

## ГЕОКУЛЬТУРНЫЕ ПРОСТРАНСТВА И КОДЫ КУЛЬТУР АЗИИ И АФРИКИ

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### Dialect Usage as a Means of Identity in Hausa Film Discourse

I. Y. Chamo

Bayero University,  
Kano PMB 3011, Kano State, Nigeria

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This paper analyzes the aspect of language and identity in Hausa films. Language is often seen as a symbol of ethnic, national or regional identity. A dialect is a variety of a language that differs from others in terms of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation as they are forms of the same language. In most cases dialects are mutually intelligible. The use of a particular dialect by a speaker reveals his or her identity in terms of the speaker's geographical location or social status. The paper studies the use of dialect in Hausa film discourse. It focuses on characters' ways of communication in the Hausa films which reveal their identity. An ethnography research method is used to collect data and the social identity theory to analyze them. The paper identified four Hausa dialects used by the film characters to communicate and show their identity. These include Katsinanci, Sakkwatanci, Zazzaganci and Kananci. Also the result of the analysis shows that some film characters unconsciously use their dialect instead of Standard Hausa; which is the main variety normally used in film discourse. It also reveals that characters in Hausa films normally use their dialects when they are in emotional situations such as anger, disappointment or romance. In addition, the paper shows that some Hausa film characters do not conform to written scripts because of their low academic qualifications and old age.

*Keywords:* language, identity, dialect, Hausa films.

### Introduction

In recent times, there is increasing interest among sociolinguists in investigating the relation between language and identity across the globe [1; 2; 3]. The sociolinguistics of identity focuses on the ways people position or construct themselves and are positioned or

constructed by others in socio-cultural situations through the instrumentality of language and with reference to all of those variables that are the identity markers for each society in the speech of its members [2, p. 12]. However, identity in current discourse is not seen as singular, fixed and intrinsic to the individual. Rather, it is viewed as socially constituted, a reflexive, dynamic product of the social practice or system. According to Omoniya [2, p. 14], contemporary social identities are hybrid, complex and hierarchical. Scholars define identity based on their understanding of the subject matter. For example, Hogg and Abrams [4, p. 2] view it as “people’s concepts of which they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others”. Deng [5, p. 1] states that identity is used in this book to describe the way individual groups themselves are defined by others on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language and culture”. According to Jenkins [6, p. 4], Identity refers to the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities”. There is an interwoven relationship between language and identity. The language spoken by somebody and his or her identity as a speaker of his language are inseparable. One of the functions of language is to identify people as representatives of groups, communities and cultures in relation to others. A dialect is a variety of a language that differs from others along three dimensions: vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation (accent). Because they are forms of the same language, however, dialects are mutually intelligible [3, p. 63]. Many scholars defined dialect based on their conceptualization of the term but the definitions sound similar. For example: Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams [7, p. 430-431] mention that ‘dialects are mutually intelligible forms of a language that differ in systematic ways. Every speaker, whether rich or poor, regardless of region or racial origin, speaks at least one dialect, just as each individual speaks an idiolect. Also, Crystal [8, p. 142] observes that ‘dialect is a regionally or social distinctive variety of language, identified by a particular set of words and grammatical structures. Spoken dialects are usually associated with a distinctive pronunciation or accent. In addition, Finegan [9, p. 371] explains that ‘dialect refers to a language variety in its totality-including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, pragmatics, and any other aspect of the linguistic system. The paper investigates the use of dialect as an identity marker in Hausa film language use. Therefore, with regard to the categorization of Hausa dialects, there are some differences among scholars. But for the purpose of space, the paper adopted Bargery’s [10] classification. The scholar classifies Hausa dialects into two main categories, namely the eastern and western. Also, each category contains about ten or more varieties. The classification was based on geographical location and close similarity of lexicons used by speakers of each region. For example Kano, Daura, Bauchi, Guddiri and Zazzau speakers called a junction with **kwana** ‘bend’ while Sakkwato and Katsina speakers called it with **lamba** ‘symbol’. The eastern dialect consists of Kananci, Dauranci, Bausanci, Guddiranci and Zazzaganci, among others. The western dialect consists of Sakkwatanci, Katsinanci, Arewanci, etc. The classification is advanced in the work of Muhammad [11], Bello [12], Amfani [13], Musa [14], Sani [15] and Abbas [16], among others. The paper studies the use of dialect in Hausa films as a means of identity where film characters sometimes use their dialects instead of standard Hausa, which is the variety normally used in Hausa film discourse.

