

## ***Ajami* Tradition in Non- Islamic Society: The Roles of *Ajami*-Arabic Scripts in Keeping Records and Documentation**

A.O. HASHIMI

Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria

**Abstract.** The term *Ajami* is a complex body of linguistic phenomena. It is a process of linguistic domestication of Arabic scripts in written communication. It is wide spread not only in Nigeria but in many parts of Africa and Asia. Its usage predates colonial rule, therefore colonial officials mastered and employed it in their correspondences with the emirs. *Ajami* script received a boost in Sokoto Caliphate, it was used to compose local poems and *waka* during preaching and other Islamic religious assembly. Today, *Ajami*-Arabic script is used in Hausa, Fulfulde, Nupe, Kanuri and Yoruba and other African languages. It is against this background that this study investigates the use of Arabic scripts in the preservation and documentation of records for personal, academic and official purposes.. It is interesting to note that *Ajami* –Arabic script has gained international recognition and it keeps space with science and technology. Consequence upon this, this paper attempts to discuss the foundational ideas of *Ajami* Arabic script in Nigeria, its evolution, development and continuous existence. The paper x-rays its contributions to scholarship in the distant past and its usefulness in historical re-constructions of Africa and Nigeria. The paper concludes that *Ajami*-Arabic script is part of indigenous African culture and its skill enhances literacy among people in Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

**Keywords:** Yoruba, *Ajami*, Arabic scripts, Documentation, Manuscript,

### **1. Introduction**

The word *Ajami* is an Arabic word derived from three Arabic verbal root “a-j-m” (ا-ج-م) It means non-Arab. *Ajami* is used to describe anything incomprehensible to Arabs. The Arabs wrote them

down in eloquence (*fusaha*) in the very characteristic of Arabic language. *Ajami* is universal phenomena found among Muslim people and literate of Arabic letters throughout the world. The beginning of *Ajami* script is not known, but history discloses that it predates the rise of Islam. *Ajami* script is a product of Arabs’ contact with outsiders when word borrowings took place. The first and famous historical record of contact dates back to the period of Ismail son of prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) (A.S), whose necessity of the time made to grow in the hub of the Arabs, spoke their tongue and married among them. (Nicholson:1985: XIV). Historical records reveal further the presence of Qays b. Saahadah al-‘lyad, a noble of the Arabs in the court of Qaysar. Historically, the idea of *Ajami* preoccupied poets of the Pre-Islamic period. At that time *Ajami* was used more generally for the languages of neighboring peoples namely, the Persians (*al-furs*) whose language was incomprehensible to the Arabs, and later the Berbers (*al-barbar*). The rise of Islam in the 7<sup>th</sup> century brought people of different nations and cultures together where rigorous word borrowing took place. Arabic linguists in their works list many words of non-Arabic origin in the language of Muslim people throughout the world.

#### **1.1 Definition of *Ajami***

*Ajami* is a linguistic domestication of Arabic script. It is employed to express ideas and thought in other languages. *Ajami* (Arabic scripts) is a systematic method, using Arabic letters to write non-Arabic words. It is a linguistic domestication of Arabic script, employed to express ideas and thought in other languages. In his work Malik (1999), defines *Ajami* as writing in local language, using Arabic script known as *Ajami*. Adamu (2010) defines *Ajami* as an indigenized form of the Arabic alphabets that

provides a medium which religious and secular ideas are expressed and used in writing works, pamphlets, poem, letters etc. According to Asmau (2010), Ajami as an adaptation of Arabic characters for writing local languages. It is essentially Yoruba words written in kind of Arabic letters to convey Yoruba words in written communication is technically called *Ajami*. Ajami is an adaptation of Arabic characters for writing local languages. It is essentially Yoruba words written in kind of Arabic letters to convey Yoruba words in written communication technically called *Ajam*. *Ajami* writing is a general term commonly used to refer to non-Arabic languages written with Arabic scripts. The use of Arabic script in the transcription of Africa languages is technically called *Ajami*. Islamic scholars resorted to the Quranic script in order to transcribe their mother tongues. *Ajami* is a relative term which applies more to the transcribed language than to the script itself. Etymologically *ajami* is used to describe anything modified by incomprehension or barbarism (*'uma*); thus its application to all languages incomprehensible to the Arabs. *Ajami* is a modified Arabic script to a phonetic rendering of languages be it Hausa, Wolof, Pular, Swahili, Amharic, Tigrigna, Yoruba or Berber. Today, Ajami script is used to write English, French and other foreign languages. Arabic script was developed, modified and employed because African languages have phonetic sounds and systems different from the Arabic language. Consequently, there have been adaptations of the Arabic scripts to transcribe them. This process is similar to what has been done outside African continent, of non-Arab countries of the Middle East and Asia. Ajami is adaptation of Arabic characters for writing local languages. Ajami writing is known in Spanish term as *al-jamiado*, which originally designated Spanish written in Arabic script. It is a common practice among Moorish people in Andalusia (Muslim Spain). An illustrative examples are the following;”Baba – با با Iya - ايا , Dodo – دودو

