LANGUAGE ATTRITION AND ITS IMPLICATION IN HAUSA KINSHIP TERMS

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Abstract

This presentation provides a survey of the attrition of Hausa Kinship terms by the language users. The concept of language attrition is associated with language loss, language shift; language change and language death. Language attrition may refer to the loss of words or portions of words in a language by members of a speech community. It may also refer to the declining use of mother tongue skills by those caught in bilingual situations. In Hausa land with particular reference to Zaria Hausa (Zazzau) some lexical attrition takes place within the speech community not only among the elite. Using sociolinguistic methods of analysis, attempt was made to discuss the subject matter from a theoretical point of view. According to Gumperz and Wilson (1981), language attrition is used to explain borrowing, semantic extension, calques, increased use of certain structures due to influence of other languages. The study surveys how terms related to blood relatives' category: (i) the parents, (ii) the grand-parents, (iii) the siblings, and (iv) the children; and the collateral relationship: (i) the uncles/aunts, (ii) the nephews/nieces, and (iii) the cousins are disused or decreased in use by Hausa people today and the adopted new terms from English, Arabic and other languages. Primary and secondary sources of data collection were used in carrying out the study. Sixty people, thirty participants aged 7-20 and another thirty participants aged 35-55, were interviewed comprising children of elite, and elite and non-elite parents. Data collected show that language attrition took place among Zaria Hausa speech community particularly among the elite and non-elite. The study contributes to the existing knowledge on how Hausa kinship terms are used by the speakers.

Introduction

The term 'language attrition' refers to changes in a native language that have either fallen into disuse or are used alongside an environmental one. In accordance with this definition, attrition is a process that is driven by two factors: (a) the presence, development and regular use of a second linguistic system, leading to cross linguistic interference (CLI), competition and other effects associated with bilingualism, and (b) a decreased use of the attiring language, potentially leading to access problems (Schmid and Köpke, 2007).

Language attrition is the loss of a first or second language or a portion of that language by either a community or individual. Language attrition is related to multilingualism and language acquisition. The loss of a native language is often experienced as something profoundly moving, disturbing or shocking, both by those who experience it and by those who witness it in others; "To lose your own language is like forgetting your mother, and as sad, in a way", because it is "like losing part of one's soul" is how Alexander McCall Smith (2013:163), puts it. We can say language attrition is the decrease in use or nonuse of lexical items of a language by a native speaker or someone who acquired such language in life as a result of contact with the community in which the language is spoken.

In any other situation in which we experience language, particularly when it comes to a change within our own linguistic repertoire, is a social one: L1 acquisition, L2 learning, communication, language for creative purposes, and so on. Whenever we encounter language, it is inseparably linked to contact with other human beings. Language is arguably what makes us part of a community or a relationship. Culture on the other hand, can be looked at as the total of the structured system of governed behavior, beliefs and values of any given people (Sapir 1921, Lado 1968).

When we look at the issue of language in relation to culture it would be seen as Salim (2014) opined that "such structured systems of governed behavior are, like their main transmission medium, (that is, language), never static but may, due to the effect of certain external, as well as internal factors, be subject to change. The resultant change may, in the sense that it enriches the language/ culture in the question, be positive; it becomes negative where such a change reduces the value, vocabulary content etc. but most significantly usage. This is because it constitutes an aspect of endangering the viability or even continued existence of such a language and/ or culture". Culture is the ways, art, beliefs of a people or a whole way of life, material, intellectual, and spiritual. Hymes (1964: xvii) believes that "when we need a term for that larger whole which is the common property of all groups of men and which distinctively sets off mankind from all other animals, there is no question; we call it culture". This definition goes to show that language and culture do indeed have something in common: they are both unique to the human species, and most importantly, language and culture are believed to share kind of content, one body of phenomena, indubitably, and that is meaning.

Kinship refers to a rather larger network of people who are related to each, by common ancestry, by marriage, or by adoption. It is kinship which enables us to identify the various kinds of relationships which exist within families and between one person and another (Wali, 1990:56).

