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**INTERNATIONAL VS. AFRICAN LANGUAGES: THE INFLUENCE OF ARABIC
AND ENGLISH ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HAUSA LANGUAGE
IN THE HAUSA DIASPORA IN SUDAN**

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The author discusses an under-researched topic of the language situation in African Sudan with its language diversity and richness of cultures with the focus on Sudanese Hausa. The author also highlights main sociolinguistic rights and obligations of the Hausa population in Sudan. Their native language endures impact of major international languages, such as Arabic and English, affecting Hausa vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and writing system. Furthermore, the article is addressed the problem of the changes in the field of linguistic identity and loyalty to the mother tongue of Sudanese Hausa speakers, as well as their mother tongue development in the face of the above-mentioned influences and means for the language preservation. The author represents a dilemma of key advantages and disadvantages in using native African languages as opposed to global international languages in terms of the communication, education, and trade opportunities of the African population. The author addresses the problem of changes in the Hausa vocabulary and linguistic identity of Hausa speakers, and demonstrates the main functions of the Hausa language in Sudan, identifying some of the challenges to the development and preservation of the Hausa language.

Keywords: diaspora, mother tongue, diasporic language, Sudanese Hausa, Arabic, preservation of the Hausa language in Sudan, African Ajami script, Sudanic Africa

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**МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЕ VS. АФРИКАНСКИЕ ЯЗЫКИ:
ВЛИЯНИЕ АРАБСКОГО И АНГЛИЙСКОГО НА РАЗВИТИЕ ЯЗЫКА ХАУСА
В ДИАСПОРЕ ХАУСА В СУДАНЕ**

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Автор поднимает малоизученную тему языковой ситуации в Судане в Африке с языковым разнообразием и богатством культур страны, уделяя особое внимание суданскому языку хауса; выделяет основные вопросы, связанные с социолингвистическими правами и обязанностями населения хауса в Судане. Родной язык хаусанцев подвергается влиянию основных международных языков, таких как арабский и английский, что оказывает влияние на словарный запас, грамматику, произношение и систему письма хауса. Кроме того,

рассматривается ряд проблем, связанных с изменениями в сфере языковой идентичности и лояльности по отношению к родному языку суданских носителей хауса, а также с развитием их родного языка в условиях этих разнородных влияний и пути его сохранения. Автор представляет дилемму ключевых преимуществ и недостатков использования коренных африканских языков по сравнению с глобальными интернациональными языками с точки зрения общения, образования и торговых возможностей африканского населения, а также обращается к проблеме изменения лексики хауса и языковой идентичности носителей хауса, демонстрируя основные функции языка хауса в Судане и выявляя некоторые проблемы развития и сохранения языка хауса.

Ключевые слова: диаспора, родной язык, диаспоральный язык, суданский хауса, арабский язык, койсан, сохранение языка хауса в Судане, африканская письменность аджами, суданская Африка

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1. Introduction: International and African languages

Africa is a continent of immense linguistic diversity and complexity, with over 2,000 languages belonging to four major language families: Niger-Congo, Nilo-Saharan, Afroasiatic, and Khoisan. These languages reflect the diversity and richness of Africa peoples' cultures and histories, but they also face some challenges due to colonialism, globalization, and marginalization. One of the challenges of the development of African languages is the influence of international languages, such as Arabic and English. The article is focused on the case of the Hausa language in Sudan, and how the major languages affect the vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and writing system of African Hausa, in particular Sudanese Hausa. We also address the problem of changes – following the impact of global languages – in the linguistic identity and diversity of African speakers, in particular Hausa speakers, Hausawa (autonyms for singular are: m. *Bahaushe*, f. *Bahaushiya*), as well as how African languages develop under these effects and how to preserve these African languages.

International languages in Africa are spoken by people from different countries and continents. These are six official languages of the United Nations (UN) – English, Spanish, French, Chinese, Russian and Arabic. These languages have a wider reach and influence than other languages because they are used as official languages in many countries around the world. They are also used as *lingua francas* or common languages for communication among people who speak different languages. Some of the advantages of using international languages in Africa are that they can facilitate communication, education, and trade across borders and regions and provide access to global knowledge and information. However, as a disadvantage they endanger the vitality and diversity of African languages, and impose foreign values and ideologies on African languages speakers [Kamwangamalu, 2016].

