



Review

Paul Newman, *A History of the Hausa Language. Reconstruction and Pathways to the Present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022, xvi-234 pp. ISBN 9781009128070

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The goals and tasks of historical linguistics have remained unchanged since the reconstruction of the Indo-European languages, although the methods of reconstruction were greatly enriched when languages with no written tradition were included in the study of the past. The tool that gives credibility in such reconstructions is the comparative method, which helps to distinguish transformations that follow regular sound laws. Historical linguistics of African languages follows this tradition, but here the path of reconstruction is much longer, because confirmation of the results is not found in written testimonies, but in many mutually supporting reconstructions and other co-existing sources, including non-linguistic ones.

Many of the contributions to reconstruction relate to the Afroasiatic family and its Chadic group to which the Hausa language belongs. In this context, Paul Newman's *A History of the Hausa Language* may be regarded as a summary of the achievements in the study of the earlier stages of the Hausa language, compatible with the attempts to reconstruct Chadic, in which the Author was also involved (e.g. NEWMAN and MA 1966). At the same time, the publication is unique due to the scale of reconstruction of earlier stages of an African language which is based on regular changes and phonologically conditioned transformations. Although the work on the history of Hausa is (or was) carried out by Hausa scholars from various centers of African studies, the achievements presented in the book are largely the work of Paul Newman.



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General remarks

As the Author wrote in the Preface, the book was inspired by the classic *History of the English language* (BAUGH and CABLE 1993). This standard work in the field of historical studies explores the linguistic and cultural development of English, from the Middle Ages to the present day. However, the history of Hausa is presented in a different way than that of English, which is justified by the fact that there is still an even smaller set of forms from the past that could be related to the history of the society, especially since Hausa has no direct evidence of the language in the past. The book gives prominence to linguistic facts, giving them a synchronic synthesis from a diachronic perspective and focusing on the changes the language subsequently underwent. The main point of reference is Old Hausa. The symbol OH is used

“to indicate the language as it existed at some early historical period. OH does not refer to any specific time; it simply designates the earliest stage of the language than we can identify for a particular phenomenon or feature even if we do not know exactly when that was” (p. 4)

The term ‘Middle Hausa’ is referred to “some time between OH and SH (Standard Hausa)” (p. 13), the latter one being a source of modern language examples.

The work summarizes the great achievements of Paul Newman in historical linguistics. Some other scholars who contributed to the description of the Hausa language and, more broadly, the Chadic languages, are also mentioned and their works are listed in the References. Words of tribute and appreciation for the contribution to research and inspiration to conduct them are addressed to Claude Gouffé (1926-2013) and Russell Schuh (1941-2016).

Transcription

The notation of Hausa examples is in accordance with the rules of Standard Hausa orthography. However, there are also some modifications to it, justified by the scholarly transcription purposes which refer to specific Hausa phonological contrasts and their historical context. The contrast between two R-s which is marginal in modern language but remains very significant in tracing the earlier stages of the language, is indicated by the use of the symbol ʀ for the rolled R and r for the flap R. On the other hand, the archiphoneme N has been distinguished to indicate a non-distinctive contrast between nasal consonants m and n, as in cāN. All Hausa citations are marked for tone and vowel length, but here the convention is slightly different from the well-established tradition maintained in Hausa-

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related works. The length is indicated by double letters, for example **aa** (=ā more commonly used in other works). Even more significant is the modification of marking both H(igh) á and L(ow) à tones (**wúyàa** ‘neck’) and F(alling) â tone (**mâi** ‘oil’), which is consistent with the system adopted for other African languages, but different from the one used in Hausa works, in which the high tone is unmarked (**màcè** ‘woman’, but **matukā** ‘limit, utmost extreme’). These modifications make *A History of the Hausa Language* closer to the standards of historical descriptions within African linguistics (e.g. descriptions of Bantu tonal languages) and easier to do comparative research. Reconstructed forms, as is generally accepted, are marked with an asterisk, as in ***giwan** ‘elephant’ (SH **gíwáa**), ***aɓa** ‘chin’ (SH **háɓàa**).

