

USMANU DANFODIYO UNIVERSITY SOKOTO

47th **FORTY-SEVENTH INAUGURAL LECTURE**

Digital Electronic Devices, Growing Dominance of Writing and the Preservation of Language
and Culture in Hausa Society

By

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Citation of Professor Salisu Ahmad Yakasai FLAN

Protocol

The Vice-Chancellor,
Deputy Chancellors (Academic & Administration),
Registrar,
Bursar,
University Librarian,
Provost, Deans and Directors,
Distinguished Professors and Senate Members,
Heads of Departments,
Staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University and other sister institutions,
Students both Undergraduate and Postgraduate,
Family Members,
The Press,
Invited Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

1.0 Introduction

I begin this inaugural lecture in the name of Allah (Subhanahu Wata'ala), Most Gracious, Most Merciful for granting me the opportunity to stand before you today. This lecture coming from the Department of Nigerian Languages is the fourth and the second from the newly created Faculty of Arts.

My journey to this esteemed position traces back to my formative years, commencing at Rimi City School in Kano for Primary education. Subsequently, I attended Government Secondary School, Kazaure (now in Jigawa State) for my Secondary education in 1976. Furthering my academic pursuit, I was enrolled in the School of Preliminary Studies, Kano (CAS) for the Interim Joint Matriculation Board (IJMB) programme.

In 1979, I gained admission to the University of Sokoto (now Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto) as a direct entry candidate, graduating in 1982. Following my NYSC I joined this University as a Graduate Assistant in 1983, commencing my academic career.

Pursuing higher qualifications, I obtained an M.A. and PhD from Bayero University, Kano in 1988 and 1999 respectively. Therefore, I stand here today to reflect on my academic journey – the quite extraordinary journey. It is a joyful and momentous occasion. It is an inaugural lecture made possible by many amazing acts of generosity. The generosity of our Vice Chancellor, whose singular and unique dream has made all this – all of this – a reality, we all thank you.

The generosity of my wonderful and supportive parents and teachers whose faith in me brings me here today. I am happy and proud of my accomplishment as I present the lecture.

Vice Chancellor sir, this inaugural lecture is titled Digital Electronic Devices (DED), Growing Dominance of Writing (GDW) and the Preservation of Language and Culture in Hausa Society. The purpose is to explore the relevance of the preservation of our languages, with particular reference to Digital Electronic Devices (DED) and the Growing Dominance of Writing (GDW). There have been attempts to formulate a comprehensive national language policy, and only recently is beginning to materialise. Given the rapid advancements in digital and internet-based technologies, the lecture identifies the trends and implications of the Growing Dominance of Writing (GDW) and Digital Electronic Devices (DED) over Traditional Patterns of Preservation (TPP) of language and Cultural in Hausa society.

Hausa is a language and an integral part of extraordinarily rich material and immaterial culture. It enjoys versatility as a language of wider communication. The language has formed around various systems that are linguistic, historical, sociological and anthropological. Within a time, Hausa has developed traditional patterns of preserving itself, its culture, and its literature. Despite the introduction of a writing system in Hausa society with both ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’ origins, the traditional preservation patterns have continued to be relevant and potential. However, the predominance of the Latinized writing system and digital electronic devices is eroding the traditional pattern of language and cultural preservation. This manifests itself in the form of various trends with many implications. These trends and implications constitute the focus of this presentation. Firstly, it provided background information on the traditional patterns and the emergence of writing and digital devices in Hausa society. Secondly, it discussed the predominating trends of writing and digital electronic devices, and their implications towards the preservation of Hausa language and culture. The presentation concluded with a discussion of how the growing dominance of writing and digital devices can be redirected and harnessed along with the existing traditional patterns in a proactive manner to create a sustainable system of preserving language and culture that is sensitive to domestic and global environments.

To this end, the first segment of the lecture discusses the contextual background, while the introductory discussion provides a brief on the Traditional Patterns of Preservation (TPP). The second segment of the lecture examines the dominance of writing, as well as the trends and implications. The third segment discusses the emergence of Digital Electronic Devices (DED) in Hausa society, its trends and implications. The last segment of the lecture concludes by offering some recommendations which are expected to serve as a way forward. It is with this general introduction that the lecture begins by examining the contextual background.

2.0 Contextual Background

Hausa belongs to the Chadic language group of the Afro-Asiatic phylum. Specifically, it belongs to the West Chadic languages sub-group and it is the most widely spoken in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is spoken as a mother tongue by many and for many others, it serves as a language of wiaader communication (Ikara, 1982; Abraham, 1962; Robinson, 1925). The native speakers of Hausa are the Hausawa (Male singular: Bahausha and female singular Bahaushiya) who are about 54 million found in the Niger Republic and Northern Nigeria. The Hausa non-native speakers are

about 34 million (Eberhard, *et al* 2024) who are living in communities and societies that are in the neighbourhood of predominantly Hausa-speaking areas or settlements. The Hausa language is also spoken aside from its native area, as a lingua franca in West Africa (Accra, Abidjan, Dakar, Lome, Cotonou, Conakry, Banjul, Ouagadougou, Freetown, Monrovia, etc.), Central Africa (Doula, Yaounde, Maroua, Garoua, Ndjamena, Bangui, Libreville etc.) and Maiwurno in the Republic of Sudan (Kiyawa, 1983).

