

Foreword

Publications on the Hausa language are professionally advanced in two thematic areas: theoretical analysis of the language and textbooks for practical language learning. With few exceptions, these two areas have not been interlinked in the current approach to language learning. A large part of the grammar descriptions of the language were created with the aim of systemic interpretation of grammatical relations and were addressed to language researchers and students with good linguistic background. On the other hand, language learning based on communicative correctness and adherence to the cultural code makes problems to the learners when using alternative structures for which no justification is usually provided. Moreover, the complex and linguistically specialized terminology limits access to rules for less advanced learners, while practical instructions without grammatical explanations do not encourage learners to use language structures creatively in various discursive contexts.

The book is in line with the current trend of combining theoretical knowledge about the systemic features of the Hausa language with the practical application of structures illustrating these features, especially the features characteristic of Hausa that do not occur (or occur rarely) in other languages

The book is intended mainly for students who have already studied the basic grammar of Hausa, although elementary information is also included in the presentation of grammar rules. The explanations are illustrated with numerous examples giving priority to those structures that differ fundamentally from English and other widely known languages, both African and non-African, and often cause difficulty.

The book is organized into 16 chapters, preceded by an Introductory chapter. Each chapter concentrates on a particular point of grammar in its broadest possible sense, which allows combining some issues that do not have clear demarcation lines in the structure of the language. The chapters are given titles that represent a traditional approach to grammar, making it easier to find both general and more specific topics. The topics, for example, noun plurals, verbal conjugation, pronouns (regardless of their length and complexity) are presented within one unit.

In theoretical part, there are explanations and examples that clarify the rules. This part is followed by a more selective approach to the topic, emphasizing exceptions to the rules, problems with the practical application of these rules, or a different perspective on the topic.

There are also eleven Appendices at the back of the book. These include patterns of noun plurals, derived adjectives, irregular verbs and verbal nouns, TAM markers of verb conjugation, among others. Finally, there is a detailed Index at the back of the book.

This work aims to convey the achievements of Hausa research to Hausa learners. It is a contrastive description of the language, emphasizing the structural differences of Hausa compared to the grammatical systems of European languages, especially English, and the equivalence (or lack thereof) in the basic terminology to which descriptions of the language typically refer.

The proposed language description combines two distinct approaches to presenting Hausa grammar. One draws on recent advances in the systemic interpretation of structures, as embodied in two fundamental works in Hausa studies: Paul Newman's Hausa reference grammar (*The Hausa Language. An Encyclopedic Reference Grammar*. New Haven & London 2000: Yale University Press) and Philip Jaggar's descriptive grammar (*Hausa*. Amsterdam 2001: John Benjamins). In particular, solutions concerning noun plural classes and verb grades are presented in this work as proposed by these authors, with a view to correlating their achievements with the descriptions of dictionary entries in the latest Hausa dictionaries.

A great inspiration for my work was language learning textbook by J. Ronayne Cowan and Russell G. Schuh (*Spoken Hausa*. Ithaca 1976) that organizes grammatical material for teaching purposes. In the current approach, I took the frames combining the two different approaches and incorporating my own experiences in studies on Hausa and teaching the Hausa language into them with reference to my first description of the Hausa language in Polish (Nina Pawlak, *Gramatyka języka hausa: Fonologia i fonetyka. Morfologia*. Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego: Warszawa 1989). [The Hausa grammar: Phonology and phonetics. Morphology]. Writing about Hausa in a language other than English poses new challenges and opens up new areas for contrastive approaches. Sergio Baldi's description of Hausa in Italian (*Grammatica di lingua Hausa*. Milano 2017: Ulrico Hoepli) provides inspiration to include the cultural context in the description of language grammar. Some of these non-canonical attitudes are addressed in this English-language book.

Above all, however, this book is the result of many years of experience in teaching Hausa grammar to the students, who pointed out those elements of the

grammar that they found difficult to understand and required deeper explanation. I thank them for their questions about more or less specialized expressions and for their observations not only about the structures themselves, but also about the rules governing their use in different communicative contexts.

I hope that the book will increase resources on learning the Hausa language and will be helpful for language researchers focused on the contrastive study of Hausa. I would like to thank Prof. Beata Wójtowicz for making it possible to support preparing this book with the fund dedicated to African Studies program developed with support of “Lines of studies in Priority Research Areas – POB (2nd degree) – Organisation of university-wide courses in support of second-level studies” implemented under the “Excellence Initiative – Research University” Programme.

Nina Pawlak

