

# The Formation of Jibbali Perfect and Imperfect Passive

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## Abstract

Jibbali belongs to the Modern South Arabian language group which also includes Mehri, Soqotri, Hobyot, Harsusi and Bathari. This group belongs to the South Semitic Branch that includes the Ethiopic group and Old South Arabian Epigraphic group that includes Sabaeen, Minaean, Qatabanian and Hadrami.

This paper describes the perfect and imperfect passive formation in Jibbali which is regarded as one of the endangered Modern South Arabian languages that have not yet been adequately described and documented. It first describes the Jibbali perfective passive which is formed nonconcatenatively showing all its common patterns, then it describes the Jibbali imperfective passive which is found to be formed concatenatively through affixation. The original contribution in this paper is the introduction and analysis of new data related to the formation of Jibbali passive. The paper follows a descriptive method, therefore, showing no argumentation. The data were chiefly collected in 2010 from purposely-chosen Jibbali male and female native speakers (four females and four males) studying at Hadramout University. The ages of these informants vary twenty to twenty three years.

### Introduction:

Jibbali is spoken in what might be called Dhufar proper, namely the monsoon-affected mountains and adjacent areas in southern Oman particularly in Taqah, Mirbat, Sidah, Jibjat and Tawi Atteer. It is spoken by an estimated 30000 to 50000 speaker. Traditionally, Jibbali speakers are semi-nomadic pastoralists, breeding cattle, as well as managing herds of goats and camels (Simeone-Senelle, 1997; Al-Mashani, 2003).

The Jibbali language received many names in the scientific literature, the most common ones are /ʃχaʊrɪ/, /ʔihkɪlɪ/, /gəɾəwɪ/ and /ʃəhɪrɪ/. Johnston (1981:xi-xii) chose the name Jibbali as the native speakers do not regard it pejorative.

Jibbali is not a language of a specific community or tribal confederation, but of a geographical area. Within this area most, if not all people, speak Jibbali as their first or second language. Jibbali has its own dialects and it is not mutually intelligible with Arabic nor with the other five Modern South Arabian languages Mehri, Soqotri, Bathari, Harsusi and Hobbjot. (Al-Mashani, ibid); Morris, 2007).

### Previous Studies :

The first Western scholar who introduced Jibbali to the world was the French consul in Jeddah Fulgence Fresnel in 1838. Fresnel's writing mark the beginning of studying Modern South Arabian languages (Rubin, 2010). The major turning point in the history of studying Jibbali and the other MSA languages was in 1898 when a scholarly expedition was sent to South Arabia by the Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien. This expedition was

carried out by the Austrian scholars David Heinrich Muller, Alfred Jahn and later by William Hein. This team of scholars collected a huge textual materials in Mehri, Jibbali and Soqotri which were published in 1902 and 1909 (ibid). Another great scholar who contributed a lot to studying Jibbali is Thomas Muir Johnstone from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He made so many field visits to southern Oman in the late 1960s and early 1970s. He collected a lot of Jibbali textual materials publishing so many studies related to Jibbali, Mehri and other MSA languages. In 1970 Johnstone wrote an article describing the definite articles in MSA languages and in 1972 he published an article describing the language of Jibbali poetry and in the same year he published a study about the diminutive forms in MSA languages. Johnstone (1981) compiled a dictionary entitled Jibbali Lexicon. Depending on the Jibbali texts collected by Johnstone, Hofstede (1998) wrote a PhD thesis describing the syntax of Jibbali.

### Word Formation in Semitic Morphology :

The Semitic morphology is largely non-linear or non-concatenative. The morphemes are not placed linearly, one after the other before or after the word stem, as prefixes and suffixes, as it is the case in English. The morphemic structure of Semitic words is characterized by at least two morphemes interwoven within each other in a discontinuous (or non-concatenative) manner. The root morpheme is inserted into the other which is called template, pattern, or scheme in certain slots of the word stem

structure. The two morphemes, the root and the template are incomplete morphologically, phonologically, and semantically, until they merge to form a word or a word stem. The roots and templates are both bound morphemes since only when a certain root and a certain template merge; a definite word is completely formed phonologically, morphologically, and semantically. Although roots and templates are considered as bound morphemes they are not entirely empty of phonological, syntactic, and semantic content. For example, the phonological content is indicated by the melody of the template and its affixes and the phonological characteristics of the consonantal root. Most of the templates may indicate, though not clearly, the syntactic word groups and most roots are usually associated with certain general meaning (McCarthy, 1981).