These activities are given primary attention at various levels of certification or assertion in Universities, Research Centres, and Projects by other agencies in Britain, America, Germany, Poland, Japan, China, Libya, Ghana, and so on. In Nigeria and Niger Republic, Hausa studies and research are conducted in Universities, Departments of Linguistics, and Centres for African Languages. It is also studied in most of the colleges of Education in Nigeria and taught at both primary and secondary school levels. It is one of the major languages that the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria of 1999 (CFRN, 1999) envisaged that it would be used for national parliamentary deliberations. Hausa is used for radio broadcasts by the BBC, Voice of America, Deutsche Welle, Radio France International, Voice of Russia, China Radio International (Beijing), and Iran radio and television broadcasts. It is also used for radio and television broadcasts in the Republics of Niger and Nigeria. It is also used as a medium for writing textbooks, literary materials, and newspapers. It is the language of a flourishing Hausa movie/home video industry in West Africa.

The context presented above encapsulated a lot about the Hausa factor in West Africa, Africa, and the world as a whole. If split open, it will generate arrays of knowledge and interests, the types that characterized the attention paid to it by linguists, lexicographers, literary scholars, educators, writers, and journalists. It suffices to mention that the focus of this presentation is on Digital Electronic Devices (DED), the Growing Dominance of Writing (GDW) over traditional patterns, and the preservation of language and culture. The explanation of these trends and implications will be done in the background of an exposition of the traditional patterns of preservation, and the emergence of writing and digital devices in Hausa society.

3.0 Traditional Patterns of Preservation (TPP) in Context

Hausa is a rich and dynamic language, also an integral part of extraordinarily rich material and immaterial culture. Various systems, institutions, philosophies, edifices, norms, and values

develop around the language and speakers of the language. The traditional patterns of language and cultural preservation sustained the Hausa language, culture, and traditional literature up to modern times. Indeed, this shows the primary role of language, in our case Hausa, to preserve and advance the course of language and culture in societies. The Hausa traditional patterns of preserving language and culture are embedded in the use of the language itself and the manner that accorded a strong base or position in culture. The traditional patterns are realized through activities, institutions, individuals, and management of material culture which are oral, performative, tangible, or philosophical. The later classification does not imply a discrete matrix under which the different traditional patterns of preservation would be placed. It is used to give a vivid explanation of these patterns, and each may be described based on one or more of the items of classification. The patterns that are oral, per-formative, philosophical, and realized through activities, institutions, or individuals, fall under Hausa immaterial culture. They include Hausa oral songs, folk songs, folktales, fables, folk stories, legends, theatrical songs/performances, and traditional games. Others include proverbs, epithets, exultation, traditional quizzes, puzzles, language games, rhetorical/oratorical amusement, and narratives by griots or genealogists in some palaces (or royal courts). Each traditional pattern of preservation is an aspect of Hausa culture by itself. It will require very wide and in-depth scholarship to reveal its nature, significance, and philosophy (i.e. in terms of its meaning, value, rationality, and objective). Each pattern aside from being an aspect of culture is capable of preserving language and culture in many respects.

3.1 The Nature and Philosophy of Selected Patterns of Orature

3.1.1 Hausa Oral Songs (Wakokin Makada)

The songs in each category consist of the utilization of linguistic resources to communicate or disseminate a message or theme. Aside from the utilization of the vitality of language, the use of language in the composition of songs is also a means of developing, promoting, and preserving the Hausa language. For instance, occupational, gallantry, and or royal songs will contain related language choices and registers. Therefore, the songs are repositories of these linguistic resources that keep the language alive. The language choice and registers used under each category of songs (even though not mutually exclusive or restrictive) are peculiar or phenomenal to enable an understanding of the language used to characterize and identify the social stratum or class

they characterize. The categorization of the musical songs is another means of understanding the socio-cultural stratification of human existence in Hausa society (or communities).

These are categorized as follows:

- Royal/Palace Music Songs (Makadān Fada) for Emirs, royalists and other traditional rulers.
- Gallantry Musical Songs (Makadān Maza) for boxers, hunters, wrestlers, tauri cult, night marauders and so on.
- Music Songs of the Populace (Makadān Jama'a) for the rich, poor, ruling class, male, female, etc.
- Occupational Music Songs (Makadān Sana'a) for farmers, fishermen, scholars, local barbers, blacksmiths, butchers etc.
- Musical Songs for Women folk (Makadān Dariya/Raha) performed by 'Yan Kama comedians,' 'Yan Garura leasers, Gambarā bluffers, etc.

See (Dangambo, 1987; Gusau, 1996)

3.1.2 Theatrical Performance

These usually occasional performances have their fixed periods of celebrations with deep social significance and implications. For instance, the *tashe* games are performed in the majority of cases by children, youth, and a times adults, male and female, during the 11th to 20th days of the month of Ramadan fast. The games are performed on the streets, at markets, in households, and in rural and urban areas. Apart from amusement and entertainment, the *tashe* games are very theatrical and give a complete mirror of every aspect of human existence in Hausa society. *Tashe* is a channel of teaching and preserving culture, norms, values, language, and history in Hausa society. The *tashe* games cover aspects of politics, religion, economy, medicine, social values, patterns, and institutions which are all displayed in organized performances and articulate use of language (cf. Umar, 1981).

The Kalankuwa and Bukin Shan Kabewa (Pumpkin Celebration, which is a Hausa Liberation or Halloween) are highly dramatic too, performed at town or village squares. They serve the same function of teaching, portraying and preserving Hausa language and culture.

3.1.3 Hausa Folktales/Fables

The Hausa folktales and fables are based on many themes and are delivered through various styles and language use. They make use of various characters taking the form of human beings, animals, insects, birds, monsters, and other creatures. The use of language varieties in various social settings in the form of speech, mimicking, songs, and selected registers during the delivery of folktales is yet another effective means of preserving language. The folktales and fables also provide another avenue for teaching, portraying, and preserving Hausa culture including norms, values, and social traits.

