Religion and language in the transformation of education in northern Nigeria during British colonial rule, 1900-1960

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the vital roles that religion and language played in the transition and transformation of education in northern Nigeria during British colonial rule, 1900-1960. It traces the history of early contacts between European explorers and traders with the people of northern Nigeria and the Sokoto Caliphate before the establishment of colonial rule. In particular, the study discusses the colonial administration's policies on religion and language and how they were used as instruments of power and social stability. It probes the effectiveness of the Lugardian policy of non-interference in religious affairs in which Qur'anic schools and missionary schools were left to function independently to serve the interests of the colonial government. It also explores the issue of language, especially of writing Hausa and other Nigerian languages in Arabic script, called Ajami which was scrapped by the British colonial administration and its effects on the Islamic religious education and mass adult literacy in northern Nigeria.

The sixty years of Britain's colonial rule in Nigeria are characterized by frequent reclassifying of different regions for administrative purposes. Lugard has already been much involved in the colony, commanding troops from 1894 on behalf of the Royal Niger Company to oppose French claims on Borgu (a border region, divided in 1898 between Nigeria and Dahomey). Between 1903 and 1906 he subdues Kano and Sokoto and finally puts an end to their rulers' slave-raiding expeditions. Lugard pacifies northern Nigeria by ensuring that in each territory, however small, the throne is won and retained by a chief willing to cooperate. British colonial rule: 1900-1960. The sixty years of Britain's colonial rule in Nigeria are characterized by frequent reclassifying of different regions for administrative purposes. They are symptomatic of the problem of uniting the country as a single state. In the early years the Niger Coast Protectorate is expanded to become Southern Nigeria, with its seat of government at Lagos. Lugard has already been much involved in the colony, commanding troops from 1894 on behalf of the Royal Niger Company to oppose French claims on Borgu (a border region, divided in 1898 between Nigeria and Dahomey). Between 1903 and 1906 he subdues Kano and Sokoto and finally puts an end to their rulers' slave-raiding expeditions.