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Hausa Verbal Compounds

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Hausa Verbal Compounds

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Hausa Verbal Compounds

Joseph McIntyre

For Sabine

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Abbreviations

- [A*] Abraham's dictionary (1958- 4th impression 1978)
[B*] Bargery's dictionary (1933)
[DW] the Hausa Service of the Deutsche Welle (Voice of Germany)
radio station
[Gtfk] Gaskiya ta fi kwabo (Hausa newspaper)
[McIMB*] McIntyre, J. and Hilke Meyer-Bahlburg (1991)
[PJ*] Jaggar's reference grammar (2001)
[PN*] Newman's reference grammar (2000)
[PN/MA] Examples from data collected by Paul Newman and
Mustapha Ahmad
[RMN] Roxana Ma Newman: English-Hausa Dictionary (1990)
[-T] = intransitive
[W*] Wolff's reference grammar (1993)
* The number following the initial(s) is the page number

1pl	=	1 st p. plural
1s	=	1 st p. sg.
2f	=	2 nd p. sg. feminine
2m	=	2 nd p. sg. masculine
2pl	=	2 nd p. plural
3f	=	3 rd p. sg. feminine
3m	=	2 nd p. sg. masculine
3pl	=	3 rd p. plural
4pl	=	4 th p. plural (= 'one')
ADJ	=	adjective
Adjnt	=	adjunct
Adv	=	adverb
AdvP	=	adverbial phrase
ALL	=	allative
Ar.	=	Arabic
C	=	consonant
cf.	=	see
ch.	=	chapter
^{cp}	=	person etc. being compared (see ch. 3.2.1.1)
CMP	=	completive aspect
cp.	=	compare
cplx	=	complex
CV(V)	=	consonant and vowel(s)
DET	=	determiner

DO	=	direct object
Engl.	=	English
esp.	=	especially
f.	=	feminine
F	=	Falling tone
FUT	=	future aspect
GH	=	Ghana Hausa
gr	=	grade ¹
gr0	=	a sub-class of irregular verb
gr1	=	a sub-class of regular verb
gr2	=	a sub-class of regular verb
gr3	=	a sub-class of regular verb
gr3a	=	a sub-class of regular verb
gr3b	=	a sub-class of irregular verb
gr4	=	a sub-class of regular verb
gr5	=	a sub-class of regular verb
gr6	=	a sub-class of regular verb
gr7	=	a sub-class of regular verb
H(*)	=	High tone(s)
H-verb	=	regular verb beginning with high tone
I-verb	=	irregular verb
IDP	=	ideophone
IMP	=	imperative
INDPRO	=	independent pronoun
InfPhr	=	infinitive phrase
IO	=	indirect object
.L	=	genitive linker: /-n/ suffixed to masculine sg. and plural nouns, /-ɾ/ suffixed to feminine sg. nouns with final vowel –a(a)
L(*)	=	Low tone(s) ²
L-verb	=	regular verb beginning with low tone
Loc	=	locative
m.	=	masculine
mà	=	NIO marker (= wà)
ma-	=	a prefix attached to some compounds
N	=	noun
NDO	=	noun direct object

¹ See chapters 1.3.1 and 1.3.2 as well as Appendix 1d for a description of the verbal ‘grades’.

² The symbol “.L” (= linker) is found in interlinear glosses; the symbol “L” (= low tone/verb) is found in the text.