The content of the book

The book consists of seven chapters. After a short introductory chapter on the Hausa language and the history of its research, thematic chapters follow, the most extensive of which deal with phonology and morphology. They are followed by an analysis of the syntax, loanwords and the lexicon. This sequence and thematic scope of the chapters show the most important levels of historical analysis and the nature of reconstruction.

The chapter *Phonology* presents the current inventory first. The set of consonants is slightly modified from earlier findings that are known from descriptions of the language, including NEWMAN’s reference grammar (2000). The palatalized labial (**fy**) is now considered a variant of /f/, following the ongoing rule ***fy** > **f** which tends to eliminate /fy/, therefore **fyáacèe** (>) **fáacèe** ‘blow one’s nose’. The section *Historical inventory* discusses the degree of rooting of some consonants in the language (e.g. glottalized consonants **ɓ** **ɗ** **ƙ** are recognized as direct reflexes of Old Hausa consonants that derive from Proto-Chadic), the sources of synchronically new phonemes (/’/ and /h/) and the contrasts developed through distributional restrictions (affecting the palatals **sh**, **c**, and **j**, sets of palatalized and labialized velars **ky**, **gy**, **ƙy** and **kw**, **gw**, **ƙw**, respectively, and two glides /w/ and /y/). The history of Hausa Rs and historical variants of Hausa nasals are also discussed from this perspective.

As for vowels, it is a five-vowel system at the synchronic level. In diachronic analysis, Paul Newman discusses the contrast of **i** and **u** and proposes a different interpretation of its loss (in some contexts) than previously accepted. He gives the assimilation rule responsible for the change **u** ->[i]/__yV in many words, but retains their status as contrastive vowels in vowel-initial words in Old Hausa. A conditioned sound change responsible for the development of the mid vowels **ee** and **oo** follows the earlier findings (NEWMAN 1979b). The current diphthongs [**ai**]

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and [au] are also reconstructed for Old Hausa, but the processes affecting other diphthongs (*iu and *ui) that disappeared are indicated as historical past.

The issues of tonality are discussed as a set of rules affecting two-tone system the result of which is the development of the third Falling tone. The Chapter ends by presenting a rigorous syllable structure that allows these syllables to be divided into heavy and light. Inference about the syllabic structure of OH is based on the significance of syllable weight as a shared variable throughout Chadic.

The chapter *Morphology* includes a presentation of nouns, pronouns and verbs and their derived and inflected forms. The current forms of affixes are given the historical interpretation, including morphophonological processes used in creating the relevant formatives. The affixes are divided into 'tone integrating' suffixes and non-integrating prefixes.

With regard to feminine nouns, a massive historical process of 'overt characterization' described in Newman's earlier works (NEWMAN 1979a) is quoted. It is shown that the inflectional feminine ending was added to words that were already feminine in gender, i.e. (fem.) *túmki + -iya > (fem.) túmkiyáa 'sheep'. Many phonologically conditioned transformations are illustrated by the plural formatives which motivate the reconstruction of their earliest lexical shapes. For example, the reconstructed form of zúuci yáa 'heart' is *zúkù + ìyáa (fem.suffix), because the regular phonological changes yield the plural form zúkàatáa. Similarly, búuzú (<*búgzúu), pl. búgàjé.

In the presentation of the plural nouns, Newman summarizes his detailed typology of morphological patterns, motivated by historical processes (NEWMAN 2000). At the same time, he rejects the thesis of the so-called internal -a plurals that are considered a diagnostic feature connecting Hausa (and Chadic) to other members of the Afroasiatic phylum. He recognizes 'internal -a' as "a component of segmental and suprasegmental templates" (p. 95), such as -aXe)^{HLH}, as in pl. gúlábée 'streams' (sg. gúlbfí); wúràarée 'places' (sg. wúrfí).

