

Linguistic Landscape in Kano: The Place of Hausa¹

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Abstract
This paper looks at the language of advertisement signs in Kano, a major city of the Hausaland, with focus on Hausa language. The linguistic landscape of one of the main streets in the city, Sabon Titi, which spans from Tal'udu round about in Gwale LGA and traverse in front of the Emir's Palace up to Kofar Mata in Municipal LGA, has been analyzed. What is immediately noticeable is the high level of absence of Hausa, with English dominating the scene. Hausa is nearly absent from the linguistic landscape. The ubiquitous presence of English signage noticeable around Sabon titi road, where native Hausa make up 95 per cent of the population is alarming. Visitor(s) to Kano city may need to be reminded that the city is a Hausa one as in the sights of the visitor(s) are English signage all over on every shop, restaurant etc that welcome them. This does not reflect the Hausa culture and history. It is a poor and misleading representation of what Kano is all about, as the city is transforming from a traditional Hausa community into an English city. This is so despite Hausa language's prestige, its literary tradition, its relatively high literacy by the inhabitants of the city to whom it is a native language and its being used in many domains in the city: home, school, markets, media etc. This situation is due to various factors, including colonialism which facilitated English to be an official language, globalization and the changing attitude of the Hausa people toward their language. However, caution must be taken not to infer a direct relationship between the language of the LL and the language use in the area of study in other domains such as the homes, markets, village/city square, mosques and broadcast media, particularly radio, where Hausa dominates the scenes. Thus, it does not suggest that the residents of the area speak English more than Hausa, far from that. This was done by analyzing the data collected from the bottom-up linguistic landscape which involves private advertisement signs, shop signs, building names, bookshops, travel agencies, meat selling points, boutiques, saloons etc, quantitatively.

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¹*This paper was earlier presented at the Hausa International Conference themed: The Hausa Nation: Past, Present and Future, organized by the Department of African Languages and Cultures, Faculty of Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, held at the ABU Main Campus between 31st July And 4th August, 2017, but has not been published anywhere.

The study was anchored on the sociolinguistic theory of public signage as propounded by Spolsky (2009). To ensure a considerable presence of Hausa on signs, this study recommends that the effort towards that should be made to be a communal one. The community should make effort to work towards that. The business owners may be encouraged to adopt a Hausa commercial signage or even adopt bilingual signage rather than English-only signage that is presently dotting the space in Kano.

1.0 Introduction

The concept of linguistic landscape, according to Sutherland (2015:148), Barni et al (n.d:2), was first drawn by Landry and Bourhis (1997) in their seminal work on ethno linguistic vitality and signage in Canada where they refer to linguistic landscape (henceforth LL) as "Visibility of languages on objects that mark the public space in a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration". Akindele (2012:2) quoted Landry & Bourhis (1997:25) defining linguistic landscape as "the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration". Ben-Rafael et al. (2006:14) in Akindele (2012:2) define the linguistic landscape as referring to 'any sign announcement located outside or inside a public institution or a private business in a given geographical location'. Landry and Bourhis (1997:25) and Ben-Rafael et al. (2006:14) are almost saying the same thing but in different wordings. From the foregoing, we can see LL as any sign, in written and visual forms, displayed in a particular place to point at a particular item with a view to attracting the attention of the people toward it for the purpose of advertisement, direction, notice, warning etc.

Linguistic landscape is basically divided into two: top-down and bottom-up (Ben-Raphael e.al. (2006), Malinowski (2009) and Shohamy et al. (2010) in Akindele (2012:7)). Top-down refers to "elements used and exhibited by institutional agencies which in one way or another act under the control of local or central policies" ... Bottom-up elements, on the other hand, are "utilised by individual, associative or corporative actors who enjoy autonomy of action within legal limits" (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006: 10). Top-down LL items, according to them, include those issued by national and public bureaucracies and include public sites, public announcements and street names. Bottom-up items on the other hand include those issued by individuals' social actors such as shop owners and companies, including names of shops, businesses, signs and personal announcements (Shohamy et al. (2010) in Akindele (2012:7)).

