

A descriptive analysis of linguistic change in the Adamawa Fulfulde in Nigeria

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Abstract

Language change is an inevitable, regular and continuous process, and this may start with a simple variation, as is evident in the Fulfulde spoken in Yola and its environs. The paper aims at analysing the phonological, morpho-phonological and morpho-syntactic changes that affect not only the forms but also the functions of the affected structures. Unstructured observation and spontaneous interview are the methodological techniques that were used for eliciting data for this study. A descriptive approach was used to present and analyse the data. The study discovered that Fulfulde in the multilingual community of Yola and its environs has really manifested variations that affected the linguistic norms of the grammatical aspects of the language. Such effects are traced to the phonological and morpho-phonological elements as well as some morpho-syntactic aspects, and leading to the limitation of the initial consonant alternation, modification of some personal pronouns, modification of some functional grammatical morphemes and introduction of a new phoneme /v/ into the language. Eventually, they resulted in the evolution of a remarkable variety of Fulfulde peculiar to that area.

Keywords: Fulfulde, initial consonant alternation, modification, variation.

Introduction

Fulfulde, the language of the *Fulbe*, is spoken by more than 32 million people worldwide (see David, Simons and Charles, 2020), and it is one of the African languages and one of the most widely spoken in the West Africa sub-region (see Arnott, 1970, McIntosh, 1984, Breedveld, 1995, etc.). The exact period when Fulfulde started spreading in the area now referred to as Adamawa still remains a speculation. *Fulbe*, the native speakers of the language are said to have reached Adamawa from Hausa-land through Borno around the 14th century and by the 16th century, they reached up to Sudan.

According to Njeuma (1978), the principal Fulbe clans that entered Adamawa were the Mbewe'en, Ngara'en, Wolarbe, Yillag'en, Ba'en, Jafun'en and Kiri'en. Around 1809, Adamawa, the *Fombina* Emirate was well established with a complete system of government operating hierarchically by the Fulbe elites under the leadership of Modibbo Adama bii Ardo Hasana with its capital in Yola, subordinate to Sokoto caliphate with Fulfulde as both official language and a lingua-franca (see Abubakar, 2008, and Victor, 1978).

Language attrition, shift and loss are common phenomena that affect languages in multilingual societies, and Fulfulde in multilingual Adamawa has also been exposed to the danger of these phenomena. Therefore, this paper studies the linguistic variation of the language which used to be a dominant language in the multilingual area for centuries (see Usman, Bello & Muhammad, 2018). The contact might have caused some of the variations, but this is out of the scope of this paper. The paper examines phonological, morpho-phonological, and morpho-syntactic variations that appear to have emerged from the local speech, leading to the development of a distinct variety of the language specific to that geo-linguistic area.

The Adamawa dialect

Matthews (2007, p. 103) defines dialect as “any distinct variety of a language, especially one spoken in a specific part of a country or other geographical area”. It is a variety of language that is determined by the social and geographical background of the speaker (Syal and Jindal, 2014).

One of the most important factors responsible for the emergence of dialects in Fulfulde is geographical location. From Senegal in West Africa down to central Africa, different variations are noticeable in the different geographical areas. Despite the fact that some certain varieties are identifiable with geographical areas, there is no clear-cut demarcation for the dialects (Girei, 2009). Arnott (1970, p. 3) earlier identifies six major dialects of Fulfulde, viz:

1. Futa Toro (Senegal).
2. Futa Jalo (Guinea).
3. Masina (Mali).
4. Sokoto and Western Niger.
5. Central Northern Nigeria (roughly Katsina, Kano, Zaria, Plateau, Bauchi and Bornu provinces) and eastern Niger.

6. Adamawa.

Adamawa dialect is one of the major dialects that spans diverse terrains, cultures, and borders. it is one of the ten major Fulfulde dialects identified by Apel (2013).