The section on pronouns focuses on showing the Chadic associations within the pronominal system. Comparative evidence from other Chadic languages indicates initial consonant s in the third person singular (shi in Hausa) as common heritage that can be traced back to OH and West Chadic. Similarly, the final -n on the plurals of pronouns is interpreted as a historical marker of pluralization.

Verbs are discussed in the context of their morphophonological categories known as 'grades'. For the modern Hausa, the Author presents in a new form his proposal for modification of the original PARSONS' classification (1960), earlier presented in the reference grammar (NEWMAN 2000). Retaining the seven basic grades

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distinguished by Parsons along with the numbering assigned to them, he adds a special grade Ø to incorporate monosyllabic verbs in their basic form in the classification of the verbal system. An additional part extending the Parsons' system also applies to subgroups within grade 3, which include both archaic remnants of the earlier verb classes and historically recent innovations. The historical references of verb patterns are more akin to the frozen suffixes, which have remained as endings to many verbs. For example, the frozen suffix **-kà** (with an intrinsic Low tone) is a widely attested ending, as in **ɗínkàa** 'sew', **yánkàa** 'cut, slaughter', **tàimákà** 'help'. The use of Chadic evidence to reconstruct earlier stages of Hausa development is shown here using the grammatical categories of transitivity and intransitivity, in particular an instance of an Intransitive Copy Pronoun, a recapitulative (subject) pronoun following the intransitive verb, that has essentially disappeared in Hausa, but its vestiges were preserved (e.g. in the imperative **jèe-ká / jèe-kí** 'go [m/f]!'). The Chapter *Morphology* devotes much space to Pluractionals in their frozen and active patterns which provide an opportunity to follow the morphophonological processes occurring as a result of transformations that are peculiar to the Hausa language.

The Chapter *Syntax - Grammar* presents the rules of Standard Hausa clausal patterns, tracing back to OH (or even to Afroasiatic) a category of gender and some syntactic markers, such as the genitive linker (-n/-ř/-n) or demonstrative sets indicating 'this/that'. The conjugation system is understood as a verbal sentence represented by a sequence of Subject + wsp (=weak subject pronoun) + TAM + VP. This section presents verbal paradigms in a different manner from the reference grammars. It focuses on reconstructible TAM markers and is based on contrastive pairs such as Completive and Preterite, Subjunctive and Aorist, Future₁ and Future₂. The continuous is not included in this reconstruction.

The description of the syntax applies to a large extent to the modern language and its structures developed at a relatively late stage, such as demonstratives, indirect object markers, reflexives and reciprocals, and prepositional phrases. One of the structures, i.e. the causative construction using the verb **sâa** 'to put, cause', was distinguished as "an old inherited formation" (p. 203). The available reconstructions offer little opportunity to create syntactical patterns of the earliest stages of the Hausa language. However, they enable the reconstruction of some grammatical morphemes (such as the **-ka** marker to indicate completive action that can be traced back to West Chadic), and most of all lexical means for coding systemic relations, which became the basis of present-day grammatical markers.

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The chapter *Loanwords* indicates the main sources of the enrichment of the Hausa lexicon by the incorporation of loanwords. The description includes Arabic borrowings, borrowings from neighboring African languages (Kanuri, Tuareg, Fulani, and Yoruba), as well as borrowings from English. The analysis of Hausa loanwords follows the phonological changes that have taken place over the centuries. Loanwords have affected the rules of palatalization from a general rule (as discussed below) to a part of regular morphological processes, therefore **tíkítì** 'ticket', pl. **tíkítóocíí**. Moreover, the rules of distribution and sequence of some phonemes were significantly changed under the influence of borrowings. The impact of Arabic has changed the phonemic status of the glottal stop / ' / and /h/, as well as the rolled /ř/. Changes motivated by the incorporation of English loanwords into Hausa are significant in terms of syllable structure and final consonants. Many conclusions regarding the periodization of Hausa development can still be drawn from the analysis of loanwords that have been massively incorporated into the language as a result of cultural changes.

