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The Etymology of Hausa *boko*

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The Etymology of Hausa *boko*

by

Paul Newman

Abstract: The Hausa term *boko*, used in the name Boko Haram, is commonly asserted, by journalists and political commentators as well as by academic linguists, to be derived from the English word “book”. This turns out to be false. *Boko* is not an English loanword. A careful analysis of Hausa phonology and morphology shows clearly that *boko* could not have come from English “book”. Rather, *boko* is an indigenous Hausa word originally connoting sham, fraud, deceit, or lack of authenticity. When the British colonial government imposed secular schools in northern Nigeria at the beginning of the 20th century, *boko* was applied in a pejorative sense to this new system. By semantic extension, *boko* came to acquire its current meaning of Hausa written in Roman script and Western education in general.

Résumé: Le mot hausa *boko*, employé dans le nom Boko Haram, est considéré aussi bien par les journalistes, les commentateurs politiques que les linguistes universitaires comme étant dérivé du mot anglais ‘book’. Mais c’est une erreur. *Boko* n’est pas un mot emprunté à l’anglais. Une analyse phonologique et morphologique rigoureuse de la langue hausa montre clairement que *boko* ne peut pas provenir de l’anglais ‘book’. En fait, *boko* est un mot hausa indigène qui connote à l’origine la supercherie, la fraude, la tromperie ou le manque d’authenticité. Quand le gouvernement colonial britannique imposa les écoles laïques dans le nord du Nigeria au début du XX^{ème} siècle, le terme *boko* fut employé dans un sens péjoratif pour désigner ce nouveau système éducatif. Par extension sémantique, *boko* en vint à prendre son sens actuel de hausa écrit en alphabet romain, et d’éducation occidentale en général.

Boko Haram is well-known as the name by which the northern Nigerian fundamentalist Islamist group is referred. It is composed of the words *haram* (from Arabic), which means unlawful or forbidden according to Islamic code, and *boko* (pronounced [bóokò]), which refers primarily to secular Western education as well as to Hausa written in the Roman alphabet as opposed to Arabic script. It is commonly asserted that *boko* is derived from the English word **book**. This widespread view is incorrect.

A. Statements by Journalists and Political Commentators regarding Boko Haram

In trying to explain to their readers the meaning of Boko Haram, numerous journalists, analysts, official report writers, social and political commentators, and lay contributors to

online blogs state that *boko* comes from **book**. Here are typical examples (with italics and bold added by me).¹

(a) Wikipedia, the world's most widely consulted source for (often unreliable) general information on multitudes of topics, has a stub-article on "Boko Alphabet".² It states, "*Boko* (or bookoo, from English '**book**') is a Latin alphabet used to write the Hausa language."

(b) The National Counterterrorism Center of the U.S. government article on Boko Haram and other Terrorist Groups states,³ "The group is popularly known in Nigerian and Western media as 'Boko Haram', which means 'Western education is forbidden' (the word *boko* is a holdover from the colonial English **book**)."

(c) In a Special Report (no. 308) published by the United States Institute of Peace (an organization described as an "independent, nonpartisan conflict management center created by Congress to prevent and mitigate international conflict without resorting to violence"),⁴ Andrew Walker writes (p. 7): "The group Jama'atu Ahlus-Sunnah Lidda'Awati Wal Jihad, known the world over as Boko Haram, is an extremist Islamic sect.... Boko Haram is...against those in northern Nigeria known as '*yan boko*'. *Yan boko* is literally translated as 'child of the **book**'."⁵

(d) Gary H. Johnson, Jr., the author of an article that appeared in *The Victory Institute* [a Christian Veteran's support organization], provides the following explanation:⁶ "Boko Haram is derived from the native Hausa term '*boko*' which means '**book**' but refers to western education in general."

(e) Contributing to the Nigerian periodical *Vanguard*, Foluso Ajibulu, a commentator on national issues, writes the following:⁷ "*Boko* in Hausa language means **book** and Haram abomination. Simply, this translates to, **book** is abomination."

(f) In the blog AJUJU, where the question "What is the meaning of Boko Haram?" is posed, Aliyu Manga, who identifies himself as a Hausa-speaking person from Kano, provides the following clarification:⁸ "*Boko*...is a localized Hausa word from the English word '**Book**' meaning western form of education."

(g) In a recent entry on the *Atlas Shrugs* website, Pamela Geller, an extremely conservative (and controversial) anti-Muslim ideologue, briefly comments,⁹ “Boko Haram means ‘**books** bad’, or Western education is sinful.”