The goal of sociolinguistic investigations of attrition is therefore to identify extra linguistic factors which can impact on the attritional process, and to determine the degree of their impact on Hausa kinship terms. The present presentation is an attempt to show how Hausa native speakers are disusing some kinship terms due to the influence of L2. That is to say societal attitude towards the use of the language resulted to the attrition. There is an existing gap or vacuum in the literature of language usage by Hausa speakers. To our knowledge, little or no work was conducted on language attrition in Hausa particularly on kinship terms. The present study is coming in with a view to advancing knowledge in the area of language attrition in Hausa kinship terminologies. This is the contribution of the study to scholarship on the context and concept of the research.

The scope of the study is the attrition or loss or disuse or decrease in use of kinship terms in Hausa, it does not intend to give a detailed survey analysis of the kinship terms of all Hausa states. That is to say, the study does not cover all kinship terms of every dialect of Hausa. Although the research tries to restrict itself to Hausa Kinship Terms of Wali, 1990, the research is limited to the kinship terms of blood relatives and collateral category relationship in Hausa. The first set are: i the parent, ii the grand-parent   iii the siblings and iv the children; and the other set, that is, is collateral relationship, consists of: i the uncles/aunts, ii the nephews/nieces and iii the cousins.

Methodology

The study used a combination of interview and naturalistic recorded interactions. That is primary and secondary sources of data collection were employed. Data for the research is based on the work of Wali (1990) on Hausa kinship terms, along with interviews, and participant observation by the researchers who are native speakers of Hausa residing in the study area. That is to say participants observant of Hausa language and culture. Within a period of 24 weeks, the researchers interviewed sixty participants drawn from Zazzaganci dialect who reside in Zaria and who are children of elite and parents who are either elite or non-elite: thirty participants aged 7-20 and another thirty participants aged 35-55.

Language

As a means by which human beings carry out day to day affairs, language is defined by various scholars, linguists and research workers. Thirumalai (2003), reported by Muhammad (2011:3),

defined language as a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which members of a social group interact with each other. It is a tool for communication by means of which human experience is analyzed differently in each community into units each of which has semantic content and phonic expression. In the same vein, Trudgill (1983:93) views language from a sociolinguistic dimension thus: "Language is not simply a means of communicating information it is also a very important means of establishing and maintaining relationship with other people." Carrol (1964) defines language as an "acquired learned arbitrary system of vocal/ written symbols through which human beings interact in terms of their cultural experiences". Language is a symbolic system used for communication purposes. Language is an integral part of human nature that is capable of distinguishing man from other animals (Pawlak 2011:2). Chomsky (1965) sees language as a door through which every normal human child contemplates the past, grabs the present and approaches the future by acquiring a system of his environment. Language is a functional aspect of human nature that plays significant roles in the general go-getting of man. Language is an important issue in human life, which is used to express ideas, feelings, emotions and thought to other people by using sounds and gestures. Language allows human beings to interact and be employed in the natural world.

Language Shift

Language shift occurs in bilinguals. Language shift is a phenomenon that is characteristic of bilingual situations without diglossia. That is, a situation where two languages compete for domain. Romaine (2000:51) observes that choices made by individuals on an everyday basis have an effect on the long-term situations of the languages concerned. According to Romaine (2000:51), 'language shift generally involves bilingualism as a stage on the way to eventual monolinguals in a new language'. On this premise, a community which was once monolingual becomes bilingual as a result of contact with another, usually more powerful group and becomes transitionally bilingual until their own language is abandoned for the new language. In some cases, shift occurs as a result of voluntary immigration to a place where it is not possible to maintain one's native language. Another reason why shift takes place is the inability of minorities to maintain the home as an intact domain for the use of their language. Saville-Troike (1984:192) while adducing reasons for language shift, says 'there are always two counter forces operating in a society: one for change and one for persistence.' Persistence would lead to stability in a language especially if such language is used for affective functions like education, religion and cultural regeneration e.g. English, French, German, Hebrew and Arabic.

Language loss is imminent when parents no longer see a reason to transmit it to the younger generation, and may even view it as a handicap to their children's education and advancement. This situation is captured by Dorian cited in Saville-Troike (1984:193) when she says, "language loyalty persists so long as the economic and social circumstances are conducive to it; but if some other language proves to have greater value, a shift to that other language begins".

