

## The Use of Hausa by the Kano State House of Assembly and Kano Emirate Council: A Revitalization Strategy for Language Sustainable Development

Sabi'u Alhaji Garba

Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto

[garbasabiu@yahoo.com](mailto:garbasabiu@yahoo.com)

### Abstract

This paper looks at the use of Hausa as a working language by the Kano State House of Assembly (KSHA) and Kano Emirate Council (KEC) as a revitalization strategy of the language for sustainable development. It finds out that the Kano State House of Assembly conducts its legislative official sittings in Hausa language and the Kano Emirate Council deploys Hausa in its correspondences with the Districts Heads, and the Ward and Village Heads reply or generate their routine administrative and operational reports to the District Heads for onward delivery to the Emirate in Hausa. The Emir, District, Village and Ward Heads in the Emirate respond to the visitors in Hausa while at the court, hosting subjects and at community events etc. The use of Hausa in these two official domains will not only maintain, preserve and document the language, but earns more prestige to the language and make people use it and pass it to the younger generation who will also pass it to their children and so on from generation to generation. The need to revitalize any indigenous language became imperative because of the deleterious threat of endangerment languages are facing which dictates that languages' owners devise means to keep them alive, delay or prevent their untimely death. The paper argues that the use of Hausa by the KSHA and KEC may help to engender sustainable development as it leads to proper representation of the masses by the representatives, proper enlightenment of the masses and entrenching democracy. It recommends amongst others that: the KSHA should cap it all with keeping the minutes of its proceedings and its other duties in Hausa just as it chose to conduct its sittings in Hausa, advocacy to document the minutes of the KSH's proceedings and its other duties in Hausa be embarked upon by the stakeholders, formulating, translating various terms relating to legislative duties and the honourable members be given refresher courses on the use of the Hausa language. Secretaries under Kano Emirate Council right from those at village, district heads to the Emirate Council secretary be given training on Hausa orthography from time to time by the stakeholders to further strengthen their duties.

**Keywords:** Hausa, Kano State House of Assembly, Language development

### Introduction

The paper examines the numerical strength and widespread nature of the Hausa language, some domains where it has been in use which form part of the revitalization strategy of the language. However, the examination shows that there is much more need to use Hausa into many more domains, especially official ones such as the KSHA and KEC which will earn more prestige to the language and make people use it and pass it to the younger generation who will also pass it to their children and so on from generation to generation which Fishman (1991) refers to as 'intergeneration transmission', an important factor of language maintenance, revitalization. The results point to the fact that in spite of the seeming speaker strength, wide spread nature of the Hausa language and its usage in many domains such as the schools and the media as discussed below, there is utmost need for its revitalization to thwart the real threat most world languages face. Contemporary linguistic research, Serafin (2011:1), shows that currently there are nearly seven thousand languages in the world; it is believed that more than half of these will disappear in the next century.

Interestingly, the revitalization of the Hausa will help to achieve a sustainable development in view of the centrality of language in any development drive. This assertion is apt when we consider Bamgbose's (1998:11) viewpoint: "The fact is that if development is to be meaningful, there is no way in which it can be carried out in a language which excludes the majority of the people in the society...". This, then, is one of the most important justifications for putting greater emphasis on revitalizing Hausa.

### The Kano State House of Assembly: A Brief

Kano State was created on May 27, 1967 from the former Northern Region and later on August 27, 1991, Jigawa State was created from old Kano State. However, the State Assembly did not come to being when the state was created as the administration of the State, and the nation in general, had been in the hands of the military till 1979 when the Second Republic was ushered in. Therefore, from 1979, Kano State House of Assembly has had eight different legislatures i.e. 1979-1984 as the first legislature, 1983-1984 as the second, 1992-1993 as the third, 1999-2003 as the fourth, 2003-2007 as the fifth, 2007-2011 sixth, 2011-2015 seventh

and with the present one which began in June, 2015 as the eighth one which has 40 Honourable Members representing 44 LGAs of the state with Honourable Kabir Alasan Rurum as the Speaker, but was removed on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2017 and replaced with Yusuf Abdullahi Ata. KSHA has been deploying Hausa in its sittings since its first legislature 1979-1984. Brann (2006b:315) listed Kano as one of the states which used Hausa in their assemblies in 1979-1784. Specifically, Kano began using Hausa in its assembly on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1979 (Brann 2006b:317). The successive legislatures sustained the use of Hausa in their sittings up till the present legislature. The deployment of Hausa by the KSHA has been welcomed by the Kano people and has helped in keeping them abreast with the activities of the legislatures and the issues bedeviling the electorates. Thus, the use of Hausa by the present legislature does not suggest that the members cannot fluently speak English, but their respect for Hausa as the present legislature comprises members who were seasoned bureaucrats, retired civil servants with even a PhD amongst them. KSHA House Standing Rules (2012) Order 8 (a) says: Sittings of the House are conducted on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

### **Kano Emirate Council in Brief**

The history of Kano, pre and post-Jihad Kano, pre and post-Colonial Kano, is well-documented in the literature that I do not need to repeat any part of it here for lack of space. For details, see: Fika (1978), Dokaji (1978), Bello (1983) and Usman (1997). Kano Emirate is almost synonymous with Kano State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, but some parts of the earlier Kano Emirate are in Jigawa State and they now constitute newly created Dutse and Ringim Emirates in addition to Hadejia, Gumel and Kazaure Emirates. The Emir is the head of the Emirate and the Emirate Council is the authority that leads the Emirate. The current structures of the Kano Emirate comprise of the Emir and Councilors, who are at the Palace in Kano, District Heads, Village Heads and Wards Heads, who are at their various domains. Presently, each of the 44 Local Government Areas of Kano State is headed by a District Head and each district is split into villages headed by Village Heads and each village is split into wards headed by Ward Heads.

