Abstract—This paper attempts to highlight the contributions of Waziri Junaidu to linguistics through a survey of some of his works on the subject. It established that, his contributions to linguistics are manifested in the works he wrote on aspects of Fulfulde language, especially syntax, morphology and phonology. It posit that, despite those works written by Waziri Junaidu, there was hardly any attention paid by researchers to his contributions in the study of language. After presenting a brief biography of the subject, the paper identified the works which represent his major contribution to the field. It further outlined some of the specific aspects of the language he dealt with in his said works.

Keywords: Linguistics, Waziri Junaidu, Contributions, Fulfulde, Sokoto Caliphate.

I. INTRODUCTION

There is a lot of literature on the life and works of Waziri Junaidu. The literature covers his administrative and intellectual contributions. However, most of the writings were concerned with his contributions as a historian and with his literary ingenuity. Examples of such works are [1], [2], [3] and [4]. Waziri Junaidu was a literary icon who was not only a poet but a prose writer that contributed greatly in such genres as travelogue and poetry of beseeching and supplication. He left behind a complete anthology on this spiritual form of poetry. There is however, another area in which Waziri Junaidu gave significant contribution but seldom caught the attention of writers and researchers; that is his contribution to the study of language. Despite the titles Waziri Junaidu had to his credit in this area, hardly one can find academic works devoted to his contribution in it. In addition to his work on some aspects of Arabic language, Junaidu wrote over four works on the grammar of Fulfulde language.

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. It is concerned with the nature and function of human languages. It deals with language as a general human phenomenon as well as particular or specific languages. In other words, linguistics studies, in de Saussure's terms [5], both langage and langue. Langue as manifestation of langage allows linguists to see through to the properties and characteristics of language. Therefore, the study of any particular language is an endeavor in linguistics. In fact, every linguist has a particular language or group of languages as his starting point. Thus, Waziri Junaidu's efforts in the study of Fulfulde are relevant as contribution to linguistics.

Linguists employ different approaches, perspectives and or methodologies in their endeavor. They range from historical to comparative, contrastive and descriptive [6]. The subject matter, sometime, determine the approach to be adopted in the work. Waziri Junaidu adopted the descriptive approach in his attempt to give a grammatical (phonological, morphological and syntactic) account of the Fulfulde language. In its effort to highlight the contributions of Waziri Junaidu to linguistics, this paper will attempt to survey briefly his work on the Fulfulde language. As a prelude, it will begin by giving his brief biography.

II. BRIEF ON WAZIRI JUNAIDU

He was Junaidu bn Muhammad al-Bukhari bn Ahmad bn Uthman Gidado. Gidado, the great grandfather of Junaidu was the Waziri of Shaikh Uthman bn Fodiyo the famous leader and founder of the Sokoto Caliphate. Junaidu was born in the ancient city of Sokoto in Shawwal 1325AH/1906, three years after the British invasion of Sokoto [2]. His father died 4 years after his birth; he therefore grew up an orphan. His family was a family of intellectuals, as the position of Waziri was traditionally a preserve of the learned. He was, right from childhood, concerned with knowledge, and made learning his major endeavor. He studied under the tutelage of many famous Sokoto scholars of the time, such as Shaikh Abubakar Bube, his nephew Yahaya Nawawi, and Imam Abdulkadir Maccido among others. He became well versed in many branches of Islamic Sciences and Arabic Language.

Waziri Junaidu, though an ethnic Fulani, didn't acquire Fulfulde language from childhood. This was due to the fact that in Hausaland, Language competence weakened among the Fulani dwellers of the cities due to the influence and dominance of Hausa Language, and the social and cultural integration that existed between the Hausas and the Fulanis. As a youth, Junaidu developed the urge for the mastery of Fulfulde. If he could learn Arabic and become proficient in it, though a foreign language, he would do better with Fulfulde, the language of his forefathers. He therefore began learning Fulfulde in his adulthood. Some of his teachers of the language were Shaikh Ibrahim of Wajake, Malam Magaji Buji of Shuni and Shaikh Muhammad Mori among others [7].

As part of his effort to gain mastery of the language, he started learning some Islamic Jurisprudence books from

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1Waziri is from Arabic, it's some time anglicized as väzier. It literally means an assistant. In Sokoto, it is a position of esteem next only to the (monarch) Sultan. Although ascension to the throne is by hereditary succession, it was known to be a preserve of the learned among the heirs to it.
teachers who conducted their lessons in Fulfulde, where the Arabic texts would be translated to and explained in Fulfulde. He also studied many literary texts in Fulfulde especially those of poetry composed by Usman Danfodiyo and his disciples. That gave him the opportunity to be conversant with the style and depth of literary language, in addition to (giving him) more mastery of the language.