## The Hausa Film Industry (Kannywood)

Kannywood is the name of the Hausa film industry based in Kano in northern Nigeria. Due to the cosmopolitan nature of Kano and the fact that most of the production is done there, in 1999 a journalist working with a Hausa newspaper, called Tauraruwa, coined a name KANNYWOOD for the industry. The Hausa film industry “Kannywood”, represents a regional film industry within Nollywood — Nigerian film industry. However, film production in Hausa land can be traced to the 1950s when the Northern Region Authority launched *Baban Larai* (1955) to mobilize and inform farmers on the importance of practicing commercial farming with emphasis on the production of groundnuts and cotton. In subsequent years, more films on various themes were produced from 1950 to 1989 mostly sponsored by government (either at regional or state level). The first commercial Hausa film *Turmin Danya* (1990, directed by Daudu Galadanci) was produced by Tumbin Giwa Production, Kano. After the successful marketing of it, many people became engaged in film production. Currently, it is estimated that there are over two thousand companies registered with the Kano State Films Makers Associations alone, let alone other registered companies throughout Northern Nigeria [17, p. 137].

## Theoretical Background

Social identity is a concept that pervades disciplines investigating human behaviour, both individual and collective. The body of ideas that became known as ‘social identity theory’ (coined by Turner and Brown [18]) has its roots in Tajfel [19] early work on categorization and social perception and as its essence the idea that an individual is motivated to maintain a distinct and positive social identity. The emphasis in Tajfel’s work lies in the social-cognitive processes of membership, and the way that ‘belonging’ is both initiated and sustained, rather than in the form of named collectivities outlined above. Social identity theory explores the phenomenon of the ‘ingroup’ and ‘outgroup’ and is based on the view that identities are constituted through a process of difference defined in a relative or flexible way dependent upon the activities in which one is engaged. Put simply, the ingroup is the one to which an individual ‘belongs’ and the ‘outgroup’ is seen as ‘outside’ and different from this group Benwell and Stokoe [20, p. 25]. The paper adopts the theory based on its suitability on the research.

## Methodology

The data used for this research was collected from five Kannywood films, namely *Dakin Amarya* (2013, directed by Saira Aminu), *Lamiraj* (2013, directed by Saira Aminu), *Hanyar Kano* (2014, directed by Abdulmumini Iliyasu), *Ibtıla’i* (2016 directed by Gumzak Ali) and *GidanFarko* (2015, directed by Isa I. Isa). The films were randomly selected and watched three times by the researcher. In addition, relevant dialogues were recorded and replayed several times before transcribing them accurately. Selection was based on the appearance of an actor, who comes from a particular Hausa region.

*Dakin Amarya* tells the story of a husband, Abubakar, and his wives, Nuratu and A’isha. Abubakar and wife Nuratu lived faithfully. But when he marries A’isha, Nuratu

becomes mad and destabilizes the peace of the House on the day A'isha moves in. She destroys Aisha's belongings and engages her in a fight. The husband cannot control their behaviours and becomes annoyed with Nuratu, in particular, because she wounded Aisha. The husband takes Aisha to the hospital and Nuratu follows them and also engages her in another fight with assistance of her relatives. Aisha's family members also arrive at the venue and fight Nuratu's family members. Finally, they resolve their conflicts and agree to leave together.

*Lamiraj* is a love story between a couple, Salim and Salma. After three years of marriage, Salma fails to conceive because of family planning drugs she has been taking, which damage her ovary. The husband's mother insists that Salim should marry a second wife, as she wants to see her grandchild. The couple are disturbed and visit a medical doctor. He informs them that Salma cannot conceive due to the damage of her ovary and that she could only get a baby through one of the birth modern processes, such as artificial insemination and the likes. The wife rejects the idea and asks her husband to marry a second wife. He promises not to do so as he is the cause of her ovary damage because he asked her to take the drugs. However, the film also tells a story of a girl, Maimuna who suffers in the hand of her step mother after the death of her mother. The girl decides to travel to a city where she does not know anyone. She is dropped at a motor station in the night and thugs in the park pursue her as she ran out of the park. Salim and his wife coming from the doctor in the night Salim knock her down. They ask her and she narrates her story. They sympathize with her and take her to their house and agree to take care of her.

*Hanyar Kano* tells a story about a journey to Kano by bus. Oga (Ali Nuhu) is the bus driver and his conductor's Blues. They drive to Kano and at intervals, stop to pick passengers from the roadside. Each passenger has a funny character that rub off others in the wrong way. Daushe warns anyone not to wake his brother, who falls asleep. Naburuska is provoked and retaliates by releasing a bad odour, which disturbs the peace in the bus. Also, Sani Danja warns everybody against admiring his girlfriend, Jummy (Aisha Tsamiya). The film is a comedy that features an all-star cast.