An analysis of the number of village heads in each of the 44 districts of the Kano Emirate as collated by Khalil and Bayero (forthcoming) shows that Ajingi has 20 village heads, Albasu 20, Bagwai 27, Bebeji 17, Bichi 44, Municipal 4, Bunkure 31, Dala 3, Dambatta 28, Dawakin Kudu 31, Dawakin Tofa 38, Doguwa 10, Fagge 7, Gabasawa 40, Garko 19, Garun Malan 10, Gaya 17, Gezawa 59, Gwale 6, Gwarzo 22, Kabo 22, Karaye 17, Kibiya 20, Kiru 20, Kura 19, Kumbotso 35, Kunchi 31, Madobi 15, Makoda 22, Minjibir 63, Nassarawa 11, Rano 13, Rimin Gado 17, Rogo 22, Sumaila 26, Shanono 19, Takai 24, Tarauni 5, Tudun Wada 26, Tsanyawa 21, Tofa 16, Ungogo 41, Warawa 28 and Wudil 17 totaling 1003 village heads in the Emirate. The number of ward heads has not been gotten, but they may also be in thousands as each village head has an average of two and above ward heads.

While the Richards Constitution of 1945 granted traditional rulers in the North formal constitutional roles and the 1963 Republican Constitution gave constitutional status to traditional rulers by retaining the Houses of Chiefs for the North and West and creating one for the Eastern Region, the 1979 and 1989 Constitutions denied them any formal role (see Ehindero 1991 for details). The 1999 Constitution, too, did not give them any role. However, in spite of a clear constitutional backing, the traditional rulers are playing major roles in the affairs of the nation. An excerpt from the address by General Sani Abacha (1994) attests to this: 'The institution of traditional rulers is an enduring part of our heritage. It plays a critical role as the custodian of culture and traditions. Expectedly, our traditional rulers are closely linked with the grassroots, and so understand the problems of our people intimately. In our search for peace, order and stability in our society, the institution could be a veritable instrument. It is in the overall interest of our people, that this institution in our national life be acknowledged and that clear provisions are made [in the Constitution] for its functions.' Alas!, the dream of the late Head of State has not yet been actualized. Meanwhile, in Kano State, the Kano Emirate officials right from the Emir to the ward head are now local government staff. In 2004, the then State Governor Malan Ibrahim Shekarau formalized this by given provisional offer of appointment to all the Emirate staff and placed them on different grade level depending on the qualification a district head and ward head has. They are now entitled to pension and gratuity in the event of retirement or death.

The KEC advises government on religious, cultural and security matters. It also serves as an instrument for interpreting government policies and disseminating information from the state government to the grassroots. Equally, the use of Hausa by the KEC does not suggest that the Council members cannot fluently speak English as the KEC comprises top bankers, Professors, retired Federal and State Permanent

Secretaries, retired top security officers, educationists etc who are very, very fluent in English, but resolve to use Hausa instead.

### **Context and theoretical framework**

Hausa is an Afro-Asiatic language belonging to Chadic family which is classified as Western Chadic, sub-group 1, type 'A' (Greenberg 1963:46). It is the largest in terms of number of speakers and widespread of the Chadic language family (Newmann and Newmann 2009). In the north of Nigeria, it is the language 'par excellence' to get you around Kirk-Greene (1965:5), 'Other Tongue par excellence' (Brann 1979), as well as the lingua franca of the region (Ikara 1987 and Brann 1990). In Nigeria, it is certainly the vehicular language, which has the most non-native speakers Wolff (1991:21). Abner (1969) shows how Hausa is used not only by the Hausa enclave in Sabo, but also by the Yoruba, trading with them. This is evidently proven by Arasanyin (2003:319) who, quoting Britannica World Data (1999:837), identifies 12 network languages in Nigeria and gives speakership strength or population using them as second language (L2) as follows: Hausa 55.5%; Yoruba 28.4%; Igbo 18.5%; Fulani (sic) 11.2%; Ibibio 5.8%; Kanuri 5.1%; Edo 3.8%; Tiv 2.2%; Izon 2.2%; Urhobo 1.5%; Nupe 1.3% and Igala 1.1%. In view of the above, it can be said that Hausa is the major of the major languages in Nigeria.

It is a lingua franca in West Africa ((Robinson 1925, Abraham 1962, Kirk-Green 1965:4, Trudgill 1974, Ikara 1991), it is the largest lingua franca in West Africa - both geographically and numerically (McIntyre 1991:11). Communities of first- and second-language Hausa speakers are found in cities from Senegal and Ivory Coast to Libya and the Central African Republic (McIntyre 1991:11) and some few locations in East Africa (Adamu 1978:179-180). Bholá (1988), Fishman (2001a) and Obiero (2008) identify Hausa as a 'regional' language. Regional languages are those languages, according to Fishman (2001a), which are banked on whenever there is an opportunity to reach larger...populations. Bholá (1988:10) predicts that 'clearly, all or some of these languages: Swahili, Bemba, Lingala, Kongo, Hausa, and Mandingo will have to be the languages of Pan-Africanism. Hence, Fishman (2001a) predicts that 'the importance of regional languages should increase in the near future' and 'a loss of hegemony for English, in favour of regional languages'. This has already manifested in Northern Nigeria where Hausa language surpasses English language in radio programming. In Kano state, Nigeria, for instance, Garba (2014a) shows that the use of Hausa language in radio programming is checkmating the dominance of English as respondents preferred Hausa language than English language programmes which shows that English is no longer in the same dominant position it occupied in the radio programmes of the other parts of Nigeria.

Muhammad (2011:334) estimates the number of people that speak Hausa today the world over at above one hundred million (100,000,000)". This may be an under estimation as the number may be higher than this in view of the spread of the language. After his voyage through the Hausaland and some African regions, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Robinson (1896:ix) predicts that "Hausa would dominate the West African sub-region within the next coming years. His words: the day will probably come when four languages and four only, will dominate the entire continent of Africa. These will be English, Arabic, Swahili, and Hausa. English will be the language of the south, Arabic of the north, whilst Hausa and Swahili will be the languages of western and eastern tropical Africa". Since that time, there has been a growing spread and use of the language in the West African sub-region. This is especially from the beginning of twentieth century as shown in Adamu (1974), and in the middle of the century when some international broadcasters, such as the British Broadcasting Corporation who, in 1957, established Hausa service for delivery of its news and programmes to the West African region Garba (2010). There are now 420 radio stations broadcasting in Hausa, globally, up from 405 earlier identified in Garba (2014b). Of the 420 radio stations broadcasting in Hausa globally, 24 are international broadcasters delivering their programmes on the short wave (SW), 384 local radio stations broadcasting on AM and FM owned by governments, private and community with 213 in Niger Republic, 140 in Nigeria, 9 in Ghana, 8 in Cameroon, 6 in Benin Republic, 4 in Chad, 2 in Togo, 1 in Sudan, 1 in Burkina Faso, 1 in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as well as 12 affiliated radio stations across West African countries. There are now 143 television stations broadcasting in Hausa up from 138 identified by Garba (2015). Of this number, over 23 of them are on satellite broadcasting to global audience.

