

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF STANDARD NIGERIAN ENGLISH SPOKEN BY L1 HAUSA AND KANURI SPEAKERS

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Abstract

As part of a larger PhD study entitled *A comparative phonological analysis of varieties of English spoken by native speakers of Nigerian languages - Hausa, Igbo, Kanuri & Yoruba - for the determination of speakers' origins*, recordings were made of speakers from Hausa, Igbo, Kanuri and Yoruba groups in Nigeria. Four different styles of speech were represented in English: spontaneous speech, picture descriptions, reading of phonetically-balanced passages and that of a word list. From 15 participants in each of the four groups, three participants were selected from the Hausa and Kanuri groups for the initial work. Their speech samples have been analysed at the segmental phonological and phonetic levels for features that distinguish one variety from the other. The paper aims to answer the following questions: (1) In what ways does Standard Nigerian English spoken by L1 Hausa speakers differ from that spoken by L1 Kanuri speakers? (2) Can the differences be accounted for by reference to the different L1 phonological systems? It is hypothesised that the Hausa and Kanuri English varieties are differentiable, and that major disparities between them, attributable to L1 phonological interference, will be apparent in their segmental phonological and phonetic features. The latter provide the main focus of this paper. Due to space restrictions of the article, only realisations of five English fricative consonants, as well as the velar nasal and voiceless bilabial plosive will be reported here. As evident in the findings of the study, all five of the English fricatives were pronounced differently than in British English by both Hausa and Kanuri English speakers. Though some of their realisations sound the same, they tend to differ in several ways; some of which are determined by the sound's environment, speech style (free speech or reading) and absence of the target sounds in the speakers' L1.

1. Introduction

The two languages, Hausa and Kanuri, though both spoken in Northern Nigeria, belong to distinct language families, as argued by GREENBERG (1966). They differ at the levels of lexico-syntax and prosodic and segmental phonology. They have different word orders: Hausa has SVO against Kanuri's SOV. Both languages are tone languages: While Kanuri has five tones (high, low, rising, falling and mid), Hausa has only three tones (high, low and falling). Hausa has five short monophthongs and their five long counterparts as well as two diphthongs (NEWMAN, 1996), while Kanuri has only six short vowels and wholly lacks long vowels and diphthongs (BULAKARIMA & SHETTIMA, 2012). The motivation of this article is to provide an up-to-date description of some features of Hausa and Kanuri English. In view of the limitations on space, only a few consonants of both varieties of Nigerian English will be discussed. The outcome of the PhD investigation overall is to assist personnel in Language Analysis in the Asylum Procedure (LAAP), popularly known as Language Analysis for Determination of Origin (LADO), with the selection of methodologies in determining asylum seekers' geograph-

ical origins. This is to assess the relative performance of four methods of distinguishing the four varieties (Hausa, Igbo, Kanuri and Yoruba) of Standard Nigerian English. It also aims to recommend who will best identify the origins of L2 English speakers for verifying claims of asylum seekers.

1.1. Hausa

Hausa is predominantly spoken across Northern Nigeria as the first language of many people and as a *lingua franca*. Minority tribes in the region use it as a link language to communicate in all social activities. It belongs to the Chadic family of the Afro-Asiatic phylum of African languages (GREENBERG, 1966). The language has more speakers than all languages in sub-Saharan Africa and has about 30 million native speakers in Northern Nigeria (NEWMAN, 1996). It plays other roles in official domains, such as government, educational institutions and commerce, as well as the mass media (NEWMAN, 1996).

1.2. Kanuri

Kanuri has over three million speakers who chiefly live in the Borno and Yobe States of north-eastern Nigeria. Generally, speakers of Kanuri currently live in the four countries surrounding the Lake Chad region; these include Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. The Kanuri provides a unification of several ethnic groups and developed as a result of its geographical diversity and political influences (BULAKARIMA & SHETTIMA, 2012).

