



Personality defines: The Hausas as addressed by speakers of different languages

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Abstract

Hausa is one of the fastest-growing languages in Africa as well as the most widely spoken within the West African countries. The Hausas thought mostly engage in agricultural activities and other crafts alongside civil service (especially in the present days), they travel to near and far communities in search of job(s), laboring etc. for livelihood. As such, they are in constant contact with speakers of different languages across the globe. However, speakers of the various languages named the Hausas differently, mostly in association with the nature or lifestyle of the Hausas. This study is set to investigate into the various names given to the Hausas by speakers of different languages, as well as the factors considered in adapting such names. Questionnaire was used as the research instrument, which was submitted to experts at the Department of Nigerian Languages, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto for validity-check, prior to its administration. The study learnt that, the factors considered by speakers of different languages in naming the Hausa include; skin color, religion, attitudes, food and dress among others. However, the researchers conclude that, naming is another means of passing Judgements about individuals or groups. Therefore, an individual or group of individuals should be conscious and considerate about names associated with them, so that they change for better. The paper further suggested that, when naming an individual or group of individuals, there should be appropriateness to avoid misunderstanding and chaos.

Keywords: hausas, hausa language, name, hausa culture, hausa language

1. Introduction

Scholar such as Baldi, (1977) and Sarbi (2008) have noted Hausa as the most spoken language within the West African countries. This indicates that Hausa language have been able to maintain the status quo considering the distance in age between the two researches indicated above (1977-2008). In a similar research conducted by Garba, (2005), he affirmed the population of Hausa language speakers as over fifty million (50, 000, 000). By now therefore, the number would have increased considerably. This is due to some factors, including:

- i) The Hausas' practice of polygamy
- ii) The simplicity of the language
- iii) Richness in vocabulary
- iv) Rapid assimilation of other languages (especially minority languages). (Jinju, 1990; Yakasai, 2005; Ibrahim, 2009) ^[7, 12, 6].

The Hausas have spread widely to different parts of the world. This is as a result of trading and commerce, religious movements and indeed search for jobs. Muhammad (2011) noted that, the Hausas are well known in commerce and trading of goods into near and far towns and cities. They are found almost everywhere within African counties. They sometimes cross Sahara into places like Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, Chadi, Sudan, Masar, Saudi Arabia etc. The Hausas are also found in European country and in fact, all over the world (Sani & Yahaya, 2017).

However, the Hausas are given various names by different people and in different languages. They consider some factors in doing so, which usually have to do with the nature and personality of the Hausas including their language, religion, dressing and others. This study is therefore interested in finding answers to questions such as:

- i) What names do speakers of different languages use in addressing the Hausas?
- ii) What are the factors considered in adapting such names?

2. The Hausas

Hausa language belongs to the Western branch of the Chadic language super family within the Afro-Asiatic language phylum. The home territories of the Hausa people lie on both sides of the border between Niger and Nigeria. In Niger, about one-half of the population speaks Hausa as a first language, whereas about one-fifth of the Nigerian population speaks it as a first language (Ekkehard, 2012; Chompson, 2015) ^[4]. However, the language is carried and spread to almost all major cities in West, North, Central, and Northeast Africa. This is indeed, among others, the result of their tradition of long-distance commerce and pilgrimages to the Holy Cities of Islam (Ekkehard, 2012; Musa, 2013; Chompson, 2015) ^[4, 9].

The origin of Hausa language is largely unknown (Birnin-Tudu, 2002; Musa, 2013) ^[9, 2]. Notwithstanding, some legendary accounts of its origin exist. The rise of the Hausa-speaking states occurred sometime between 500 and 700 A.D.,

but it was not until roughly 1200 A.D. that these states came to control the region of Northern Nigeria and Northwestern Niger. There are a number of views about the origin of the Hausa people. The famous of the views is the Bayajida legendry, though number of scholars rejects the theory. Another view holds that all Hausawa once lived by Lake Chad, but were forced to move westward when the water level in the lake dropped. However, a view also identifies the Hausa people as desert nomads who lived in the Sahara. Some scholars believe that there is a link between the Hausa and the people of Ethiopia based on shared worship of the sun, practiced prior to the arrival of Islam and Christianity. Many Hausa themselves believe that their ancestors were Arabs whose descendants founded the popular Hausa city-states (Birnin- Tudu, 2002; Thompson, 2015) [2].

