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HAUSA DIALECTS MIXTURE: A CASE STUDY OF KANO AND HADEJIA DIALECTS

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Abstract

It is a common phenomenon in any society to have different groups of people who speak the same language based on their regional or social identity, but one may find out that there exist some similarities and differences among these groups in some linguistic areas. This dynamism of language as a means of communication is what makes it an area worthy of research into these similarities and differences. Moreover, due to the sociolinguistic and other reasons, the dynamism of these groups affecting other groups as a result of neighbourhood, marriage, migration, education, language standardization, mass media, films etc., culminating into various interactions between the Hausas necessitate language users to code-mix or code-switch with other dialects. Thus, the aim and objectives of this research is to investigate the linguistic areas that Hadejia and Kano dialects code-mix or code-switch on syntactic and lexical perspectives. The research is undertaken in line with the linguistic theory of language variation formulated by William Labov in 1972; which employed Interview, Questionnaire, observation, listening to speeches and visitation of documentation centres like libraries and research institutions, as a means of data collection techniques. Indeed, it has been discovered that Hadejia and Kano dialects of Hausa code-mix in some areas of syntax as well as lexical aspects of linguistic studies. Several examples have been given in the appropriate sections of the paper reflecting the relationships of these dialects.

Keywords: Code-mix, dialect, dialect mixture, lexis and syntax.

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1.1 Introduction

The study of language is fundamentally a study of structure and meaning. Grammar is defined as the branch of linguistic science concerned with the construction of sentences. A sentence is complete, meaningful utterance constructed according to specific linguistic rules. Within the Hausa language, these rules can vary significantly across different dialects.

The Hausa language is one of the languages that is full of different dialects. Those include *Kananci* (Kano dialect), *Sakkwatanci* (Sokoto dialect), *Guddiranci* (Guddiri dialect), *Haɗejanci* (Hadejia dialect) and so on. This dynamism of language as a means of communication is what makes it an area worthy of research. This research focuses on the linguistic interaction between two prominent Hausa dialects: Kano Dialect (Kananci) and Hadejia Dialect (Ha*ɗe*janci). While Kano Dialect is often viewed as the basis for standard Hausa, distinct regional dialects like Hadejia Dialect possess unique grammatical and lexical features. However, languages and dialects are not static; they are subject to change and influence through contact.

The central phenomenon examined in this study is dialect mixture or dialectal interference. This occurs when speakers of one dialect adopt the linguistic traits of another. The background of this research lies in the observation that communities in the border regions between Kano and Hadejia, specifically areas like Ringim, Taura, and Auyo etc are increasingly exhibiting a mixed dialect. This mixture is not merely lexical but extends deep into the grammatical structure, affecting how pronouns are used, how tenses are constructed, and how sentences are negated.

Scholars such as Bello (2014), Galadanci (1976), and Sani (2011) have extensively documented the standard forms of Hausa grammar. However, there is a need to document how these standard forms interact with, and are sometimes replaced by, regional variations in transitional zones where Hadejia and Kano populations converge.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This research holds substantial value as it provides empirical documentation of the evolving nature of the Hausa language, specifically the bidirectional interference between the Kano and Hadejia dialects. Unlike previous studies that may assume the standard Kano dialect solely influences regional variations, this study highlights a reciprocal relationship where Hadejia syntactic structures are actively permeating Kano speech in border communities. Furthermore, the study offers critical sociolinguistic insight by demonstrating that this dialectal mixture is not an isolated phenomenon but a widespread trend driven by geographic proximity, trade, and social interaction.

The findings are particularly significant because they reveal that these linguistic shifts cut across all social strata, the adoption of these mixed forms is practiced by both men and women regardless of age or educational background, indicating a deep-rooted and potentially permanent evolution in the grammar of these transitional zones.

1.3 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The scope of this research is geographically and linguistically defined to ensure a focused analysis of dialectal interference. Geographically, the study is delimited to specific border

communities where the interaction between Kano and Hadejia populations is most intense. On the Hadejia axis, the investigation covers areas including Kaugama, Malam Madori, Auyo, Kafin Hausa, and Birniwa. On the Kano and Jigawa border axis, the scope extends to the Local Government Areas of Taura, Ringim, Miga, Jahun, Dutse, Kiyawa, Birnin Kudu, Ajingi, Gabasawa, and Gezawa.

Linguistically, the research is confined to the analysis of Syntax and Vocabulary, specifically examining how these elements overlap between Kano Dialect and Hadejia Dialect. Within the domain of syntax, the study is strictly limited to four key grammatical categories: Personal pronouns, tenses, reflexive pronouns, and Negation. The study does not extend to other grammatical features or other dialects of Hausa outside of the Kano-Hadejia dichotomy.

