

# ARABIC, THE MUSLIM PRAYER AND BEYOND

An Inaugural Lecture  
Delivered at the University of Ibadan

on Thursday, 16 September, 1999

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE AUTHOR

To MR. B. A. OLADELE LIBRARIAN  
Signed [Signature] by

Date 03.11.08

**Sayed H. A. Malik**  
*Professor of Arabic*  
Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

ARABIC, THE MUSLIM PRAYER  
AND BEYOND

Ibadan University Press,  
Publishing House,  
University of Ibadan,  
Ibadan, Nigeria.

© University of Ibadan  
Ibadan, Nigeria

*First Published 1999*

*All Rights Reserved*

ISBN 978 - 121 - 321 - 3

Printed by:  
W. Giradet Press (W.A.) Co., Old Ife Road, Ibadan.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

## **ARABIC, THE MUSLIM PRAYERS AND BEYOND**

Mr. Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration), Registrar, Provost of the College of Medicine, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Deans of Other Faculties and the Postgraduate School, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to deliver on behalf of the Faculty of Arts the first in the series of the University Inaugural Lectures for the 1998/99 academic session. I am therefore fully conscious of the honour done me by the Faculty in giving me this opportunity to act as its torch-bearer.

The Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies was established in this University in 1962. In the following year, courses leading to the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree in Arabic and Islamic studies were instituted. The aim of the B.A. degree in Arabic and Islamic Studies is the study of the Arabic Language and Literature and an understanding of the Islamic civilization, which is the common heritage of all Arabic-speaking countries in the Middle East and of many other countries and communities in Africa and Asia. The degree options which are currently being offered by the Department are: B.A. Arabic Language and Literature, B.A. Islamic Studies and B.A. Arabic and Islamic Studies.

This inaugural lecture is the second from the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies. The first was delivered on Thursday, January 30, 1986 by the late Professor Musa Abdul, who was the first Nigerian on the academic staff of the Department. His lecture came from the Islamic Studies component of the Department and was titled: "Religious Challenges to National Development".

My lecture is coming from the Arabic Language component of our Department. Therefore, I have the honour of delivering the first inaugural lecture from the chair of Arabic Language of this University.

The title of my lecture is: "Arabic, the Muslim Prayers and Beyond", and the intention is to examine the relationship of Arabic with the religion of Islam, its historic contribution in the past and its role in modern times. The relevance of Arabic to the contemporary human societies will, I hope, emerge in the course of the lecture.

### Arabic as a Language of a Revealed Religion.

Wherever Islam was preached, encouragement was given to the learning of Arabic and to the establishment of schools for teaching the reading of the Qur'an and for the study of the Arabic Language and Islamic literature. This is in consonance with the divine injunction in the Qur'an which stresses the importance of literacy in the life of man. This divine injunction is as follows:

- ١ - اِقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ .
- ٢ - خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ .
- ٣ - اِقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ .
- ٤ - الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ .
- ٥ - عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

1. Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists).
2. He has created man from a clot (of thick coagulated blood).



3. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.
4. Who has taught (the writing) by the pen.
5. He has taught man that which he did not know.

(Qur'an; 96:1-5)

It is evident that the main factor responsible for the spread of Arabic to areas outside the Arabian peninsula is Islam. Being the language of the Qur'an and the Islamic branches of knowledge (i.e commentaries of the Qur'an, hadith-criticism, Islamic law, theology etc.), Arabic has inevitably been interwoven with Islam. The intimate relationship between the two is reflected in the attributes and beliefs of the Arab and non-Arab Muslims over the centuries. They have always had great reverence for the Qur'an which exerted from the outset, a great influence on their religious, political, social and intellectual life.

The fact that every Muslim must recite portions of the Qur'an in its original Arabic in his ritual prayers, no matter what his native tongue may be, promoted considerably the study of Arabic, both as a native and foreign language. In the early centuries of Islam, there were linguistic developments which stemmed directly from the religious stimulus and aesthetic appreciation of the Qur'an.

In the long run, many non-Arabs were motivated to learn Arabic and suddenly the language found its users fast multiplying with the passage of years. Such fast increases in the number of Arabic users invariably led to the loss of the original purity and correctness of the language. Consequently, many ungrammatical Arabic expressions were soon to be heard in oral expressions as well as in the reading of the Qur'an. And with time, not only the non-Arabs were committing such grammatical mistakes but many Arabs as well. These developments naturally led to meticulous philological studies which culminated in the writing of valuable

books on grammar, lexicography and other aspects of the language, all of which form the Arabic heritage to the present day.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the Arabic Qur'an became the pivot around which several linguistic studies revolved. Arabic grammar and morphology, for instance, were developed in order to protect the Qur'an from corruption by foreigners who later accepted Islam as a way of life; Qur'an exegesis evolved in an attempt to give the correct interpretation of specific verses of the Qur'an; Phonetics and the art of the recitation of the Qur'an in accordance with the established code of pronunciation and intonation emerged to ensure the correct production of the phonemes which make up the Qur'anic words and expressions; Arabic lexicography and Philology developed so that specific expressions contained in the Qur'an may be traced to their roots; Arabic rhetorics evolved to explain the use of unfamiliar images in the Qur'an<sup>2</sup>.

The Qur'an was believed to represent the highest linguistic achievement of the Arabic language. For this reason, it has become a factor to be considered in any study of the Arabic language. This conviction must have facilitated the rapid development and dissemination of Arabic and contributed immensely to its transformation from an obscure dialect into one of the important languages of medieval and modern times.

Commenting on the relationship of Arabic with the Islamic religion, Browne, a non-Muslim, has observed:

The Arabic language is in a special degree the language of a great religion. To us the Bible is the Bible, whether we read it in the original tongues or in our own, but it is otherwise with the Qur'an amongst the Muslims. To them this Arabic Qur'an is the very word of God, an objective, not a subjective revelation<sup>3</sup>.



books on grammar, lexicography and other aspects of the language, all of which form the Arabic heritage to the present day.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the Arabic Qur'an became the pivot around which several linguistic studies revolved. Arabic grammar and morphology, for instance, were developed in order to protect the Qur'an from corruption by foreigners who later accepted Islam as a way of life; Qur'an exegesis evolved in an attempt to give the correct interpretation of specific verses of the Qur'an; Phonetics and the art of the recitation of the Qur'an in accordance with the established code of pronunciation and intonation emerged to ensure the correct production of the phonemes which make up the Qur'anic words and expressions; Arabic lexicography and Philology developed so that specific expressions contained in the Qur'an may be traced to their roots; Arabic rhetorics evolved to explain the use of unfamiliar images in the Qur'an<sup>2</sup>.

The Qur'an was believed to represent the highest linguistic achievement of the Arabic language. For this reason, it has become a factor to be considered in any study of the Arabic language. This conviction must have facilitated the rapid development and dissemination of Arabic and contributed immensely to its transformation from an obscure dialect into one of the important languages of medieval and modern times.

