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Hausa vowels and pronunciation of words by Yorùbá native speakers learning Hausa

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Abstract

This study examines the production of 10 monophthongs, and 2 diphthongs of Hausa with the aim of identifying how Yoruba speakers commit errors in the pronunciation of disyllabic Hausa words in the first and second syllables respectively by using a quantitative method with 9 participants (males and females). The results of both the shared and unshared vowels appear to be non-significant for being greater than $p > .005$ in the first and second syllables even though their level of performance indicates there are differences. In conclusion, the

government should ensure the availability of instructional materials in schools.

Keywords: Vowel, Pronunciation, Language, Error, Native, Speakers.

Vocales en hausa y pronunciación de palabras por hablantes nativos de yorùbá que aprenden hausa

Resumen

Este estudio examina la producción de 10 monofongos y 2 diptongos de hausa con el objetivo de identificar cómo los hablantes de yoruba cometen errores en la pronunciación de las palabras de disusa hausa en la primera y segunda sílabas, respectivamente, mediante el uso de un método cuantitativo con 9 participantes (hombres y mujeres). Los resultados de las vocales compartidas y no compartidas parecen no ser significativas por ser mayores que $p > .005$ en la primera y segunda sílabas, aunque su nivel de rendimiento indica que hay diferencias. En conclusión, el gobierno debe garantizar la disponibilidad de materiales educativos en las escuelas.

Palabras clave: Vocal, Pronunciación, Idioma, Error, Nativo, Hablantes.

1. INTRODUCTION

Correct Hausa pronunciation as governed by well-articulated vowel production has always been a major challenge for Yoruba native speakers learning Hausa as a second language. Yoruba native speakers find it difficult to pronounce certain disyllabic Hausa words due to their inability to correctly produce some Hausa L2 sounds, especially in second language situation. This study examines the production of

Hausa vowels by Yoruba native speakers learning Hausa as a second language in Federal College of Education, Osiele-Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria, with a view to identifying how the learners commit errors in the pronunciation of some disyllabic Hausa words (CHAMBERS & TRUDGIL, 1998).

In learning of Hausa as a second language by Yoruba native speakers, they tend to substitute certain Hausa vowels with that of their mother tongue which led to mispronunciation of some disyllabic Hausa words. This constitutes a threat to understanding since lexical, as well as grammatical words, are affected. The negative transfer due to the influence of the Yoruba as a mother tongue is one of the causes of errors committed by the L2 learners in the area of Hausa pronunciation. AROKOYO (2012) says individuals tend to transfer forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native languages to the foreign language. The fact that this area has little or no literature due to neglect, is, therefore, considered a gap that needs to be bridged (BROWN, 1991).

The purpose of this study is to examine how Yoruba native speakers produce the 10 monophthongs (/i/, /i:/, /e/, /e:/, /a/, /a:/, /o/, /o:/, /u/, /u:/), and 2 diphthongs (/ai/ and /au/) of Hausa with the aim of identifying the errors they commit in the pronunciation of disyllabic Hausa words. As part of the significance of this research is to contribute to the area of teaching and learning of Hausa as a second language especially in the classroom settings. This will further boost

the morale of both the teachers and learners in the learning process (BELLO, 2017).

The study will also assist the Yorùbá native speakers who are learning Hausa to easily identify and correct the errors they commit during the learning process in the classrooms. In addition, the study will contribute to the body of knowledge in second language learning and linguistics generally. Additional benefit to derive from the present study is to assist the language curriculum developers in terms of designing and redesigning a new school curriculum for second language learning in line with the world best practices and lastly, it will enhance the peaceful coexistence and inter-ethnic relationship among people from different cultural backgrounds that are living together for some time (BLENCH, 2014).

2. METHODOLOGY

In this study, the research design is production task using a quantitative approach where individual participants were given production task to perform by reading the carefully selected stimuli prepared in carrier phrase (Yá yí ... kúmá) (see appendix A) and personally recorded by the researcher. In order to address certain problems in the society, participants were selected based on purposive sampling since they speak Yoruba as their first language with Yoruba cultural background. The 24 different stimuli were used as research

instruments to collect the data from 9 (5 males and 4 female) different participants through speech recordings. Ethics approval was equally granted by the authority concerned (EKPE, 2010).

The services of two linguists from the university system in Nigeria were employed to serve as independent raters. In scoring the performance of participants, correct pronunciation has 1 mark, while wrong pronunciation takes 0 marks, after which, inter-rater reliability was conducted to determine the level of agreement between the first and second-raters in each of the syllables based on ADEAGBO's (2010) agreement scale. Before the analysis of the data so far collected, the normality test was conducted based on Skewness and Kurtosis to find out if the data were normally distributed (GORDON, 2005). The recorded individual speech as designed in the carrier phrase which was scored by the two different raters was also transformed into 0 and 1. (See appendix A). Meanwhile, the different scores obtained by individual participants were used to carry out the inter-rater reliability test, in order to find the level of agreement between them (BÁMGBÓŞÉ, 1967).

