CHAPTERONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, basic information about the language of study(Yeskwa) shall be given. The chapter centers on background information aboutthe language, the historical background of speakers, the sociolinguisticprofile of the people as well as, the genetic classification of the Yeskwalanguage. We shall later proceed to scope and organization of study,theoretical framework, data analysis, data collection, and later to basicsyntactic concepts. We shall finally focus on VERB PHRASE in Yeskwa languageand application of transformation rules to Yeskwa language.

1.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND

Yeskwa is a language spoken in Kaduna, Nassarawa, and PlateauStates. The name Yeskwa was originally called 'Nyankpa' meaning 'to know leaf',but it was later changed to Yéskwá by the missionaries who could not pronouncethe name well.

Yeskwa speakers in Kaduna state can be found in the KagomaDistrict of Jema'a Local Government Area. In Nassarawa State, Yeskwa speakersare found in Panda district of Karu Local Government Area while in Plateaustate, they do not have a district of their own neither do they have a LocalGovernment Area of their own because they are mere settlers. Yeskwa speakers inthe Panda district of Karu Local Government Area are popularly known as Nyankpapeople. Yeskwa speakers form 60% of the populace while the other takes up theremaining 40%. This clearly indicates that the speakers of the Yeskwa languagein the Panda district of Nassarawa state are more than any other people in thedistrict.

Since speakers of the Yeskwa language happen to live in apredominantly Hausa speaking community, it then follows that the Hausa languageis usually the second language of every Yeskwa native speaker. Hence, themajority of Yeskwa native speakers also speak Hausa fluently.

Yeskwa language is still spoken currently and it is not threatenedby Hausa people. However, from a brief visit, there is every evidence that thelanguage continues to flourish and is spoken by the young people in thesettlement.

1.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDOF YESKWA SPEAKERS

Yeskwa speakers claimed to have originated from Darigo in Kadunastate. From an available corpus of oral evidence, the first Nyankpa man wholived during the pre-historical period originated from a place called 'DARIGO'.The mystical place which is itself name after the founder of the language is upto date, faithfully behaved with certainly, up to form part of the areas aroundthe hills situated North, East and West of the present Kwoi, now in Kadunastate across the Gitata, Bagagji up to Uke areas of the present Nassarawastate.

A permanent foot mark and other archeological evidence of thispre-historic advent of Nyankpa language can still be found at this orallyauthentic place of origin called (Darigo). Darigo, the first Nyankpa man had awife called Obiche with whom they had several children. among these childrenwere Ovurgbe, Ontat, Onok (all males) and Oching (female). Each of them had hisor her own children who grew into the various clans we have in Nyankpa landboth home and in Diaspora today. The offspring from Ovurgbe became the

Ovurgbeclan. Those of Ontat form the Ontat clan while those of Onok are believed to befounders of the old Nok of famous archeological monuments and indeed itssurrounding towns up to Kafancha, Kagoro, and Zunkwa area in the present Kadunastate.

Oching the only female is believed to have married probably to adifferent language called Zho, then living at the foot of the hills where thepresent Kwoi town in Kaduna state is situated. She had children with him out ofwhose lineage the present Mada and Eggun language are believed to have sprungfrom. The Nyankpa people are thus one of the proud archeologicalethnolinguistic clusters of the famous Nok area.

1.3 SOCIOLINGUISTIC PROFILE

The people have their own distinct culture and general way oflife. The Nyankpa people have been generally known in the literature as Yeskwa,a Hausaised form of their name.

Although there are native speakers of Yeskwa in Kaduna, Nassarawa,and Plateau State, they do not form a single speech community across thesestates because of the phonological and morphological differences. Thesedifferences do not interfere with intelligibility. They have a common historyand share similar social and cultural ideologies. Yaskawa is conventionallydivided into twenty mutually comprehensible dialects and Titatara is said to bethe main dialect.

As per the role of the Yeskwa language in education, the researchconducted by the researcher revealed the important role play by the Yeskwalanguage in the area of education. It is a language used in elementary andsecondary schools. The language used as a language of instruction or taught asa subject within both primary and secondary schools in the language area.However, it has said not to attain a high level of standardization nor has itbeen studied in the Nigeria Universities.

The role of Yeskwa as a language in the field of commerce cannotbe overemphasized. Its role is as old as the existence of the Anyankpas. Yeskwalanguage is used by the majority of people to transact business between eachother or among one another.

Above all, Christian broadcasts scriptures in the Yeskwa language.Hence, the majority of Yeskwa native speakers also speak Hausa fluently.

ASPECTS OF YESKWA VERB PHRASE

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