Waziri Junaidu has been a teacher all his life at both formal and informal level; not withstanding his administrative responsibilities. He taught at Sokoto Middle School between 1930 and 1939. He was the pioneer principal of the School for Shari’ah, Sokoto; an institution established in 1939 to train judges for the local courts. He held that post for five consecutive years. At these two institutions, Junaidu had the privilege of teaching many illustrious sons and daughters of the area; among them was Alhaji Shehu Usman Aliyu Shagari, the first Executive president of Nigeria.

Junaidu was a prolific writer who left behind about sixty books in different specialties. He was a literary icon in poetry and prose, a historian of repute, a linguist per excellent and a jurist.

His writing language was principally Arabic in which he wrote over fifty books, and two compendiums (anthologies) of poetry. As a linguist, he wrote on varied topics of Arabic Language. But his most important contribution is in his works on Fulfulde grammar and phonology (orthography); he wrote three books on grammar and one on orthography.

Junaidu was appointed and crowned as Wazirin Sokoto; (Chief Counselor) a hereditary successive throne, in 1948 after the death of his elder brother Abbas. He remained on that throne until his death the 9th day of January, 1997, at the age of 91. He was honoured with the degree of doctor of letters by Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1971 [2].

III. WAZIRI JUNAIDU’S CONTRIBUTIONS TO LINGUISTICS

As said earlier, Waziri Junaidu’s most significant contributions to the study of language (Linguistics) can be found in his works on Fulfulde language. At a point of serious dearth in literature on Fulfulde in this part of the world, Waziri Junaidu was able to write down four books in which he explained the basics of the Fulfulde grammar and recorded what might be said to be a nucleus of a Fulfulde – Arabic bilingual lexicon.

A. Fulfulde Language

Fulfulde (or Pulla in the West) is classified as a member of the Atlantic branch of the Niger-Congo family of Languages [8]. It is considered to be a macro language comprising various dialects in a continuum that stretches across some 20 countries in West and Central Africa [8]. It was estimated to have a total population of over 40 million native speakers distributed unevenly in those countries, with Nigeria having the highest number of over 15 million [8].

Despite this higher number of Fulfulde speakers, there were few books, if any, on the grammar of Fulfulde language in Nigeria during the time of Waziri Junaidu; that probably was the source of his motivation.

Having learnt the language as an adult, Waziri Junaidu had experienced a lot of challenges in the process, which he was able to successfully surmount; one of them was the lack of literature on basic grammatical rules that could help the adult learner and simplify that task of learning the language. There were a lot of literary materials such as poetry composed in the language; but there was no any systematic effort, or even the intention to spread the Fulfulde Language among the wider community. Other than children who acquire it naturally right from infancy, if for any reason, anybody was interested in learning the language he would do that through interacting with the speakers of the language. But Waziri Junaidu having learnt Arabic Language through a systematic way, encoded in various books of grammar with different approaches, was not to subscribe completely to the existing practice in his locality. The general assumption is that his knowledge of Arabic grammar helped him to identify important aspects of language that would require the attention of the learner more in the process of learning the language. After grasping the basics of the grammar of the language, he concentrated on studying literary texts in order to gain mastery that would allow him to make the contributions he gave.

B. Junaidu’s Works on Fulfulde

Waziri Junaidu’s works on Fulfulde could be found in the books he wrote on the language. They are [9]:

2. Iqdu al-Murjan ‘ala Lughati al-Fullāni. [Eng. 'A Coral Jewellery on Fulfulde Language.]
3. Al-Bakuratu al-Janiyyah ‘ala Lughati al-Fullani. [Eng. 'Ripe first fruits on Fulfulde Language.]

The above four mentioned books are Junaidu’s well known works on Fulfulde. In addition to them, he wrote a pamphlet in which he gave an account of his study of the language giving the names of those people he learned it from. Three out of the four books, mentioned above are on grammar while the other is on orthography; especially as it affects writing Fulfulde in Arabic scripts as the practice was by then. Of the three, two are prose and the other in verse. For obvious reasons, the one in verse i.e. 'Marta’u al-Adhhan’ was the most popular.

Working under the influence of Arabic grammatical works, Junaidu divided his books into chapters and sections;
giving each section or chapter a title. The major aspects of grammar that were covered in his works include;

1. Pronouns and their classifications
2. Transitive and intransitive verbs, tenses, passive and active verb,
3. Plural formations, prepositions: their usages and meaning,
4. Adverb, adjective, interjection, interrogatives, adverb of place and of time,
5. Emphasis (of an action), negation of verbs (actions),
6. Genitive construction,
7. Diminutive,
8. Conditionals,
9. Demonstratives, relatives (linking verbs),
10. Participle, gerunds, apposition, etc.[10], [11] and [12].