1.3. Comparison of phonological systems of Hausa and Kanuri

Hausa has 30 consonant phonemes: /b, t, d, k, g, m, n, s, z, ʃ, h, tʃ, dʒ, l, j, w, ʔ, ŋ/ have equivalents in English but /k^w, g^w, k^j, g^j, ʔ, ʔ^j, β, d, k, k^w, k^j, φ, r, ɾ/ do not have equivalents in English. Hausa does not have the English phonemes /p, f, v, θ, ð, ʒ, ɹ/. It also has 12 vowels, which comprise five short monophthongs, and their five long counterparts as well as two diphthongs /a, ɪ, o, u, e, a: ɪ:, o:, u:, e:, ai, au/ (NEWMAN, 1996; SANI, 2005). On the other hand, Standard Kanuri has 18 consonant phonemes: /b, t, d, k, g, ʔ, f, s, z, h, tʃ, dʒ, m, n, ŋ, l, j, w/ have equivalents in English but /r, ŋ, h/ do not have equivalents in English. Kanuri does not have equivalents of English phonemes /v, θ, ð, ʒ, ɹ/. Kanuri has six vowels: /a, ɪ, o, u, e, ə/. In addition, four allophones which include [p], [φ], [ɾ] and [ʃ] serve as variants of /b/, /f/, /l/ and /s/ respectively (BULAKARIMA & SHETTIMA, 2012). While the velar nasal [ŋ] is an allophone of the alveolar nasal /n/ in Hausa, it is an independent phoneme occurring in any environment in Kanuri. Hausa has a unique set of consonants such as labialised velar, palatalised velar and palatalised glottal. Such consonants do not have equivalents in both English and Kanuri. While the syllable structure of Hausa is either CV, CVV or CVC, Kanuri has CV and CVC only. Diphthongs do not exist in Kanuri at all. Thus, CVV structure does not exist in Kanuri.

2. Methodology

Recordings were made of speakers from the language groups in the Nigerian cities of Kano (Hausa) and Maiduguri (Kanuri). Four different styles of speech were represented: spontaneous speech, picture descriptions, reading of phonetically-balanced passages and of a list of English words. From 15 participants in each of the groups, three participants have been selected from both groups for the initial work. Their speech samples have been analysed at the segmental phonological and phonetic levels for features that distinguish one variety from the other. Due to the restriction of space, the article reports several realisations of five English fricatives. The equivalents of such fricatives do not exist in both Hausa and Kanuri. Besides, it also includes treatments of the velar nasal /ŋ/ and consonant clusters.

3. Results

3.1. Voiced labio-dental fricative

A voiced labio-dental fricative /v/ is realised as a voiced bilabial plosive at the beginning of a syllable/word and before a vowel (i.e. at syllable onset position). While /v/ is mainly realised as [b] in syllable onset position in both Hausa-English and Kanuri-English, it is differently realised as [ɸ] in syllable coda position (word-finally) by Hausa speakers and [p] by Kanuri speakers. The [p] realisation of /v/ syllable/word-finally reflects the influence of sound distribution in Kanuri phonology. As an allophone of the phoneme /b/, the voiceless bilabial plosive [p] occurs in syllable coda position of some of the Kanuri words, but it is absent in Hausa.

Environment	Hausa		Kanuri	
#_	[b]	various	[berɲas]	[b] vegetable [bedʒitabl]
V_V	[b]	heavy	[heɪ]	[b] division [dɪbɪdʒm]
_#	[ɸ]	have	[haɸ]	[p] gave [gɛp]

3.2. Voiceless labio-dental fricative

A voiceless labio-dental fricative is realised as a voiceless bilabial fricative before a vowel (i.e. at a syllable onset position). While /f/ is realised as [ɸ] syllable-initially (i.e. in syllable onset position) of both groups, it is realised as [p] syllable-finally by Kanuri speakers. Thus /v/ and /f/ are merged as [p] in Kanuri-English syllable coda. Both /p/ and /f/ are merged as [ɸ] in Hausa-English. It is not surprising since both phonemes do not exist in Hausa. While /v/ and /f/ are merged as [ɸ] syllable-finally (i.e. in syllable coda position) in Hausa English, they are merged as [p] in Kanuri English.

Environment	Hausa		Kanuri			
#_	[ɸ]	friend	[ɸren]	[ɸ]	farmers	[ɸa:mas]
_V	[ɸ]	unfortunate	[anɸotʃunet]	[ɸ]	information	[ɪnɸɔ:meʃɪm]
V_V	[ɸ]	effect	[eɸekt]	[ɸ]	happy	[hɑ:ɸɪ]
_#				[p]	myself	[maɪsɛlp]

3.3. Voiced dental fricative

A voiced dental fricative is mainly realised as a voiced alveolar fricative word-initially and occasionally as alveolar plosive in free speech.