African languages, on the other hand, are those that are spoken by people from different countries in Africa. Africa is home to approximately one-third of the world's languages, with over 2,000

distinct languages belonging to four major language families: Niger-Congo, Nilo-Saharan, Afroasiatic, and Khoisan [Ekkehard Wolff, 2016]. These languages reflect the diversity and richness of Africa's cultures and histories, but they also face some challenges due to colonialism, globalization, and marginalization. Some of the advantages of using African languages in Africa are that they can express the identity and culture of African speakers, and that they can preserve the linguistic and cultural heritage of Africa. However, some of the disadvantages are that they can limit the communication, education, and trade opportunities of African speakers, and that they can experience shortage of the resources and support for their development and preservation [Osborn, 2010].

2. The most widely spoken indigenous languages in Africa

The most widely spoken indigenous African languages are: Swahili (100–150 million speakers mainly in East and Central Africa), Hausa (70–100 million speakers mainly in West and Central Africa), Berber (40–56 million speakers mainly in North Africa), and Oromo (35 million speakers mainly in East Africa) [Language and National Identity in Africa, 2008]. These languages are also official in some African countries, such as Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Niger Republic, Nigeria, Algeria, Morocco, Ethiopia, and Somalia.

These languages have influenced or been influenced by other languages in the region of Africa and in broader region. For example, Swahili has borrowed many words from Arabic, Persian, Portuguese, and English, and has also spread its words to other African languages, such as Lingala, Shona, and Zulu. Hausa has borrowed many words from Arabic, English, and French, and has also served as a *lingua franca* for many other African languages, such as Fulani, Kanuri, and Zarma [Lefebvre, 2023]. Berber has borrowed many words from Arabic, Latin, and French, and in its turn influenced some Arabic dialects spoken in North Africa. Oromo has borrowed many words from Arabic, Somali, and Amharic, but has also influenced the Cushitic languages spoken in East Africa.

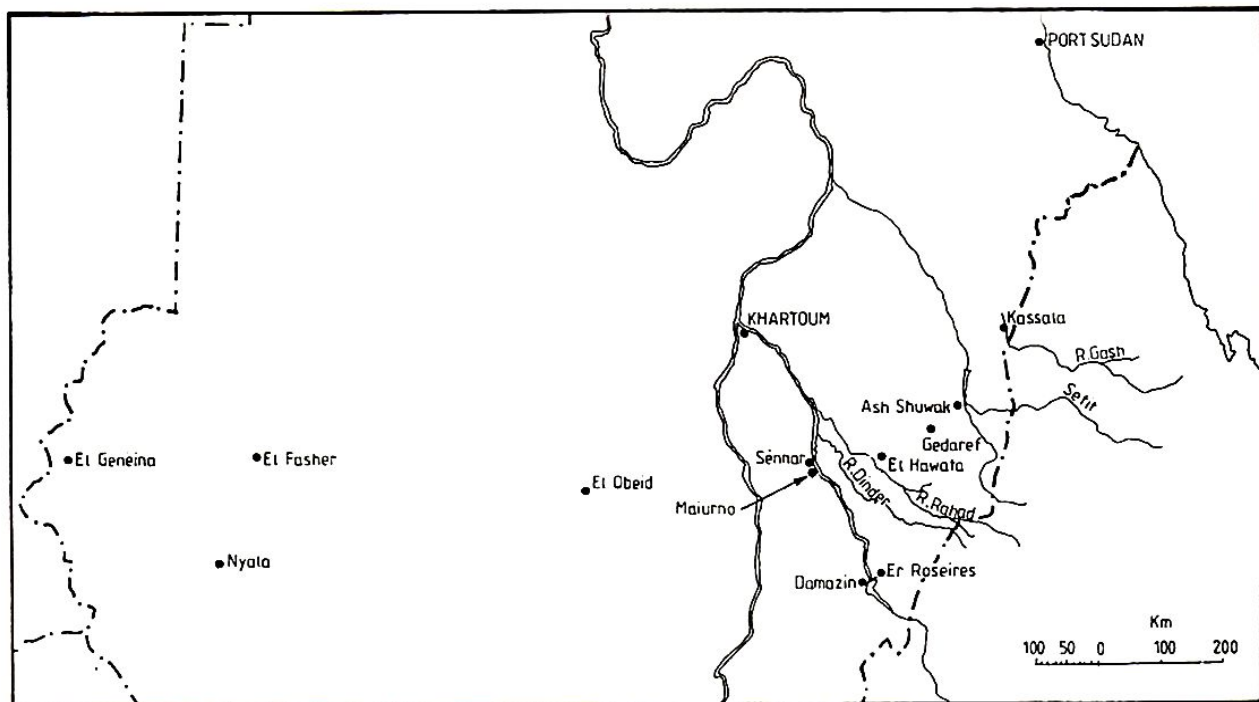
Some of the factors that have contributed to the spread and popularity of these languages are: migration, trade, religion, and media. So, Hausa spread through migration and trade of the Hausa people across West and Central Africa, as well as through the adoption of Islam and the use of the Ajami script, which is based on the Arabic writing.