An overview of language change

Though language change has no simple explanation, languages change in a regular manner that is recognisable, even if the change is not predictable (Hickey, 2010). Aitchison (2002, p. 249) reports that “a closer look at language change has indicated that it is natural, inevitable and continuous, and involves interwoven sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic factors which cannot easily be disentangled from one another.”

However, typologically, there are different reasons or causes of the change. Language change can either be internal or external. The internally motivated change is the change caused by the structural aspect of the language, and change is regarded as external if there is no obvious internal reason for it (see Hickey, 2010). So, variation is motivated by different reasons. According to Labov (1972, pp. 1-2) “These variations may be induced by the process of assimilation or differentiation, by analogy, borrowing, fusion, contamination, random variation, or any number in which the language system interacts with physiological and psychological characteristics of the individual.” Indeed, some of these phenomena are evident in the variations manifested in the variety of Fulfulde spoken in that area. Moreover, the most affected aspects of the language include but are not limited to the grammatical aspects that are peculiar to Fulfulde such as the initial consonant alternation, personal pronouns, functional grammatical morphemes and the phonemic system.

According to Rooy (2020, p. 134) “the distinction between language and dialect acquired a highly subjective dimension from the end of the sixteenth century onwards.” Thus he explains that some scholars view dialect as an anomalous deviation from analogical norm of the language as inspired by language-external, social realities and standardization process. Therefore, the variety of spoken Fulfulde which resulted from the phenomena mentioned above can be considered a new dialect of the language.

Research method

Unstructured observation and spontaneous interview were the methodological techniques used for eliciting data for this study. Unstructured observation was conducted over an

extended period. Fulfulde speakers who reside in Yola were observed during the research to detect deviant elements in their expressions. These expressions were recorded and analysed. Data were collected from over fifty speakers, but the biodata of the informants was not recorded due to the nature of the method adopted. Moreover, spontaneous interviews were also used not only to validate the available data but also to obtain additional information.

Ten speakers were engaged in spontaneous interviews, selected informally using simple random sampling to ensure that every member of the population had an equal chance of selection, thereby enhancing the accuracy and reliability of the data (Osuala, 2005; Pandey & Pandey, 2015).

The biodata of informants interviewed was not recorded due to the spontaneous nature of the sessions, which focused on simple questions about pluralisation, verb agreement, and the use of /v/ and /w/; the data were presented and analysed using a descriptive approach.

Discussion

This section discusses data showing linguistic deviations, indicating the emergence of a variety common not only to non-native speakers but to Yolans generally, regardless of origin. The Adamawa dialect of Fulfulde, historically used as an official and aristocratic lingua franca across diverse cultural and ethnolinguistic regions, now exhibits notable variation in Yola, which is rapidly spreading to nearby towns and rural areas.

Limitation of the initial consonant alternation

Initial consonant alternation (henceforth, ICA), is an important aspect of Fulfulde grammar. Initial consonants of verbs alternate to agree with the number of the subject in any given sentence, while that of nouns and adjectives alternate to agree with the number in marking plurality or quality (see Abba, 1991 and Gottschligg, 2004). ICA in Fulfulde can be morpho-phonological as well as morphosyntactic.

The initial consonants of the singular personal nouns and adjectives are the initial consonants of the plural non-personal nouns and adjectives, and vice-versa. In the case of verbs, the alternation is triggered by the plurality of the subject of the sentence. Let us consider the tables below.