Commenting on the relationship of Arabic with the Islamic religion, Browne, a non-Muslim, has observed:

The Arabic language is in a special degree the language of a great religion. To us the Bible is the Bible, whether we read it in the original tongues or in our own, but it is otherwise with the Qur'an amongst the Muslims. To them this Arabic Qur'an is the very word of God, an objective, not a subjective revelation<sup>3</sup>.

The Qur'an, which is held by the Muslims to be the very word of God, was revealed to Muhammad in the Arabic language. This book is thus regarded as the source of all knowledge and wisdom. Since the Arabic Qur'an is the word of God, it is inimitable and is generally held untranslatable. For this reason, Muslims in every age and place have considered it a religious duty to acquaint themselves with Arabic so as to be able to read the Qur'an in its original language. Thus, Arabic has become the religious language of all Muslims irrespective of colour, race or nationality. Hitti emphasized this point when he said:

The classical form is not only the literary form used by all the Arabic writing peoples but also the religious language of all Muslims, no matter what their native tongue may be. To Muslims, Arabic is the only appropriate language of approach to Allah<sup>4</sup>.

Many Muslim theologians, philosophers and philologists upheld the doctrine of the divine nature of the Qur'an. This came to encompass the Arabic language itself. In the introduction to his well-known Arabic lexicon, *Lisanu-l-'Arab*, Ibn Mansur says that it is God who made the Arabic language superior to all other languages and that He enhanced it further by revealing the Qur'an through it and by making it the language of the people of paradise. He relates a tradition attributed to Prophet Muhammad stating the three reasons why people love the Arabs:

أنا عربي. والقرآن عربي. ولغة أهل  
الجنة العربية .

I am an Arab; the Qur'an is Arabic; and the language of the people of Paradise is Arabic.<sup>5</sup>



Similarly, Mahmud Taymur, a famous Egyptian scholar and a member of the Egyptian language Academy, rejects the views of those who consider standard Arabic doomed to perish as Latin did. He argues that Arabic is the language of a revealed religion (*Lughatu dinin samawiyyin*) and that it is bound to remain a living language as long as the Qur'an and Islam exist.<sup>6</sup>

This situation is aptly described by Chejne as follows:

It is this kind of conviction coupled with the religious devotion of the faithful that was the main factor contributing to the belief in the supremacy of the Arabic language as revealed through the Qur'an, and in the necessity for learning and reproducing the language of God's word in a way befitting its divine origin.<sup>7</sup>

It is worth noting that the grammar taught in the schools of the Arab world today is virtually identical with the grammatical system devised by the eighth-century Muslim scholars. It should also be pointed out that the efforts of these scholars were confined to classical Arabic rather than spoken Arabic dialects. Thus, while the latter developed faster along different lines in different areas, the former was much slower in development holding the classical form of the Qur'an and pre-Islamic poetry as its model and was always close to this model no matter in which areas the literature was produced. This implies that standard Arabic was protected from what is normally termed 'linguistic decay' to which some European languages like Latin and Old English have been exposed.<sup>8</sup> As a result, the spoken Arabic of the different Arab countries can truly be described as dialects of one and the same language rather than separate languages.

### **Arabic as a Medium of Historical Documentation**

From the historical perspective, Africa, like some other continents, is greatly indebted to Arabic for serving as the vehicle of a vast literature and for keeping African historical records which we, as Africans, can proudly call our own. Many centuries before the coming of Europeans to West Africa, Arabic had brought its educational achievements as well as its rich literature to the West African environment. It is on record that for about three hundred years, between the 17th and 19th centuries, Arabic documents remained the only sources of information for European writers who were interested in the history of the Western and Central Sudan. Many of the scholarly works written by native West African authors in Arabic or in their native languages using the Arabic script formed valuable source material for the reconstruction of African history. It is worth noting that these Arabic works contain convincing and sufficient evidence to show that Africa had never been a 'dark continent' as claimed by European writers on Africa. This point has been well articulated by renowned African scholars. For instance, the late Professor K.O. Dike, a former Vice-Chancellor of this University said:

As a historian myself, I have taken the keenest interest in this development for it is through the aid of these Arabic documents, and those written in African languages in the Arabic script, that the scholar will be aided in his task of unlocking the secrets of the African past. It had been a revelation to the whole world of scholarship to realise for the first time that Africa before the European penetration, so far from being a "dark continent", was in fact a continent where the light of scholarship shone brightly, as the Arabic works now being discovered bear testimony<sup>9</sup>.

Emphasizing the importance of Arabic in the history of the Sokoto caliphate, Last commented:

.... the fullest histories of the first fifty years of the nineteenth century are those written in Arabic .... For the later period, it is the Arabic sources again ... that provide the data for the Sokoto administration and its crises during the last two decades of the nineteenth century .... Without recourse to the Arabic sources, no adequate study of Sokoto, I believe, is possible. Most modern historians have overlooked the importance of the Arabic sources in relation to the oral tradition, owing to the poverty of published texts or translations. Further, since the translations that are generally known are sometimes misleading, scholarship based on them is somewhat vitiated.<sup>10</sup>

Commenting on the important role of the Arabic scholars in various research efforts aimed at discovering indigenous materials for writing authentic Nigerian history, the late Professor Dike said:

... It is through their work on the enormous amount of Arabic material in Archives and Libraries, both public and private, that we shall be enabled to put together a coherent picture of Northern Nigerian history based on our own indigenous source materials and not, as in the past, chiefly on the report of colonial administrator and foreign travellers, valuable though much of these material is. The significance of this for the new generation of Nigerian students in schools and colleges can hardly be over-emphasised. The Arabic scholars of the present, drawing upon the writings of the Arabic scholars of the past, will



be able to bring before us the events and happenings of the past ages of Nigeria, and so help us to write a history we may rightly call our own.<sup>11</sup>

It is pertinent to mention that records written in Arabic or in Swahili using the Arabic script also constitute an important source material for the history of East African countries. On this point Kamera and two other scholars comment as follows:

But the most important documents of medieval history on the eastern coast is [sic] found in written records. Most of them were written in Swahili (using Arabic characters), in Portuguese, English and German, and in Arabic, Persian and Gujerati.<sup>12</sup>

It is thus clear from the assertions of scholars of African history that the importance of Arabic to African history, including West African history, is immense. Since records of pre-colonial Africa existed only in Arabic or in African languages written in the Arabic script, knowledge of Arabic is certainly indispensable to historians of those periods of African history. The validity of this assertion is underlined by the fact that the doctorate theses of at least two former students of the Department of History of this University had to be jointly supervised by our Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies and the Department of History. Both of them are now accomplished historians of international repute.

That Arabic is very relevant to African history is also attested by the fact that the title of the journal published for the Historical Society of Nigeria is *Tarikh*, which is the Arabic word for "history".

It hardly needs saying, of course, that there will be no history if there are no events, and events can only be prevented from falling into oblivion if they are recorded through the instrumentality of language. It is, therefore, important to note that prior to the European penetration, Arabic language had played a crucial role by serving as the only indigenous African language through which the events of the African past were recorded for the present and future generations.