(h) J. Peter Pham is a well-known political science professor, policy center director, and prolific columnist who writes widely on issues relating to Islam and West Africa. In an interesting paper on Boko Haram, published by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Pham makes an assertion about the meaning of *boko* and its relation to **book** as if it were a fact: “The name Boko Haram is itself derived from the combination of the Hausa word for **book** (as in ‘book learning’), *boko*, and the Arabic term *haram*, which designates those things which are ungodly or sinful” (p. 2).¹⁰

(i) Even Adam Nossiter, the respected West African bureau chief for the *New York Times*, relates *boko* to **book**. In an article on Boko Haram, he writes:¹¹ “The group’s very name is a rallying cry against schools — ‘*Boko*’ means ‘**book**’ or ‘Western learning’ in the Hausa language, and ‘haram’ is Arabic for forbidden.”

(j) In a scholarly publication on Boko Haram written by Abimboja Adesoji, a lecturer in the Department of History at Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria, the purported relationship of *boko* and **book**, which is found so often in journalistic works, is still espoused:¹² “‘Boko Haram’ is derived from a combination of the Hausa word *boko* meaning ‘**book**’ and the Arabic word *haram* which is something forbidden, ungodly or sinful. Literally, it means ‘**book** is sinful’, but its deeper meaning is that Western education is sinful, sacrilegious or ungodly and should therefore be forbidden” (p. 100).

(k) Finally, in a very recent blog posting,¹³ Alex Thurston, a Ph.D. student in Religious Studies at Northwestern University, makes the following observation regarding the etymology of *boko*: “Some say that ‘*Boko*’ is a corruption of the English ‘**book**’, which would link the word strongly to educational contexts.” Drawing on information found in my Hausa–English dictionary,¹⁴ Thurston goes on to mention a more interesting, but usually neglected, possibility, one that touches on the correct analysis: “Others say the word is of Hausa origin and means fake or deceitful, and appears in contexts other than just education.”

B. Statements in the Scholarly Linguistic Literature

The issue of Boko Haram aside, linguists specializing in the Hausa language have long related English **book** with Hausa *boko* in the sense of western education and the Hausa orthographic system built on the Roman alphabet. Here are some ten examples.

(1) The first documentation of *boko* that I have come across, although the word undoubtedly already existed in the language much earlier, is in G. P. Bargery's monumental Hausa dictionary dating from 1934.¹⁵ His *boko* entry (pp. 117-118) contains eleven meanings, most of which denote things or actions having to do with fraudulence, sham, or inauthenticity. In his definition 11, he indicates that *boko* is an English loanword and, moreover, that it means **book**. Mixed in with the sham entries, he also documents the use of *boko* in the phrase *karatun boko* (lit. reading/education of *boko*) 'Western/non-Islamic education' and *makarantar boko* (lit. school of *boko*) 'Western/non-Islamic school'.

(2) In R. C. Abraham's excellent dictionary,¹⁶ which was published fifteen years after Bargery's groundbreaking work, the *boko* entry (p. 109) is divided into two parts. The first definition is "deceit, fraud", expanded by further subentries and examples. In the second definition we find "Eng. **book**" with "*karatun boko* secular education" and "*makarantar boko* Gov't controlled school" given as related examples.

Although subsequent scholars have followed Bargery and Abraham in treating *boko* as having COME FROM **book**, there is seldom further mention of *boko* as actually DENOTING **book**. As indicated above, journalists and political commentators remain uninformed and continue to repeat misinformation when it comes to the essential meaning of *boko*. By contrast, scholars working in the field of Hausa language and linguistics seem to understand that *boko* and **book** do not refer to the same thing. For example, looking at six quite disparate dictionaries that have been published over the past 35 years (including two monolingual Hausa-Hausa dictionaries),¹⁷ none of which provides etymological information, one finds that the definitions of *boko* are all quite similar and, moreover, that there is no mention of **book** as a possible meaning of *boko*. When it comes to the assertion that *boko* MEANS **book**, Bargery and Abraham, both of whom are usually remarkably reliable, were simply mistaken.

(3) In a contribution to a non-technical book intended for the general public, Lüpke and Jaggar (p. 64) say the following about Hausa:¹⁸ “The language was originally written in Arabic script [*ajami*], an orthographic system still used in Qur’anic schools.... Although most Hausas still learn the Arabic script as young children, *ajami* is gradually being replaced by a modified version of the Roman alphabet referred to as ‘*boko*’ (probably from the English ‘**book**’).”

(4) In a wonderful memoir of Alhaji Mahmudu Koki, a Hausa mallam who worked closely with Bargery in the preparation of his classic dictionary, Skinner (p. 153) adds a footnote to explain Mahmudu’s use of the term *boko*:¹⁹ “*Boko* is a pejorative, perhaps derived from the English ‘**book**’, but also meaning ‘sham, artificiality, imitation’. It was applied derisively—in the early days at any rate—to any form of western education.”