The geographical spread, numerical strength, notwithstanding, as evident above; there is utmost need for revitalization of Hausa language, especially for Nigeria's sustainable development. In light of the above, the usage of the Hausa language in much more official domain will be a crucial context of revitalization. Although, the language is being used in many official domains such as the schools where it is a medium of instruction in many primary schools in Niger and Nigeria and a subject of study up to doctoral

level in a number of West African and extra African universities, the media, common law and other domains of the public sector such as politics where politicking and electioneering are conducted in Hausa in most part of Northern Nigeria, campaign kits, posters and publicity materials were mostly in Hausa, there is high demand for and interest in the language revitalization support by other formal domains. Even though, language revitalization experts have identified home as a vital domain for language transmission Fishman (1991), most revitalization advocates, however, stressed formal domains Fishman (2001b). Meanwhile, despite the fertile ground and platform these formal domains readily provide for language revitalization, numbers of them are untapped. With only a handful of official domains where Hausa is being used, there is an urgent need to capitalize upon the many other ones to deploy the language. Indeed, the restriction of the language usage in few domains is a major challenge to the transmission, survival of the language. However, if it is used in different official domains, its use will be promoted and facilitate its transmission. Domains such as the legislative assemblies and palaces would be effective language learning areas as they engage in meaningful conversations which are usually covered by journalists working for radio and televisions stations. This means that those present when the conversation is taking place at these domains or those watching and listening on television and radio stations at office, at homes, markets or in the cars will learn the language being used. Thus, this covers both the formal and informal domains such as home, markets etc. This can be seen to be part of the intergenerational activity of language transmission which is one of the successful efforts of language revitalization. In his theoretical framework for language revitalization efforts, Fishman (1991 and 2001b), emphasizes the importance of re-establishing intergenerational transmission of the endangered minority language. The lack of language transmission from generation to generation is, according to Fishman (1991), a significant contributing factor to the loss of that language, since lack of transmission leads to fewer and fewer speakers each generation. In view of the above, this paper will look at the usage of Hausa language in KSHA legislative business and the KEC to explore how the language is used and how it might promote language learning and use in the society as it may provide the listening public with a natural language learning method.

### **Language Revitalization**

Getting a proper grasp of the concept of language revitalization will help us appreciate the main thrust of this paper as well as bringing to fore how language revitalization will lead to sustainable development. Nash (2014:9) refers to language revitalization as an attempt to slow, halt, or reverse language death. And reversing language death/shift in the eyes of Fishman (1991) refers to changing in the opposite direction the displacement process of a language in order to restore it as a means of communication in daily life. To Serafin (2011:1), language revitalization, 'involves the restoration or strengthening of a particular language in regions where they prevailed before being displaced by other, more powerful and prestigious languages'. Revitalization typically involves trying to increase the number of speakers of a language and expanding the domains (e.g., home, school, government, media, etc.) in which it is used Saul&Lise (2016:89). Overall, language revitalization has much to do with languages that are no longer used in everyday communication, as well as with those that are restricted to use only in certain contexts Hinton (2001) in Serafin (2011:1). The foregoing definitions have, to some extent, simplified the concept of revitalization to us to understand that any effort aims at delaying, reducing the speed of the language death as well as deploying language into all ramifications and socialization of life as a means and mode of communication. We can, from the above, see the utmost need to revitalize the Hausa language via its usage in many more domains to re-strengthen, restore its past glory as it is being challenged by more powerful and prestigious languages such as English in the British colonized areas of Africa and French assimilated ones. Language revitalization can involve teaching, developing, cultivating, strengthening, and disseminating a language to make it a vital instrument of communication in daily life; in other words, restoring and strengthening its pragmatic functions in various spheres of society Serafin (2011:1). Hence, the use of Hausa in the KSHA and KEC aptly falls part of efforts to restore and strengthening its pragmatic functions in various spheres of society, especially that the KSHA and KEC form part of functional domains.

Morrison and Peterson (2003) note that language preservation activities include creating dictionaries, taping Elders speaking the language and, more recently, incorporating the use of computers, and interactive CD-ROMs, and (Francis et al, 1998) observe that the principal role of archiving is to store records, potentially indefinitely, and make them available to those entitled to access them. This then tells us that the activities of Hausa radio stations local and foreign such as the BBC, VOA, DW, RFI etc, and television stations such as Sunna TV, Africa TV3, Wisal Hausa TV, Manara TV etc whose broadcast programmes are

archived digitally and with extensive web presence in Hausa programmes which retrieval and access are very easy are helping towards preserving the language, and indeed a prelude to its revitalization. The popularity of Hausa service is not limited to the broadcasts programs, but also the written one. The internet managing editor of the VOA's Africa Division, Ferri (2013), identified Hausa, Vietnamese, English, Persian and Mandarin as the top five mobile language sites at VOA. Meanwhile, on the mobile site, Hausa language site of the VOA takes the lead. The Director of Africa Division of VOA, Gwen Dillard in Ferri (2013) notes that Audiences across West Africa are increasingly turning to the VOA Hausa mobile site for breaking news and information that is customized for the mobile platform. The Hausa-language site received more than 2 million page views in November, 2013, making it VOA's most popular mobile site. Deustche Welle (2014) notes that, interest in DW's Hausa service online presence, especially its interactive platforms, is on the rise. DW listeners are able to comment on latest developments via text message or Facebook, and they do so with enthusiasm. DW Hausa has more than 100,000 Facebook fans, and the number is growing all the time. It is on the account of millions of user of Hausa on the Facebook that made the Facebook, a software giant, added Hausa language into its setting and recognized languages on 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2016 (BBC Hausa afternoon transmission of 1/8/2016). This can be a platform for Hausa revitalization. Scannell (2012) notes Social media are particularly well-suited to minority language revitalization. Several studies have investigated the effectiveness of social networks in maintaining language varieties in indigenous communities (Sallabank, 2010).