3. Hausa language and population in Sudan

Hausa, also known as Abakwariga, Habe, Haoussa, Halsen, Harsen, Hawsa, Hausawa, Kado or Mgbakpa²¹ is a Chadic language belonging to the Afro-Asiatic language family [Porkhomovskiy, 1990].

²¹ See also: (<https://www.omniglot.com/writing/hausa.htm>).

It is spoken as a first or second language by about 70–100 million people in West and Central Africa. Hausa is also used as a lingua franca by millions of people in other African countries, including Sudan, where it is spoken by about 3–10 million people in the western, central, and eastern regions of the country, particularly in the Darfur region, Al-Jazira State, and the eastern states of Kassala, Gedaref, Sennar, and Blue Nile (see map below) [Abu-Manga, 1999]. In addition to the Hausa people, the Hausa language is sometimes spoken in Sudan by members of other ethnic groups, such as the Fulani, Kanuri, and Borno diaspora²².



Map: Important sites of the geographical distribution of the Hausa in the Western, Central and Eastern Sudan.

Figure. 1

Hausa speakers in Sudan have a long history of migration and trade with other regions of Africa [Adamu, 1984]. The Hausa and their neighbours in the central Sudan. They first arrived in Sudan in the 14th century, as part of the trans-Saharan trade and pilgrimage networks that linked West Africa with North Africa and the Middle East. They settled in various villages and towns along these routes, such as Darfur, Kordofan, and Jazirah, where they were engaged in commerce, agriculture, and crafts. They actively took part in the pilgrimage to Mecca, which exposed them to Islamic culture and learning. These people established their own communities and institutions, such as mosques, schools, and markets, where they maintained their language and culture. Hausa people widely interacted with other

²² On the situation of Hausa language and people in the 20th century see also: [Philips, 2004].

ethnic groups and regions, such as the Arabs, the Nubians, and the Funj, through trade, marriage, and politics. They contributed to the cultural and social diversity of Sudan, especially in the fields of music, cuisine, and literature. In terms of food, the Hausa are famous for enriching Sudanese cuisine by way of introducing and spreading several kinds of food across Sudan, including the famous “Agashie” (grilled kebabs of beef, lamb or chicken seasoned with spices and peanut powder and served with onions and lime juice). Today, “Agashe” remained the number one beloved street food across Sudan. Hausa also introduced “Godogodo”, a delicious porridge [Ali, 2023; Dobronravin, Popov, 2017].

Hausa has a number of geographical dialects, marked by differences in pronunciation and vocabulary. Hausa spoken in Sudan has some distinctive linguistic features and varieties, compared to Hausa spoken in other countries. For example, Hausa spoken in Sudan has more Arabic loanwords than the variety spoken in Nigeria or Niger, due to the closer contact and influence of Arabic in Sudan. Sudanese Hausa also has some regional variations, such as the Darfur dialect, the Kordofan dialect, and the Jazirah dialect, which differ in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. These variations reflect the geographic and social diversity of the Hausa speakers in Sudan, as well as their contact and interaction with other languages and dialects.

4. The influence of Arabic language on the development of Hausa language in Sudan

Arabic is the first official language in Sudan, where it is spoken by most of the population. Arabic is also the most important source of borrowing for Hausa, as it has contributed a large number of words dealing with religion (Islam), government, law, culture, literature, science, and warfare. In fact, the Arabic and Hausa languages are classified within the Afro-Asiatic family of languages because of the kith and kin relationships between the two languages [Noorain, Mohammed, Alhaj, 2020]. According to some studies, Arabic loanwords constitute about 25 % of the Hausa vocabulary, and they are more prevalent in formal, religious, and technical registers than in informal, everyday, and colloquial registers [Greenberg, 1947]. Arabic loanwords have been integrated into the Hausa grammatical system, and some of them have even replaced the original Hausa words. For example, the word for ‘governor’ in Hausa is *Hakimi*, which is derived from the Arabic word (حَاكِمٌ – *hakimun*). The original Hausa word for ‘governor’ was Sarki, which now means ‘king’ or ‘chief’.