The paper, mainly paid attention to the bottom-up type of LL, looked at the position of Hausa in the linguistic landscape of a particular area in

Kano, a major city of the Hausaland. This was done by analyzing the language(s) of advertising signs, building names, billboards, shop signs, restaurants etc. The study was anchored on the sociolinguistic theory of public signage as propounded by Spolsky (2009).

From a sociolinguistic perspective, Spolsky proposes three relevant conditions that determine the choice of languages in a sign: 1) "write in a language you know"; 2) "write in a language which can be read"; 2) "write in a language which can be read by the people you expect to read it;" and 3) "write a sign in your own language or in a language with which you wish to be identified." (2009: 33).

2.0 Linguistic Landscape: A Brief

According to Huebner (2016:2), the Landry and Bourhis's seminal paper in 1997 made research in language signs to become an important branch of sociolinguistics, drawing increasingly more attention on the part of sociolinguists and other academics in different countries despite the fact that it dated back to the 1970's (Backhaus, 2007, p. 12; Spolsky, 2009, pp. 26-27). The Landry and Bourhis article inspired a number of subsequent papers using the term "linguistic landscape" which began making the conference circuit of the American Association for Applied Linguistics (Arlington Virginia 2003, Portland Oregon 2004) and the European Second Language Association (San Sebastian Spain 2004) panel presentations. Four idiosyncratic papers from these panels were first published in the *International Journal of Multilingualism* (Vol. 3:1, 2006) and in the same year reprinted as a monograph by Multilingual Matters (Gorter 2006). Whether or not the study of linguistic landscape represented "a new approach to multilingualism" (Gorter 2006) or simply an often neglected source of sociolinguistic data, these early papers contributed to our understanding of the symbolic construction of the public space through an examination of the use of language in multilingual signs, code-switching and hybrid varieties. At the same time these papers, including my own, were heavily quantitative, narrowly language-focused and struggling to define geographic territory, units of analysis and relative language prominence in multilingual signs (Huebner 2016:2).

As the number of conference papers and panels on linguistic landscape grew, it became apparent that a conference focusing specifically on LL was both feasible and desirable. In 2008, the first "Linguistic Landscape Workshop" was convened in Tel Aviv, resulting in a second publication dedicated to LL (Shohamy and Gorter 2009). Seven subsequent linguistic landscape workshops have been held at a variety of international sites on three continents: 2009 – Siena, Italy (Siena University for Foreigners), 2010 – Strasbourg, France (University of Strasbourg), 2012 – Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

(Addis Ababa University), 2013 – Namur, Belgium (University of Namur), 2014 – Cape Town, South Africa (University of the Western Cape), 2015 – Berkeley, California, USA (University of California), 2016 – Liverpool, England (Liverpool University (Huebner 2016:2)).

As at the time of writing, plans are being made for Linguistic Landscape Workshop 9 scheduled for Luxembourg in the spring of 2017. Since the first workshop, LL has become the object of serious academic research, resulting in several single authored and edited volumes, numerous articles in international journals, including its own disciplinary journal (*Linguistic Landscape: An International Journal*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam and Philadelphia), MA theses, PhD dissertations, and at least one dedicated web site. (See Robert Troyer's review in this volume for a listing of some of the primary resources in the area.) One can now find papers on linguistic landscape at professional meetings and conferences in sociolinguistics, anthropology, sociology and education. A 516 item bibliography compiled by Robert Troyer devoted to LL studies can be found at www.zotero.org > groups > linguistic landscape bibliography (Huebner 2016:2).

