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# LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY IN MONOLOGUES OF TWO BARAYIN SPEAKERS

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**Abstract:** This paper compares the language ideologies expressed in two monologues from speakers of Barayin, a Chadic language spoken by about 6000 people in the Guera region of Chad. Both speakers express an essentialist conceptualization of their language in which an authentic use of the language is linked to ethnic identity. However, one speaker rejects the need for literacy in Barayin, while the other argues for literacy to help the younger generation maintain their vital link to the language.

**Key words:** language revitalization, language maintenance, literacy, Barayin, language ideology

## 1. Introduction

This paper compares the language ideologies expressed in two monologues from the Barayin language documentation corpus (Lovestrand 2017a). In these recordings, speakers spontaneously give their views on language endangerment and literacy in Barayin. The recordings express four ideological positions about language: authenticity, permanence, ethnolinguistic linking and religio-linguistic linking. While the two speakers express some overlapping ideologies, they hold opposite views on the importance of an ongoing mother-tongue literacy program.[1]

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Barayin is a Chadic (Afroasiatic) language spoken by approximately 6000 people in the Guera region of central Chad, specifically in the town of Melfi and surrounding villages.[2] Among those who identify as Barayin, there are four subgroups. Two of these groups, Jalkiya and Giliya, speak mutually intelligible dialects (Lovestrand 2011). This paper is focused on two members of the Jalkiya group.

Many, if not most Barayin speak Chadian Arabic, the regional vernacular. A relatively small percentage of Barayin also speak French, the language of formal education and government. In the town of Melfi and in villages which border the Sokoro-speaking area, many Barayin speakers also learn to speak Sokoro. Sokoro is a related (but not inherently intelligible) Chadic language spoken by about 5000 people.

As a relatively small, multilingual group with limited literacy Barayin ranks relatively low on some language vitality scales (e.g. Brenzinger et al. 2003). However, the number of speakers of Barayin is not currently showing signs of decline, but rather the language is robustly transmitted to the next generation. In fact, relatively small, multilingual speech communities like the Barayin may be the norm rather than the exception in many African contexts (Lüpke 2017).

Considering the Africa-specific criteria for language vitality proposed by Lüpke & Storch (2013) as shown in example (1), all of the criteria point to strong vitality for Barayin, with the exception of the issue of socioeconomic stability.[3] The Barayin currently live in relative isolation in an extremely underdeveloped region of Chad, and it is very possible that their inevitable integration into the market economy will result in a negative impact on the continued use of Barayin (cf. Brenzinger 2009; Mufwene 2010).

[2] For a historical and sociolinguistic overview of the Guera region, see Alio (2008).

[3] The fifth criteria is less obviously positive for the vitality of the Komiya and Jalking varieties which have not yet been incorporated into the literacy activities of the Barayin language association as their speakers are somewhat isolated geographically from the slightly larger Jalkiya and Giliya groups.

(1) Five Africa-specific criteria for language vitality (Lüpke & Storch 2013: 307)

- The existence of communities of practice and social networks for language socialization in a given language ecology
- A "home base" providing the opportunities for maintaining and creating communities of practice and social networks in a given language ecology
- Socioeconomic and political stability in the language ecology in question
- Attitudes by speakers and non-speakers to the language ecology
- The reification of languages in the ecology as 'named languages' and their authentication as fully-fledged languages

Since 2009, a group of community leaders have been promoting literacy in Barayin (Tyler 2012). This is motivated in part by a desire to see the language authenticated and preserved, as well as to increase educational success for children in the community. One of the catalysts for this effort was seeing that neighboring languages, like Sokoro, already had an established literacy program of their own.[4] The Barayin community-based organization, l'Association pour le développement et la promotion de la langue baraïn, known as ADPLB, is a member of the regional organization for literacy in local languages, la Fédération des associations pour le développement des langues nationales, or FAPLN.[5] FAPLN is a secular Chadian organization founded in partnership with SIL International to create a structure that provides funding, literacy materials, training and supervision to language communities in Chad who want to pursue a community-based literacy

[4] In a similar manner, Terrill (2002: 214–215) observes that the Lakuval community in the Solomon Islands compared the lack of books in their language to neighboring groups where books had been produced.

[5] Previously known as FAPLG (Fédération des associations pour le développement des langues du Guéra). For more background on this organization, see Tyler (2017).

program in their own language. Since 2001, FAPLN has partnered with 18 language communities, and their work was recognized by a UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize in 2013.[6]

My involvement with the Barayin community began in 2010 at the invitation of FAPLN and ADPLB. I was a member of SIL at that time. The fact that these structures were in place before my arrival essentially pre-determined both who would represent the constructed "communities" of collaboration, as well as the basic expectations for collaboration with a foreign linguist (cf. Good 2012). The stated goal of the collaboration was to devise a provisional alphabet and initial literacy materials to informally test with Barayin speakers. Most of the work in 2010 involved linguistic interviews and elicited recordings with Moussa Adou and his daughter Saïdé Moussa. The initial research project ended with the production of the first literacy primer (Lovestrand & Adou 2011), but ADPLB has continued to produce more literacy and educational material and to organize Barayin literacy classes ensuring that the material has not become a "lifeless preservation like preserves in a jar" (Mufwene 2003: 325); nor are the materials purely symbolic in their function (cf. Terrill 2002).

Grammatical description of Barayin (Jalkiya and Giliya) continued a few years later with a doctoral research project that included a video documentation project in 2017 funded by a Small Grant (SG0431) from the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP). Over seventeen hours of video were collected during four months in Chad. Most of the recordings are of semi-spontaneous monologues. Each speaker was invited to speak for the recording, but generally allowed to choose their topic, and spoke with little or no advanced preparation. From this collection of recordings, 34 texts have been transcribed and translated. This collection, and another 14 previously transcribed recordings are archived by the Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR),

[6] http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/programmes_in_bangladesh_chad_cote_divoire_india_and/ [accessed 10 July 2020]

and accessible online.[7] The two recordings discussed here are labeled "bva052" and "bva057". In the transcribed examples from these recordings the label is given followed by a period and a number or range of numbers which are the line numbers in the transcription of the recording in the archive.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 explains the context of the two recordings examined in this paper. Section 3 is the main section of the paper in which the language ideologies expressed in these monologues are laid out with examples from each transcribed recording. Section 4 is a brief conclusion and consideration of the implications of this analysis.