Table I: Personal (Human)¹ Initial Consonants Alternation

S/No.	Set A	Set B	Singular	Plural	Gloss
1.	b	> w	baad-dó	> waadbe	dead (useless)
2.	c	> s	cooydó	> sooybe	poor
3.	d	> r	daneejo	> raneebe	white
4.	g	> w	gujjo	> wuybe	thief
5.	j	> y	jaawdó	> yaawbe	fast
6.	k	> h	kaadó	> haabe	non-Pullo
7.	p	> f	perdó	> ferbe	wise

The set of plosive sounds that are under set **A** in table I above alternate to the set of sounds under **B** with regard to nouns that refer to human beings. The plosive sounds alternate to fricatives or glides in the personal nouns. The plosive sounds in reverse order are the alternants of the glide and fricatives under set B when they refer to names of non-human beings. The ICA has two directionalities; personal and non-personal. The personal has to do with people and the non-personal has to do with things other than people. Let us study the following tables:

Table II: Non-personal (Non-human) Initial Consonants Alternation

S/No.	Set B	Set A	Singular	Plural	Gloss
1.	w	> b	waare	> ba'e	buddle
2.	s	> c	sawru	> cabbi	staff
3.	r	> d	reedu	> deedi	stomach
4.	w	> g	wuro	> gure	village
5.	y	> j	yowre	> jowe	bee-hive
6.	h	> k	hayre	> kaa'e	stone
7.	f	> p	faabru	> paabi	frog

The alternation of the above consonants in either of the conditions is now fluctuating because our data shows that, the deviation depends on individual speakers but not on individual consonants. Some of the data have even revealed that the deviation by some individuals is beyond the ICA because it affects the entire word formation process of some

¹ Table I, II, IV and VI are all adapted from Bello (2016) as sources of standard material to which the modifications or variations can be traced.

words in this category. Let us consider the following table which illustrates the deviation in both conditions, i.e., the personal and non-personal pronouns.

Table III: Deviation from Alternation

S/No.	Initial Consonants	Singular	Plural	Gloss
1.	j > j	junngo	junngooji	hand
2.	s > s	sooydo	sooybe	poor
3.	r > d	reedu	deedi	stomach
4.	w > g	wuro	gure	village
5.	y > j	yowre	jowe	bee-hive
6.	h > k	hayre	kaa'e	stone
7.	p > p	paabru	paabi	frog

Though, some individuals tend to ignore the alternation, generally speaking, the greater percentage of the data prove that, the ICA of this condition is active and productive among the Fulfulde speakers in Yola. However, the fluctuation of the ICA is clear evidence of a change in progress. Looking at the first column of tables II and III and their related examples of the second columns, one can notice the introduced deviations. In table III the plural of the word *junngo* is generalised as *junngooji* instead of *juude*. The initial consonant of the word *sooydo* 'poor' supposed to be (c) /ʃ/ which alternates to /s/ in the plural is neutralised as /s/ in both the singular and the plural forms in the examples above. The same thing happens to the word *paabru* 'frog' in the last column where the initial consonant of the word is neutralised. The initial consonant of the singular form is 'f' /f/ but it is 'p' /p/ in both singular and plural forms in the examples above.

However, the second condition of ICA is subject-verb agreement. This alternation is seriously affected by the change. Contrary to the case of the alternation in nouns, here, only in a few cases and by a few individuals that the alternation is observed. For instance, the glide and fricative consonants under **set A** in **table II** can be part of the alternating consonants in verbs with alternants different from those of nouns as illustrated in Table IV below:

Table IV: Subject-Verb Agreement in Fulfulde Verbs

S/No.	Set B	Set A	singular	plural	Gloss
1.	w >	mb	O wammbi	Be mbammbi	praised
2.	s >	c	O soodi	Be coodi	bought

3.	r > nd	<i>O remi</i> > 'Be <i>ndemi</i>	farmed
4.	w > ng	<i>O wujji</i> > 'Be <i>ngujji</i>	stole
5.	y > nj	<i>O yotti</i> > 'Be <i>njotti</i>	arrived
6.	h > k	<i>O hari</i> > 'Be <i>kari</i>	snored
7.	f > p	<i>O faarti</i> > 'Be <i>paarti</i>	chased

The first column of the above table presents the initial consonants of verbs and their alternants, while the second (middle) column presents clauses in pairs. The clauses by the left of the arrows indicate the singular-subject singular-verb agreement, while the ones by the right of the arrows present the plural-subject plural-verb agreement. The materials in the above table are considered to be the standard materials in Adamawa Fulfulde and beyond. However, looking at these materials, the study found that most of the initial consonants of verbs no longer alternate to agree with plural subjects any more in Yola. Let us consider table V below:

