

KANURI'S DIFFICULTIES IN SPEAKING SOME HAUSA SOUNDS

Mohammed H. Barka

Department of Hausa

College of Education Waka-Biu, Borno State

Abstract

This study is meant to phonologically analyze the difficulties the native Kanuri faces in speaking some Hausa sounds. The result of the study demonstrate that native Kanuri speaker of Hausa commit certain errors largely due to mother tongue interference or due to sound deficiency in his/her native language. The result of the study reveals that all palatalized sounds are de-palatalized, all glottalized sounds are de-glottalized, all labialized sounds are de-labialized, some diphthongs are monophthongized in some environments, are some of the features that characterized the Hausa spoken by native Kanuri.

Keywords: Phonology, de-glottalization, de-palatalization, de-labialization, monophthongization.

Background to the Study

Linguistically Hausa and Kanuri differ from each other. Hausa belong to the Chadic language Family. According to Newman (2000), Hausa has the largest speakers of any language in sub-Saharan Africa. It is the first language of twenty five to thirty million people in northern Nigeria, the Niger republic and scattered communities of settlers and traders in large towns throughout West Africa (Pawlak 2002). Furthermore there is Hausa speaking community in the Blue Nile area of Sudan dating from the beginning of the 20th century (Alqali 1987).

Nowadays Hausa is widely used as a second language and is spreading rapidly as lingua franca. It is extensively used for governmental, educational, literary, and commercial purposes. Hausa language broadcasting is done not only within Nigeria and Niger Republic, but also by international Radio stations such as the BBC, Voice of America, Deutsche welle, Radio Moscow, Radio France International, China Radio International etc. Newspapers and magazines appear in Hausa, and book publishing is active. Both the Quran and the Bible have been translated into it. Hausa has been the subject of linguistic study since the mid-19th century (Yahaya 1988).

Greenberg (1963) classifies Kanuri under the Saharan branch of the Nilo-Saharan phylum of African languages. Cyffer (1981) observes that Kanuri is the widest language spoken in Chad, Nigeria, Niger and some part of Cameroon. Kanuri speakers are also found in Hadeja in Jigawa state, Azare and Misau in Bauchi state, Lafiya Barebari in Nasarawa state and Bukuru in Plateau state.

The goal of most second language learners is attain native like fluency. They want to be indistinguishable from native speakers. However, for many second language learners, this native like fluency is elusive as native speakers easily identify them as non-native speakers because of the difficulties they face in speaking some sounds. Therefore this study is aimed at analyzing the difficulties the native Kanuri face in speaking some Hausa sounds.

Statement of the Problem

Kanuri have adopted Hausa as lingua franca in Maiduguri, however some of the Hausa sounds spoken by the native Kanuri sounds different from the standard Hausa in many aspects. The study is aimed at finding out the difficulties the native Kanuri faces in speaking some Hausa sounds.

Significance of the Study

- 1 The study will enable us to understand the difficulties a native Kanuri speaker of Hausa faces in speaking some Hausa sounds.
- 2 The study will provide useful information for use in language planning, standardization and development of teaching materials for use in all levels of education.
- 3 Finally, the study will also serve as reference material to students of Hausa in particular and linguistics in general.

Methodology

The models of approach adopted for this study is that of Pawlak (2003). In her approach, Pawlak (2003) analyzes the varieties of Hausa spoken outside the Hausa land proper, mainly in its function as lingua franca in Jos urban centre in central Nigeria. The study looks at the level of pronunciation among various ethnic groups in Plateau that speak Hausa. Pawlak (2003) observes that manifestation of the vowel length considerably distinguishes ethnic and non-ethnic pronunciation in Plateau Hausa varieties. Her study also observes the numerous consonantal replacements.

The data for this study was collected through unobtrusive observation. The unobtrusive observation was conducted at various points in Budum, Kalari, Adam Kolo, Nimeri Korongoso and Shehuri North. As a former student who have lived in Maiduguri for more than ten years (as a graduate and post graduate student), I consider these wards as one of the mainly Kanuri speaking areas. During the

unobtrusive observation notes were taken, conversations were recorded. Fourteen sounds were targeted, these sounds are: /v/, /x/, /q/, /ts/, /fy/, /qw/, /kw/, /gw/, /ky/, /qy/, /gy/, /'y/, /au/, /ai/.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The result obtained shows that the native Kanuri speaker of Hausa has some difficulties in articulating some Hausa sounds. The native Kanuri speaker of Hausa makes different types of substitutions in order to overcome these linguistic difficulties. The substitutions are based on sounds which are closer in terms of place or manner of articulation.

· Voiceless velar ejective /q/ in standard Hausa becomes voiceless velar stop /k/ in Kanuri Hausa. Consider the following examples:

Standard Hausa	Kanuri Hausa	Gloss
qafàa	kafàa	leg
qàramii	kàramii	small
qayàa	kayàa	thorn

The above example can be accounted for by the following rule:

+ cons	- cont
+ back	- round
+ glott	- glott

The above rule states that glottalized velar ejective /q/ in standard Hausa is deglottalized in Kanuri Hausa.

