LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation/symbol	Meaning
+	plus or added to
=	equals to
Sg	singular form
Pl	plural form
Adj	adjective
N	noun
Adv	adverb
V	verb
Prep	preposition
~	alternates
/	high tone
\	low tone
	rising tone
!	exclamation mark
	changes to

CHAPTER ONE

YESKWA LANGUAGE ANDITS SPEAKERS

1.0   General Introduction

Language is a majormeans of communication, interaction and relation in the human society. Languageis the network that connects human society together in a lively mood making ita lively place to stay.

Language is "humanvocal sound, or it is the graphic representation of signs and symbol,gesticulations and signals for the purpose of communication." Language issimultaneously a physical process and a way of sharing meaning among people, alanguage in this sense is a system of signs for encoding and decodinginformation. In another words, language is "an instrument of thought, that is,a psycho social interactive measure which binds human society together incommunities and linguistic groups." The use of language has become deeplyentrenched in human culture and, apart from being used to communicate and shareinformation, it also has social and cultural uses, such as signifying groupidentity, social stratification and for social grooming and entertainment.

This work serves as achannel to show case Yeskwa language and also to bring it into the lime lightof the real world of the academician.

Yeskwa language isspoken in the north- west of Nasarawa state, in Karu local government area andKaduna state in Jema'a local government area, all in the Northern region ofNigeria. Yeskwa language is spoken by about thirty-two thousand speakers[32,000] as at 2008 [from

Ethnologue.com] . Most of the speakers aremultilingual, that is, they are able to speak more than their native language[Yeskwa] .

This work willconcentrate on the morphological aspects of Yeskwa language, that is, theorganization of words and formation of words, studying to bring out themorphological beauty of the language by identifying, analyzing and describingforms of words, the morphemes; free and bound morphemes; Derivational versusinflectional, morphological processes and many more in Yeskwa language.

1.1 Historical Background of Yeskwa People.

The first Nyankpa man who livedduring the pre-historic era came from a place called "Darigo". This place wasnamed after the founder of the language, till now this mystical place formparts of the areas around the hills located North East and West of the presentKwoi, in Kaduna state across to Gitata, Bagaji up to Uke areas of the Nasarawastate.   Darigo, was married to Obiche, with whom they had many children, some ofthe children are named, Ovurgbe, Onat, Onok (all males) and Oching (female).The grand children to Darigo produced by his biological children grew up todifferent clans present in Nyankpa land both at home and in diasporas.Ovurgbe's children later became the Ovurgbe clan, Onatat's offspring was shapedinto Ontat clan and those of Onok are believed to have been the pioneer of theold Nok of famous archeological monuments and indeed environs like Kafanchan,Kagoro and Zonkwa area in the present Kaduna state. It is believed that, Madaand Eggon language sprung Oching's lineage today. The Nyankpa people are thusone of the proud archaeological ethno-linguistic clusters of the famous Nokarea.   A permanentfoot mark and other archaeological evidence of this pre-historic advent ofNyankpa language is present at the orally authentic place of origin called'Darigo'.   From the other hand, Yeskwa language speakers migrated from Maiduguri, apart in the northern Nigeria. In the bush they migrated to then, which is nowtheir present permanent location of habitation, the name of the language wasderived from the situation of their immigrants fore-father, meaning 'we deviateor leave from Maiduguri to this bush then what are we to call ourselves' i.e.Nyankpa is formed from two words, leaves "ankpa" and deviation.

The people are calledYeskwa both in literature and by the Hausas, but they call themselves "Nyankpa"and their language "Nyankpa". The language is having Panda, Bede, Gitata (Buzi)and Tattara as the main dialects of Yeskwa language, while Tattara is thestandard form of the language and Bede the most divergent dialects of Yeskwalanguage. The alternative names are Anyankpa and Yasgua (according toethnologue). The population of thepeople have graciously increased year after year because in 1973(SummerInstitute of Linguistics) they are about 13,000 but as at 2008 they are about32,000 in number. The language is not threatened by any neighboring language orprestigious language like Hausa language.