Reviewing some of the LL works will help us give a clue to understanding the field very well. Ben-Rafeal et al, (2006) compared patterns of LL in a variety of homogeneous and mixed Israeli cities, and in East Jerusalem. The groups studied were Israeli Jews, Palestinian Israelis and non-Israeli Palestinians from East Jerusalem, most of whom are not Israeli citizens. The study focused on the degree of visibility on private and public signs of the three major languages of Israel-Hebrew, Arabic and English. Their study revealed essentially different LL patterns in Israel's various communities: Hebrew-English signs prevail in Jewish communities; Arabic Hebrew in Israeli-Palestinian communities; Arabic-English in East Jerusalem. Further analyses also evince significant – and different – discrepancies between public and private signs in the localities investigated. All in all, LL items are not faithfully representative of the linguistic repertoire typical of Israel's ethno-linguistic diversity, but rather of those linguistic resources that individuals and institutions make use of in the public sphere. Tulp (1978) in Akindele (2012:2) examined the languages of commercial billboards in Brussels. The purpose was to demonstrate how language usage patterns on these signs have been contributing to the city's Frenchification. He assumed that the visibility of a language in a public space is vital for its perceived ethno-linguistic vitality. Tulp focused on three large billboards in and around Brussels. The areas selected included major tram, metro, and bus routes. The findings show that French dominates the linguistic landscape. Sutthinaraphan's (2016:68) work explored multilingualism in advertising signage on the Skytrain in Thailand. His finding showed that approximately 87 percent of the data were written in either English alone or bilingual Thai-English. In addition, the 13% written exclusively in Thai script contained

English borrowings. That the use of the English language is ubiquitous in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context like Thailand. This study intends to contribute to this development in Kano, Nigeria. Thus, this paper aims to begin the first steps in filling this gap by investigating the place of Hausa in the bottom-up type of LL in one of the main streets i.e. *Sabon Titi*, that span from *Tal'udu* Roundabout and traverse in front of the Emir's Palace up to *Kofar Mata*, in Kano, a major city of the Hausaland.

2.1 Language and Culture in Linguistic Landscape

The issue of language to be used in the LL is very central. Hence, researchers tried to proffer some guidelines on the choice of language(s) to be used in order to achieve the set goals as well as the benefits language(s) being used in the LL derive. Linguistic landscape signs, according to Barni et al (n.d.:4), describe the identity of a city and almost 'speaks the language' of its inhabitants at a moment in time'. What this suggests is that the language of the inhabitants of an area, territory or region should be the one to be used in the LL of that particular place. This may be why Landry & Bourhis, (1997 and Cenoz & Gorter, (2009:56) in Akindele (2012:3) averred that 'LL indicates the borders of the territory of linguistic group. Ben-Rafael et al. (2006:8) note that LL constitutes the very scene -made of streets, corners, circuses, parks, buildings-where society's public life takes place', and it serves as the emblem of societies, communities, and regions (Akindele 2012:3). However, this may not be generalized as many communities, regions do not have this opportunity as the LL in their areas are not written in their language(s). The case in point is Kano, the subject of the present study. This is so even with the submission of Shohamy (2006:115) in Akindele (2011:5) that 'the presence or absence of languages in public space communicates symbolic messages about the importance, power, significance, and relevance of certain languages or the irrelevance of others'. The languages used in public signs indicate what languages are locally relevant, or give evidence of what languages are becoming locally relevant (Shohamy 2010, Kasanga2012 in Barni et al, n.d.:4). Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) assert that the LL can be seen as a vehicle for the presentation of self and as a community identity marker. In Richmond, a Canadian city, according to Achiam (2015), the city inhabitants expressed concern on the fact that many signs are in languages other than English. This led to some public concern about the need to regulate signs to include English.

While the people of Kano City, especially the Hausa native speakers, are indifferent on the near absence of Hausa in the advertisements, other communities, such as Richmond City in Canada, are concerned with the absence of their language(s) in the advertisement as a result of dominating Chinese-only signs in the city. Hopper (2014) reports that, 'Last year, two activists appeared in front of Richmond City Council with a 1,000-signature petition and a plea to force local businesses to advertise in one of Canada's

official languages'. To show the seriousness attached to the concern of the inhabitants of Richmond, Hopper (2014) reports 'Richmond council candidate Carol Day and Michael Wolfe issued a statement saying they would address Chinese-only signage if elected, and pursue "potential steps to address the issue"'.