## 2. Context of the two recordings

Most of the recording sessions in 2017 were organized by the leaders of ADPLB, Ousmane Amine and Bourma Tchorama. Since I had access to a vehicle while visiting them in Melfi, they wanted to take advantage of the opportunity not only to include several of the surrounding villages in the language documentation project, but also to promote the work of ADPLB. In the nearby villages of Mebra and Mosso (see Figure 1), they had already established a volunteer-run evening literacy program for adults, and they wanted to create informal pre-schools for children to learn to read and write in Barayin before attending the Francophone government-run elementary schools. On these visits, Ousmane functioned as the group leader, explaining both the concerns of ADPLB and our purposes in recording people speaking Barayin. I took on a more passive role as videographer.

When I went with ADPLB to visit Mosso and Mebra on February 10, 2017 for language documentation purposes, Moussa Adou was invited to join us. Moussa was the key native speaker consultant for the orthography development project and co-authored the first Barayin

[7] http://hdl.handle.net/2196/00-0000-0000-000F-CB5D-3 [accessed March 22, 2021]. Registration is required to access files.

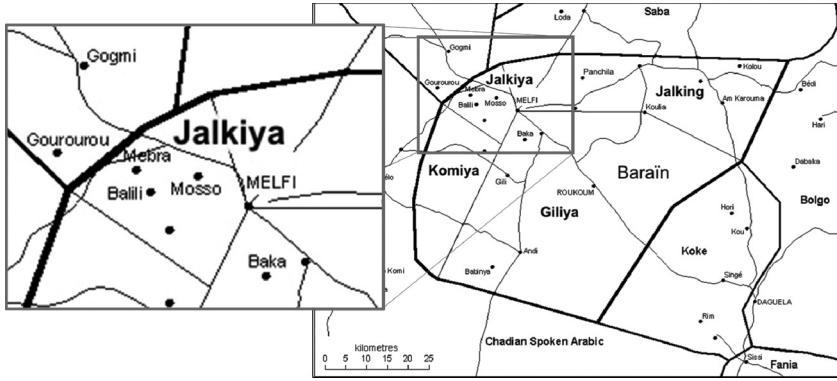


Figure 1: Map showing locations of Mebra and Mosso © SIL, 1996
(Rapport d'enquête sociolinguistique :
Première évaluation parmi les Barein du Guéra)

literacy. Moussa is gifted linguistically—a natural translator who does not struggle to think abstractly and systematically about the grammar of his own language. In the process of working with ADPLB, FAPLN and myself on the creation of literacy materials, he naturally became invested in seeing his language used in writing.

On this trip, we first stopped in Mosso where ten people volunteered to speak for the video documentation project. One of those was Ramadane Abdoulaye who chose to give an impassioned speech about his views on language and identity. In Ramadane's view, there was no need for a literacy program. Moussa Adou did not immediately respond, but when we had moved on to the village of Mebra, he volunteered to speak, and gave his own views on the language and outlined the reasons why he feels that literacy in Barayin is important. Ramadane was not present at that moment, but the themes of Moussa's speech suggest that it is a response to Ramadane's speech. The two speeches both present the language as essential to Barayin identity, but strongly contrast in regard to their desire for a community-run literacy program.

### 2.1 The speech in Mosso: How could Barayin disappear?

The first stop on the trip was in the village Mosso. The first three men who were recorded in Mosso took a few minutes each to discuss agriculture and told a folktale. The fourth speaker, Ramadane Abdoulaye, took on the topic of language use, and spoke at length and with vigor. The content of his monologue indicates that he is responding to rhetoric of language endangerment used by the ALDBP coordinator Ousmane Amine in order to motivate the literacy and language documentation activities. (Ousmane's explanations were not recorded, so it is unknown what exactly he said.) The transcription of Ramadane's speech (bva052) is arbitrarily divided into 154 lines which can be roughly grouped into the following 11 thematic sections.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Don't mix languages | (lines 3-21) |
| 2. Language loss is suffering | (lines 22-33) |
| 3. Language as a birthright | (lines 34-41) |
| 4. Uses of Barayin | (lines 42-48) |
| 5. My age is my authority | (lines 49-59) |
| 6. You are lost without your language | (lines 60-72) |
| 7. Your language is valuable | (lines 73-91) |
| 8. Uses of Barayin, part 2 | (lines 92-107) |
| 9. Sexual relations in marriage | (lines 108-118) |
| 10. Traditional marriage ceremonies | (lines 119-142) |
| 11. Barayin cannot disappear | (lines 143-154) |

The seriousness of the speech is clear from the first lines in which the topic is said to be hara. This word is borrowed from a Chadian Arabic adjective hârr which means 'difficult', 'burning' or 'stinging'.[8] The difficulty is related to the Barayin language, specifically what the speaker perceives as a second, illegitimate form of the language (example (2)).

[8] Jullien de Pommerol (1999: 562) offers the French equivalents: *brûlant(e), dur(e), pénible, fort(e), piquant(e) difficult à supporter, qui fait mal*. The Barayin transcriber-translator (Soumaïne Ahmat) translated it as *choquant* 'shocking'.

