si   lyôm*
     me   neg   eat(m.impf.2fs) thing today
     I haven't eaten anything today

(2) An extensive use of the LA second singular feminine personal suffix (-*ik*: you, your, yours) or, to a lesser degree, the third singular feminine suffix (-*a*/-*ya*: she, her, hers), instead of the first person's (-*e*/-*ne* I, me, my). This results in sentences like "your son (is) a soldier" to say "my son (is) a soldier" (2a), or "your husband no there is hit her", instead of "my husband has never hit me"(2b). For an explanation of the "no there is" part of the latter sentence check below under feature number (8).

(2a) *ana   ebn-ik   askari*
     me   son-your(fs) soldier
     My son is a soldier

(2b) *ana   saws-ik mapi drobi-ya*
     me   husband-your(fs) there-is-no you hit(imp.2fs)-her(fs)
     My husband has never hit me

(3) Although there is no gender nor number distinction in the PM, in most of the cases where a maid uses an adjective to denote any entity, the adjective has the LA feminine singular form. This gives sentences that sound to LA speakers like "all the children she's good", for "all the children are good" (3a), and "your husband she's good" for "my husband is good" (3b).

(3a) *abel maDam lête bêbi kellu hilwi*
     before madam 3 baby all beautiful(fs)
     All of my previous Madam's children were good-looking
  [i.e. The Madam in the previous house where I was before coming here]

(3b) *saws-ik   nîya*
     husband-your(fs) good(fs)
     My husband is good

(4) A lot of LA expressions that are normally transformed or conjugated in LA become frozen expressions in the Pidgin Madam, like iconized clichés. This gives sentences like: "Starting from now, I do-you-want-me-to-put-the-money-for-you-in-the-bank" (4a), meaning "Starting from now, I want to save some money in the bank". Or: "you-love-me coming" for "I

loved to come, I wanted to come" (4b). In fact, for the verb "to love/to like", the informants often use the Arabic phrase "do you love me" or "you love me" as the bare verbal stem that semantically implies the idea of "love" or "like" equivalent of English "to love".

(4a) *halla   sway   badd-ik-nhott-o   bank*
     now   a little   intention-you(fs)-put(m.impf.1p)-it   bank
     (Starting from) now, I want to save some money in the bank.

[The informant had wasted all the money she had earned so far by sending it to her family on a monthly basis. Starting from now, she doesn't want to send them anything anymore, she wants to save it in the bank for her future plans]

(4b) *bethebbî-ni   jêye*
     love(impf.2sf)-me   coming (pr.part.s)
     I felt like coming.

[In answer to "why did you come to Lebanon?", she said "I just felt like doing it", meaning that she is the one decided, nobody in her family forced her to")

(5) Some Arabic causative verbs are also used in the pidgin as non-causative, or some transitive verbs used like intransitives: "to wake some-one up" used in the pidgin instead of "to wake up (oneself)", giving sentences like "I wake-me-up at seven" for "I wake up at seven" (5a). The sign > is used to transcribe an intonation contour that will be discussed under (10).

(5a) *ana> sitti nôs   payyî-ne,*
     me   6 half   wake(imp.2fs)-me
     I wake up at six thirty.

[More precisely in the context, and if we translate the > intonation gloss: "As for me, well, it's at 6 thirty that I wake up". The informant was comparing her status to that of 2 Ethiopian maids who live with her in the same house. The Ethiopian maids wake up at 8 thirty, whereas her, she has to wake up at 6 thirty].

(6) Some interrogative forms (minus the interrogative intonation) are used in a non-interrogative context, either to express a relative clauses: "the dog what's his name Bobby", for "the dog's name is Bobby" (6a), or to focus on an element as in "I what-do-you-want that", for "it's that that I want".

(6a) *hône kaleb   s-usm-o   bôbi*
    here   dog what-name-his Bobby
    This dog's name is Bobby.

(6b) *ana   su   badd-ik   hayda*
    me   what intention-your(fs) that
    What I want is that thing.

   (7) The relative clause is also often expressed by means of a pidgin-invented usage of the LA particle *fî*, pronounced as *pî* in the Pidgin Madam. *fî* in standard Arabic is a preposition meaning "in, inside", but in LA it is used to denote the existence either of people or of objects, with the meaning of "there is, there are". In the Pidgin Madam, it is used, prenominally, as if it were the Sinhala existence animate and inanimate verbs (respectively: *innavâ, tiyenavâ*), in their present or past participial forms, meaning "being, having been" (7a, 7b).