3.1.4 Folk Songs and Folk Games

These songs are lyrical and didactic. They are aimed at value reorientation, moral rearmament, and creating awareness in society. They are channels for societal checks and balances. Folk songs and folk games are performed at different forums and occasions, especially by women, youth, and children. Youth or women perform the songs during household chores, wedding ceremonies and other feminine communal self-help efforts. Children or youth perform the games and the accompanying songs during play times or moonlight games at various village or town squares. The songs by women include wedding songs (*wakoƙin aure*), floor ramming songs (*wakoƙin dabe*), grindstone/milling songs (*wakoƙin nika*) and pounding songs (*wakoƙin daka*). The games and songs by children include the *gada* songs (*wakoƙin gada*) by girls, active games with songs by the boys and other games that cut across genders.

Some of the songs by children include:

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---------------------------------|----------|
| Ina da cikin ɗan fari | - | The pregnancy of my first child | By girls |
| Weeh! Ni kura | - | Weeh! I am the Hyena | “ |
| Carmandudu | - | Carmandudu | “ |
| Dokin naka Kuru ne | - | Your Horse is Dwarf | By boys |
| Malam na Bakin Rafi | - | The River Bank Man | “ |

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|--------------------------|---------------|
| Awo | - | Buying Measures of grain | By boys/girls |
| Jini-Jini Jan-jau | - | The Red, Red Blood | “ |
| Kulli Kucchiya | - | The meandering Dove | “ |

Folk songs and folk games are embodiments of Hausa culture which, apart from being cultural performances, serve as patterns for portraying and preserving different aspects of Hausa culture. The songs are also repositories of language use, choice and also enable the mastery of language registers and performance. The songs by women are also laden with Hausa vocabulary, style and other aesthetics. They also address the social problems or issues that affect the society. The songs and games are also aptitude-based, which sharpen one's sense of perception and arithmetic, typically are songs like *Malam na Bakin Rafi*, *Kulli Kucchiya* and *Ina da Cikin Dan Fari*. The *Awo* and *Jini-Jini* songs are geared towards language preservation and verbal aptitude, where a child is subjected to rigorous semantics at an early stage. The *Awo* song is focused on identification or sorting out varieties of grain in Hausa society, while *Jini-Jini* is aimed at listing or identifying animals or creatures that are blooded.

3.1.5 Hausa Traditional Quiz, Puzzle and Language Games

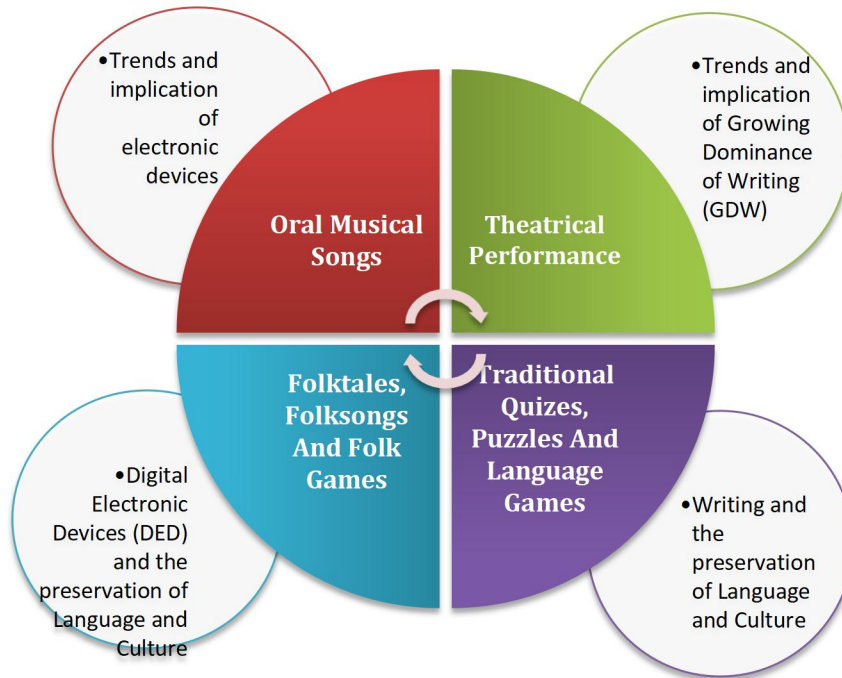
Hausa traditional quizzes, puzzles and language games are yet other patterns of portraying and preserving Hausa language and culture. These are mainly oral and aimed towards the enhancement of verbal and perceptive competencies. The language quiz and games are also other avenues of storing Hausa words passed down from generation to generation. They go further to portray and by extension preserve the different Hausa language structures and categories. These language structures manifest themselves in different language and problem-solving skills that the children or people are subjected to. The quiz and puzzle consist of questions that are conventionally set to test or sharpen one's ability or competence in understanding certain descriptions, entailments, other semantic indices, or logic to give the exact meaning of the word or phrases envisaged. While some of the questions consist of description, others may be onomatopoeic, or problem-solving based on rationality.