## 1.2 Ajami-Arabic Script in Africa

The advent of Islam in Africa and subsequent Islamization of vast numbers of the people in Africa enhanced the wide spread knowledge of the Arabic alphabets and writing system, which later resulted in writing local languages. The curiosity of Muslim people in Africa for learning created the new idea, in using Ajami script in written communication. The early contact of Muslims with the people of Africa, followed by the introduction of Islam, marked the beginning of Ajami script. The early evidence is the presence of ‘Uqbah bi Nafil, the Muslim military leader who married from the tribe of Rumi in North

Africa. Abdullahi b. Fudi (d.1829), mentions in his work, that Uqbah bi Nafil ‘married the daughter of the ruler *Bag-Mang*. (Abdullahi b. Fudi, n.d.) The additional evidence of Ajami script in writing African languages, dating back to the historical establishment of Islamic learning centres in Africa. Popular among these is Sankore University in Timbuktu, Mali. Teachers and students flocked to these various centres of Islamic learning from abroad as well as from all parts of Sudan.

Moreover, the important number of libraries found in Timbuktu was attested to by the Arab traveller named Leo Africanus who came to western Sudan in 1510 C.E. points out that there was more profit made from the sale of books than from any other commercial activity there. (Abubakr, 1982) The newly discovery of *Ajami* manuscripts in all parts of Africa is a substantial evidence of the wide spread use of *Ajami* script in Muslim communities across Africa. *Ajami* Manuscript in Niger and Tamagheg history dating to the 1500C.E was an evidence of its long period of usage in Africa. Thus the early conversion of Muslims in Africa to Islam exposed Muslim populace to the Arabic script through the studies of the holy Qur’an; these people mastered Arabic orthography and modified versions of the script to write their languages. Consequently, *Ajami* manuscripts are developed and used among the Swahili, Hausa, Fulani, Mandinka, and Wolof people in distant past in Africa. The first written document of *Ajami*-Arabic script in South Africa was written by Muslim Malay slave. There was evidence suggests that most of these *Ajami* literature sprung up over 700 years ago, there is also evidence that the Tuaregs of the Sahara and Sahel developed *Ajami* system for writing their languages some five hundred years ago. The recent discovery in Niger of a Folio Tamashaa, *Ajami* manuscripts written between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, is the one of the most significant of the past decade. This started from the early Islamization of many parts of the country.

## 2. Ajami Scripts in Nigeria

According to al-Miskin in his work (2010:200), the first documental work that makes reference to Ajami script is eleventh century *Mahrams* (chapters of privilege), of the Kanem – Borno ruler Mai Umme Jilmi (Umme b. Abd ‘l-Jalil (C. 1075 – 1086) as an important historical document written in Arabic. (Al-Miskin, 2010) In writing history of the empire, there was a need to Arabize (Ajamize) indigenous names and places. The use of Arabic script and production of *Ajami* manuscripts was made possible at the early period due to the prominence of Borno as the centre

of Islamic scholastic excellence. There were many Borno Arabic texts that made references to the indigenous words in the Arabic script by Borno scholars which later constituted a prototype of linguistic documentation of Arabic script called *Ajami*. This was intellectual legacy of Safawa Dynasty in Kanem - Borno Empire. This linguistic documentation of the Arabic alphabet and its subsequent application to both the writing of *Ajami* and the learning of Arabic prevailed in the early period of Islam in Nigeria in the Quranic education and *Ajami* traditions of both Fulfulde and Hausa orientation. Other Arabic works of early period by Borno scholars that contained indigenous names, places and correspondences are Ibn Fartuwa's *Kitab Ghazwat*, work of Shaykh Tahir Fairamma titled *Badi Bisimillahi*. These triumvirate Arabic works provided basis for *Ajami* as a methodology of expressing indigenous thought through an Arabized script.