Kinship and Hausa Kinship Terms

In anthropology, kinship is the web of social relationships that form an important part of the lives of most humans in most societies, although its exact meanings even within this discipline are often debated. Anthropologist Robin Fox states that "the study of kinship is the study of what man does with these basic facts of life – mating, gestation, parenthood, socialization, siblingship etc." in human society is unique. He argues that these social ends include the socialization of children, and the formation of basic economic, political, and religious groups.

Kinship refers to a rather large network of people who are related to each other by common ancestry, by marriage, or by adaptation. It is kinship which enables us to identify the various kinds of relationships which exist within families and between one person and another. The family is a kinship group whose primary responsibility is the socialization of its children and the fulfillment of certain basic needs. The family normally "consists of a group of people who are related to one another by blood, marriage, or adaptation and who live together for an indefinite period of time" (Wali, 1990:56).

Kinship can also refer to a principle by which individuals or groups of individuals are organized into social groups, roles, categories, and genealogy by means of kinship terminologies. Family relations can be represented concretely (mother, brother, grandfather) or abstractly by degrees of relationship (or kinship distance). A relationship may be relative (e.g., one is a father in relation to a child), or reflect an absolute (e.g., status difference between mother and a childless one).

Kinship plays an important part in all human societies. It regulates behaviour between persons and helps in the formation of social, political and territorial groups. Kinship bond itself can be seen either in terms of individual parents and sibling relations, those relations which make up the 'nuclear' family unit, or in terms of mathematical co-ordinates (Leech, 1974).

So, we may regard kinship as a field in which different conceptual domains overlap, rather than see it as a single conceptual domain (Wali, 1990).

Kinship systems are a universal feature of language, because kinship is so important in social organization. It is also important to remember that when a term like father, brother, or older brother is used in a kinship system, it carries with it ideas about how such people ought to behave towards others in the society that uses that system. They are also assumed to have certain rights and duties. In practice, of course, they may behave otherwise. It is the kinship system which determines who is called what; it is not the behaviour of individuals which leads them to be called this or that.

Hausa kinship terms are kinship terminologies that the Hausa people use in identifying or addressing larger network of people who are related to each other by common ancestry, by marriage, or by adoption. It is kinship terms that enable us to identify the various kinds of relationships which exist within families and between one person and another including the terms of address used in the different languages or communities for different relatives and the terms of reference used to identify the relationship of these relatives to ego or to each other.

Lexical Attrition in Hausa Kinship Terms

As social conditions change, we can expect kinship systems to change to reflect the new conditions as the case of Hausa kinship terms. The new terms also indicate the current lack of importance given to certain kinship terms which leads to the disuse of the terms by Hausa people today. Musa (2014:4), lexical attrition in Hausa is gradual and step by step example: *aje/ (mota, babur, keke*) use decreased. (Innovation *faakaa* borrowed from English parker) and lexical attrition in relic situations (**recall:** *caavaa, cuuwaa-cuuwaa).*

Theoretical Framework

Language convergence is a type of language contact induced change whereby languages with many bilingual speakers mutually borrow morphological and syntactic features, making their typology more similar. Convergence approach leads to borrowing, semantic extension, calques, and increased use of certain structures due to the influence of other languages.

Language Contact and Linguistic Borrowing

As has been pointed out by writers in the field, all instances of linguistic borrowing are, of necessity proceeded by those of language contact (Weinreich, 1953; Haugen 1950/70 in Salim 2014). Furthermore, in all such cases, those speakers of the borrowing language (i.e target language) who are fluent in the source language, that is, the Bilinguals and Pseudo-Bilinguals are usually the vanguard of the borrowing process (Haugen (op. cit); Salim 1981 in Salim 2014). Where affinity to the cultural group, happens to be socially prestigious, membership to the target language **LT b**ilingual group usually entails some form of identity adjustment. That is, for the **LT** speaker in question, the social prestige attached to fluency in source language **LS** will be the guiding motivating factor that consequently governs his attempts at attaining and thus assuming an identity label that sets him apart from his fellow **LT** speakers.