These can be seen in the following examples:

Description: *Takanda ba kashi ba* - The dry flake that is not bone

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Answer: | <i>Kanwa</i> | - | Potash |
| Description: | <i>Baba na daka, gemu na waje</i> | - | The father is in the room and his bear is outside |
| Answer: | <i>Wuta da hayaki</i> | - | Fire and smoke |
| Description: | <i>Shanuna dubu madaurinsu daya</i> | - | I have a thousand heads of cattle, but tied at one place |
| Answer: | <i>Tsintsiya</i> | - | Broom |
| Description: | <i>Kur-kucuf-kucuf</i> | - | Onomatopoeia |
| Answer: | <i>Kwanciyar kare</i> | - | Motion of a lying dog |

The most fascinating means of preserving language is in the language games. This is where deliberate attempts at mastery and maintenance of language structures are displayed. Several games are created to show the discrete nature of sounds, syllabic or word boundaries and their combinations. The games consist of continuous use or combination of similar phonemes that are difficult to pronounce. They also consist of the transposing of sounds or words between syllables or between chains of words in a sentence. They as well consist of the deliberate creation of ambiguity through the unabated repetition of the pronouncement of sentence. These games are popularly encountered under what is termed as *Zaurance*, *Karya harshe/karangiya* or *tunkuda bami* (pull the fool). Apart from the function of preserving language, the Hausa traditional quiz, puzzle and language games also provide ways of preserving the Hausa socio-cultural values. They cover different aspects of the social life of Hausa people concerning politics, economy, religion, etc.



Graphic representation of Traditional Pattern of Preservation (TPP)

4.0 Writing and Preservation of Hausa Language and Culture

It is an incontrovertible fact that speech comes first before writing. The primacy of speech is indeed what has been given due consideration in our explanation of the Hausa traditional patterns of preserving language and culture. The patterns are language and culture-based, and so also are the items or human products that they preserve. However, it is also pertinent to note that the evolution of writing in the rise of greater civilizations of the world provided another important means of advancement of human societies and by the same token language and culture.

Writing occupies a very important position in human social existence and the development of societies. Writing is a representation or symbolization of sounds of a given language, under which values are assigned in the form of letters or figures that are readable or can be deciphered. It involves the ascription of visual marks or symbols that are used to record expressions of a language in a permanent form. The value and utility of writing transcends generations and will continue to be an indispensable tool for human interaction and development the world over.

Hausa land and the society (or societies) that coexisted with it, benefitted tremendously from the advent and utilization of Arabic, *Ajami*, English and *Boko* writing systems, Therefore, Hausa has

enjoyed the status of being written about, and of a written language from 17th century to date. Documents on Hausa language, culture, literature and history are generated in permanent form through the use of these writing systems. This occasioned the emergence of written correspondences, records and documents about political leadership and between political leaders on Hausa language, culture, literature and history, where information could be put and obtained straight in the simplest comprehensible way. Indeed, the body of references on Hausa language, culture, and literature are enormous. They can be found in archives, libraries, wider circulation and collections of individuals.

Arabic writing was the first to be utilized in Hausa land. The early reference materials were written in Arabic in the form of letters, documents or books. Examples of these materials were *Tarikh al-Sudan* (the History of Sudan) by Abdulrahman al-Sa'id, *Risalat al-Mulk* (a treatise called the Obligation of the Prince) by al-Maghili and *Infaqul Maysur* by Muhammadu Bello (the son of Shehu Usmanu Danfodiyo). These materials were written on Islamic theology, jurisprudence as well as the history and culture of Western Sudan including Hausa land. The second system of writing to be developed and utilized was the *Ajami* writing, a variant of the Arabic script introduced by Islamic Scholars/ Missionaries and traders. The resident religious scholars and their disciples adapted the Arabic scripts with slight variations to write in Hausa.

Eventually, it became accepted, although not without the problem of standardization, as a system of writing through which letters, documents and literary corpus were written in Hausa. Many poems were written by clerics as early as 1667 to 1758 before the Sokoto Jihad of Usmanu Danfodiyo. These clerics include Muhammad ibn al-Sabbagh (Wali Dan-Marina) (1667), Malam Muhammadu na Birnin Gwari (1758) and Malam Shi'itu Dan Abdurra'uf (1757). *Ajami's* writing received much impetus and was entrenched during the formative period of the Jihad of Usman Danfodiyo, and the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate which covered or directly influenced 'Hausa land' and beyond. The period witnessed a plethora of religious poems by many writers on various themes or issues including, preaching, jurisprudence, belief, politics, supplications, praises and so on. The *Ajami* writing enjoyed patronage even after the introduction of Latin scripts by the colonialists in Northern Nigeria and beyond independence. The decline and gradual non-utilization of the *Ajami* scripts has over time been aggravated by the Western education system and its teaching products that make use of only Boko or English scripts.

The third system of writing for Hausa is the *BOKO* script, a Latin-based alphabet system introduced officially by the British colonial administration. However, before this period, the writing evolved in different stages. The reduction of the Hausa language using the Latin scripts started between 1843 and 1918 (Newman, 1991) through the activities of Europeans who worked on or came in contact with the Hausa language either as expeditionists, missionaries, philologists, lexicographers, colonialists, or educators. They wrote Hausa language and specimens of Hausa literature thus laying the foundation of preserving their dictionaries, sketches of Hausa grammar, culture and many articles. These writers include James Frederick Schon (1802-1889), Heinrich Barth (1821-1865), Charles Henry Robinson (1861-1925), George Percy Bargery (1876-1966), and Roy Clive Abraham (1890-1963).

The colonialists consolidated the use of the *Boko* writing system especially in Northern Nigeria to record or write all administrative proceedings and documents. This became paramount, especially from the year 1930 when concerted efforts were made in the establishment of institutions and infrastructure which brought about the production of Hausa newspapers, text materials, primers, literary books and translated materials all using the Hausa *Boko* scripts.

A large number of creative literary books on drama, prose and poetry written in Hausa in the past and now are widely in circulation. The advent and utilization of writing in the form of Arabic, *Ajami*, English and *Boko* have now elevated the Hausa to the high pedestal of real scholarly endeavours and learning in different institutions of the world. Diversification and specialization in various fields of Hausa language and cultural studies have covered three significant grounds of language-related scholarship which include linguistics and theorization, literature and culture. More research reports and reading materials on Hausa culture and language are continually produced to advance the course of Hausa language and culture and preserve them.