2.1 Hadejia and Kano Emirates: An Overview

The Hadejia Emirate is situated in the northeast of modern-day Jigawa State. Its name is said to have originated from the famous hunter "Hade" and his wife "Jiya," who historians like Haruna Wakili state founded the town. The Emirate has a size of 6,963 square kilometers. Hadejia is the largest Emirate in Jigawa State, and its Sarkin Hadejia (Emir) chairs the council of Emirs in the state. Geographically, Hadejia is a flat, level land with no major mountains or thick forests. The northern part is sandy, while the east, south, and west are characterized by sandy clay due to a river that flows through these areas. This geogr aphy supports the primary occupations of the people (Hadejawa), which are farming, animal husbandry, and fishing. The dominant language among the people of these polities is Hausa, with other groups including Fulani, Auyakawa, Kwayama, and Bare-bari (Kanuri). Hadejia is bordered by Damagaram to the north, Gumel and Ringim (part of Kano) to the west, Badawa to the east, and Guddirawa (in present-day Bauchi State) to the south.

Historically, the Emirate's income was derived from various taxes and levies, such as zakka, jizya, and fees on crafts like dyeing (kudin karofi), weaving (kudin saka), and blacksmithing (kudin kira). This economic structure, based on traditional Hausa occupations, confirms Hadejia as a Hausa land.

The Kano Emirate is described as a land of abundance (Kano ta Dabo tumbin Giwa, gari ba Kano ba dajin Allah!). A state was confirmed to exist in the area by the end of the ninth century 17, and the government was established for about a thousand years. Kano is a fertile and expansive land, supporting farming and animal husbandry as its dominant economic activities from its founding to the present. Its prosperity and central location attract traders from within Nigeria and other African and global nations. The climate consists of three seasons: Hot (May to July), Rainy (July to September), and Cold (October to February), though the timing of these seasons may sometimes shift. Kano is bordered by Katsina to the west, Daura to the north, Hadejia to the northeast, Zazzau to the southwest, and Bauchi and Guddiri to the southeast. Despite the differing views on origin, Kano is widely accepted as a Hausa area based on its traditional settlement and occupational patterns. The Emirate's historical reach even encompassed areas in modern-day Jigawa, such as Ringim and Dutse.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the study is grounded in William Labov's Descriptive Theory of Language Variation (1972), which provides the essential rules and principles for analysing the data gathered during research on language accents. Labov proposed several methods for obtaining reliable data on accent variation, including: covert observation in important places or gatherings to record natural speech without the subjects' awareness; conducting unprepared interviews **(**sociological interviews**)** in diverse public settings like trains, buses, dining areas, or zoos, which allows individuals to use their authentic accents freely, even those whose speech may not adhere to strict language rules; utilizing mass media (Radio and Television) programs that feature direct, unscripted public discussions; employing a reading passage method, where participants read a word to reveal inherent variations in pronunciation; and finally, consulting libraries for published materials such as books, journals, articles, and theses (undergraduate through postgraduate) as sources of valid and reliable data on language variation.

3.1 Research Methodology

Descriptive qualitative research is being utilized and the different methods were used to collect data of the study. The primary method involved interviewing people from the research area to uncover important information regarding the interplay among speakers using the different language variants. The researchers entered the communities to observe and analyse the language variations within their natural setting. Places visited for observation included motor parks, markets, and schools. An independent method involved visiting libraries to consult published books, research theses (from undergraduate to doctoral levels), seminar papers, journals, and articles. Recognizing the importance of the educated population who can read and write, the researchers prepared and distributed questionnaires to them to fill out, ensuring the collection of robust data. To ensure the study's success, the researchers listened to radio and television programs that featured people from the target areas. Specific programs mentioned include "Ra'ayi Riga" (BBC London), "Gai da mai gaishe ka" (Radio Kano), and "Kudirina" (Radio Jigawa). Content analysis was used to analyse the data.

4.0 Data Presentation and Analysis

This section analyses the linguistic data to demonstrate the phenomenon of dialectal interference between the Kano and Hadejia dialects. The data reveals that this mixture is not unilateral; rather, it is a reciprocal exchange occurring in border communities such as Ringim, Taura, Miga, and Jahun etc. The analysis focuses on two primary categories: Syntactic Interference and Lexical Interference.

4.1 Syntactic Interference

The study identified four key areas of grammatical divergence where dialectal mixture is most prevalent: personal pronouns, continuous tenses, reflexive pronouns, and negations marker.

4.1.1 Personal Pronouns

The personal pronoun forms vary between Kano and Hadejia dialects.