Table V: Non-Alternation of Initial Consonants of Verbs in Yola

S/No.	Set B	Set A	Singular	Plural	Gloss
1.	w > w	w	<i>O wammbi</i> > 'Be <i>wammbi</i>		praised
2.	s > s	s	<i>O soodi</i> > 'Be <i>soodi</i>		bought
3.	r > r	r	<i>O remi</i> > 'Be <i>remi</i>		farmed
4.	w > w	w	<i>O wujji</i> > 'Be <i>wujji</i>		stole
5.	y > y	y	<i>O yotti</i> > 'Be <i>yotti</i>		arrived
6.	h > h	h	<i>O hari</i> > 'Be <i>hari</i>		snored
7.	f > f	f	<i>O faarti</i> > 'Be <i>faarti</i>		chased

Table IV presents the phonological variation as triggered by the syntax, but in table V above the subject-verb agreement has now been neutralised. So, initial consonants of verbs no longer alternate in the speech of Fulfulde speakers in Yola. In all the examples above, the initial consonants of the verbs remain the same in both sets of sentences. So, the plural subject agreement is lost in all the phrases by the right of the arrow where the subject *be* 'they' is plural but none of the initial consonants of the verbs alternates to conform to the rule.

Modification of the personal pronouns

Bello (2016) categories the personal pronouns of Fulfulde into seven: first-person singular, first-person plural (inclusive), first-person plural (exclusive), second-person singular, second-person plural, third-person singular and third-person plural. The pronouns are distributed accordingly in the table below based on subject, emphatic, object and genitive respectively. By inclusive, it means the 2nd person is included, and by exclusive it means the 2nd person is excluded.

Personal pronouns are also part of the aspects of the language that are affected by the natural change. Some of the personal pronouns have been either modified, shifted, or extended, as we can see in the following tables. First, let us look at the standard materials in table VI below.

Table VI: Categories of Personal Pronouns in Fulfulde

S/No.	Persons	Subject	Emphatic	Object	Genitive
1.	1 st Pers. Sing.	mi	miin	yam	am
2.	1 st Pers. Pl inclusive	en	enen	en	men ²
3.	1 st Pers. Pl exclusive	min	minin	min	amin
4.	2 nd Pers. Sing.	a	aan	maa/-e	maa
5.	2 nd Pers. Pl	on	onon	on	mon
6.	3 rd Pers. Sing	o	kanko	mo	maako/mum
7.	3 rd pers. Pl	6e	ham6e	6e	ma66e

The above table contains the standard forms of the personal pronouns in Adamawa Fulfulde from which table VII below is extracted. The difference between the materials in the two tables is typical in the last two columns of the table. The materials in the fourth column which contains the **object** manifest variations compared to the same materials in Table VI above. The *-e* in the third column of the above table is a suffix attached to verbs to mark 2nd person singular. both the *-e* and the *maa* serve as 2nd person singular, but they play a

² *Men* is the shortened form of the 1st person plural inclusive genitive form *meeden* ‘our’, *maa* is the shortened form of the 2nd person singular genitive form *maada* ‘your’, *mon* is a shortened form of the 2nd person plural genitive form *moodon* ‘your’ while *mum* is the shortened form of the 3rd person singular genitive form of *muudum* ‘his/her’. The 3rd person singular genitive form is divided into two; *maako* and *muudum*. The former is an anaphor whose antecedent must be a pronoun while the latter is an anaphor that refers to a noun. (Bello, 2023).

complementary role. That is to say, the dependent morpheme *-e* is attached to a verb root as the object of the sentence to indicate imperative. While the independent morpheme *maa* as an object is used to indicate completive aspect. So, the verbs that come along with this pronoun must be in the past tense form which is marked by a vowel. E.g.