1.2 The Administrative Circle of YeskwaSpeakers

Prior to the adventof colonial rule in Nigeria and before the 19th century, Nyankpa people had anadvanced functional system of governance, with their well shaped clans thatstayed independent of each other. Each clan had a head that gives justice and alsomakes sure that each clan is well administered to.

These heads who arecalled 'odyongutep' as the title also preside over meeting in their clans inall matters, and they have the house or compound heads and elders of the clansas their assistance in performing their duties right.

In additionodyongutep were juju priest odyong nyanpka in each clan who perform purelyritual rites. Their functions are mainly based on general issues of discipline,and these are usually done in the juju shrine 'ofu'. Also these priests haveselected elders called 'Asa cisa' to give a helping hand. The present odyongnyankpa is Joel Sabo Awinge.

1.3 Geographical Location and Map

The language speakersof Yeskwa language are located in the Northern part of Nigeria. About sevenhundred kilometers or more away from Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory

ofNigeria. The speakers of Yeskwa language are founded in Karu Local GovernmentArea also formerly known as Keffi LGA in Nasarawa State, and Jema'a LocalGovernment Area in Kaduna State

1.4 Socio-Cultural Profile

Yule (2007:239) describes"sociolinguistics as the interrelationship between two language and society".Socio-cultural is formed from three word or terms; language, society andcultural. (2007:239):

"It is important notto overlook this social aspect of language because, in many ways, speech is aform of social identity and is used consciously or unconsciously to indicatemembership of different social groups or different speech communities. A speechcommunities is a group of people who share a set of norms, rules andexpectations regarding the use language. Investigating from this perspective isknown as "SOCIOLINGUISTICS".

Yeskwa languagespeakers have so many social plus cultural activities and lifestyles thatdistinguish them from their neighbouring communities. They treat thesesocial-cultural ways of life with great reverence. Some of thesesocial-cultural activities will be exposed.

Occupation: Yeskwapeople engage mainly in farming, theyplant millet (Acha) , cassava (Logo), maize (Vuza), rice (Siyapa), okra(Anvwago), sweet potato (Juma), sugar cane (Oleke), guava (Nkpocho), cotton(Aluru), locust seeds (Emi), monkey-guava (Onkpwat), cowpea (Enep), sorghum(Avu), guinea-yam (Ocit) and so on. They are involved both in annual andperennial farming. This is the major reason the men are polygamous, becauseboth wives and children help the man in farming processes. After the harvestthe women take their product to the market for sale. And in cases when theproducts are in large quantity they export them to other communities and alsooutside the state which is known as "dam" in Yeskwa language.

Dressing: There isalso something special about the way they dress. The ancestors of Yeskwa peoplecovered their nakedness with leaves, the women cover both breast and privatepart only with leaves. Later on, they improved on their dressing changing fromthe use of leaves to what they call "bente" which is made from animal skin(this animals like leopard, cow, ram, etc.)   This improved way of dressing was inthe 17th century and it went into extinction in the 70s. The 'bente' way ofdressing is majorly used by the men in order to hold their male organ (penis)tightly. The women on the other hand made use of animal skin to cover theirbreast with small piece of the animal skin to cover their private part, whichis made in form of short wrapper that wrapped their waist to cover theirprivate part.

As the world becomemore civilized in dressing, the modern way of dressing among the Yeskwaspeakers is to cover their nakedness with sewed underwear like pants for bothwomen and men alike, and brassiere for the women especially those in theiryouth age. Then the outer covering with sowed materials, for men, shirts andtrousers, and women, skirts, wrappers and blouses.

1.4.1 Religion

In ages past, theancient fathers of Yeskwa people (Anyankpa) engage in traditional religion.They worship 'Nan' as their main god and some masquerades to be specific theyworship, namely; 'terefu', 'jaku', 'dagba', 'awiya', 'ambabe', 'donko', 'yaka','gbarato', 'ofu', 'ogbeke' and so on. The story changed when the whitemissionaries came for mission in the land in 1912, through this Christianitywas introduced in the land and community. Later on Islam was brought intoYeskwa through the influence of Usman Danfodio's jihads. As at present, thepopulation of the Christians among the people has greatly increased and has risen high above other religions with thepercentage 70% and the ratio seventy to thirty (70:30) to both traditionalreligion and Islam.