*Ibtila'i* is a film of a couple, Kamal and his wife, Habiba, a poor motor mechanic working with a garage and his rich woman who does not stay at home to take care of him and their two daughters. She engages in taking hard drugs and going to club with other men. Kamal normally takes care of their daughters and provides them with whatever they need. He cannot tolerate Habiba's character and after warning her several times, he divorces her. She takes the children and stops paying the house rent. Kamal becomes homeless and disturbed as he cannot rent a house and take care of his daughters. He gets a driving job from a rich lady, Nana Khadijah, and the lady maltreats him but later falls in love with him and promises to marry him. But he rejects the marriage offer because of his experience with his first wife, Habiba.

*Gidan Farko* narrates a story of a society where people struggle to make money by all means. Okoro is a land lord who accommodates criminals and drunkards. On the other side, it tells a story of a man who refuses to marry out his daughter to her suitor because he is not rich. He wants to marry her to the person she does not love because of his money. That person finally rapes her in collaboration with his friends. The suitor of the girl is a lawyer; he takes the case to the court and wins. The offenders are arrested and punished. At the end, the film shows that people of the town complain about the attitude of Okoro

to their district head who buys Okoro's house and orders it to be destroyed. The house is demolished when Okoro is away. When he returns he complains that his money was stolen and he files a case at a court accusing Maiunguwa and others. The court delivers on the case and adjourns to a later date.

## Data Presentation and Analysis

Characters in Hausa films often use their dialect to communicate in the films discourse instead of Standard Hausa, which is the accepted variety used in writing film scripts in the industry. The study identified four dialects used by the film characters to communicate, namely, Katsinanci, Sakkwatanci, Zazzaganci and Kananci. Therefore, dialect used by some characters demonstrates their identity and shows the particular Hausa region they belong. For instance, Hausa film characters from Katsina sometimes use Katsinanci one of western dialects spoken in most of Katsina State. For example, in *Dakin Amarya* and *Lamiraj* some characters use Katsinanci while conversing with other characters as follows:

1. Abubakar kana ina wannan ta'addancin ya **hwaru** a gidanka? Hajiya-Abubakar  
Abubakar where were you when this dreadful act happened in your house?
2. Abubakar **hwad'a** suka yi ko ko me yake **hwaruwa**?  
Abubakar did they fight or what happens?
3. ....Za ta iya bin ta har can gidan ta sake yi mata abinda ya **hi** wannan. Hajiya-Salma  
She can fallow her to the other house to fight her more than this.
4. ...Na **fadi** maka ka yi shiru. Nana Khadijah-Kamal  
I said to you that you should keep quite
5. ...Salma ku je ku kai ta gurin likita domin ya **diba** min **lahiyarta**  
Salma take her to a doctor for a medical check
6. Ko da **shike** yanzu akwai cigaban da aka samu. Dr. -Salim  
Even though there is some development now.
7. ...Ya kamata ka kara ba ta dama ta karshe, na san kishi babu abin da **bai** ya sawa.  
Hajiya-Abubakar  
You should give her a last second chance I know rivalry can cause anything
8. ...Ke kuma ya kamata ki yiwa **d'i'yarki** huɗiɓa ta **zanna** da abokiyar zamanta lafiya.  
Hajiya-SirikarAbubakar  
You should warn your daughter to live in peace with her co-wife.
9. ...Matarsace da 'yan'uwanta suka taru suka yiwa Aisha duka. **Jibi** yadda su ka yi mata da jiki. Salma-Hajiya  
It's his wife and her relatives who gang up and beat Aisha. Look at what they did to her body.
10. ...Ai gara haka, dan nasan yaron yana da hankali, saboda na san zai goyi bayan gaskiya don ba zai **bi ga** bayan karya ba. Hajiya-Aisha.  
That's better, I know the boy is responsible, he would not support injustice.

In example 1, it's Hajiya asking Abubakar the scene of the incident and she uses **hwaaru** instead of **faaru**. The same in Example 2 and 3 where /hw/ is used instead of /f/. In the above examples, /f/ is changed to /h/ and /hw/ as obtained in Katsinanci. This demonstrates the identity of the character, as indicated by her use of Katsinanci dialect.

In addition, in Example 4 the character used **faɗii** instead of **faɗaa**. Also, in example 5, **diba** is used instead of **duba**. In Example 9, **jibi** is used instead of **duba**. In these situations /a/ is changed to /i/ and /u/ to /i/. Katsinanci justifies the characters identity.