Environment	Hausa		Kanuri			
#_	[z]	there	[zeja]	[z]	there	[zeja]
	[d]	themselves	[demselfs]	[d]	there	[deja]
V_V	[z]	within	[wɪzɪn]			
	[d]	another	[anada:]	[d]	other	[ɔda:]

Although /ð/ is mainly realised as [z] in Hausa English, as evident in both free speech and reading, another realisation of [d] is occasionally evident in free speech. Kanuri speakers unconditionally (in both free speech and reading) articulate /ð/ as [d]. The frequent realisation of /ð/ as [z] by Hausa speakers suggests a specific realisation for the reading task. They attempted to realise the dental fricative as in Received Pronunciation by observing the orthographic symbols. However, the speakers articulate a Hausa alveolar fricative [z] sound. It seems the Hausa-English speakers prefer [z] for its greater similarity with /ð/ than [d]. The reading passage data revealed a few [z] realisations in Kanuri syllable-initial positions. Thus, both realisations were observed in onset position. Concerning the two distinct realisations of [z] and [d], such a difference may not be attributed to L1 Hausa and L1 Kanuri phonological disparity since both Hausa and Kanuri have /d/ and /z/ as contrastive phonemes. Although both realisations can be argued to be attributed to the influence of the two languages, the differences in terms of the main realisation of [z] by Hausa speakers and [d] by Kanuri speakers remain unjustifiable.

There is also some evidence of interspeaker variation in both groups. For the Hausa group, certain participants who attended a private high school in Kano and had their undergraduate or postgraduate studies abroad prefer using [d] for /ð/ rather than [z]. Their realisation is more categorical compared to the other Hausa participants, who variably realise it as [z] while reading and sometimes [d] in free speech. The realisation of the voiced dental fricative when it occurs in onset position of an open syllable is a clear example for distinguishing the two varieties. While Hausa speakers mainly pronounce the definite article ‘the’ with [a] vowel as either [za] or [da] across all speech conditions, Kanuri speakers mainly realise it with [ɪ] vowel as [dɪ] regardless of which sound precedes or follows it. Similarly, a few Kanuri-English speakers have shifted from the typical Kanuri-English accent. One of the Kanuri participants does not sound like the others. He had his primary education in his Kanuri community before moving to Katsina State in the northwestern Nigeria for higher education. He also obtained a master’s degree from the University of Maiduguri.

3.4. Voiceless dental fricative

A voiceless dental fricative is realised as a voiceless alveolar plosive syllable-initially, syllable-finally or in between vowels. Besides, it is occasionally realised as a voiceless alveolar fricative syllable-initially, finally and in between vowels (in both syllable onset and coda positions) as evident in:

Environment	Hausa		Kanuri			
#_	[t]	thought	[tɔt]	[t]	thought	[tɔt]
	[s]	throughout	[suruawut]			
V_V	[t]	nothing	[nɔtɪŋ]			
_#	[t]	north	[nɔt]			
	[s]	earth	[as]	[s]	mouth	[maus]

/θ/ is realised as [t] or [s] in Hausa-English. Such realisations are evident in both free speech and reading. But it is mainly realised as [t] and occasionally as [s] in Kanuri-English. However, highly educated Hausa speakers, particularly those who had a part of their education abroad, mainly realise it as [t]. They even sometimes pronounce it as in Received Pronunciation.

3.5. Voiced post-alveolar fricative

A voiced postalveolar fricative /ʒ/ is realised as a voiced postalveolar affricate [dʒ] or a voiceless postalveolar fricative [ʃ] in onset position of a second syllable of words in both Hausa and Kanuri English. While it is mainly realised as [dʒ] in onset position of both open and closed syllables in Kanuri-English, it is only realised as [ʃ] in onset position of a closed syllable in Hausa-English. A good example is the word 'division'. As onset, the sound [dʒ] mainly replaces /ʒ/ in onset position of an open syllable of both groups as in the word 'measure'. The voiceless postalveolar fricative /ʃ/ frequently occurs in Hausa words. But it occasionally serves as an allophone of the palatal /j/ in Kanuri. Thus the frequent replacement of /ʒ/ with [ʃ] in Hausa-English is attributed to its distribution in Hausa phonology.

Environment	Hausa		Kanuri			
V_V	[dʒ]	measure	[medʒa]	[dʒ]	measure	[medʒa]
	[ʃ]	division	[dɪvɪʃɪn]	[dʒ]	division	[dɪbɪdʒɪn]

3.6. Velar nasal

A velar nasal is realised as the same velar nasal or alveolar nasal at a word boundary as evident in:

Environment	Hausa		Kanuri			
_#	[ŋ]	long	[lɔŋg]	[n]	long	[lɔ:n]

While the velar nasal /ŋ/ is occasionally followed by velar plosive [g] syllable-finally in Hausa-English, it is mainly realised as an alveolar nasal [n] in Kanuri English in spite of its existence in Kanuri phonology. Hausa speakers' improved realisation could be argued to be an influence of a similar structure in the Hausa sound system since [ŋ] is realised as an allophone of alveolar nasal /n/ word-finally. The realisation of [ŋ] word finally in Hausa English showcases the L1 Hausa influence since it is distributed word-finally in Hausa words. However, it is rarely realised in Kanuri-English in spite of its presence in Kanuri system. Thus, Kanuri speakers hardly distinguish the two phonemes in the English syllable-final position, as in the words 'king' and 'kin'.