The ubiquitous presence of English signage noticeable around *Sabon Titi* road, where native Hausa make up 95 per cent of the population, is alarming. Visitor(s) to Kano city may need to be reminded that the city is a Hausa one as in the sights of the visitor(s) are English signage all over on every shop, restaurant etc that welcome them. One is greeted by English language in the signage and adverts. This does not reflect the Hausa culture and history. It is a poor and misleading representation of what Kano is all about. This is a phenomenon that should have drawn the attention, or even the ire, of the Hausaists or the language, culture's campaigners, who want to promote Hausa language and culture, as the city is transforming from a traditional Hausa community into an English city. The information signs on this road in a native Hausa neighbourhood are only passing information to the English-reading population. This can be said to have excluded the rest of the community for which these signs are meant for. The English signs placed on businesses are targeted Hausa clients. This has corroborated de Bres (2015:3) where he submits that 'the multilingualism of the advertisements fulfills symbolic (and fundamentally commercial) purposes rather than reflecting the linguistic realities of its target audience, in whose societies these languages do not perform a communicative function and many of whom may not understand the languages used at all'.

This notwithstanding, the use of city signs and urban symbols could tell a lot more about the culture of a place than history ever could and could also be used as a means for language learning and language comparison (Barni et al, n.d.:11). This was reinforced by Reh (2004:38) in Akindele (2012:2) who emphasized that the study of a linguistic landscape enables conclusions to be drawn regarding, among other factors, the social layering of the community, the relative status of the various societal segments, and the dominant cultural ideals'. Hewitt-Bradshaw (2014:160) notes that 'many texts in the landscape are identity texts, which provide indigenous sources of knowledge about self and community, and thus provide educators with opportunities to engage students in ways that allow them to read, understand, and analyse community texts, and, further, to question such texts in more socially responsive ways. In this sense, LL can be viewed as language in use that represents individual, collective, and national identities. Through the study of the language landscape that surrounds them, students learn to understand their history and culture, of which their indigenous language is a part'. It is in view of this, as shown by Akindele (2012:3), that, 'Some state and regional authorities have included in their language policy

rules about the languages to be used on signage. In Thailand, it is obligatory by law to use at least Thai, still English is prominent on many signs (Huebner 2006 in Akindele (2012:9). Regulations related to LL go side by side with a language policy for the use of languages in education, the media, social and economic life or other domains Akindele (2012:3). However, in Nigeria, such regulations do not exist; and if they exist, they are not observed. Hence, one sees language such as English, Hausa, Ajami, Arabic etc on shops signs, buildings, restaurants etc in Kano, Nigeria, with English taking considerable part of the LL.

3.0 Kano and its Language Situation

Kano is no match for any other Hausa 'state'. Ahmed and Daura (1970:8) note that "Kano, has, for centuries, been the most urbanized and sophisticated of the Hausa City-States". Bello (1992:3) notes that "Kano is the largest single Hausa city in Northern Nigeria". It is the most important urban agglomeration in northern Nigeria (Wolff 1991:22) as well as the traditional commercial navel of Hausaland (Wolff 1991 and Sani 2009:5).

Kano drew many people from far and near, Arab, European, African and Nigeria indigenous people, which has had an important influence on its language situation. Traditionally, Kano has been a Hausa phone area. Arabic has been a language of religion since the coming of Islam in Hausaland, English mainly functions as an official language since independence. Hausa has been a spoken language before the writing system in Roman alphabets was introduced before the 20th century (Yahaya 1988), *Ajami*, Hausa writing in Arabic alphabet (Yahaya 1988 and Birnin Tudu 1990), has been a written language since its debut before the 17th century (Yahaya 1988) and Arabic has also been a spoken language, especially in religious affairs, as well as a written one to some extent. Even though English is the official language, Hausa has been the language of the law, especially at lower/area courts, English language of administration in principle with Hausa being the one in practice. Hausa is the language of the media (broadcast), and used across the city on a daily basis in many domains such as markets, schools, mosques, shopping, political and government discussion. Taiwo (1976:408) corroborates this assertion that "Among the Nigerian languages, the status of Hausa is relatively high in the Hausa-speaking areas and it is deliberately promoted. The emir usually speaks Hausa in his emirate even when he is fluent in English and his audience is English-speaking. Hausa is freely spoken in the offices and the shops, in some of which articles are labelled in Hausa. Road notices in towns are in Hausa". Shuaib (2007) points at how Emir Ado Bayero of Kano, for instance, spoke Hausa to the Queen of England and President of United State of America on their separate visits to his palace. This has been the practice till date. The present Sarkin Kano, Muhammadu Sanusi II, is keying into this as he responds to

visitors/audience in Hausa and a Council member interprets in English or Arabic to the visitors/audience (Garba, 2016).

