

**PAUL NEWMAN AND ROXANA MA NEWMAN, HAUSA DICTIONARY FOR EVERYDAY USE: HAUSA-ENGLISH/ENGLISH-HAUSA | KAMUSUN HAUSA NA YAU DA KULLUM: HAUSA-INGILISHI/ INGILISHI-HAUSA, XXXVIII + 630PP. KANO: BAYERO UNIVERSITY PRESS (HARDBACK & PAPERBACK), 2020; OXFORD: AFRICAN BOOKS COLLECTIVE (PAPERBACK & E-BOOK), 2022. £61.**

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In a 2001 survey of Hausa lexicographic traditions spanning 150+ years, Newman & Newman (2001) documented 59 Hausa dictionaries, vocabularies and glossaries that have been published. Even for an African language with an estimated 100 million first and second language speakers in Nigeria, Niger and other neighbouring countries, that is still an exemplary scholarly output from Hausaists around the world. In the intervening period, a dozen more dictionaries and related specialised Hausa wordlists have been added to this impressive inventory. In addition, their description of Hausa as ‘one of the most extensively studied languages in Sub-Saharan Africa’ (Newman & Newman, 2001: 283) continues to hold, as evidenced by Professor Paul Newman’s most recent bibliography of Hausa and Chadic linguistics scholarship (see Newman, 2022).

*Hausa Dictionary* by Paul and Roxana Newman is an important milestone in the herculean lexicographic task undertaken since the 1970s by the two giants of Hausa language scholarship. The dictionary combines and modifies R. Newman’s (1990) *An English Hausa Dictionary* and P. Newman’s (2007) *A Hausa-English Dictionary*. With a total inventory of over 20,000 words, roughly 10% more Hausa than English headwords, the dictionary is a worthy and reliable reference for everyday use. Preliminary pages, in Hausa as well as English, consist of a preface, acknowledgements, user’s guide and references to major dictionaries and grammars. The preface by their former student, Professor Mustapha Ahmad Isa, and acknowledgements by the authors set out the rationale for the publication of the dictionary by Bayero University, Kano. Information regarding the extensive editorial work on the *Hausa Dictionary* by native Hausa professors of language and linguistics was also included. User’s Guide pages include a detailed description not only of the organisation of the dictionary, but also a helpful grammatical sketch of Hausa nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns, ideophones, prepositions and determiners (xvii-xxiv). In these pages, there is enough information for the reader to appreciate the enormous length to which the authors were obliged to go in the making of *Hausa Dictionary*.

Turning now to the main entries, the *Hausa-English* section contains approximately 11,000 headwords distributed over 276 pages, while the *English-Hausa* entries of approximately 10,000 cover 343 pages, more and fuller examples being provided to illustrate usage. The appendices of Hausa pronouns, place names and the profiles of the authors (621-628) complete this clearly spaced-out and legible dictionary with its beautifully embroidered cover design. And in both H-E and E-H sections, all entries, devoid of typos and mistakes, note the parts of speech to which the headwords belong, a clear indication that this is no ordinary ‘everyday use’ Hausa dictionary. Tones and vowel lengths are not marked except in minimal pair contrasts, e.g. *áyá*: ‘tigernut grass or fruit’ vs. *á:yà*: ‘verse of the Koran’ (14); *yà*: ‘how?’ vs. *yâ*: ‘elder sister’ (261). Note the distinctive change in ‘standard’ tonal transcription, where high tone [*á*] and long vowel [*a:*] are used in such contrastive cases. This is a major departure from virtually all the Hausa dictionaries and grammars in current use today.

A real strength of *Hausa Dictionary* lies in combining and updating the two most useful dictionaries produced for Hausa learners and professional linguists (R. Newman 1990; P. Newman 2007). In addition, extensive grammatical and semantic labelling of entries, coupled with very helpful examples of their use in various contexts make the dictionary an essential reference companion, e.g. figurative *ba dama!* ‘It’s terrific, there’s nothing like it!’, instead of its literal ‘no chance’ meaning. In other cases, an entry, such as the highly productive diminutive *ɗan* [*’yar; ’yan*] form generated three pages of examples (60-62),