Accordingly, Data can be considered normal if Skewness and Kurtosis are ± 1 . However, values between ± 2 are also acceptable (GEORGE & MALLERY, 2003). AWOBULUYI (1978) values were used to check the measurement of the normal distribution of the data. The values for the vowel data in the first and second syllables are presented in the table below:

Table 1: Results of the normality test

Skewness vowel values (First Syllable)	Kurtosis vowel values (First Syllable)	Skewness vowel values (Second Syllable)	Kurtosis vowel values (Second Syllable)
0.67	-1.67	-1	-1.54

The result of the test of normality conducted is found to be within the acceptable range. The performance of individual participants was measured based on how each vowel was produced in the first and second syllables.

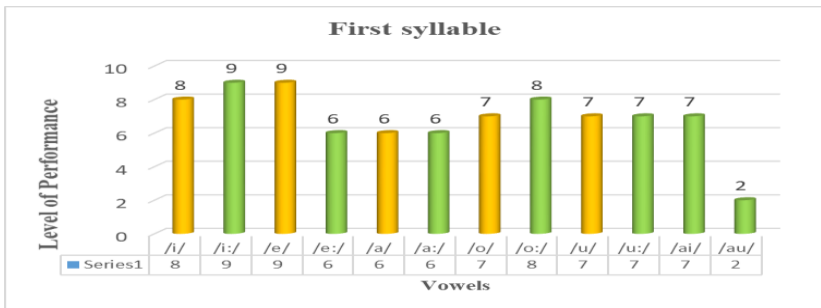


Figure 1: Level of performance in vowel production

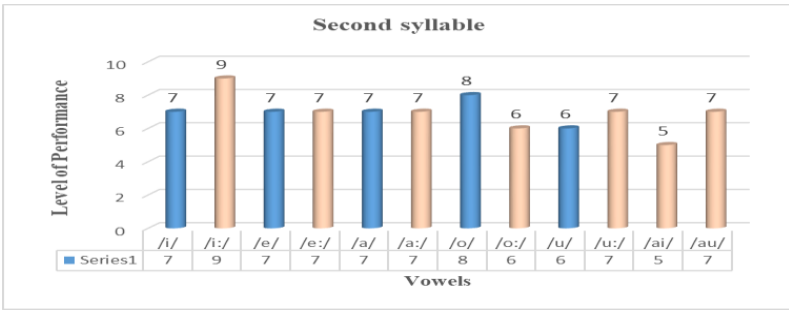


Figure 2: Level of performance in vowel production

Despite the performance of the participants on vowel production and the subsequent assessments by two different raters, it can be observed that a number of errors were detected. Error and performance with respect to vowel production have been tested and arranged according to the frequency of each variable based on the performance of the participants. Meanwhile, from the left to the right shows the higher the frequency, the lower the error, while the lower the frequency, the higher the error committed by the participants on vowel production in the first and second syllables. While serial number 1 became first in ranking, serial number 12 is, therefore, the last in the ranking. (See table 2 and 3 below):

Table 2: Frequency on vowel productions in the first syllable

Rank Order	Vowel	Frequency (%)
1.	/i:/	9
2.	/e/	9

3.	/i/	8
4.	/o:/	8
5.	/o/	7
6.	/u/	7
7.	/u:/	7
8.	/ai/	7
9.	/e:/	6
10.	/a/	6
11.	/a:/	6
12.	/au/	2

In the first syllable, the above table shows that the short front and upper vowel /i:/ with a score of 9% is the highest and /au/ diphthongs with a score of 2% is the lowest in this category.

Table 3: Frequency on vowel productions in the second syllable

Rank Order	Vowel	Frequency (%)
1.	/i:/	9
2.	/o/	8
3.	/i/	7
4.	/e/	7
5.	/e:/	7
6.	/a/	7
7.	/a:/	7
8.	/u:/	7

9.	/au:/	7
10.	/o:/	6
11.	/u/	6
12.	/ai/	5

In the second syllable, the above table shows that, the short, back and high vowel /i:/ with a score of 9% is the highest and /ai/ diphthongs with a score of 5% is the lowest in this category (CRYSTAL, 2008).

3. DISCUSSION

RQ 1: How do Yoruba native speakers produce the 10 monophthongs (/i/, /i:/, /e/, /e:/, /a/, /a:/, /o/, /o:/, /u/, /u:/), and 2 diphthongs (/ai/ and /au/) of Hausa?

RQ 2: What are the vowels of disyllabic Hausa words that are difficult to produce and the ones that are easier to produce by Yorùbá native speakers?

To find answers to the two research questions raised, a study was carried out using a descriptive statistic to compare the level of performance and errors as committed by participants on vowel

production based on Hausa and Yoruba shared and unshared vowels in the first and second syllables respectively (DUSTAN, 1969).

An independent sample t-test was carried out to compare the production of Hausa vowels of part 3 male and female participants from ABK, especially in the first syllable. Since Levene's test for equality of variances is statistically non-significant ($p=.332$), we can assume that the variances of the two samples (groups) are equal. The results reveal that male Yoruba native speakers perform better in the first syllable ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 1.44$) on vowels, compared to the female participants ($M = 2.17$, $SD = .834$), $t(22) = 17.677$, $p > .332$. Therefore, it can be observed that part 3 female participants commit more errors on vowels in the first syllable compared to the male counterparts (FRANCIS, 1983).