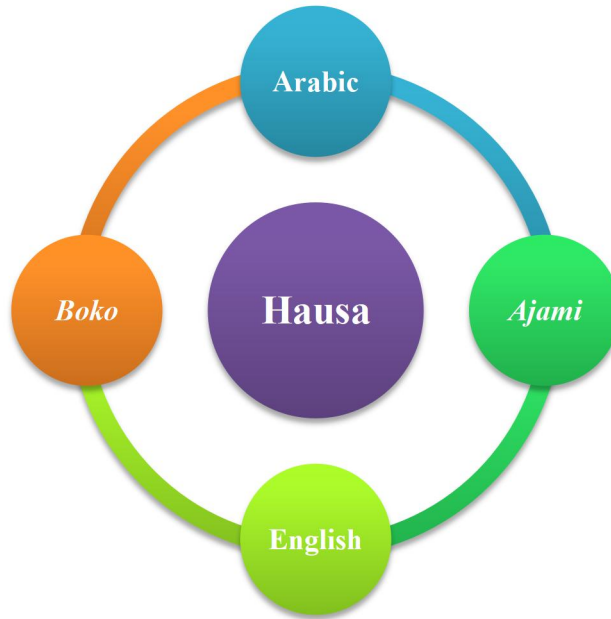
The use of writing has brought about the expansion of the course contents of Hausa studies and the utilization of the knowledge gained in the different spheres of life worldwide. The most important is the utilization of the Hausa language in mother Tongue Education, Media houses, mass Mobilization, commerce and other day-to-day human social interactions. The reduction of Hausa to writing also enables communication ‘across time and distance’.

5.0 Trends and Implications of the Growing Dominance of Writing (GDW)

The over-growing dominance of writing in preserving language and culture is now obvious because traditional patterns of preservation are dwindling continuously in the face of modern educational and technological development. The trend of the growing dominance of writing has characterized Hausa studies, scholarship and broadcast which now constitute avenues for portraying and preserving Hausa language and culture. There is an overbearing preoccupation of generating Hausa written literary materials and the conduct of their study, which though relevant, are considered as the most effective ways of preserving and developing Hausa language and culture. Research, research reports, textbooks and other instructional resources are predominantly text-based. The aspects of material and immaterial culture are now presented, taught and preserved in book form more than in the traditional patterns. There is also an unabated proliferation of Hausa prose literature referred to as Kano literature by young budding authors. Kano town in Northern Nigeria has become the centre for the coordination, development, production and distribution of these materials all over Hausa-speaking areas in Nigeria, Niger, Ghana and other West African countries.

Many implications arise from these trends, prominent among which include:

- The gradual loss of naturalness in the production aspects of language, material culture and immaterial culture that are preserved.
- The loss and non-reflection of performance, context, emotions, motions, practice and precision that go with aspects of Hausa language, culture and traditional literature.
- Gradual weakening of the aspects of language and culture so preserved which may not be fully comprehended and as such making them vulnerable and non-competitive in the face of negative influences of modern and alien languages and cultures.
- The transmission or passage of only a few norms and values that writing can afford to capture, while the numerous ones that can only be captured by traditional patterns of preservation are jettisoned.
- The proliferation of literary materials such as Kano literature prose, which have not been managed professionally and highly patronized by the youth, led to the unfiltered import of foreign culture, misrepresentation of the Hausa language, and lowering of orthographic and book development standards.



Graphic Representation of Growing Dominance of Writing Systems (GWD)

6.0 Emergence of Digital Electronic Devices (DED) in Hausa Society

The advent of electronic devices to communicate messages or information is one of the greatest achievements of humanity. These devices are in the form of audio devices/media, audio-visual resources, and broadcast media. The different categories of these devices have significantly affected every aspect of human social existence and development, and as language and culture. These devices play a significant role in the portrayal and preservation of languages and cultures of the world. Hausa language and culture have a great deal of the utilization of these devices and the service they generate. They have been used to develop, advance, portray and preserve the Hausa language and culture for various purposes through broadcast, information dissemination, education, politics, social mobilization and so on. The effective use of the radio and cassette/tape recorder to permanently and recursively record, play, playback and disseminate sounds in the form of Hausa natural spontaneous speech, songs and music has yielded results over a long period of history to date.

Many things that would have been lost about Hausa language and culture are preserved as lasting legacies that will continue to be used or referred to. The audio-visual electronic devices or resources and broadcast media have also played an important role in the advancement, portrayal and preservation of the Hausa language and culture. The audio-visual resources and broadcast

media are used to prevent situations that involve speech and movement. People and things are heard, and actions or motions are seen as in natural life situations. Therefore, different aspects of language and culture are reported, portrayed or preserved permanently in the form of direct experiences, demonstrations, field events, performances, drama, movies, documentaries and other programmes (NERDC, 2009). The resources that are used to preserve aspects of language and culture include Video/Video Cassettes and recently Video Compact Discs (VCDs) and Digital Compact Discs (DVDs).



Radio & Video Cassettes and Compact Discs players

The world today is in the era of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) which is characterized by knowledge explosion using a globalised system of storage, access and retrieval. Preservation of aspects of language and culture are achieved using e-resources. The e-resources are computer and internet-based resources which are electronic devices or systems that include websites, e-mail, e-mail chatting, hand-held devices and e-storage devices (NERDC, 2009).

Websites can be dedicated to containing information or data in the form of texts, graphics and sounds on different aspects of the Hausa language. There are certain websites containing information on Hausa language and literature that can be obtained as written text materials, such as Wikipedia, Ethnologue and other linguistic websites. Mobile phones, mp3 players and other storage devices like flash drives, floppy discs, compact discs and memory cards are used casually and frequently to record aspects of Hausa language and culture.