(2) a. *buk-i siidi diyo genne*
say-INF two nothing POSS.1PL.EXCL
We don't have two languages

b. *buk-i na jalki-ya-aŋ na paniŋ-tu bas*
say-INF BG Jalkiya-PL-NMLZ BG one-SG.F only(Ar)
The Barayin language is the only one (bva052.9-10)

The sections that most directly address language ideologies are sections 1-3, 6-7 and 11. These are discussed below. In sections 4 and 8, Ramadane gives several examples of how Barayin is used in everyday expressions such as Bedaw ammi 'Give me water' and Tottu iti `Cut down a tree.' The expressions used in section 8 lead to a tangent on sex and marriage in the ninth and tenth sections. The fifth section is an appeal to the speaker's age, 67 years old, as a basis for his authority. Unfortunately, as the videographer on this project, I failed to ensure that the battery in the camera was sufficiently charged before Ramadane began speaking, so the camera ran out of power and stopped recording in the eighth minute and did not capture his concluding words. Despite this failure on my part, the recording still contains plenty of material to consider.

### 2.2 The speech in Mebra: What is said will remain

Moussa Adou does not respond directly to the speech given at Mosso. His speech is given in the next village we visited, Mebra. The audience is unaware of what was discussed in Mosso, but Moussa's speech can still be seen as an indirect response to what he heard, or at least his speech was influenced by Ramadane's views. Moussa's speech is shorter than Ramadane's, and is more difficult to divide into thematic sections, but it can roughly be divided into the following five sections:

1. History of Mebra (lines 2-15)
2. Young people will lose the Barayin language without literacy (lines 16-56)

3. Others write their languages (lines 57-67)
4. Consistent writing is not self-evident (lines 68-84)
5. The elders will pass away (lines 85-97)

He begins his talk by announcing that he will discuss a seemingly benign topic: the history of Mebra. His history begins at the time the residents of Mebra were brought down from the mountain. The groups of the Guera region are known as the Hadjeray, which is from the Arabic word for mountain. This is because their villages used to be in the rocky hills where they could more easily defend themselves from invaders. When French colonizers arrived in the area around 1910, they began forcing the inhabitants out of the mountains as part of a "pacification" policy. That's around when the village of Mebra would have been moved to where it is now, at the foot of the Balili mountain. Moussa's history lesson stops there (lines 2-15), and he turns instead to how people used to speak in the past compared to how they speak now.

(3) a. *wakit* *de* *sonde* *de* *ane* *sonde*
time(Ar) REL.SG.F now REL.SG.F 1PL.EXCL now
*sul-do* *je* *dee*
live-OBL PART then
Nowadays we live here

b. *mejere* *ti* *di* *joo*
people SBJ.3SG.F DEM.SG.F FOC
This people

c. *nandaŋga* *na* *ma* *kaw* *ganda* *buk-eyi* *buk-i*
children BG who also inside say-IPFV say-INF
*de* *gejji*
REL.SG.F POSS.3SG.M
The children are each speaking their own way… (bva057.22-24)

In the rest of the recording, Moussa weaves together themes of elderly Barayin speakers needing to pass on their knowledge of their language to the younger generation through literacy so that they will not be lost. These themes will be explored in the next section.

## 3. Language ideologies expressed

The documentation of Barayin did not include any explicit effort to document language ideologies. The views expressed in these recordings spontaneously arose due to the context of combining the language committee's literacy efforts with the documentation project. They offer snapshots of speakers' reactions to the situation they found themselves in at a particular moment. However, since there was no further research into language ideology in the Barayin community, it should be kept in mind that this is not a representative view of the community as a whole. Notably, both speakers are elderly, and both are male.

The language ideologies discussed in this section are linguistic authenticity, linguistic permanence, religio-linguistic linking and, finally, two contrasting points of view on literacy. Underlying these ideologies is what McIntosh (2005: 1926) calls language reification: "the notion that languages are inherently discrete, bounded entities, rather than categories created by cultural and political contingency."

### 3.1 Linguistic authenticity

It is clear in both Ramadane's and Moussa's discourse that they make use of an ideology of language authentication. "Language authentication is the idea that some instances of a language are relatively more authentic than others" (McIntosh 2005: 1929). This is not an uncommon attitude among elderly speakers of any language. In the recording, Ramadane Abdoulaye states his age as 67 years old (in a country where life expectancy is around 53 years). Moussa Adou does not know his year of birth, but his life history includes being enlisted by the French colonial military and sent to Vietnam during the First Indochina War

(1946–1954). Both men, in stereotypical fashion, target their linguistic criticism at the younger members of their language group. In example (3) above, Moussa's refers to children each speaking in their own way (presumably not the correct way). Ramadane also refers to children, in example 4). He says they do not understand what the elders say, and that they are mixing Barayin with other languages.[9]

(4) a. *nandaŋga* *ne* *sonde* *ane* *w-e-ŋ* *na*
children REL.PL now 1PL.EXCL birth-PRF-OBJ.3PL BG
Our children nowadays, we gave birth to them

b. *buk-i* *ne* *ni* *dop-a* *do*
say-INF REL.PL SBJ.3PL find-PFV NEG
They don't get what is said [the language] …

c. *nílla* *na* *ní* *sule* *limm-a-ŋ*
2PL BG SBJ.2PL PROG bring.together(Ar)-IPFV-OBJ.3PL
*buk-i-ya* *koja-ga*
say-INF-PL much-PL
You are mixing languages (bva052.12-13,15)

Neither speaker is very precise in regards to exactly what the younger generation is doing that deserves criticism. The reference to "mixing languages" most likely refers to the regular use of Chadian Arabic words by Barayin speakers of all ages. In a 17,000-word corpus of adult speakers who explicitly intend to speaker monolingually in Baryain about 5% of the words are of Arabic origin (Lovestrand 2017b). Note that despite the influence of Chadian Arabic on the Barayin lexicon, there are no signs of language shift in the Barayin community. The only Barayin children who do not learn to speak Barayin are the few who grow up outside of the language area.

[9] The word for 'language' in Barayin is the infinitival/nominal form of the verb 'to say'. The nominal form can also refer to a quarrel or problem.