In spite of the seeming speaker strength, wide spread nature of the Hausa language and its usage in many domains such as the schools and the media as seen above, there is utmost need for its revitalization to thwart the real threat most world languages face. The vast majority of languages that fall into these categories are the indigenous languages (Serafin, 2011:1), of which Hausa forms part. UNESCO (2003) avers that there are only eight languages of wider communication currently in the whole world out of the about 6000 languages spoken in the world and over 417 languages all over the world are endangered, and Grenoble and Whaley (1998) had earlier predicted that another 2,400 will come to near extinction leaving only 600 languages in the safe category. Based on the above, it became imperative to revitalize and document Hausa to prevent it from falling into those languages in red alert, or at least delay its falling. Thus, it is essential to device ways and means to prevent Hausa's extinction, and to safeguard its cultural and linguistic knowledge, peculiarity which are necessary to the sustainable development of Nigeria and Africa in general. And, using it in other official domains such as KSHA and KEC is a right step in a good direction.

#### **Legal Legislation on the Use of Nigerian Languages**

Constitutional recognition of the validity of indigenous languages in legislative duties has improved the Nigerian languages' status. The 1979, 1989, 1995 and 1999 constitutions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria have all given legitimacy to use indigenous Nigerian languages in National and States' assemblies. Article 91 of the 1979 Constitution states that 'reading the business of House of Assembly shall be conducted in English, but the House may in addition to English conduct the business of the House in one or more languages spoken in the state, as the House may by resolution approve'. Article 95 of the 1989 Constitution clearly leaves the choice for language allocation to the states themselves. Chapter 5, part 1, section 55 of the 1999 Constitution on the use of Nigerian languages in the National Assembly states thus: 'The business of the National Assembly shall be conducted in English, and in Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba when adequate arrangements have been made thereof'. Chapter 5, part 2, section 97 of the 1999 Constitution is on the use of Nigerian languages in the State Assemblies and it reads thus: the business of a House of Assembly shall be conducted in English, but the House may in addition to English conduct the business of the House in one or more other languages spoken in the state as the House may, by resolution, approve. However, despite this highest legal backing, most Nigerian languages have not been put to use in the States' assemblies and none in the National Assembly. Brann (2006a:188) observes that "Although the 1979 Constitution allowed each of the 19 states Houses of Assembly to choose an indigenous language during the Second Republic, as many as 12 opted for one of the major or federal languages: Hausa (7), Yoruba (3), and Igbo (2) – the latter only *de jure* and not *de facto*. The single House to choose an indigenous (but not a major) language was Borno, which added Kanuri to English and Hausa". Elsewhere Brann (2006b:315) lists the states which used the above languages in their assemblies. Hausa was chosen in 7 States: Bauchi, Borno, Gongola, Kaduna, Kano, Niger and Sokoto; Yoruba in 4 states: Lagos, Ogun, Ondo and Oyo; and Igbo in 2 states: Anambra and Imo. The seven states adopted the use of Hausa as the second, additional language of procedure in the following

chronological order: Niger, October 2<sup>nd</sup>; Bauchi, October 3<sup>rd</sup>; Kano, October 5<sup>th</sup>; Kaduna, October 10<sup>th</sup>; Borno, October 11<sup>th</sup>; Gongola, 5<sup>th</sup> November and Sokoto November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1979 (Brann 2006b:317).

It is worthy of note that Hausa was legally recognized to be used in the legislative business prior to the above Federal Constitutions since when each of the 3 regions of Nigeria had its own constitution and legislature. Brann (2006b:316) reports that the Constitution of the Northern Nigeria, in the Nigeria (Constitution) Order in Council, 1960, Kaduna Government Printer: 77-108 as well as in the Constitution of Northern Nigeria Law 1963 (Kaduna Government Printer, n.d), where in para.23 of both (pp 86 and 12 of the two documents respectively) it is stipulated that: The business of the Legislative House of the Region (i.e. House of Assembly and House of Chiefs) shall be conducted in English and Hausa: Provided that all bills introduced in either House and all laws made by the Legislature of the Region shall be printed in Hausa, the English text shall prevail in the case of a conflict between the two texts.

While the KSHA may draw its inspiration to use Hausa language from the above provisions, the KEC may have also leaned on the provision of the Cultural Policy of Nigeria (1988). Section 9, 2.2 of the Policy relating to right to culture which state thus: The right to ethnic culture is implicit in the stated objectives of the 1988 Cultural Policy for Nigeria (C. P. N.). ‘The policy shall serve to evolve, from our plurality, a national culture, the stamp of which will be reflected in African and world affairs’. This is an expression of “Unity in Diversity”, in which some process of convergence is implied. More specifically: ‘The State shall recognize Language as an important aspect of culture and a vehicle for cultural expression and transmission... The State shall promote Nigerian Languages at various levels of the educational system... develop technical terms in various fields in Nigerian Languages...promote the publication of books, newspapers, learned and academic journals in Nigerian Languages...(yet) cultivate a common language for the nation’.

#### **The Use of Hausa in Kano State House of Assembly**

On the language(s) recognised by the Kano State House of Assembly, the House Standing Rules (2012) Order 1 (5) says: “The proceedings and debates of the House shall be conducted in English and Hausa”. This official recognition given to Hausa by the KSHA may have been occasioned by the official backing given to some indigenous Nigerian languages as contained in Chapter 5, part 1, section 55 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. However, Hausa has been accorded official status in the KSHA since the first legislature in the House in 1979 Lawan Badamasi (interview: 30/11/2016). This is also based on the provision of the article 91 of the 1979 Constitution, as well as those preceding it i.e. the Constitution of the Northern Nigeria, [in The Nigeria (Constitution) Order in Council, 1960 and the Constitution of Northern Nigeria Law 1963.

