

## “Hausa Verbal Compounds”

Hausa is a Chadic language, belonging in the Afroasiatic phylum. It is spoken mainly in northern Nigeria and southern Niger. Some 30 million people speak Hausa as a first language and a similar number of speakers use it as a second or third language. In this work, the various types of Hausa verbal compounds are described.

The introduction offers a first definition of what a Hausa verbal compound is. There is a brief summary of the seven chapters, of the eight appendices and a short description of the data and sources.

Chapter 1 introduces compounding and Hausa verbal compounds. The salient features of the Hausa verbal system are outlined for readers not familiar with this system and labels for certain groups of verbs – some of them not the traditional “Hausaist” labels – are explained along with the relevance of these labels for the description and analysis of Hausa verbal compounds.

In chapter 2 basic verbal compounds are examined: such compounds (V+X compounds) begin with a verb, which satisfies its arguments inside the compound. Some such compounds have two or more members and/or one or two VPs; the verb may be marked or unmarked. The various markers of the verb – the imperative form and tone lowering (the latter found only in compounds) – are described along with other phonological features found in verbal compounds. These basic V+X compounds are described at length, organised according to syntactic frame, verb type and phonological markers. Two phonological markers – final vowel shortening and phonological reduction – are briefly referred to in chapter 2; these features and their importance in verbal compounds are analysed in chapter 4.

Three further types of verbal compound are described in chapter 3: the first type are compounds whose first member is not a finite verb, rather it is a pronoun-complex preceding the verb (the verb is unmarked in these compounds), giving information about person and number, and about tense, aspect or mood. The second type of compound described has a **ma-** prefix; there are both singular and plural “**ma-**compound” forms. In the singular form the verb is marked; some anomalous singular **ma-** compound forms are analysed, showing that one surface form may have two or three derivations. The plural **ma-** compound form is shown to be a unit: the **ma-** prefix, the verbal element, the arguments of the verb and the tone pattern of the **ma-** prefix plus verbal element. The plural **ma-** compound form (specifically, the **ma-** prefix plus the verbal element) is contrasted with plural nouns of agent; the latter have the same surface form but are not compounds. The third group of compounds described in this chapter are the verbal noun compounds: compounds with a verbal or deverbal noun as first member. All compounds in this chapter are described according to their syntactic frame (in the case of the verbal noun compounds, according to the underlying syntax) and verb type.

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: while it typically marks the noun direct object in two-member compounds, it is occasionally found in more complex compounds and, significantly, is also used in Hausa to mark nouns as names, nicknames, etc. The frequent use of final vowel shortening in compounds – and its striking absence in a few compounds where it would be expected (discussed in chapter 5) – suggest that it *is* a true compound marker. However, the exceptions described (in chapter 4) lead one to ask whether the naming function of final vowel shortening is the motivation for its use in compounds, marking prototypical (V+NDO) compounds as names.

The imperative form, while often found in compounds, is, of course, also found in other contexts, viz., giving commands. Its role as a marker of V+X compounds is, on the one hand, a consequence of the fact that, like tone lowering, the verb (at least its first syllable) has a low tone. On the other hand, the use of the imperative form in verbal compounds will be seen to have a different kind of importance (chapter 6). Tone lowering of the verb is shown to be a true marker of compounds; this feature is sometimes accompanied by lengthening of the verb final vowel; this too is only found in compounds.

Three kinds of phonological reduction in verbal compounds are described; two involve the verb ‘give’ (**bàa** < **bàa dà** ‘give (sth.)’ and **ban** < **bàa ni** ‘give me’, similar to English ‘gimme’) and a third relates to a handful of compounds with “fused forms”, forms which *seem* to be an imperative verb form but, which, on analysis turn out to be the reduction of a verb and either the particle **wà** (indicating the presence of a noun indirect object) or the preposition **à** ‘at’ or ‘in’.

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 verb type. The main part of this chapter examines “grade 2” verbs (regular, transitive verbs) in compounds. While such verbs with a noun direct object (NDO) are very frequent in normal speech, they are unexpectedly rare in compounds; the few compounds found with such a verb and syntax are idiosyncratic, e.g. in the *four* examples where final vowel shortening of the NDO would be expected, it does not occur. A hypothesis is offered to explain these idiosyncrasies, relating them to a feature of “grade 2” verbs which has recently gained the attention of Hausa scholars, a feature emphasising the role of the subject of these verbs. It is suggested that the absence of an overt subject in V+NDO compounds explains these idiosyncrasies.

In chapter 6 Hausa verbal compounds are analysed from a cognitive perspective, describing regular metonymic relationships between the surface form and the lexical meaning of the compound, and commenting on the presence of metaphor and other rhetorical devices in these compounds. This analysis is made possible by interpreting the compounds as real utterances. The

frequent use of the imperative form (chapter 2) as well as the existence of compounds with a person-aspect-pronoun as first member (chapter 3) allows this interpretation. Through this interpretation, regular metonymic relationships between the surface form of the compounds and its lexical meaning are described: firstly, the latter may be the subject or object (or complement) of the verb in the former; secondly, the compound is an utterance hypothetically uttered in the situation – i.e. as *part* of the situation – it names. The description of metonymic relationships in Hausa verbal compounds is supplemented by descriptions of metaphor and other rhetorical devices (humour, irony, etc.) in these compounds.

In chapter 7 the content of the previous chapters is summarised and the features found in Hausa verbal compounds are analysed; the cognitive facts play an important role in this definition. The chapter ends with a summary of innovative claims made in this work.