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## DIALECTICAL VARIATIONS IN HAUSA LANGUAGE:

### AN ANALYSIS

### BY

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### **Abstract**

*This paper is intended at pointing out clearly to learners and those who have interest in Hausa language the usages which are peculiar to their own and also other dialects and which they must try to avoid when they write standard Hausa. Importantly, the use of standard Hausa or any language on formal occasions cannot be over-emphasized. The paper concludes with recommendations aimed at re-kindling our hope regarding dialectical variations in Hausa language.*

**Keywords:** Dialects, Standard and Variations

### **Introduction**

We should not misconstrue this topic as co-equal to Marxist theory of "dialectical materialism". This is a dialectical difference of Hausa language. Dialect according to Abramam (1961) "is a regional variety of language that may differ from other varieties of language in features of its vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation". This simple definition is for the benefit of those of us who are non-linguists. Among my audience perhaps, some had been fortunate to travel widely in Hausa land. Hausa land is the geographical North which comprises of Kano, Katsina, Sakkwato, Daura, Hadeja, Zaria and some parts of Bauchi. These and many other areas

in today Niger Republic were called Sudan. These places mentioned are dominated wholly by Hausa speaking people through Fulanis who are found in a large group both sedentary and nomadic. Other tribes too who associate with the Hausas speak the languages very well though we cannot address them as Hausas.

According to Ahmed U. and Bello D. (1970) A simple contact with a Hausa man from Kano and a Hausa man from Sakkwato will make one understands the difference of accent in Hausa language. Take a typical market in Kano and Katsina, go to where vegetables are sold, ask for the big pepper, they will tell you "'Ataruhu or Atarugu' in Kano but in Katsina they will tell you "Tugande" and in Sakkwato they will tell you "Tankwa" There are so many like this. This simple experience will enable a person to know that in Katsina, Kano, Zaria, Daura lots of same things are said in different ways. Hausa language like any other language has seven dialects. Take Ngas language in Pankshin Local Government of Plateau State, our immediate neighbour has six dialect which includes Garam Dialect, Miship (Chip), Mupun (Langtang), Pang Dialect, Pangchen/Wukos, Per/Bwir dialect. Arabic language which has influenced Hausa so much has many dialects too, such as the Humair, Quarish which is regarded as the Standard Arabic, Kanana, Urdu, Gasanah etc. the Hausa has Kananci which is regarded as the Standard Dialect, Katsinanci, Dauranci, Zazzaganci, Sakkwatanci and Bausanci Some examples will be seen in due course. Ahmed U. and Bello D. (1970) suggested tentatively that culturally, Sakkwatanci is the origin of the Hausa people but today the Sakkwatanci is not regarded as the Standard Hausa but Kananci because of its simplicity in phonological aspect.

## **CATEGORIES OF HAUSA DIALECTS**

The Hausa dialect can be divided into three broad categories. These are: Social Dialect (urban) is a variety used by social group. Regional Dialect which can be referred to as Rural dialect. Professional or Occupational Dialect which is used by professional bodies. The professional and social groups of dialects are more acceptable by the elites who are opportune to get good education. This group of people lives in Government Reserved Areas (GRA). They are found mostly in Urban Centres and some of them are wealthy Dialect of Hausa which is prestigious and used by political leaders and upper socio-economic classes. This dialect is chosen by this group of people because it is used in literature, for printing documents, taught in schools, used in media houses etc. Here you find that when you tune your radio during the BBC,