ranging from *dan Kano* ‘Kano man’, to *’yar Tibi* ‘Tiv woman’, to *dan wasa* ‘actor’ (62). Similarly, the goal of capturing ‘new terms and expressions ... not covered by previous publications’, as stated in the back cover, has been overwhelmingly achieved, with such recent additions as *afil* ‘appeal’, *afto* ‘actor’, *aful* ‘apple’, *dan-raji* ‘activist’, *Ibola* ‘Ebola’, *kalmar sirri* ‘password’, *korona* ‘coronavirus’, *kutse* ‘hacking’, ‘data’ *bayanai*, *DNA* ‘sinadarin halitta’, and ‘website’ *dandali*, to mention just a few of the new terms. (It is commendable that the authors did not shy away from wholesome adoption of foreign terms, where there are no alternative forms in current use.) The new terms, particularly Hausaised variants of English equivalents, e.g. *fiza* ‘pizza’ help to provide the first documented cases of their standard spelling. This is also the case with place names acquiring greater prominence in the Hausa world, e.g. *Indunisiya* ‘Indonesia’, *Kafi* ‘Keffi’, *Insuka* ‘Nsukka’, *Fataskum* ‘Potiskum’, *Tunas* ‘Tunis’. They have been included both as dictionary entries and part of the appendices.

The extensive revision of the original dictionaries (Newman & Newman, 1977; R. Newman, 1990; P. Newman, 2007), unfortunately, however, also led to the loss of some important elements in *Hausa Dictionary*. One of these losses is the decision to do away with tones and vowel length transcription in all entries, except in minimal pair contrast. And even in such a contrastive environment, a less common system of Hausa transcription of assigning [á] to the high tone and [a:] for the long vowel was adopted (see above). Unusually for the authors, there is no explanation for this departure. It is a standard of Hausa dictionary writing that tones and vowel length are indicated, and, moreover, that this practice follows the more familiar grave [à], circumflex [â] and macron [ā] system, with acute [á] remaining unassigned (Newman & Newman, 2001: 265). In other technical writings, such as the presentation of phonological data and the glossing of syntactic examples, vowel doubling [aa] is often used instead of transcription by macron. (See Bargery, 1934; Abraham & Mai Kano, 1949; and Newman & Newman (1977) for variant dictionary transcriptions.) The loss of tones and vowel length on the entries in *Hausa Dictionary* is noticeable in an otherwise perfect reference work for ‘everyday use’. In addition to spelling, meaning and usage, dictionaries are regularly consulted as guides to pronunciation of words. Given the authors’ previous commitment to tone and vowel length assignment on head entries, one can only assume that the ‘... panel of expert linguists...’ who were tasked by the in-house Bayero University Press, Kano ‘... to carefully vet a draft of the entire dictionary to eliminate errors and make suggestions for improvements’ (xi) may have overreached themselves. Eliminating tones and vowel length either as ‘errors’ or ‘improvements’ is a mistake in my view, and at least, requires explanation from the authors.

Another area of omission is a few ICT terms related to fintech, e-commerce and social media that have become ubiquitous in Hausa new media discourse. Here, one can point to global ‘apps’ [app], ‘Facebook’ [Fèzbûk], ‘fake news’ [(lābàran) kanzon-kùrēgē], ‘Google’ [Gūgùl], ‘social media’ [shāfukàn sādà-zùmùntā/sōshiyāl mīdiyā], ‘influencer’ [tāurāròn sōshiyāl mīdiyā], ‘blogger’ [bùlōgā], ‘online’ [kân lāyī; hau], ‘WhatsApp’ [Wasàf], ‘YouTube’ [YūTùf], and local (Nigerian) ‘network’ [netìwòk], ‘419’ [fō-wan-nāyìn], ‘ATM’ [mazārin kudī], ‘POS’ [nā’ūrar FÔS], ‘mobile network service strength’ [sābìs], ‘online payment’ [tìrànsifā], and ‘yahoo-yahoo [online scams]’ [(’yan) yāhū], as obvious candidates for (spelling) standardisation in a current Hausa usage dictionary. Ironically, social media, including official handles of authoritative Hausa news outlets happen to be among the best sources of new terms. Had these sources formed part of the consultation process, the diversity of their journalists, their ‘followers’ and their ‘friends’ would have pointed out their ‘likes’ and their ‘dislikes’ in their ‘statuses’ and ‘profile’ displays. In fact, all of these last cases of omission relate to the extension of their ordinary meanings to new media usage, as they appear as headwords in both H-E and E-H sections of *Hausa Dictionary*.

*Hausa Dictionary* is an excellent addition to Hausa lexicographic traditions, and it succeeds in further exemplifying African linguistics scholarship at its best, despite the waning interest in Hausa language teaching abroad. But, with the recent compulsory mother-tongue use policy in Nigeria’s primary schools, this dictionary serves as a huge resource for teachers and learners in their ‘everyday use’ of Hausa.

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