Preliminary Survey and Subject Analysis of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts in Birnin Zazzau, Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study was undertaken to identify the locations, owners, and to analyze the contents of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts in Birnin Zazzau (Zaria City). The study used a mixed research method, qualitative and quantitative, with a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised of all the individuals that have Arabic and Ajami manuscripts in their collections. The data were collected using the snowballing sampling technique. The study identified the locations and owners of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts, with the total number of 2,841 copies of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts in the hands of the designated owners/custodians. The subject analysis was made to the resources through which over 14 subjects and related subjects were found. The study recommends, among others, that effort should be made by universities, historical research centres, documentations centre, archives, and museum to look for the locations and owners of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts across the country for proper management of the Arabic and Ajami manuscripts.

Keywords: Arabic and Ajami, Manuscripts, Subject Analysis, Birnin Zazzau

Introduction

The cultural influences from the Middle East and North Africa, especially about Islam, and the process of commerce, some societies in Nigeria developed a literary tradition and booked culture for centuries. This cultural influence was due to the spread of Islam through North Africa and its subsequent acceptance by a large number of people in the area. The religion emphasizes knowledge, through teaching and learning as a religion with the book, and is the cardinal basis of practice among its followers. As a result of knowledge acquired through teaching and learning of the religion, the people became literate. The transmission of such knowledge is part of the general process of the transfer of cultures, which in turn defines the primary functions of educational instructions. Therefore, education, deriving from old, new, or renewed forms of knowledge, with the transmission of values, skills, and know-how of the society, is excellent for rejuvenation and development. They could write and document their literary heritage, historical antecedence, and ideas in the form of manuscripts.

The manuscripts are in both Arabic and Ajami and are produced in large quantities representing all spheres of learning, such as medicine, agriculture, health, philosophy, religion, languages, and others. This is one of the symbols of learning processes in the North that allows people to learn from the past, engage the present, and imagine what future may likely be. In Northern Nigeria, the Arabic and Ajami manuscripts constitute essential and invaluable resources for understanding the historical background of the people's values, religion, culture, and traditions (Dogara, 2011). Unfortunately, it has been observed that despite the availability of these resources in Universities, public libraries, research centres, archives, museums, and private-owned libraries, a large number of this information is at the hands of private owners who are dispersed in towns and cities in Nigeria.

Understanding the subject disciplines, coverage, or theme of information resources is an integral part of information management, which determines access, retrieval, and use of the resources. The need for understanding subject disciplines and themes in the library and information science is relevant to the overall objective and mission of establishing libraries and information centres in satisfying the information needs of various and diverse users. Arabic and Ajami manuscripts are expected to cover a wide range of subjects and themes that will be of interest to researchers and scholars and for the development of new knowledge.

This study used the parameters of identification and availability of information resources, which referred to as indicative and physical access to the information resources that are sequential to information retrieval and use. It will provide readers with the knowledge of locations of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts, their owners, and as well their subject coverage in Zaria City. The study encourages the tradition of scholarship that allows them to learn from the past and engage the present situation to imagine what the future may likely be. This effort of documentation and preservation of the people of Northern Nigeria where Islamic culture is upheld, also allowed them to participate in the production of new ideas of knowledge and participate in promoting world civilization and scholarship.

Brief History of Birnin Zazzau

Birnin Zazzau, others wise known as Zaria city, was once initially known as Zazzau, the capital of the Hausa kingdom of Kasar Hausa. This Birnin Zazzau was one of the oldest domains in Nigeria dating back to the period of first Habe ruler (Hausa) of Zazzau known as Gunguma, and He ruled centuries before the Jihad of the Shehu Usman Danfodiyo which has led to the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate in 1804. Zaria is the name of the headquarters of Zazzau Emirate. According to Zemda (2015), the city of Zaria as founded in the sixteenth century. The founder of Zaria, who was the 22ndHabe ruler of Zazzau, first lived at Turunku village, 17 miles south of the Zaria city. Zazzau territory was the largest among all the emirates in Sokoto caliphate.

It was reported by Maishanu (1987) that Islamic learning in the pre-colonial period in Zaria, which is the headquarters of Zazzau Emirate, began to expand with the influx of scholars, students, and traders from all directions. Mainly from the west along Sene-Gambian region and Borno into Zaria, which is the headquarters of Zazzau Emirate in search of knowledge? Suleiman (2007) asserted that the reputation of Zaria as the headquarters gained over the years as a great citadel of knowledge during the pre-colonial period was the product of a long history of Islamization, which often went hand in hand with the spread of learning and scholarship.