Islam probably entered Hausaland sometime in the eleventh century, but it was not until around fourteenth century that it began to exercise any real influence there. The Hausa Muslim communities in Nigeria domesticated the Arabic alphabet in a visually iconographic manner, an innovation traced to the reign of Sarki Rumfa (1463 – 1499). The foundation of a systematized language policy was established during the reign of Muhammad Rumfa (1463 – 1499). In his work Adamu, (2010:204) argues that the tradition of *Ajami* script was strengthened by the arrival in Kano of Muhammad b. Abdul Karim al Mughili (1425 – 1504 C.E), during the reign of Sarki Rumfa and it was only in Hausa communities that an extensive system of mnemonic sound association between an alphabet and its visuality was developed. The most eloquent testimony of al-Maghili's intellectual influence on Rumfa was the former's treatises, the most famous being '*Taju-ad-din Fi ma yajibu ala 'l Muluk and wasiyat al-Mughili ila Abi Abdullahi Muhammad b. Yakub Rumfa*'. Therefore, it is from these intellectual works that the language policy emerged to use *Ajami* to express indigenous thoughts. Consequently, the most significant Islamic educational reform brought about by Muhammad Rumfa in Kano was in the adaptation of the Arabic script to become a basis for the creation of an indigenized Arabic script named *Ajami*.

This system created in Rumfa's reign in the 15th century and modified along the centuries and modified along the centuries persists to date and provides the primary contact of the Hausa learner with a formalized literary curriculum. The reign of

Muhammad Rumfa created a desire to innovate and experiment, with the result that a scholastic community was established and a means of communication was developed in using Arabic alphabet to arabize or *Ajamize* Hausa words. The practice of *Ajamization* continued in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. One of the celebrated Arabic scholars who promoted *Ajami* in 17<sup>th</sup> century Hausaland, was Abdullah Suka, a Kastina based scholar. His work of *Ajami* contains a profile of prophet Musa (A.S) and *Ajami* poetry catalogued in Jos Museum. (Abdul Mumin, 2010:) Thus *Ajami* works continued to flourish in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and 18<sup>th</sup> century and up to the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Nigeria.

The Jihad of the 19<sup>th</sup> century contributed to the sustenance of *Ajami*. *Ajami* works received a monumental development under Sokoto Caliphate. It is a means that aided the wide spread of education. The foundations of *Ajami* writing were laid by 'Uthman bin Fudi (d. 1817), his brother Abudullahi b. Fudi (d. 1829) and Sultan Muhammad Bello (d. 1837). Asmau bint Sheu (1794-1863), and some of the early disciples as of Uthman b. Fudi Asim Degel and Muhammad Tukur. They handled in Hausa the favorite genres and the main themes of Islamic writing.

### 3. *Ajami* in Yorubaland

The Yoruba ethnic group is majorly found in the south-western Nigeria. The Yoruba homeland lies between latitudes 6<sup>o</sup> and 9<sup>o</sup> North and longitudes 2<sup>o</sup>3<sup>o</sup> and 6<sup>o</sup> 3<sup>o</sup> East with estimated area of about 181,300 square kilometres. The Yoruba people are found primarily in southwest Nigeria and the adjoining parts of neighboring countries. They constitute one of the ethnic groups in Nigeria and occupy the whole of Ogun, Ondo, Oyo, Ekiti, Osun, Lagos, and parts of Kwara and Kogi states. Due to long distance trade, a considerable number of the Yoruba people are found in the south-eastern part of the Republic of Benin. And due to the transatlantic slave trade, they are also found in Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela, and other parts of the America. They later constituted and integrated to the core of the 'New World lineages'. (Akintoye, 2010)

