

BACKGROUND

This chapter will examine the general background of the study and described the speakers of the language in respect of their historical background and socio-cultural profile. It also, introduces us to the genetic classification of Kofyar, the scope and organization of the study together with the theoretical framework. The method of data collection and analysis, as well as the review of the chosen framework are also examined. The work studies negation in Kofyar, a language spoken in Qua'anpan local government area of Plateau state. The speakers of Kofyar spread to seven districts due to their large population in Doemak, the main village. The Kofyar people are administered by village heads and they are assisted by their chiefs. Therefore, the aspects covered in this study are the sound, tonal and syllable inventories of the language, as well as some syntactic concepts such as phrase structure rules, basic word order, lexical categories and sentence types. Transformational processes like focusing, relativization and question formation are discussed.

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Historical Background of Kofyar People

According to oral history Kofyar, people of the present day of Plateau state of Nigeria are from Jukun origin. The ancestral home of the Kofyar people was 'Kofyar payer' while their ancestor in Dafyar, who descended from the eastern part of the country. Dafyar gave birth to twelve children in Kofyar among which were twins (Dajan and Dajin) Dajin went to Namu while Dajan stayed in Doemak meaning "my movement ends here". Kofyar language has the following dialects Kofyar (Kwong), Kwagallak (Kwa), (Kwalla), Dimmuk (Dimuk, Doemak, Mirriam, Mernyang) Bwol (Bwal, Mbol) Gworam (Giverom, Goram), Jipal (Jepel, Jibyal).

The speakers are approximately 50,000. The population known as the Kofyar actually comprises three different tribes as designated by British Colonial officers: the Doemak or Dimmuk, Mernyang and Kwalla.

However, the three groups have a common language, economic pattern and origin (Nigeria census, 2005). These speakers are officially known as Kofyar people but locally referred to as Koffiar. The diagram below shows the geographical location of the Kofyar people on the map of Qua'anpan local government.

NEGATION IN KOFYAR LANGUAGE OF PLATEAU STATE

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