

## TONE SPLITTING AND GWANDARA ETHNOHISTORY

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Gwandara, spoken by some 50,000 people in the Middle Belt of Nigeria, is the Chadic language most closely related to Hausa. It is geographically totally separated from Hausa (and other Chadic languages), being surrounded by speakers of Kwa and Plateau languages. Gwandara and Hausa are not mutually intelligible, though many Gwandaras speak Hausa as a second language. The extent of difference between the two languages, as well as the degree of similarity, can be seen in the following examples. (All Gwandara data in the paper are drawn from Matsushita [1972, 1973, 1974]).

- |        |                              |                          |
|--------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| (1) H. | náa tsáyàa'á kân Ráfàa d'áyá | 'I stood on one foot'    |
| G.     | ń cècē à kyíyá kápā dā       |                          |
| (2) H. | wúRánnàn bâa tá dà káifíí    | 'this knife isn't sharp' |
| G.     | ĩnkāmú í mā ñ kápī bá        |                          |
| (3) H. | bàì zóo bá tükùná            | 'he hasn't come yet'     |
| G.     | í tükù jò wō bá              |                          |
| (4) H. | kùnámàa táa hàrbée ñì        | 'a scorpion stung me'    |
| G.     | kùnámā rībī ñī               |                          |

This paper addresses the following linguistic/ethnohistorical question: Is Gwandara an independent millennium-old sister language of Hausa, as implied by most Chadic language classifications, or is it, as suggested by oral history, a relatively recent offshoot of Hausa that has undergone massive, contact-induced change? In other words, is the relationship of Gwandara to Hausa comparable to that of Frisian and English or to that of Krio and English? A key to the solution of the problem lies in the comparative analysis of the tonal systems of the two languages.

Unlike Hausa, which has two distinctive tones inherited from Proto-West-Chadic, Gwandara has three tone levels: Hi á , Lo à , and Mid ā . The tonal correspondences are set out in the following examples, Hausa on the left, Gwandara on the right. (Long vowels in Hausa are indicated by double letters; Gwandara does not have distinctive vowel length.)

- |     |         |       |         |     |         |        |            |
|-----|---------|-------|---------|-----|---------|--------|------------|
| (5) | H L >   | H M   |         | (6) | L H >   | L M    |            |
|     | Ráfàa   | kápā  | 'foot'  |     | Ràhóo   | kòhō   | 'horn'     |
|     | wáakàa  | wónkā | 'song'  |     | yàashíí | yànshī | 'sand'     |
|     | dúutsèe | dúncī | 'stone' |     | kwàađóo | kwàrō  | 'frog'     |
|     | gásàa   | gáshā | 'roast' |     | Ràarú   | kàrū   | 'increase' |

- |     |           |                |     |           |                |
|-----|-----------|----------------|-----|-----------|----------------|
| (7) | L H L >   | L H M          | (8) | H L H >   | H L M          |
|     | hànkáakàa | ànkákā 'crow'  |     | mútàanéé  | ńtànī 'people' |
|     | ðàráawòo  | bòrówā 'thief' |     | gírìgizáa | gígìjā 'shake' |
- 
- |     |     |            |      |       |              |
|-----|-----|------------|------|-------|--------------|
| (9) | L > | L          | (10) | L L > | L L          |
|     | mèè | mì 'what?' |      | àbù   | m̀bò 'thing' |
|     | wàa | wà 'who?'  |      | m̀cè  | m̀cè 'woman' |
- 
- |      |      |             |      |        |               |
|------|------|-------------|------|--------|---------------|
| (11) | H >  | H           | (12) | H H >  | H M           |
|      | dúu  | dú 'all'    |      | húđú   | hūrū 'four'   |
|      | tá   | té 'via'    |      | ráanáa | nānā 'sun'    |
|      | sháa | shá 'drink' |      | đáací  | rācī 'bitter' |
|      | cí   | cí 'eat'    |      | gání   | gānī 'see'    |

The above examples illustrate differences between Gwandara and Hausa, but do not explain the development of the additional tone level. Here are some of the sources for the three-way tonal contrast in Gwandara. First, there is truncation of disyllabic H H words resulting in a distinctive Mid tone on monosyllabic words.

- (13) Loss of syllable: H H > MM > M
- |      |    |       |        |     |               |
|------|----|-------|--------|-----|---------------|
| đáyá | dā | 'one' | tsáwóo | cō  | 'length'      |
| bíyú | bī | 'two' | túwóo  | twō | 'staple food' |

Second, there is the effect of final vowel length. The H L > H M change presented in (5) actually only applies to words with an original long final vowel. Where the original final vowel was short, H L is realized as H L. Since Gwandara has lost distinctive vowel length, the former contrast between long and short final vowels has emerged as a tonal contrast between H M as opposed to H L.

