

Chapter Fifty-Four: 563-575

**DIALECTAL VARIATION: A STRATEGY FOR RHYME
MAINTENANCE IN HAUSA POETRY**

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses how Hausa poets employ different dialects as a poetic device, in an attempt to maintain the regular occurrence of a particular sound, syllable or word in poetry. The maintenance of these distinctive features in Hausa poetry is called rhyme. Hausa poetry has five different types of rhymes, depending on the structure of the verse. These include: (i) Internal rhyme (ii) Terminal rhyme (iii) Independent rhyme (iv) Initial rhyme and (v) Tonal rhyme. This paper observes that the poets switch to various Hausa dialects in order to maintain the flow of any of the above mentioned rhymes in their poetry.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Hausa language has varieties of dialects, which were divided into two major groups, east and west. The eastern dialects include Kananci, Bausanci, Dauranci, Guddiranci and Zazzaganci. The western dialect includes Katsinanci, Sakkwatanci, Kurhwayanci and Arewanci respectively. (ref. Zaria 1982, Abubakar 1983 & Zulyadaini 2003). The poets irrespective of their dialectal background break the said dichotomy by using the features of any of the above mentioned dialect, in an effort to maintain the flow of a particular sound in their poems. The sources of the data collected for the purpose of this paper are published and unpublished texts composed Hausa poets. These poems were selected based on the geographical location of the poet and the dialectal dichotomy to which the poet belongs. All the poems selected exhibit dialect mixture for the sake of rhyme maintenance¹. It is pertinent to present brief explanatory remarks on the concept of rhyme, for the benefit of our readers who are not familiar with it. Rhyme is the regular occurrence of a particular sound, syllable or word in poetry. In Hausa five different rhymes are identified; namely: (i) Terminal rhyme, (ii) Initial rhyme, (iii) Tonal rhyme, (iv) Internal rhyme, and (v) Independent rhyme. Thus: Terminal Rhyme refers to situation where the poet maintains a regular flow of a sound or

¹ The poems selected can be seen in appendix I.

syllable at the end of each stanza in the entire poem as illustrated in (1a & 1b) below:

- (1a). Gaskiya launinta guda daya ne
Ko da a gaban Dujal Mahari
- (1b). Karyar banza karyar wofi
Niyya it ace aiki na gari

In the above stanzas the *ri* segment in the second line of each stanza serves as the terminal rhyme in the poetry.

The second type of rhyme is called initial rhyme. This is a rhyme in which the same sound occurs at the beginning of the lines in the stanza of a poem. This can be seen as follows:

- (2) **F**andisho na gininmu a yanzu duk
Fankama ta rurrusa shi duk,
Farkawa ta fi gare mu duk,
Fatarmu arewa ta farga duk,
Don ta gane lamarin duniya
Abdulkadir (1979:95)

The occurrence of *fa* at the beginning of the lines is what we regard as initial rhyme.

The third type of rhyme in Hausa poetry is called internal rhyme. It refers to a rhyme that occurs at the end of internal lines in the stanza of poetry as exemplified in (3):

- (3) Shi ke sa kato na sa **bula**
Fuskarsa ya je rokon **dala**
Gindinsa ya sa fatar **dila**
Da gani ka san ba **ingila**
In ji mai lafazin barbarci
Abdulkadir (1979:163)

In the above stanza, the sequential arrangement of words ending in *la* is called internal rhyme. Independent Rhyme is the fourth type of rhyme found in Hausa poetry. It is a rhyme in which the internal and the terminal rhymes end in the same segment. This is illustrated in (4):

- (4) Kaka uwa ce ga **damina**
Idan ta buo a ko' **ina**
Za ka ga manya da **kankana**
Suna ta harka da **kunguna**
Saboda Innarmu **damina**.
Arnott (1968: 131)

The systematic termination of all the lines in *na* sequences is what we call independent rhyme. The last type of rhyme is called tonal rhyme. This involves the maintenance of consistent tone patterns at the end of each line in the stanza as shown in (5):

- (5) Ka yi yarda ga ìmámí
 Shehuna Kudubin hitámí
 Kai kabuli ga nìzámí
 Sad da rayi ke tükéwà
 Sipikin (1978: 22)

The poets irrespective of their dialectal background switch to various dialects in an effort to maintain rhyme by using substitution as a linguistics technique².