1. Haa mi hokk-e deftere nden.
let 1PSg give-2PSg book Det³
'Let me give you the book.'
2. Mi hokk-i maa defte didi.
1PSg give-past 2PSg books two
"I gave you two books."

The materials in table VII below proves that the complementary role of the morphemes is neutralised in Yola. The morpheme *maa* as an object pronoun is now used to replace the bound morpheme *-e* as an object pronoun, while the imperative verb is closed with vowel /a/. However, the 3rd persons (both singular & plural) still continue to resist any serious change, as we can see from the two tables.

Table VII: Categories of Personal Pronouns in Yola Variety

S/No.	Persons	Subject	Emphatic	Object	Genitive
1.	1 st Pers. Sing.	mi	min	mi/am	am
2.	1 st Pers. Pl inclusive	en	enen	men	men
3.	1 st Pers. Pl exclusive	min	minin	amin	amin
4.	2 nd Pers. Sing.	a	aan	maa	maa
5.	2 nd Pers. Pl	on	onon	mon	mon
6.	3 rd Pers. Sing	o	kanko	mo	maako
7.	3 rd pers. Pl	be	kambe	be	mabbe

Considering Table VII above, most of the materials in the fourth column of table VI are affected except the 3rd person pronouns. Both *mi* 'I' and *am* 'my' of the 1st person singular are used by different individuals as the **object** to replace *yam* 'me'. In the 1st person plural (inclusive & exclusive) and the 2nd person (plural), the objects are modified towards the

³ The personal pronouns are assigned symbolic interpretations in the gloss so as to give a non-speaker of the language clearer idea of the natural meaning of the pronouns. *1PSg* (mi/yam/am), *2PSg* (a/maa) and *3PSg* (o/mo) refer to the first person singular, second person singular and third person singular respectively. While Det (nden/am) is the abbreviation of the word determiner which refers to the definite article *nden* and the first personal singular genitive pronoun *am*.

genitive pronouns. In the case of the 2nd person singular, the object that has various forms based on the morpho-syntactic requirement is reduced to only one form, i.e., *maa*.

Modification of the functional grammatical morphemes

The grammatical morphemes that attracted the study are the causative marker *-in*⁴ and the dative marker *-an* that are not only common elements in Adamawa but common in other dialects of Fulfulde too, as well as in the other sister languages like Serer and Wolof spoken in the Senegambian region (see Greenberg, 1963). However, the morpheme *-an* basically has two functions, because it also serves as a benefactive element that indicates an **action for...** For the causative marker *-in* let us consider the examples below.

3. O sorr-in-i yam nagge am.
3PSg sell-cause-pst 1PSg cow Det
'He made me sold my cow'
4. A wurt-in-i yam nder naange meere.
2PSg come out-cause-pst 1PSg in sun nothing
'You made me came out under the (hot) sun for nothing.'
5. Hammadu yar-n-i Ali kosam baali.
Hammadu drink-cause-pst Ali milk sheep.
'Hammadu made Ali drank sheep milk.'
6. Mi his-n-i mo nannggeego.
1PSg save-cause-pst 3PSg arresting
'I have saved him from being arrested.'

The counterpart of the illustrated marker in the examples above is the dative or benefactive marker *-an*, which we say functions either as a dative element or benefactive element based on the syntactico-semantic structure at hand.

7. Yaar-an mo mootaa.
take-to 3PSg car
'Take a car to him.'

⁴ The phoneme /i/ of the causative element *-(i)n* is basic but conditionally optional. When the morpheme is attached to a verb root that ends with a consonant cluster or gemination, the phoneme /i/ is compulsory, so, the whole element *-in* is attached, otherwise the consonant /n/ of the element is adequate.