- (14) Effect of short final vowel: H L (short) > H L > H L
- |          |      |             |           |       |            |
|----------|------|-------------|-----------|-------|------------|
| 'úkù     | úkù  | 'three'     | mútù      | mútù  | 'die'      |
| j́yà     | j́yà | 'yesterday' | b́átà     | b́étà | 'get lost' |
| (ná)mj́ì | mj́ì | 'male'      | námù/támù | -ámù  | 'our'      |
- (cf. H. mj́ì G. mj́ì 'husband')

Third, within Gwandara itself, a contrast between Hi and Mid has surfaced due to the suffixation of a floating Hi tone genitive/associative marker. Note the following examples within Gwandara of M M vs. M H, H M vs. H H, and L M vs. L H.

(15) Suffixation of genitive/associative marker ' .

nānā	'sun/day'	nānā bijē	'market day'
āskyē	'light'	āskyē nānā	'sunlight'
(cf. H. háskée, háskén ráanāa )			
rāmī	'hole'	rāmí kúnī	'ear hole'
wóntā	'month'	wóntá jíyà	'last month'
òbā	'father'	òbá míjī	'husband's father'
kèshī	'bone'	kèshí báy	'backbone'

The mechanism by which Gwandara has increased its number of tones does not match the generally known process of tone splitting [Maddieson 1974]. Rather, the Gwandara tonal system seems to have resulted from the reinterpretation of Hausa surface tones in terms of the tone spacing grid of a language or languages already having three tones. Note the similarity between the treatment of Hausa loanwords in Gwari and Nupe [Maddieson 1977], two Kwa languages with three tones, with the tonal correspondences between Hausa and Gwandara. The proposed explanation for the tone splitting in Gwandara is thus substratum, i.e. Gwandara arose from Hausa as pronounced by people whose first language had three tones like neighboring Kwa and Plateau languages. The substratum explanation fits in well with other major changes in Gwandara: loss of grammatical gender, loss of distinctive vowel length, and loss of glottalized consonants. These are all common features of non-native Hausa [Feyer 1947, Hodge 1960]. By contrast, glottalization is an extremely stable feature of Chadic languages [Wolff 1959], being resistant to loss even under extreme areal and contact pressures [Wolff and Gerhardt 1977].

This is not to say that Gwandara should be viewed simply as a deviant, pidginized dialect of modern Hausa [Gouffé 1973]. Since Gwandara exhibits older features of Hausa as well as certain Kano Hausa innovations, it cannot be identified with any present-day dialect. Rather, Gwandara has to be associated with a variant of Kano Hausa as it existed at a somewhat earlier period of time. Consider the following:

(16)	Sokoto H.		Kano H.		Gwandara	
	ḍiyáa	ḍíyáa	'yáa	'yáayáa	yā	yāyā 'daughter/children'

If Gwandara had taken its singular form from the Sokoto dialect (which preserves the original shape of the word) it would appear as ḍiyā or riyā; if it had taken it from present day Kano Hausa it would appear as yā with Hi tone. The Gwandara form relates instead to a hypothetical old Kano form \*'yāá that existed after the ḍiy- to 'y innovation, but before the subsequent LH to H contour tone simplification rule characteristic of modern Hausa [Parsons 1955, Leben 1971].

According to oral tradition [Hass and Na'ibi 1962, Isichei 1982, Temple and Temple 1922], the Gwandara were Hausa people who fled from Kano rather than accept Islam. Unomah [1982] has proposed that the exodus most likely took place

during the reign of Yaji, 11th Emir of Kano (1349–1385), or Muhammad Rumfa, 20th Emir of Kano (1463–1499), while Adamu [1978] has pointed to the reign of Muhammadu Kutumbi, 29th Emir of Kano (1623–1648). The latter date, particularly, has been felt to be incompatible with the considerable linguistic differences between Gwandara and Hausa. However a time depth of as little as 300 years presents no problem once one recognizes that Gwandara is not an isolated sister language of Hausa that has diverged gradually through time, but rather is a sort of creolized Hausa that has undergone rapid change due to substratum influence. Linguistic, historical, and geographical factors suggest that there never was a mass migration of Gwandaras from Hausaland. Rather, a small group or groups of pagan Hausa found a refuge in the Middle Belt region where they became the nucleus for multi-tribal settlements containing Kwa and Plateau speakers. Eventually the non-native Hausa of the majority of the community developed into the language that is now known as Gwandara.

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