· Voiceless labialized velar ejective /qw / in standard Hausa becomes voiceless labialized velar stop /kw/ in Kanuri Hausa. Consider the following examples:

Standard Hausa	Kanuri Hausa	Gloss
qwaacèè	koocèè	to take by force
qwalloo	kolloo	ball
qwàaroo	kòoroo	insect

[qw]: [kw] in the above example can be accounted as follows:

+ cons	- cont
+ back	- round
+ glott	-glott

The above rule states that Labialized velar ejective /qw/ in standard Hausa becomes labialized velar stop /kw/ in Kanuri Hausa

· Voiceless palatalized velar ejective /qy/ in standard Hausa becomes voiceless palatalized velar stop /ky/ in Kanuri Hausa. Consider the following examples:

Standard Hausa	Kanuri Hausa	Gloss
qyândaa	kêndaa	measles
qyaashii	keshii	jealousy
qyàllii	kyèlii	glittering

[qy]: [ky] in the above example can be presented thus:

+cons - cont
 +back
 + pal
 + glott - glott

The above rule states that, palatalized velar ejective /qw/ in standard Hausa becomes palatalized velar stop /kw/ in Kilba Hausa

· Glottalized voiced bilabial implosive /v/ in Standard Hausa is released as voiced bilabial stop /b/. Consider the following examples:

Standard Hausa	Kanuri Hausa	Gloss
vàraawò	bàraawò	thief
vàrnaa	bàrnaa	destruction
vera	bera	rat

/v/: /b/ in the above example can be accounted thus:

+ cons - cont
 + ant
 + strid
 + glott - glott

The above rule states that glottalized voiced bilabial implosive /v/ in Standard Hausa is released as voiced bilabial stop /b/ in Kanuri Hausa.

· Glottalized voiced alveolar implosive /x/ in Standard Hausa corresponds to voiced alveolar plosive /d/. Consider the following examples:

Standard Hausa	Kanuri Hausa	Gloss
xaakì	daakì	room
xaurè	daurè	to tie
xaacii	daacii	bitter

/x/: /d/ in the above example can be accounted thus:

+ cons	- cont
+ glott.	- glott
+ strid.	
+ ant	

· Voiceless labialized velar stop /kw/ in standard Hausa is released as voiceless velar stop /k/. Consider the following examples:

Standard Hausa	Kanuri Hausa	Gloss
kwalabaa	kolobaa	bottle
kwangilaa	kongilaa	contract
kwàndoo	kòndoo	basket

/kw/: /k/ above can be represented thus:

+ cons	- cont
+ back	
+ high	
+ lab	- lab

The above rule states that voiceless labialized velar stop /kw/ in standard Hausa corresponds to /k/ in Kanuri Hausa

· Voiceless palatalized velar stop /ky/ in standard Hausa is released as voiceless velar stop. Consider the following examples:

Standard Hausa	Kanuri Hausa	Gloss
kyàù	kèù	beauty
kyàutaa	kèutaa	gift
kyànwaa	kènwaa	cat

/ky/: /k/ can be represented thus:

+ cons	- cont
+ pal	- pal
+ back	
+ high	

The above rule asserts that voiceless palatalized velar stop /ky/ in standard Hausa is released as voiceless velar stop /k/ in Kanuri Hausa.

· Voiced labialized velar stop /gw/ in standard Hausa is released as voiced velar stop /g/ in Kanuri Hausa. Consider the following examples:

Standard Hausa	Kanuri Hausa	Gloss
gwandà	gondà	pawpaw
gwamnà	gomnà	governor
gwaazaa	goozaa	cocoyam
gwarzoo	gorzoo	undaunted

/gw/:/g/ can be represented thus:

+ cons	- cont
+ round	- round
+ back	
+ high	

The above rule asserts that voiced labialized velar /gw/ in standard Hausa is released as voiced velar stop /g/

· Voiced glottalized velar stop /'y/ in standard Hausa corresponds to voiced palatal approximant /y/ in Kanuri Hausa. Consider the following examples:

Standard Hausa	Kanuri Hausa	Gloss
'yancii	yancii	freedom
'ya	ya	daughter
'yaa'yaa	yaayaa	children

/'y/:/y/ can be represented thus:

+ cons	
+ back	
+ high	
+ pal	- pal
+ cont	- cont
+ glot	- glot

The above rule asserts that voiced glottalized velar stop /'y/ in standard Hausa released as voiced palatal approximant /y/ in Kanuri Hausa.

