

Review

Contributions of Ilorin scholars to Arabic and Islamic studies in Yoruba land: Focus on Shaykh Adam Abdullah Al-Iluri

F.O. Jamiu

Department of Religious Studies, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, P.O. Box 1951 Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria

Received 15April, 2014: Accepted 1 September, 2014

Ilorin, the haven of Arabic and Islamic scholars, is multi-lingual and multi-ethnic community popularly known to some people as “GerinAlimi” (the town of Alimi) and to many others as “Ilorin Afonja” (Ilorin of Afonja); it has contributed and still contributing in no small measure to development of Arabic and Islamic studies not only in Yorubaland but also in Nigeria and beyond. As one of the Arabic and Islamic Centres in Yorubaland, Ilorin scholars have turned out numerous scholars who have occupied enviable positions in different spheres of human endeavours in different towns and cities in Yorubaland and West Africa. The paper aims at bringing into limelight the account of Ilorin as a great centre of Arabic and Islamic scholarship in Yorubaland. It delineates the various periods of the development of Arabic and Islamic learning in Yorubaland, explains the types of schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies in the area, the methods used in teaching in the schools and focuses on Shaykh Adam Abdullah Al-Iluri who had impacted greatly on Arabic and Islam in Yorubaland. It ends with a conclusion and recommendations. In carrying out this paper, the author has relied on history books, Arabic literary works and recent researches on the major scholars of Arabic and Islam. At the end, the reader would have been convinced as regards the tremendous role Ilorin scholars and in particular Shaykh Adam Abdullah Al-Iluri has played so far in Arabic and Islamic education in Yorubaland.

Key words: Yorubaland, Arabic and Islamic Studies, Ilorin, scholars, Quaran.

INTRODUCTION

Yorubaland is situated in South Western part of Nigeria as one of the largest and most important cultural groups. It lies to the immediate west of the River Niger and south of the Quorra (that is, the western branch of the same river above the confluence). To the west lies the present Benin Republic while the Bight of Benin forms its southern

boundary (Atanda, 1980:1). The term “Yoruba” applies to a linguistic group that occupies a large area which coterminous with States such as Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti and parts of Kwara States of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It has many dialects spoken by different groups in the region. The Yoruba people

E-mail: fatja_miu2@yahoo.com.

Author agree that this article remain permanently open access under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

were mostly animist prior to the advent of both Islam and Christianity. In fact, Islam entered Yorubaland before Christianity but it met stiff opposition from the pagans due to human nature of resisting change. When Christianity arrived, notions of a higher religion were no longer new to the people. The struggle for conversion of the Yoruba was vigorously pursued by the higher religions. As time went on, Christianity had managed to be on the same footing with Islam as regard the number of converts within a short period, despite the latter's early arrival in the area. This can be attributed to the early challenge of European and Christian forms of school education as well as the use of English as the official language, which the Yoruba Muslims in Lagos and Islamic scholars of this town were the first Nigerian Muslims to be exposed to that challenge.

Ilorin: The haven of Arabic and Islamic Scholars

Narration has it that Ilorin was founded by a man called Ojo who was originally a hunter from Ilofa near the present city of Oyo between 1770 and 1800. While Oke-Sunna and Agbaji Muslim settlements co-existed with Ilorin, a place of hunting and sharpening iron implements was founded by Ojo and his group (Al-Iluri, 1990:56-61; Salman, 2008:4-7). The early settlers in the town were Yoruba – speaking people with a man called Afonja as a prominent military leader among them. Afterwards, a Fulani itinerant Muslim scholar from the North called ShaykhSalih (Alimi) had sojourned into different places in Yorubaland which served as a guide to a retinue of subsequent scholars of Arabic moving from Ilorin with their knowledge and leaving their indelible marks on the sand of time.

