Zaar-Hausa-English Code Mixing

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LLACAN (CNRS-Inalco-Paris7).
caron@vjf.cnrs.fr

According to [NEWMAN, 1990 : 202], Zaar (which he calls Saya) belongs to the the West-B3 group of Chadic languages, with some doubts arising from the properties it shares with Angas.

The names derived from the root 'Saya' (i.e. Bàsayèe (pl. Sayaawaa) for the speakers, and Sayancìi for the language) are the names used by the Hausas. The speakers call themselves **Zaar** (pl. **Zaarsɔ́**) meaning *human being*, and call their language **vìk☐zaar** (lit. *the mouth of men*). They consider the term "Saya" derogatory, and associate it with the Hausa verb sàyaa, to buy, taking it as a reference to the fact that Hausas used to take them as slaves. In this work, we will use the term Zaar to refer both to the people and the language.

Most Zaar people of the younger generation are bilingual Hausa-Zaar. They are schooled through the medium of Hausa in primary school, before learning English. The Zaars are Christians, and use a Hausa translation of the Bible. The older generation are not very confident in Hausa, whereas the younger educated elite who sometimes hold positions in the administration, police and education, switch between Zaar, Hausa and English.

The purpose of this paper is to examine how a minority language that is healthy is used in two different contexts : (A) an urban context, with educated speakers who are fluent in the two main vehicular languages of the area : English and Hausa ; (B) a rural context with speakers who hardly speak a few words of Pidgin English, but are quite fluent in Hausa.

1. Sources

This presentation was done using the transcription of two dialogues of around half an hour each.

A   a conversation between three teachers of English in Azare Teachers' College, in the North of Bauchi State. The conversation was recorded in a hotel in Azare in 1991, on the first day of my field work on Zaar. It was transcribed the following year in Ibadan with Sunday, my Zaar language assistant. Topic : one of the teachers narrates the attack of his taxi by a gang of highway robbers on the way from Ibadan to Jos.

B   a conversation between a mechanic (30) two unemployed young men (in their early 20s) and a young boy (10). It was recorded in 1996 and transcribed in 1999 in the village of

Tudun Wada (B'ogoro LGA, South of Bauchi State). Tudun Wada is in the middle of the area where the Zaar language is spoken. The conversation bears on various topics : purchase of material to repair shoes ; radio equipment ; sexual behaviour of one neighbour, prostitution, teasing the young boy, etc.

On the whole, the texts are samples of unmistakably « good » Zaar spoken by competent speakers, with various degrees of code mixing.

2. Historical stratification

It is possible to distinguish various strata of borrowing depending on the degree of integration into the matrix language structure, ranging from the more to the less integrated.

2.1 (Integrated) loan-words

They are part of the architecture of the sentence, both from the point of view of lexicon and grammar. They follow the phonological and grammatical rules of Zaar (noun determination ; integration into the verb class system).

2.1.1 Lexical

2.1.1.1 Nouns

English (sometimes via Hausa)
:□ **aidi kááɗa** (*I.D. card*) ; **buróóda** (*brother*) ; **dəráávai** (*driver*) ; **gəlóóbi** (*electric bulb*) ; **ínjàán** (*engine*) ; **lìiló** (*nylon thread*) ; **màashîn** (*motorbike*); **mástàà** (*Master*) ; **móóta** / **mootoocii** (*motor car*) ; **súlee** (*shilling*) ; **tàɣzî** (*taxi*) ; **tashèè** (*station*) ; **tóócês** (*electric torch*) ; **vòlùm** ("*volume*" *for a radio*) ; **wáálêt** (*wallet*).

Hausa : **àllúúra** (*injection*) ; **amarya** (*bride*) ; **asali** (*situation*) ; **bààkúr** (*sweet* sp.) ; **bəki** (*wedding ceremony*) ; **bìndígà** (*gun*) ; **ɗìnki** (*sewing*) ; **gaskyá** (*truth*) ; **haske** (*light*) ; **írì** (*type*) ; **karfe** (*o'clock*) ; **karyá** (*lie*) ; **kìrtááni** , **kèltááni** (*hemp thread*) ; **makaranta** (*school*) ; **salla** (*Muslim prayer*) ; **shìrmé** (*insolence*) ; **táágyà** (*hat*) ; **tàllè** (*peddling*) ; **tòòtòò, tootúwàà, tóótuwáá** (*sweet* sp.) ; **zàncé** (*situation*) ; **zìri** / **zàre** (*thread*).