To show the vitality of Hausa in radio programmes in Nigeria and in Kano in particular, Garba (2013:9) quotes the Nigeria Broadcasting Commission (2011) in its content analysis of stations' programs schedules domiciled in Kano and Jigawa States for the fourth quarter of 2011, which shows that amongst the Arabic, Hausa, Fulfude, English, Ebra and Hindu languages, Hausa language stands out with the highest airtime. To cite an example, Hausa has the amount of airtime in the following radios. Rahama Radio, Kano, 87%; Pyramid Radio Madobi, Kano, 74%; Freedom Radio, Kano, 55%; Radio Kano FM 41.2%; Radio Kano AM 88.2% and Radio Jigawa, Dutse, 82%. English, however, is the language chosen for LL. This is happening even with the increasing status of Hausa, the native language of the area under research, as a written language. This was facilitated by the standardization it has achieved over the years. Hausa has been progressively standardized over the 19th and 20th century which has now resulted in a standard variety with an official orthography, a monolingual dictionary and many bilingual ones and grammar including a reference grammar. Hausa is increasingly being used in schools, the media both print and broadcast which also utilize written platforms and particularly the new media. Although the status of Hausa as one of the major Nigerian languages, with more speakers and most widely used among the country's major languages, is not yet designated as an official language. In written context it exhibits/displays similarities to major world languages, but it is presently, according to the LL data gathered, not a major language of advertisement signs in Kano, a major centre of Hausaland.

4.0 Methodology

4.1 Data Collection

The data were collected in 2016 on the streets of Kano city. This selection was based on my personal observations on its homogeneity as it is almost one hundred per cent resided by the native Hausa speakers, except pockets of some non-Hausa resident communities such as Yoruba and other Northern tribes. The choice of the research area is spurred by the purpose of this study to unearth the position of Hausa language in the linguistic landscape of *Sabon Titi* road. The signs placed by the shops/businesses owners provide information on their goods and services and to call the attention of their prospective customers. Contents of commercial shops' sign, advertisements, names on buildings found on the street were collected with the assistance of a locally trained field assistant. A total of 360 contents on signage were collected and examined for language(s) used and the relative prominence of

the language(s) used on the signs. The items were gathered and classified according to the frequency of the language(s) used in the signs.

4.2 Data Analysis

In the analysis, attention was paid to the presence or absence of some languages: native Hausa language, Nigeria's indigenous language(s), Arabic and English. The frequency of the language used provides vitality of specific languages in Kano. The tables below provide the findings.

4.3 Language Used and Language Distribution in Signs

Table 1: Overview of all languages used in all of the signs

Languages	Number of Signs	%
English only	335	93.05%
Hausa only	13	3.6%
English and Hausa	10	2.7%
English and Arabic	2	0.5%
Total	360	100

The table indicates that English only constitutes the highest number of LL in the study area. It is followed by Hausa, a native language of the area, and Arabic a foreign language. In terms of occurrence of bilingual signs, English and Hausa are the highest while English and Arabic followed. There was no occurrence of Hausa and Arabic or any other indigenous Nigerian language(s). The area under study is mainly residential and shopping one dominated by bottom-up contexts.

Table 2: Distribution of Languages in Monolingual Signs

Languages	Number of signs	%
English	335	96.3%
Hausa	13	3.7%
Total	348	100

The above table indicates that English constitutes the highest number of monolingual signs in the study area, and followed by Hausa, but with a very large, unbelievable margin. However, the monolingual signs have an attachment of prefix of names suggestive of Hausa such as: Yusuf Barbing Saloon, As-sabah Computer Centre, Alfijir Electrical & Electronic, A. M. Investment: Dealer in all kind of recharge card, Ja'iz Tailoring and Sales of Unisex, Haidar Stores, Dandago Healthcare Patient Medicine Shop, Mandawari Medical Centre, Al-Amir Restaurant. The reason for placing them in monolingual signs is that the attached names are just mere business

names but the goods and services being advertised are in English, hence, classifying them as monolingual signs.