Notwithstanding, the most accepted view of Hausa origin is that of Thurstan Shawi (Danmahe, 1985; Birnin- Tudu, 2002) [2]. Thurstand is of the view that since there is strong evidence showing the existence of creatures in the South and East Africa (*Austthroploithous*) as far back as about two million and six hundred years (2 000 600 years), the situation might be similar in the West Africa, only that there exists no research-evidence to vindicate that. Therefore, it is right at this juncture to say that, Hausawa migrate to their current cities neither from Masar, nor from the East. Rather, they had lived for long with other peoples at the Lake Chad. Desertification, which caused drainage to the lake, resulted into their permanent migration to River Rima area. It is from there that they spread and formed cities such as Kano, Katsina, Zazzau, Daura, Rano, Damagaram, and Agadas among others (Birnin-Tudu, 2002) [2]. However, many researches account for the origin of Hausa. These researches include; Bunza, (1995) [3]; Maiyawa (2008) [8]; Abdullahi, (2008) [1]; Yusuf, (2012) [13]; Gobir, (2012) [5] etc.

3. Methodology

The methodology employed for this study is a descriptive survey. The study is able to cover fifty-four (54) Nigerian languages as well as ten (10) foreign languages. The population of the study is therefore composed of native speakers of the targeted languages. However, a structured questionnaire was used as the research instrument. The questionnaire was designed to seek responses of the respondents on the names, with which their (respondents’) languages address the Hausas. The result of which was afterward carefully collected and recorded in a tabular form. Before the administration of the questionnaire, it was submitted to three (3) experts in the Department of Nigerian Languages, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, and Sokoto who assured its validity after minor corrections.

4. Data Presentation and Discussion

This session of the paper carries the presentation of the data obtained from the field as well as its discussion. Responses of the respondents are carefully collected and sorted in tabular

form accordingly.

Table 1: Names Based on Dress

S. No.	Language and Location	Name they Call the Hausas	Meaning
1.	Kambari (Yawuri, Neja)	A gana	Someone who puts on <i>lage</i> ¹¹
2.	Kanuri (Barebari)	Afuno	Someone who puts on leaves
3.	Jukun	Ambakwa Riga	They are given clothing
4.	Arum	Akpanaa	He dresses like the Hausas

Source: Field work (2016)

It is widely believed that clothing is an aspect of material culture. It defines and symbolizes a certain group of people in question. As such, it is not astonishing to find out that tribes are addressed based on their forms of dressing. Both items 1 and 2 in the table 1 above indicate the primitive forms of Hausa dressing. It could be assumed therefore, Kambari and Kanuri adapted these names since donkey years. Item 3 in the table 1 indicates that, to the Jukun, Hausas are given clothing. This must have resulted from experience of a situation far back, when things of such happened to the Hausas. Lastly, item 4 of the table 1 is self-explanatory. The Arum thus, consider the modes of dressing of the Hausas to address a Hausa person.

Table 2: Names Based on Religion

S. No.	Language and Location	Name they Call the Hausas	Meaning
1.	Tivi (Benue)	Atsonka	A person who performs abluion
2.	Kuteb (Taraba)	Songka	A person who prays
3.	Eggon (Nasarawa)	Mosnak	A Muslim
4.	Igbo (Oyo, Edo, Imo)	Ala-kuberi	God is the Great
5.	Jukunawa (Taraba)	Sunkaka	A person who nods his forehead on the ground
6.	Fulani	Kado	Non-Muslim
7.	Kanuri (Barno)	Kirdi	A pagan Hausa
8.	Zabarmawa (Neja, Sakkwato)	Alpha	Scholar
9.	Igbo (Cross-River. Delta)	Alhaji	Someone who has done pilgrimage to Mecca
10.	Chamba (Taraba, Adamawa)	Choikaka	Those who pray alone

Source: Field work (2016)

It has been a living fact that, the majority of the Hausas are Muslims. Only few of them practice Christianity or traditional religion known as *Maguzanci*. Table 2 above indicates some languages that consider religion in naming the Hausas. Items 1, 2, 4, 5 and 10 of the table 1 carries names, which describe the form and or activity (ies) found in the Muslims’ prayers. Eggon directly refers to Hausas as Muslims, this is as indicated in item 3 of the table 2 above. However, the situation is ironical to Fulani and Kanuri as found in items 6 and 7 in the table 2 above. This usually happens if a tribe distrust the manner of practice of religion by another tribe.