NDOcplx	=	complex noun direct object
NEG	=	negative marker
NIO	=	noun indirect object
N.L-N	=	noun plus linker plus noun
ØDO	=	frame where no DO immediately follows transitive verb
OH	=	Old Hausa
p.	=	(in examples) person
PAC	=	person-aspect-complex (see chapter 1.2.4)
p.c.	=	personal communication
PDO	=	pronoun direct object
PIO	=	pronoun indirect object
pl.	=	plural
pol.	=	political
POT	=	potential aspect
pp.	=	persons (in examples)
PREP	=	preposition
q	=	quality compared (see ch. 3.2.1.1)
REL.CMP	=	relative completive aspect
RHET	=	rhetorical aspect
sg.	=	singular
SH	=	Standard Hausa
so.	=	someone (in examples)
STAB	=	stabiliser
sth.	=	something (in examples)
SBJ	=	subjunctive
th.	=	thing
V	=	verb
v*	=	a sub-class of irregular verb (note 1 above)
V _[+T]	=	transitive verb
V _[-T]	=	intransitive verb
V[wa]	=	a verb with the morphology: Cà(a)Cà < Ca(a)Càa wà
V+X	=	verbal compound with verb as first member
VC	=	verbal compound
VN	=	verbal noun
VN-L+X compounds	=	compounds with a VN, linker and noun, etc.
VNC	=	verbal noun compound
VOC	=	vocative

Introduction: Hausa Verbal Compounds and Compounding

Hausa is one of about 130 Chadic languages, belonging in the Afroasiatic phylum. It is spoken mainly in northern Nigeria and southern Niger; the exact number of Hausa speakers is not known, but possibly some 30 million people speak Hausa as a first language and a similar number of speakers use it as a second or third language. Established Hausa migrant communities are found as far away as Ghana, Libya and the Sudan.

In this work I shall examine Hausa verbal compounds. A simple working definition is the following: a Hausa verbal compound is a compound which contains a verb. Discussions about compounds and compounding have centred around the definition of what compounds are and where compounding takes place in the grammar. No one school of thought has prevailed. Perhaps one of the main sources of the differences between various authors is the attempt to offer a universal definition of compounds and compounding. In this thesis I limit myself to Hausa verbal compounds, describing what comprises such a compound.

I shall examine the formations earlier authors on Hausa compounds have discussed, adding two formations which have, up to now, been all but ignored. The various compound types are: V[erb]+X compounds, PAC+V compounds (a PAC is a pronoun indicating tempus, aspect and/or mood), singular and plural **ma-** compounds and verbal noun compounds. In the conclusion I propose a continuum on which Hausa verbal compounds can be considered and discuss the extent to which the various kinds of compound fit this set of criteria.

Various features of Hausa verbal compounds will be discussed. The first is morphological: there are three possible markers of the verb in a compound, including one form not found in everyday Hausa speech; furthermore, under certain conditions, the noun direct object of a compound is shortened. The second feature syntactic: since the internal arguments of the verb(s) in a Hausa verbal compound is (are) satisfied inside the compound, compound syntax can be fairly complex. The third feature is semantic. The lexical meanings of Hausa verbal compounds are often opaque; in other words, the lexical meaning and the literal meaning differ. The various kinds of relationship between the two meanings is systematically described. This description brings us into the realm of cognitive linguistics.

The chapters

Chapter 1 is an overview of compounding and of Hausa verbal compounds. For readers who are not familiar with the Hausa verbal system I outline the main features of this system; I also explain my labels for certain groups of verbs; these labels relate to my description of verbs in compounds; some of them are not the traditional “Hausaist” labels.

In chapter 2 I examine basic verbal compounds: such compounds begin with a verb, have two or more members and/or one or two VPs and may be marked or unmarked. Various markers – the use of the imperative form and tone lowering to mark the verb (the latter is found only in compounds) – are described along with other phonological features found in verbal compounds. (One such feature – the final vowel shortening of some nouns in compounds – is mentioned in this chapter, and explained in chapter 4.)

In chapter 3 further verbal compounds are described: firstly, compounds beginning with a person-aspect-complex, i.e. a pronoun giving information about tense, aspect and mood; the verb(s) in these compounds is (are) unmarked. The second type of compound is the **ma-** compound – compounds, both singular and plural – with a **ma-** prefix; in singular **ma-** compounds the verb is marked. I then examine verbal noun compounds (compounds with a verbal or deverbal noun). The underlying syntax of all three kinds of compound is described.