1.4.2 Marriage

Marriage is theformal union of a man and a woman as husband and wife. Marriage is a means bywhich reproduction can take place by further multiplying and increase in thepopulation of a community.

This aspect of lifeis not taken by levity at all by yeskwa people, but with much

seriousness.Bosom friends (men) marry off their daughters to each other right from the timetheir wives are pregnant (even as at the time they haven't known the sex of theunborn baby). After their wives put to bed, the father of the baby boy presentlarge quantity of dried locust bean powder to the mother of the baby girl withwhich her meal is prepared till she is about seven years old (7yrs) when thebaby is seven years old her parent will bring her to her husband's house, although,she will be under the care of her mother-in-law. From that age, it is a mustthat she pays her husband respect till when she is old. When she is old enoughi.e. when she reaches her puberty stage she will leave the mother-in-law tosettle down with her husband. The process is called 'zam' by the people meaningtraditional marriage. Through this method ladies virtue and dignity and ispreserved and treated with high regards and reverence.   Among the yeskwa people, polygamous is rampart and a normal way of life.A man can have up to twelve wives and even more, depending on the capacity.Polygamous is a way of helping the man in his farming occupation, that is boththe wives and their children helps the father in farming on his farm. Apartfrom the father's (husband's) farmland, the wives have each or differentfarmlands to themselves also each child is entitled to have a farmland tohis/herself. After working with their father, they retire to work on theirs.

1.4.3 Festival

Festival is a day orperiod of celebration, and this is the time people from different homes comestogether in the universal lively mood in the town to celebrate in yeskwa. Thisis a time, when numerous socio cultural belt of harmony fastened more tightlyamong the people. The Yeskwa's have numerous festivals, in this research workonly two will be show cased.

Yeskwa peoplecelebrate a festival called 'ekokop' by them when a grandfather has fourgrandsons. This festival came to life because of their belief that the sons arestrong and gift from their gods. This festival is a way of showing appreciationto the gods for blessing them with special gift. The grandfather provides mealsto all the invitees during the ceremony.

The second festivalthat the Yeskwa's will never treat with levity even though their religion(Christianity or Islam) is not in support of which they still celebrate is'turning of the dead'. This is done after some years a person has died, duringthe celebration a masquerade will represent the dead person, then horns called'ezo ezo' a long wooden horn will be played with what they call 'ontom' duringthe ceremony. The people also call the masquerades voice 'ekpaciri'.

Their believe aboutthis, is that it is a way of making the journey of the dead safe to heaven,they also believe that any family who refuses to perform this tradition canlead to a dead trap to the other living members of the family. It is one of thefamily members who is a matured man that usually put on the masquerade cloth,and this masquerades represent the dead person on earth. During all thesefestivals, there is usually merry all over the community because they arewishing one of them who is dead a safe and smooth trip to heaven.

The points that has beendiscussed under the broad topic socio-cultural using Yeskwa language, hasproved and showed that the Yeskwas are rich and wealthy when it comes toculture and tradition.

1.5 Genetic Classification

Ruhlen (1994:1)states that; "the idea that groups of languages that share certain systematicresemblance have inherited those similarities from a common origin is the basisfor genetic classification". Also Greenberg (1966:8) explained that Africanlanguages belong to various families, and there are four main groups namely;Niger-kordofian, Nilo-sahara, Afro-asiatic and Khoisan.

Yeskwa language isrelated to other African languages through the diagram of geneticclassification. This means or portrays that all languages grouped under Africanlanguages relates in one way or the other, this is the usefulness of geneticclassification.

Yeskwa language issub-grouped under the platoid-west of language family. The below

diagram figureshows the detailed classification of Yeskwa language.

1.6 Scope and Organization of Study

In this researchwork, an attempt has been made to investigate the aspect of the morphology ofthe Yeskwa language spoken in Nasarawa, Karu Local Government (formerly Keffi)and Kaduna state, Jema'a Local Government.

Thus, the study ingeneral has been systematically divided into five chapters, with each chaptercontaining relevant linguistic information about the morphology of thelanguage.