Ramadane himself takes full advantage of his Chadian Arabic lexicon when speaking Barayin. Even when he expresses contempt for mixing languages, he uses a verb from Chadian Arabic italics ‘to bring together’ (French: se rassembler) (Jullien de Pommerol 1999: 762), rather than the Barayin verb italics ‘to mix’.[10] From this it seems that the linguistic forms are not the main issue, but are being used as part of a “discourse of nostalgia” (Hill 1992).

### 3.2 Linguistic permanence

Whatever it is that the younger generation is doing incorrectly, neither Ramadane nor Moussa emphasize that the language could be endangered, as was apparently suggested by Ousmane Amine before the recordings began. Near the end of his recording, Ramadane explicitly denies that Barayin (Jalkiya) could disappear.

(5) a. *wo* *nílla* *sonde* *kaye* *nílla* *níya* *gi*
and 2PL now here 2PL SBJ.2PL.QUOT DEM.SG.M
’But you say that

b. *buk-i* *jalki-y-aŋ* *diyo*
say-INF Jalkiya-PL-NMLZ nothing
the Barayin language will disappear

c. *buk-i* *jalki-y-aŋ* *diyo* *na* *ti* *ta*
say-INF Jalkiya-PL-NMLZ nothing BG SBJ.3SG.F PURP
*up-u-jo* *na*
create-SBJV-DTRV BG
If the Barayin language disappears, it will recreate itself

d. *ti* *ta* *wut-a* *to* *ti* *kikkep*
SBJ.3SG.F PURP be.lost-PFV COND SBJ.3SG.F how(Ar)
How could it be lost? (bva052.143-145)

[10] See also example (5d) where Ramadane uses Chadian Arabic question word *kikkeef* ‘how’ rather than the Barayin equivalent *talaŋ*.

Instead of a discourse of language endangerment (that a language may be in danger of no longer existing), we see a discourse of language permanence (that a language is not something that can go out of existence). Belew (2020: 102) documents similar discourse of language permanence among some Iyasa speakers in Cameroon. Belew suggests that those who hold a view of language permanence are less likely to take on an activist role in maintaining or promoting the use of their language. This appears to be true in Ramadane's case, given that this speech can be understood primarily as a negative reaction to the appearance of the Barayin language association asking for volunteer literacy workers in his village.

Moussa, on the other hand, does take on an activist role in promoting Barayin literacy (Section 3.5). Unlike Ramadane, he does not explicitly deny the possibility of the language going out of use, but, like Ramadane, he focuses on the fate of the younger speakers, saying that they will not have access to the language (example (6)), rather than focusing on the language itself. This framing of his concern is still compatible with a view of linguistic permanence. The younger generation could become lost, detached from the language, even while the language continues to exist in some unchanged but inaccessible form.

(6) a. *nandi-ne* *ne*
infant.PL-POSS.1PL.EXCL REL.PL
Our children who…

b. *ni* *sonde* *ganda* *duw-e-ne* *ni* *ni* *na*
SBJ.3PL now inside see-PRF-OBJ.1PL.EXCL SBJ.3PL DEM.PL BG
…are looking at us now,

c. *baaden* *jalki-y-aŋ* *ni* *dop-a-ŋ* *do*
next(Ar) Jalkiya-PL-NMLZ SBJ.3PL find-IPFV-OBJ.3PL NEG
they will not find the Barayin language. (bva057.37)

### 3.3 Ethnolinguistic linking

The idea that people are lost if they do not speak a particular heritage language (correctly), is a reflection of the view that language use is crucial to belonging to a particular community. McIntosh (2005: 1925–1926) calls this ethnolinguistic linking: "Ethnolinguistic linking is the notion that a particular language is the natural, intrinsic, and (at least in some cases) inalienable province of a particular ethnicity." In these recordings, Barayin speakers engage in discourse which equates use of the language with belonging to a particular ethnolinguistic community. In example 7, Ramadane speaks of language as a birthright—something received from your parents. To speak another language is to take an identity that does not belong to you, and thereby to reject your own heritage.

(7) a. *buk-i* *dey* *na* *buk-ti* *buk-i-go*
say-INF then BG say-OBJ.3SG.F say-INF-POSS.2SG.M
So the language, speak your language

b. *de* *jalki-y-aŋ* *ti* *di* *dey*
REL.SG.F Jalkiya-PL-NMLZ SBJ.3SG.F DEM.SG.F then
Barayin then

c. *to* *ki* *buk-eyi* *buk-i* *de* *gije-go*
COND SBJ.2SG.M say-IPFV say-INF REL.SG.F friend-POSS.2SG.M
if you speak someone else's language

d. *to* *al-o-go* *do* *na*
COND belong.to-INF-POSS.2SG.M NEG BG
If it doesn't belong to you

e. *doo* *sar-ti* *ŋ* *doo* *ka* *gi* *do*
FOC bring-OBJ.3SG.F PREP place SBJ.3SG.M DEM.SG.M NEG
then don't bring it

f. *buk-ti* *de* *gergo* *de*
say-OBJ.3SG.F REL.SG.F POSS.2SG.M REL.SG.F
*al-o-go*
belong.to-INF-POSS.2SG.M
(Speak) your language that belongs to you

g. *de* *i-go* *w-ago* *je*
REL.SG.F mother-POSS.2SG.M birth-DAT.2SG.M PART
that your mother gave you at birth (bva052.35-37)

In another part of his speech (example (8)), Ramadane refers to slavery, and points to language as something that can ground one's identity as a Barayin in any circumstances, regardless of location. Conversely, if you do not know your language, you will be lost (example (8h)).[11] This can be contrasted with Ramadane's position that a language cannot be lost from example (5d). Ramadane's concerns are not with the endangerment of his language. Rather, the younger speakers are the ones who are endangered if they fail to maintain their connection to the language. If the younger generation fails to speak the language, it is not the language that is lost, but the people.