As a result of this linguistic liberty offered, the KSHA members decided to settle for Hausa in conducting their legislative business. Debates on all motions and bills, presentation of motions and bills are carried out in Hausa. However, the Speaker or the House Leader does often read the heading of an issue to be deliberated upon in English, but the deliberations are wholly in Hausa. The usage of Hausa in the KSHA did not start with the eighth legislature (2015-) as Lawan Badamasi (interview: 30/11/2016) confirms that all the previous legislatures used Hausa in the business of the Assembly. On why the KSHA decided to use Hausa in their sittings, Lawan Badamasi (interview: 30/11/2016) notes that it is obvious that the members had to use Hausa since it is the lingua franca in the state and the members would always want to identify with their electorates. This shows that there was not an advocacy taken to the KSHA to use Hausa just as that had to be done to other State Houses of Assembly. Owolabi (2006:13) reports that “Advocacy of the use of Yoruba has also had the desired effect in the House of Assembly in Oyo State but it has not at all been embraced in the House of Assembly in Osun State despite my repeated visits to that House”.

The Hausa usage in the KSHA is of good quality as the members speak natively in an organic way. One noteworthy point is that Hausa is being used in all the sitting days at the KSHA to wit: Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. This is a testimony of acceptance from the part of the electorates/masses and a rare commitment from the part of the Honourable Members as this is not obtainable in the other two major Nigerian languages. Owolabi (2006:14) notes that “Altogether, five Houses of Assembly (Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Ekiti and Lagos) in the South Western part of Nigeria now conduct their legislative discourse in the Yoruba medium, albeit once weekly...”.

However, minutes of the KSHA’s proceedings are kept in English. The ‘order paper’, which set forth the business of the day and being distributed to the members at the opening of each day’s proceedings, is also written in English.

### **The Use of Hausa in Kano Emirate Council**

Although there has not been any written law/document which stipulates Hausa as the official language of the KEC not even the famous document at the palace ‘the Obligations of the Prince’, by Shaikh Muhammad ‘Abd al-Karim Al-Maghili, which outlined how to be a good Muslim ruler, the activities at the palace point towards that as Hausa takes precedent in all activities at the palace. In fact, there is an unwritten law known by everyone in the palace that *Sarki* should not speak any language other than Hausa while at the court on the throne, holding session at the court, issuing statement or a call on the subjects etc. This law is still in force. Taiwo (1976:408) remarks thus: “Among the Nigerian languages, the status of Hausa is relatively high in the Hausa- speaking areas and it is deliberately promoted. The emir usually speaks Hausa in his emirate (sic) even when he is fluent in English and his audience is English-speaking”. Shuaib (2007) points at how Emir Ado Bayero of Kano, for instance, spoke Hausa to the Queen of England and President of United State of America on their separate visits to his palace. This has been the practice till date. The present *Sarkin* Kano, Muhammadu Sanusi II, is keying into this as he responds to visitors/audience English, Arabic or French or whichever language speaking in Hausa and any other Council member interprets in English or Arabic to the visitors/audience. Due to his high love for the language and culture, on accession to throne, Muhammadu Sanusi II advocated to be addressed as *Sarkin* Kano instead of Emir of Kano. The use of Hausa in this Palace should not be interpreted as lacking in fluent English by the Palace officials, but a share respect to the language as the Palace consists of top bankers, Professors, retired Federal and State Permanent Secretaries, retired top security officers, educationists etc who are very, very fluent in English, but resolve to use Hausa instead.

Other areas where the *Sarki* officially uses Hausa is while issuing statements to the subjects in respect of sighting moon to begin the *Ramadan* fast and when the new moon is sighted to end the fast, address the *Sarki* gives during *Sallah* celebrations and while calling for peace to calm frayed nerves in times of civil disturbances etc. The Emir holds court daily to arbitrate minor civil cases and the session is being conducted in Hausa.

To show the position of Hausa in the Kano Palace, Khalil and Bayero (2006) identify some socio-lingual peculiarities that exist in the Palace language which differ from the Hausa used outside the Palace. For instance, when called by the Emir, say via a messenger, in disseminating the message, the messenger is not supposed to say “*ka zo inji Sarki*” or “*ka zo Sarki na kira*” (come, *Sarki* is calling you) as in normal Hausa tradition, rather, he will say “*ka/ki amsa*” (answer a call) and in reply to this, the person whom the call is addressed to will say “*ran Sarki ya dade*” (may *Sarki* live long) not “*Na’am*” (meaning yes). The same thing will be said when one presents oneself before the Emir instead of “*gani*” (here I come) like in ordinary Hausa conversation. The word *gaisuwa* (greeting) in normal Hausa setting stands for its literal meaning “greeting,” whereas before the Emir, it is an appointment seeking device, as in the aforementioned example of *Wambai* sending his message of greeting through *Shamaki* to the emir. What that means is he wants to see the emir.

Khalil and Bayero (forthcoming) identify Kano Emirate as ‘the chief custodian of the culture and religion of the people of Kano’. Thus, the culture here includes the language of the people of Kano. This may be the basis on which the KEC premised its usage in Hausa language in all its affairs, especially, the in-house affairs. This follows that every correspondence between the KEC and the District, Village and Ward heads is written in Hausa. While the KEC tasked the District Heads in writing in Hausa, the ward, village heads respond to the tasking as well as generate reports of the happenings in their various domains to the District Heads in Hausa, who in turn process and forward same to the KEC. The District Heads have a statutory duty to furnish the Emirate of all the happenings in their various districts. They maintain files in their registry in which all issues are filed according to their categories using folios just as obtained in other government offices. They write on routine administrative and operational issues. These includes: general conditions of their domains, law and order, land issues/transactions, health issues, incident reports etc. this is why each District Head and also each Village Head has a secretary who scribes all that transpires in their areas of operations. The only area where the KEC uses Government, other non Hausa palaces etc. Even here, however, the correspondence is not wholly in English as the concluding part of it, consisting of a prayer, used to be in Hausa as ‘*Allah ya ba mu lafiya da zaman lafiya*’.