### Arabic Literacy

In all communities that have embraced Islam, the history of Arabic literacy is traceable to the advent of Islam in such communities. Thus, Arabic has made outstanding literary contributions to the indigenous West African civilization by bringing the first form of literacy (i.e Literacy in Arabic) to West African countries before the coming of the colonial masters to the area. Many West African languages such as Wolof, Mandinka, Hausa, Fulfulde and Yoruba were commonly written in the Arabic script before the introduction of the Latin script. Writing in local languages using the Arabic script is known as *ajami*. Until the twentieth century, Hausa and Fulfulde were written in this Islamic literacy tradition.<sup>13</sup>

Records show that by the first quarter of the nineteenth century, itinerant Hausa trader-teachers had settled in Yorubaland teaching the natives basic Islamic sciences and Arabic literacy. A testimony of the cultivation of Arabic by the Yoruba at that time is given by Richard Lander, the British explorer who, in company of captain Clapperton, visited parts of Yorubaland between 1825 and 1826. He has recorded:

There were Mallams (teachers) from Hausa reside [sic] in almost every town through which they passed. The Mallams were in such towns



propagating their religion and teaching the inhabitants to read and write in Arabic. Therefore, Islamic education had evidently been introduced to towns like Oyo, Ogbomosho, Ikoyi, Iseyin, Igboho and Badagry, at least, by the beginning of the last century.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, the encouragement and patronage of the ruling elite enhanced Arabic-Islamic learning in major towns of Yorubaland in the nineteenth century. For instance, it is on record that Apati, a chieftain of the Owu clan, sent eight of his children for instruction in Qur'anic studies under the guardianship of a Fulani mallam who accompanied the clan during its migration to the city of Abeokuta in the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup> It is, therefore, not surprising that the earliest documents in Yoruba language, as in other West African languages, employed Arabic script. This is because Arabic was the only written language known to the natives before the advent of Western education and the introduction of the Latin script. That Arabic literacy was a prominent phenomenon in the Yoruba Muslim communities by the beginning of the nineteenth century when colonialism was being imposed and Christianity was being introduced is further confirmed by another evidence to the effect that the Christian missionaries in their attempt to develop a standard Yoruba orthography to enable them to undertake scholastic and evangelistic work considered, among other options, adapting the Arabic script. On this point Samuel Johnson says:

The earliest attempt to reduce this language into writing was in the early forties of the last century, when the Church Missionary Society, ... organized a mission to the Yoruba country .... After several fruitless efforts had been made either to invent new characters, or



adapt the Arabic, which was already known to Moslem Yorubas, the Roman character was naturally adopted.<sup>16</sup>

The prominence of Arabic literacy before the advent of colonialism in Africa is also true in the case of East Africa as attested by the following statement of Tolmacheva's:

There is evidence that literacy came to the East African coast very soon after hijra; but that it was at first a hieratic art confined to religious works in the Arabic language.<sup>17</sup>

There is the story of a British professor of African languages who visited the president of a West African country sometime ago. While the professor was talking about education and literacy in Africa, the president was surprised to hear about the high literacy rate in his country. When the president asked the professor for evidence, the professor requested the Head of State to allow his cook and servants to be brought in. They could, of course, neither write in English nor in the Latin script. But when the visiting professor insisted that they should write anything, they all started to write their names in the Arabic script.<sup>18</sup> Thus was the British professor able to prove his point to the president who had previously regarded his servants as illiterate.

It should be noted that in recent times, there is a growing interest of Muslim peoples in using the Arabic script to write their native languages. For instance, there are at present in Northern Nigeria publications in Hausa language using the Arabic script. These include books, pamphlets and weekly newspapers. The current effort being made by the Morocco-based Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) in

encouraging the use of the Arabic script in writing the languages of Muslim peoples is noteworthy in this regard. Four Nigerian languages - Hausa, Kanuri, Fulfulde and Yoruba - are among the fifteen languages selected from East and West Africa by this organization which, in collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank, Jeddah, (Saudi Arabia) has standardized the Arabic symbols and manufactured special typewriters for writing these selected languages. Three of such special typewriters are available in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies of this University.

Empirical evidence shows that there are many people in West and East Africa today who cannot write either in the English or the Latin script but who still read and write things in their local languages using the Arabic script. Thus, those who are erroneously considered illiterate are in fact literate in Arabic. An indication, perhaps, that more Nigerians are literate in Arabic than in English is the fact that the Nigerian currency note carries an inscription indicating its value in a Nigerian language written in the Arabic script.

From the foregoing analysis, it is clear that many countries in West and East Africa have proved no exceptions to the general rule that the spread of Islam is accompanied by a spread of literacy in Arabic which provides a means of opening up communications in a way not possible for illiterate people. Therefore, the role of the Arabic language in providing a common form of literacy over large parts of West and East Africa as well as in establishing a means of both local and international communication and as a vehicle for education right up to the present day cannot be ignored.

### **Arabic Literary Contribution**

Apart from the Qur'an, which was revealed in Arabic, the Hadith and the literary works which explain in clear terms the religious, philosophical and legal foundations of the Islamic community



and its contributions to world civilization in the fields of literature, art, science, medicine and architecture, were originally written in Arabic before they were translated into other languages. It should be further noted that in the ninth and tenth centuries, which were accompanied by an enormous literary output, the Arabic language acquired a universal character. As the medium of intellectual expression, it had a general appeal not only among Muslims but also among non-Muslims.

Commenting on the important role which Arabic played from the eleventh century onwards, Chejne says:

Arabic served as the medium for transmitting Greco-Arabic lore to the West through the translation of Arabic books into Latin, Spanish and Sicily served as the link between East and West in the cultural osmosis that had an enormous influence on Western thought.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, it should be pointed out that Arabic served as the medium through which many of the excellent works of the Romans and the Greeks were passed to modern Europe. On this point Hitti observes:

Language, next to religion, constituted the major enduring contribution of Arabians. For some three hundred years, beginning in the mid-eighth century, Arabic was the vehicle for transmitting scientific, philosophic and literary thought, which was quantitatively and qualitatively superior to anything being transmitted in Latin, Hindu, Chinese or any other language.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, scores of books were preserved in the Arabic translation whereas the original writing of such works was lost forever.

An important aspect of the literary contribution of Arabic is



in the area of travel literature. It is to be noted that Arabic travel literature constitutes a large segment of the general main stream of Arabic literature. Many Arab and Muslim travellers have contributed in varying degrees to our knowledge of the people and places with which they came into contact at certain periods of Islamic history. It is pertinent to mention that scholarly travels for the sake of acquiring knowledge in both medieval and contemporary Muslim societies are motivated by religious purposes. In this connection, the following *hadith* (tradition) of Prophet Muhammad is very relevant:

من خرج في طلب العلم وهو في  
سبيل الله حتى يرجع

He who goes out in search of knowledge will  
be in the path of Allah until he returns.

Thus, travel as a meritorious activity is endowed with an ancient pedigree in the Muslim tradition.

'One of the most famous contributors to Arabic travel literature is the Moroccan, Muhammad Ibn Abdallah, known as Ibn Battuta. He travelled widely in Africa, Asia and Europe. One of his primary aims was to describe the contemporary scenes of the Islamic World and beyond.