He was a scholar of note who had a large following even before he finally settled in Ilorin. On his arrival, he met a large number of Muslims at OkeSunna whom he taught the half of TafsirJalalayn. Many more scholars came from different parts of Nigeria such as Hausaland, Bornoland and Nupeland to settle in Ilorin. He initiated the unfolding events which turned the city of Ilorin to a multi-lingual and multi-ethnic community of saints, preachers and scholars who arrived in the town and within a short period, his descendants established an Islamic State in Ilorin and its environs. Today, the town is predominantly Yoruba but in politics and administration, it approximates to the northern (Islamic) tradition. Ilorin, to some people, is known as "GerinAlimi"(that is, the town of Alimi) and to many others as "Ilorin Afonja" (that is, Ilorin of Afonja).

Development of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Yorubaland

Various scholars at one time and at another have

classified Arabic and Islamic learning in Nigeria. For instance, While Shaykh Adam Abdullah spoke of the periods of Borno, Wangara, Maghili, Fulani and Colonialism, Oseni (2002:6) has pointed out the following classification:

'*Asrul-Istihlal* (The Era of Commencement, 1000-1300 C.E)

'*Asrul-Istirshad* (The Era of Seeking for Instruction, 1300-1804)

'*Asrul-Istiqrar* (The Era of Consolidation, 1804-1903)

'*Asrul-Ist'amar* (The Era of Colonialism, 1903-1960)

'*Asrul-Istiqlal* (The Era of Independence, 1960-1999)

'*Asrul-Izdihar* (The Era of Fluorescence, 1999 to date).

The activities of Arabic and Islamic scholars of Yorubaland and their literary output fall within five eras named above. They are as follows:

Pre-Jihad Era: This is the period before the enthronement of Abdul-Salam, a son of ShaykhSalihbn Ahmad Junta, popularly known as 'Alim' a learned man, around 1830. It is believed that ShaykhAlimi composed a Y-rhymed poem which consists of 21 lines and apart from this, not much was done intellectually in Arabic and Islamic scholarship. The fact remains that the basic knowledge was sought for the purpose of worship and sufi activities. The first Islamic centre in Yorubaland emerged from OkeSunna.

The Jihad Era: This corresponds with the Era of Consolidation earlier mentioned. Many battles were fiercely fought by Ilorin to spread Islam and a force to be reckoned with after the fall of Old Oyo Empire. But the period marked the influx of scholars from different parts of north to the city. The hero figure of this period was the first Emir of Ilorin, Abdus-Salam son of ShaykhAlimi. In the name of Islam, Ilorin fought fiercely to widen its emirate despite being the heir of the Old Oyo Empire. There were internal problems in Ilorin and the Emir Abdus-Salam eliminated both Afonja and Solagberu. He sought the assistance of Sokoto and got the full support of the Caliphate to enable him face the Yoruba groups who intended to re-establish old Oyo hegemony (Danmale, 1981:1-13; Abubakre, 2004:24; and Jamii, 2004:15).

Colonial Era: The military prowess of Ilorin went down with the British conquest but its intellectual might remained. With the British putting a stop to Ilorin's military expansion, which the latter convincingly regarded as Jihad after a combined force of Yoruba troops had temporarily halted them at the battle of Osogbo in 1843. It was observed that Islam spread in Yorubaland during peace time more than when Ilorin and Nupe were at war. The town was the nearest Islamic Centre to Yorubaland, and young men sojourned Ilorin to quench their thirst for

knowledge of Arabic and Islam. Some scholars of Ilorin origin moved out to teach others while some remained at home to teach those who preferred to come to Ilorin from Ibadan, Iseyin, New Oyo, Lagos, Abeokuta, Ekiti, Iwo, Epe, Ijebu etc. ShaykhAbubakarIbn al-Qasim (d.1882), a native of Ibadan and popularly known as *Alaga* who was trained in Ilorin and later returned to Ibadan after a brief sojourn at Iseyin. He established his Arabic school in 1876 at OkeAremo in Ibadan where he trained the first generation of productive scholars and serious Arabic authors. He was succeeded on his demise in 1882 by one of his pupils, HarunMatanmi (d.1935), a native of Osogbo who became the chief Imam of Ibadan in 1922 (Jamiu, 2004:25).