2.0 SUBSTITUTION

According to Matthews (1997) substitution is defined as a “replacement of one unit or sequences of units by another”. Substitution as a result of rhyme refers to situation whereby the poet switches from one dialect to another by substituting a lexical item with its variant from another dialect. The poets employed this linguistics technique in an attempt to maintain one of the above rhyme mentioned in (1.1).

2.1 SUBSTITUTION FOR TERMINAL RHYME

Substitution as a result of terminal rhyme refers to situation whereby the poet switches from one dialect to another through replacement of a lexical item with its variant from another dialect for the sake of maintaining a regular flow of a sound or syllable at the end of each stanza in the entire poem. For instance, in an attempt to preserve terminal rhyme Musa Jahun a poet from Bauchi dialect switches to Guddiri dialect as exemplified in TBY³ blow:

- (6.) Amma da yardan Rabbanaa
 Huwaa Maalikul Mala Kuutunaa
 Da nufii da niyaa naa munaa
 Yardaa yanaa gun mai *shiyaa*
 By the wishes of God,
 He [God] the sovereign leader,
 He [God who] wishes and permit,
 He [God] the owner of wishes

The independent pronoun *shiya* (he) is Guddiri lexical item (cf. Bagari 1979, 1983, Baba, 1988, Musa, 1997). The standard speech form is *shi*. Using this form deters the poet from achieving the terminal rhyme.

² There are various Linguistic reasons behind the dialectal switching in Hausa poetry; for the purpose of this paper only substitution as a result of rhyme is considered.

³ See appendix for the meaning of the abbreviations.

Another attempt to maintain terminal rhyme by the Bauchi poets, using substitution, can be seen in DBW. Hamidu Zungur in his effort to maintain a systematic flow of a sound or syllable at the end of each stanza in the poem shifts to Sakkwato dialect in the following stanzas:

(7a) Ku cee baabu sallah fa, kadɗaa ku yii shakkaa,
 Duuba “Sarmar – kandii” zaa ku *jiyaa*.
 You say no praying, [And] we should not doubt,
 You should check Sarmar-kandi [and you see].

(7b) Akwai wani mutum wanda bai kula sallaa,
 A can zaamanin Manzoo anka *jiyaa*.
 There was a person who neglect prayer(s),
 During the time of Messenger of Allah

The old form of the verb *jiya* (listen) in second line of the first and the second stanza is Sakkwato variety used by the poet for the sake of maintaining his terminal rhyme ending in ya throughout the poem. Maintaining the standard forms would prevent the poet from achieving the terminal rhyme.

Guddiri poets also demonstrate the use of substitution in achieving terminal rhyme. For instance, in MSK, the poet switches to Sakkwato in trying to maintain the ya segment as the terminal rhyme as exemplified below:

(8a) Sakandaree an yii cikin zaamaninsaa
 Don yaada ilimii a dukkan kasarsa
 Akwai lumaanaa wanda ko sun isaa
 Too ɗan uwaanaa biyoo kar ka koosaa
 Da sauran bayaanai da zaa ka *jiyaa*.
 Secondary was built during his time
 In order to educate his entire province.
 There is peaceful existence [his province]
 My brothers bear with me.
 There are many things you will hear.

The word *jiya* in the last line of the stanza is Sakkwato variety employed in an effort to preserve the flow of ya segment. The standard form of the word is *ji*. Using this variety would deter the poet from achieving the targeted rhyme in the above stanza.

Katsina poets also employ substitution to achieve terminal rhyme. For instance, in his attempt to maintain terminal rhyme, Saulawa switches to Sakkwato dialect in the following stanza:

(9a) Naa tahoo nee in muku albishir:
 Duk ku karkadee kunnee kun *jiyaa*

I have come with good news
All be attentive and listen

(9b) Kun sanii Allah in yai kiraa
Doole sai karbaawaa kun *jiyaa*
You know if God calls
You must respond.

(9c) Tsiiraa da amincin Rabbanaa
Ga Rasuulullaahii abin *biyaa*.
May his peace and blessing,
Be upon the messenger of God.