Liman (n.d) stressed that some factors led to the constant influx of scholars into Zazzau. One of these factors is the excellent climatic condition of Zaria, which was not too cold or too hot as obtained in other states in Hausa land, particularly further north. Secondly, Zaria scholars were highly committed and dedicated to Islamic teachings and scholarship. Thirdly, that seeking knowledge is regarded as an act of worship. More so, any student or teacher that happened to be groomed by Zaria scholars used to be different from others. Fourthly, and more significantly, the scholars in the area are described as erudite and professional with full authority in their various fields of specialization. These qualities or attributes made them intellectually exceptional, among others. They built great institutions with established faculties of knowledge that produced sophisticated ideas for the construction and reconstruction of societies. These factors attracted the coming of scholars and students into Zaria to seek for knowledge. The early centres of learning that were most prominent and established early in Zaria were located at Anguwan Kona and Anguwar Juma. According to Adamu (2009), these two schools were believed to have formed the nucleus from which other schools were built later during the post Jihad period.

In his contribution Zage – Zagi (2014) reported the presence of many schools located in different wards in Zaria, some of these schools were; Makarantar Abubakar Siddiq at Anguwar Juma, Makarantar Limamin Kona at Anguwar Kona, Makarantar Alfa Umaru, Makarantar Shehu Ibrahim Kaura Quarters, Makarantar Muhammadu Maiyaki Kusfa Quarters, Makarantar Mallam Shitu Kusfa, Makarantar Sheikh Mallam Musa Magajiya Quarters, Makarantar Mallam Magatakarda Kwarbai Quarters and Makarantar Alfa Zage-Zagi Quarters.

Problem Statement

The Arabic and Ajami manuscripts are information resources, essential assets of the intellectual heritage of the people of Northern Nigeria. Generally, these manuscripts have potential values for education, teaching, learning, research, cultural heritage, and scholarship in general.

They are handwritten, and unpublished manuscripts exist in large numbers and are scattered in private hands and various cities and towns in northern states of Nigeria. There is the need to know where the manuscripts are, with whom, and what their

subjects' coverage is. Thus, there is the need to exploit ways of identifying these resources for eccess and use, documenting and coordinating their management for future use by generations and generations to come. This study is based on an assertion of Bello (2010) that the total sum of knowledge in various communities exists and is stored and transmitted in a variety of froms, both as information and ideas related to data concerned. It is worth noting that if action is not taken to know where they are, get them managed, and the manuscripts will continue going into extinction for not using them and the disappearance for their lifespam.

Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To identify the locations of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts in Birnin Zazzau.
2. To find out the owners of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts in Birnin Zazzau.
3. To determine the subjects of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts in Birnin Zazzau.

Literature Review

Literary Dimensions of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts in Nigeria

Chronologically, Arabic, and Ajami manuscripts have four historical narratives. The first concern is as the earliest written literature, which were copies of the Holy Qur'an and the records of the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the most authoritative source of Islam. Corroborating this, Galadanci (2007) reported that the earliest manuscripts in circulation in the Muslim countries were copies of the Glorious Qur'an, the recording of al-Hadith, and books on Arabic grammar that relate to semantics, phonetics, and syntax. However, the second concern was as a result of the religious leaders who learned Arabic, and their followers (disciples) were constrained by their languages – Hausa, Fulfulde, Kanuri Yoruba, e.t.c. It became imperative to have Ajami. The development of Ajami could be traced back to the early 7th century A.D. This period, as reported by Muslih (2006), marked as the period of production and use of the Arabic and Ajami manuscripts. It was through this method that the bulk of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts of Nigeria were produced for literacy for understanding the religion of Islam. Several Arabic and Ajami manuscripts complement the need for appropriate religious tracts and pamphlets to guide the populace, especially with the influx of enthusiastic men and women, old and young, eager to learn, read and write and also to apply the teachings of Islam.

Gwandu (2010) reported that at that period, books could be found all over the northern Nigeria area, with teachers and scholars keeping private collections of Qur'an, Hadith, and Fiqh for their pupils and themselves. These intellectual resources indeed increased the number of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts and books available in the area. During the second phase, the preaching and teaching of Islam relied on manuscripts and books naturally in Arabic. However, as preaching and teaching reached an advanced

level, the Ulamas resorted to domesticating Arabic to write Hausa and Fulfulde, Nupe, and the like As Ajami.