Post-Independence Era: With the attainment of political independence in 1960, the seeds of weakening Arabic and Islamic Studies which were sown by the British Colonialists were being uprooted by Islamic intellectual jihadists of Ilorin in different places. Their efforts in this regard during the latter part of the colonial era were being seriously intensified. Thus, we found Shaykh Adam Abdullah al-Iluri establishing an Arabic and Islamic Training Centre first at Abeokuta in 1952 and then transferring it to Agege, Lagos in 1955. In the same vein, we found ShaykhKhidrSalahudeenApaokagi establishing *Ma'had at-Ta'lim al-'Arabi al-Islamiat* Owo in Ondo State in 1955 after he had taught in the town for 10 years. There were many others, including learned Mallams who used the old method of teaching and preaching in different cities, towns and villages within Yorubaland.

Era of Fluorescence: Many factors have attributed to the fluorescence of Arabic and Islamic scholarship in Yorubaland and Nigeria in general. These include the proliferation of standard Arabic schools in Yorubaland and the renewed zeal of Muslims to be committed to Islam and Arabic studies. The realization that one can attain any height with one's Arabic and Islamic education as long as one is committed, the availability of role models in the field such as ShaykhKamaludeen al-Adab, Shaykh Adam al-Ilori, ShaykhMurtadaAbdus-Salam, ShaykhAgbarigidoma, ShaykhAbubakar Gumi, ShaykhTahirUthmanBauchi, Shaykh Sharif Ibrahim Salih al-Hasan, ShaykhAbubakar al-Miskin, ShaykhKhidrSalahud-Din Apaokagi, ShaykhAbdur-Rahim Amin and ShaykhYahyaMurtala.

As a result, Arabic became a medium of diplomatic correspondence used by several Yoruba rulers and Islamic communities, through the assistance of some scholars, in their communication with Ilorin and other places. Trading activities of Ilorin with some Yoruba cities and towns brought a large number of its traders and scholars to these towns. Lagos became an important place for Arab migrants and traders who were instrumental to importation of Arabic printed books.

In the new dispensation, much literature in Arabic and Islamic Studies had been produced in the field of Arabic

language and Arabic literature as well as creative writing in Arabic of which Ilorin is the main centre in Nigeria. In Islamic writing, Ilorin is among the most vibrant centres (Jamiu, 2004:55-56). All these have assisted in no small measure in the production of high quality of Arabic and Islamic scholarship whose foundation had been laid by the old scholars of Ilorin and the exponents of modern Arabic and Islamic Studies most of whom were Ilorin scholars based in Yorubaland and elsewhere.

Types of schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Yorubaland

There were two types of schools in Yorubaland from the very beginning namely: Qur'anic Schools (*MakarantaAlo*) and Advanced Schools (*Makarantallmi*). The former was for learning how to recite the Qur'an and for the memorization of some portions of the Qur'an. It used to take a child several years to master the reading of the Qur'an. This was due to difficult method of learning. In fact, the pupils had to copy out each portion they were reading on a wooden slate (*alo* or *wala*), using the black edible ink (*tada*) obtained locally and sold at a cheap rate up till now.

On the completion of the recitation of the Qur'an, an elaborate feast was organized for the pupil for achieving so much. It is called *walimatkhathmil-Qur'an*. It was a day of feeding and the celebrant would recite the Qur'an in the public at conspicuous centres, his teacher's home and his own house. It is interesting to note that in Ilorin, the feast of completion of the learning of how to recite the Qur'an is often merged with wedding banquet for which the word *walimat* is more often aptly used.

The second stage of acquisition of Islamic knowledge is *Makaranta 'Ilmi* whereby the student begins to acquire more knowledge. He first learns the rudiments of Islamic theology, jurisprudence, hadith text, Islamic history, Qur'anic exegesis, Arabic grammar, Arabic literature and a host of others. Later in life, he may choose to dig deep into one or two of the subjects and specialize (Fafunwa, 1982: 62).

With the availability of modern Arabic schools, the system has changed drastically. First, the learning of how to recite the Qur'an has transformed. Instead of using wooden slates, pupils now use printed books like *Al-Qa'idat al-Baghdadiyyah* and *Yassarna al-Qur'an*, though the former is far more popular in Yorubaland. Instead of spending up to ten years in learning how to recite the Qur'an, the exercise now takes less than one year. On its completion, *walimat* is still performed as in the old system.

