

DEVELOPING URBAN SOCIO-LINGUISTICS IN THE LAKE CHAD REGION

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This short presentation concerns ongoing work in urban socio-linguistics developed in Maiduguri over some 15 years. Initially it concentrated on Maiduguri Metropolitan (BRANN 1995, BRANN forthcoming) and was extended, in a second stage, to towns of the University's 'catchment area', i.e. of the old North-East, on which a number of students' essays and dissertations were written under my supervision (cf. asterisked entries in the bibliography). Quite recently, it has reached northern Cameroonian cities, which belong to the same culture area, though across international borders. This has been facilitated by my supervision of work by Cameroonian students at Maiduguri University. On the other hand, expectations of research collaboration with N'Djamena University have not yet been realized, even though they go back to contacts of 1978 and I gave courses in Socio-linguistics there twice, in 1990 and 1991.

Whereas linguistic as well as socio-linguistic surveys in the region have been mainly based on ethnic groups, living on their own territory (e.g. the SIL (Société Internationale de Linguistique) on the Buduma and Kotoko, or DIEU in ALAC (Atlas Linguistique de l'Afrique Centrale) etc.¹, urban socio-linguistics is concerned with the linguistic accommodation of ethnic groups in the city, and communication within this multilingual microcosm.²

¹ The Société Internationale de Linguistique (SIL) have been conducting detailed socio-linguistic surveys of the Lake Chad Region, including questions of inter-intelligibility, with a view to Biblical translations into acceptable speech forms. As an example, cf. CHESLEY and WAGNER 1995. The Atlas Linguistique de l'Afrique Centrale by M. DIEU et al. Paris and Yaounde, ACCT and CERDOTOLA 1983, comprises sociolinguistic surveys of the francophone side of the Lake Chad Region (i.e. Chad and Cameroon). Cf. also KOENIG and CHIA (1983) which contains data on some northern Cameroonian cities.

² The aims and methods of urban sociolinguistics are discussed in AMMON, DITTMAR and MATTHEIER (1987), here referred to as Handbook 87, with articles *Domain* by A. MIONI: 170-77; H. STRASSER on *Class*: 182-86; W. J. SAMARIN: *Lingua Franca* 371-3; P. VAN DE CRAEN and H. B. BEARSMORE: *Research on City Language*: 579-84; W. F. MACKEY: *Bilingualism and Multilingualism*: 699-712; J. ORNSTEIN-GALICIA: *Linguistic minorities etc.*: 713-29. Notable contributions to African Urban Linguistics have come from L. J. CALVET et al. (1992). A collection on *The Bilingual City: Studies in Urban Multilingualism*, edited by J. COBARRUBIAS, W. F. MACKEY and J. ORNSTEIN is in the press: Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter, 1994, contributions to which are in accordance with a

With one group generally constituting the autochthonous host - representing the core population in the centre³ - immigrant groups tend to reside in separate ethnic wards and even work in wards/*quartiers* identified with their ethno-specific crafts and trades - and often named after them. The socio-linguistic survey will therefore use available and new maps and ethno-linguistic statistics: For the former, the urban surveys by the Max Lock Company of north-eastern Nigeria have been of great help (especially the population data of their chapters 7), but have to be updated⁴; for the latter, various censuses had to be supplemented by more recent information⁵. With ethno-linguistic wards constituting enclaves which can only interact through a language or languages in common, we can apply the general model of the *triglottic configuration* by positing x territorial and y immigrant, ethnic languages of solidarity; one general urban community language or *lingua franca* of interaction; and the official language of authority and administration. This language of authority was formerly a local *aristolect* (Kanuri or Fulfulde), but is now mostly an *exolect* - English or French.⁶

well laid-down outline. An excellent example of a sympathetic and insightful study into urban multilingualism of the region is TOURNEUX and IÉBI-MANDJEKS (1994).