Among the most outstanding works of medieval Arabic travel literature are the two books written by Ibn Jubair and Ibn Battuta. The books are still available in Arabic and some European languages.<sup>21</sup> It is to be noted that Ibn Battuta's work and the results of field research and historical studies of other Muslim travellers are still of interest not only to historians, geographers,

anthropologists and folklorists, but also to students of literature and stylistics.

Arabic was used in various ways during the nineteenth century in Nigeria in particular and West Africa in general. They include correspondence, political books and pamphlets, treatises of advice to rulers, biographical literature, histories, ethnography, sociology and education.<sup>22</sup> It should be pointed out, however, that the uses to which Arabic was put in the past should not be interpreted to mean, in spite of the impact of education in English or French over the past eighty years, that the language is falling into disuse in West and East Africa as a means of communication and recording history or as a medium of education. In fact, the tradition of Arabic scholarship is still very much alive in Nigeria and other West African countries. In these areas, many learned Islamic scholars still use Arabic to express their ideas and to record events. Many of them also have large libraries and correspond with each other in the Arabic language.

A thorough examination of the level of scholarship and the degree of proficiency and artistry achieved by indigenous West African Arabic scholars reveals that Arabic has become a symbol of intellectual development and identity of Islamic communities of sub-Saharan Africa. From the second-half of the twentieth century, West African scholars writing in Arabic with remarkable ease have increased considerably. They have written scholarly works in every genre of Arabic scholarship such as poetry, prose, short stories and novels in addition to their great contributions in the field of pure Islamic sciences. A survey of the extant literary works of these '*ulama*' shows that they have been very prolific.

In their provisional account of the Arabic literature of Nigeria up to 1804, Biva and Hiskett (1962) listed some 45 Arabic works written by Nigerian scholars.<sup>23</sup> Kensdale (1955) published a catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts preserved in the

Kenneth Dike Library (formerly Ibadan University Library), University of Ibadan,<sup>24</sup> while Balogun (1975) listed 115 Arabic works written by Uthman Dan Fodiyo.<sup>25</sup> Bello is also reported to have listed 521 Arabic works attributable to Nigerian writers.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, Bashir (1985) listed 110 Arabic books written by Uthman b. Fudi, 101 by Abdullah b. Fudi, 114 by Muhammad Bello b. Uthman b. Fudi, 51 by Shaikh Junaidu, the late Waziri of Sokoto, 44 by 'Abdul Qadir b. al-Mustafa and three by Asma'u, the daughter of Uthman Dan Fodiyo.<sup>27</sup>

That Arabic literary composition was held in high esteem in the Sokoto caliphate is attested by Last who avers:

To write poetry in Arabic was the attainment of a cultured man, and the famous poems of the founders of the Sokoto caliphate became part of Sokoto culture: the poems of the Shaikh (Uthman Dan Fodiyo), Bello and others were learn't by rote by children; today they are broadcast over the radio.<sup>28</sup>

It is pertinent to mention that the cultivation of Arabic literary scholarship in the nineteenth century in West Africa was not confined to male scholars only. Nana Asma'u, the famous daughter of Shaikh Uthman Dan Fodiyo "was one of the most learned of the Shaikh's children, a poet in Fulfulde and Arabic, and an author of three books in Arabic"<sup>29</sup>.

As has been pointed out earlier in this lecture, the cultivation of Arabic-Islamic learning was prominent in Yorubaland in the nineteenth century. The uses to which Arabic is put in Yorubaland confirm its relevance and importance to the Yoruba Muslim community. From the time Arabic found its way to Yorubaland up till the present day, many learned natives of Yorubaland have



not only used written Arabic for all sorts of purposes - religious, social and educational - but have also produced sizeable works of great academic value in Arabic.<sup>30</sup> In this connection Muslim scholars in the city of Ibadan have always played a leading role

An important fact which indicates the importance of Arabic in Yorubaland is that certain records were kept in Arabic, notably those of *qadi's* courts. Many families in parts of Yorubaland are called '*alikai*' families because their forefathers were *Shari'ah* court judges. It is on record that Oba Abibu Olagunju, the first Muslim Timi of Ede in Osun State, who ruled in the second half of the nineteenth century, accorded the *Shari'ah* official recognition in his domain. Consequently, a *shari'ah* court was officially established in Ede at a quarter called Agbeni in 1913.<sup>31</sup> The name of the first *qadi* (*alicali*) of the court was Sindiku (*Siddiq*) who recorded the proceedings of the court in the Arabic language.

It should be noted that the extent of Arabic penetration into Yorubaland is not confined to the area of scholarship but is also visible, together with Islam, among the lowest classes of the society. That is why we still see thousands of private and unrecognized Arabic schools everywhere in Yorubaland devoted to the teaching of Arabic and Islamic literature to the exclusion of almost anything else. Thousands of Yoruba Muslim children attend these schools, many of them thereby forfeiting their places in the recognized Government schools. The establishment of these Arabic schools was and is still a spontaneous reaction on the part of the Muslim masses and a way of demonstrating their strong interest in Arabic Studies. As has been said, Arabic was the only form of education before the colonial era. Far from fading away with the spread of the western-type schools, these Arabic schools are on the increase everywhere in Yorubaland.

Therefore, the relevance of Arabic to the Yoruba Muslim community (like any other Muslim community) cannot be over-emphasized.

The remarkable diffusion of Arabic language among the various ethnic communities of sub-Saharan Africa has made it a status symbol of the cultured. As Last has rightly observed, "Arabic was the lingua franca of the learned: being not merely a literary but also a spoken language (admittedly in the classical form) throughout Muslim West Africa, it was often the only means of communication between the communities of Tuareg, Kanuri, Hausa, Fulani, Nupe or Yoruba. Further, the religious and scholastic character of the Sokoto caliphate ensured that Arabic was the language of state".<sup>32</sup>

#### **Arabic vis-a-vis Other Foreign Languages**

While many Nigerians are aware that Arabic is one of the foreign languages taught in Nigerian schools, only a few of them know that the provision for its teaching in Nigerian schools is much less adequate than that for the teaching of English and French. This imbalance can be attributed to the fact that there are still some misconceptions about Arabic in spite of its long history in Nigeria. One of such misconceptions is that Arabic is only relevant to Qur'anic teaching and Muslim prayers. Obviously, this view is held by people who were educated in missionary schools and even public schools which are noted for prejudices against the Arabic language and the Islamic religion. This kind of misconception can be regarded as a remnant of the colonial past.

The misconceptions about Arabic are manifested in a number of hostile attitudes, stands and statements related to the teaching and learning of the language even in tertiary institutions. On one occasion, to cite just one instance, the late Professor El-Garh,



who was then the Head of the Department of Arabic and Islamic studies, was introduced to a female University of Ibadan professor at a social gathering. She then asked Professor El-Garh: "For how long do you keep students in your Department?" Professor El-Garh replied: "We keep them for four years." She then retorted: "Four years! Is there anything to learn in Arabic other than these Muslim prayers?" Obviously, the learned professor was quite ignorant of the fact that in modern times the role of Arabic as a language transcends the religious sphere.