(8) a. *ka* *ŋ* *kol-o* *goŋja* *na*
SBJ.3SG.M PREP go-INF elsewhere BG
If one goes elsewhere

b. *to* *ni* *ŋaam-a-ga* *kaw*
COND SBJ.3PL steal-PRF-OBJ.3SG.M also
Even if they steal him,

c. *ka* *ŋ* *kol-o* *wonn-o-geti* *ŋ* *buk-i-ji*
SBJ.3SG.M PREP go-INF know-INF-POSS.3SG.F PREP say-INF-POSS.3SG.M
he will go and know his language

[11] McIntosh (2005: 1931) records a Giriama elder using the vocabulary of being "lost" to describe the younger generation's linguistic practices.

d. *ki* *dop-o-ji* *ŋ* *mijjo-go*
SBJ.2SG.M find-INF-POSS.3SG.M PREP person-POSS.2SG.M
You will find your people,

e. *wo* *to* *ki* *top-e*
and COND SBJ.2SG.M enter-PRF
Even if you go

f. *ganda* *ŋ* *doo* *ge* *ni* *wonn-a-go* *do*
inside PREP place REL.SG.M SBJ.3PL know-IPFV-OBJ.2SG.M NEG
where they don't know you

g. *buk-i-ya-to* *ki* *dopi-ŋ* *do* *na*
say-INF-PL-POSS.2SG.M SBJ.2SG.M find-OBJ.3PL NEG BG
When don't find your words

h. *ma* *kalas* *ki* *gan-e* *bot-e* *kalas*
who that's.all(Ar) SBJ.2SG.M do-PRF be.lost-PRF that's.all(Ar)
Then you are lost.

i. *ni* *ŋ* *ep-o* *ŋ* *kol-o* *ŋ* *bit-o-go*
SBJ.3PL PREP catch-INF PREP go-INF PREP sell-INF POSS.2SG.M
They will take you and sell you.

j. *caa* *na* *misiri-ya* *pid-eyi* *na* *ni*
formerly BG Missirie-PL carry-IPFV BG SBJ.3PL
*bit-a-ne*
sell-IPFV-POSS.1PL.EXCL
In the past the Missirie (Arabs) took us and sold us. (bva052.63-70)

Moussa also invokes the idea that speaking one's heritage language is a crucial marker of identity. In the passage in example (9), he says that if they are too ashamed to attend literacy classes and lose their language, they may end up speaking the neighboring language, Sokoro,

or Chadian Arabic. This provokes murmuring and nervous laughter from those listening.

(9) a. *wo* *to* *ní* *jekk-a-ti* *dey* *ní-ya*
and COND SBJ.2PL leave-IPFV-OBJ.3SG.F then SBJ.2PL-QUOT
*gi*
DEM.SG.M
But if you leave it, you say

b. *a'aa* *ti* *di* *sokoŋ-tu* *ti* *di*
no SBJ.3SG.F DEM.SG.F shame-SG.F SBJ.3SG.F DEM.SG.F
*sokoŋ-tu*
shame-SG.F
it is embarrassing,

c. *bonte* *paniŋ* *ká* *ní* *dop-eyi* *mapana* *kaye* *do*
morning one also SBJ.2PL find-IPFV something here NEG
one day you will lose it

d. *ní* *ŋ* *att-o* *ee* *na* *otti* *kene*
SBJ.2PL PREP remain-INF yes BG *** ***
You will be left with otti kene ['come here' in Sokoro]

e. *inti* *tal* *jay*
*** *** ***
*Inti tal jay* ['come here' in Chadian Arabic] (bva057-48-50)

Note that Moussa invokes the idea of a shift to Sokoro by speaking Sokoro himself. He is able to act out what being a Sokoro speaker would be like because he himself has learned at least some Sokoro, as have most of the people in his audience. In spite of being a multilingual community, there is still a sense of identity linked to one particular heritage language.

Ethnolinguistic linking has been critiqued as a Eurocentric nationalist idea which often does not apply in multilingual African contexts (Good 2012; Lüpke 2016), unless under the influence of European (colonial and missionary) linguists (Lüpke & Storch 2013: 3). This ideology may actually be the norm in the Guera region. In a discussion of language attitudes of emigrants from the Guera region, Alio (2008: 5) writes: "Migrants see their first languages as an essential element of their personal identity an essential link to their own religious and cultural origin…" (cf. Marten & Petzell 2016).[12]

What is the reason for the prevalence of ethnolinguistic linking in the Guera region? Is it a colonial import? Colonial administrators did not have an extensive or continual physical presence in this region, and generally seem to have treated all residents of the region as Hadjeray irrespective of linguistic or ethnic affiliations. Perhaps it can be linked to the post-colonial Christian missionaries? The Guera region is a Muslim-majority area, and while some ethnolinguistic groups have a minority Christian population, the Barayin do not. Some further explanation would be needed for how they would have adopted this ideology through the influence of Christian missionaries.

There is also a possible precolonial explanation for an ideology of ethnolinguistic linking among the Barayin. The Barayin are reported to have been in a vassal-suzerain relationship with the Bagirmi at a time when the Bagirmi were a powerful kingdom in the region (Boujol & Clupot 1941). Foley (2014) points out that, in the West, linguistic purism linked to national identity has been a tool for modern state-building, however, he also argues that a minority language group can adopt an ideology of linguistic purism as a method of preservation of an ethnic identity in the face of challenges from majority groups (Foley 2014: 174–175). The latter is a possible explanation for why this ideology appears among the Barayin.

Anecdotally, the references to slavery in Ramadane's discussion correspond to the notion that ideas of linguistic identity among the

[12] Note that Khalil Alio is from the Guera region (Bidiyo).