Chapter one addressesthe introductory part of this work, it includes the general background ofYeskwa, the historical location where the people, the geographical locationwhere the people speaking Yeskwa language can be found, the socio-culturalprofile, with their religion, marriage and festival inclusive, the geneticclassification of Yeskwa language, as well as the theoretical framework, thedata collection, data analysis gotten data from Yeskwa language.

Chapter two examinesthe sound inventories and the sound patterns in Yeskwa language with thedistribution of vowel and consonant sounds inclusive.

The third chapterprobes into the aspects of the Yeskwa morphology; morphemes types and languagetypologies in Yeskwa language, also examined are the details of free and boundmorphemes with their kinds in Yeskwa language.

The fourth chapterfocuses on the morphological processes that are present in Yeskwa language, inthe formation of new words.

Chapter five, thelast chapter, summarizes, makes some recommendations and draws conclusion aboutthe whole work also with the references including the appendix containing the400 word list.

1.7 Data Collection

The data collectionwas done through the use of Ibadan word list of four hundred (400) lexicalitems. The method used in the data collection is called contact method. Thedata collection was possible through the language informants or helpers, whoare native speakers of Yeskwa language. Information about the informants usedin this research work are as follows; the first informant is Mr. Ayeme Efuna,thirty- four years old, he is a state security officer by occupation. Mr.Zachariah Muhammed is the second language helper, he is thirty years old, heworks with the Nigeria National Petroleum Company (NNPC). The duo are native ofKondoro in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa state, also both informantare multilingual, aside Yeskwa language , they speak English, Hausa, Gbagi andEggon in addition to their native language. The minimum years they had stayedin their home town is twenty-five years. The third informant is Mr. AbudullahiAminu, he is 63 years old, a native of Nasarawa state, a native speaker ofYeskwa language, aside this he is able to speak Nupe, Hausa, Yoruba and a bitof English language. He spent 25years in his home town, by occupation he is atraditional medicine practitioner, also a Muslim by religion.

1.8 Data Analysis

Based on the Ibadan400 wordlist and the frame technique collected through a direct translationfrom English into Yeskwa language the data was analysed.

1.9 Brief Review of Theoretical Framework

Theories are bundlesof abstract representation that occurs in the linguistics repertoire of alinguist. Theories are propounded in order to present a systematic account ofthe linguistic knowledge or the competence of native speaker posses morphologylike other levels of language analysis has several theories that can be use todemystify it.

The frame techniquethat will be used in this research work is one of the most valued approaches tomorphology, this distinct approach was codified by two scholars by nameBloomfield (1933) and Hockett (1954). This approach is linked withstructuralists' linguistics because this approach was probe into by Bloomfieldin 1933 by organizing laws and rules which later developed into a system inmorphological linguistics.

The theoreticalframework to be use in study is Morpheme based morphology. Henceforth, seessword forms to be analysed as arrangements of morphemes. Morpheme basedmorphology, a modern and sophisticated approach seek to maintain the idea ofthe

morpheme while accepting non- concatenative, analogical and other processesthat are problem free.

"A morpheme isdefined as the minimal meaningful unit of a language."

This theory ofmorphology that treat words as if they were made up of morphemes, place aftereach other like beads on a string is called item and arrangement model. InEnglish language for example the word 'antidisestablishmentarianism' is asingle word in the dictionary but it is the joining of morphemes. This wordalso proves the fact that in this model is putting the above word arrangementin a language. The constituent can be analysed as follows;

Anti– meanspreventing, like antivirus. [bound morpheme]

–dis – means   not or the opposite. [bound morpheme]

–establish– means tostart or create.[free morpheme]

–ment– means a derivational way, it changes the wordto noun class from verb class.[bound morpheme]

–arian– means aderivational way of changing word class [bound morpheme] .

This word comprisessix morphemes; five bound morphemes and one free morpheme.

Other examples:

Misfortune > mis-means bad [bound] + -fortunate means luck [free]

Misused > mis-[bound] , -use – [free] , -ed-[bound] represent past tense

Unenviable>un-[bound] means 'not' +-envi- [free] +-able- [bound]

Tucker > tuck-[free] + -er- [bound]

Triangle> tri-[bound] means three +-angle- [free] means shapes.

ASPECTS OF THE MORPHOLOGY IN YESKWA LANGUAGE