### **The Use of Hausa in KSHA and KEC as a Strategy to Hausa Revitalization**

From the foregoing, it has been deduced that, the use of Hausa in these two official domains has demonstrated that they have a very good attitude toward the language. Adegbija (2004:54) notes that “Attitudes towards

languages are motivated by several factors including their perceived socioeconomic value, their status-raising potential, their perceived instrumental value, their perceived esteem, their perceived functions or roles in the nation, their numerical strength, the perceived political and economic power of its speakers...". This shows that the KSHA and KEC have perceived Hausa to have all the features mentioned above, hence deploying it. Thus, the use of Hausa in these domains has given the language prestige. This prestige is a critical factor in language revitalization as it will make the society- old and young- to love it the more and keep speaking it. This means that the old will continue speaking it till the end of their lives and the children and the young will keep using it through their teenage life until they become parents and even pass it to their children. This is what Fishman (1991) has been referring to as intergenerational transmission of the language, and according to Fishman (1991:91) "the road to societal death is paved by language activity that is not focused on intergenerational continuity". On this note, the use of Hausa in these two important official domains is playing out as a strategy to revitalize Hausa. The coverage of KSHA sittings by the media such as the televisions and the radio is helping in documenting the proceedings and serve as archival materials. The ARTV and its radio arm as well as the NTA Kano cover the assembly's sittings and produce programmes to that effect. Meanwhile, the KEC on the other hand, serves as both means and modes of production and distribution of the language materials by corresponding in the language. It also helps in documenting the language. Furthermore, the use of Hausa has demonstrated the KSHA and KECs' sacrifice, self-help to maintain the language. These have also been identified by Fishman (1991) as some of the important factors in successful efforts to maintain minority languages.

#### **Use of Hausa by the KSHA and KEC and the Path to Sustainable Development**

The utilization of Hausa by the KSHA and KEC is a unique way of revitalizing the language. This appreciation of the language by the KSHA and assigning it in a legislative business will surely enhance its status, and will engender national development as the public are talked to in their native language. We may appreciate this if we take this definition of development as given by Tchindjang et al (2008:44) as quoted by Owolabi (2011:2) as thus: "The current concept of development implies a finality of social and cultural order that includes the reduction of all forms of misery, poverty, malnutrition, insecurity, injustice and oppression. It is the expression, then, of liberty, and as such, can be differentiated from the concept of growth, which is essentially economic". As a result of the above, Owolabi (2011:3) gives some useful hints on the linguistic dimension of sustainable development especially with reference to the developing countries of Africa as follows: since development (as defined by Tchindjang et al. above) is about people and for people, the participation of the populace in the development process of any country, nation or state cannot be overemphasized; thus effective communication in the languages that the grassroots operate in is inevitable; for government's development endeavours to achieve meaningful results, there is need to create awareness among the people at the grassroots level through effective communication in their languages with a view to increasing their participation in the development process, empowering them socially and economically, enhancing their productivity and raising their living standard, and the indigenous languages of the people must be made to play a big role in various domains such as basic health, hygiene or sanitary education, HIV/AIDS; agriculture; business opportunities; market and price information; users' instructions on food and chemical products, medicine; education, especially adult literacy; road safety; human rights, gender rights, social rights and obligations; political awareness and participation in democratic process; legislation, legal language, judicial processes including proceedings in courts, rural development and poverty eradication; security; etc. Drawing from the above, the following points itemize below are some of the ways the use of Hausa in the KSHA and KEC may help to engender sustainable development. They are:

#### **Proper Representation**

The use of the language is giving room for a proper representation as the legislators will lend their voice to major decision on crucial issues that affect their constituencies. The members are relating their experience and ideas on what concern their constituencies and how to tackle pressing issues. On the contrary, some members may not be able to relate their experience on what militates against the development of their areas in English language, even if they are educated.

#### **Proper Enlightenment of the Masses**

The grassroots people are being kept in the know of what is transpiring in the governance with regards to policies and programmes. While the KSHA educate the masses via their proceedings in Hausa on all issues



they move the motion on and what the executive submits to the assembly, the KEC help in explaining to the masses policies of the government which are always packaged in English. This has corroborated Bamgbose (2007:30) who posits that Information on the programmes should not only be in the languages that people understand, the various projects offered to alleviate poverty should be capable of being pursued through the medium of our indigenous languages. The KEC interprets government policies and conveys these to the grassroots through the traditional emirate channels of communication which mobilizes people to participate effectively in government programmes, and for this reason national and foreign dignitaries frequently visit to the Emir to solicit his support for their various programmes. Palaces of the District Heads are serving as meeting points where health issues are being discussed. The polio evening review meetings are mostly held at the palaces. Health tips are given at the palaces and other sessions at the instance of the traditional rulers. This health campaign being done in Hausa are part of the reasons for the tremendous improvement achieved such as the eradication of polio in the state and the nation in general, but for its resurgence in the crisis ridden-North East region of Nigeria in the mid 2016.

**Entrenching Democracy:** the use of the Hausa will entrench democracy in the state and the nation in general via mobilizing the grassroots people to participate in political processes.

### Conclusion

As shown earlier, Hausa is still widely spoken across a significant portion of the West African Sub-region and even in other regions such as the Republic of Sudan, Libya and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as well as its considerable usage in the media, despite the real threat of endangerment world languages face. There is a good reason to optimistically feel that Hausa has a bright future. However, its future is not something that can be left to chance; without deliberate intervention and sustained efforts to counter the endangerment threat, it could go the way of many other indigenous languages, which are still fighting for survival. The study has also underscored that revitalization of the Hausa language will engender development as it ensure socio-economic life and social mobility.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

- i) The KSHA should cap it all with keeping the minutes of its proceedings and its other duties in Hausa just as it chose to conduct its sittings in Hausa,
- ii) Advocacy to document the minutes of the KSH's proceedings and its other duties in Hausa be embarked upon by the stakeholders,
- iii) The relevant stakeholders such as the Departments of Nigerian Languages, Linguistics and the Centre for Research in Nigerian Languages and Folklore to, as a matter of joint efforts or individually embark on formulating, translating various terms relating to legislative duties and other matters such as: politics, economic, education, health, industries etc
- iv) The Honourable Members be, from time to time, given refresher courses on the use of the Hausa language, and
- v) The scribes or secretaries under Kano Emirate Council right from those at village, district heads to the Emirate Council levels be given training on Hausa orthography to further strengthen their duties.