¹ Lage is a form of clothing, which is a singly piece of cloth wrapped round the body and tightened over the right shoulder, leaving both hands uncovered.

Table 3: Names Based on Attitudes

S. No.	Language and Location	Name they Call the Hausas	Meaning
1.	Gwari (Neja, Kogi)	Yenbeto	Wise
2.	Nufawa (Neja)	Kenchi	Insect
3.	Jukunawa (Taraba)	Ambakwa	Pigeon
4.	Dibo (Lafai, Neja)	Elu	Bird
5.	Tula (Gombe, Bauchi)	Nebawere	Good Confidante
6.	Yauruba (Ogun)	Elewure	Masu halin Tumaki
7.	Ibirra (Nassarawa, Ondo)	Plasar	Selfishness
8.	Agbor (Ika-south/ Delta)	Ndi-ugu	Quarrelsome
9.	Ghyn (Mada/Nassarawa)	Ghyngan	Quarrelsome
10.	Wangarawa (Mali)	Marhaba	Welcome
11.	Mada (Nassarawa)	Nagwai	Good culture
12.	Igbo	Uke	Friend
13.	Zabarmawa	Hausan or Hausanke	Associated with being rude in marriage

Source: Field work (2016)

Personality of an individual matters a lot in the way the world views him. On the other hand, if a number of individuals from a tribe exhibited a certain attitude or attitudes, the world turns to associate or generalize such attitudes to the tribe. Notwithstanding it could be overgeneralization in some cases. Attitudes of the Hausas are considered in naming them, as indicated in the table 3 above. From the table however, one could learn that, every language speakers named the Hausas based on the experience they had during their encounter (encounter between the Hausas and speakers of the language in question). This is simply the reason why speakers of some languages associate Hausas with goodness in character, whereas, speakers of other languages overgeneralized the Hausas as troublesome individuals. Items 1, 3, 4, 5, 11 and 12 of the table 3 above carries the names of languages, which speakers consider the Hausas as good people. On the other hand, speakers of languages under items 2, 6, 7, 8 and 9 consider the Hausas as troublesome or selfish.

Table 4: Names Based on the Language

S/N	Language and Location	Name they Call the Hausas	Meaning
1.	Angas (Plateau, Bauchi)	Gwa	The Hausas or a Hausa man
2.	Kworo (Neja)	Okwe	A simple language
3.	Busawa (Kogi, Neja)	Gamina	The Hausas or a Hausa man
4.	Idoma (Benue, Kogi)	Agbakpa	A Hausa man
5.	Kadara (Plateau, Gwari)	Ikei	A Hausa man
6.	Tangale (Bauchi, Barno)	Kwainnin	The Hausas or a Hausa man
7.	Ruruma (Kaduna)	Ashashih	Hausa speakers
8.	Maghili (Nassarawa)	Aduma	Cannot speak Hausa
9.	Jama'a (Kaduna)	Figi fukun	The Hausas
10.	Songhai	Aussa/Aussan	The Western Hausas
11.	Faransi	Le haoussa	A Hausa man
12.	Chaina	Zhon guoren	A Hausa man
13.	Assente	Ga-me-ji	A Hausa speaker
14.	Biorom (Plateau)	Tiyom	Hausa people

Source: Field work (2016)

Hausa itself as a language is considered in naming the Hausas by speakers of certain languages. Here, the name is usually representing the image of Hausa language as perceived by the speakers of the language, which initiated the name. Perhaps, it sometimes includes a mere referral to the speakers of the language (Hausa). In this regard, majority of the speakers of the languages consulted address the Hausa directly in reference to the Hausa language. This could be noted from the

items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11 and 14 in the table 4 above. However, speakers of Kworo (in Niger state) consider Hausa as a simply language, which is learnt easily. As such, they call the speakers of the language (Hausas) as *simple language*. This is as indicated under item 2 of the table 4 above.

Table 5: Names Based on Skin Color

S/N	Language and Location	Name they Call the Hausas	Meaning
1.	Arabic	Tukururu Alsudan	Blacks
2.	English	Blacks (Ape)	Blacks

Source: Field work (2016)

There are speakers of few languages who consider the skin color of the Hausas in addressing them. They are the Arabs and the White Men (English) as indicated under items 1 and 2 in the table 5 above. The speakers of both the languages address the Hausas as 'black'. This must have to do with the fact that, the speakers of both the languages have different skin color with the Hausas. However, the fact that none of other African languages addresses the Hausas based on skin color is an evident to this assumption.