After the completion of the recitation of the Qur'an, the pupils proceed to the *Ibtida'iyyah* (Primary) school which lasts about three years. Subjects taught are Qur'anic texts, Hadith, Jurisprudence, Islamic monotheism, History, Ethics, Arabic Grammar, Literature, Comprehension,

Composition, Translation, General knowledge and English.

The third stage is the *I'dadiyyah* (intermediate or junior secondary) school which has a three-year duration. The subjects mentioned in the preceding paragraph are studied in addition to basic logic, geography, social studies, arithmetic, rhetoric and science, all in Arabic.

The fourth stage is the *Thanawiyyah* or *Tawjihyyah* (Senior Secondary) school which has the same duration as the above third stage with more intensive study of the subjects named above.

METHODS OF TEACHING IN THE SCHOOLS

In the old system of education (which still strives in some quarters) rote method was used both in Qur'anic and 'Ilmi Schools. The method was slow, strenuous and individual oriented. A pupil needed to be extra-intelligent to be able to move fast. In teaching the advanced students, the teacher would teach a few lines at a time so that the students would be able to comprehend and digest the contents properly before moving on (Fafunwa, 1982:62).

On the other hand, modern Arabic Schools brought about a revolution so much that a student would be able to learn within a week what he would not have been able to cover over a period of four months. The present writer had the privilege of learning under the system.

At the tertiary level, the method is that of lecturing, giving guidance to the students to learn more through the use of libraries, discussions, seminars, television, radio and observations outside the school.

Classification of Ilorin scholars of Arabic and Islamic Studies

The '*Ulama*' of Ilorin have been classified into four groups. These are itinerant preachers, Islamic teachers, ascetics, who devote all their time to worship and Sufism and spiritual healers who solve people's spiritual, psychological, political, social and economic problems by means of special prayers, herbs and astrology.

They can be broadly classified into two groups: those who occupied political office and others who operated on private initiative. The first group comprised Imams and Judges (*alkala'i*) while the second comprised teachers or preachers. Apart from those early Ilorin scholars who versed in Islamic law, there were many other Shari'ah judges before the Alkali courts were changed to Native Courts; prominent among them were *Alkali* Mahmud Belgore, *Alkali* SaliuFodie, *Alikali* Sa'aduOkubiyi and *Alikali* Ile GaladimaGegele (Salman, 2008:32-33).

Apart from those who were political officers, there were independent numerous scholars who were neither Imams nor office holders but versed in various disciplines of learning. Shaykh Adam Abdullah gave a long list of Ilorin

scholars from 1800-1980 and based his classification according to the place of settlement in the town and treated them in groups based on age or period.

Effort shall be made to look into a brief biographical account of Shaykh Adam 'Abdullah Al-Illuri and his contributions to Arabic and Islamic education.

Shaykh Adam Abdullah Al-Illori

Shaykh Adam was born in 1917 at Wasa, a town in the northern part of Republic of Benin but came to Ilorin with parents in 1929. Though, his mother was a princess of Wasa. He was brought up by his father who was fond of taking him to eminent scholars to seek their blessing for him. He studied under many scholars but mainly from Shaykh Adam Namaji. He was very inquisitive and eager to learn from his tender age.

Shaykh Adam attained his status in scholarship mostly through self-effort by reading and writing. He related the influence of some scholars who happened to be his role model. He is quoted to have said: "I love history like my father and was influenced a great deal by eminent scholars of the town. Others that influenced me (in academic activities) include ShaykhWaziriBida, Adam Namaji and as-Sayuti in literary works, IbnKhaldun and al-Ghazali in research activities".

The contribution of Shaykh Adam to Arabic and Islamic learning in Nigeria at large and in Yorubaland in particular cannot be over-emphasized. He achieved wonderful success in this regard through the establishment and management of an Arabic Training Centre popularly called *Markaz* at Agege, Lagos. The school has offshoots in different parts of Yorubaland and West African countries such as Benin Republic, Togo, Ghana and Ivory Coast. On 5th May, 2002, the *Markaz* marked its golden jubilee where Prof. Shuaib Oba Abdur-Raheem, formerly Vice Chancellor of the University of Ilorin was honoured in recognition of his excellence in public service.