Table 3: Distribution and placement of Languages in Bilingual Signs

Languages	Number of Signs	%
English and Hausa	10	83.3%
English and Arabic	2	16.6%
Total	12	1000

The above table shows that LL in the study area is dominated by the bilingual signs of English and Hausa and remotely followed by English and Arabic. This can be explained in terms of the fact that there are more English-Hausa bilingual than English-Arabic speakers. Meanwhile, in all the bilingual signs, English comes first and is mostly written in bold bigger than the two languages: Hausa and Arabic. For instance, Well Care- *LafiyaJari*, Askin Berbing, *AskinAska*; A.B.K Communication: *Ana ba da sarin kati*; Sa'ad bin Abi Wakas Islamic Medicine: *Rukiya ta Shari'ah*, Al'Ansar: we sell *Fura natural*, etc. just like in Akindele (2012), the placement of the languages seem to be suggestive of Nigeria's language policy which recognizes English as the official language and Hausa a national language.

5.0 Findings and Discussion

The findings showed that the LL in the study area exhibits three main languages in monolingual and bilingual signs: English, Hausa and Arabic. However, the use of English dominated the data collected. The LL in the study area reflects the effects of colonization, and current trends which seems to put English language as the major language of the world, which brought about a decrease in the use of Hausa, at least in written form, as determined by the study. On colonization, this corroborates Salawu's (2012) assertion that "African languages, generally, are suffering neglect due to the historical fact of colonization...". This study confirms Akindele's (2012) submission that English dominates the landscape of Anglo African countries today. The dominant presence of English in the data obtained in this study has corroborated Piller (2003: 175) in de Bres (2015:12) where he notes: "The strong presence of English in the data relates to the global spread of English, which is now 'near-universal' in advertising around the world. English is present in advertisements to varying degrees, from slogans in advertisements mainly in other languages to full text advertisements in English". This is why (Shohamy, Ben-Rafael & Barni, 2010; Jaworski & Thurlow, 2011 and Blommaert, 2013) in Sutthinaraphan (2016:53) remark that 'Linguistic landscape studies have regularly shown the important role that English plays as an international language in the world today'. This fact is reflected in virtually all studies of linguistic landscapes world-wide (Sutthinaraphan

2016:53). Amidst this world-wide dominant posture of English, Akindele (2012:9) notes that, 'English is more of an index of globalization than a means of communication. This is so because only a small fraction of the population speaks English in official contexts and in business sectors as study in Gaborone revealed'. This, however, is not only limited to Botswana where Akindele (2012) conducted his study, but applicable to this study area. This is because; Fafunwa (2009) in Alyebo (2012) admits that, "over 50% of Nigerians are illiterate". This means, they are not able to read or understand any other language other than their native language. The point being made here is that, more than half of Nigeria's population neither understands nor speaks English. Thus, the English dominated LL in this study may not serve its communicative purpose as only a small fraction of the population speak English in official context and in the business sector, as well. Hence, the signs in *Sabon titi* should not be seen as a reflection of the reality of language use in Kano.

From the above findings and discussions, we can deduce that the owners of the businesses in the area under study did not take into cognizance some of the conditions determining the choice of languages in a sign as proposed by Spolky (2009:33). They did not write in the language they know. They did not write in the language which can be read by the people they expect to read and they did not write in their own language, but only wrote in the language they wish to be identified with i.e. English.

The near absence of Hausa in the LL of the study area has denied the language and culture of so many advantages being derived from the LL. This is because, Barni et al, (n.d.:11) averred that 'City signs provide an easy, visual and clear way to promote language and culture while they also provide excellent material for language learning in 'real life'...'. Landry & Bourhis (1997:143) in Akindele (2012:7) state that "...absence of the in-group language from the linguistic landscape can lead to group members devaluing the strength of their own language community; weaken their resolve to transmit the language to the next generation, and sap their collective will to survive as a distinct language group". Here, Hausa as an in-group language seems to be near absent in the LL of the area under study in Kano, just as was found out by Akindele (2012) in Gaborone, Botswana. The colonization and globalization have resulted in a proliferation of English signage noticeable around *Sabon titi* road, where native Hausa make up 95 per cent of the population. This is a phenomenon that should have drawn the attention, or even the ire, of the Hausaists or the language, culture's campaigners, who want to promote Hausa language and culture, as the city is transforming from a traditional Hausa community into an English city. Similarly, this may not be unconnected with the status of English as a global language (Crystal, 1997), English is widely regarded as having become the global language (Graddol, 2000:2).