There is no doubt that the most popular of all the foreign languages taught in Nigerian schools is English. The reasons for the popularity of English are obvious. First, English is a colonial language and, as such, it has been adopted as the official language of Nigeria. Secondly, it is the language of science and technology. Thirdly, English serves as a kind of international medium of communication. For these reasons adequate provisions are made for its teaching in Nigerian schools. Hence, Nigerians who are literate in English show evidence of a high degree of competence in using it.

But despite the fact that English is Nigeria's official language which serves, among other things, as the medium of communication for persons from the different ethnic groups, it is not used by the majority of Nigerians. It is only popular among the elites who are literate in English. Professor Ayo Bamgbose, a distinguished linguist, has summarized the situation with regard to the place of English in Nigeria in the following words:

The case for English has always been overstated. It is true that English in Nigeria is a common language, but only for educated elites. Perhaps as many as 90 per cent of our people in both the urban and rural areas are untouched by its alleged communicative role.<sup>33</sup>



French enjoys a more favourable position in Nigerian schools than Arabic even though it arrived in Nigeria much later than Arabic. An objective assessment of the situation in most primary and secondary schools shows that the teaching of French is encouraged more than that of Arabic. One continues to wonder why the current wave of enthusiasm for French in schools has not been extended to Arabic. It certainly should be, in our own opinion.

Considering the present socio-linguistic situation in Nigeria, it is pertinent to mention that at least one well-known Nigerian linguist has acknowledged the fact that Arabic, like English, is another foreign language whose influence over millions of Nigerians cannot be ignored. This view has been expressed by Professor Ayo Banjo as follows:

But we must remember that English is not the only non-Nigerian language that exerts a strong influence over millions of Nigerians. There is also Arabic, and those who have it in their repertoire have more situations to adjust to appropriately.<sup>34</sup>

### **Universal Applicability of Arabic Wise sayings**

Arabic wise sayings, like proverbs, are brief epigrammatic utterances presenting well-known truths that are popular and familiar to most people. They reflect the way of life of the Arabs, their social relations, moral values, manners and customs. In addition, they reflect their powerful expressions and eloquence, and their mastery of the Arabic language.

On the whole, Arabic wise sayings constitute a rich source for Arabic literature as they are universally applicable to various contemporary situations. Here are some examples.

On knowledge:

١ - كل عز لم يؤيد بعلم فالى ذل يصير.

- (1) Every glory unsupported by knowledge will soon vanish and be replaced by humiliation.<sup>35</sup>

٢ - أي شيء أدرك من فاته العلم وأي شيء أضاع من أدرك العلم.

- (2) What has he got who has missed knowledge, and what has he missed who has acquired knowledge?<sup>36</sup>

On justice:

العدل لا يعرف صديقا

Justice does not know any friend.

On the importance of health:

الصحة تاج فوق رؤوس الأصحاء لا يراه إلا المرضى

Health is a crown on the heads of the healthy people; but only the sick people see it.

On the ephemeral nature of wordly power:

لو دامت لعيرك لما جاء دورك

If the position you occupy were to last for ever, your turn would not have come.

## **Influence of Arabic on Other Languages**

As the language of the Qur'an and a vehicle of Islamic culture, Arabic has influenced the languages of Muslim peoples, resulting in syntactical and lexical borrowings.

In Asia, Persian, Turkish, Urdu and Malay are amongst the languages that have been tremendously influenced by Arabic. In Africa too, Somali, Swahili, Mandinka, Wolof, Hausa, Fulfulde, Kanuri and Yoruba have acquired loans from Arabic words and expressions. Thus Arabic has enriched these languages with thousands of religious, political, legal and commercial words and expressions.

### **(a) *Arabic Influence on Swahili***

Swahili, which is spoken in Tanzania and other East African countries, has been greatly influenced by Arabic. One of the theories concerning the origin of Swahili language is that it is a creole that came into being when the coastal Bantu tribes in East Africa inter-married with Arabs. In this connection, Dr. G.S.P. Freeman-Greenville in his article on medieval evidences for Swahili has argued:

Swahili owes much to Arabic: and the first indication of such a process of hybridisation on the East African coast is in the *Periplus of the Erythraean sea*, written by an unknown Alexandrine Sea-Captain of the 1st Century A.D....<sup>37</sup>

Professor Muhammad Hassan Bakalla computes that Swahili has borrowed more than thirty percent of its vocabulary from the Arabic language.<sup>38</sup> It is interesting to note that the influence of Arabic is also reflected on proper nouns and epithets used in the Swahili language. For instance, the name of the capital of



Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, is borrowed from the Arabic phrase "darus-salam" meaning "the home of peace". Also the popular Swahili epithet for Julius Nyerere, the former Tanzanian President, is "mwalimu" which is borrowed from the Arabic word "Mu'allim" meaning "a teacher".

### (b) Arabic Loan Words in Hausa

Hausa has borrowed extensively from Arabic.<sup>39</sup> It has also adopted Arabic names for the seven days of the week. Apart from many lexical items used in Hausa which are loan words from Arabic, a good example of the influence of the latter on the former is the use of the pronoun prefixes /ya-/ and /ta-/ for masculine and feminine nouns respectively. The following sentences amply illustrate this point:

ARABIC	HAUSA	MEANING
(i) <u>yadhab</u> يَذْهَبُ	yana tafiya	he is going
(ii) <u>tadhab</u> تَذْهَبُ	tana tafiya	she is going

Similarly, the pronominal suffixes /-ka/ and /-ki/ are used for masculine and feminine nouns respectively in both Arabic and Hausa as shown in the following examples:

ARABIC	HAUSA	MEANING
(i) baituka بَيْتُكَ	gidanka	your house (masculine)
(ii) baituki بَيْتُكِ	gidanki	your house (feminine)

Some other examples of the Arabic lexical items commonly used in Hausa are the following:

ARABIC	HAUSA	MEANING
(i) al'ahad الأحد	lahadi	Sunday
(ii) al'ithnain الاثنين	litinen	Monday
(iii) 'aththulatha' الثلاثاء	talaata	Tuesday
(iv) al'arbi'a' الأربعاء	laaraba	Wednesday
(v) alkhamis الخميس	alhamis	Thursday
(vi) aljum'ah الجمعة	juma'a	Friday
(vii) assabt السبت	asabari	Saturday
(viii) al'akhbar الأخبار	labaari	news
(ix) jaridah جريدة	jariida	newspaper
(x) dars درس	darasi	lesson

(xi) talib	daalibi	student
طالب		
(xii) 'ilm	ilimi	knowledge
علم		
(xiii) mu'allim	maalami	teacher
معلم		
(xiv) mithal	misaali	example
مثال		

(c) *Arabic Loan Words in Yoruba*

Yoruba language is also not free from the influence of Arabic. Prof. Ogunbiyi (1984) has identified eight subject matter groups in which the Yoruba language has borrowed words and expressions from the Arabic language.<sup>40</sup> As a matter of fact, the range of Arabic loan words in Yoruba shows the impact of the language on the linguistic and cultural life of the Yoruba people. Here, an attempt will be made to focus attention on some of the Arabic loan words which are frequently used by Yoruba speakers in their daily speech, in Yoruba classical poetry (*ewi*), as well as in Yoruba radio and television programmes. Reference will also be made to some Arabic words used in the translation of the Bible into Yoruba.