The earliest evidence of the presence of Islam and literacy goes back to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. (Sanni, 2003). Though opinions are varied on the time of entry of Islam in Yorubaland. Adam al-illuri (1978) in his work "posits that Islam entered Yorubaland in the period of Mansa-Musa of Mali in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Other views attributed the rise and fall of some empires in sub-Saharan Africa to the contact of Islam with Yoruba people. Other school of thought ascribes the contact of Islam with the rise of Oyo Empire in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The beginning of writing in *Ajami* in the Yorubaland cannot be said with precision. However, the earliest Arabic work that mentions Yoruba is work of Ahmad Baba al-Timbuktu in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Also, Abdullah Sukka, in his work *Azhar; r-rubbah fi khabar bilad Yuruba* written in the 16<sup>th</sup> also mentions *Yuruba* in Arabic script. There is evidence that Muhammad Bello (d.1837) discusses Yoruba in a chapter of his work '*infaaq al- maysur*'. The aforementioned works were written in Arabic language where names and words of Yoruba were transcribed with Arabic scripts these might be the basis of *Ajami* writing in Yorubaland and later inspired the Yoruba Arabic scholars to write their local names, addresses and confidential information in *Ajami* writings, using Arabic scripts. These included the writing down in *Ajami* the names of the medicinal materials, plants, herbs and names of clients in divining process, especially by the *Raml* divination practitioners.

*Ajami* writings in the Yorubaland also cover Islamic pedagogy, where local poems (*Waka*) were composed in Arabic-Ajami form. Olayiwola (1991), in his work claims that *Ajami* manuscripts of Yoruba authorship are found in Jos Museum. He further cites a Yoruba *ajami* manuscripts transcribed in verse (*qaasidah*), a versification of one hundred and seventeenth (117) verses. Furthermore, Jimba (1997, 2011& 2013) and Sanni (2013), mentioned Shaykh Badamasi bin Musa Agbaji (d.1891) as the foremost Yoruba Arabic scholar who braided the train of *Ajami* writings in Yorubaland. From this period upward many Yoruba '*ulamaa*' (Arabic scholars) composed their indigenous poems (*waka*) in *Ajami* style. Famous among them were Shaykh Busayri Abaomu and Shaykh Muhammad al- Amin Saarumi. (al-illuri,1982) In this contemporary time, one of the cultivators of *Ajami* writings is Shaykh Ibrahim Alabi Bello, a celebrated author of the '*Aonu 'li- 'ulamaa*' who wrote down many Yoruba medicinal names in *Ajami* form.

*Ajami* is simplified teaching tools accessible to the public at large and the relevant populations remain firmly attached to the script using it on a grand scale as an effective community literacy tool. *Ajami* is highly prized in Quranic schools in Sub-Saharan African states of sub-region such as Guinea, Mali, Senegal, Niger and Chad. They have put in place National *Ajami* literacy programme, with the technical and financial support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization; and

the Arab league educational, cultural and scientific organization. The long-standing method of transmitting the Muslim community's tradition orally was supplanted by the use of the Quranic script which served as a tool for cultural preservation. An inestimable legacy of *Ajami* documents in different disciplines had been produced over several centuries. The standardization of *Ajami* is a welcome initiative which no doubt brings its users together. The usage of Arabic script is a universal phenomenon, which cuts across all the continents in the world. Kurdish, Persian, Pashto, Turkish and a number of tongues in the Indian sub continent and languages like Berber in North Africa and Spain utilized Arabic script. It is evident today that a good number of the Malayo-Polynesian dialects, the vernaculars of the Muslim people in West and East Africa, some of the languages of Central Asia, the Indian sub-continent, and a few Slavonic tongues in Europe, adopted Arabic Script. *Ajami* has a rich history; it is devised centuries ago by Islamic Arabic teachers to disseminate religious messages to the people. The level of *Ajami* usage is varied by culture and people, but in all cases, it is popular and relevant in promotion and discovery of new knowledge. It is a central component in Islamic scholarly communities throughout the world. Hence an inestimable legacy of *Ajami* documents in different disciplines has been produced over several centuries. The curiosity of people for learning created the ideas, using the *Ajami* script in written communication. This cuts across the world. *Ajami* is a key can unlock the African perspective on centuries of history, as well as literature, religion and medicine because many Afro-centric communities relied on *Ajami*, it is a reliable indicator of a community's cultural loyalty. The usage of *Ajami* goes beyond Islamic circle, it is also a tool employed by non-Muslims for religious propaganda, business advertisements, announcements etc. It is not surprising that Christians in northern Nigeria are using *Ajami* for evangelism and propagation of Christianity. (Adamu, 2010:216). *Ajami* was created in the Muslim world at the moment the Arabic alphabet was first used to write a non-Arabic or Quranic name and object. *Ajami* Arabic script provides a new knowledge, concepts and ideas. It is a means to enhance a new knowledge, preserving the past efforts of scholars and sustaining it for succeeding generation. *Ajami* scripts are based on a modified Arabic alphabet introduced in the wake of Islam in Africa and disseminated through Islamic scholars. These Arabic based scripts are used throughout Africa. It is the script used in the transcription of African languages. It is instructive that records written in Arabic or in Swahili using the Arabic script also constitute an important source