This is in line with what Smith (1979) described the academic ideals of the scholars of the Sokoto Caliphate. That the tradition of learning and teaching which the Mujahidin (Jihadists) sought to follow and developed were not, of course, something which they invented themselves. It was the time-honoured ideals and traditions of scholarship which had formed the basis of intellectual endeavour in the Islamic world for centuries; traditions and models which the ancient universities of the Islamic world had been founded to preserve. Islamic knowledge is universal, embracing knowledge of God and His creation and including knowledge of anything to be found in the universe.

The third stage could be regarded as what Ibrahim (1988) reported that in 1950 a letter was written by the British administration in Nigeria from the seat of the Northern Regional Government at Kaduna to collect all the Arabic manuscripts from all the corners of the country. These efforts were for extraction of value purpose as the belief that that the Arabic and Ajami manuscripts have valuable implication and application in different research activities and purposes

The literary dimension of the Arabic and Ajami manuscripts in Nigeria is multi-faceted. What is permanent is that the resources are instrumental for the construction of the history of Northern Nigeria and resources for academic research, cultural and religious excellence as its subject content encompassed all activities ever indulged by humankind. For instance, Dogara (2011) reported that the subject coverage of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts is not limited to history or religion in their intellectual content, they also treated natural and human science subjects, which include among others; Astronomy, Geography, Medicine, Politics, and Pharmacology. Revealing the intellectual significance of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts and the need to discover more and preserve them for the development of new knowledge led to the hosting of two conferences on Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts in Nigeria by international organizations. Arewa House organized the first conference, Ahmadu Bello University, in collaboration with the United States Embassy with the theme, Preserving Nigeria's scholarly and literary Traditions and Arabic/Ajami manuscript Heritage in 2007. The second conference was held in 2010 organized by the Arewa House and Ford Foundation, with the theme, Arabic and Ajami manuscripts: resources for the development of new knowledge in Nigeria.

Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts

Arabic and Ajami's manuscript are in the form of a piece of handwritten information, which could be a book, pamphlet, letter, poem, poetry, and so on that is not published. The recorded information could be in the form of sermons, preaching, judgments, proceedings, treatise, transactions, record of medicinal herbs, spiritual or magical treatise for charms which is known as *kundi*, a small pocket or bundle of small

sheets of papers. Mohammed (2009) noted that manuscripts could be described as a handwritten or printed document of the information source, sources, and resources inbound or unbound format regardless of language and or alphabet used in writing it. It is also conceived as a handwritten, hand – press or printed document, diary of events or information record on a variety of activities, issues, and subjects vital to the writer, composer, compiler, or collector.

The Arabic Manuscripts are in two distinct forms: the Arabic manuscripts and the Ajami manuscripts. The Arabic manuscripts are those manuscripts that are written in the Arabic language by using Arabic letters or characters. Umar (2007) noted that Arabic manuscripts were written in the standard Arabic language as a result of the matured learning effort of subjects of grammar and rhetoric *nahw* and *sarf*. The text demonstrates strict observation of its linguistic rules and conversion. On the other hand, Ajami manuscripts are those manuscripts written in any different language but using Arabic characters or inscription. Hashimi (2009) noted that the word "Ajami," which means non-Arabic, is the utilization of Arabic inscriptions to express thought and ideas in other languages. It is the process of linguistic domestication of Arabic letters. Umar (1995) argued that although the Ajami manuscript is not in strict term Arabic materials, nevertheless, the Ajami manuscripts do share a lot in common with the Arabic materials. There is no distinction between lower and upper case letters; short vowels are represented by a set of marks below or above the letters to aid in the pronunciation of the word. Apart from the Arabic script itself; the Ajami materials contain a substantial amount of loaned words from Arabic. Consequently, there exist today in Nigeria, particularly in the Northern part, a lot of literature written in Hausa, Kanuri, Fulfulde, Nupe, Yoruba, and others, using Arabic alphabets collectively referred to Ajami manuscripts. Batiste (2007) described Arabic and Ajami manuscripts as the real information resources with a body of knowledge which can be present for future generations of humanity.

Methodology

The research method for this study is a mixed-method using both qualitative and quantitative methods and employed the use of descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised of all the individuals that kept Arabic and Ajami manuscripts in their collections in Birnin Zazzau. That is the private holders in the city. The study adopted the use of the snowballing sampling technique and collected the data for the study, with the aid of selection criteria for participation in the study. That is for some to be involved in the study must full fill the following requirements of the selection criteria:

- He must have the Arabic and Ajami manuscript collections for at least 30 – 50 years.
- He must be literate about the resources in his repository.
- He must be a resident of Birnin Zazzau for at least 20-30 years and above.
- He must have at least 50 copies and above of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts in his repository.

