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The Hong and Gaya dialects of Kilba

Abstract. In this paper we present some observations on Linguistics variation between Hong and Gaya Dialects of Kilba. Two types of differences are observed, lexical and phonological. The lexical reveals that differences can occur in one or more sounds in words used to express the same meaning in the two dialects of the language. While at the phonological level, it has been discovered that Hong dialects uses /t/ and /k/ while Gaya dialects uses /d/ and /g/ respectively. It has also been observed that where the vowel /a/ is used in Hong dialect a high back vowel /u/ is heard in Gaya dialect.

1. Introduction

The term “dialect,” according to Crystal (1980), refers to a regionally or socially distinctive variety of language identified by a particular set of words and grammatical structure. Traugott (1980) breaks down the social definition by saying that a dialect is a version of a language associated with a specific rhyme, social class, ethnic, sex, or age. It is usually identifiable at all levels of grammar, from sound to words, sentence structure, and even speech acts.

Similarly, for Hartman and Stork (1976: 65 –119) as cited in Baba (1988), a dialect is a regional variety of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary in an adjacent region, usually shown by bundles of isoglosses. Bundles of isoglosses may be used to establish dialect boundaries though it is often difficult to distinguish. The following quotation from Vendryes (1959; 260) sums up the ways in which a dialect develops.

Dialect arises spontaneously through the natural interplay of linguistic acts. Wherever in contiguous areas the current speech shows common peculiarities and a general resemblance apparent to the speakers, there is a dialect ... A dialect is all the more closely defined when it coincides with political division.

However Zaria (1982:39) stated that:

Anyone ever involved with dialect study will be aware of the fact that linguistic criteria that divide and determine the dialects of any language are as numerous and varied as they themselves.

Having developed the above notion of dialect, it is also important to note that all languages have dialects. Languages spoken by millions of people, like English, Arabic, French, and Hausa, have many different forms according to the areas from which the speakers originated. Americans speak English different from people in England. People from Kano speak Hausa in slightly different ways from those from Sokoto. We call these ways of speech forms dialects.

Kilba Language is not an exception. Hananiya (1993) and Muazu (1995) states that the Kilba language has two dialects: Hong and Gaya dialects. Hong dialect is regarded as the prestige variety, and it is known as *nya-hɔba*. It is the dialect spoken in the area where the chief resides. It is spoken in Hong, Pella, Zhedienyi, Mumbol, Kwakwa,ah etc. while Gaya dialect is regarded as less prestigious; it is known as *nya-taku* and it is spoken in Gaya, Garaha, Mijili, Gashala, Mbalwaha, etc.

2. Data collection procedures

The study was conducted in Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State. Sixty (60) Kilba informants were selected, using random sampling technique. Thirty (30) informants for each of the two dialects under study were interviewed. Which were drawn from the two dialects speaking areas: for Hong dialect the informants were selected from Hong, Pella, and Zhdenyi, while for Gaya dialects the informants were randomly selected from Gaya, Mijili, and Gashala towns/villages. The instrument used to collected data for this research was a structured interview (500-swedish word-list) and personal observation as well as native speaker intuition.

3. Data analysis

The analyses are divided into two major headings. The first discussion is on the lexical level where the second is on the phonological level.

3.1 Lexical differences between Hong and Gaya dialects of Kilba

Hong and Gaya dialects differ at the lexical level. At this level, words may differ in one or more sounds or, as is usually the case, different words may be used to express the same meaning. Examples of these phenomena are provided below (based on the 500 Swedish word-list). The examples below are the only differences that occur at the lexical level in the two dialects.

3.1.1 Sound difference in corresponding words

Hong dialect	Gaya Dialect	Gloss
wùlè	ùlè	neck
cì	cù	leather/skin
vitùkwà	vitùkù	sweat
míhibì	míhipì	guest
dlà	dlù	smiting
kùcìkpà	kùcìkpù	dew
gwàmbà	gwàmbù	frog
pùtsidà	pùtsidù	ashes
má	mú	mountain
dùrà	dùrù	cap
ùngì	ùngiù	rat
kwà	kwù	goat
dəfà	dəfù	food
màshì	màshù	blood
tlərà	tlərù	to work
tá	tù	to die
hùbwà	hùbwù	hunger
ləhà	ləhù	near
əná	ənú	yesterday
ndàssà	ndàssù	to swallow
mà,í	mà,eú	to go
húí	kwúí	to run
lá	lá,á	to see
ngàti	ngàtù	to hear
bèsà	bèsù	to rub
həlà	həlù	to steal
ngala	ngàlù	to bite
vàkà	vàkù	to throw
mbəlà	mbəlù	to push

chindà	chindù	to wash
nùdà	nùdù	to watch

A close examination of the above examples reveals that there are differences in one or more sounds, which will be discussed under the section on phonology.