VOA or Germany Hausa Broadcasts. you will hear them using the Standard Hausa. This dialect is used in cultural centres and taught to non native speakers whom we refer to as L2 speakers. Ahmed U. and Bello D. (1970) the Standard Dialect of Hausa is accepted literarily and is used even for official businesses. The other categories Regional or which we may call Rural Dialect is the one which is used by less privileged group. This dialect is mostly used in rural areas where modern amenities are far to be fetched. The circumstances surrounding Regional Dialect is the result of some geographical features or natural baries such as mountains, forest, swamps, seas etc. though in Hausa land some of these mentioned barriers cannot be found i.e. swamps and seas. These might completely disrupt social interaction because of the distance one area to another or perhaps an obstacle between one place to another. The importance of social interaction in determining the Standard Dialect of an individual or group cannot be over emphasized. Kano for example though for a very long time the most urbanized and sophisticated of the Hausa city states, is surrounded by some rural and semi - rural centres who are still ancially backward. As such the Haus spoken in these areas are completely rural, because differences are found in the areas Of pronunciation, vocabulary and word usage for example: while they live in modern houses full of modern facilities. The elites speak the Standard

### **KANO URBAN**

Shááyí

Tàshà

Táushéc

Shi

Cíiwóó

Cirè

Gyàxáá

For example:

### **STANDARD HAUSA**

Wááqáá

Qóóqóó

Wùqáá

Káákà

Qáíff

Qwááráá

Qóótáá

### **KANO RURAL**

Jééhò

Hyayi

Tahya

Tauhye

H

Rauni

Kwave

I have had an experience for good five years living in a particular Hausa community in the Northern part of Bauchi State. This community is located between Jigawa and Yobe States perhaps due to remoteness from urban centres or lack of modern amenities, the "Guddurawa" as they are called, though completely Hausa but the dialect they use can be referred as sub-standard just like the Sakkwatawas who persistently use Flap(r) forgetting trill (r) for commission, the Guddurawas have no cause to associate themselves with the consonant (k) in most of their speeches.

Gujiya

## **GUDDURANCI**

Wa'a

O'o

Wu'a

A'a

Aifi

Wara

Ofa

Haro

## **ENGLISH**

Tea

Motor Park

Traditional Song

He Wound

Take it up

Groundnut

## **ENGLISH**

Song

Small Calabash

Knife

Grand Parent

Sharpness

One

A Handle of Hoe Throw It these people. My three solid years in Sakkwato enabled me to understand Sakkwan the most all aspects of their speeches differ from Kananci and the rest of difference in location. The dialect used in Sakkwato may not be the one used in k Sakkwatanci apart from the Rural Dialect, some differences are equally found d people using the word "wadanga"(these) but in Kebbi i or any other places ; itis said" Yawuni, Argungu, Gusau, Tsafe and Gobir. For example in Sakkwato town you will or wagga" or "wadagga'respectively. However Sakkwatanci i which is regarded as the Some of these things may sound difficult for whoever is having a first time contact Hausa and which is closely associated with Arabic and Islamic traditional is more dift than Kananci and other dialects. Sakkwatanci only the Flap (r) is completely neglected.

For example:

## **STANDARD HAUSA**

Shigár

The Standard Dialect ofHausa has two (rs) one is trill while the otherr is flapbe

Hárbíí

Màyár

Biyár

Fàrár - Rigáá

Fità

## **SAKKWATANCI.**

Shigat

Halbi

Mayat

Biyat

Farat Tago

Fitat

Put in because this is as the result of the influence of and word that is one of the above mentioned consonants.

For example: **ENGLISH** Shooting Put it back Five Among so many places, Pankshin too, has her own standard of Hausa Pankshin can be counted as a Hausa speaking area whatsoever but students from Hausa Depa White shirt who are mostly from this area can be pointed at specifically as Hausa speaking people even address as Hausa specialists. But t experience has shown that the type of Hausa thy speak leads one to conclude that it is something far from the Standard it tis a Dialect ofi own. Perhaps Hausa without any classification. The value of using Standard Hausa formal occasion like in the classroom or even outside the classroom cannot be emphasized. Though Ahmed (1970) said non native speakers of Hausa who may find difficult to pronounce sounds like: bl, /d/, /ts/, /sh/, /k/, , should not feel embarrassed Bring it out students apart from very few who are Hausa have the problemn of pronouncing Correct their mother tongue.