(7a) *hôn   pî   benet*
    here there is   girl
    The girl who is here

(7b) *sir lanka   pi sogol   no gûD*
    Sri Lanka   there is work   no good (Eng)
    The jobs available in Sri Lanka are not good

   (8) This usage of *pî* is further extended so as to cover all usages of the Sinhala *tiyenavâ* mentioned above under CS main characteristics, and more specifically its appearance after a conjunctive participle denoting experience, as in "I have done that previously in my life", or "I have been to Kuwait" (8a). The example (2b) previously mentioned offers a negative expression of *pi*, as *mapi*, giving the meaning of "having never done something". This particle can also combine both usages explained under feature (7) and feature (8): that of expressing a relative clause, and that of expressing an experience (8b, 8c).

(8a) *ana pi   rûhi   kuwêT*
    me there is   go(imp.2fs) Kuwait
    I have been to Kuwait

(8b) *ana   pi   amali   sogol*
    me there is do(imp.2fs) work
    The work that I do/ I have done

(8c) *hiyi abel   pi   jîbi   masâre*
she before there is bring(imp.2fs) money
The money which she had brought earlier

(9) Arabic prepositions are reinterpreted in the Pidgin Madam as postpositions. Moreover, the prepositions in question have a complex Arabic form that is treated as a bare form in the pidgin. That is, from the preposition *maɛ* "with", one can say in LA *maɛ-ik* "with you(fs)", whereas in the Pidgin Madam *mayik* meaning simply "with", and is used as a postposition (9a to 9c). The preposition *pô* meaning "above" appears, however, without the suffix (9d). One should note that in LA: "above" *fô'* + suffix *-ik* = *faw'ik*.

(9a) *tarî   hadd-ik   opis*
road next to-you(2fs) office(Eng)
The office that is by the road

(9b) *ana   may-ik   tayi*
me   with-you(2fs) come (imp.2fs)
Come with me

(9c) *ana masâre ana   saws-ik   may-ik*
me   money   me   husband-your(2fs) with-2fsg
My money is with my husband

(9d) *misTer ana   pô   nêmi*
Mister me above   sleep(imp.2sf)
Mister lay down on top of me [the informant was telling about
how she was abused by the "Mister" of the house where she is working.)

(10) Another important linguistic device in the Pidgin Madam is a particular intonational contour. This specific contour, marked here by the sign >, is characterized by a rise on the element preceding the sign, followed by a gradual falling in the remaining sentence. This contour fulfils a wide range of functions: it is used to focus on the element preceding the > sign (10a), something very similar to the intonation in English sentences like "As for my son> well... he's with my mother"; it can also introduce a consequence or an implication concerning the element or action preceding the sign > (10b); it follows an element that occurred chronologically after the element before the sign ("Having done this> I proceeded further to do that", i.e. very similar to the Sinhalese use of conjunctive participles) (10c); and it follows subordinate clauses (time, manner, condition, or cause) (10d, 10e).

(10a) *bêbi   >ana mâma   bêt*
     baby   me   mum   house
     As for my son, [well] he's in my mother's house

(10b) *ana   supt-a   hiye > ana   tarip   hiye no gûD*
     me see(perf.1s)-her she   me know(peft.1s) she no good(Eng)
     As soon as I saw her, I knew she was not a good [person]

(10c) *kallasit >   ana   isit*
     finish(perf.3fs)   me   come(perf.3fs)
     Having finished [my contract abroad], I came [back].

(10d) *supt-a   >   tikki,   no   sûp-a >   assan*
     I see(peft.1s)-her cry(m.impt.3fs) no see(m.impf.1s)-her better
     If I see it, then I cry. If I don't see, then it's better [for me].
[The informant was telling why she doesn't want to have any pictures of
her children while in Lebanon for three years. If she sees them in a picture,
she cries, so she prefers not to see them].

(10e) *badên   hêk,   ana   sêwi   akel> hiyi   rûyi*
     then   like this   me do(imp.2fs) food   she go(imp.2fs)
     Then [it was all] like this: If I cook, she would go away.
[The informant was talking about a problem she has with another maid in
the same house. They had both had an argument after which, the other
maid refused all contact with the informant. She even refused to eat, be-
cause it was the informant who had prepared the food.]

(11) Pidgin Madam makes extensive use of reduplication of adjectives
(11a), adverbs (11a), and nouns (11b). Reduplication serves either to plu-
ralize a noun, or to intensify its meaning.