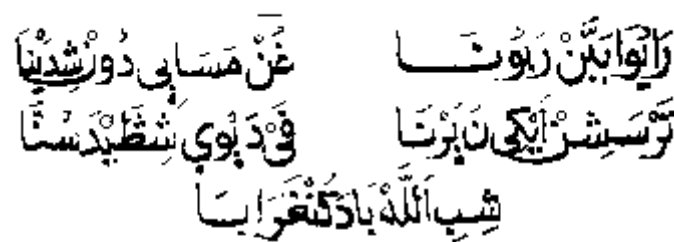
Here are more examples of Arabic loanwords in Hausa language:

Table 1

Examples of Arabic loanwords in Hausa language

| Arabic origin | Hausa | Meaning |
|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| <i>hikma</i> | <i>hikima</i> | wisdom |
| <i>iyal</i> | <i>iyali</i> | family |
| <i>maqaam</i> | <i>muqami</i> | position |
| <i>jidat</i> | <i>jidali</i> | argument |
| <i>rahim</i> | <i>rahim</i> | merciful |
| <i>rabuna</i> | <i>rabbana</i> | our lord |
| <i>wajib</i> | <i>wajibi</i> | duty |
| <i>salat</i> | <i>salla</i> | prayer |
| <i>ghafar (verb)</i> | <i>gafaraa (noun)</i> | forgive/forgiveness |
| <i>salam</i> | <i>sallamàa</i> | peace/greeting |

Arabic has also influenced the writing system of Hausa, which previously used a modified version of the Arabic script called Ajami. This was used in Hausa literature to write down historical, religious and legal texts, as well as poetry. However, Ajami was not standardized and had some limitations in representing the Hausa sounds and tones, opening the possibility of different writers using letters with different values [Bondarev, Dobronravin, 2019; Ngom, Rodima-Taylor, Robinson, 2023].

Sample text in ajami

رَأْيُوَا بَبَّانِ رَابَّوْنَا
تَرْسِشَرِ اَيْكِي نَابَرْنَا
عَنْ مَسَافِي دُونِ شَيْنَا
فِي دَبُّوِي شِظِيْدَسْنَا
شِيْبِ اَللَّهِ بَادَا كَنْغَرَايَا

Rāyuwā bābban ràbō nā, Gun masāfī don shi dainā,
Tārsāshin aiki na bārnā, Fāi dà bōye shi tsai dà sunnā,
Shi bi Allāh bā dà kàngarā ba.

A verse from Aljiyu Namangi, Imfiraji, Part 3 (Verse 3)

Fig. 2. Sample text in Ajami²³

²³ The example is taken from: (<https://www.omniglot.com/writing/hausa.htm>).

Aside from the influence of Arabic language on the development of Hausa language in Sudan, Hausa has also influenced Sudanese Arabic in some degree as a result of this interaction, though this influence is way more less than that of Arabic on Hausa. As a result of this interaction, Arabic in Sudan borrowed some vocabulary from the Hausa language. These are usually the names of traditional Hausa dishes and products that have become part of the national dishes of Sudan, such as Agashe (grilled meat in as special sauce and coating), Gado-gado (a dish made from millet, yogurt, sugar, tahini, jam, biscuits, and ginger), Goro (*Cola acuminata*), etc.

5. The influence of English language on the development of Hausa language in Sudan

English is the second official language in Sudan and is widely spoken, especially among the educated elite and the younger generation. It is also another source of borrowing for Hausa, not only in the historic homeland for the Hausa people, Nigeria, where it is the official language and medium of education, but also in Sudan. English has introduced many words related to modern science and technology, philosophy and ideology into Hausa. For example, the word for “computer” in Hausa is *kwamfuta*, which is derived from the original English word of the same meaning.

Here are some examples of English loanwords used in in Hausa language.