3.7. Epenthesis (vowel insertion) in Hausa and Kanuri English

A vowel is inserted in between two consonants in consonant clusters as evident in:

Cluster	Hausa	Cluster	Kanuri
/fl/	[fil] floor	/dr/	[dər] drops
/tl/	[tɔl] bottle	/θr/	[tər] throne

While some vowels break consonant clusters in both Hausa and Kanuri Englishes, KIT and FOOT vowels mainly break consonant clusters in both syllable onset and coda positions of Hausa-English. The schwa vowel mainly breaks the consonant clusters in syllable onset positions of Kanuri-English. KIT vowel rarely breaks consonant clusters in Kanuri-English. The Kanuri-English speakers mainly insert schwa vowel in between consonants of the English words. While schwa vowel is the most widely used vowel in Kanuri words, it is rarely used in Hausa. Therefore, its frequent use in English consonant clusters as realised by the Kanuri speakers is attributed to their L1 system. On the other hand, such clusters are mainly interrupted by KIT and FOOT vowels in Hausa-English. Generally, consonant clusters do not exist in both L1 Hausa and L1 Kanuri (BULAKARIMA & SHETTIMA, 2012; SANI, 2005). Thus speakers of both groups insert vowels in between consonant clusters at either syllable onset or coda position.

3.8. Consonants cluster reduction in Hausa English

The Hausa-English speakers habitually drop a consonant in consonant clusters. This is mainly observed word-finally where the past tense morpheme *ed* is not pronounced. Besides, final /d/ in base words such as 'find' and 'kind' is mainly dropped in Hausa-English. Kanuri speakers rarely drop final consonants in this case. However, they mainly pronounce an additional schwa vowel [ə]. For example, the word 'explained' is sometimes realised as [esplendə]. All of the three conditions are syllable coda conditioned. While the syllable structure of Hausa allows CV, CVV or CVC (SANI, 2005), Kanuri allows CV or CVC only (BULAKARIMA & SHETTIMA, 2012). Thus, Hausa and Kanuri do not allow a sequence of two or more consonants without a vowel in any position. It is, therefore, presumed that the speakers of such languages may either break the consonant clusters or drop the syllable-final consonants. The table below shows some consonant reduction in both varieties. However, cluster reduction is mainly observed in free speech. Many of the participants pronounce each sound of a given word in written texts,

discourse and others (i.e. spelling pronunciation). There is less elision of final consonants in syllable coda positions, as observed in the two reading excerpts.

Cluster		Hausa	
/Cd/	[n]	explained	[esplɛ:n]
		find	[fam]
	[s]	caused	[kɔ:s]
/ks/	[s]	explain	[esplɛ:n]
		accepted	[aseɸtet]

4. Conclusion

In summary, there is evidence of overlap between [p] and [ɸ] as well as [d] and [z] in both varieties. The degree of their realisations would serve as a major source of their variation. Some of the pronunciations sometimes seem to have interspeaker and even intraspeaker variation. The dental fricative consonants are never categorical. Although they are distinctly realised by both Hausa and Kanuri speakers, such realisations overlap across different speakers. It is also worth mentioning that the frequency of distribution of some vowels influences the L2 English of such speakers. A good example is the insertion of a schwa vowel in consonant clusters by Kanuri-English speakers.

With reference to the research questions, there is evidence of replacing the five English fricatives with other sounds for lack of their equivalents in both L1 Hausa and L1 Kanuri. Although their differences are mainly based on the differences of allophonic distribution of the equivalent phonemes in both L1 Hausa and L1 Kanuri, all of the possible realisations [s, z, t, ɸ, p] of the five English fricatives are either contrastive phonemes or allophones of both Hausa and Kanuri. The realisations can be used in distinguishing the two varieties of English.

While the influences of L1 in L2 mostly remain inevitable, the level of such influences varies among speakers as evident above. One ought to admit the fact that people (i.e. those who speak English and other languages as L2) gradually shift from their L1 influence when they become highly educated or live for some time in native communities of the target language. Thus, the level of education is one of the factors resulting in interspeaker differences within the same Hausa or Kanuri group. In other words, language exposure at foreign institutions such as the UK and US universities is also another factor. In the case of those who lived in the UK and other English-speaking countries, there is an element of improved fluency and consistency in their speech.

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