From the topics given above it could be understood that Junaidu set out to give a description of the grammar of Fulfulde language in a manner suitable to the learner to grasp. His intention was to make simple the grammatical rules of the language in a way that will make its memorization easy; giving suitable examples that illustrate the application of those rules. This was quite in line with the position of grammar translation method which dominated language teaching and learning endeavor in this part of the world at that particular time. He said in the introduction of Marta’u al-adhhân, ‘Pasturage of the minds.’

The intention of (composing) this poem is to precisely (present) the rules of speech (Of) Fulfulde language (which here) is my concern. Although we have abandoned it since O ye who enquires about Fulfulde Take this code- may you be guided by God.

Junaidu was influenced in his works not only by his experiences in the study of Fulfulde but principally by his knowledge of Arabic grammar and the existing literature on that grammar that was available at his disposal. It was a common practice by Arabic grammarians to present ab-initio their thoughts in poetry or render the content of earlier books written by them in verse. The main purpose of this rendering in verse was to aid memorization by students. The famous ‘Alfiyyah’ (a thousand verse poem) of the celebrated Arabic grammarian, Ibn Malik, is an example. Junaidu, in the same pattern wrote two books on the basics of Fulfulde grammar in prose and then came up with another one in verse.

Another aspect in which Junaidu contributed to the study of Fulfulde is phonology. This can be seen through the book he wrote on the orthography and spelling of Fulfulde words. Writing as representation of sounds pre-supposes knowledge and understanding of the sound system of a particular language. Two things could be deduced from Junaidu’s book ‘The suitable guide in Fulfulde language spelling; his understanding of the phonology of Fulfulde and his grasp of the relationship between the sounds of Fulfulde and that of other languages he had knowledge of, especially Arabic. That gave him the ability to compare the two languages at the level of sounds, and identify what they have in common and where they differ, so that Arabic alphabets could be used without any adjustment for sounds common to both languages. While Arabic alphabets representing particular sounds in Arabic language could be used with appropriate adjustments to represent Fulfulde sounds similar to the Arabic sounds they represent. The adjustments take care of the phonological differences between the Arabic sound for which the alphabet stands for and the Fulfulde sound for which it is now borrowed.

C. Significance of Waziri Junaidu’s Works

Waziri Junaidu’s works on Fulfulde were significant in the sense that they provided reference literature on the grammar of Fulfulde language and to some extent do phonology in an environment that was in serious need of such literature. Although Fulfulde was one of the Nigerian Languages in focus at research centres in some Nigerian Universities, very little was known of their achievements at the time Junaidu was writing his books. In fact, the Fulfulde Language Board of the Centre for the Study of Nigerian Languages of Abdullahi Bayero College, (ABC/ABU), (now Bayero University,) Kano, came into being only in 1972 [13]. The style of presentation in the books made them suitable materials for teaching and learning Fulfulde language especially by adult.

These books written by Waziri Junaidu are now used as source materials for the development of curriculum for the Fulfulde language in some institutions of learning in Nigeria. Similarly teachers and students refer to them also for guidance. It can therefore, be safely said that, even though, there might not be novel ideas about Fulfulde language in the works of Waziri Junaidu, they contribute greatly in the teaching and learning of the language in an area where many ethnic Fulani have abandoned or lost the language. With these works, many people, especially the Arabic educated ones among ethnic Fulanis, were able to learn to communicate in the language of their forefathers. Thus, a sort of rebirth or revival of the Fulfulde language in this part of the world.

One major constraint against these works by Junaidu is the medium. Arabic, in which they were written, is not use as language of instruction in either the formal or non formal school system in Nigeria except in a very limited situation. As a result of this, coupled with the fact that, not very many Fulfulde and Hausa speakers have the Arabic linguistic competence to read and understand the books, they were confined to the use of the few people with advanced knowledge of Arabic Language. There is therefore, the need for efforts from capable hands to remove this linguistic barrier
between those works and the general public. Junaidu (2001) is an example of such efforts.

IV. CONCLUSION

It has been clear from the foregoing discussion that Waziri Junaidu contributed significantly in the study of Fulfulde through his writing, at a time when literature on the language was in short supply. However, the medium through which he wrote did not allow for maximum utilization of his books in the spread and development of the language in his locality and region. There is therefore, the need for linguists with the knowledge Arabic language, especially among Fulfulde speakers to translate those works left behind by Waziri Junaidu into languages such as Hausa, English and Fulfulde, the first two being commonly used now for communication and formal instruction in educational institutions in the area.

REFERENCES