In chapter 4 features of the compounds seen in chapters 2 and 3 are commented on: final vowel shortening, the imperative verb form, tone lowering and phonological reduction. Final vowel shortening is seen to have an ambiguous status, marking noun direct objects in compounds as well as names. Tone lowering is shown to be a true marker of compounds. Three kinds of phonological reduction in verbal compounds are described, two involving the verb ‘give’ and a third relating to a number of apparently imperative verb forms which turn out to be phonological reductions of a verb and a particle or preposition.

In chapter 5 relationships between syntactic frames and verb types in verb compounds are discussed, i.e. which kinds of compound are found in which frames and with which type of verb. The main part of this chapter examines “grade 2” verbs in compounds, showing that these verbs have idiosyncratic features. A hypothesis which might explain these idiosyncracies, relates them to a feature of grade 2 verbs which, until recently, had escaped the attention of Hausa scholars.

In chapter 6 I look at Hausa verbal compounds from a cognitive perspective, describing regular metonymic relationships between the the surface form and the lexical meaning of the compound, and commenting on the presence of metaphor and other rhetorical devices in these compounds.

In chapter 7 I briefly summarise the content of the previous chapters and review the features found in Hausa verbal compounds, the cognitive facts (chapter 6) playing an important role here.

The appendices

The appendices relate to specific chapters: Appendix 1a lists the syntactic functions of verbal compounds and Appendix 1b is a list of examples of compounds in sentences. Appendix 1c gives information on the gender and number of verbal compounds. Appendix 1d describes the Hausa verbal system (see chapter 1): “the grade system”, the VTE system. Readers who are not familiar with these systems and/or who have a question arising from the description of different kinds of verbs in compounds will, hopefully, find the answer to their question in this appendix. Appendix 1d also describes the differences between finite and nominalised VPs in Hausa as well as the imperative form (a form which is shown to play an important role in compounding – see chapter 2).

The appendices to chapters 2 and 3 are lists of compounds discussed in those chapters. Appendix 2 lists the V+X verbs; here “X” stands for a second verb, an object (or objects) with or without adjuncts. Appendix 3a lists compounds in which the verb is preceded by a PAC or person-aspect-complex – a “subject pronoun” giving information about tense, aspect or mood; Appendix 3b lists the **ma**-compounds (singular and plural) and Appendix 3c lists compounds containing a non-finite form of the verb, or “verbal noun”.

Data, sources, references – and some abbreviations

Various kinds of Hausa verbal compounds are presented here: 581 basic verbal compounds (chapter 2), 71 PAC+V compounds (compounds whose first member is a person-aspect-complex), 31 singular and 17 plural **ma**- verbal compounds as well as 261 verbal noun compounds (chapter 3).

The data for this thesis came from several sources: the largest single source is the work of Mustapha Ahmad (1994) on Hausa compounds (not just *verbal* compounds); almost 400 of my examples are found in his work. This was supplemented by data collected by

Mustapha Ahmad and Paul Newman¹. Further examples were found during my part-time employment in the Hausa Service of the Deutsche Welle (Voice of Germany) radio station (1983-2000). Here I was able to listen to Hausa speakers live in the studio – and on tape where I was able to double-check certain features informally. A number of verbal compounds used in recent Nigerian politics came from my colleague Mohammed Munkaila (Bayreuth/Maiduguri). Others were found in the major Hausa-English dictionaries: Bargery (1934) and Abraham (1958).

Bargery's (1934) and Abraham's (1958) dictionaries are often quoted in this work. I have taken the liberty of using an abbreviation when quoting them: Bargery (1934) = [B], Abraham's (1958) = [A]. Thus "[B855]" indicates Bargery, 1934, page 855; "[A148]" indicates Abraham 1958, page 148. I have allowed myself the same liberty with the Hausa reference grammars of Jaggar, Newman and Wolff; thus "[PJ44]" refers to Jaggar 2001, page 44, "[PN704]" refers to Newman 2000, page 704, and "[W364]" refers to Wolff 1993, page 364. These abbreviations are used following examples or quotes. In the text the references are written in full where this is stylistically appropriate. I also use the abbreviation [DW] to indicate an example or information given by a colleague in the Hausa programme of the German radio station, Deutsche Welle. (See "Abbreviations", page xii.)

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