According to Ratcliffe (1990) and Watson (2007) Semitic languages have two morphological levels. Level one affects predominately the stem of the word. This level corresponds to the nonconcatenative or infixal morphology. The second level does not affect the stem of the word; it works through adding affixes to the beginning and end of the word stem. This level corresponds to the concatenative or linear morphology. However, in a few cases level one includes level two by adding an affix and changing the stem template or the vocalic melody simultaneously. The current study confirms what Ratcliffe (*ibid*) and Watson (*ibid*) state. It shows that the perfect passive of Jibbali is formed according to Level One (nonconcatenatively) and its imperfect passive is formed according to level one and level two simultaneously.

#### **Formation of Jibbali Perfect Passive :**

As it has been mentioned previously, the perfect passive of Jibbali is formed nonconcatenatively,

through modifying vocalic melody of the verb stem. This type of passive is sometimes called internal. Internal passives are known in West Semitic languages and in Modern south Arabian languages. Their existence has not yet been proved convincingly in Amorite, in Ugaritic, and in Epigraphic or Old South Arabian, while they do not occur in Palaeosyrian, East Semitic, and Ethiopic. Internal passive is widely used in Classical Arabic but it has disappeared in most modern Arabic colloquials (Lipinski, 1997).

The formation of Jibbali internal passive has been treated briefly by Simeone-Senelle (1997) who mentioned only two of its perfect patterns (ε)CCiC/i and éCCɔC/. No one has yet offered a systematic comprehensive study of the common patterns of this type of passive in this language.

Contrary to what Rubin (2010) states that the use of internal passive is very limited in the Modern South Arabian Languages, it has been found in this study that the perfect internal passive in Jibbali is very common and productive. It is possible to form internally or nonconcatenatively a passive counterpart for each perfect transitive verb. It is formed by changing the vocalic pattern of the transitive verb without affecting its prosodic structure; therefore, this process is considered as less intrusive (Laks, 2008). . This vocalic pattern, which marks (active or passive) in verbs, changes into several different patterns in the perfective depending on the number of the root consonants. The study shows that this stem vowel modification or ablaut results in changing the active verb vowels into either / i: / or / i / .The most common perfect passive patterns are listed and illustrated below according to the number of the consonants in the root morphemes of the verbs :

#### **Perfect Passive Patterns of Roots with two consonants:**

##### **A) Ca:C → Ci:C**

Active	Gloss	Passive
ħa:s	'put in jail'	ħi:s
la:s	'wore'	li:s
ħa:l	'carried'	ħi:l
ħa:t	'caught'	ħi:t
sa:k'	'stole'	si:k'

k'ɑ:ɪ	'buried'	k'ɪ:ɪ
lɑ:d	'cut'	lɪ:d
ɪɑ:t'	'tied'	ɪɪ:t'

**B) C<sub>3</sub>C<sub>3</sub> → C<sub>1</sub>C<sub>1</sub>**

Active	Gloss	passive
ʃɜk'ɜ	'drank'	ʃɪk'ɪ
fɜk'ɜ	'wore'	fɪk'ɪ
k'ɜɪɜ	'hid'	k'ɪɪɪ
ɪɜɜɜ	'invaded'	ɪɪɪɪ