The words *jiyaa* in the second line in (9a and b) and *biyaa* in (9c) are Sakkwato forms of speech. These dialectal features are employed by the poet, in trying to preserve the flow of terminal rhyme. Using the standard form of speech, *ji* in (9a and b) and *bi* in (9c), would deny the poet the sequences of the established terminal rhyme in TUN.

2.2 SUBSTITUTION IN SEARCH OF INTERNAL RHYME

Hausa poets sometimes maintain this type of rhyme in their poetry through eclectic switching to various Hausa dialects. Substitution in search of internal rhyme refers to a situation whereby a poet replaces the standard variety with its variant, from other dialect in trying to preserve the internal rhythmic flow of the lines. This is enumerated where Bauchi poets switches to Sakwato dialect by adopting substitution as a linguistic process in an attempt to maintain the regular flow of sound at the beginning of the lines in the stanza of a poem, as illustrated in MDS poem in (10a):

(10a) Kaa ji kinibiibii da hiilaa
Kaa ji gulma da sunka kullaa
Don su warware alkaawullaa
Sunka zaabura, baa kasaalaa
Sunka faadãa kan Ameerikaawaa
What a deceit and guile,
For their treachery
In breaking their promises,
They sprang most vigorously
And fell upon the Americans.

We have observed that from the above stanza the poet, in his attempt to preserve internal rhyme, moves to Sakkwato dialect in line three of the stanza, using the word *alkawulla* (promises). Any effort to use the standard form *alkawura* would tamper with the internal rhyme, which terminates in *la* syllable.

In other stanzas Musa Jahun from Bauchi dialect switches to Katsina in TBY poem; using the same linguistic device in search of internal rhyme, as shown below:

- (11a) Duk dan *kasān* nan dan *kwarai*,
 Kiishin *kasaa* ta *zamoo garai*,
 Son rai ka *jaawoo baata* rai,
 Jama'a *maidoo tarbiyaa*
 Whoever is a true patriot,
 He should be nationalist,
 Selfishness bring inconvenience,
 Oh! People let return good conduct [to the society]

The word *garai* (to him) in the second line of stanza is Katsina variety. The equivalent in the standard is supposed to be *gare shi*. Retaining the standard form hampered the arrangement of internal rhymes in the affected lines of the above stanzas. This can be the main reason why the poet adopts the Katsina speech forms.

Aliyu Dansidi, a poet from Zariya dialect, in his attempt to maintain internal rhyme in some stanzas of TBK switches to Sakkwato as can be seen in (12a) below:

- (12a) Zoo ka *tabaa dai ka jiyaa*
 Yau mukee *koo koo na jiyaa*
 Hauree ka *ciwoo ijyaa*
 In yaa yi *sai a yi jinyaa*
 Baa zaa a *deebeewaa baa*.
 Come and test
 Are we adults or not?
 It is the tooth that aches [and be removed] the eyes [only],
 Pains [and must] be nursed,
 It cannot be removed.

The word *jiya* (hear) is a Sakkwato form of speech in (12a). The equivalents of these words in the standard forms are *ji* in (12a) Using the standard variety would scatter the internal rhythmic flow of the above stanzas. This is the reason why the poet switches to this dialect.

Kano poets also adopt the use of substitution as a device to maintain internal rhyme. For instance, Na'ibi switches to Sakkwato and Zariya in DMN in an effort to preserve the flow of internal rhyme thus:

(13a). Kai a takaiice koo kaa *jiya*
 Koomai ka duubaa koo bishiyaa
 Zaa ka ga taa saakee rausayaa
 Kamar amarya koo gimbiyaa
 Koowaa gaadaa taasa daaminaa
 In short have you heard
 What ever you watch even a tree
 You will see it swing
 Like a bride or queen
 Everyone's enjoy that is rainy season

(13b.) Tun daga kauyee kakee ganii
 Koowane babbaa da *kankanii*.
 Harkarsu sai wanda ya ganii
 Maataa ko sai kirmaa a *zani*
 Sabooda kaakaa ta daaminaa.
 Right from the village you will see.
 Everybody, big and small.
 Very busy, only the one who sees can describe
 The women are happily changing wrapper
 Because of the good harvest.