Barayin were formed in a time when smaller societies in the Guera region were under the threat of being taking as slaves by regional sultanates such as the Bagirmi (Colosio 2022: 281). This particular threat came to an end with the colonial suppression of African kingdoms. While it cannot be proven, it is nonetheless very plausible that the expression of ethnolinguistic linking seen in Ramadane's speech has pre-colonial roots.

### 3.4 Religio-linguistic linking

In example 10, from the second section of Ramadane's speech, language is said to be linked with the afterlife, a typical domain of religious belief. Loss of language is equated with the loss of one's history and losing access to heaven. This is an instance of what McIntosh (2005: 1933) refers to as religio-linguistic linking: "a natural link is stipulated between a religion and a language."

(10) a. *taari-go* *na* *mot-u* *ŋ* *balli* *teyi*
history(Ar)-POSS.2SG.M BG die-SBJV PREP side like.this
Your history, when you die

b. *ta* *taari-go* *ki* *ta* *dopu-do* *janna*
COND history(Ar)-POSS.2SG.M SBJ.2SG.M CERT find-OBL heaven(Ar)
If you have your history, you will get into heaven

c. *to* *ki* *dop-ti* *taari-go* *do*
COND SBJ.2SG.M find-OBJ.3SG.F history(Ar)-POSS.2SG.M NEG
If you don't have your history

d. *non-go* *ki* *jekk-aga* *ganda* *wooji*
infant-POSS.2SG.M SBJ.2SG.M leave-DAT.3PL inside suffering(Ar)
You will leave your children to suffer

e. *non-go* *ki* *jekk-aga* *wooji* *na*
infant-POSS.2SG.M SBJ.2SG.M leave-DAT.3PL suffering(Ar) BG
You will leave your children to suffer

f. *killa* *ŋ* *kida* *wala* *ŋ* *dow-o*
2SG.M PREP land without(Ar) PREP go.to.bed-INF
You will be in the ground without rest

g. *ŋ* *guma* *kaw* *ki* *jekk-aga* *na*
PREP hole also SBJ.2SG.M leave-DAT.3PL BG
From your tomb you will also leave them

h. *ganda* *wooji* *diki-jiga* *ŋ* *ay-to*
inside suffering(Ar) center-POSS.3PL PREP friends-POSS.2SG.M
suffering in the midst of your friends

i. *wo* *ki* *jekk-aga* *bulo* *gi* *bas*
and SBJ.2SG.M leave-DAT.3PL slave DEM.SG.M only(Ar)
And you will leave them as slaves

j. *ge* *ŋ* *pid-o-ji* *teyi*
REL.SG.M PREP take-INF-POSS.3SG.M like.this
the one who is taken

k. *kol-o* *ŋ* *gan-o-ji* *ŋ* *kita*
go-INF PREP do-INF-POSS.3SG.M PREP work
to go and work

l. *damman* *ki* *ŋ* *iss-o* *ganda* *ŋ*
until SBJ.2SG.M PREP feel(Ar)-INF inside PREP
*kolku-go*
grave-POSS.2SG.M
You will even feel it in your tomb

m. *ma* *tega-tu* *damman*
who strong-SG.F until
It will be so strong that

n. *dar-go* *kaw* *dop-eyi* *aape* *do*
grandson-POSS.2SG.M also find-IPFV health(Ar) NEG
your grandson will not be healthy

o. *kalla* *taaba* *bas*
3SG.M suffering(Ar) only(Ar)
he will suffer (bva052.23-32)

It is interesting to note that, in this Islamic context, the local language is linked with wellbeing in the afterlife, rather than Arabic, despite Chadian Arabic being the language of wider communication. In addition to losing access to heaven, reference is also made to negative consequences for future generations (10d, 10e) including the potential for slavery (10i) and sickness (10n).

### 3.5 Literacy: motivations and challenges

Moussa does not express an ideology of religio-linguistic linking and, unlike Ramadane, does not insist on an ideology of linguistic permanence. He does, however, share a similar view of Barayin as a singular heritage language and marker of identity (examples 6 and 9). The two speakers share similar ideologies in regards to the nature and value of the Barayin language. They are concerned that the younger generation is drifting away from the language.

It has long been recognized that an ideology of authenticity (or linguistic purism) can have a negative effect on linguistic vitality by discouraging the use of the language in its "impure" forms (e.g. Dorian 1994; Abtahian & Quinn 2017). However, as Riessler and Karvovskay (2013: 86) recognize, community members who hold such ideologies often have a paradoxical role in language vitality; being both gatekeepers and agitators towards continued language use.

Ramadane and Moussa share an ideology of authenticity but differ sharply in their view of the need for literacy. Ramadane finds literacy to be unnecessary. Moussa, on the other hand, expresses a graphocentric ideology which considers literacy crucial to language vitality (Lüpke 2011: 320). Moussa exhorts the older generation to teach—specifically, to provide someone to lead a literacy class. In the passage in example 11, he directly states that something can be done to prevent the younger generation from losing their connection with the language. In other words, he channels his concerns related to linguistic authenticity into language activism in the form of literacy.

(11) a. nandi-ne ne ni
infants-POSS.1PL.EXCL REL.PL SBJ.3PL
Our children who

b. *sonde ganda duw-e-ne ni ni na*
now inside see-PRF-OBJ.1PL.EXCL SBJ.3PL DEM.PL BG
see us,

c. *baaden jalki-y-aŋ ni dop-a-ŋ do*
next(Ar) Jalkiya-PL-NMLZ SBJ.3PL find-IPFV-OBJ.3PL NEG
they will not find the Barayin language

d. *to idda aŋa na Mebra na*
COND truth presence BG Mebra BG
If it's true, then Mebra,

e. *ní ta ŋ jel-o-geti ŋ maŋjo*
SBJ.2PL PURP PREP put-INF-POSS.3SG.F PREP thing
you can put something

f. *ní ta ŋ bed-i-geti ŋ mijjo*
SBJ.2PL PURP PREP give-INF-POSS.3SG.F PREP person
You can give someone

g. *ge* *ta* *doy-o-geti* *ŋ* *nandaŋga*
REL.SG.M PURP teach-INF-POSS.3SG.F PREP children
to teach it to the children

h. *wo* *ní* *ŋ* *doy-o*
and SBJ.2PL PREP study-INF
And you can learn (bva057.37-40)

Moussa makes two further points to argue for literacy. First, he argues that if other groups write their languages, there is no reason that the Barayin should not. Second, he points out one way in which writing is not self-evident, and must be learned in order to be effective.