**C) CC<sub>3</sub> → CC<sub>1</sub>**

Active	Gloss	Passive
ɪdɜ	'threw'	ɪdɪ
ɪhɜ	'licked'	ɪhɪ
ɪfɜ	'fabricated'	ɪfɪ

The perfect passive in the above patterns is formed nonconcatenatively by changing the vowels /ɑ:/ and /ɜ/ of the active perfect verbs into /ɪ:/ and /ɪ/ respectively while the prosodic

structure remains unchanged. The following examples show how the Jibbali perfect passive form is inflected for person, number and gender

1s.	ħɪ:s-k	'I was put in jail.'
1P	ħɪ:s-ən	'we were put in jail.'
2M.S	ħɪ:s-k	'you (man) were put in jail.'
2 F.S	ħɪ:s-ʃ	'you (woman) were put in jail.'
2M.P	ħɪ:s-kum	'you (men) were put in jail.'
2F.P	ħɪ:s-kən	'you (women) were put in jail.'
3M.S.	ħɪ:s	'he was put in jail.'
3F.S.	ħɪ:s-ɔt	'she was put in jail.'
3M.P	ħɪ:s	'they (men) were put in jail.'
3F.P	ħɪ:s	'they (women) were put in jail.'

**Perfect Passive Patterns of Roots with three consonants:**

**A) C<sub>0</sub>C<sub>1</sub>C / C<sub>1</sub>C<sub>1</sub>C → C<sub>1</sub>C<sub>1</sub>C<sub>1</sub>**

In this pattern the perfect passive is formed nonconcatenatively by changing the vowels / ʊ, ʌ / of the active perfect into the vowel /ɪ/.

Active	Gloss	passive
k'ulab	'returned'	k'ilib
χudam	'served'	χidim
ħuzal	'removed'	ħizil
ɟuɟaf	'dragged'	ɟuɟif
ħizal	'sorted out'	ħizil
ɣiðaf	'cut'	ɣiðif
t'ɪɪaf	'rolled'	t'ɪɪif
t'ɪɪad	'chased'	t'ɪɪid

**Perfect Passive Patterns of Roots with four consonants:**

/ə/, /ɪ/ or /ə / of the active perfect verb into the long vowel /ɪ:/.

In these patterns the perfect passive is formed nonconcatenatively by changing the last vowel

**A) CəCCəC → CəCCɪ:C**

Active	Gloss	passive
ʂəʕsəɪ	'loved'	ʂəʕsɪ:ɪ
ʂək'ləb	'returned'	ʂək'lɪ:b
s'əʕðəɪ	'loved'	s'əʕðɪ:ɪ
ʂənkəθ	'rescued'	ʂənkɪ:θ
ʂənʔəb	'drank'	ʂənʔɪ:b
ʂələkəf	'caught'	ʂələkɪ:f
ʂəbjəb	'confessed'	ʂəbjɪ:b

**B) ʔəCCəC → ʔəCCɪ:C**

Active	Gloss	Passive
ʔək'həb	'had a nap'	ʔək'hɪ:b
ʔənk'əf	'opened'	ʔənk'ɪ:f
ʔəbjəħ	'got into'	ʔəbjɪ:ħ

**C) CCCɪ / ə C → CCCɪ:C**

Active	Gloss	Passive
ʂχbə/ɪ ɪ	'asked'	ʂχbɪ: ɪ
ʂħjə/ɪ ɪ	'waited'	ʂħjɪ: ɪ
ʂk'bə/ɪl	'welcomed;	ʂk'bɪ:l

**D) ʔCCɪ/əC → ʔCCɪ:C / ʔCCɪC (accusative)**

Active	Gloss	Passive
ʔħj ɪ /ə ɪ	'made wait'	ʔħj ɪ: ɪ
ʔχdɪ/ə m	'employed'	ʔχdɪ:m
ʔħɟɪ/ə ɪ	'brought'	ʔħɟɪ:ɪ

**Formation of Jibbali Imperfect Passive:**

Imperfect passive voice is another category for which the Jibbali verb may inflect. Unlike the perfect passive, the imperfect passive in Jibbali is expressed by means of a derived verbal stem. The temporal aspectual marker *d3* - acts as a prefix signaling the passive voice of the imperfective verb in Jibbali. It is attached

directly to patterns of the imperfect transitive verbs. The prefix *dn-* is used instead of *d3* - when the subject of the passive verb is the first person plural. The following examples show the passive conjugation of the imperfect Jibbali verb *l3t3k* "kill":