Table 2

Examples of English loanwords in Hausa language

| English origin | Hausa |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| <i>book</i> | <i>buku</i> |
| <i>cassette</i> | <i>kaseta</i> |
| <i>passport</i> | <i>fasfot</i> |
| <i>quality</i> | <i>kwaliti</i> |
| <i>secondary</i> | <i>sekondari</i> |
| <i>train</i> | <i>tirin</i> |
| <i>zone</i> | <i>zauna</i> |
| <i>motor</i> | <i>mota</i> |
| <i>telephone</i> | <i>talifon</i> |
| <i>class</i> | <i>kilasi</i> |

English has also influenced the Hausa writing system, which currently uses a Latin-based alphabet with the addition of modified letters that represent glottalized consonants called Boko,

originally meaning “sham” or “deceit” [Ekkehard Wolff, 1998]. Boko was introduced by the British colonial administration and missionaries in the 19th and 20th centuries, and was later adopted by the Hausa Language Board in 1956. Boko is more standardized and consistent than Ajami, and represent the Hausa sounds and tones more accurately. However, this doesn't mean that Arabic and Ajami were abolished or replaced by English and Boko. In fact, Arabic and its Ajami writing continued to be used by many Hausa speakers, especially for religious and literary purposes, while English and Boko were mainly used for administrative and educational purposes [Abu-Manga, 1999: 163–192].

6. Some of the challenges to the development and preservation of the Hausa language in Sudan

Some of the challenges facing Hausa language in Sudan are:

1. Lack of recognition and support, language shift and loss, and linguistic interference and change. Hausa is not an official language in Sudan, unlike Arabic and English, which are used in government, education, media, and business. This means that Hausa speakers have less access to public services, information, and opportunities in their language, and that the Hausa language and culture are not fully recognized and valued and are not promoted by the state. This may lead to a loss of confidence and pride in language and identity among native speakers, and a preference for Arabic or English over Hausa. See also [Abdelhay et al., 2015].

2. Hausa speakers may face discrimination and marginalization from the dominant groups in Sudan, especially in the context of ethnic and political conflicts. Sudan has a history of civil wars and violence between the Arab-dominated north and the African-dominated south, as well as between the central government and the peripheral regions. Hausa speakers, who are mostly located in the western, central, and eastern regions of Sudan, may be caught in the crossfire of these conflicts, and may be targeted or persecuted for their ethnic and religious affiliation. This may force them to flee their homes, abandon their language and culture, or assimilate to the dominant groups.

3. Hausa speakers may also lack access to resources and opportunities to learn and use their language. There are few or no schools, books, newspapers, radio stations, or television channels that use or teach Hausa in Sudan. There are also few or no organizations, associations, or movements that support or advocate for Hausa language and culture in Sudan. This may result in a low level of literacy, education, and awareness among Hausa speakers, and a lack of transmission and development of their language and culture.

4. Hausa speakers may opt for Arabic or English for social and economic reasons, such as education, employment, mobility, and prestige. Arabic and English are seen as more useful and prestigious languages than Hausa in Sudan, as they can provide access to higher education, better jobs, wider

markets, and global networks. Hausa speakers may therefore choose to learn and use Arabic or English instead of Hausa, especially in urban and formal settings, and especially among the younger generation. This may result in language shift, where Hausa is used less frequently or only in certain domains, such as home and religion. These factors may eventually lead to language loss, where Hausa is no longer spoken or transmitted to the younger generations. Language loss may have negative effects on the linguistic and cultural diversity of Sudan, as well as on the social and psychological well-being of Hausa speakers. Language loss may also result in the loss of valuable knowledge, wisdom, and heritage that are embedded in Hausa language and culture.

These factors may eventually lead to language loss, where Hausa is no longer spoken or transmitted to the younger generations.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to say that Hausa is a diverse and dynamic language that reflects the history, identity, and culture of its speakers. Hausa may be influenced by Arabic or English in terms of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and writing system. Hausa may borrow words from these languages to express new concepts or realities, or to adapt to different contexts. Hausa may also change its structure or sound system to accommodate the influence of these languages. These changes may affect the linguistic identity and diversity of Hausa. However, Hausa speakers in Sudan may be at risk of language loss due to political, social, and economic factors. Therefore, I suggest that Hausa speakers and supporters in Sudan need to:

1. Promote the value and vitality of their language, as well as its cultural and historical significance.
2. Create more spaces and opportunities for learning and using Hausa in various domains and settings.
3. Document and preserve the linguistic features and varieties of Hausa, as well as its oral and written traditions.

These efforts, along with others, can help ensure the development and preservation of the Hausa language in Sudan and beyond.

I also suggest that further research is needed to explore the current situation and future prospects of Hausa language and culture in Sudan, and to compare and contrast it with other countries where Hausa is spoken. This can provide more insights and understanding of the dynamics and challenges of Hausa language and culture in Africa and the world.

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