(A) Examples of the Arabic loan words used in *ewi*.

1. Iyàn àjàjù ló ní fa sáábàbí ibínú

A continuous argument causes anger.

The Yoruba word *sababi* is borrowed from the Arabic word *sabab* meaning "reason, cause". The *ewi* in which this word was used was read on N.B.C. Ibadan by Olalomi Amole on March 6, 1976.



2. Má fi èpè yè kádàrá ọmọ

Don't change the child's destiny with curse.

The word *kádàrá* is borrowed from the Arabic word *qadar* meaning "destiny, fate". The *ewi* was read on N.B.C. Ibadan on March 23, 1976.

3. Àlámòrí ayé kanpá.

The affair of this world is not a simple thing.

The word *alamori* is borrowed from the Arabic word *al'amr* meaning "affair". This *ewi* was read on N.B.C. Ibadan on November 11, 1976.

4. È tuuba ninu işe ibi

Repent of evil deeds.

The Yoruba word *tuuba* is a loan word from the Arabic word *taubah* meaning "repentance".

5. È da àniyàn tuntun ninú ọdún tuntun.

Make a new intention in the new year.

The word *àniyàn* is borrowed from the Arabic word *an-niyyah* meaning "intention". The Yoruba words *tuuba* and *aniyan* were used in the *ewi* read on Radio Nigeria, Ibadan by Ademola Isola on December 31, 1982.

(B) Examples of Arabic loan words used in Yoruba news bulletins.

1. N wọn kan sáára sí ijọba ipínlẹ̀ Ọyọ fún mímu itọ́jú àwọn ọmọ abirun ní ibáádà.

The Oyo State Government was commended for taking good care of the handicapped children (i.e The Government regarded the care of the handicapped children as a divine service).

2. Olóri ilẹ̀ wa ní kí àwọn ọmọ akekọ mú eré idárayá ní ibáádà gégé bí nwọn ẹ́ mú èkọ́ wọn ní ibáádà.

Our Head of State appealed to school children to take sports seriously just as they take their studies seriously.

The word *ibaada* is borrowed from the Arabic word *ibaadah* meaning "divine service, act of devotion". This word was used in the 8.p.m. Radio O-Y-O Yoruba News Bulletin of December 16, 1981 and 11.00 a.m. Radio Nigeria, Ibadan Yoruba News Bulletin of May 18, 1982 respectively.

3. À n tóka àlèébù sí awọn tówà ní ijọba.

We pin-point the fault of those in Government.

The word *àlèébù* is a loan word from the Arabic word *al-'aib* meaning "fault, defect". The statement in which the word *àlèébù* was used was made by a pastor in a Palm Sunday sermon carried on NTA Ibadan Yoruba News Bulletin at 9.30a.m. on April 4, 1981.

4. Kọmísánà Adedọja ẹ̀ sàdánkàtá sí ilé iṣẹ̀ Rẹ́díò O-YO- fún iṣẹ̀ dáadáa rẹ̀.

Commissioner Adedọja commended Radio O-Y-O for its truth and sincerity.

The word *sàdánkàtá* is a loan word from the Arabic expression *sadaqta* meaning "you have spoken the truth". This expression was used in the Radio O-Y-O Yoruba News Bulletin at 5.30p.m. on April 1, 1986.

5. Nwọn dá sẹ̀rìyà fún àwọn olè nàà.

The robbers were given the punishment they deserved in accordance with the law.

The word *sẹ̀rìyà* is a loan word from the Arabic word *Shari'ah* meaning "Islamic Law". This expression is often heard

on Radio and Television in reports on cases of robbery and the punishment attached to it.

(C) Examples of Arabic loan words used in radio advertisements.

1. È yéé gba rìbá mọ.  
Stop taking bribe.

The word *rìbá* is a loan word from the Arabic word *riba* meaning "usury, bribe". This statement is often heard on Radio Nigeria, Ibadan. It is designed to eradicate bribery in the Nigerian society.

2. È yéé jẹ hàràámù.  
Stop engaging in an illegal act.

The word *hàràámù* is a loan word from the Arabic word *haram* meaning "illegal act, cheating." This statement is also often heard on Radio Nigeria, Ibadan. It is meant to discourage corruption in the society.

3. Èyin sòwòsòwò ẹ yéé sẹ màkàrùrù.  
O you traders! Stop engaging in dishonest acts.

The word *màkàrùrù* is a loan word from the Arabic word *makrūh* meaning "a detested thing, a dishonest act". Radio O-Y-O designs this advertisement in order to discourage traders from cheating or engaging in commercial malpractices.

(D) Examples of Arabic loan words used in various editions of the Yoruba Bible.

1. "Jesu pade wọn, o wipe, Alafia"  
"Jesus met them and said, "Hail!"

The Yoruba word *àlàáfíà* is a loan word from the Arabic word *al-afiya* meaning "good health, well-being". It is used in Mattheu, 28:9, Samueli 3:21 and Iwe Owe 17:1.

2. "Gbọ adura mi, Oluwa"  
"Hear my prayer, O Lord".



The Yoruba word *àdúà* is borrowed from the Arabic word *ad-du'a'* meaning "prayer". It is used in Orin Dafidi, 102:1; 65:2 and 142:8.

3. "Kalamu ayawọ akowe li ahon mi"

"My tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe".

The word *kalamu* is borrowed from the Arabic word *qalam* meaning "pen". It is used in Orin Dafidi 41:1.

4. "O si wi fun won pe, E je ki a lo si ilu miran,  
ki emi ki o le wasu nibe pelu".

"And he said to them, let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also."

The Yoruba word *iwàásù* is borrowed from the Arabic word *wa'z* meaning "sermon, preaching". The word is used in Marku, 1:38 and 1:7 as well as in Matteu, 10:7.

5. "Bi a ti ko o ninu iwe woli Isaiah".

"As it is written in Isaiah the Prophet".

The word *wòlìí* is borrowed from the Arabic word *waliy* meaning "saint, holy man". This word is used in Marku 1:2.

All the Arabic words used in Yoruba which are cited above are taken from BIBELI MIMO (The Bible in Yoruba, corrected edition) published by United Bible Societies, Lagos, 1969. The English translations are taken from the HOLY BIBLE Revised Standard Version published by Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., London 1957.

Indeed, the general distribution of Arabic loan words in Yoruba and their acceptability all over Yorubaland indicate that the words must have entered the Yoruba language perhaps in the early days of Islam in Yorubaland. This is why such words and expressions are often used by Yoruba men and women regardless of whether they are Muslims, Christians or Traditional worshippers.

That the history of the contact between Yoruba and Arabic through Islam has been a very long one is attested by this popular Yoruba saying:

Ayé l'abá 'fá  
Ayé l'abá 'màlè  
Ọsán gangan ni ìgbàgbó  
wọlé dé.<sup>41</sup>

We met ifa (the Yoruba traditional religion) in this world,  
We met Islam in the world; but  
Christianity came later in the day.