Table 4: Mean scores and Standard Deviation of males and females in part 3. First syllable vowels

Group 1 (male)	Mean	Std D	t-statistics (df)	p-value
Group 2 (female)	4.67	(1.43548)	17.677 (22)	.332
	2.17	(.83485)		

Similarly, the independent sample t-test was carried out in the second syllable to compared the production of Hausa vowels of part 3

male and female participants from ABK. The result shows that, the Levene’s test for equality of variances is non-significant ($p=.781$). We can assume that the variances of the two samples (groups) are equal. The results reveal that male Yoruba native speakers perform better in the second syllable ($M = 4.67, SD = .779$) on vowels, compared to the female ($M = 2.25, SD = .754$), $t(22) = 21.977, p < .000$. Meanwhile, it can be observed that part 3 female participants commit more errors on vowels in the second syllable compared to their male counterparts.

Table 5: Mean scores and Standard Deviation of male and female in part. Second syllable vowels

Group 1 (male)	Mean	Std D (.77850)	t-statistics (df)	p-value
Group 2 (female)	Mean 2.25	Std D (.75378)	21.977 (22)	.781

This study discovered that the production of the 12 Hausa vowels by Yorùbá native speakers, especially the unshared vowels has always been a great challenge. Based on the data and the analysis conducted, despite Yoruba speakers having less problem when producing the shared vowels, they still substitute certain vowels with other vowels in their pronunciation especially, in the first and second syllables due to the differences between the two languages. Such vowel substitutions by Yoruba native speakers’ were observed in the

pronunciation of some Hausa words containing the shared vowels between Hausa and Yoruba include fárí with vowel arrangement /a/ → /e/ being pronounced as férí (white color), námà with /a/ → /a/ vowels pronounced as nómò (meat), dákó with /a/ → /o/ vowel sequence being pronounced as dókó (carrying of load as occupation), nómá with /o/ → /a/ vowels being pronounced as nómá (farming), as well as nónò with the vowel arrangement of /o/ → /o/ being pronounced as núnù (breast milk).

Similarly, the unshared vowels observed to affect the pronunciation of Yoruba native speakers due to the substitutions can be seen in the following Hausa words: dǎukà with a vowel arrangement of /au/ - /a/ being pronounced as dókà (taking something), Màkáu with /a/ - /au/ vowel sequence being pronounced as Mákó (name), and dáídái with /ai – ai/ vowels being pronounced as dédé (correct) respectively.

Such a situation affects not only the lexical words, but the grammatical meanings of words are also tempered with. Factors considered to be responsible for the substitution are, but not limited to mother tongue influence alone. The socio-economic reason and gender differences equally contribute to such challenges. The difference between Hausa and Yorùbá as postulated by Error Analysis Model equally contribute to the challenges being faced by the second language learners.

Research in Western nations affirms that women's speech is considered to be more self-conscious and class-conscious than men's

speech, such that data collected from them are not as natural as those from men because they pretend to be sophisticated and artificial in their utterances. Men's speech is purer and more original because they are rather conservative.

Research in Western World also claims that men's speech is purer and more reliable than the female's speech was seen to have reflected in the present study, even though some argue that, females perform better in second language learning. The results of the present research attest to the fact that male participants perform better in terms of vowel production especially in the first syllable, compared to the female participants who commit more errors. FADORO (2014) also adds male informants have a higher proficiency in their speech forms than their female counterparts. Similarly, the results obtained with respect to the production of vowels in the second syllable discovered that male participants also perform better when compared to the female participants who commit more errors on vowel production. Such findings concur with the postulation of Error Analysis Model.

Therefore, in this research, it has been discovered that despite the p values in the first syllable as well as in the second syllable appeared non-significance, the Yorùbá native speakers in part 3 at Federal College of Education, Osiele-Abeokuta in Ogun State, Nigeria still commit a number of errors in their pronunciations as can be observed in their performance as indicated in figures 1 and 2 above. In addition, Yorùbá native speakers also find it difficult to produce the unshared /i:/, /e:/, /a:/, /o:/, /u:/, /ai/ and /au/ Hausa vowels when

compared to the shared /i/, /e/, /a/, /o/ and /u/ vowels due to the difference between the two languages.

4. CONCLUSION

This research was conducted to find out if there is a significant difference in how Yoruba native speakers produce the 12 Hausa vowels, and also to identify some errors usually committed by the Yoruba native speakers in their pronunciation of some disyllabic Hausa words in the first and second syllables. It has been discovered that the vowels that are not shared between Hausa and Yorùbá appeared more difficult to produce by Yorùbá native speakers especially in pronunciation while the ones that are shared were found to be easy to produce. Therefore, if both the teachers and learners of Hausa as a second language could pay more attention to the errors so far identified in this research, learning of Hausa as a second language will be easier. In addition to other corrective measures to be taken on how to tackle the problems learners encounter, government should ensure the availability of the instructional materials in schools, as well as to ensure it is only qualified second language experts are allowing to handle language classes for optimum performance in schools.

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