Al-Illuri was the first scholar in sub-saharan Africa to be recognized by President Husni Mubarak of Egypt, acting on the recommendation of *al-Azhar* University, with an award of the first category in erudition in sciences and arts in 1989. Another activity of Shaykh Adam Al-Illuri which is not less in importance is preaching which motivated not only Yoruba Muslims but also Muslims throughout the federation as well as non-Muslims. He used to organize *Tafsir* sessions in *Markaz* where topical issues on different aspects of Islam were discussed with thunderous ovations from the audience.

The production of literary works in Arabic on virtually all branches of Arabic and Islamic Studies has made the people of southwestern Nigeria to be inward-looking for erudition in Arabic learning in contrast to the erstwhile tendency to consider their northern neighbours as the sole authorities. These literary products of well over seventy-seven books published by respectable

publishers around the world in addition to over eleven poems have received deserved academic attention. We shall quickly look at one of his verse works.

Arabic rhetoric

Rhetoric is the bye product of a literary culture being held and applied with great tenacity. One reason for the interest of Yoruba 'Ulama' in rhetoric would seem to be related to the understanding of the Qur'an itself. It is pertinent to mention that the first work on rhetoric in Yorubaland is attributed to Shaykh Ahmad b. AbiBakr popularly called Omolkokoro who was requested by a friend, Shaykh Abu Bakr b. 'Abdullah (d.1909) who was a prominent scholar and preacher in Lagos, to write an introduction into Arabic rhetoric at the beginning of the twentieth century.

This short treatise, *Iltiqat al-Mutun min khamsatfunun* contains five chapters that rhetoric mainly based on *al-Qazwini's Talkhis al-Miftah* is explained in three chapters while syntax and morphology occupy the remaining two chapters. Omolkokoro, in his introduction, refers to the value of 'ilm al-Balaghah as the best of the sciences, the most subtle and the most important with respect to the secrets conveyed by it.

Similarly, Shaykh Adam al-Iluri purposely wrote on rhetoric in verse to facilitate easy learning of the subject. It is in this sense that efforts shall be made to look at some lines in his work for this paper.

Shaykh Adam al-Iluri's Verses on Arabic Rhetoric: Text, Translation and commentary

أسرار البلاغة وأساس الفصاحة

*** المرتجى العفو عن المساوى	قال أدم اليرباوى
*** علم الفنون فوق من أرشدنى	الحمد لله الذى قد زادنى
*** على النبي سيد الأنام	ثم صلاة الله بالدوام
*** قراننا حديثنا يحويها	أصولها ثلاثة فعيها
*** أشعارهم أمثالهم للراء	ثم كلام العرب العرباء
*** فأسلك مسالك ذوى الأداء	إن شئت أن تكون فى البلاغ
*** لا زمه للحفظ وللتبيان	ولا تفارق مصحف القرآن
*** ففى المقام الثان فى نظام	أما حديث سيد الأنام
*** أشعار أهل البدو للتقاضى	نهج بلاغة الشريف الراض
*** بالشرح تحت الكل حفظها يسير	مقامة الحريري قاموس صغير

الفصاحة

*** ومن غرابية و خلف البادر	خلوص حرف القول من تتافر
*** عن ضعف تأليف وتعقيد ترى	فصاحة وفى الكلام إن عرى
*** والسن السلطان شاعت يدرى	مثاله يضرب زيد عمرا
*** على اللسان ذاك ليس يقبل	وعن تتافر الذى قد يثقل
*** وليس قرب قبر حرب قبرى	كقبر حرب بمكان قفر

أسرار الفصاحة والبلاغة

*** سر خفي فاحتفل للأدب	وفى مجارى كلمات العرب
*** وهكذا التأنيث والتذكير	من ذلك التقديم والتأخير
*** كعكسه على الصحيح يا فتى	وفاعل بلفظ مفعول أتى
*** مقام مفعول وفاعل نمى	إقامة المصدر ثم الإسم
*** والجمع للإثنين دون مين	ويؤمر الواحد كالإثنين

Translation

The secrets of rhetoric and foundation of eloquence
The destitute Adam, a native of Yoruba (who is) hoping
for Allah's pardon for his shortcomings, says:

Praise be to Allah who had increased me in knowledge of sciences more than he who guides me.