Borrowing as Linguistic Endangerment

In any given language contact situation, consequent borrowing may be either conscious or unconscious (Salim, 1981:16). By conscious borrowing it means instances where a given speaker falls back on the source language (or dialect) either due to genuine need (deficiency in **LT** in respect of the linguistic item, process etc in question) plain affection, or desire to identify (assumed identity) with the source language/ culture group. Unconscious borrowing differs from the first type only in terms of speaker awareness. Further, with both types of borrowing, two kinds of borrowing directionality may be identified. That is, vertical, where the source language is accepted to be on a higher socio-economic scale, more communicatively; and has greater, more globalized (relative to the "universe" of the Target Language speaker) area of facilitative

communicative coverage. In such instances, the subsequent borrowing thrust is largely unidirectional. As we shall see later, linguistic borrowing in such instances may end up being both a blessing (Linguistic endangerment) or a curse (Linguistic endangerment). Those at the vanguard of this phenomenon are, in all cases, the socially ambitious bilinguals or pseudo-bilinguals whose conscious or unconscious desire to move-ahead determines their active identification (even if misguided) with the source language/culture where their own are now rejected. The disadvantage vis-à-vis the source language/culture, the identity longer and linguistic behaviour of its bilinguals easily identifiable as its elites, actively supplies the ammunition for its endangerment (Salim, 2014).

Language Attrition

Attrition can be described in two ways, as a process or as a phenomenon. The definition of the process is deceptively simple: when we are looking at attrition, we are dealing with "the non-pathological decrease in a language that had previously been acquired by an individual" (Köpke and Schmid, 2004:5). In other words, attrition investigates the situation where a speaker (of an L1 or a late learned second or foreign language) can no longer do something which she/he had previously been able to do, and this loss of proficiency is not caused by a deterioration of the brain due to age, illness or injury, but by a change in linguistic behaviour due to a severance of the contact with the community in which the language is spoken. For Schmid (2000), language attrition is a process of gradual erosion of language skills due to limitation in use. In Waas' (1996) view, language attrition is a natural phenomenon prevalent in language contact situations if one's language is not maintained by its speakers. Language attrition usually refers to decreasing competence in the mother tongue of individual speakers (Myers-Scotton 2002).

Factors Responsible for Language Attrition

According to Musa (2014), the following may be factors responsible for language attrition:

- Expressions used by parents have already been lost
- Rural objects are fading of the language due to urbanization
- Even words used by parents get lost
- Societal nonchalant attitudes to those who would want to acquire a foreign language at the expense of using mother-tongue in expressions
- Education leads to second language learning
- Technological change (ICT) may also be the cause for the loss of words, and
- Migration

Analysis and Discussion

The data collected were classified into two major groups: the attrition in the blood relatives and attrition in collateral relationship. One group contains terms related to parents, grandparents,

siblings and children while, the other group comprises uncles/aunts, cousins and the nieces/nephews.

Attrition in the Blood Relatives

Terms such as uncle, father, mother, sister, brother, son, and cousin are sometimes used outside the English kinship system as Hausa kinship system today adopted into their system by abandoning the terms they used in the past. So, also family structures are changing in many parts of the world: the extended family is becoming less and less important as the nuclear family grows in importance; divorce results in one-parent families; and remarriage results in mixed families.

i.   **The Parents**

Old Term Hausa Decreased in use	New Term Hausa Increase in use	Borrowed from a particular language	Meaning
Mahaifi Baba Uba Maigida Tsoho	Daadii Daadii Alhaji Baffa Malam Ábbà Àbbà	Arabic via Kanuri Alhaji, Malam, Abba, Baffa Arabic via Fulde	Father
Iya Uwa Mahaifiya Babaa Gyatuma Tsohuwa Yaayaa	Ummi Moomii Hajiya Umma	Arabic Ummi English Mummy Arabic Hajiya	Mother

Guggo			

Data show that the use of kinship terms by children that refer to parents in Hausa was decreased in use, new innovations borrowed from English, Arabic, Kanuri and Fulfulde are on the increase in usage. 75.3% of the respondents decreased in use of the terms while 19.7% are still using them, the remaining 5% no longer use the terms.

ii.   The Grandparents

Old Term Hausa Decreased in use	New Term Hausa Increase in use	Borrowed from a particular language	Meaning
Kaka	Alhaji Malam Hajiya	Arabic	Grandparent male and female