In the passage in example 12, Moussa points out that White people all study their own language (because they don't want to "lose" their language). He quickly adds that the Chinese also learn to write their language in their own way, as do the Arabs, the Bornou (the Kanuri language) and the Hausa. In post-colonial Chad imitating White people is not always seen as a positive motivation, and the reference to these African languages gets several nods of agreement from his audience.

(12) a. *wo* *nílla* *duw-a-ŋ*
and 2PL see-IPFV-OBJ.3PL
But if you look

b. *mejere* *ne* *por-o* *ni* *ni* *na*
people REL.PL be.white-INF SBJ.3PL DEM.PL BG
at the White people

c. *ki-ya* *jaŋ-o* *ni* *wonn-eyi* *do*
SBJ.2SG.M-QUOT write-INF SBJ.3PL know-IPFV NEG
You think that they don't know how to write

d. *paa-jiga* *ni* *jaŋ-eyi* *jaŋ-o*
all-POSS.3PL SBJ.3PL write-IPFV write-INF
They all know how to write

e. *wo* *ta mo* *ni* *jaŋ-eyi* *ŋ* *buk-i* *de*
and why SBJ.3PL write-INF PREP INF REL.SG.F
*ŋ* *gejjiga*
PREP POSS.3PL
Why do they write their language

f. *ma* *ta* *ni* *japp-a* *buk-i-jiga* *joo*
who PURP SBJ.3PL want-PFV say-INF-POSS.3PL FOC
*wut-u* *do*
get.lost-SBJV NEG
Because they don't want to lose their language

g. *paa-jiga* *ni* *jaŋ-eyi* *jaŋ-o*
all-POSS.3PL SBJ.3PL write-IPFV write-INF
They all write their language

h. *to* *CHINOIS* *joo* *damman* *jaŋ-o-jiga* *kaw*
COND Chinese(Fr) FOC until write-INF-POSS.3PL also
*letta-jiga*
alone-POSS.3PL
The Chinese write in their own way

i. *wo* *por-o* *ni* *ni* *do*
and be.white-INF SBJ.3PL DEM.PL NEG
They are not White

j. *ká* *ma* *ni* *doy-a-ti* *doy-o*
also who SBJ.3PL study-IPFV-OBJ.3SG.F study-INF
They also study their language

j. *suwa-ya* *ni* *ni*
Arab-PL SBJ.3PL DEM.PL
The Arabs,

k. *duw-u-ŋ* *borno-ya* *alli* *ni* *ni*
see-SBJV-OBJ.3PL Borno-PL there SBJ.3PL DEM.PL
look at the Kanuri,

l. *hossa-ya* *alli* *ni* *ni* *na*
Haussa-PL there SBJ.3PL DEM.PL BG
the Hausa,

m. *kitap* *ti* *di* *na*
books(Ar) SBJ.3SG.F DEM.SG.F BG
The books

n. *ni* *law-r-ti* *je*
SBJ.3PL return-APPL-OBJ.3SG.F PART
They translate it

o. *ŋ* *buk-i* *de* *gejjiga* *bas*
PREP INF REL.SG.F POSS.3PL only(Ar)
in their own language

p. *wo* *ta mo* *genna* *gan-o* *diyo*
and why POSS.1PL.INCL do-INF nothing
Why do we have nothing? (bva057.56-67)

After trying to motivate literacy in Barayin, Moussa anticipates a reaction. He predicts that some doubters will say: Why should we learn our own language? Sonde de ŋ attiyana di, de iŋ suldona. Literally, 'Now, it is in our stomachs; it is where we live' (example 13). This seems to be a common reaction when people who are predominately or exclusively oral language users are faced with the idea of literacy. Why should I study this language that I already live and breathe every day?

(13) a. *wo* *nílla* *duw-a-ti* *na* *ní-ya* *a'aa*
and 2PL see-IPFV-OBJ.3SG.F BG SBJ.2PL-QUOT no
*ane*
1PL.EXCL
When you see this you say, no, we

b. *tilla* *dogo* *wuro* *ka* *aŋa-geti*
3SG.F until before SBJ.3SG.M presence-POSS.3SG.F
It is already here,

c. *ane* *ta* *doy-eyi* *doy-o* *ta* *gan-o* *mo*
1PL.EXCL PURP lesson-IPFV study-INF PURP do-INF what
why should we study our language

d. *sonde* *de* *ŋ* *atta-yana* *di*
now REL.SG.F PREP stomach-POSS.1PL.INCL DEM.SG.F
it is in our gut

e. *de* *iŋ* *sul-do=na* *na*
REL.SG.F SBJ.1DU.INCL live-OBL=2PL BG
it is where we live (bva057.68-71)

Moussa's response is that writing is not as obvious as speaking. Each person might write in their own way, but the next person will have trouble understanding what the other person wrote. He gives an example of the word 'snake' in Barayin. As he discusses this word he makes writing gestures on the mat in front of him to make clear that he is talking about how to write the word. The first sound in the word is a palatal nasal. In the Barayin area, the language of education is French. The sound is written with a digraph <gn> in French, but this only rarely occurs at the beginning of a French word. Moussa is quite astute in picking out a word that even those who are literate in French will struggle to figure out how to write in Barayin.