Table 6: Names Based on Occupation

S/N	Language and Location	Name they Call the Hausas	Meaning
1.	Yoruba (Kwara)	Molla	Cattle rearing
2.	Gwari (Kwantagora, Neja)	Ago	Someone who engages in irrigation
3.	Margi (Barno, Adamawa)	Jirzuwa-karsuke	Farmers
4.	Dukkawa (Yawuri, Rijau)	Kukogo	An itinerant trader
5.	Yoruba	Elewure	Goats' owners
6.	Yoruba	Areoreoya	Herbalists
7.	Biorom (Plateau)	Bawunaya	Famers
8.	Agatu (Nassarawa)	Abakpa	Itinerant laborers

Source: Field work (2016)

Occupation is also an aspect of material culture. Some crafts are mostly associated with certain group of individuals (tribes). In reality, Hausas are renown in the field of agriculture and other local crafts such as blacksmithing, dying, sewing, woodcarving, herbalism etc. In the table 6 above, speakers of languages under items 2, 3 and 7 address the Hausas as farmers. By implication, the Hausas are great farmers. Significant percentage of the Hausa population engage in farming. Further, items 1 and 5 under the table 6 above present speakers of Yoruba associating the Hausas with

rearing. Lastly, items 4 and 8 of the table 6 above indicate that, the Hausas are recognized as itinerant traders and laborers respectively. This shows the habits of the Hausas in traveling as far as practicable in search of job(s) for livelihood.

Table 7: Names Based on Food

S/N	Language and Location	Name they Call the Hausas	Meaning
1.	Babur (Maiduguri, Barno)	Asanpu	Someone who drinks <i>fura</i> ^[2]
2.	Babur (Taraba, Adamawa)	Absatikira	Someone who ats <i>tuwo</i> -flour ^[3]
3.	Igala (Lokoja, Benue, Kogi)	Akeshi	Someone who eats bones
4.	Gudu (Adamawa)	Makinba	Someone who eats paper
5.	Yoruba	Gambari	Someone who eats cola nuts
6.	Igbo	Otoji	Someone who eats cola nuts
7.	Ijaw (Igbo)	Iri-Eve	They eat too much cola nuts
8.	Kilba (Adamawa)	Chabol	Sellers of <i>fura</i>

Source: Field work (2016)

Food is another cultural aspect, which is material. There are obvious differences in forms and types of foods found amongst different tribes. This subscribes to the popular Hausa say thus: “*Maganin wani guban wani.*” (A man’s medicine is another man’s poisoning, to roughly translate). Speakers of Babur and Kilba recognize one of the famous foods of the Hausas, which is *fura*. This is as indicated under items 1 and 9 in the table 7 above. A Hausa man is also known for taking as well as trading of cola nuts. It is there for not surprising when speakers of three languages i.e. Yoruba, Igbo and Ijaw, associate the Hausas with cola nuts. That is as indicated under items 5, 6 and 7 in the table 7 above. *Tuwo* is another of the Hausas’ popular food, which speakers of Babur use in addressing the Hausas. This is as indicated under item 2 of the table 7 above. Items 3 and 4 of the table 7 indicate that, speakers of Igala and Gudu address the Hausas based on food; thus, bones and paper respectively.

Table 8: Names Based the Hausas’ Migration and Itinerant Trading and Laboring

S/N	Language and Location	Name they Call the Hausas	Meaning
1.	Dakarkari (Zuru)	Kogno	A visitor
2.	Mumuye (Taraba)	Fo	A visitor
3.	Kudai (Neja)	Legulata	A visitor
4.	Bandana (Taraba)	Manpha	A visitor
5.	Michika (Adamawa)	Ahwasa	A visitor
6.	Waja (Bauchi, Adamawa)	Nereba walange	A visitor
7.	Baguje (Neja)	Atefun	A visitor
8.	Alago (Nassarawa)	Oyikadambala	Stranger
9.	Kagoro (Kaduna)	Akpat	Migration
10.	Gbagi (Nassarawa)	Ogozi	Immigrants
11.	Jaba (Kaduna)	Akatuk	Homeless individuals
12.	Busa (Neja, Kogi)	Gono	Sit

Source: Field work (2016)

The Hausas migration to other communities as well as their practice of itinerant trading and or laboring are considered by

² ‘Fura’ is a variety of food within the Hausa-folk.