(11a) *Tîr   Tîr bîr bêt. bîr bîr*
     very very big house big big
     The house is just so big [the informant was complaining about
the enormous size of the Lebanese house where she works. A big house
means a lot of work]

(11b) *ana kil yôm sogol sogol*
     me every day work work
    I have so much work to do everyday.

(12) One last important linguistic feature of this language is the creation of modal particles that modify the verbs. In fact, distinctions related to time and continuity of action are either understood from the context or indicated by adverbs, or by a set of preverbal modal morphemes created from some LA particles. We have already seen the particle *pi*, but there are two additional particles, *kalas* and *badde*. *kalas* comes from the LA particle *HalaS* meaning "it's over, it's finished" or simply "stop" . In the Pidgin Madam it is used as a preverbal particle giving the verb an accomplished aspect, implying that the action is "finished" or "already done" (12a, 12b). On the other hand, *badde* is formed from the LA expression "I want", it can be deconstructed into *badd-* (volition, intention) + the first personal suffix *-e* "me, my". When used pre-verbally in LA, the whole phrase means "it is my desire to...+ verb". In the Pidgin Madam its preverbal appearance implies that the subject of the verb is or was about to start the action, or that the subject has engaged in an action (12b, 12c).

(12a) *bent-ik   kalas   jawwase*
daughter-yours(2fs) finished get married (imp.2fs)
My daughter is already married

(12b) *kullu kalas   sêwi   bil* bêt*
all   over do(imp.2fs) in house
We have finsihed all work at home

*bil is from LA *bi* (in) + *el* the definite aticle "the". But in the Pidgin Madam, the article is interpreted as being part of the preposition.

(12c) *âdi,   badde   tekkî-ni   awiyyi*
sitting(pr.part.fs) I want talk(m.impf.2fs)-me   strong
Sitting, they start talking aloud. [The informant was talking about two women that bother her. Everytime they meet, they both sit and they start talking for hours in a loud voice]

(12d) *badde   rûyi   badde sûpi sûra*
I want go(imp.fs) I want see(imp.fs) picture
So they went and they started looking at pictures. [The informant was telling me how her Lebanese employers chose her to be their maid: they decided to go to a maids' placement agency, and they started looking at pictures of Sri Lankan maids that the agent showed them. Her picture was one of them.]

CONCLUSION

A thorough study of the language briefly described above is still to be done in order to determine the underlying linguistic processes at stake and the impact of each of the substrate and target languages in these processes.

However, it seems clear that this language's morpho-syntactic profile is marked by highly economic strategies typical of situations where pidginization is involved: reduction, simplification, improvement and functionalization of some liguistic devices (such as intonation), reduplication, preference of explicit morphemes, analogical extension of rules, and creation of new linguistic devices

In fact, nouns in the Pidgin Madam are usually used without an article, gender is disregarded, and number is inferred from the context. Adjectives are almost always feminine. Personal pronouns, although they follow LA explcit independant pronouns (as opposed to dependant pronominal suffixes), are often not used, reference being inferred from the context. Except in possessive constructions where personal pronouns are useful (*ana mâma* "me mother" for "my mother"). The Pidgin Madam verb very frequently derives from LA imperative singular feminine, ending with the sound [e/i]. In a few instances, a related LA noun functions as a verb (*ana sogol* "me work" for "I work" as well as "my job"). Time and aspect are inferred from the context or indicated by means of adverbs of time or pidgin-institutionalized modal particles. Since a large number of LA grammatical tools have been dropped from Pidgin Madam, some words are overworked (some adverbs, and some LA prepositions reinterpreted as postpositions cover more usages than in LA). Pidgin Madam lacks conjunctions, and uses juxtaposition plus intonation instead of subordination. Reduplication (of adjectives or adverbs) is quite common for focussing or for pluralizing.

This sort of pidginization phase does not always lead to the establishment of an autonomous pidgin. It could appear in an early stage in language learning. According to Schumann (1978) acquisiton of a second language begins with the pidginization of it, followed by expansion and complexification of the interlanguage system. It is thus somehow difficult to draw a clear dividing line between the grammaticality of pidgins and other linguistic forms, such as the different spectra of imperfectly acquired foreign languages. However, one may argue that this difference lies in the fact that in pidgins these syntactic devices become institutionalized and fossilized, which means that they become a recognisable norm.