The instruments used for data collection were interview and document analysis to the content of the manuscripts. The data collected from the study were analyzed using thematic analysis and descriptive statistics and presented in percentage and frequency tables. Ethical considerations were sought from the participant before participating in the study. That is with the understanding of the objective of the study; they agreed to provide their names, addresses, number of collections, and their subject coverage.

Results and Discussion

Locations of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts, their Owners/Custodians, and their addresses in Birnin Zazzau.

Understanding of location of something within a phenomenon is torchlight to the pathway of success. In the field of library and information, access to information is always and forever, the area of concern of the librarians and information scientists. The ability of information to know the location of information is excellent to access and use of such information and user satisfaction. Information remains a strategic resource and tool that all human kinds irrespective of their status, communities, societies, or nation need to have access to, for their well being and development.

The first objective of this study sought to find out the locations of the Arabic and Ajami manuscripts. The second objective sought to discover who are the owners/custodians of these resources. Table 1 below presents the locations of the owners/custodians of the Arabic and Ajami manuscripts, as well as their names and contact addresses in Birnin Zazzau.

Table 1: Locations and Owners/Custodians of the Arabic and Ajami manuscripts in Birnin Zazzau

S/No	Location by Ward	Name of the Owner	Address
1.	Anguwar Kusfa Zaria City Bakin Kasuwa	Sheikh Mallam Bala Mai Ashafa	Gidan Bala Mai Ashafa Anguwar Kusfa Bakin Kasuwa Zaria City

2	Limancin Iya Zaria City	Mallam Hassan Gali Shakh Yahuza	Gidan Sheikh Yahuza Limancin Iya – Zaria City
3	Anguwa Karfe Zaria City	Mallam Muhammad Sani Haliru	Gidan Mallam Mai chasa'in Anguwan Kafe Zaria City
4	Anguwar Kaura-Rinji, Zaria City	Sheikh Ishaq Gusau	Gidan Mallam Ishaq Gusau Kaura -Rinji Zaria City
5	Anguwar Limancin Iya – Zaria City	Sheikh Khalifa Tijjani Abdulkadir	Gidan Sheikh Tijjani Khalifa Limanci Iya Zaria City
6	Anguwar Madaka Zaria City	Imam Sheikh Muhammadu Isa Kawun Makaranta	Gidan Sheikh Imam Muhammad Isa Kawun Makaranta No 15, Madaka Zaria City

Table 1 revealed the locations, names of the owners/custodians of Arabic and Ajami manuscript collections in the city of Zazzau and their contact addresses. This information is a fundamental human right and a vital resource in the development of any society (Omotayo, 2018).

Owners/Custodians of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts in Birnin Zazzau and their Collections

Understanding the richness of the Arabic and Ajami manuscript collection is significant to its availability and understanding of the various subjects' coverage by the resources.Table2: below presents the distribution of owners/custodians of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts in Birnin Zazzau and the size of their collections.

Table 2: Owners/ Custodians of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts and the size of their Collections in Birnin Zazzau

S/No	Name of Owners/Custodians	Frequency	Percentage%
1.	Sheikh Mallam Bala Mai Ashafa	1677	59
	Mallam Hassan Gali Sheikh Yahuza	858	29.5
3	Imam Muh'd Sani Haliru	72	2.5
4	Sheikh Ishaq Gusau	70	2
5	Sheikh Khalifa Tijjani Abdulkadir	78	3
6	Imam Sheikh Muhd Sani Isa Kawun Makaranta	94	4
7	**Total**	**2.841**	**100**

Table 2 revealed the identified owners of the Arabic Ajani manuscripts in Zaria City. The finding shows that Sheikh Mallam Bala Mai Ashafa with the highest collection of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts of 1677 (59%) among the identified owners/custodians of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts collections in Birnin Zazzau, followed by Mallam Hassan Gali with 850 (29.5%) and Imam Muhammad Sani Kawun Makaranta with 94(4%) and Sheikh Ishaq Gusau with the least of 70(29%) collection of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts collections.