The word *jiya(hear)* in the first line in (13a) is Sakkwato form of speech employed to maintain the flow of internal rhyme. The standard form of the word is *ji* (cf. Bargery 1936, Abubakar, 1983, 2000). The poet uses this form in order not to distort the structure of the internal rhyme of his poem. The word *kankanii*. and *zani* in (13b) is Zariya form of speech (ref.Arnott 1975). The standard varieties of these lexical items are *kankane* and *zane*. Using the latter forms would prevent the poet from getting internal rhyme in the third and fourth lines of the above stanza in (13b). This necessitates the poet to switch to Sakkwato and Zariya varieties, in the stanzas above.

NPC is another poem from Daura dialect, where the poet uses different forms of speech, instead of the standard variety in an attempt to maintain internal rhyme. The poet switches to Zariya dialect in order to preserve the flow of internal rhyme in (14a) below:

(14a) Waanee yaa ki kaakanshii waanee yaa ki baabanshii
 Tuutir A'uuzuu billaahii dan NEPU naa bar shii
 Baa mu *son shi* waawaa nee kar ya baata NPC
 Somebody denounces his grandfather and father.
 Everyone should seek refuge from God against NEPU member
 We do not want a foolish [person], so that he cannot spoil NPC.

The word *babanshi* is Zariya form of speech adopted by the poet in order to obtain his internal rhyme. The standard form of the word is *babansa*. Using the

standard form would make the poet to lose his internal rhyme, as can be seen thus:

- (14b.) Waanee yaa ki kaakanshii waanee yaa ki baabansa
 Tuutir A'uuzuu billaahii |an NEPU naa bar shii
 Baa mu *son shi* waawaa nee kar ya baata NPC

The use of standard form in the possessive marker *-nsa* as against Zariya variety *-nshi* prevents the poet from achieving internal rhyme.

Dialectal switching for maintaining internal rhyme is also displayed by Kantu a poet from Sakkwato dialect. *The poet* switching to various dialects such as Sakkwato, Katsina and Guddiri as can be seen in some stanzas of *SAL poem* below:

- (15a). Yaa kiranyi dawaakunaa
 Sun ki yai gun jaakunaa
 Yaa kiraa |an |ansu naa
 Yaa kuu marasaa tunaa
 Nii ga kookon zuuciyaa.
 He called the horses
 They refuse; he changes to donkeys
 He called the smallest donkey
 Oh you who do not think
 At all.

- (15b). Naa ga can |an fashii,
 Yaa fitoo yai murmushii,
 Yai ma dangii aarashii,
 Har da |an wani *daamishii*,
 Sun haroo mai duukiyaa
 I saw a robber there,
 He came out and similes
 He takes the relative by surprise
 He smiles widely.
 When they dropped wealth for him

- (15c). Wai kadoo kee tsookanaa
 Yanaa fa|aa da doorinaa
 Ooho dai shii yas *shiinaa*,
 Tun da shii zai |an|anaa,
 Can azaabar duuniyaa
 The crocodile is provoking
 Is fighting hippopotamus
 Oh! Is left to him,

He is the one to suffer,
All the consequences

The lexeme *na* in the third line of (15a) stanza is Sakkwato lexical item. Its equivalent in the standard form of speech is copula *ne*. The Clause *wani damishi* in the fourth line of (15b) is Katsina form, the regular form of the word in the stanza is supposed to be *damisa*. The word *shina* in the third line of (15c) is a Guddiri form of speech, the standard form of the word is *sani* (ref. Bagari, 1979, Baba 1988, Zulyadaini 1995). Using the standard form of these words that is *ne* in (15a), *damisa* in (15b) and *sani* in (15c) prevents the poet from realising the internal rhyme in the above stanzas.

2.3 SUBSTITUTION FOR MAINTAINING INDEPENDENT RHYME.

Substitution for maintaining independent rhyme can be defined as a process in which the institutionalised form of speech is replaced with its equivalent from other dialects, in an effort to achieve the sequences of the same sound at the end of the internal and external lines, in a stanza.