May the perpetual blessings of Allah be upon the Prophet, the leader of mankind.

Pay attention to (rhetoric) in its three origins that comprise the Qur'an and the prophetic sayings.

Then, the speech of the Arabs, their poems and proverbs for those who observe.

Follow the paths of the accomplished ones if you were to be reckoned with the rhetoricians.

Do never abandon (the reading of) Qur'an, always read it for memorization and exposition.

The prophetic tradition occupies the second position in the arrangement.

The method adopted by Sharif ar-Radi in rhetoric and the poems of the Bedouins (are cited) for judgment.

A short dictionary is Maqamatul-Hariri with footnotes and its memorization is simple.

Eloquence

The letters that form a sentence must be free from cluster of consonants, strangeness of the collocation lexemes and difference from the established rules.

A sentence is eloquent when it is free from the contrary of the established grammatical rules and awkward manner of arranging it.

The following are its examples: Zayd flogs 'Amr and the king's tongues were spread in order to know.

It will never admit the cluster of consonants that heavies on the tongue. Like Harb's grave at a place (called) Qafir, and there is no grave near Harb's grave.

The secrets of eloquence and rhetoric

To the literati, there are conspicuous secrets in the arrangement of Arabic words.

Among them are forwarding and delaying (words) as well as awarding feminine (signs) to masculine and vice versa.

O youth! Active subject appears correctly in form of direct object as its opposite. The verbal noun and the noun perform the role of active subject and direct object. It commands one like two persons and employs plural for two persons without distortion.

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE VERSES

Asrarul-BalaghahwaAsasul-Fasahah is one of the early

literary products of Shaykh Adam al-Iluri which was written in 1942. It consists of 60 lines that are divided into the preamble of 18 lines; the main theme is sub-divided into two sections that comprise 37 lines and concluding part in 5 lines. The work begins with the author's name that praises Allah and invokes His blessings on the prophet Muhammad as contained in (vv.1-3).

The opening part of this verse work follows the popular '*Uqudul-Jumanof* as-Suyuti as Shaykh 'Abdul-Wahab al-Ghamawi, one of the prominent students of Shaykh Adam al-Iluri, gives this assertion in his commentary to the work (Al-Ghamawi, 1987:5). It is one of the text-books used by Nigerian '*ulama*' for rhetoric. As-Suyuti (d.911 A.H) was an Egyptian Arabic scholar mostly revered in the fields of Arabic language especially, Qur'anic exegesis and philology (Nicholson, 1979:456). As-Suyuti's work opens thus:

قال الفقير عبد الرحمن *** الحمد لله على البيان

The destitute Abdur-Rahman says: praise be to Allah on (His) elucidation (n.d:3).

The same mode is adopted by Shaykh al-Iluri in the opening line of the verse work. This is not to suggest that the latter follows the former in the subject matters.

The author in (vv.4-10) explains some guidelines which a student of rhetoric should strictly adhere to in order to attain the mastery of the subject. These include constant reading of the Qur'an with its memorization, prophetic traditions, texts written by Arabs and non-Arabs as well as the study of *Maqamatul-Hariri* and a host of others.

The first section of the main theme (vv. 11-15) explains that before a sentence could be eloquent, it must be free from the following defects such as cluster of consonants, strangeness of word in usage and contrary to grammatical rules. The second (vv.16-20) points at the secrets of Arabic rhetoric which include forwarding that is popularly known as '*Umdah*' that comprises verb, subject, abstract noun and relative pronouns while delaying is called *Fadlah* which includes objects, specifying and situational indicator that follow the former in arrangement.