The final chapter, *Lexicon and Etymologies*, presents a portion of Hausa vocabulary, assumed to be "basic", that can be traced back to its Chadic roots. It shows both the archaic nature of this vocabulary, preserving ties to Proto-Chadic (Chadic ***ka**, Hausa **kâi** 'head'; Chadic ***fudə**, Hausa **húfú** [**fúfú**] 'four'), and its innovative character, distinguishing the Hausa lexicon from other Chadic languages (Chadic ***bətu**, Hausa **tòokáa**; Chadic ***am**, Hausa **rúwáa**). Reconstructed forms are presented as full words (including vowels) rather than as a consonantal skeleton identifying the root, which is characteristic of the Proto-Afroasiatic reconstructions and some alternative Proto-Chadic reconstructions. This is a new look at the Proto-Chadic reconstruction by presenting Chadic lexical retentions, such as Hausa **cí** 'eat' < Chadic ***tj**; Hausa **mútù** 'die' < Chadic ***məta**. The earlier Proto-Chadic reconstructions of 'eat' and 'die', namely ***t-** and ***m-t** (NEWMAN and MA 1966: 234, 233), respectively, or ***twy** and ***mwt** (JUNGRAITHMAYR and IBRISZIMOW 1994: 56, 47), respectively, are no longer discussed.

To complete the account of the reconstruction of Hausa, 17 original etymologies are discussed to manifest the contact with other languages and historical events responsible for their development. Among them is the word **kàsúwáa** 'market' borrowed through Kanuri from the Arabic root ***suq**, and the word **bóokdò** (commonly said to be derived from English *book*) being an example of semantic derivation from a native Hausa word indicating deceit, trickery, etc. to a linguistic code of European (Western) education. These examples confirm linguistic reconstruction that is based on regular sound changes but also includes the culture-based adaptation of the linguistic forms.

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In the *Conclusion*, the Author summarizes some basic achievements that define the features of Old Hausa and these are the features recognized on the basis of sound laws and morphophonological rules. The lack of the indication of time depth in the reconstruction makes some forms (marked by asterisk) incompatible, as the original form of **nan**, which is ***neene** (p. 172), has no reference to the period for which the three vowels are reconstructed for Old Hausa (p. 56).

Sound laws and morphophonological rules

A History of the Hausa language does not provide a traditional reconstruction aimed at establishing characteristics of the proto-language and deriving from it the stages of language development up to its modern forms. It is from the language used today that the earliest forms of lexical and grammatical elements are reconstructed, using the methodology of internal reconstruction and comparative analysis with reference to dialect variation and common Chadic vocabulary. This approach seems to be more reliable and consistent with the type of data available. The credibility of this reconstruction is reinforced by references to regular transformations having the status of sound laws comparable to the well-known sound laws in European languages or morpho-phonological rules peculiar to Hausa.

The best-known sound change in Hausa, first described in 1927 by August Klingenberg, originally consisted of four separate rules, i.e. 1) ***Velars > w**; 2) ***Coronals > ɾ** (/ɾ/ in Western Hausa); 3) ***Labials > w** (Eastern Hausa only); 4) ***Nasals > ŋ** (Eastern Hausa only). They came to be known collectively as Klingenberg's Law that has functioned for a long period of intensive studies on Hausa in a very general formulation. In *History of the Hausa Language* Paul Newman uses the modified version of these rules, redefined in his earlier work (NEWMAN 2004) by extending the conditional environment for all of these rules which in the original version relied on nothing else but the syllable-final position. Newman describes Klingenberg's Law as the historical behaviour of syllable-final consonants within a word. However, along with this extension the rule was redefined by the statement that reduplicative forms do not fall under the Klingenberg's Law, but they have their own distinct phonological rules, which Newman has labelled the *Law of Codas in Reduplication* (Lacore). This law is about producing a syllable-final consonant with an immediately following abutting consonant which assimilates to and becomes a geminate with the following consonant, e.g. **fiffikèe** < ***fik-fikèe** 'wing'; **búbbùgáa** < *** búg-bùgáa** (**bùgáa** 'beat'). The rule specifies that the change to ɾ also affects sibilants /s/ and /z/, not only stops/affricates, e.g. **ḡàṛḡáshíí** < ***ḡàs-ḡáshíí** 'crumbs'; **ḡíḡízáa** < ***gíz-gízáa** 'shake'.