Almost all Sound

X/

Ts/

/Q/

/Sh/

Xaa (son of)

Yar (daughter of)

correctly:

Kuwa (indeed)

Amma (but)

Standard Word

Xáarii

Xóóra

are you going)

Xaùrà

Vàráawò

Váára

Tsóohóó

Tsáaráá

tsáámíí

Qàhóó

Qáátò

Shááyíí

dan

kwa

ama

None Native

Othe common mistakes in their speeches are:

XI like in

Dari

Dora

Daura

Barawo

Baara

Soho

Sara

sami

Kato

Kaho

Sayi

English

Cold

Put on

Tie

Thief

Shelling

Old

Mates

SOur

yan Many more cannot pronounce these words

Horn

Big

Koyarwa (teching) koyaswa This is more particularly a Daura Dialect but cannot be the Standard Dialect of more devastating is the grammatical errors often found with these non- native speakers of Hausa. For example, somebody who would Tea Instead he would say mun je makaranta, which has completely different meaning from the former statement or, instead of: Za ka je ina ne? They prefer to say: kin je ina ne? Which is grammatically wrong, while the meaning is completely different from the former. The list is endless. Ahmed (1970) non-native speakers of Hausa speak the language with accent just like an English speaker who speaks English with the Welsh, Scottish, or Irish accent students of English and teachers are all around to give us a helping hand, just like an average Hausa speaker of English finds it difficult to pronounce certain sounds like 'f example 'five', he may pronounce it 'pipe' or 'four' he may pronounce it 'pour' (as in pour the water) etc. those of you who have keen interests in watching television could remember one Alhaji in Checkmate drama presentation. This Alhaji speaks English like any average Hausa man who understands English, though an imitation. It will look much more improper to study dialect without (Where) say: zamuje makaranta (we are going to school)

Standard

Ciki

Ciki

Tsábtáá

Tsäkáánii

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Bausanci

Shiki

Shiki

learners of Hausa.

Sabta

these languages which at the end corrupt the accent of Hausa Sakani one particular group of people known as Guddurawas. These Guddurawas s are saidy

The substitution of words with other words in the Bauchi Dialect might be attribute the original founders of Bauchi many of them are living in the country side Fulanis, Jarawas and Sayawas. As such; the Hausa they speak has been influencet

English

Stomach

The following recommendations should be taken into consideration for exposure of students to dialectical variations in Hausa language.

anybody as inferior.

Inside

Cleanliness

1. Learners of Hausa language as a second language should try to cultivate a babi

using the corect and standard pronunciation of the language.

2. There is also the need for the standard forms of the language to be taught in all schools, i.e. both primary and post primary to avoid confusing second languag

3. Students of Hausa should endeavour not only speak in the standard Hausa botiha and outside the clasrOom, but to also correct any misuse of the languag

wherever such is identified.

4. The National Institute of Nigerian languages Aba, should work in conju

with the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council hU

(NERDC) to produce materials in the standard form of the language.

In conclusion, however no dialect is superior to another and to think that way is!

linguistic blunder, language whether English, Yoruba, Ngas, Maghavul, Igbo, Russ

French, Arabic, Hausa etc, is a vehicle for communication for any given society

whatever variety of dialect this society uses be it urban or rural cannot be declared by

Standard

Ciki

Ciki

Tsábtáá

Tsäkáánii

Bausanci

Shiki

Shiki

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Sabta

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## **The Role of Nigerian Arabic Literature in Social Reformation**

Nigerian Arabic literature performs creditably well in reforming social vices in Nigeria through its three main literary genres: **poetry, prose, and drama**. In contemporary Nigeria, the significance of Nigerian literature in Arabic cannot be overstated, especially considering its consistent reformative contributions.