material for the history of East African countries. (Malik, 1999) It is realized from the above that the importance of Arabic to African history is immense and since records of pre-colonial Africa existed only in Arabic or in African languages written in the Arabic script. On this line of thought, Camera notes that:

*But the most important documents of medieval history on the eastern*

*Coast is (sic) found in written records. Most of them were written in*

*Swahili (Using Arabic characters), in Portuguese, English, and German*

*Arabic, Persian, and in Arabic and Gujerati.*

It is understood from foregoing that the importance of Arabic *Ajami* script to Africa history is immense, because most records of pre-colonial Africa exist in Arabic and Arabic *Ajami* script *Ajami* as a form of literacy remains widespread today despite little or non-government support. It is used to record court records. It is used in many countries across a swath of Islam-influenced sub-Saharan Africa. It is a script invented by Islamic teachers to serve as teaching aids in educational saloons in the past, but it also served as means of communication to masses during the anti-colonial nationalist resistance in Muslim lands in Africa. There are many *Ajami* written poems against colonialism in Nigeria, Senegal etc. It is used by the class of the Muslim scholars to write letters, run informal businesses and read religious poems and writings. Since the eleventh century, ample body of religious, historical and cultural literature has been produced in these *Ajami* Arabic scripts in Nigeria. *Ajami* script is taught in some tertiary institutions and universities such as Ahmadu Bello University (A.B.U) Zaria, Usman Dan Fodio University (U.D.U) Sokoto, Olabisi Onabanjo University,(OOU) Ago-Iwoye and Bayero University Kano (B.U.K) Kano. It is offered at the pre-degree levels and first programmes. This is the official use of *Ajami* for the purpose of education. It is used on posters to create awareness campaign and mobilization of the general public to participate in government programmes such as National Programme on Immunization (N.P.I) in conjunction with World Health Organization (W.H.O) and United Nation Children Education Funds (U.N.I.C.E.F). Posters written in *Ajami* for the purpose of immunization are commonly circulated in various hospitals, clinics, dispensaries, schools and other public places in northern Nigeria to draw the attention of parents and the general public. It is interesting to note that the Hausa kolanut traders that transact their businesses with the kolanut farmers and traders in the south-west of Nigeria are using *Ajami* letters on their consignments to write their addresses

for delivery. It is also worthy of note that till recent past, Nigeria paper money carried Hausa-*Ajami* script. The politicians also use *Ajami*, writing on posters electioneering campaign to explain their manifestos and other related political issues in Hausa speaking communities. *Ajami* is used today in the traditional Quranic schools both in Southern and Northern Nigeria. Teachers use *Ajami* in their teaching methodology, which formed the basis upon which to further consolidate its presence. *Ajami* scripts are also employed by the medicinal Alfas ('*Ulamaa*) in Southern part of the country among the Yoruba Muslims. They use to write down names of herbs and medicinal ingredients.

#### 4. Themes of *Ajami* Manuscripts

*Ajami* written texts covered a wide range of sociological, historical, cultural information that was not discovered by the elite writers of Arabic and European languages. *Ajami* written texts covered a wide range of sociological, historical, cultural information that was not captured by the elite writers of Arabic and European languages. There are manuscripts covering science, philosophy, and diplomacy. Others contain tales and stories, discussion on pharmacopoeia, stomachache or rheumatism. In fact, *ajami* covered all fields of scholarly activity. The existing manuscripts focus on *Al-tib al-mahdi* (the description and traditional treatment of various illness)

*Al- saudala* (the properties of plants and ways of using them.)