Moreover, in Example 6, **shike** is used instead of **yake**. Here it is /y/ changed to /sh/. In Example 7, **bai** is used instead of **zai**. In this case /z/ changed to /b/. Example 8 contains **ɗiyarki** instead of **yarki**, which indicates an addition of **ɗi** by the character. Also, in Example 10 **bi ga** is used instead of **bi**. This clearly confirms that some characters, especially from Katsina, use Katsinanci to reveal their regional identity. Katsinanci and Sakkwatanci differ from Standard Hausa in some areas of phonetics, phonology and lexical variation, as shown in the above examples. However, the character (Hajiya Zulai) that frequently used Katsinanci dialect in the film is from Katsina and she has not acquired high education that is why it is difficult for her to say what it is written in the script which is in standard Hausa. The usage of the dialect by the character is sometime unconscious as she mostly used standard Hausa in the film.

Therefore, film characters from Sokoto used Sakkwatanci in their film discourse to reveal their identity. Sokoto dialect is spoken in Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara States and has some features that differentiate it from Standard Hausa. It's very easy to identify a speaker of Sakkwatanci in film discourse. For example in *Hayar Kano*, Boloko uses the dialect as follows:

11. Ai ko an lahira **an kai** wa mutum horo da **wanga** tusa ya aikata babban **laihi**.  
Boloko-Buss passengers  
Even Hereafter someone is punished with such farting, one has indeed committed a serious offence.
12. Ba ni **kuddin** anfikulos, anfikulos ta **sabarta** mu.  
Give us money to buy ampiclox, we must take it.
13. To wallahi **kakka** jawo **mane** bala'i. Allah ya **kassheka** kai d'aya mu **yabanmu**  
Do not put us in trouble. May God kill you alone and leave us
14. Kai direba ban **kuddina in tai** kasa  
Driver gives me my money, let me trek, instead.

In the above dialogues, Boloko uses Sokoto dialect to converse with his fellow passengers in the bus, when Naburuska farted in the bus. Example 11 shows the use of **an kai** instead of **aka yi**. Also, the use of **wanga** instead of **wannan** masc.sing, -this and **laihi** in place of **laifi** (offence) indicates the addition of /n/ and the use of /h/ instead of /p/ when compared with Standard Hausa. Example 12 shows the use of **kuddin** in place of **kudin** and the addition of /d/ in the dialect. In Example 13, **kak** is used instead of **kar** which shows the substitution of /r/ with /k/ and also, the use of **mane** instead of **mani**, which reveals the substitution of /i/ with /e/. In addition, Example 14 shows the use of **tai** in place of **tafi** and reveals his identity of coming from Sokoto region. The character (Shehu Jibril) used Sokoto dialect in the film is from Sokoto and did not acquired high qualification that's why he was not able to follow the script accordingly.

Film characters from Zaria emirate use Zazzaganci when discussing with other characters. Zazzaganci is spoken in Zaria and its environs. For example, Salma and Maimuna use the dialect in *Lamiraj*:

15. Na gaji da irin azaban gidan nan. Maimuna-Abba  
I'm tired of the hardship in this house
16. Babu abin da nake gani a kwayan idanka illa gaskiya da tsantsan tausayi. Salma-Salim  
There is nothing noted in your eyes than truthfulness and pity
17. Habiba wallahi na yi nadaman aurenki. Kamal-Habiba Ibtala'i  
I regret marrying you Habiba
18. ...Kai ka fi kowa sanin cewa saboda rashin haihuwana yau sama da shekaru uku ba ta yi min Cagana. Salma-Salim  
You know that she doesn't talk to me for over three years because of infertility.
19. ...Tun jiya ki ke ta bina sai kin san wani abu game da rayuwana  
You have been insisting since yesterday to know about my life
20. ...Nan kafana ne inda motan ta bige ni, shi ma kaƙan ne. Maimuna Salma  
This is my leg which the car hit, but the injury is not much
21. Zan sami wani ko sadaka ne na ba dake. Abba — Maimuna  
I will find someone to marry you out to him, even for free.

In Examples 15, 16, and 17 it is the use of a short link element **-n** for both masculine and feminine gender as in **azaban**, **kwayan** and **nadaman** instead of **azabar**, **kwayar** and **nadamar**, which are used only for the feminine gender in standard Hausa. Also, in Examples 18, 19 and 20, there is the use of **-na** a link element for masculine gender in place of **-ta** a long link element for feminine gender. In addition, Example 21 indicates the use of stabilizer **-ne** for feminine gender as against **-ce**. The above examples show that characters from Zaria region use Zazzaganci as a means of identity to region they come from. The use of Zazzaganci in Hausa film discourse is very common among characters. But some of the characters are not from Zazzau area, they are from Jos as most speakers from that area are not from Hausa ethnic group and, they do not have gender in their languages. This is why they exhibited some features of Zazzaganci in the films. For instance, Salim, Abba, Habib (Zaharaddeen Sani) and Salma (Rahama) are from Zazzau region while Maimuna (Nafisa Abdullahi) and Habiba are from Jos. This shows that only film characters from Zazzau that are using Zazzaganci dialect in Hausa film discourse.