### References

- Abacha, S. (1994). Text of an Address by General Sani Abacha, Head of State, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, on the *Inauguration of the National Constitutional Conference*, Abuja, June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1994.
- Abner, C. (1969)*Customs and Politics in Urban Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press
- Abraham, R. C. (1962)*Dictionary of the Hausa Language*. London: Hodder and Stoughton
- Abu-Manga, A. (1999)*Hausa in the Sudan: Process of Adaptation to Arabic*. Cologne: Rudiger Koppe
- Adamu, Mi. (1978)*The Hausa Factor in West African History*. Zaria: ABU Press
- Adegbija, E. (2004). 'Language Policy and Planning in Nigeria', *Current Issues in Language Planning*. 5 (3), 1-66. <http://www.multilingual-matters.net/cilp/005/0181/cilp0050181.pdf> accessed on 6 September, 2016
- Arasanyin, O. F. (2003) Nigeria: Language, Media and Legislative Engineering,' in Mugane, J.N (ed) *Trends in African Linguistics: Linguistic Typology and Representation of African Languages: ACAL 5*. Africa World Press, Inc.
- Bamgbose, A. (1998). 'Language as a Resource: An African Perspective'. In Ambrose, M., J. Read and V. Webb (Compilers) *Workshop Papers: The Role of the African Languages in Democratic South Africa*, 5-6 March

1998. Pretoria, University of Pretoria, CentREPoL, pp. 1-14. <http://www.up.ac.za/academic/libarts/crpl/1998-03-05-Bamgbose.pdf> accessed on 9 February 2015
- Bamgbose, A. (2007) 'Linguistics and Social Responsibility: The Challenge for the Nigerian Linguist', in Ndimele, O. (ed.) *Nigerian Languages, Literatures, Cultures and Policy Reforms*, A Festschrift for Ayo Bamgbose, Festschrift Series No.6 Linguistics Association of Nigeria
- Bello, S. (1983). 'The State and Economy of Kano, 1894-1960: A Study of Colonial Domination' PhD thesis, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria
- Bhola, H. S. (1988). 'Literacy for Revitalization in the SADCC Countries of Southern Africa', Paper presented at the Modern Language Association Right to Literacy Conference (Columbus, OH, September 16-18, 1988). <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED297304.pdf> accessed on 6/11/2016
- Brann, C. M. B. 2006a. Democratization of Language Use in Public Domains in Nigeria', in *Language in Education and Society: An Anthology of Selected Writings of C. M. B. Brann (1975-2005)*. Maduguri: University of Maiduguri Library of Language in Education and Society, pp179-189
- Brann, C. M. B. 2006b. 'Language Choice in the Nigerian State Houses of Assembly', in *Language in Education and Society: An Anthology of Selected Writings of C. M. B. Brann (1975-2005)*. Maduguri: University of Maiduguri Library of Language in Education and Society, pp. 315-331
- Brann, C. M.B. (1979) 'Mother Tongue, Other Tongue and Further Tongue: The Triglottic Configuration in Nigeria'. Inaugural Lecture, Dept of Nigerian Languages and Linguistics, University of Maiduguri
- Brann, C. M.B. (1990) Language In/for the Mass Media: A Research Model for Nigeria', National Communication Symposium Unimaid
- Dokaji, A.A. (1978). Kano Ta Dabo Cigari. Zaria: Northern Nigeria Publishing Company Ltd
- DW (2014) 'Dialogue and interaction: 50 years of DW Hausa', <http://www.dw.de/dialogue-and-interaction-50-years-of-dw-hausa/a-17267995>
- Ehinder, S. G. (1991). *The Constitutional Development of Nigeria: 1849-1989*. Jos: Ehinder Nigeria, Ltd.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria, Cultural Policy for Nigeria (Lagos, 1988)
- Ferri, S. (2013) VOA Hausa Mobile Traffic Surges <http://www.insidevoa.com/content/voa-traffic-surges/1810043.html> accessed on 10 June, 2014
- Fika, A. (1978). The Kano Civil War and British Overrule, 1882-1940. Ibadan: Oxford University Press
- Fishman, J. A. (1991), *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages*. Clevedon, Eng.: Multilingual Matters.
- Fishman, J. A. (2001a). 'The New Linguistic Order', in *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* <http://www.uoc.edu/humfil/articles/eng/fishman/fishman.html> accessed on 23 May, 2013
- Fishman, J. A. (Ed.) (2001b), *Can Threatened Languages Be Saved?*, Clevedon, Eng.: Multilingual Matters.
- Francis, R., et al. "Electronic Archiving-A 100 Year Experiment" Proceedings of the Third Document Computing Symposium, Sydney, Australia, August 21, 1998. <http://210.8.122.120.vers/publications/pdf/electronic%20Archiving>. Accessed on 1 June, 2014
- Garba, S. A. (2010). 'Hausa A Gidan Rediyon BBC', M.A Dissertation, Department of Nigerian Languages, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto
- Garba, S. A. (2014a). 'Language as a Factor in Radio Listening: A Case of Kano Radio Listeners' a mandatory PhD seminar paper presented at Department of Nigerian Languages, Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2014
- Garba, S.A. (2014b). 'Hausa as a Regional and International Language of Radio Broadcasting', a paper presented at the International Conference on African Languages and Literatures in the 21st Century, organized by the Institute of African Studies, Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya. Theme: From Asmara 2000 to Nairobi 2014: New Horizons and Trends in African Languages and Literature held from August 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, 2014
- Garba, S. A. (2015). 'A Survey of Television Stations Broadcasting in Hausa Language', in Noufal, Mohamed Ali (ed) *Language and Identity in Africa: In Light of the Current Variables Vol. 2*. Cairo: University of Cairo Press, pp. 305-331
- Genetti, Carol & Rebekka Siemens. 2013. Training as empowering social action: An ethical response to language endangerment. In Elena Mihas, Bernard Perley, Gabriel Rei-Doval & Kathleen Wheatley (eds.), *Responses to language endangerment: In honor of Mickey Noonan* (Studies in Language Companion Series 142), 59-78. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Greenberg, J.H. (1963) *The Languages of Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University
- Grenoble, A. L. and Whaley, J. L. (1998). *Endangered Languages: Language Loss and Community Response*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ikara, B. (1987). *Minority Languages and Lingua Francas in Nigeria*, University of Maiduguri Public Lecture Series No.1
- Ikara, B. (1991) Hausa Language Studies: A Perspective for the future", in Abba Rufa'I (ed), *Nigerian Languages: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. Kano: CSLN, Bayero University
- Kano State House of Assembly Standing Rules (2012)
- Khalil, N. W. and Bayero, A. S. (2006) 'Royal Communication in Traditional Setting: Language Patterns, Etiquette and Address Forms in Kano Emir's Palace', a paper presented at First International conference on Communication,