*Ilm-as-asarar* ( texts dealing with the field of the occult sciences)

Translations of works and texts from Arabic into Yoruba language.

Using in writing local names, addresses and on luggage

Numerous writings of *Ajami* exist on text books or notebooks of students of Quranic Schools in Yorubaland.

Thus *ajami* writings continued to flourish through the activities of Islamic scholars throughout the Yorubaland in the 21th century and the themes of writings are issues concerning the people. The didactic characteristics as simplified teaching tools accessible to the public at large.

#### Names of plants in Yoruba Written in *Ajami*.

كجيج -	kajiji
كرفمالا	Karifu mala
ليموا -	Lemu
زرما	zuruma

- أڤكوفولي	Ajekofole
حرو	Eru
- اتاج تب ايفارو	Itaja tabi Afaaro
- افطي	Afato
ورق ايسيشي	Ewe esinsi
عمنمبي	Amunimuye
كافورا	kafura
تراري	Turari

## 5. Location of Ajami Manuscripts in the Yorubaland

Ajami manuscripts are ubiquitous in the Yorubaland. These are found in public libraries and private collections. The most important of public institutions and individual collections are: Centre of Arabic Documentation of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan. Kensale Kenneth Library, University of Ibadan y. University of Ilorin Libraries, Centre for Ilorin Studies Studies. (CILS) Private Libraries and collections where Ajami manuscripts are found are Professor Zakariyyah Oseni, the Chief Imam of Auchi Library. Professor Amidu Sanni and Professor R.A Raji Library. Shaykh Adam al-illuri collection

## 6. Findings of the study

In the course of this research work the following findings are made:

- Ajami - Arabic script has played important historical role in the transcription of the languages of African people. Therefore an inestimable legacy of Ajami documents in different disciplines has been produced over several centuries.
- Ajami scripts are based on a modified Arabic alphabet introduced in the wake of Islam in Africa and disseminated through Islamic scholars. It was creatively adapted to write non- Arabic languages. Ajami is employed for religious purposes such as prayers, protective devices disseminating religious materials, edicts, and commercial and administrative record- keeping, writing eulogies and family genealogies.
- Ajami manuscripts are valuable parts of the human heritage in Africa
- Ajami manuscripts are keys that unlock the African perspective on centuries of history, these attest to a significant history of literacy in Africa dating to a long time before European colonialism

- The written works of Ajami script attest to a significant fact that Africa was never illiterate continent before European incursion.
- The writings of *Ajami* signal a whole first allegiance to a black African culture, hence it has become a reliable indicator of a community's cultural loyalty.

## 7. Recommendations

Ajami scholarship is a field of study where a lot needs to be done, therefore acquisition of Ajami writing and understanding skills are necessary to unlock the correct African history written by Africans themselves. *Ajami* manuscripts are in need of translation for public knowledge; hence, concerted efforts should be put in place to train scholars with linguistic competence in Ajami scripts to analyze Ajami documents. All the Ajami manuscripts of African scholarship should be collected and housed in public depository in Nigeria and other public places in African nations.

Interest in *Ajami* scholarship should be developed and incentives be attached to its scholarship and additional collaborative scholarship is needed in this area of study. In the field of language, *Ajami* script can serve as unified language in Africa, since its scholarship cuts all across all parts of African continent and its script possesses the criteria such as population, acceptability, typology, state of development and literary status in choosing a national language.

## 8. Conclusion

It is understood from the foregoing that, *Ajami* is a universally generic term commonly used to refer to non Arabic languages written with Arabic scripts, it is an indigenous African modified Arabic script adopted in the wake of introduction of Islam in Africa and ample body of literature has been produced in it across Africa. The study also positions that its scholarship manifests African cultural identity of black people which will call our own. Furthermore the research work discusses the themes of *Ajami* manuscripts and where they can be found. Some of the findings of the research disclose that *Ajami* script is African heritage, therefore the paper calls for adoption of *Ajami* script as lingua franca of Africa, this call is made on the premise that Arabic is the national language of the whole North Africa, so also a common language of many communities in sub-Saharan Africa. This research paper concludes Arabic -*Ajami* script has many benefits to offers us as

Africans and its scholarship gives us a pride that Africa was never a dark continent before Europeans incursion rather, it is a continent where the light scholarship shone brightly.

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