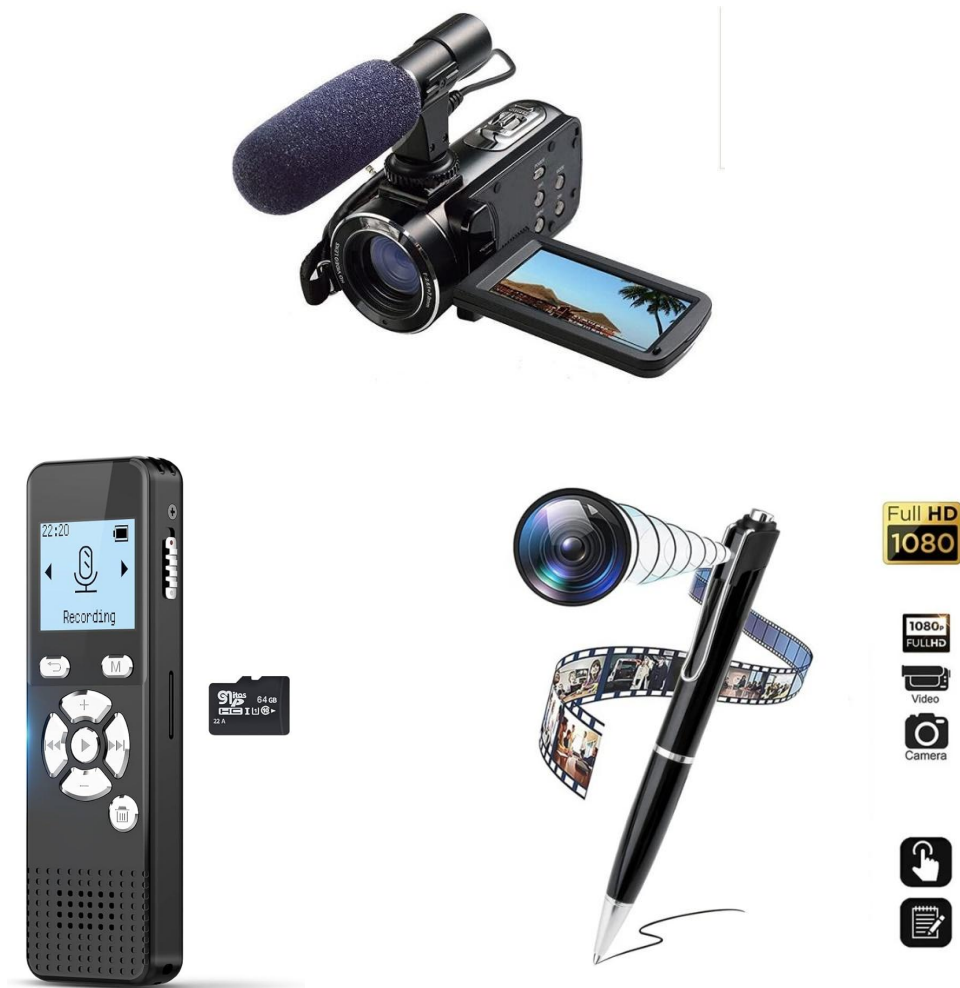


Sample of storage devices

7.0 Trends and Implications of the Dominance of Electronic Devices

The utilization of electronic devices for the preservation and portrayal of the Hausa language and culture has contributed immensely to scholarship, data generation and documentation. Although some of the materials or documents generated as information or data might not be intended primarily to achieve these purposes, they still exist in different forms. There are many programmes or documentaries both audio and visual on the history of Hausa language as well as different aspects of Hausa culture and society. These different aspects include the social systems, ceremonies/festivities, creative and oral arts, per-formatives, clothing, architecture, norms and

values and so on. Several electronic stage devices enumerated above are used to record all these aspects with attendant success. The aspects recorded are also disseminated via various audio resources or media. Some websites contain information which people can access and retrieve on the Hausa language, culture and traditional literature. However, these efforts, as enormous as they might seem, are not adequate compared to the untapped mass of information that exists within the society which is now fizzing out gradually.



Some electronic documentation in-put devices

One disturbing trend is that there is paucity or lack of assertion on the part of experts, the public, spirited individuals and stakeholders to embark on deliberate activities to preserve aspects of the Hausa language, culture and literature with all the vigour it deserves. The little efforts in a few Hausa-based documentary and research centres at Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Bayero University Kano and Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, have dwindled (Amfani, 2001). Most of these efforts are now left to the broadcast media who document and preserve aspects of the Hausa language and culture based on their perspective, operation and ill-informed knowledge or sources. The advancement in the development of movie/film industry equipment or facilities has brought about the simplification of programmes and production.

These brought about the transformation of the Hausa television drama series which is rich in culture to the production of Hausa movies. Like wildlife, these home video movies (which also have their roots in the referred Kano literature) developed into a blossoming industry. The patronage of these movies goes beyond areas where Hausa is spoken in West Africa, to Hausa people in the Diaspora in other parts of Africa, Europe, Asia and the United States of America. The movies performed by enterprising groups of educated and relatively educated young individuals, consist of themes and scenes that are partly Hausa, Western or Indian in orientation. They produce their movies on different storage devices including video tapes, DVDs and a few other cinematographic films (Yakasai, 2014).