2.1.1.2 Verbs

The integration of verbs borrowed from Hausa can be seen in the way they adopt the Zaar class system, with the two-syllable verb tone scheme Mid-Hi :

bugá (*pound*) ; **buuɗé** (*open*) ; **gamá** (*finish*) ; **sapká** (*get down*)

and suffixation with the Verbal Noun formative **-kə́ni** (with /k/ > /ɣ/ in intervocalic position) :

moorá-ɣə́ni (*relax*).

2.1.1.3 Prepositions

dàgà (*from*) ; **zúwà** (*to*).

2.1.2 Grammatical

2.1.2.1 Aspectual verbs

Zaar doesn't have any auxiliaries and makes a heavy use of Hausa aspectual verbs, which are integrated into the Zaar verb class system (cf. *supra* 2.1.1.2)

gamá (*finish*) **; rigá** (*have already*) ; **saaké** (*repeat*), **faará** (*begin*).

As in Hausa, the aspectual verb can be followed by a verbal noun (here : **kón-gə̂n** , talk-ing) :

in yáá mán <u>saaké</u> **kóngə̂n dààmuwaa gíí ɗaɗa...**
if/ 3s.Cond/ come/ <u>again</u>/ say/ trouble/ this/ again
If he <u>keeps</u> talking about this problem...

or a finite verb (here : **shiishí** and **ɓəərní** in the Narrative)

màà <u>rigá</u> mɔ́ shiishí mɔ́ ɓɔ̀ɔ́rni.
1pl.Perf/ <u>already</u>/ 1pl.Narr/ get up/ 1pl.Narr/ stand
we <u>had already</u> risen and gone

2.1.2.2 Modality verbs, adverbs and particles

Various quality judgements or modalities (epistemic, deontic) are expressed through borrowing from Hausa.

gaara (*should*) ; **kámaatá** (*should*) ; **kííla** (*may be*) ; **aanhí, aanihês** (*really*) ; **kaɗáí, kaɗéé** (*only*) ; **sòòsáí** (*well, good, completely*) ; **da wuri** (*quickly*).

yáàn ka ɗiib máá, <u>gaara</u> àà ɗiibni ŋaa gíí.
if/ 2s.Fut/ buy/ even/ <u>should</u>/ 2sg.Subj/ buy-Dir/ small / this
If you buy, you <u>should</u> buy this small one.

2.1.2.3 Discourse particles

Topicalization and discourse continuity draw heavily on Hausa lexical ressources :

ai (*well*) ; **àmma** (*but*) ; **àséé** (*indeed*) ; **dèè** (*indeed*) ; **fa** (*indeed*) ; **in** (*if*) ; **kààfìn** (*before*) ; **koo / kóó kwàà** (*or*) ; **kuma** (*too*) ; **maa** (*even*) ; **séé / sáí** (*only*) ; **tóó-wààtòò** (*well*) ; **wáí** (*they say*)

2.2 Exclamations

Emotional reactions are expressed through exclamations, insults, etc. borrowed from Hausa. It is not easy to assess the degree of integration of these borrowings.

Allah! (God) ; **case!** (Engl : *trouble*) ; **íí mànà! èè ká! èè dèè dee!** (*yes indeed*) ; **kálláú!, káwâi!** , **kâi!** (*indeed*) ; **shéége!** (*bastard*) ; **sòòsáí!** (*quite*) ; **wallahi!** (*I swear*) ; **yáúwà** (*yes*).

2.3 Set phrases, quotations

They are not assimilated into Zaar, they do not follow the phonological and morphological rules of Zaar.

2.3.1 Hausa

ƙara gani (*look again*) ; **abin nan wai** (*well, this thing...*) ; **da zan shiga** (*if I was going*) ; **ka gan e ko?** (*do you understand?*) ; **ga ta ka taɓa** (*here you are, you have already*) ; **in ji mai tallin wa nene** (??? *Hausa saying*) ; **ina ji** (*I think that*) ; **ku tu manna!** (??? *Hausa saying*) ; **wai ɗan gata n wannan ; yan durin wannan** (*insults*) ; **wajen karfe** (*aroud X o'clock*)

2.3.2 English

addicted ; at least ; but ; driver ; fòòtós (*photos*) ; **hijacking ; police station ; posta** (??) ; **reserve ; sanitation** (*sanitation day*) ; **so ; station ; total ; yes ; you know.**

3. Types of code mixing

Different types of code mixing can be associated to various contents.