While talking about the influence of Arabic on some important Nigerian languages, we consider it pertinent to remark that Arabic is, indeed, qualified to be regarded as a Nigerian language. This view can be supported by the fact that a Nigerian ethnic group, the Shuwa Arabs, who are found in Borno State, speak Arabic as their mother tongue. Since these Shuwa Arabs have a definite location within the political map of this country, it cannot be denied that they are bonafide citizens of Nigeria.

Religious prejudices notwithstanding, it is virtually impossible to eliminate Arabic loan words from the living vocabulary of the Nigerian languages referred to in this lecture. I venture to say that any attempt to remove the indelible impact of Arabic on these languages will be an exercise in futility. This is because not even a dictator can prevent people from speaking as they please.

### **Africa's Lingua Franca: Arabic as an Option**

In the quest for Pan-Africanism, the Union of writers of the African peoples agreed on the need to adopt a national language for all the countries of Africa. This is clear from the following

statement made by Professor Wole Soyinka, one of the members of the Union:

At the Conference in Algiers in 1975, the All-Africa Union of Teachers boldly resolved that the continent of Africa adopt one common language and proposed a selection from Hausa, Arabic and Swahili.<sup>42</sup>

The call for the adoption of Swahili was later made by the Union and it was repeated by Professor Wole Soyinka at the 1977 FESTAC colloquium.

Without going into the merits of the choice of Swahili by the Union, Arabic seems to be highly qualified to be the lingua franca of Africa. After all, it is not a foreign language as is the case with English, French, Afrikaans or other non-African languages. This view is predicated on the premise that Arabic is the national language of the whole of North Africa and the common language of many communities in sub-Saharan Africa. In this connection, Last has this to say:

The lingua franca of the community was Arabic, and thus it transcended national divisions.<sup>43</sup>

The criteria to be used in choosing a national language, as advocated by Prof. Ayo Banjo,<sup>44</sup> include the following:

1. **Population:** This has to do with the number of people who already speak the language as native speakers and whether there is a standard variety of the language.



2. **Acceptability:** How acceptable the language is to the native speakers of other languages.
3. **Typology:** What the relationship of the language is to other languages.
4. **State of Development:** This has to do with whether or not the language already has a standard orthography in use.
5. **Literary Status:** This has to do with the quantity and quality of the literature existing in the language.

Bearing these criteria in mind, the choice would seem to be Arabic as far as choosing a lingua franca for Africa is concerned.

First, Arabic has the largest number of people who speak it either as a native or non-native language in Africa. Also, there is a standard variety of Arabic which enjoys universal acceptability all over the Muslim world. Secondly, the influence of Arabic on many African languages has been discussed. Thirdly, there is a well-known Arabic script which has served and is still serving as a medium of writing many African languages. Fourthly, it has been established that a large quantity of good quality Arabic literature exists in the Arab world and in Muslim communities in Asia and Africa. Fifthly, Arabic has been recognized as an international language: it is one of the six official languages of the United Nations and its sister organizations. Of the three official languages used by the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U) and the African Petroleum Producers Association (APPA), Arabic is the only indigenous African language.

## **Problems Facing the Teaching of Arabic in Nigeria**

I do not intend to dwell at length in this lecture on all the pedagogical and related problems facing the Arabic language in Nigeria. This important aspect has been treated extensively by non-Nigerian and Nigerian Arabists such as Mr. Selim Hakim, Professor Ayoub, Prof. Ogunbiyi and Prof. Malik. Nevertheless, an attempt will be made to highlight some aspects of this problem. These aspects include the following:

### **1. *Weak Background of Arabic Learners***

The standard of the students who learn Arabic in secondary schools is very low. The reason for this is that most of these students have no previous knowledge of Arabic before their admission to secondary schools as a result of non-teaching of Arabic in their primary schools. Hence, these pupils know absolutely nothing about Arabic.

### **2. *Inadequacy of Trained Arabic Teachers***

In most states in Nigeria, there are no colleges where Arabic teachers are trained. In the Northern states where a few Arabic teachers' colleges exist, the teachers produced in those colleges are few, and as such, they cannot meet the demand for trained Arabic teachers in both the primary and secondary schools. Hence, there is scarcity of trained Arabic teachers in most states of Nigeria.

### **3. *Non-availability of Suitable Instructional Materials***

At present, there are not enough good books on the Arabic language suitable for various categories of readers and levels of learners.

The problems that have been identified as confronting the teaching of Arabic in Nigeria at present are in no way insurmountable. One way of solving the problems is the early introduction of Arabic language at the primary school level. The



merit in this is that many pupils will have a good background in Arabic. Consequently, many of them will be encouraged to learn Arabic in secondary schools as well as in Teachers' Colleges and other institutions of higher learning. The training of Arabic teachers should be taken very seriously at the elementary, secondary and tertiary levels. To achieve this objective, refresher courses, seminars and in-service training programmes should be organized for Arabic teachers.

With regard to the availability of instructional materials, the situation has improved through the emergence of a new breed of indigenous Nigerian Arabic writers such as Binuyo, Hijab, the late Professor Suwaid, Professor Ogunbiyi, Professor Malik and Professor Oseni. Nevertheless, a lot more needs to be done in the area of the provision of a wide variety of suitable Arabic books and instructional materials which employ new audio-visual techniques and supplementary aids such as phonographs, magnetic tapes, slides, flashcards, films as well as language laboratories with facilities for group and individual practice. While such books should be very relevant to the learners' environment, they should also reflect the true picture of Arabic and Islamic culture.

It should be admitted that the religious factor has far-reaching consequences on people's attitude to Arabic in Nigeria. This has also affected government support for the cause of Arabic scholarship. Consequently, Arabic has suffered considerably from religious prejudice and subjectivity.

Considering the various aspects of Arabic and its relevance to sub-Saharan Africa, its religious and historical values, its linguistic and literary values, its indelible impact on a number of indigenous African languages and its role on the international scene, there is need to re-appraise the role of Arabic in Nigeria. This is with a view to formulating an objective and realistic policy which will



improve the teaching of Arabic and encourage more people to learn it so that access to the original sources of our heritage as preserved in Arabic documents will be made possible for many Nigerians in the next millennium.

It should be pointed out that an important aspect of the Islamic culture and civilization is literacy in Arabic. Through Islamic education, non-Arab Muslims all over the world are exposed not only to Arabic and Islamic literature but also to new ideas and the Arabic literary world. A remarkable feature of the exposure of non-Arab Muslims to a different civilization is the fact that Islam offers an alternative access to a renowned culture and enduring human civilization other than through Christianity and submission to European cultural colonization.

It is appropriate on this occasion to remember my late mother, who did not live long enough to enjoy the fruits of her labour. I pray that Allah may have mercy on her. I must also express my sincere gratitude to my father, who made my nurture the object of his precious care. My profound thanks are due to my wife and children for their patience over the seemingly interminable period of time involved in my study and writing of Arabic materials which compelled me to be away from them for most of the hours of the day and night. In terms of love, care, affection and assistance my wife, Khadijah Titilade, is to me what Khadijah bint Khuwailid was to Prophet Muhammad. I pledge my eternal love for her and our children. I also convey my appreciation to my benefactors, friends and well-wishers.