Table 3: Subject Distribution of the Arabic and Ajami Manuscript Collections with their Identified Owners/Custodians in Birnin Zazzau

S/N	The Owners/ Custodians of Manuscript Collections	Subject Coverage														Total
		Astrology/Geography / Environmental Sci	Fiqh/jurisprudence	Politics/Govt	Language	Hadith	History/Biogr/Diary	Mathematic/ Physics.Science	Medicine /Pharmacology	Eulogy/Praise	Qur'anic exegesis	Sufism	Supplication/prayers	Talisman/Kundi	Tauhid/Theology	
1.	Sheikh Mal. Bala Mai Ashafa, Gidan Mallam Bala, Kusfa – Zaria	54	230	56	45	271	132	23	134	125	28	189	137	176	131	1.677
2.	Mal Hassan Gali Gidan Sheikh Yahuza Limanci Iya -Zaria	45	134			138		9		153	17	120	57	110	67	850
3.	Sheikh Ishaq Gusau, Gidan Mal. Ishaq Gusau 24 Rijin Kaura Zaria	7	16	8	7	10	5	2	2		7	3		5		72
4.	Mal.Muh'd Sani Haliru Mai Chasa'in Gidan Masallaci n Anguwar Karfe-Zaria		8		4	9		9	7	11	5	9		8		70
5.	Sheikh Tijjani Abdulkadir, Limanci Iya Zaria.	9	11		6	7	4	5		5	8	10	3	3	7	78
6.	Mal.Muh'd Sani Isa Kawun Makaranta,		17		10		9	5	5	13	14	3	8	5	5	94
		115	416	64	72	381	150	53	148	307	79	334	205	307	210	2,841

Table 3 revealed the subject distribution of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts collections of the identified owners/custodians in Birnin Zazzau.

Subject Coverage of Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts

The need to understand the subject discipline of information resources is forever relevant to the field of Library and Information Science. The Arabic and Ajami manuscript resources are expected to cover a wide range of subjects and themes from their contents. From the findings of this study, the Arabic and Ajami manuscripts were grouped into three main subjects' area; religion, language, and other sciences. It is worth noting that subjects in Arabic and Islamic literature are encyclopaedic whereby the reader will find a theme, issue, or topic discussing more than two issues related to each as it affects man in the society.

Analysis of subjects under religion. Indeed, the subjects covered include *Tauhid,* the Qur'anic knowledge, which provides for its exegesis (tafsir) and its sciences. Hadith, the traditions, and the sayings do silent and approval of the holy prophet, the Fiqh (Muslim Jurisprudence). While under language, such as grammar, literature, especially prose, poetry, prosody, syntax, morphology, rhetoric lexicology, among others. The study further revealed the following themes covered by the Arabic and Ajami manuscripts. *Ibadat* (worship) which include all forms of physical and theoretical practice of the religion, such as *Zakat* almsgiving, marriage, succession and distribution of wealth of inheritance. Others are fasting, hajj, jihad, business transaction, among others.

The subject analysis under other sciences includes *Falsafa* philosophy or Sufism, mathematics, geography, astronomy, history, politics, administration and government, pharmacology, health, medicine, food and nutrition, agriculture, among others. For further understanding of the subject coverage of Arabic and Ajami manuscript in the area of the study, table 4 below analyzed the total number of subjects discovered from the collections of the identified owners/custodians of the resources in Birnin Zazzau.

Table 4: Subject Analysis of the identified Arabic and Ajami manuscripts in Birnin Zazzau.

S/N	Subject Converge	Frequency	Percentage%
1.	Astrology/Geography, Environmental Science	115	5
2.	Fiqh/Jurisprudence	416	15
3.	Politics/Government	64	2.5
4.	Language	72	2
5.	Hadith	381	13
6.	History/Biography	150	6
7.	Mathematics/Physics	53	2
8.	Medicine/Pharmacology	148	5
9.	Eulogy/Praise	307	10.5
10.	Qur'anic Exegesis	79	2.5
11.	Sufism/Philosophy	334	12

12.	Supplication/Prayers	205	7
13.	Talismanic/ Kundi	307	10.5
14.	Tauhid/ Theology	210	7.5
15.	**Total**	**2,841**	**100**

Table 4 revealed the distribution of the subject analysis of the Arabic and Ajami manuscripts in Birnin Zazzau. From the analysis, Fiqh/jurisprudence, Hadith, Sufism/philosophy eulogy/practice, talismanic/Kundi, Tauhid/theology were the highly available Arabic, and Ajami identified in Birnin Zazzau.

Recommendations

Considering the findings from this study and the importance of the Arabic and Ajani resources, the following recommendations were made:

1. Universities, Historical Research Centres and Documentations, Archives, and Museum should make an effort to look for the locations and owners of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts across the country for proper management of these manuscripts.
2. Where owners/custodians of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts are discovered, encouragement should be given to them on the management of their collections by the use of information and communication technologies facilities.
3. Collaborative research on the content of Arabic and Ajani manuscripts should be encouraged by lecturers and students from the field of History, Arabic, linguistic, Anthropology, Sociology, and Archaeology.

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