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BIBLIOGRAPHY OF HAUSA PROVERBS STUDIES

1. Introduction¹

This is a bibliography of paremiological and paremiographic publications concerning the Hausa language. Hausa is one of the major languages of the world, as well as one of the so-called Islamic languages. It is the third largest indigenous language in Africa, after Arabic and Swahili. It is classified as a West Chadic language of A.1 group. The Chadic language family, part of the Afro-Asiatic language phylum, comprises some 170 languages, of which Hausa is the largest and the most important (Newman 2013: 2-3).

Hausa is used as the first language (mother tongue) by around 50.7 million people (Eberhard et al. 2022), mainly residents of northern Nigeria and southern regions of the Republic of Niger. It is also spoken in diasporas, including in Sudan. It is important to note that Hausa is a vehicular language in West Africa. At least 26.2 million people use it as a second language (Eberhard et al. 2022) for the purpose of interethnic communication. The vehicular function of Hausa has developed mainly due to commercial contacts (Pawlak 1998: 7-8).

¹ References to this paragraph which are not included in the following bibliography: Eberhard, David M., et al., editors. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. 25th ed., SIL International, 2022, <https://www.ethnologue.com/>, retrieved on 3 July 2024
Newman, Paul. *The Chadic Language Family: Classification and Name Index*. 2013, <https://www.cepam.cnrs.fr/megatchad/publications/Newman-2013-Chadic-Classification-and-Index.pdf>, retrieved on 3 July 2024, retrieved on 3 July 2024
Pawlak, Nina. *Język Hausa [Hausa Language]*. Dialog, 1998.

Hausa is one of the most thoroughly researched African languages with a relatively large number of resources and extensive academic literature. The same applies to literature on proverbs in this language (known as *karin mǎgana*, literally ‘folded speech’, pl. *karin mǎgàngànū*²). The academic interest in Hausa proverbs dates back to the first modern descriptions of the language. The first paremiographic work on Hausa proverbs was published by a German missionary F. Schön (1885). In the earliest period, European scholars compiled numerous collections of Hausa proverbs containing interpretations of their meanings, often along with semantically equivalent proverbs in English or German (Fletcher, 1912; Kirk-Greene, 1966; Merrick, 1905; Mischlich, 1906; Prietze, 1904; Rat-tray, 1913; Robinson, 1905; Tremearne, 1913; Whitting, 1940). The first collection of proverbs compiled by Hausa paremiographers was an anonymous leaflet (Karin Magana “Iya Magana Ma Da Ransarsa!” [Proverbs. “Knowing How to Speak Brings Luck”], 1958). Later, Yunusa (1977) collected over 1500 proverbs and attached interpretation (all in Hausa) to about a third of them. In addition to the above, there are more recent collections, published in Nigeria, which contain a few thousand Hausa proverbs each (unfortunately) without any explanation of their meanings (i.a. Danhausa, 2012; Danyaya, 2007; Haruna, 2017; Malumfashi & Ibrahim, 2014). At least two lexicons were also compiled by Nigerian scholars (Moussa, 2004; Nafiou, 2014). Some researchers attempted to develop methods of classifying Hausa proverbs according to various lexico-semantic criteria (Abdulkarim, 2015; Aminu, 2003; Dikko, 2017; Piłaszewicz, 1983: 28–36; Sadi & Sadiq, 2009; Satatima, 2016; Zajac, 2023). To date hundreds of works have been published on various aspects of Hausa proverbs.

2. List of bibliographical entries

The Hausa bibliography lists publications in English, Hausa, French, Polish, German, Spanish and Russian. It comprises books and articles, a few of them dating back to the end of 19th century. Some works covering more languages than just Hausa

² Despite some culturally-motivated differences in understanding the term *karin mǎgana*, it is considered the equivalent of the English term *proverb* and its counterparts in other languages.

were included. In addition, some works on Hausa folklore and genres closely related to proverbs (such as *kirari* ‘epithet’) were listed. However, some others were excluded, since the intention was to limit bibliography to the proverbs studies, and not to extend it too much towards various issues in Hausa phraseology and style in oral and written literature. Efforts were made to include as many publications as possible, although the author is aware that the list of entries is not complete. The hope is that it will be of use to Hausa scholars as well as international community of paremiologists.

The list includes two dictionaries of the Hausa language (Abraham 1962; Bargery 1934). The reason for this is that these two old publications include countless proverbs and sayings associated with many lexical entries. For the same reason, some old grammars and textbooks of Hausa were included, written by European scholars, which present a number of Hausa proverbs as linguistic data.

A special place in the bibliography is occupied by the canonical work of Hausa literature – the novel “*Magana jari ce*” [‘Ability to tell stories is a valuable possession’] (Imam 1940) which is the ultimate example of the use of proverbs in Hausa literature as it contains at least 265 proverbs³. The use of proverbs and stylistic devices in the text was analysed in various publications which are also included in the list.

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2. Abdulkarim, Zainab. “Thematic Analysis of Some Selected Hausa Proverbs.” *Arts and Design Studies*, vol. 27, 2015, pp. 27–30.

³ I counted it personally one by one going through the text, but since I am not a native speaker, I suppose that I might have not noticed some of them, and therefore their number is in fact even bigger.

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