In fact, Pidgin Madam is socially recognized and has a well defined norm. When LA speakers talk in Pidgin Madam, they try to intuitively apply a certain set of "rules" that caricature the Pidgin Madam's grammatical profile: the phonological transformation according to the Sinhala phonological system (that LA speakers largely guess), the intonation, an overuse of imperatives as verbal stems, an exclusive use of feminine adjectives and suffixes, use of 2nd and 3rd singular feminine suffixes *-you, she-* instead of 1st person singular *-me-*, use of the modal particle *pi, badde* and *kalas*, use of LA 'word + personal suffix' refering to 'word' (*ebn-ik,* literally "your son" in LA, but "son" in Pidgin Madam), use of English doublets of some words *husband-sawsik, bêbi-ebnik, masâre-money,* etc... Moreover, Pidgin Madam is not only a language used by Sri Lankan maids and their Arab employers, it is also used by speakers of the target language amongst themselves, as a joke, to claim their innocence, or to comically plead in favour of a victimized person.[4]

In conclusion, although I take the position that it is a pidgin, I must ack-nowledge (considering the degree of fluctuation attested in this langauge) that it has not yet reached a stable linguistic state. In fact, imperatives for

instance, although they quantitatively constitute the bulk of the verbal system, are not the only verbal forms attested. We have many verbs in the perfective and imperfective aspects. Moreover, the use of second and third feminine singular person does not completely erase the existence of that of the first person singular (10b, 10d). On the other hand, the study of the recordings showed one important difference between the language spoken by Sri Lankan housemaids and that spoken by Sri Lankan free-lance workers: while the former has, as described above, an almost exclusive use of LA feminine and singular forms, the latter shows a large variety of masculine and plural forms completely unattested in the Pidgin Madam (and not described in this report). This observation questions the impact of the input that the Sri Lankan maids receive and the context in which the informal learning takes place on the constitution of the language itself (a confined context in the former, and a more open context in the latter, i.e. with greater access to the target language norm). A deeper study of the structures of the Pidgin Madam in both the Sri Lankan maids' speech and in that of their Arab employers is, therefore, necessary in order to better describe the processes of linguistic creation involved in this contact.

Notes

[1] It is difficult to give an exact appreciation of the number of speakers of the Pidgin Madam without having an estimation of the number of families living with Sinhala-speaking housemaids, and speaking with them in Arabic (as opposed to English).

[2] The data from which I draw my examples were collected in Lebanon and in Sri Lanka from women who had previously been to Lebanon. This study was mainly conducted on a set of free recordings of Sinhala maids talking about their life (total amount of time: 25 transcribed hours, total amount of informants 14). Seven out of those 25 hours were recordings of discussions between Sri Lankan maids and their "Madams" in order to study the Arabic used by the employer addressing the maid, but also the interaction between the two parties. Two of the 14 informants were not housemaids: One was working as a free-lancer in a big hospital, and the other in an office, both were living independently in a rented apartment. As a consequence, the context was different from that of housekeeping; much less confined, and with much more external contact, especially with men. Another set of recordings involved translating into LA a questionnaire written in CS. Some additional recordings of free speech (5 hours) were conducted in Sri Lanka, back home with 3 of the 14 informants. However, to the best of my knowledge, no study on the influence of Arabic on Sinhala has yet been undertaken. I have no such recordings yet. Moreover, this study did not include any Tamil-speaking Sri Lankan domestic servant, although it is clear that comparative study with the Tamil-case in the same context may prove extremely valuable. Some Sri Lankan maids (4 out of the 14) had first learned Arabic in other Arab countries with different dialects (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Dubai, Jordan). And it seemed that, in spite of minor structural differences between Arabic dialects, the Arabic spoken by Sri Lankan domestic servants throughout the Middle East is quite homogeneous. The dynamics in the grammatical creation proved to be the same. Nonetheless, it would be more careful to conduct a study in the Gulf area for a more accurate assessment of the situation.

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[3] In the examples related to CS and LA throughout the report, the system of transcription adopted is not conventional. Therefore, for CS, capital letters refer to retroflex sounds (T, D), while for LA they refer to pharyngalized emphatic sounds (T, D, S). However, for LA, the capital letter H refers to the Arabic voiceless fricative post-velar sound.

[4] In fact, due to the image of the exploited Sri Lankan maid, this language has come to be (in the Lebanese mental representation at least) synonymous of "weakness, helplessness".

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