

# AN INTRODUCTION TO HAUSA NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

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This collection of papers constitutes an introduction to the structure of narrative in Hausa. Although the basic syntactic structures of Hausa are well known and discussed in numerous volumes, very little to date has been said regarding Hausa text structure.

A word regarding the theoretical models employed in these papers is appropriate. Two of the papers (those by B. Cain and Goring) are written within the framework of Stratificational Grammar as developed by Fleming (Fleming 1988). Within this point of view several strata of linguistic structure are proposed, crucial among them for our purposes the **communication situation** stratum (corresponding roughly to pragmatics), the **sememic** stratum (corresponding roughly to semantics), and the **morphemic** stratum (corresponding roughly to syntax). While each stratum has a certain degree of independence, there are inter-relationships among them which can be usefully exploited to describe the nature of the linguistic structures under investigation. Thus a given construction on one stratum has a realization or set of alternative realizations on another stratum, and conversely, the same specific structure on a given stratum may be a manifestation of differing structures on another stratum. Of particular interest is the distribution within text and the speech-act context of the alternative realizations of a given structure. A full summary of the model is beyond the scope of this volume, but Goring's paper provides enough information to make reference to it intelligible.

The second theoretical orientation which is featured in this papers is that of Tagmemics as developed by Longacre (Longacre 1989a, 1989b, 1990); the papers by K. Cain, Johnson Brye, Rand, and (to a lesser extent, see below) Christopher fall into this group. There are two claims here of crucial importance with reference to this study. The first is that structures found at levels larger than the sentence are no different in kind from those found at lower levels. Thus to describe discourse structure is in principle no different from describing sentence structure, or clause structure, or phrase structure, etc. The second crucial claim is that there are in fact two levels of structure always in view, **deep or notional structure**, and **surface structure**. Such a distinction allows for the function of a given structure to be neatly described separate from its form, and vice versa. Important techniques exploited in Longacre's orientation include the analysis of patterns of **participant reference**, the analysis of **conversation**, and the analysis of the **plot structure** of discourse.

The texts considered in the papers in this volume warrant a degree of comment. The folktales themselves are very short, perhaps a result of their being part of the text material included for the use of individuals who are studying Hausa for the first time. In spite of their brevity, however, they show an interesting degree of complexity, which suggests that they are not non-representative of short narrative characteristic of the language as a whole. Three of the papers (K. Cain, Christopher, Rand) include in their discussion reference to a longer portion of text material as well, taken from the Hausa novel Magana Jari Ce 'Talk is Wealth' (hereafter MJC). Because the Hausa orthography does not normally indicate tone or vowel length, the printed version of the novel in Imam (1937, 1939, 1939) fails in many instances to distinguish words and morphemes whose interpretation is crucial to understanding and analysis (especially important is the representation of the third person singular person-aspect markers for the complete and relative complete aspects, which are numerous in the text and

differ only in this way). Thus in the case of both the folktales and MJC, the papers here have relied on the transcription as represented in Kraft (1965 and 1973). The texts of the folktales are found in the Appendix; in the papers dealing with the structure of MJC, enough context is included with the examples presented to allow for their ready interpretation (a summary of the novel is found in K. Cain).

Just a word about MJC may be called for. In its Hausa version the novel runs well over five hundred pages, including illustrations. The portion included in the papers of this study covers only the first fourteen pages. On the surface this may appear to be a trivial amount of data to include from such a large work, so it is important to emphasize that this is a portion which has a significant amount of textual integrity, and which can properly be studied as a unit in and of itself. The novel deals with a number of important themes of Hausa life and culture, but for the most part these first fourteen pages serve to establish a context within which a series of folktales (which forms the majority of the work) can be presented. The result is that the whole is a work along the lines of Tales of the Arabian Nights. Interspersed with the folktales at later points in the text there are narrative portions which refer back to the information and characters of these early pages and resume the account of their interaction, but such narrative is relatively brief in relation to the folktales which provide the majority of the subsequent text material, each of which forms a literary linguistic unit in its own right.

The introductory nature of the studies in this volume can scarcely be over-emphasized. As mentioned above, the amount of material examined is limited, and it may be suggested that given its pedagogical intent, it is not as complex in structure as is normal in Hausa narrative. Nevertheless, the hypotheses set forth account for a significant number of facts of text organization and thus form a useful set of hypotheses for subsequent investigation. Let me summarize briefly the contribution of each paper (in addition to those portions included as illustrative in the papers themselves, all the texts examined are included in the Appendix, with interlinear gloss and a free English translation).

B. Cain 'A discourse analysis of the Hausa fable "The hyena and the drum" ' demonstrates the importance of taking account of both the form of a text (including both its notional or semantic structure, and its surface structure) and the purpose of the narrator in recounting the text (i.e., its communicative context). Such texts as the one considered here are narrative both notionally and in surface form, but they have a behavioral objective which is the focus of the narrator. Introduction of participants and important props is of interest in this particular text because the common means is through reference by means of the use of a noun phrase as a direct object (see also Goring's paper, and a similar conclusion advanced by Christopher). Cain also investigates the distribution of aspects in narrative. He notes that the relative completive aspect in main clauses marks events on the storyline, with subordinated events (serving to provide cohesion) expressed by means of the relative completive in subordinate clauses, the two progressive aspects, and the two future aspects; further, the progressive aspects are used in this text to describe background states, and the futures to describe collateral or irrealis (i.e., as yet unrealized, potential) events. A salience scheme representing such facts of levels of information is presented as a hypothesis to be tested against further data. Cain argues that the peak of the text (the climax of the tale) is marked by two phenomena: (1) the presence of the particle *sai* in sentence-initial position (limited to this portion in the text under investigation); and (2) promotion of props (here the hare and the drum) to being full participants in the story (this promotion being carried out by the use of the definite marker *-n* with nouns referring to

the two, a pattern never found with the main participant, the hyena). In the final section Cain provides a macrostructural analysis of the text (incorporating narrator's behavioral intention), and an analysis of paragraph structure.