Hausa poets, switch to various Hausa dialects, in an attempt to maintain the sequences of the same segment in the end of the lines. An instances of this can be seen in Zariya poems, where Abubakar Ladan in ZTR switches to Sakkwato, Zariya, and Guddiri as can be seen in (16a, b & c):

(16a). Haka nan aka zaunaa zaamaanii,
A cikin harkan nan mai muunii,
A cikin duuniyaa daama da *haunii*,
Baa maasu kwa oo baa maasu hanii.
Daga al'ummar wannan karnii.
They live over that period of time,
In that type of dirty transaction,
From all angles in the world,
No one cautioned none stopped it.
From the people of that century.

(16b). Koowa kun san shi da *takenshii*,
Kun san haka tun *kaakanninshii*,
Kun san loogaa da *makamancinshii*,
Kuu kee rike maa da *madaafanshii*,
Kan kun soo baa mai *kaushee shii*.
Everybody is identified by his epithets,
You knew that from his fore fathers,
You knew all the tricks,
You control him,
If you like nobody can displace him.

- (16c). Sun jeerin gwaanoo sun zoo suu,
 Aafirka da suu da jakaadunsuu,
 Mun karba ba ma tsargar su,
 Baa maa kyamar al'adunsuu
 Sai dai sha'awarsuu da kaayansuu
 They came in a convoy,
 To Africa with their messengers
 We accept them whole heartily
 We do not hate their culture.
 We only admire them and their culture.

The word *hauni* (left) in the third line of (16a) is Sakkwato variety, used by the poet in order to maintain independent rhyme. The standard variety *hagu* is avoided for the sake of achieving the rhyme.

In (16b), the short possessive pronoun *nshi* employed from line one to four is Zariya form of speech (see. Zaria, 1982, Abubakar, 1983, Sani, 2000). The standard form of the word is supposed to be short possessive pronoun *nsa* in all the said lines. Sticking to the popular variety makes the poet to lose the structure of independent rhyme to become internal rhyme.

The copy of the pronoun *su* in first line of (16c) is Guddiri form of speech (see. Bagari 1979, Abubakar, 1983, Baba 1988, Musa 1997). The poet uses this as a strategy to maintain independent rhyme. Maintaining the predominant variety in the above examples (16a, b & c) would distort the independent rhythmic flow in the stanzas as can be seen in the affected line (ref. to the lines in 16a, b & c).

This necessitates the poet switching to Sakkwato, Zariya and Guddiri dialects for sake of the achieving of a targeted rhyme in the stanzas.

Katsina poets also switch to various dialects as a means of independent rhyme maintenance. For example, Hamisu Yadudu in UMG, switches to Kano dialect in an attempt to preserve the flow of independent rhyme, thus:

- (17a) In taa ga taa harbu baa taa *fa*/*i* :
 Sai tai shiruu kwat tabaa yaa *fa*/*ii*:
 Kee kookii kookii uwar kin ka/*i*;
 Haalinta karyaa da zambaa da *ruu*/*ii*:
 Algungumaa mai idon cin ku/*i*:
 If she is pregnant, she does not tell
 She keeps quiet and puts the responsibility on whoever inflected her.
 He! You useless
 She is noted for her lie and deception
 The notorious, plunder

The word *fa*/*i* (to say) in the second and third line in (17a) and the word *ru*/*i* (deceive) in the fourth line (17a) are features of Katsina dialect employed by the

poet in an effort to maintain independent rhyme. Using the standard form would completely deter the poet from achieving this rhythmic flow as enumerated thus:

- (17b). In taa gaa taa harbu ba taa *fa/aa* :
 Sai tai shiruu kwat tabaa yaa *fa/aa*
 Kee kookii kookii uwar kin ka_{ii};
 Haalinta karyaa da zambaa da *ruu/ii*:
 Algungumaa mai idon cin ku_{ii}:

The substitution of Katsina form of speech with the standard forms disorganises Hamisu Yadudu's independent rhyme. Avoiding this necessitates the poet to retain Katsina the poet's form of speech.