· Voiced palatalized velar stop /gy/ in standard Hausa corresponds to voiced velar stop /g/ in Kanuri Hausa. Consider the following examples:

Standard Hausa	Kanuri Hausa	Gloss
gyaarà	geerà	to repair
gyàatsa	gèesa	belching
gyàxaa	gèdaa	groundnut

The above example can be represented thus:

+cons	-cont
+ back	+ high
+ pal	- pal

The above rule asserts that all voiced palatalized velar stop /gy/ in standard Hausa is released as voiced velar stop /g/ in Kanuri Hausa.

· Voiceless palatalized labio-dental fricative /fy/ in standard Hausa corresponds to voiceless bilabial fricative /f/ in Kanuri Hausa. Consider the following examples:

Standard Hausa	Kanuri Hausa	Gloss
fyaaxè	faxè	rape
fyaacè	faacè	to blow one nose

The above example can be represented thus:

+ cons	
+ cont	
+ pal	- pal
+ ant	
+ cor	- cor
- stri	

The above rule asserts that voiceless palatalized labio-dental fricative /fy/ in standard Hausa is released as voiceless bilabial fricative /f/ in Kanuri Hausa.

· Voiceless alveolar ejective /ts/ in standard Hausa corresponds to voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ in Kanuri Hausa. Consider the following examples:

Standard Hausa	Kanuri Hausa	Gloss
tsaamiiyaa	saamiiyaa	tamarind
tsaatsà	saasà	roost
tsintsiyaa	sintsiyaa	broom

The above example can be represented thus:

+ cons	
+ cor	- cor
+ cont	- cont
+del.Rel	- del.rel
	- stri

The above phonological rule asserts that voiceless alveolar ejective /ts/ in standard Hausa is released to voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ in Kanuri Hausa.

· The diphthong /au/ in standard Hausa corresponds to monophthong /o/ in Kanuri Hausa. Consider the following examples:

Standard Hausa	Kanuri Hausa	Gloss
audùgaa	odùga	cotton
hàukaa	hòoka	madness
mahàukàcii	mahòkàcii	a mad man

The example can be represented thus:

+ round	- round
+ syll	- syll
+ back	

The above rule asserts that the diphthong /au/ in standard Hausa is released as monophthong /o/ in Kanuri Hausa.

· The diphthong /ai/ in standard Hausa corresponds to monophthong /e/ in Kanuri Hausa. Consider the following examples:

Standard Hausa	Kanuri Hausa	Gloss
masallaatai	masallaate	mosques
àbòokai	àbòoke	friends
àddiinai	àddiine	religions

The above example can be represented thus:

+ pal	- pal
+ high	- high
+ syll	- syll

The above rule asserts that the diphthong /ai/ in standard Hausa is released as monophthong /e/ in Kanuri Hausa.

Conclusion

The above analysis, interpretation and exemplifications have clearly revealed that the native Kanuri speaker of Hausa encounter diverse phonological problems resulting from two (2) basic causes:

- (a) the differences between the mother tongue (Kanuri) and the target language (Hausa) and
- (b) mother interference.

These two factors prompt the native Kanuri speaker of Hausa to make some sound substitutions. These sounds are substituted by the closet substitute sounds in his/her native language. The substitutions are based on sounds which are closer in terms of manner or place of articulation.

References

- Abubakar, A. (1983) "Generative phonology & Dialect Variation: A study of Hausa Dialects". Unpublished Ph.D Thesis University of London
- Abubakar, A. (1999) "Depalatalization in Hausa, Maiduguri Journal of Linguistic & Literary studies" (MAJOLLS) Vol. 1 1999: P 1-19
- Abubakar, A. (2000) "An Introductory Hausa Morphology University of Maiduguri". Desktop Publishing
- Alqali, M.A (1987) in Mohammed, A.U. (1994) "Phonological Variations of The Spoken Hausa of Kanuri Native Speakers in the Mainly Kanuri Area of Maiduguri" Unpublished M.A dissertation, Department of Languages & Linguistics, University of Maiduguri
- Barka, M.H (2014) "Comparative study of standard Hausa & Hausa spoken by the Kilba". Unpublished M.A dissertation, Department of Languages & Linguistics, University of Maiduguri
- Chomsky, N & Halle, M (1968) "The sound pattern of English". New York: Harper & Row.
- Cyffer, N (1991) "We learn Kanuri" Bernd Gimdel – Koln Koppe
- Greenberg, J.H. (1963) "The Language of Africa Indiana University Bloomington". The Hague: Mouton,
- Mu'azu, M.A (2009) "A grammar of the Kilba Language", LINCOM GmbH, Gmunder str.35, D 81379 Muenchen
- Newman, P. (2000) "The Hausa language" An encyclopedic Reference Grammar. London, New Haven: Yale University Press
- Pawlak, N. (2003) "Hausa outside the Mother Tongue Area" Plateau Variety. Academic publishing House Warszawa: (Dialog)
- Yahaya I.Y. (1988), "Hausa a Rubuce Tarihin Rubuce-Rubucecikin Hausa". Zaria: N.N.P.C