- Media and Popular Culture in Northern Nigeria, Organised by Department of Mass Communications, Bayero University Kano, 12th – 13th July, 2006.
- Khalil, N. W. and Bayero, A. S. (forthcoming). *Oral and Intangible Traditions of Kano Palace*.
- Kirk-Greene, A. H. M. (1965). *A Working Introduction to the Study of Hausa and the Major Languages of Northern Nigeria*, Occasional Paper No. 3, Department of Languages, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- McIntyre, J.A. (1991) ‘Lexical Innovations in Hausa (Niger, Nigeria)’, in Utta von Gleich and Ekkehard Wolff (eds) *Standardization of National Languages*. Unesco: Institute for Education, Hamburg
- Morrison, S., & Peterson, L. (2003). *Using technology to teach native american languages*. <http://www.cal.org/ericcl/langlink/feb03feature.html> accessed on 19 April, 2011
- Muhammad, D. (2011) ‘Hausa a Duniyar Yau: Tasirin Shirin Game-Duniya kan Harshen Hausa’, in Yalwa, L. D. and Bichi, A. Y. and Sani, S. (eds.) *Studies in Hausa Language, Literature and Culture: the Sixth Hausa International Conference*. Centre for the Study of Nigerian Languages, Bayero University, Kano, pp. 333-342
- Nash, Carlos, M. (2014), ‘Language Endangerment in East Africa’. 45<sup>TH</sup> Annual Conference on African Linguistics held at the University of Kansas from April 17-19, 2014. The themed: “Africa’s Endangered Languages: Documentary and Theoretical Approaches” Sponsored by the US National Science Foundation [http://www.acal45.ku.edu/files/Nash\\_UGworkshop.pdf](http://www.acal45.ku.edu/files/Nash_UGworkshop.pdf) accessed on 31/10/2016
- Newmann, R. and Newmann, P. (2009) The Hausa Lexicographic Tradition <HTTP://WWW.SCRIBD.COM/DOC/14017667/the-Hausa-Lexicographic-tradition> accessed on 18 March 2012
- Obiero, O. J. (2008) Evaluating Language Revitalization in Kenya: The Contradictory Face and Place of The Local Community Factor *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 17(4): 247–268 (2008) <http://www.njas.helsinki.fi/pdf-files/vol17num4/obiero.pdf> 6/11/2016 accessed on 1 August, 2014
- Owolabi, K. (2011). ‘Using Africa’s Indigenous Languages as Tools for Sustainable Development: A Pragmatic Approach’, a lead paper presented at the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria held at Bayero University, Kano December 5-9, 2011
- Robinson, C. H (1896) *Specimens of Hausa Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press <https://archive.org/stream/specimensofhausaa00robirich#page/n0/mode/1up> accessed on 7 June, 2011
- Robinson, H. C. (1925) *Dictionary of the Hausa Language* vol.1, London: Cambridge University Press
- Sallabank, J. (2010). The role of social networks in endangered language maintenance and revitalization: The case of Guernesians in the Channel Islands. *Anthropological Linguistics* 2010; 52(2):184-205.
- Saul, S. & Lise M. D. (2016) The cultures of Native North American language documentation and revitalization, *Reviews in Anthropology*, 45:2, 88-123, DOI: 10.1080/00938157.2016.1179522 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00938157.2016.1179522> accessed on 19 October, 2016
- Scannell, K. (2012). Translating Facebook into Endangered Languages. *Proceedings of the 16th Foundation for Endangered Languages Conference* 2012
- Serafin, M. C. (2011). ‘ Revitalization of Endangered Languages: Quechua in the Andes’, *Droit et cultures* [En ligne], 62 | 2011-2, mis en ligne le 04 mai 2012, consulté le 04 octobre 2016. URL : <http://droitcultures.revues.org/2661> accessed on 20 October, 2016
- Shuaib, Y. A. (2007) ‘Shekarau: Speaking the Language of the People’, appeared on Opinion Page of Weekly Trust Newspaper of June 16, 2007 and available at <http://yashuaib.com/2007/07/shekarau-speaking-the-language-of-the-people/>
- Taiwo, C. O. (1976). ‘Nigeria: Language Problems and Solutions’, in Morsy, Z. (ed.) *Prospects: Quarterly Review of Education* Vol. 6, No. 3. 1976. Paris: UNESCO, pp. 406-416. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0001/000192/019245eo.pdf> accessed on 15 May, 2012
- The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Printed by Federal Government Press, Mobil Road, Apapa Lagos.
- Trudgill, P. (1974) *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction*. England: Penguin Books Ltd.
- UNESCO. (2003). “Language Vitality and Endangerment” Available at <http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL> accessed on 27/9/2010 accessed on 28 January, 2013
- Usman, N. (1997). ‘The Role of Native Administration in the Provision and Development of Social Services in Kano Emirate, 1903-1968. M.A Bayero University, Kano.

### Interview

Lawan Badamasi is the Clerk/Permanent Secretary, Kano State House of Assembly, on 30/11/2016 at his office at the State Assembly Complex, Audu Bako Secretariat, Kano.