The fact that the movies are based on scenes that are alien or not true representations of Hausa culture, calls for great concern to parents and families. This brought about the intervention by state institutions trying to regulate or moderate the movies as it relates to quality, theme, morality and ethics. Advancement in ICT affects the preservation and portrayal of the Hausa language and culture. There are efforts to manage information on the Hausa language and culture using the internet through a few websites. Although the websites are not peculiar about the Hausa language, they provide information that is subsumed under certain topics or issues that are general. The mobile phones even though used to preserve aspects of Hausa language and culture, are not purposeful or permanent but for leisure or youthful exuberance. Many implications arise from these trends prominent among which are:

- Gradual loss of language and culture aspects because the ones recorded or preserved using devices are based on narrow perspectives.
- The state of permanence, renewal and reply may not be maintained because the recordings can easily be done away with if they are stored.
- The under-utilization of the internet facilities to create separate and exclusive sites on the Hausa language and culture will mean reliance on the writing system with all its implications or over-reliance on sites that provide cursory information on the Hausa language and culture. This will invariably allow volumes of untapped information on the Hausa language and culture to drain out in the face of the rapid advancement of ICT.
- The moral and ethical implication of transmitting negative alien norms and values through the Hausa movies and other activities which are facilitated by electronic devices, thereby eroding the Hausa language and culture.

8.0 The Way Forward

The implication of the growing dominance of writing and electronic devices points seriously towards over-reliance on patterns that are not as reliable and effective as the traditional pattern of preserving the Hausa language and culture. The complex system that is built around Hausa language and culture instead of being reinforced by writing and advancement in ICT has fallen vulnerable to their onslaught. It is pertinent to point out at this juncture that the growing dominance of writing and digital devices or resources in the preservation of Hausa language and culture should not be misconstrued as a negative or ineffective means of achieving that purpose. However, some trends emanated from their use which have serious implications. These implications need to be seen as challenges that need to be confronted for the effective preservation, promotion and portrayal of Hausa language and culture.

The way forward is not about going back to the relics but finding a means of harnessing and harmonizing the different patterns to effectively preserve, promote and portray the Hausa language and culture, to withstand the taste of time and be part of the global efforts of information management, which is ICT enabled. The dominance of writing and electronic resources (devices) can be redirected and harnessed along with existing traditional patterns proactively to create a sustainable system of preserving Hausa language and culture that is adequate and sensitive to domestic and global environments.

The initial step that should be taken towards harnessing and harmonization of the patterns is to package, brand and streamline many aspects of the traditional pattern of preserving the Hausa language and culture. The activities that characterized the traditional pattern need to be transformed or tailored into socio-economic activities that are in tune with present realities or needs. Activities that for example relate to crafts, clothing, fashion and design, cuisines, performances, oral arts and festivals can be turned around and launched into modern stages and ways of doing things.

This can be done in such a way as to entrench the activities firmly on the socio-economic system. The social situations and other aspects of immaterial culture must be recognized by making good use of the traditional social structure and values. This can be done through social orientation and inculcation of traditional social values that can be done through various activities in schools and at different public forums.

Using writing to preserve or document aspects of Hausa language and culture should be done with emphasis on practice, activities, exercises, visitations and illustrations. This will create competence and give a vivid image of the aspects of language, culture or traditional literature they are trying to preserve or portray. The production of more books that will cover the different aspects of language, culture and literature needs to be encouraged. Textbooks, supplementary readers, primers, workshops, and other materials should be published reflecting the real practical and invaluable aspects of language, culture, and literature not the too academic or bookish orientation of many books on Hausa. They should contain practical activities, exercises, illustrations and drills on Hausa language and culture.

The proliferation of literary materials of the likes of Kano literature (with all its ways of debating language and wrong portrayal of certain aspects of Hausa culture) need to be scrutinized, for them to be meaningful. The energy of budding authors who write these books needs to be redirected or refocused to make good use of the language and cultural resources in their works. A quality control mechanism needs to be established by Hausa scholars and practitioners for the attainment of the highest possible standard in book production. This standard will contain requirements on content (substantive) editing and technical (cop) editing. Generally, these requirements are those on book design and production, content (or relevance), language and style, and format. Experts and publishers must ensure that books are properly assessed before

production. They should also be publicized for wider circulation through various means including the Internet.

The electronic devices (resources) can be harnessed and utilized in several ways to preserve the Hausa language and culture. The media broadcast industry can be reoriented towards coverage of the substantive aspects of language and culture for preservation and transmission. Producers of Hausa movies need to be oriented to redirect their movies, energy contents, themes and scenes to reflect the substantive aspects of Hausa language and culture. The zeal for creativity and dynamism by film producers and artists should not be at the expense of the true reflection of what language and culture are in the real sense.

Hausa studies carried out in schools and institutions need to move with time and utilize Computer Based Training (CBT) techniques which offer low cost to training needs. Many learners can be trained or taught topics that are supplied on CD-ROM, DVD, MP3 and other handled devices. These devices can contain texts, graphics, sounds, motion pictures and other effects. The CBT also include accessing content online via the internet from different websites. Where websites are not adequate to provide needed information or content, they can be created showing the conceptual, emotional, physical, per-formative, material and immaterial aspects of Hausa language and culture. References and active linkages to other websites should be done to create linkages; synergy and exchange of ideas worldwide between language and cultural institutions, study and research centres as well as experts, students and people seeking information on Hausa language and culture.

To create synergies among institutions and stakeholders, the production of CBT learning packages can be done through collaboration by selected language and culture-based study or research centres in Nigeria, Niger or other African countries, and countries that have advanced technologies. To achieve this, intending producers of learning packages should partner with language and culture experts to go into the field and obtain accurate data on different aspects of Hausa language and culture. When the relevant packages are developed, they should be mass-produced, publicized and distributed for sale at various centres of learning. Furthermore, the establishment of computerized language laboratories in language and research facilities in Hausa language and cultural centres or departments in selected institutions will be an important step towards the preservation and advancement of Hausa language and culture.