- ³ Often this dominant core has imposed its speech form not only on the city (e.g. the ancient Greek or classical Hausa City States), but on the surrounding country, creating *aristoglossic* varieties which ultimately served as national and international standard, e.g. Parisian with French, Westminster with English, Kananci with Hausa, Oyo with Yoruba, etc. But on other occasions, the autochthonous group was overpowered by an immigrant aristocracy, as with Kanuri in Maiduguri outnumbering and assimilating the autochthonous Gamergu; or Hausawa, the native Gwari in Kaduna, etc.
- ⁴ Max Lock, the consultant company for urban planning, conducted superbly documented urban surveys in the 60's and 70's in most cities of north-eastern Nigeria.
- ⁵ Ethnic language data, in town and country, were collected for the decennial censuses in Nigeria since 1911. Especially the one of 1921 is replete with information, as published by MEEK (1925) and TALBOT (1926) for Northern and Southern Nigeria respectively. The last Nigerian census to collect ethno-linguistic data is that of 1963. Thereafter censuses were either cancelled (1973) or lack such data (1991), as the National Population Commission shunned controversial census questions (though the writer was invited by the Commission to provide questions on language use for this Census, they were not used, for the above reason).
- ⁶ The growing terminology of sociolinguistics is expounded in the writer's forthcoming study "The Terminology of sociolinguistics in Multilingual Societies: a trilingual Glossary (English, French, German)". His "Terminology of Babel" is also published and discussed in *Sociolinguistics* (Dordrecht) 18/1+2, 1989:85-98, as well as in MACKAY (1990). The model of the *Triglottic configuration* has grown out the writer's work over the past 25 years and is in tune with Anwar DIL's Indian *Three-language model*, or his *2 1/2 plus/minus model*, as well as with the more recent elaboration by LAITIN (1992), where he writes of a *3 plus/minus language outcome*.

The loci of habitual interaction are termed *domains of incidence*, among which have been distinguished 16 typical or *archi-domains*.⁷ Of these, three are concerned with familiar discourse dominated by the *ethnolects* - *Home, Club and Farm*; seven are domains of communal interaction, which are dominated by the *demolect or local lingua franca* -, *Entertainment, Market, Palace, Resto, Temple, Unibus and Workshop*; and six domains are concerned with civic services, mostly expressed through the official language or *politoelect* - *Assembly, Bar, Dispensary, Legion, Office and School*. In addition, 14 *media of incidence* have been isolated - corresponding to the communicative practices of the region, both traditional and contemporary.

Each domain is researched for specific *language events*, or occasions on which the actors interact, which are in turn examined for a sequence of *language acts*, with an interplay of language transactions, in terms of accommodation and adjustment⁸. This is often done through *code switching* or *code mixing*.⁹ By using a simple time scale and notation, the relative frequency

⁷ The 16 domains of incidence are, alphabetically: 1. Assembly = urban council, rallies; 2. Bar = all courts of law, including police and military; 3. Club = ethnic, occupational, professional clubs, associations; 4. Dispensary = all places for health care delivery, including hospitals, pharmacies etc.; 5. Entertainment (formerly Theatre) = public sports gatherings, cultural shows, plays, traditional recitals etc.; 6. Farm = all market gardens and home farms, here in the urban area; 7. Home = the family compound of monogamous or polygamous families, also extended family homes, including the palaces of the *nouveaux riches*; 8. Legion = law enforcement and security forces, both governmental and private; 9. Market = all places of trade and commerce; 10. Office = all administrative offices, whether federal, state, civic or commercial; 11. Palace = residences of the urban authorities, both traditional, urban, state and federal; 12. Resto = places of relaxation, restauration or temporary lodging, including Pilgrims' camps, hotels etc.; 13. School = all levels of formal instruction, whether traditional, religious, civic or general, including literacy classes; 14. Temple = all places of worship, whether traditional, Christian or Muslim, as well as meetings of religious societies; 15. Unibus = all stations for public transport (= motorparks), as well as the urban transport itself, as a locus of linguistic interaction; 16. Workshop = all places of collective manufacture or factory production. These sixteen archidomains of incidence fall into the *triglottic configuration* (note 6) of A familiar, solidary interaction (domains 3, 6, 7), B interethnic transactions (domains 1, 5, 9, 11, 12, 15, 16) and C official, administrative contacts (domains 2, 4, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15) - with overlappings, i.e. bilingualism, as well as diglossia between categories A and B, and B and C. However, TOURNEUX/MANDJEK report increasing use of Ffulde in the homes, as *lingua franca* (paralleled in Maiduguri by Hausa) in the case of northern families; and of French as a prestige language in southern middle-class homes.