It is pertinent to note that some nouns at times are used as masculine and at another as feminine like *Sabil* (path) and *Taghut* (idol) (Q2:196). Direct object may be used instead of active subject (*fa'il*) as in *Hijabanmasturan* (an invisible veil) instead of *Satiran* (Q17:45). Similarly, a verbal noun may be employed instead of a passive participle as in *La'asimal-yawm min amrillah* (this day nothing can save from the command of God) instead of *la ma'suman* (Q11:43). One person is commanded like two while the message is directed to one. For instance, *alqiya fi jahanamkullakafarin 'anidin* (throw into Hell every contumacious rejecter of God Q50:24). In the same vein, plural noun is employed for two persons as in *Intatubailallahfaqadsaghatqulubukuma* (if you two turn in repentance to Him, your hearts are indeed so inclined)

instead of *qalbakuma* (Q66:4).

His literary products have received copious citations and frequent consultations as high grade research materials from scholars of religions, history, sociology, anthropology, language, literature, linguistics and a host of others not only in Nigeria but also in Britain, Germany, United States of America, Africa and the Middle East. Products of his Arabic Centre, who later acquired Western education elsewhere, are found as lecturers in almost all Nigerian universities and colleges of education where Arabic and Islamic Studies are taught. He died on Sunday 3th May, 1992 (Jamiu, 2004:64).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It has been observed how Ilorin developed from a small community formed towards the end of the eighteenth century and how scholars and soldiers from different communities came to settle in it. Beginning with the Oke-Sunnah and Agbaji Muslim Communities, the town gradually became the haven of Arabic and Islamic scholars from Hausaland, Borno and Nupeland. Subsequently, numerous Sufi leaders, Arabic and Islamic scholars of diverse origins were raised from Ilorin. Some of the scholars stayed at home and taught people while others moved out and spread Arabic and Islamic culture to many places as Shaykh Adam Abdullah Al-Iluri did.

Arising from the above, the following recommendations are made in order to further enhance Arabic and Islamic Studies not only in Yorubaland but also in Nigeria:

Having observed the great strides made in Yorubaland and other places by the introduction of modern Arabic schools, there is a great need for the proprietors of private Arabic and Islamic institutions to work together, have uniform curricula, examination and certification.

Proprietors of modern Arabic schools should know that English has come to stay as the official language in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. They should, therefore, ensure that English is taught in their schools. Proprietors of private Arabic and Islamic institutions should strive relentlessly to improve on their methodology, imbibe information technology which is now indispensable and ensure that they move with the times reasonably and decisively.

In spite of the long history of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Yorubaland, Arabic, which is the language of Islam, is not taught in most government secondary schools. The ugly situation should be corrected forthwith. Arabic should be made available in all secondary schools in Yorubaland.

There is a dire need for co-operation between the League of Imams and Alfas, and proprietors of Arabic

and Islamic institutions in order to promote Arabic and Islamic education maximally.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

REFERENCES

- Abubakare RD (2004). The Interplay of Arabic and Yoruba Cultures in South Western Nigeria. Iwo: Darul-Ilm Publishers. 24.
- Atanda JA (1980). An Introduction to Yoruba History. Ibadan University Press. 1.
- Danmole, HO (1981). The Spread of Islam in Ilorin Emirate in the Nineteenth Century. J Nig Assoc. Teach. Arabic and Islamic Stud, 1. Century. NATAIJ. Arabic and Islamic Studies 2(2):1-13.
- Fafunwa AB (1982). History of Education in Nigeria. London: George Allen and Unwin. Ltd. 62.
- Jamiu FO (2004). A Study of the Contents and Structural Patterns in the Didactic Arabic Poetry of Yoruba 'Ulama' 1885-1985. Ibadan PhD Thesis. Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies. University of Ibadan pp. 15-64.
- Nicholson RA (1979). A Literary History of the Arabs. London: Cambridge University Press. 456.
- Oseni ZI (2002). Prose and Drama in Nigerian Literature in Arabic: The Journey So Far. (The 53rd Unilorin Inaugural Lecture) Ilorin: Library and Publications Committee, University of Ilorin. 6.
- Salman MA (2008). An Appraisal of Shari'ah in Ilorin Metropolis. Ijebu-Ode B. ED Long Essay in Islamic Studies. Department of Religious Studies. Tai Solarin University of Education. 4-7.