Given all the issues raised above, the envisaged vision for the preservation, portrayal and advancement of the Hausa language, culture and literature is the one that is sensitive to local realities which are harnessed, branded and packaged into mainstream global efforts for human development.

9.0 Conclusion

Hausa is a rich and dynamic language, in terms of material and immaterial culture. Various systems, institutions, philosophy, edifices, norms, and values are developed around the language and speakers of the language. The phenomena brought about uniqueness of the inseparable nature of Hausa language and the cultural values and their various manifestation or spectacles have been discussed. It is with respect to this, that the system of using Hausa as cultural cum linguistic tool evolved over a period to preserve both Hausa language and culture. Although the utilisation of the electronic devices for the preservation and portrayal of the Hausa language and culture contributed immensely to scholarship, data generation and documentation, there are many implications that arise from the resultant use of the digital electronic devices. In view of all the issues raised above, the envisaged vision for the preservation, portrayal and advancement of the Hausa language, culture and literature is the one that is sensitive to local realities which are harnessed, branded and packaged into mainstream global efforts for human development.

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Professor Salisu Ahmad Yakasai was born on the 5th of January 1958 in Kano, Municipal Local government area of Kano State. He attended Rimi City Primary School from 1965 to 1970. Thereafter, he proceeded to Government Secondary School, Kazaure (now in Jigawa State) from 1970 to 1976. He attended the School of Preliminary Studies (CAS) from 1977 to 1979, the University of Sokoto (now Usmanu Danfodiyo University) from 1979 to 1982 and Bayero University Kano from 1985 – 1988 and 1995 – 1999 respectively.

Throughout his career, Professor Yakasai has gained valuable experience in education. He started his teaching career at the University of Sokoto during his National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in 1982 – 1983. He was engaged in teaching as Master II at the School for Arabic Studies (SAS) in 1983. Subsequently, he took on appointment as a Graduate Assistant at Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto in 1983-1984, where he engaged in teaching,

research and community service, where he rose through the ranks to become a professor of Sociolinguistics in the year 2007.

Professor Yakasai has taught over 35 courses in different high institutions of learning at home and abroad during his visiting and sabbatical leaves. Some of these institutions include his home institution Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto, Kaduna State University, Bayero University, Kano, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina, and Beijing Foreign Studies University, (BFSU) China. As a result of which he has brought international linkages from BFSU to ABU, BUK and UDUS.

To date, Professor Yakasai has been in the teaching profession for exactly forty years. Through these years, Professor Yakasai has demonstrated his passion for the academia. He has to his credit over 50 well researched articles, all published in reputable, and well indexed local and international journals. Similarly, he has attended seminars, conferences, workshops and trainings locally and internationally where he has presented over 50 seminar and conference papers. In his strong craving for journalism, he has written over 30 Newspaper Articles published both in Hausa and English Newspapers and Magazines.

Professor Yakasai is an active Translator per excellence. He has served as member in the Translation Team in various capacities in the Committee of Translations of the Terminologies of the UNESCO History of Africa. In recognition of his immense contribution, he was honoured with the UNESCO ETXEA Award for Research on World Languages in the year 2000. Similarly Professor Yakasai has also served as a Translator for several UNDP assisted projects in Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara states. He is currently the 2nd Vice President of the Nigerian Institute of Translators and Interpreters (NITI).

An erudite author and writer, Professor Yakasai has published seven advanced level books, including *Aro da Kirkira a Hausa* (2023); *Sanin Makamar Fassara* (2019); *Jagoran Ilimin Walwalar Harshe* (2020); *Rayuwa da Falsafa cikin Tunanin Al'ummar Sinawa* (2022); and *Nazarin Taskar Al'ada da Tarihi da Nishaɗi* (2012). He has co-authored *Translation: An Introductory Guide* (1993) and *The Right of Widows and Divorcees in Hausa/Fulani Society* (2002).

Mr. Vice Chancellor sir, the humble scholar standing before you is an external examiner to Federal College of Education (Technical) Gusau, Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto, Kaduna State University, Bayero University, Kano, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina, and Sule Lamido University Kafin-Hausa. He has assessed many like-minded scholars to the ranks of Readers and Professors at BUK, ABU, Unimaid, and Yobe State University.

Professor Yakasai is a recipient of various awards and prizes. He is a Fellow of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria, Fellow Nigeria Institute of Translators and Interpreters, and Fellow Mac Arthur Foundation upon his successful completion of the Mac Arthur research grant in year 2002.

Vice Chancellor sir, allow me to peruse through some of the administrative accomplishment of the gentleman before you. He was a one time Chairman, Caretaker Committee of Area 1W Forum, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto 2013 – 2014; Chairman, Coalition of NGO's in Sokoto State (CONSS), 2002 – 2006; Chairman, Junior Staff Vehicle Loan Committee, UDUS, 2001 – 2005; Chairman, University Sports Committee, UDUS, 2003 – 2007; Chairman, University Ceremonies Committee, UDUS who organized the just concluded combined 38th, 39th, 40th & 41st Convocation Ceremony; Head of Department, Nigerian Languages, UDUS, 2010 – 2014; Senate Representative in the Board of Centre for Peace Studies, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, 2014 – Date; Member, Committee on the Establishment of Campus Radio, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, 2009; Member, National Technical Committee on the Development of a National Language Policy, 2010 – Date; Member, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Mock Accreditation Committee, 2009, 2014; Adviser, Kano State Students Association, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, 1995-2007; Patron, Kano/Jigawa Medical and Veterinary Student's Association, 2002 – 2007; and Patron, Kungiyar Hausa, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, 2002 – 2007. He is happily married and blessed with children.