⁸ The constructs of *Language event and language act* are discussed in current socio-linguistic literature; an eponymous article by the writer is in press.

⁹ Code-switching in the African urban context has been extensively discussed by MYERS-SCOTTON (1972). HEINE 1970 and 1979 respectively are useful for descriptions of urban vehicular languages.

of use of the various codes can be quantified. Observation techniques include both the participatory and unobtrusive varieties.

Apart from the dominant and actual language usage in cities, the question of language *maintenance and shift* arises in relation to all three components of the configuration - familial, communal and official. What is the *vitality index* of the various component languages of the urban linguistic configuration?¹⁰ Ethnic languages are largely maintained through regular meetings of the ethnic associations typical of African cities (cf. GREENBERG 1971)¹¹, as well as by their use at home. But a shift of language use has often been observed among the youngest generation, who constantly mix with their peers in the city's *lingua franca*, even to the point of carrying the latter into the homes. Thus Hausa is being carried into allophone homes in Maiduguri or Yola; or Fulfulde into homes in Maroua, Garoua or Ngaoundere. Communal languages themselves are prone to shift and change, as seen in the Hausanization of north-eastern Nigerian cities like Maiduguri and Yola, since the Second World War - where Kanuri and Fulfulde have been partly displaced as *lingua francas*.¹² With expanding western education, the exolect may encroach on some of the public domains, in which the local community language was hitherto used. And from the northern Cameroonian cities it is reported that it is even used in (elite)homes of immigrants from the south. Where such samples of usage can be taken over time, historical socio-linguistic perspectives arise - as will be seen in the Proceedings of the 1991 Maiduguri Symposium on Language Use and Language Change in the Lake Chad Area, shortly to be published¹³.

Over the past fifteen years, it has been attempted to apply the above criteria and methods to urban-linguistic studies of Maiduguri¹⁴, to extend them gradually to other towns of north-eastern Nigeria - Bauchi, Jalingo, Potiskum, Yola¹⁵, and to open up an international network of parallel surveys in cities of the region, like N'Djamena, Garoua, Maroua and Ngaoundere¹⁶. The growing

¹⁰ Language vitality theory is discussed in works by J.A. FISHMAN, by MCCONNELL (CIRAL, Quebec), in articles in *Multilingua* (de Gruyter, Berlin), as well as in a topical issue on *Ethnolinguistic Vitality* ed. by LANDRY and ALLARD (1994).

¹¹ J. GREENBERG'S seminal article *Urbanism, Migration and Language*, which first appeared in KUPER (1965), has been reprinted in DIL (1971), 198-211

¹² BELLO (1989). Also Bulakarima and Opoku-Agyeman (1988).

¹³ cf. note 1 for proceedings of the 1991 Maiduguri Symposium.

¹⁴ Some 'Final year essays' and M.A dissertations have been written on related topics under the writer's supervision, apart from the writer's occasional articles.

¹⁵ It is intended to expand the network of cooperating academics in the field.