In my efforts to be a Nigerian Arabist, I have benefited, as is to be expected, from the knowledge and expertise of many teachers whom I hold in high esteem. But, encouragement, inspiration and scholarly guidance came at a crucial time from the late Professor Muhammed Salim El-Garh and the late Professor

Musa Ajilogba Abdul, both distinguished scholars who made outstanding contributions to Arabic and Islamic scholarship. It is to their memories that this humble exercise is dedicated.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I can think of no better words to conclude this lecture than the divine words contained in the following verses of the Qur'an:

١ - وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا .

1. And of knowledge, you (mankind) have been given only a little.  
(Qur'an 17:85).

٢ - وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلْمٍ عَلِيمٌ

2. And above all those endowed with knowledge is the All-knowing (Allah).  
(Qur'an 12:76).

I thank you all for listening.

## REFERENCES

1. Chejne, A.G. (1969). *The Arabic Language: Its Role in History*, (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press), P. 12.
2. Abd al - Tawwab, R. (1980). "Fusulun Fi Fiqh al - 'Arabiyyah", Chapters in Arabic Philology (Cairo, Maktabat al-khanji).
3. Browne, E.G. (1928). *A Literary History of Persia*, (Cambridge, Vol. 2.), P.4.
4. Hitti, P.K. (1976). Arab Civilization in B.S. Gayne (Ed.), *The Encyclopaedia Americana*, Vol. 2 (New York, Americana Corporation), P.112.
5. Ibn Manzur, M.I. (1955). *Lisan al-'Arab*, Vol. I (Beirut, Dar Bayrut), P.7.
6. Taymur, M. (n.d.). *Mushkilat al-Lughati-l-'Arabiyyah*, (Cairo, Maktabatu-l-Adab), pp. 6 and 7.
7. Chejne, Op.cit. P.11.
8. Potter, S. (1971). *Language in the Modern World*, (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books Ltd.), pp. 103 and 104; Lord, R. (1967). *Comparative Linguistics*, (London, The English Universities Press Ltd.), pp. 29-31 and Barber, C. (1964). *The story of language*, (London, Pan Books Ltd.), chapters vii, x and xv.
9. Hunwick, J.O. (1965). Report on a Seminar on the Teaching of Arabic in Nigeria, (Ibadan and Kano), p.31.
10. Last, D.M. (1967). *The Sokoto Caliphate*, (London, Longman, Green and Co. Ltd.), p.227.
11. Hunwick, Op.cit, pp.32 and 33.



12. Kamera, W.D. et. al (1986). "The Socio-cultural and Economic Factors in Developing a National Language: The case of Kiswahili in Tanzania", *The Arts and Civilization of Black and African Peoples*, Vol. iv, (Lagos, The Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization), p. 131.
13. Boyd, J. and Mack, B.B. (1999). *The Collected Works of Nana Asma'u Daughter of Usman Dan Fodiyo (1793-1864)*, (Ibadan, Sam Bookman publishers), p.xxii.
14. Bidmus, K. (1972) "A Literary Appraisal of the Arabic Writings of the Yoruba Ulama' ", Unpublished M.A. Dissertation, University of Ibadan, pp. 3 and 4 quoting Richard Lander. *Records of Captain Clapperton's Last Expedition to Africa* (London, 1830), p. 277.
15. Biobaku, S.O. (1957). *The Egba and their Neighbours 1842-1872*, (Oxford), p.25.
16. Johnson, S. (1973). *The History of the Yorubas from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*, (Lagos), p.xxiii.
17. Tolmacheva, M. (1978). "The Arabic Influence on Swahili Literature: A Historian's View" *Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2, (London), p.224.
18. Bakalla, M.H. (1983). *Arabic Culture Through Its Language and Literature*, (London, Kegan Paul International), P.18.
19. Chejne, Op.cit., p. 16. See also Crittenden, P.W. (1971). *The Achievements of Islam*, (Basingstoke and London, Macmillan Education Ltd.), pp. 6-20.
20. Hitti, P.K. (1970). *Islam: A Way of Life* (Regnery/Gateway, Inc.), p.106.
21. Bakalla, Op.cit., p. 266.

22. For a detailed analysis of the uses to which Arabic was put in the nineteenth century, see Hunwick, J.O. (1964). "The Influence of Arabic in West Africa", *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, Vol. vii, (Legon, Ghana), pp. 37-40.
23. Bivar, A.D.H. and Hiskett, M. (1962). "The Arabic Literature of Nigeria to 1804: A Provisional Account", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*. Vol. xxv, pp. 104-118.
25. Kensdale, W.E.N. (1955). Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts in the University Library, Ibadan, Nigeria.
25. Balogun, I.A.B. (1975). *The Life and Works of 'Uthman Dan Fodiyo*, (Lagos, Islamic Publications Bureau).
26. Ogunbiyi, I.A. (1987). *Of Non-Muslim Cultivators and Propagators of the Arabic Language*. Inaugural Lecture (Lagos State University).
27. Bashir, U.A. (1985). *Qa'imatu 'Asma'u al-Makhtutat al-'Arabiyyah Li 'Ulama' Sokoto*, (List of the Names of Arabic Manuscripts on Sokoto Scholars)", (Sokoto History Bureau).
28. Last, op.cit., p.222.
29. Ibid., p. 223.
30. Hunwick, (1964). "The Influence of Arabic Language in West Africa", pp. 24-41.
31. Shittu, D.O. (1977). "The Nigerian Draft Constitution and the Shariah Controversy", *NATAIS*, No. 1, p. 114. See also *Population Census of Nigeria, May 1962: Historical Events of Ede District Council*, p.1.
32. Last, op.cit., p. 192.

33. Bamgbose, A. (1985). "Language and Nation Building" *Review of English and Literary Studies*, Vol.2, No.2., p.97.
34. Banjo, A. (1985). "On Citizenship in a Multilingual State," *Review of English and Literary Studies*, p. 184.
35. Shalaby, A. (1973). *Tarikh al-Tarbiyati-L-Islamiyyah*, (History of Islamic Education) (Cairo, Maktabatu al-Nahdati-L-Misriyyah), p.287.
36. Ibid., p. 287.
37. Kamera, op.cit. p. 125.
38. Bakalla, op.cit., p.18.
39. Abubakar, A. (1972), *Al-Thaqa fatu-L- 'Arabiyyah fi Naijiriya* (Arabic Culture in Nigeria), (Beirut, Mu'assasatu 'Abdul Hafiz al-Bisat), pp. 387-469.
40. Ogunbiyi, I.A. (1984). "Arabic Loan Words in the Yoruba Language", *Arab Journal of Language Studies* 3 (1), pp. 161-180.
41. Gbadamosi, T.G.O. (1978). *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba, 1841-1908*, (London, Longman), p.16.
42. Soyinka, W. (1977), "The Scholar in African Society", *Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture-Colloquium: Black Civilization and Education*, (Lagos), p.14.
43. Last, op.cit, p. Lxxx.
44. Banjo, L.A. (1986). "Language Policy in Nigeria", *The Arts and Civilization of Black and African Peoples*, Volume four of *Black Civilization and African Languages*, (Lagos, The Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization), pp.112 and 113.