³ Tuwo is a form of solid food with is made from grinding and sifting of cereal grains.

speakers of certain languages in naming them (the Hausas). In this regard, about seven (7) languages refer to Hausas as ‘visitors’. This is indicated under items 1 – 7 of the table 8 above. Correspondingly, speaker of ‘Alago’ addresses the Hausas as ‘strangers’, as it is under item 8 in the table 8 above. Similarly, item 11 of the table 8 accounts for the speakers of ‘Jaba’ referring the Hausas as ‘homeless individuals.’ These, must have resulted from the Hausas’ migration into such environment, or their going there in search of jobs. That may as well be the reason why, speakers of ‘Busa’ addresses the Hausas in the manner as if they are always visitors, who are being welcomed (sit). This could be seen under item 12 of the table 8 above. More specifically however, speakers of Kagoro and Nbagi address the Hausas as immigrants, as presented under items 10 and 11 in the table 8 above.

Table 9: Disdainful and Mockery Names

S/N	Language and Location	Name they Call the Hausas	Meaning
1.	Zabarma (Neja, Nijar)	Helanciki	Piece of meat between the teeth
2.	Zabarmawa (Sakkwato, Kebbi)	Sibeze	Stick
3.	Kataf (Kaduna)	Atiyab	Fool
4.	Tibi (Benue)	Oke-Oke	Associated with illness of a penis
5.	Dachama (Adamawa)	Fufe	Bush people
6.	Kotokoli (Togo)	Tula	Fool
7.	Mbuula (Benin, Adamawa)	Amafufana	Tree back
8.	Ibirra (Neja, Kogi, Okene)	Abakpa	Beggar
9.	Mossi (Neja)	Zanguwaigu	Bush people

Source: Field work (2016)

Apart from the different names, which speaker of different language use in addressing the Hausas, some other names are mere insults or mocking in nature. The Katafs and the Kotokolis referred to Hausas as ‘fools’, which is a direct insult. This is indicated under items 3 and 6 in the table 9 above. Similarly, items 5 and 9 in table 9 above, indicates the speakers of Dechama and Nossi addressing the Hausas as ‘bush people’, which is an insult. ‘Beggar’, the name, with which the speakers of Ibirra address the Hausas is a disdain, i.e. item 8 of the table 9 above. However, names of the Hausas to speakers of languages under items 1, 2 and 7 of the table 9 could be considered as mockery.

5. Position of the Paper

In line with the data obtained during the field work of the study, it is obviously clear that speakers of different languages within and outside Africa address the Hausas differently. The names are grouped into nine (9) categories (as presented under 4.0 i.e. *Data Presentation and Discussion*), depending on the factors considered in adapting each name, thus:

- i) Names Based on Dress
- ii) Names Based on Religion
- iii) Names Based on Attitudes
- iv) Names Based on the Language Itself (Hausa)
- v) Names Based on Skin Color
- vi) Names Based on Occupation

vii) Names Based on Food

viii) Names Based on Migration and Itinerant Trading and or Laboring and

ix) Disdainful and Mockery Names

By implication, name is another means of telling the world and the bearer of the name about the bearer's material and nonmaterial culture. Different aspects of life of an individual or group of individuals are considered in naming them, which may be positive or otherwise, being some names mere disdains notwithstanding.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

It is interesting to realize that, speakers of different language give names to speakers of other language by considering their culture or the language itself. This is, by implication, an indication that people are watchful on the situations and others individuals and groups they come into contact with. Nevertheless, there are instances whereby some names are adapted based on overgeneralization. Instances of such are observed during the study. However, the followings are hereby recommended:

1. There should be carefulness and appropriateness in adaption a name for other individuals or groups in order to avoid misunderstanding and chaos. Names adopted should not be insulting, disdainful or expressing abhorrence.
2. In line with number 1 above, elders, leaders, academics and even the government should take part in ensuring the use of only nonviolent and diplomatic names in order to promote peaceful co-existence for the attainment of sustainable national and international integration.
3. Individuals and groups should be conscious and take corrections from the names they are addressed with, incase their bad side(s) is/are pointed out.

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