¹⁶ In 1991, the writer concluded an agreement with the University of Ndjamenana on comparative urban linguistic studies between Maiduguri and Ndjamenana; it is intended to have similar links with the new University of Ngaoundere (N). In the 1995/96 session, three Cameroonian students will undertake urban studies on Garoua, Maroua and Ngaoundere, linked with the Anthropos Project (N).

corpus of urban linguistic data aids comparisons of instances and contributes to the development of urban-linguistic theory, for which some generalizations can be made in what could be named *urban socio-linguistic universals*.

1st stage: An autochthonous minority has been overlaid by an allophone conquering population - with the original language group either being absorbed or pushed back to the periphery - as in Maiduguri, N'Djamena, Ngaoundere¹⁷.

2nd: The language of the conquering, urbanizing group became the ruling lingua franca, tending - through assimilation of other groups - to become their home language also¹⁸.

3rd stage: Traders and craftsmen arrive from outside, settling in ethnic wards, using their own language, or being gradually absorbed by the majority population. Not only crafts, but also produce and products thus become associated with distinct ethnic groups in the various markets¹⁹.

4th: The exogenous, colonial administration extends the old cities by 'newtowns' (*sabon gari*), divided into residential, administrative and trading (shopping) areas, their exolects becoming the official language²⁰.

5th: Additional exogenous traders - Libyans (Fezzani) in Maiduguri, Lebanese in Ngaoundere - establish their own quarters, either maintaining their language to this day, or becoming absorbed into the majority urban group through intermarriage, finally abandoning their language²¹.

6th: Periodic markets attract groups from outside the city, each bringing their own category of produce or product, and with them the use of their

¹⁷ In Maroua, the Mofu and Giziga have been partly absorbed, but still exist as entities separate from the Fulbe (TOURNEUX/MANDJEK 1994). In Maiduguri, the Gamergu live in the surroundings of the city, but speak more Kanuri than their own language.

¹⁸ Whereas in Maroua (TOURNEUX/MANDJEK 1994), Fulfulde is still expanding into originally allophone homes; in Maiduguri, Kanuri has ceased to expand - this being a useful indicator of linguistic vitality.

¹⁹ The exclusivity of certain labour, trades and crafts to specific ethnic groups has been a general feature of ancient cities in most parts of the world, whose quarters often carry the names of the settling peoples, e.g. Hausari (or Afunori) in Maiduguri, or Sararé and Doualaré in Maroua. It is also common for craftsmen and petty traders to operate from their homes - whereas wholesale trade warrants stores in another area of the city.

²⁰ Both the British and French colonial quarters were built outside the city centre, which was inhabited by the traditional ruler. In the case of Yola, this separation gave birth to the twin cities of Yola and Jimeta.

²¹ It would be an interesting object of research to ascertain how many of the Middle Eastern and Sudanese settlers have maintained the colloquial use of Arabic. It was still the lingua franca of the market at the beginning of the 20th century, and was even the language of instruction in the first primary school in Maiduguri.

language - though transactions with buyers tend to be in the local *lingua franca*.²²

7th: With the growth of the cities and the opening up of transport facilities by river, road, rail, and air, ethno-linguistic groups, traders, transporters (including taxi drivers), and mechanics from other - sometimes distant, southern parts of the country - become permanent settlers.²³ They continue to use their own languages in ethnic associations (of which over 200 are registered in Maiduguri alone). Thus Yoruba drivers are numerous in Maiduguri, whereas many Igbo shops retail car parts and electrical goods in Jimeta (Yola), Maiduguri and Bauchi. In the three Northern Cameroonian cities this function is chiefly in the hands of Bamileke traders.²⁴

8th: Another factor of immigration has been the waves of unrest in Chad, displacing fairly large populations to NE Nigeria and NW Cameroon, where they have laboured in the building boom. The three Cameroonian cities of Maroua, Garoua and N'Gaoundere have in addition Central African migrants, few venturing as far as Maiduguri²⁵.