Johnson Brye 'Features marking Peak and Peak' in Hausa folktale' examines four folktales for information regarding overall text structure. Taking Longacre's terms **Climax** (referring to the point of maximum tension) and **Denouement** (referring to the crucial event which allows the plot to be resolved), Johnson Brye investigates how these notions are marked structurally. Use of the particle *sai*, long troublesome to Hausa scholars, is a common device used to identify these pivotal events. There is also a tendency toward short, simple sentences, an occurrence of dialogue, and some suggestion of the presence of a particular verbal aspect otherwise unexpected (progressive in one instance, completive in another, both in contrast to the relative completive found commonly elsewhere in the texts). While the proposals here are perhaps the most tentative in these studies (remembering especially the small number of instances investigated, and the very short texts involved), they form useful hypotheses for further research.

Goring 'The evil judge, a Hausa folktale: insights from stratificational grammar' provides an in-depth analysis of the Hausa folktale *Muugù-n Alk'aalii*. A number of topics are discussed, with hypotheses set forth to be tested against further data, among them the distribution of aspects (the relative completive commonly marks events on the storyline), and the distribution of conjunctions and particles (subordinate clauses with *dà* 'when' commonly precede, those with no conjunction commonly follow and provide information regarding attribution, identification, cognition, or reaction). Of particular interest is the discussion of referent identification and participant ranking as manifested in this text. Participants are commonly introduced in Hausa narrative by means of a noun phrase, with subsequent reference by person-aspect marker alone until a different participant takes the stage. In this particular text the major participant is the judge, the minor participant is the defendant in the case brought before him. It is interesting, however, that the defendant is not introduced by a noun phrase, and in fact a good deal of cultural and contextual information is needed to identify him as the participant in focus in a given event because frequently person-aspect markers alone are used as the form of reference for the participants (because both participants are masculine, the person-aspect reference is the same for both). For example, at one point in the story the defendant must be identified as the one who sends pumpkins because the judge is identified as being the one who receives them and no one else is mentioned; later, the defendant must be identified as the one who goes outside after the courtroom scene because the content of the quotation attributed to the individual now outside is appropriate only for him; and it must be the defendant who later comes on the scene because it is the judge who does the summoning and in the following context both are present. The pattern of reference in the text shows a ranking of participants also, such that the judge outranks the defendant. The forms of reference themselves are indicative of such ranking, including in addition to the means of introduction the fact that the judge is always referred to by title (and never by pronoun); the use of the ventive marker *-oo* on verbs referring to movement toward the judge's location shows the judge to be the perspective also of the narrator; the judge's mental processes are represented; and the judge is quoted directly (while in the conversational context the defendant is always the addressee and is never quoted directly).

K. Cain 'An introduction to the distribution of stative clause types in Hausa narrative' investigates the distribution in eleven folktales and MJC of clauses containing

**nee/cee** 'be', **gàà** 'there is', and **àkwai** 'there exists' as predicate. The proposals are amply illustrated in the paper, I summarize them briefly here. The verbal particle **nee/cee** 'be' (**nee** is the masculine and plural form, **cee** the feminine) is used (especially in quotations) during moments of high tension, and often conflict. The particle **gàà** 'there is' is used often in conjunction with the particle **sai** to introduce (unexpectedly) a participant or a prop which is particularly important to the story; without **sai** it is used to convey characters' thoughts, especially in instances in which important turning points in the plot are being presented. Clauses with **àkwai** 'there exists' are rare in the materials included here, with only six occurrences altogether; with so few examples sweeping generalizations are unwarranted, but it is an interesting fact that such clauses are always found in dialogue, generally conveying rhetorical questions and perhaps sarcasm. The negative form of **àkwai** is **baà**; it is used more frequently than **àkwai**, conveying information regarding narrator comments regarding the non-existence of a crucial entity which would otherwise provide a solution to a dilemma.

Rand 'An analysis of repartee structure in Hausa narrative discourse' investigates the organization and function of dialogue in two folktales and a portion of MJC. Longacre's model of repartee organization is summarized and exemplified. Especially interesting in the presentation is evidence of the mismatch commonly occurring between form (e.g., question) and function (e.g., to express a command), for which insightful discussion is offered. The paper concludes with a paragraph analysis of the same portion of MJC, which illustrates the use of dialogue in Hausa narrative in building up tension and culminating in a peak of confrontation.

The most ambitious paper of this series is Christopher 'Anaphora interpretation in Hausa narrative: application of Topic-set Theory.' Combining a fundamental notion of Government and Binding with Longacre's principles of participant reference in discourse, Christopher develops the notion of **topic-set** to account for the interpretation of anaphors across sentence boundaries. Basically, a topic-set is an abstract unit, a sequence of clauses or sentences whose predicates share the same subject. In Hausa topic-sets are established by two techniques: (1) introduction of a participant by the overt occurrence in subject position by a noun phrase making reference to the participant; (2) promotion of a participant from occurrence of a referring expression in (direct or indirect) object position in a preceding sentence. Having established the notion, Christopher illustrates its application in interpreting anaphors (both pronouns and empty categories in subject position) in three folktales and a portion of MJC. This paper provides not only an account of anaphor interpretation in Hausa narrative text, but also a proposal regarding a possible theoretical statement of interaction between sentence-level and discourse-level rules.