In order to ensure the quest for a considerable presence of Hausa on signs, this study recommends that the effort towards that should be made to be a communal one. The community should make efforts to work toward that. The business owners may be encouraged to adopt a Hausa commercial signage or even adopt bilingual signage rather than English-only signage that is presently dotting the space in Kano.

6.0 Conclusion

This paper has beamed its search light on the language use in written advertisement/signs and found out that the city is moving towards English-only written signs, based on the data obtained from the bottom-top linguistic landscape of *Sabon titi* in Kano City. This is a result of colonization, ineffective language policy and planning and globalization. While the dominance of Hausa was expected in the LL of the area in question, the results revealed a considerable presence of English in the bottom-up LL and a near absence of Hausa, which is the native language of the area under study. The result has shown a shifting balance from the language with a longer history in Hausaland which was the main traditional written language, *Ajami*, to English as a language of written signs. However, caution must be taken not to infer a direct relationship between the language of the LL and the language used in the area of study in other domains such as homes, markets, village/city square, mosques and broadcast media, particularly radio, where Hausa dominates the scene. Thus, it does not suggest that the residents of the area speak English more than Hausa, far from that. The study suggests the waning of Hausa culture and language, albeit in written form, right in the heart of Hausaland. The study revealed the absence of any indigenous Nigerian language, not even Fulfulde, as no single sign was seen in any other indigenous Nigerian language apart from Hausa. This is understandable as the area does not have substantial non-Hausa residents.

Further research should focus on other Hausa cities or even areas in Kano to see if similar situations like *Sabon titi* in Kano can be found. Future research may also tilt towards investigating reasons concerning the choice of language(s) in the signs by the shop owners, and the type of clientele that patronize them. Top-down LL may also be paid attention to as the present study only looked at the bottom-up LL in the area in question.

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Humour in French and Igbo Versions of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

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Abstract Language, Literature and Translation are necessary for national development. African natural multilingualism compounded by colonial and religious factors has ensured that African literature can be expressed in African and non-African languages. No society can experience true development if it neglects its literary artists who through aesthetic use of language inform, instruct and entertain in such a way that the ideas expressed by them if properly harnessed, turn the weaknesses of the society into strengths that lead to development. The focus of this study is on humour in *Things Fall Apart* and its French and Igbo translations. *Le monde s'effondre* (1966), the first French version of *Things Fall Apart* translated by Michel Ligny and the Igbo version *Ihe Aghasaa* translated by Izuu Nwankwo (2008) will be the versions for the study. Our method of study will be analytical and comparative as humour shall be investigated in the source text and the two target texts. Our theoretical framework will be based on a communicative approach to translation in order to understand how Achebe's French and Igbo translators reproduced the humour in the original work in their translations. Our secondary sources for the study will include studies on translation notably Nida (1991, 2006), Simpson (2010), Ajunwa (2014), Baker (2014), studies on literary appreciation and humour such as Azodo (2014), Okoh (2015), Okugbe & Ekundayo (2015) and Mkpa (2017). The study reaffirms the entertainment and leisure aspect of literature and its implications for national development as it projects Achebe's original witty message and its rendering by his Igbo and French translators in their efforts to multiply Achebe's readership.

Keywords: Achebe, humour, translation, French, Igbo, National development

Introduction

Humour, entertainment and leisure are indispensable ingredients in keeping the spirit, soul and body together. Every human endeavour is often geared towards meeting physical, mental or emotional needs by harnessing properly the flora and fauna in a given environment. Literary creativity seeks to educate, instruct, entertain and create beauty through the artistic use of language. Obi (2014: 103-104), points out that functions performed by fiction and other literary modes include giving us pleasure and using language in especially powerful ways, to tell us something and to delight us. World literature exists because the literatures of different lands and cultures are