9th: A *triglottic configuration* typifies urban language use, with ethnic languages used in the home and familial domains: the urban *lingua franca(s)* in trade and commerce and some public services and the official language in education and administration. There is a *complementary distribution* in the use of the *lingua franca* and the official language in the various public domains - with the domain of worship partaking of all three levels.²⁶

10th: Both the urban *lingua franca* and the official language are open to linguistic simplification by allophone speakers. One can thus speak of urban Arabic, Fulfulde, Hausa, Kanuri and Sara in the region, no less than of Pidgin English, or Broken, with their French equivalents.

²² Even if the wholesalers and transporters from outside do not necessarily use the city's *lingua franca*, the retailers in the market certainly can.

²³ Several generations of Southerners have settled - more or less permanently - in the cities of our region. The Sara constitute a large proportion of Ndjaména, where the language is one of the *lingua francas*, with local simplifications (cf. MOADJIBAYE in BRANN/CYFFER forthcoming).

²⁴ Whereas Kanembu and Shuwa were among the first immigrants to Maiduguri, since they lived in symbiosis with the Kanuri, many Nigerian soldiers of Chadian origin settled in Maiduguri after the two world wars. The waves of political refugees who came since 1978 have constituted a fairly unstable population, since some have returned home (cf. ABANGA 1994).

²⁵ The *triglottic configuration* is characteristically unstable. The medium element - the *lingua franca* - tends to encroach on both familiar and official domains - which is, indeed, the origin of many of the 'national' languages of the 19th century.

²⁶ Whereas in the West (North America, Europe) the language maintenance of minority groups is often discussed and catered for, it has not yet been the object of discussion in our region, where territorial, i.e. 'autochthonous' minorities are scantily recognized for urban services, beginning with education and information.

On language maintenance, we ask:

1. To what extent, and how, do the autochthonous peoples of the cities maintain their language - if they have not already been wholly assimilated? To what extent, and how, do the majority groups maintain their language, a.) in the face of second language use by allophone peoples b.) of Hausanization and c.) exolect usage?

To what extent do 20th century immigrant groups consider themselves settled in the cities of their migration and both integrate into the majority culture and language and yet wish to maintain their own language in various private or public domains of incidence?²⁷

On linguistic access, we can ask:

2. Do, or ought, urban administrations cater for this diversity by providing *linguistic access* to urban services, such as housing and employment, education, health care delivery, transport, and communications, information as well as law and order? This issue has been touched on in a 1994 article on the democratization of language use in public domains, of which the urban communities are the main exemplars²⁷.

Urban socio-linguistics is relevant both to historical research into the culture of the Lake Chad Area, as it is to the maintenance and development of urban harmony.

I take this opportunity of thanking colleagues who have contributed chapters to the ongoing collection Language Use and Language Change in Maiduguri (LULACHAM).

Abstract

The capitals of the region are characterized by urban agglomerations, generally round an original core group, living and sometimes working in ethnic wards, where their languages are maintained; and their transactions in communal trade, industry and civic institutions in a *lingua franca* - either the language of the core majority, an imported language, or the exolect - which alone serves written communication and record.

Interaction is researched through a schedule of 16 *domains of incidence*, within which *language events* are observed (by participatory or unobtrusive observation, questionnaire or interview), analysed in *language acts* and quantified. These studies began with Maiduguri and are now being extended to other cities of Borno; to the capitals of Yobe, Adamawa and Bauchi, as well

²⁷ Access to legal services in minority languages has been guaranteed in successive Nigerian Constitutions, which is reflected in similar services of the Commissioner for Public Complaints who employ interpreters. Urban services do not provide linguistic access, save in the mass media - radio booster stations, posters and loudspeakers; or sometimes in political rallies.

as to neighbouring Maroua, Garoua and Ngaoundere in Cameroon, and to N'Djamena in Chad.

The comparable results will show specific and universal occurrences of the *triglottic configuration* - familial (territorial), communal (vehicular) and official (administrative) language usage - and their changing role in urban multilingualism.

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