

A collection of Țt-Ma'in narrative texts annotated for reported speech

Compiled and annotated by Rebecca Paterson. Texts contributed by Ibrahim Tume Ushe, Mama Iliya, and Ibrahim Yohanna. Free translations completed in consultation with Sunday John.

Language and its speakers

Țt-Ma'in is a Kainji (Benue-Congo, Niger-Congo) language spoken in northwestern Nigeria (Gerhardt 1989; Blench 2018). Most speakers live in Fakai Local Government Area near the border of Kebbi State and Niger State; the land area is reported to be approximately 2,247 square kilometers (Nigeria Population Commission 2006). The northern language area border is the Ka River. The oldest towns are located at the top of the hills, many along the ridge that runs from the towns of Rijau to Zuru. The principal town of Țt-Ma'in speakers is Mahuta, located on the road that runs from Dabai, near the town of Zuru, to the town of Koko on the main road to the Kebbi State capital Birnin Kebbi. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2017) present a projected 2016 population of Fakai Local Government Area as 161,365, an increase of more than 40,000 relative to the 2006 census population that reported a population of approximately 120,000 (Nigeria Population Commission 2006).

Most Țt-Ma'in speakers are farmers of millet, guinea corn (sorghum), and dry-farmed rice. There is a relatively low population density in this agricultural community, 71.8 people per square kilometer.

Țt-Ma'in speakers comprise a minority group among minority language groups in the area. The Țt-Ma'in language area is bordered by Hausa ([hau],Chadic, Afroasiatic) spoken to the north and west, by C'Lela [dri] and Gwamhi-Wuri-Mba [bga] spoken to the northeast and east, by Țt-Hun [uth] to the south, and Țs-Saare [uss] to the southeast. With the exception of Hausa, all other neighboring languages belong to the Northwest Kainji Cluster. Most native speakers of all Northwest Kainji languages are bilingual in Hausa; Hausa is used between speakers who do not share a common first language.

Insert Map of Kainji Languages

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kainji_languages#/media/File:Map_of_the_Kainji_languages.svg)

Despite the tendency for bilingual speakers to shift to the language of wider communication in many parts of the world, McGill and Blench (2012) report that threats of language shift are more restrained by a strong sense of ethnic identity through language use among speakers of the (geographically) West Kainji languages in Kebbi State, than among speakers of the East Kainji languages of Plateau State, where shift to Hausa poses a considerable threat. McGill and Blench (2012:109-112) attribute the differences to a strong sense of ethnic identity among the West Kainji language communities in response to generations of oppression by Hausa-speaking peoples, at least as far back as the slave-raiding connected to the establishment of the Kontagora Emirate under Umaru Nagwamatse (b.1806-d.1876), grandson of the prominent 19th century Usman dan Fodio who founded the Sokoto caliphate c. 1804 (Hogben and Kirk-Greene 1966: 500). As a result, ethnic identity, of which language is an integral part, supersedes any other identity factor among most West Kainji groups. This is true for Țt-Ma'in speakers also. Children are still learning the West Kainji languages, and language itself is seen as a marker of ethnic identity.

Town dwellers, particularly those with parents from two ethnic groups, learn little of their father's language. Ut-Ma'in speaking men commonly marry outside of their ethnic group, often to Lelna women (i.e., C'Lela speakers). Mothers use their first language with children in the home, but fathers tend to use Hausa or English with their children when the mother is from another ethnic group. Hausa is crucial for life in the multi-ethnic town settlements along the main roads. Hausa traders have been in these towns for decades, if not centuries.

Language name

Ut-Ma'in is a recently applied cover term for seven mutually-intelligible varieties previously known in the literature by their individual varietal endonyms Kag-Fer-Jiir-Koor-Ror-Us-Zuksun (e.g., Ror for Ut-Ma'Ror), by the label Kag Cluster (Gerhardt 1989: 362-363), and by exonyms Puku-Geeri-Keri-Wipsi from the neighboring C'Lela [dri] language, as well as Fakkanci, Gelanci, etc., in the regional language Hausa [hau] (Table 1, see Smith 2007 and Paterson 2019 for discussion).

Table 1: Autonyms of Ut-Ma'in speaking groups

C'Lela-based Exonym (Regnier 2003)	Language Endonym (Regnier 1992)	Language Endonym (Tume p.c.)	People Endonym (Tume p.c)	Principle towns (Regnier 2003)
əɗ-Gwan	ət-Kag	<u>U</u> t-Kag	Kag-ɲɛ	*Fakai, Mahuta
Keri-ni	ətma-Koor	<u>U</u> t-Ma'Kuɯr	Kuɯr-ɲɛ	*Kele, †Old Kele
Geeri-ni	ət-Jiir	<u>U</u> t-Ma'Jiir	Jiir-ɲɛ	Bokoh, Bajida, †*Gele
Pək-nu	ətma-Ror	<u>U</u> t-Ma'Rɔr	A'Rɔr	*Mahuta, Birnin Tudu, Matseri, Tungan Dutsi
	ət-Us	<u>U</u> s-Us	A'us-Us	*†Rafin Kanya, now scattered among other groups
Wipsi-ni	ət-Zuksun	<u>U</u> t-Zuksun	A'Zuksun	*Tungan Kuka
	ət-Fer	<u>U</u> t-Fer	<u>U</u> s-Fer	*Kukum, Sakaba

*indicates the traditional center of the group

†indicates a traditional center used only for festivals

The label Ut-Ma'in is not in widespread general use; however, it is commonly used by language consultants when they interact with other speakers from their communities and subsequently readily understood. The name Ut-Ma'in was proposed in c. 2000 at a gathering of representative speakers from all

seven varieties who were meeting to discuss the development of a writing system (cf. Heath et al. 2005). Ūt-Ma'in roughly translates as 'our (incl.) language'. The term *ur-ma'in* [ɔ̄r.mā.ʔĩn] is used by all varieties as a label for the 'culture' shared by speakers of the mutually intelligible language varieties. The root *mā* is used in the autonyms of language names of at least three of the varieties: Ūt-Ma'Ror, Ūt-Ma'Jiir, and Ūt-Ma'Kūūr. The cover term Ūt-Ma'in takes the base of Ūt-Ma and replaces the clan name with the first person plural inclusive possessive pronoun *ĩn* '1PL.INCL.POSS'.

Corpus composition

Select Ūt-Ma'in texts annotated for speech reports are taken from approximately seven and a half hours of recorded and translated data; the larger corpus contains texts in various genre including folk narratives, personal narratives, pear story retellings, and conversational data. These texts were collected during twelve months of fieldwork conducted in 2005–2007, 2013 and 2017. The annotated texts come from the Ror and Jiir varieties.

Citing the Ūt-Ma'in corpus (Chicago-Style Citation Author-Date 16th ed.)

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