8. Sood-an mo deftere nden.
 buy-for 3PSg book Det
 ‘Buy the book for him/her.’

Now the two elements are confused and a kind of variation is introduced as a result. There are cases of shifting the meaning as well as modification of the marker. In the case of the causative marker *-in*, very few maintain the modified form of the marker, rather, a different word entirely is introduced for that purpose, i.e. *waat-*. The dative *-an* is replaced with the causative marker *-in*, but we see the case of *-an* > *-in* as a simple modification, whereas the data proved that there is evidence of modification in respect to the causative *-in* > *-un*. However, most of the Fulfulde speakers in that area tend to use the independent morpheme *waat* instead of the dependent morpheme *-in*. *-an* > *-in* as ‘to’. So, the sentences in (7 & 8) can be rewritten with the morpheme *-an* substituted by *-in*, as we can see in (9 & 10) below, but the semantic interpretation remains intact. This is possible because of the shift that introduced a different morpheme to cater for the causative aspect.

9. Yaar-in mo mootā.
 take-to 3PSg car
 ‘Take a car to him/her.’
10. Sood-in mo deftere man.
 buy-for 3PSg book Det
 ‘Buy the book for him/her.’

When the causative *-in* shifted to dative, its modified form *-un* as a causative marker is evident but is not commonly used today. It is only found as an idiosyncratic variation of some individuals. A morpheme *waat* (*cause*) has taken over the role of the original causative element *-in*. Let us consider the following examples

11. O waat-i am mi soor-i nagge am.
 3PSg cause-pst 1PSg 1PSg sell-pst cow Det
 ‘He made me sold my cow’
12. O waat-i am mi yar-i bone.
 3PSg cause-pst 1PSg 1PSg drink-pst affliction
 ‘He made me suffer.’

The shifting or modification of the other elements also seems to be an external influence attributable generally to the languages that are in contact with Fulfulde in and around the speech community.

The introduction of a new consonant

The most significant variation noticed in the phonology of the language is the introduction of the voiced labiodental fricative phoneme /v/, (see Girei, 2009). First, the sound was hypothesised as a variant of the bilabial glide /w/, however, the study proves that the sound was introduced and used by non-native speakers of Fulfulde, later on, it was adopted by the native speakers as a process of strengthening, from /w/ > /v/. the study discovered that voiced labiodental fricative sound /v/ has already gained a phonological ground in the Adamawa dialect of Fulfulde spoken generally in the study area and to some extent, even far and wide into the rural areas. The fact about the sound is that:

Firstly, it has limited itself to some nouns and verbs, that is to say; it does not substitute every /w/ because it has some selectional restrictions to the nouns or verbs that it applies. Secondly, it has only one restricted environment of occurrence, i.e.; word-initial position. So, it is a defective sound by nature of adoption. Because throughout our observation and in the data that are collected and analysed, there is no single case of occurrence of the sound in an environment other than the word initial position except in compounds, especially those that are derived through reduplication process, in words such as:

13.		<u>/w/</u>	>	<u>/v/</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
	a)	welwelo	>	velvelo	‘excitement’
	b)	wilwildu	>	vilvildu	‘bat’

However, no case of simple words with medial or final variation of /w/ and /v/ in the data elicited for this paper. So, the medial or final /w/ in words like: *mawdo* ‘elder’, *loowru* ‘the west wind’, *jawngal* ‘guinea-fowl’, *dow* ‘up’, etc. resist the /v/ variant in any context. Therefore, any attempt to substitute the medial or final /w/ sound with /v/ sound renders the derivation ungrammatical as we can see in the following examples.

14.	a)	mawdo	>	*mavdo	‘elder’
	b)	loowru	>	*loovru	‘the west wind’
	c)	jawngal	>	*javngal	‘guinea-fowl’
	d)	dow	>	*dov	‘up’
	e)	law	>	*lav	‘quick’

So, the variation is environment specific and applies to some selected nouns and verbs, but the criterion that guides the selection of the words is yet to be justified. Let us consider the occurrence of the phoneme in the nouns below.