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The reinterpretation of the behaviour of syllable-final consonants is Paul Newman's important contribution to the methodology of historical research on Hausa and the particular reconstructions.

Another historical process that determines the results of reconstruction is palatalization, a general rule that automatically changes coronal obstruents when followed by a front vowel into their palatal counterparts, i.e. *s, z, t* -> *sh, j, c*, respectively. As a general rule of changing Hausa consonants when preceding *i* and *e*, it has been known for a long time from grammar descriptions (including the /*d*/ -> /*j*/ change, the /*w*/ -> /*y*/ change as well as the palatalization of velars *k, g, ŋ* in this context), but distinguishing the historical change from an active process and incorporating the specific features of this process into lexical reconstruction constitutes significant progress in the study of the history of the Hausa language.

Some Hausa historical rules were constructed in a comparative analysis, taking into account other Chadic languages and Proto-Chadic (PC) reconstructions, e.g. the **r* > *Y* Rule that non-initial **r* historically changes to *Y*, where *Y* represents /*y*/ or /*i*/ depending on its position in the syllable (p. 34), therefore *àikí* 'send' < **arki* (PC **rəkə*), cf. also Hausa *súuyàa* 'frying', Karekare *sùrú* (*PC *surə*). Some of the rules apply to nasal consonants *n* and *m*. The contrast identified for OH, in present-day Hausa is often reduced to *N*, following the rules affecting the word-final and word internal syllable final position of nasals. With these recognized rules, internal reconstruction and comparative evidence provide grounds for tracing back the present forms to OH forms.

The tonal changes in the development of Hausa are discussed in the context of 'tone integrating' suffixes. One historical rule, namely the Low tone raising (LTR) rule, initially described by LEBEN (1971), has been redefined by changing the unconditioned rule to the rule having its contextually motivated variants.

Among the reconstruction paths, there are some phenomena that elude the rules of regular phonological transformations, such as metathesis (**saki* > *áskli* 'shaving') and the development of patterns in which formerly plural nouns have been lexicalized as singulars (*ítàcée* 'tree, wood' < = *ícee*) and received a new plural form (pl. *ítátúwàa*).

Concluding remarks

A History of the Hausa Language is the first comprehensive work on the reconstruction of Hausa, one of the most important and most widely spoken languages in sub-Saharan Africa. Systematic and in-depth investigation into the

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linguistic past complements and enriches the descriptive grammars and dictionaries.

The work is unique not only in the field of Hausa studies, but it is also an important contribution to all African studies and diachronic studies in general. Within African studies, it can be compared with a linguistic history of Swahili (NURSE and HINNEBUSH 1993) and other historical studies relating to languages without a written tradition. The reconstruction path includes sound laws and morphophonological rules, but the recognized rules also show that the processes on which the linguistic transformations were based are significantly different from the processes known from the history of Indo-European languages. The main difference is that transformations in Hausa may be interpreted as sound correspondences, but only when they are related to the structure of the syllable.

The book is written with great passion, it manifests the Author's fascination with language and his great experience in the historical analysis of Hausa. This emotional attitude which was already revealed in a separate article (NEWMAN 2014) can only be understood by those who have come to know the richness of the structural peculiarities of the Hausa language.

As the Author states, some questions are left answered. The present book is certainly an inspiration for further research on the history of Hausa and theoretical basis of reconstruction. It is hoped that, like BAUGH's *History of the English language*, first published in 1935, Newman's *A History of the Hausa Language* will also see its fifth edition, in which there will be many new discoveries about the past of the Hausa language.

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