(14) a. *welli-ga* *ɲelme* *na*
call-3SG.OBJ.M snake BG
We call it snake

b. *sonde* *wala* *katib-e-jo*
now without(Ar) write(Ar)-PRF-DTRV
it can't be written

c. *tiya* *alli* *do*
like.that there NEG
it's not like that

d. *ki* *duw-a-ti* *jaŋ-o-geti* *joo*
SBJ.2SG.M see-IPFV-OBJ.3SG.F write-INF-POSS.3SG.F FOC
*ti* *di*
SBJ.3SG.F DEM.SG.F
You see the writing,

e. *wo* *ti* *well-e-jo* *letta-geti*
and SBJ.3SG.F call-PRF-DTRV alone-POSS.3SG.F
But it is called something different

f. *aa* *to* *ní* *dop-ti* *do* *na*
yes COND SBJ.2PL find-OBJ.3SG.F NEG BG
If you don't find it

g. *ma* *baaden*
who next(Ar)
who then

h. *ní* *ŋ* *wut-o* *bas*
SBJ.2PL PREP get.lost-INF only(Ar)
You will be lost (bva057.80-87)

Moussa ends his speech by linking the ability to pass on language through writing to the idea of a legacy. He reminds them that as elders they will pass on one day, but that was is said (if written) will remain accessible to the next generation.

(15) a. *wo* *ne* *att-e-ŋ* *bali-y-aŋ*
and REL.PL remain-PRF-OBJ.3PL behind-PL-NMLZ
Those who remain behind,

b. *ka* *ta* *ŋ* *por-o* *tiya* *ane* *wo*
SBJ.3SG.M PURP PREP be.white-INF like.that 1PL.EXCL and
*ní* *kol-ga*
SBJ.2PL go-PROG
those with white hair, we will also leave

c. *wo* *ti* *buk-u-jo* *ta* *ŋ* *att-o* *tilla*
and SBJ.3SG.F say-SBJV-DTRV CERT PREP remain-INF 3SG.F
*di*
DEM.SG.F
but it should be spoken and will remain (bva057.95-96)

## 4. Reflection and conclusion

For the last few decades linguists have framed much of the work of language documentation and language maintenance in terms of language endangerment (Hale et al. 1992). In these two Barayin speeches about their language, a threat is perceived, but it is not the language that is in peril. The concern expressed is that by failing to maintain an authentic expression of the Barayin language, younger speakers are drifting away from their critical identity as members of the Barayin community. The essentialist views expressed by these two (elderly, male) Barayin speakers are often critiqued as Western assumptions:

> "The equation of one language/one people, the Western insistence on the authenticity and moral significance of the mother tongue, and associated assumptions about the importance of purist language loyalty for the maintenance of minority languages have all been criticized as ideological red herrings, particularly in settings where multilingualism is more typical and where a fluid or complex linguistic repertoire is valued." (Woolard & Schieffelin 1994: 61)

In these Barayin texts, we see that linguistic authenticity is not inherently linked to Western contexts; although Western influences likely play a role (e.g. Pennycook & Makoni 2005; Handman 2009). In the context of discourse for the maintenance of minority languages, it is also observed that linguistic essentialism is not inherently linked to activism. Two members of the same minority language group express similar ideologies and yet come to different conclusions in regard to the need for literacy as a tool for language maintenance. One argues that since the language cannot disappear, there is no need to invest in literacy. The other argues that since the younger generation is in danger of losing touch with their language, thereby losing their identity, there is a motivation for action to preserve the wellbeing of the younger generations which can be done through literacy which allows (the authentic version of) the language to be preserved and passed on. Note that while there is no guarantee that literacy will directly increase language vitality (Grenoble & Whaley 2006: 102), it is likely to play a role in perceived prestige, or "authentication as a fully-fledged language" which is one key factor in language vitality (see example (1) above).

Since it is unlikely that these ideologies will change, the future prospects of a language like Barayin may depend on such ideologies being channeled in a positive direction. As Dorian (1994: 481) puts it: "a common challenge for language revitalization and language revival is to limit the restrictive role which puristic attitudes are likely to play in the communities in question, or to channel such attitudes into forms which are useful rather than harmful."

For grassroots language advocacy organizations like ADPLB, FAPLN and similar organizations around the world, the analysis of

these two speeches suggest that an examination of language ideology may result in uncovering creative local approaches to promoting expanding language use (e.g. into written modalities) which frame the benefits of language advocacy in terms that address local concerns while avoiding direct conflict with existing language ideologies. Moussa's contextualized response to the rejection of any need for literacy in Barayin on account of the language's permanence was not to insist that the language is susceptible to extinction, nor to problematize the underlying linguistic essentialism, but rather to suggest that literacy would serve the purposes of the linguistic ideologies of authentication and ethnolinguistic linking.

Moussa also suggests two further rhetorical strategies for mobilizing primarily oral speech communities to invest in literacy. One is to provide relatively localized examples of literacy, African literacy in this context, thereby demonstrating that literacy is not a purely Western modality of language use. The second strategy is to find illuminating ways to address the perception that literacy is for those who need to learn the language. From this perspective, developing skills in literacy is not be framed as an individual self-improvement project, but as communal activity built around developing a consensus for how to represent the language in writing. In the context of new orthographies, the literacy classes are not to help language learners. On the contrary, literacy classes require language experts to engage and develop orthographic conventions for the community.

## List of abbreviations

APPL – applicative
BG – background
CERT – certitive
COND – conditional
DAT – dative
DEM – demonstrative
DTRV – detransitive
DU – dual
EXCL – exclusive
F – feminine
FOC – focus
INCL – inclusive
inf – infinitive
IPFV – imperfective
M – masculine
NEG – negative
NMLZ – nominalizer
OBJ – objective
OBL – oblique
PART – partitive
PFV – perfective
PL – plural
POSS – possessive
PREP – preposition
PRF – perfect
PROG – progressive
PURP – purpose
QUOT – quotative
REL – relative
SBJ – subject
SBJV – subjective
SG – singular
2 – second person
3 – third person

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