The maintenance of independent rhyme is also employed by Sakkwato poets. The poet uses substitution as a linguistic measure in an effort to maintain independent rhyme. This is exemplified in TSM poem, where Sa'id sticks to his dialect in (18a) and switches to Zariya in (18b) thus:

- (18a). Mai tambayar mai wagga waakaa cee *mishi*
 Nii nee Muhamman Bello mai beegen ki
 Whoever is asking the composer of this poem, tell him
 Iam Muhamman Bello, your affectionate

- (18b). Nii ban ganin haskenta koo daa *kankanii*:
 In ban da nai saa'aa shi zam naa gan kii.
 I didn't see its shining at all
 If not because I was lucky to have seen you

The indirect object pronoun *mishi* in the first line in (18a) is Sakkwato variety borrowed by the poet in an attempt to achieve independent rhyme. Sticking to the standard variety would prevent the poet from getting the independent rhyme.

In (18b), the word *kankani* (at all) in the first line of the stanza belongs to Zariya variety (Bargery 1936). The equivalent form of the word in standard language is *kankane*. Adopting the standard variety restrains Sa'id completely from achieving independent rhyme. This explains the reason behind the dialectal switching by the poet.

3.0 CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have observed that Hausa poets switch to various dialects such Katsinanci (Katsina dialect), Sakkwatanci (Sokoto dialect), Kananci (Kano dialect), Dauranci (Daura dialect), Zazzaganci (Zariya dialect), Bausanci (Bauchi dialect) and Guddiranci (Guddiri dialect) in an attempt to maintain rhyme in their poems. In order to achieve a targeted rhyme, the poets substitute a lexical item with its variant from other dialect. The use of this linguistics technique reveals not only the poets competence in the language; but also make their poetry more

aesthetic. The technique also aid poets in delivering the overall message of their poems efficiently.

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Zulyadaini B (2003) "Dialect Mixture in The Twentieth Century Hausa Poetry: Metrical

No.	Dialect Area	Poets	Poems
1	Bauchi	Sa'adu Zungur	Wakar Maraba da soja ((hence-forth MDS)
2	Bauchi	Hamidu Zungur	Wakar Duniya Budurwa Wawa ((hence-forth DBW)
3	Bauchi	Dahiru Musa Jahun	Wakar Tarbiyya ((hence-forth TBY)
4	Zari'a	Abubakar Ladan	Wakar Zuwan Turawa Afika ((hence-forth ZTR)
5	Zari'a	Aliyu Dansidi	Wakar Tabarkoko ((hence-forth TBK)
6	Zari'a	M.B. Umar	Wakar Baitocin Tarbiyya ((hence-forth BTR)
7	Kano	Wada Hamza	Wakar Neman Ilmi (hence-forth NIM)
8	Kano	Mudi sipikin	Wakar Neman Taimako Ga Allah ((hence-forth NTA)
9	Kano	Na'ibi Sulaiman Wali	Wakar Damina ((hence-forth DMN)
10	Guddiri	Muhammadu sarkin Tashar. Azare	Wakar Mumar Samun Sandar Maigima Sarkin Katagum (hence-forth MSK)
11	Guddiri	Bura Tela Azare	Wakar Begen Tashin Alhazai (hence-forth BTA)
12	Guddiri	Garba Affa Azare	Wakar Tauhidi da Sallah (hence-forth TDS).
13	Daura	Auwalu Sandamu	Nasiha ta Musamman ga Dalibai ,(hence-forth KMD)
14	Daura	Maman Daura	Wakar cin Nasarar Jamiyyar NPC (hence-forth NPC)
15	Daura	Maman Daura	Wakar Asalin Hausa (hence-forth ASH).
16	Katsina	Rabiyu Umaru Saulawa	Wakar Ta'aziyar Marigayi Sir Usman Nagogo Da Mumar Na'in Sarauta Sarki Usman Naggo (hence-forth TUN).
17	Katsina	Musa Bara Mashi	Wakar Kurar Zuciya (hence-forth KNZ)
18	Katsina	Hamisu Yadudu Funtuwa.	Wakar Uwar Mugu (hence-forth UMG)
19	Sokoto	Umaru nasarawa Wazirin Gwandu	Wakar Yadda Ya Kamata Najeriya ta Arewa da Mutanenta su zama (hence-forth NDM)
20	Sokoto	Yusufu Kantu Isa	Wakar Salo (hence-forth SAL),.
21	Sokoto	Bello Sa'id	Wakar Tsarabar Masoyi (hence-forth TSM).

Approach" Unpublished PhD. Thesis, University of Maiduguri.

APPENDIX I: Table of Poems