Person	Kano Dialect	Hadejia Dialect
1st Sing.	Nii	niya
2nd Sing. M.	Kai	kaiya
2nd Sing. F.	Kee	keeya
3rd Sing. M.	Shii	shiya
3rd Sing. F.	Ita	ita
1st Plural	Muu	muuya
2nd Plural	Kuu	kuuya
3rd Plural	Suu	suuya

There is evidence of dialectal contact or mixing in pronoun usage between Kano and Hadejia dialect. Speakers in areas like Kaugama, Malam Madori, Auyo, Kafin Hausa, and Birniwa (Hadejawa) are observed to mix their speech. These speakers are adopting the Kano dialectal forms instead of their native Hadejia dialectal forms, as in *nii* instead of *niyaa*, *kai* instead of *kaiyaa*, *muu* instead of *muyaa*, etc.

1. The Relative Continuous Tense

A significant finding is the infiltration of Hadejia verbal aspects into the speech of Kano natives. In Standard Kano Dialect, the Relative Continuous Tense uses the marker *kèe* (e.g., *yakèe*). In contrast, Hadejia Dialect uses a low-tone *nàa* structure for the same aspect.

The article identifies a dialectal variation in the continuous tense structure used by the Hadejia Dialect and a significant mixing of this structure into Kano Dialect speech areas.

The Hadejia low-tone structure (Pronoun + nàa) is being adopted by Kano dialect speakers. Taura,

Ringim, Miga, Jahun, Dutse, Kiyawa, Birnin Kudu, Ajingi, Gabasawa, and Gezawa (Kano and Jigawa States). Kano dialect speakers in these areas use the Hadejia dialect form (e.g., *Audu ya ce, kùnaà amfaàni da shi*) instead of the Kano dialectal subordinate form (e.g., *Audu ya ce, kùkèe amfaàni da shi*). The mixing is widespread and occurs across all demographics (gender, age, education).

2. Reflexive Pronouns

Reflexive Pronouns refer to the repetition of the subject pronoun at the end of a sentence for emphasis, a feature native to Hadejia Dialect but absent in Standard Kano Dialect. The data confirms that this syntactic feature has crossed into Kano territory.

Hadejia Dialect Pattern: *Na zo* ***ni*** (I came [me]).

Kano Dialect Pattern: *Na zo* (I came).

Speakers in Kano districts like Ajingi, Gaya, and Wudil now frequently append these reflexive pronouns (*...ni, ...ka, ...shi*) to the end of their sentences, mirroring Hadejia syntax.

3. Negation Placement

The syntax of negation differs significantly between the dialects regarding the placement of the negative particle *ba*.

Kano Dialect: Places the second *ba* at the very end of the sentence (e.g., *Ba ka dawoo gida* ***ba***).

Hadejia Dialect: Places the second *ba* immediately after the verb (e.g., *Ba ka dawoo* ***ba*** *gida*). The analysis shows that this "immediate post-verbal negation" is now being used by Kano speakers in border areas, representing a structural shift in how negation is constructed in those communities.

4.2 Lexical Interference

Lexical borrowing is driven by commerce, agriculture, and daily social interaction. The data presents a bidirectional exchange of vocabulary, where specific dialectal terms are replaced by their counterparts from the neighboring dialect.

English Gloss	Kano Dialect Term	Hadejia Dialect Term	Observation of Mixture
Peanut Cake	Kùlii-kùlii	Kàraagòo	Kano speakers in Taura and Ringim use the Hadejia term Kàraagòo.
Grinding Machine	Injin-nikàa	Tàhuunàa	Hadejia speakers adopting the Kano term Injin-nikàa.
Urine	Fitsaarii	Sayii	Hadejia speakers replacing Sayii with the standard Fitsaarii.
Shed/Stall	Rùmfaa	Gadawàa	Widespread use of Gadawàa in Kano border markets.
Rosary/Beads	Dàrbeejìyàa/maina	Càrbii	Interchangeable usage observed in religious contexts.

5.1 Conclusion

The research confirms that the linguistic contact between the Kano Dialect (Kananci) and the Hadejia Dialect (Hadejanci) has resulted in a significant and dynamic dialect mixture within the shared border communities of Kano and Jigawa States. Grounded in William Labov's Descriptive Theory of Language Variation, the study demonstrates that this phenomenon is not a passive reception of the standard dialect but a reciprocal exchange driven by intense socio-geographical interaction, trade, and media exposure. Crucially, the observed dialectal interference extends deep into the grammatical fabric of the language, indicating a structural evolution rather than superficial lexical borrowing.

Furthermore, the research established that this dialect mixture is a robust, pervasive trend across the entire social spectrum of the border communities. The adoption of mixed forms (be they Hadejia's syntactic structures by Kano natives or Kano's pronominal forms by Hadejia natives) is practiced universally, regardless of the speaker's gender, age, or educational attainment. This finding underscores the fact that the documented linguistic shifts are not transient instances of code-mixing but represent an emergent, deeply rooted dialectal norm in the transitional zones. The resulting mixed speech variety effectively bridges the two major dialectal areas and provides empirical evidence of the Hausa language's ongoing evolution in response to social and geographical contact.

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