### **Poetry: A Tool for Moral and Religious Guidance**

Arabic poetry in Nigeria serves as a crucial medium for moral instruction and religious enlightenment. Since the primary aim of learning Arabic in Nigeria is to understand religious matters properly and behave according to Allah's legislations, poetry has become an important channel for fostering societal reformation. Various types of Arabic poetry in Nigeria include:

**Al-Madh (Eulogy/Praise)**

**Ritha' (Elegy)**

**Al-Fakhr (Pride)**

**Al-Wasf (Description/Portrayal)**

**Az-Zuhd (Asceticism)**

**Al-Hikmah (Aphorism/Wisdom)**

**Ash-Shakwah (Complaint)**

**Al-Irshad (Guidance/Counseling)**

**At-Tahaniyat (Congratulatory Poems)**

**Ash-Shukr (Gratitude)**

**Ad-Du'a wa At-Tawassulat (Prayers and Supplications)**

**As-Suluk (Conduct/Manners)**

**Ad-Dubabat (Humor/Jokes)**

These poetic forms reflect elements of religion and promote morality, piety, righteousness, kindness, peace, honesty, and humility, while fighting against corruption, indiscipline, and other societal vices.

### ***Selected Poetic Excerpts***

**Sheikh Yahya Abdulgadir** eulogized **Ameer Alhassan bn Mu'azu** during his turbaning ceremony:

"Somebody like this high-spirited and noble person deserved to handle the mantle of caliphate...  
Our land will be shining and be full of goodness...  
The fire of enmity will be extinguished...  
Tongues desiring to cause corruption will be silenced."

**Sheikh Waziri Junaid** lamented the moral degradation:

"They have corrupted the religion and the world...  
A time when right seems wrong, and wrong seems right..."

**Al-Qadi Umar Ibrahim** emphasized the demand for peace:

"Peace and security are the major things people are demanding,  
We don't want war, but peace as its substitute."

### **Prose: A Vehicle for Advice and Reflection**

The prose genre in Nigerian Arabic literature also plays a significant role in societal development. It includes:

**Sermons (Al-Khutbah)**

**Advice (Al-Wasiyyah)**

**Proverbs (Al-Amthal)**

**Wisdom (Al-Hikmah)**

## **Epistles (Ar-Rasail)**

These forms provide moral guidance, social advice, and religious instruction to both the elite and the masses.

## **Drama: A Modern Medium of Awareness**

Dramatic literature in Arabic has emerged as a powerful tool for reforming, educating, entertaining, and guiding people in Nigeria.

Notable Arabic drama texts by Nigerian scholars include:

**"Al-Ameedulul Mubajjal" (The Honorable Dean)** and **"Tabaqatul 'Ulya" (The Upper Class)** by *Professor Hussain*.

**"Qad Ghaabat An-Nujum" (The Faded Stars)** by *Abdul Ganiyy Adebayo Alabi*.

These works reflect and critique societal problems, aiming for moral and ethical reconstruction.

## **Arabic and Human Capital Development**

Arabic language has contributed immensely to human capital in Nigeria. Those who acquire Arabic knowledge and earn a living through it include:

Arabic Teachers and Lecturers

Ambassadors

Commercial Arabic Writers

Arabic Typists and Artists

Alfas, Imams, Islamic Sheikhs, and itinerant preachers

These individuals serve society materially, spiritually, and morally, thereby promoting national development. (*Sanusi, S.A. 2012*)

## Conclusion

Language education holds a vital place in Nigeria, as all academic disciplines require language as a foundation. Arabic, in particular, has played immeasurable roles in Nigerian education, religion, and culture since its introduction.

## Recommendations

In light of the significant roles Arabic plays in Nigeria, the following recommendations are proposed:

**Arabic language education should be promoted at all levels** – from primary to tertiary institutions.

**Government support for Arabic private schools** and strengthening of the *Almajiri* education system.

**Encourage non-Muslims to study Arabic**, making it clear that Arabic is not exclusive to Islam but an internationally recognized language.

For example, *Professor Isaac Ogunbiyi*, a non-Muslim, has made notable contributions to Arabic language development.

**Employ professionally trained Arabic teachers** at all educational levels.

**Improve teaching and learning** by providing sufficient teaching aids, facilities, and textbooks.

**Arabic teachers and lecturers should remain resilient**, competitive, and innovative despite challenges in the field.

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