Data show that the use of kinship terms by children that refer to grandparents in Hausa was decreased in use; new innovations borrowed from Arabic are in the increase in usage. 88.4% of the respondents decreased in use of the terms while 8% are still using them, the remaining 3.6% no longer use the terms.

iii.   The Siblings

Old Term Hausa Decreased in use	New Term Hausa Increase in use	Borrowed from a particular language	Meaning
Xan uwa	Buroda		Brother/ Sister
'Yar uwa	Sista		Elder or younger brother or sister
Wa	Siniya		
Yaya	Elide		
Qani	Jiniya	Junior English brother	
Qanwa	Anti	Sister	
Dada			

		Senior brother	
		Elder	
		Junior	
		Yoruba 'elder'	

Data show that the use of kinship terms by Hausa people that refers to siblings in Hausa was decreased in use, new innovations borrowed from English and Yoruba are in the increase in usage. 67.8% of the respondents decreased in use of the terms, while 22.2% are still using them, the remaining 10% no longer use the terms.

V. The Children

Old Term Hausa Decreased in use	New Term Hausa Increase in use	Borrowed from a particular language	Meaning
Xa 'Ya Shi/ kai Ita/ ke Yaron nan Wannan Xan Yarinyar nan Xiya	Walid Walida Real name of 1st son/ 1st daughter. Ikrama	Arabic	Son/ Daughter

Data show that the use of kinship terms that refers to children by parents in Hausa was decreased in use new innovations borrowed from Arabic are in the increase in usage. And 90% of the respondents decreased in use of the terms while 2% are still using them, the remaining 8% no longer use the terms.

Attrition in Collateral Relationship:

i. The Uncles/ Aunts

Old Term Hausa Decreased in use	New Term Hausa Increase in use	Borrowed from a particular language	Meaning

	Ankul	English	Father's or mother's brother
Baba (wan babana/ qanin babana)			
Baba, Malam, Kawu (paternel uncle) Alhaji, Malam			
Guggo (paternal aunt), Hajiya, Baba, Inna	Anti	English	Father's or mother's sister

Data show that the use of kinship terms by children that refers to uncles/aunts in Hausa was decreased in use new innovations borrowed from English are in the increase in usage. And 93.4% of the respondents decreased in use of the terms while 2.8% are still using them, the remaining 4% no longer use the terms.

ii. The cousins

Old Term Hausa Decrease in use	New Term Hausa Increase in use	Borrowed from a particular language	Meaning
'Ya'yan maza abokanin wasa	Kozin	English	He and I are sons of two brothers
'Ya 'yan mata	Kozin	English	Cross-cousins
Bawa / Baiwa	Kozin		Cross-cousins
		English	

Data show that the use of kinship terms by children that refers to cousins in Hausa was decreased in use new innovations borrowed from English are in the increase in usage. And 88.9% of the respondents decreased in use of the terms while 9.1% are still using them, the remaining 2% no longer use the terms.

iii. The Nieces/ Nephews

Old Term Hausa Decrease in use			
'Ya 'Yar wana 'Yar qanina 'Yar yata 'Yar qanwata	Nisi	English	My elder or younger brother's daughter
Xa Xan qanwata Xan qanina Xan qanina Xan yata	Nifiw	English	My elder or younger sister's son

Data show that the use of kinship terms by Hausa people that refers to nieces/nephews in Hausa was decreased in use new innovations borrowed from English are in the increase in usage. And 84.7% of the respondents decreased in use of the terms while 12.3% are still using them, the remaining 3% no longer use the terms.

Conclusion

Too much lexical attrition may lead to language loss and that may lead to language death. However, Hausa language is not an endangered language considering UNESCO parameters for language endangerment. But still attrition took place in Hausa language looking at the above survey of Hausa kinship terms mostly among bilinguals. The lexical attrition is the disuse of those terms as they were known before and it occurred in gradual and relic situations. In many homes in the study area, language of wider communication is used especially where it is different

from the native language. The data show that children of educated Hausa could not use kinship terms of Hausa language because their parents did not speak it to them and the people they interacted with could speak too. We have shown how the study comes in with advancing knowledge in the area of language attrition in Hausa kinship terminologies. This shows the implication of the subject matter in Hausa kinship terms.

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