1s	<i>d3l3t3k</i>	'I am killed.'
1P	<i>dn3l3t3k</i>	'we are killed'.
2M.S	<i>d3l3t3k</i>	'you (man) are killed'.
2M.P	<i>d3l3t3k</i>	'you (men) are killed'.
2F.S	<i>d3l3t3k</i>	'you (woman) are killed.;
2F.P	<i>d3l3t3k-3n</i>	' you (women) are killed.'
3M.S	<i>d3l3t3k</i>	'he is killed'.
3M.P	<i>d3l3t3k</i>	'they (men) are killed'.
3F.S	<i>d3l3t3k</i>	'she is killed'.
3F.P	<i>d3l3t3k-3n</i>	' they (women) are killed'.

Despite the fact that the imperfect passive in Jibbali is formed through affixation as shown in the above examples, it is also evident that in some cases both affixation and stem vowel

modification are employed simultaneously in forming the imperfect passive in this language as shown 2 in the following examples:

	<i>3x33</i> 'ask'	
1S.	<i>d33x33</i>	'I am asked.'
2F.S	<i>d33x33</i>	'You (woman( are asked)).'
	<i>l3t3k</i> "kill"	
2F.S	<i>d3l3t3k</i>	'you (woman) are killed.'

**Conclusion:**

Jibbali distinguishes active and passive voice. It has two morphological means of expressing passivity. The first way is by means of what is called internal passive or internal vowel pattern. The vowels of the active verb are modified while

the consonantal root remains unchanged. The second way is by means of a derived verbal stem. A prefix is attached to the active verb form to change it to a passive form. In some cases both affixation and stem vowel modification are employed simultaneously to express passivity.

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## المبني للمجهول التام وغير التام في اللغة الجبالية

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### الملخص

تتنمي اللغة الجبالية إلى مجموعة لغوية تسمى اللغات العربية الجنوبية الحديثة التي تشمل أيضا اللغة المهرية واللغة السقطرية واللغة البطرية واللغة الحرسوسية واللغة الهبيوتية وهذه المجموعة تتحدر من الفرع الجنوبي من اللغات السامية الذي يشمل أيضا مجموعة اللغات الإثيوبية ومجموعة اللغات العربية الجنوبية القديمة أو ما يسمى لغات النقوش (اللغة السبئية واللغة المعينية واللغة القتبانية واللغة الحضرية). يستهدف هذا البحث دراسة صياغة المبني للمجهول التام وغير التام في اللغة الجبالية التي تُعدُّ إحدى اللغات الجنوبية العربية الحديثة المهتدة بالانقراض والتي لم توصف أو توثق بدراسات لغوية متكاملة و معمقة بعد. قام الباحثان أو لا بدراسة كيفية صياغة الأفعال التامة المبنية للمجهول في اللغة الجبالية فقد وجد أن هذه الأفعال تصاغ عن طريق التحول الداخلي اللاخطي للفعل ، وقاما بوصف الأوزان التي تأتي عليها هذه الأفعال المغيرة الصيغة ، ثم قاما بدراسة كيفية صياغة الأفعال غير التامة المبنية للمجهول في هذه اللغة ووجدا أن هذه الأفعال تشتق بطريقة خارجية خطية وذلك عن طريق الإلصاق. إن الإسهام الأصيل في هذه الدراسة يكمن في تقديم معلومات ومادة لغوية لم تكن من قبل موجودة أو مدروسة في أي دراسة سابقة. اعتمدت هذه الدراسة المنهج الوصفي وجمعت مادتها اللغوية من طلبة جامعيين عمانيين (ذكور وإناث) يدرسون في جامعة حضرموت لغتهم الأم هي اللغة الجبالية وذلك في العام 2010م