3.1 Borrowing

Borrowing is omnipresent in Zaar in the complexification of sentences (2.1.2.3), and discourse continuity : **in, kuma, àmma, kààfín, sáí, wáí ; tòò, wààtòò.**□

3.2 Tag switching

Tag switching, on the other hand, is associated with contents that escape the usual rural setting associated with the original Zaar lexicon stock. In the following instances, the wallet and the ID card are items associated with « modern » life, and are designated by loanwords. These loanwords are nouns that get a Zaar determinant suffix :

wáálêt-es : *wallet + Definite* ; .

X - tɔ́ ɬɔ̀ɔ́rí <u>wáálédes</u> ?
　　3pl.Narr/ go+Déf/ wallet+Def
X - Did they go away with the <u>wallet</u> ?

áidi-kààɗâ-dn : *ID card + 1ˢᵗ. Sing. Genitive*

Y - tɔ́ ɬɔ̀ɔ́rí ɗebát áí. <u>áidi-kààɗâdn</u> **máá yiɣáí.**
　　3pl.Narr/ go+Déf/ completely/ indeed// ID card+1s.Gen/ even/ there is
Y - They took everything. Even my <u>ID card</u> there was.

3.3 Interlarded speech

This is generally set off by an event or a thing associated with the world outside Zaar rural life.

Mɜ̀nàà gáà ɗândì kávit áí, dán tɜ̀nàà <u>gamá</u>*... you know... sanitation.* <u>Tòò</u> **mɜ̀nàà gáà ɗândì á dzàŋ. Dón** <u>*mootooci*</u> **tɔ́ lɔ̀ɜ̀t náŋ.** *<u>Káá gáánèè kóó</u>?* **So... mɜ̀ nàà...** <u>kààfin</u> **mɜ̀ nywaal...**
We left there at night, well, (not) until they <u>had finished</u>... you know... « sanitation ». <u>Well</u>, we left there during the day. Because there were many <u>cars</u>. <u>Do you understand</u> ? So... we left... <u>before</u> we went away...

<u>**"but"** dəráávei</u> **ci tɔ́ raa** <u>**"ka ji ? wallahi"**</u>**, ci tɔ́ raa.**
<u>But</u>, <u>the driver</u> was courageous, <u>you hear</u> ? <u>I swear</u>, he was courageous.

This type of code mixing is present mostly in the conversation of the educated speakers. In the case of the uneducated speakers, one observes the occasional quotation of a Hausa saying.

3.4 Metaphorical code-switching

The most common function of tag-switching is pragmatic : highlighting an event, setting off a personal reaction to what has been said. (cf. 2.2)

In the second conversation, one notices a very stong rise in code-mixing when the topic switches to sexual jokes. The small boy is eating some fried groundnut cake, and the adults around him start teasing him, drawing a parallel between eating sweets and the sexual act. In this case, it corresponds to an expression of strong emotional reaction.

[somebody has just said that « totuwa », i.e. groundnut cakes, can never be finished]

X - Nə tòòtòò ŋ̀ càá wû tu nə tootúwàà ŋáàn? Miɣáí tu càá wûl tu nə gɜ̀sàà hôì!
X - Is it groundnut cakes that they call « totuwa » ? I thought they were saying vagina, what !

Z - <u>*è ìnáà! Káákáákáá kâì! Shéége X.*</u> **!**
Z - Come on ! (Excl.) You bastard, X. !

Y - Wàllááhi máá gaa gɜ̀dn tu nə gɜ̀sàà hôì! Kɜ̀ <u>dîngá</u> **tòòtòò** <u>káwáì</u> **ɓángôn gáí hǰàà?** *<u>Ga ta ka taɓa</u>* **wú mgɔ̂n táá ɗiib tòòtòò ɓaní hǰ? gɜ̀shês máá càá dîìb poɣɔ́í àán? [...] kyáá mɔ́shí àà ɓaní ɣɜ̀n.**
Y - I swear, I thought that it was vagina, what ! Have you <u>ever</u> (heard) it finishes ? <u>Here you are, have you already</u> heard that they sell groundnut cakes and it is finished ? As for vagina, do they sell and there is none left ? [... only] if you die it is finished.

4. Conclusion

The interest of this study lies in the way it reveals the processes at work in borrowing and grammaticalisation. It gives a synchronic view of diachronic processes at work. Words are borrowed, beginning in the pragmatic domain (emotions, feelings, modality) then get integrated into the area of topicality verging on sentence complexification (with the so-called Hausa modal particles heavily borrowed). Then finally, aspectual verbs build a sub-area of Zaar grammar where auxiliarity is being developed.

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