Consequently, Hausa film characters from Kano use the Kano dialect while communicating with other characters. Kananci refers to Hausa spoken in Kano State and its environs. For example, in *Gidan Farko*, Mai Shari'a uses Kano dialect when pronouncing on a judgement taken by his court against Tasiu, as follows:

22. Za a cigaba da ajiye sa har sai an kamo sauran. Mai Shari'a  
He is to be kept in prison until his co-offenders are arrested

In the above dialogue, the character uses **sa** instead of **shi** in Standard Hausa and clearly shows the identity of the character. There are no many examples of the use of Kano dialect in Hausa film discourse may be because of the fact that Kano dialect closely

resembles Standard Hausa [12, p.82]. Mai Shari'a (Shehu Hassan Kano) is the character that uses Kananci in the film being from Kano. But in most situations he uses standard Hausa instead of Kananci.

## Conclusion

It is clear that Hausa film characters use their dialect in the film discourse, as against standard Hausa which is the main variety used in Hausa films discourse. The paper observes that Hausa film characters sometimes abandoned what is written in the script due to the influence of their dialects. Moreover, the paper identified four Hausa dialects, namely, Katsinanci, Sakkwatanci, Zazzaganci and Kananci that demonstrate the identity of characters and the particular Hausa region they belong. The four dialects differ from Standard Hausa in phonetics, phonology, syntactic constructions and lexical variation. It is noted that some Hausa film characters do not have high academic qualification that is why in most situations they do not conform with what is written in the film script. In addition, Zazzaganci dialect is used in the film not only by characters from Zazzau but other characters from non-Hausa ethnic group areas like Jos. The paper also discovered that Hausa film characters use their dialects unconsciously, as they use standard Hausa in most situations in film discourse. In addition, Kano dialect is closest to the Standard Hausa among all the four dialects discussed because only a few instances of the dialect were found in the films studied. Finally, the paper also confirms Hudson's [21, p.46] assertion that 'your dialect shows who (or what) you are'.

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Author's information:

Isa Y. Chamo — PhD, Lecturer; [iychamo.lin@buk.edu.ng](mailto:iychamo.lin@buk.edu.ng), [iychamo@gmail.com](mailto:iychamo@gmail.com)

## Использование диалекта как средства идентичности в кинодискурсе на языке хауса

И. Ю. Чамо

Университет Байеро,  
Кано PMB 3011, штат Кано, Нигерия

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Анализируется аспект языка и идентичности в фильмах на языке хауса. В научной литературе язык часто рассматривается как символ этнической, национальной или региональной идентичности. Диалекты — это разновидности одного и того же языка, которые отличаются друг от друга с точки зрения словарного запаса, грамматики и произношения. В большинстве случаев один диалект понятен носителю другого диалекта. Использование определенного диалекта говорящим раскрывает его/ее личность с точки зрения географического местоположения говорящего или социального статуса. Исследуется использование диалекта в кинодискурсе на языке хауса. Основное внимание уделяется способам общения персонажей в фильмах на хауса, которые раскрывают их индивидуальность. Этнографический метод используется для сбора данных, теория социальной идентичности — для их анализа. Определены четыре диалекта хауса, используемые персонажами фильма для общения и демонстрации своей идентичности: *Katsinanci*, *Sakkwatanci*, *Zazzaganci* и *Kananci*. Проведенное автором исследование показывает, что некоторые герои фильмов бессознательно используют свой диалект вместо стандартного хауса, который является языковой нормой, обычной в дискурсе фильма. Автор также показывает, что персонажи в фильмах на хауса чаще всего говорят на своих диалектах, когда находятся в эмоциональных ситуациях, таких как гнев, разочарование или романтическое настроение. Кроме того, показано, что некоторые герои фильмов на хауса не следуют языковым нормам из-за низкой академической квалификации и пожилого возраста.

*Ключевые слова:* язык, идентичность, диалект, фильмы на языке хауса.

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Контактная информация:

Чамо Иса Юсуф — PhD, преподаватель; [iychamo.lin@buk.edu.ng](mailto:iychamo.lin@buk.edu.ng), [iychamo@gmail.com](mailto:iychamo@gmail.com)