- | | | | | | |
|-----|----|--------|---|--------|-------------------------|
| 15. | a) | wamnde | > | vamnde | ‘donkey’ |
| | b) | weelo | > | veelo | ‘hunger’ |
| | c) | waare | > | vaare | ‘bundle’ |
| | d) | winnde | > | vinnde | ‘a deserted place’ |
| | e) | wamngo | > | vamngo | ‘aboriginal settlement’ |

The examples above illustrate the variation of the /w/ sound in nouns. As we have said earlier, /v/ sound is not a variant of /w/ sound of all nouns. In fact, some nouns maintain their /w/ sound and reject the /v/ sound as the variant of their initial /w/ sound, and therefore such variants are marked as ungrammatical. The nouns with the asterisk in (16) below are considered ungrammatical for their /v/ initial sound.

- | | | | | | |
|-----|----|--------|---|---------|--------------------------|
| 16. | a) | wawru | > | *vawru | ‘well (source of water)’ |
| | b) | wuro | > | *vuro | ‘town/village’ |
| | c) | waandu | > | *vaandu | ‘monkey’ |
| | d) | woyla | > | *voyla | ‘north’ |
| | e) | waade | > | *vaade | ‘death’ |

In (16) above, it is clearly indicated that not all nouns with initial /w/ sound can substitute its (w) with a /v/ sound. The initial /w/ sound of the verbs behaves exactly like that of the nouns. Because the verbs are also of two groups, some of them have /v/ sound as a variant of /w/ sound while some resist the variation. First, let us look at the verbs with the variation, and then the ones that resist and so, we consider such an attempt as ungrammatical.

- | | | | | | |
|-----|----|-------|---|------------|--------------|
| 17. | a) | wama | > | vama | ‘to dance’ |
| | b) | waala | > | vaala | ‘to twist’ |
| | c) | wolwa | > | volwa/vola | ‘to talk’ |
| | d) | wuula | > | vuula | ‘to swim’ |
| | e) | wonna | > | vonna | ‘to destroy’ |

These are examples of verbs that adopt /v/ sound as a variant of /w/ sound. Similar to the case of the nouns, some resist the variant completely. Any attempt to substitute the initial /w/ sound of the following verbs will render them ungrammatical as far as the Fulfulde speakers in the study area are concerned. Let us consider the following examples.

- | | | | | | |
|-----|----|-------|---|--------|---------------|
| 18. | a) | wada | > | *vada | ‘to do’ |
| | b) | waala | > | *vaala | ‘to lie down’ |
| | c) | wara | > | *vara | ‘to come’ |
| | d) | wasa | > | *vasa | ‘to dig’ |
| | e) | wanya | > | *vanya | ‘to hate’ |

These are some of the examples of the words that have an initial /w/ sound but resist the free variation of the /v/ sound. This proves that the variation is free as well as restricted. It is free on one hand, for the fact that the two sounds, i.e.; /w/ and /v/ have a similar distribution in context and are not in contrast in some contexts, while the variation is regarded as restricted on the other hand for the fact that the same sound /w/ resists adopting the /v/ sound as its free variant in the contexts of certain words. The phonological reason for this behaviour is yet to be brought to limelight, and it is not the scope of this paper. However, one of the appreciable effects of the introduction of the /v/ sound and its restricted variation is that it disambiguates some affected homonyms in that context.

Conclusion

This paper examines linguistic change in Fulfulde by analyzing variations in different grammatical aspects, which have contributed to the emergence of a distinct variety of the language. The study revealed that these variations affected the grammatical system of the language spoken in the area, including phonological, morpho-phonological, and morpho-syntactic components. It also identified changes such as the restriction of initial consonant alternation, the modification of some personal pronouns, the alteration of functional grammatical morphemes, and the introduction of a new sound /v/ into the phonemic system of the language. These are typical cases of externally motivated changes introduced into the language, which may eventually lead to the emergence of a new and remarkable variety of Fulfulde.

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