3.1.2 Lexical variation expressing the same meaning

Based on the data collected (500 Swedish word-list). It is observed that in some cases different words in the two dialects are used to express the same meanings:

Hong dialect	Gaya Dialect	Gloss
yákái	bátú	trouser
fǒlà	ndzà fǒlà	fly
kùsà	kasha,à	hurry
úlúrdú	nzùr	mortar
kòr-bùng	dùwà	anthill
kàtsàkər	bràngùm	sword
hyà,andi	hyàni	to raise

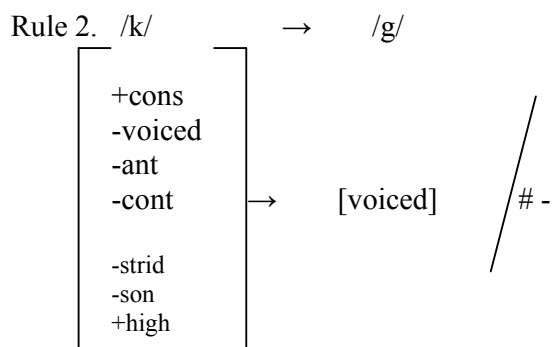
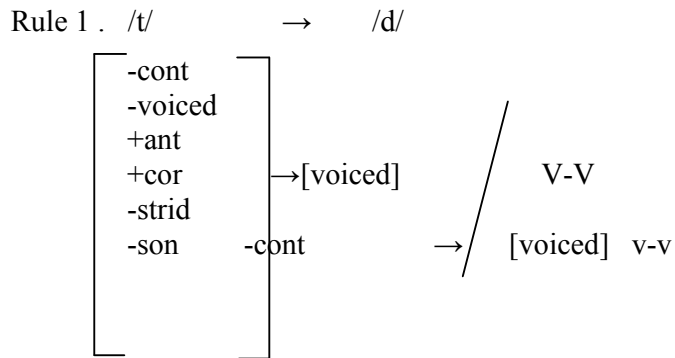
A close examination of the above examples reveals words in the two dialects that have no apparent correlation between words. There is no link between the two words. In other words there is an alteration between the words such that the morphological or grammatical links between the two forms in the dialects are no longer apparent but refer to the same thing. It is important to note that these cases are few.

4. Phonological difference between the Hong and Gaya dialects

The phonological differences between the two dialects are minor, mainly in the occurrence of the consonants /k/ and /g/. Hong dialect uses the voiceless dental-alveolar stop /t/ and voiceless velar stop /k/ while the Gaya dialect uses voiced dental-alveolar stop /d/ and voiced velar stop /g/ respectively. Examples of these phenomena are provided below:

Hong dialect	Gaya Dialect	Gloss
tàtsi'dà u'wàdà	tàdd'à u'wàdà	fetch me (some) groundnuts
ngèrtittiyá	ngèrdiddiyá	I have left it
kà	gò	you(sing)did
kà shillìgò	shilli	you come
kùvà-gáyá	gùovà-gáyá	name of a village in Gaya district
kàmì gnò kò gha òdà	gàmì gnò kò gha òdà	what are you calling me for

Based on the above examples, it can be observed that the phoneme /t/ in Hong dialect is /d/ in Gaya. Similarly, the phoneme voiceless, velar stop /k/ in Hong dialect is realized as voiced velar stop /g/ in Gaya dialect. These correspondences can be expressed using the following feature rules.



There are also differences in the pronunciation of the fricative consonant /h/; the Hong dialect uses a voiceless glottal fricative /h/ for ‘you’ plural, while Gaya dialect uses voiced palatal nasal /ny/ for /ni/ ‘you’ plural. Examples of these phenomena are provided below:

Hong dialect	Gaya Dialect	Gloss
àmà hì d'ànyà	àmà nyì d'ànyà	how are you today”
àmà hì	àmà nyì	where are you”
àmà hì gwá	àmà nyì gwá	where did you enter”
àmà hì shilli	àmà nyì shilli	how did you come”

Another interesting phenomena discovered in the dialect is the vowel /a/. In Hong dialect this vowel is realized as /u/ in the same environment in Gaya dialect. The difference is usually in the final position. Consider the following examples below:

Hong dialect	Gaya Dialect	Gloss
gwàmbà	gwàmbù	frog
má	mú	mountain
dòrà	dòrù	cap
dlà	dlù	smiting
dəfà	dəfù	food
tá	tú	to die
thòrà	thòrù	work
ndàssà	ndàssù	to swallow
ḃèsà	ḃèsù	to rub
vàkà	vàkù	to throw
bòlà	bòlù	to break
cindà	cindù	to wash
dəzà	dəzù	to smoke
tèfà	tèfù	to spit
təḃà	təḃù	to pull

Based on these examples, we can formulate the rule:

$$/a/ \quad \rightarrow \quad /u/ \quad - \#$$

The vowel /a/ becomes /u/ in Gaya when it occurs in word final position.

In summary, Hong and Gaya dialect of Kilba are identified show lexical and phonological variation. On the lexical level it was discovered that there exist differences in one or more sounds and also differences in words use to express the same meaning. While at the phonological level it has been discovered that Hong dialect uses /t/ and /k/, Gaya dialect uses /d/ and /g/ respectively; similarly, in the data collected it was discovered that the vowel /a/ in Hong dialect is realized as /u/ in Gaya dialect. Finally, from what has been analyzed, it was concluded that the differences between the two varieties of Kilba, Hong and Gaya, are relatively few and do not cause Kilba different dialects difficulty in speakers understanding one another.

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