(5) Two decades later, Skinner provides an entry for *boko* in his Hausa etymological dictionary, in which he again relates the word to ‘**book**’, but with implicit reservation.²⁰ The entry (p. 24) reads: “*boko* false ‘not genuine, non-Arabic writing, non-Muslim education, *book’ ? < Eng. **book** (which was felt to symbolize Western education).”

(6) In my own comprehensive Hausa reference grammar, I essentially followed Skinner regarding the etymology of *boko*, also incorporating his lack of certainty by the use of a question mark (p. 726).²¹ “Hausa has two writing systems. One of them, termed *boko* (< from English ‘**book**’?) is based on the Roman alphabet.... The other, termed *ajami*, is based on the Arabic alphabet.”

With some scholars, the “perhaps”, “probably”, or question mark has disappeared and the statement has become an unqualified assertion regarding the etymological relationship of *boko* to **book**. The following are typical examples.

(7) In describing the introduction of Hausa written in Roman script (*boko*) at the beginning of the 20th century by the colonial officer Hanns Vischer, Baldi²² adds a note (p. 23, footnote 38) in which he states without qualification that *boko* derives from English **book**.

(8) Ekkehard Wolff, one of Germany's leading African linguists, twice adopts the etymology of *boko* as coming from **book**. In an article in a UNESCO-sponsored conference on language standardization, he writes (p. 24),²³ "The Roman [orthographic] system...became known in Hausa as *boko* (from English 'book')." Second, in his major grammar of Hausa,²⁴ he states (p. 19) that the Roman-based writing system "wird im Hausa, in Abgrenzung vom *ajami*, *boko* genannt (abgeleitet von Engl. 'book')." "

(9) Jaggar's statement about *boko* in his reference grammar is equally unqualified (p. 698):²⁵ "However, *ajami* has been gradually superseded by the Romanized orthography *boko* (< Eng. 'book'), introduced by the British colonial authorities after the establishment of colonial rule at the beginning of the 20th century."

(10) One also finds a factual statement about the relationship of *boko* to **book** in an excellent overview of British colonial language policy by the historian John Philips. He writes (p. 57, fn 8.):²⁶ "The term *boko* for Romanized Hausa derives from the English word 'book'."

What is striking (and disconcerting) about the above ten examples is how many linguists specializing in Hausa (myself included!) naively accepted the idea of *boko* coming from **book** without critically examining the claim. We were all wrong. This is not a matter of an occasional reporter or amateur linguist going astray. This is a systematic error that we professional Hausa specialists have perpetuated over the years and thus we deserve real blame for having provided other scholars and the general public with misleading information.

C. The Correct Answer

The correct answer was implicitly presented by Liman Muhammad, a Hausa scholar from northern Nigeria, some 45 years ago.²⁷ In his study of neologisms and lexical enrichment in Hausa, Muhammad (pp. 8-10) gives a list of somewhat over 200 loanwords borrowed from English into Hausa in the area of "Western Education and Culture". Significantly, *boko* is not included. Rather one finds *boko* in his category for western concepts expressed in Hausa by SEMANTIC EXTENSION of pre-existent Hausa words. According to Muhammad, *boko* originally meant "Something (an idea or object) that

involves a fraud or any form of deception” and, by extension, the noun denoted “Any reading or writing which is not connected with Islam. The word is usually preceded with ‘Karatun’ [lit. writing/studying of]. ‘Karatun Boko’ therefore means the Western type of Education.” To appreciate the semantic extension, one needs to understand that Western education introduced by the British colonial government in the early 1900s was not viewed with approbation. As compared with traditional Koranic learning, which was highly valued, western education was viewed as lacking in substance and a fraudulent deception being imposed upon the Hausa population by a conquering European force. Rather than send their own children to the British government schools, as demanded by the British, Hausa emirs and other elites often shifted the obligation onto their slaves and other subservients. The elite had no desire to send their children to school where the values and traditions of Hausa and Islamic traditional culture would be undermined and their children would be turned into *’yan boko*, i.e., “(would-be) westerners”. The semantic development was NOT

- **book** → *boko* → western education → sham, fraud, etc., BUT RATHER

- *boko* sham, fraud → western education (including the writing of Hausa in Roman script).

As mentioned earlier, the meaning of *boko* never actually went so far as to indicate a **book** as such. For that, the well-established and non-pejorative word *littafi* ‘book’ remained, and still remains, fully operative.

There are various pieces of evidence that support the view that *boko* not only never meant **book**, but could not have come from **book**. No one factor is crucial in and of itself, but they add up to the same conclusion, namely that the resemblance between *boko* and **book** is purely coincidental and of no historical linguistic import.

(i) If English **book** had been the source for Hausa *boko* [bóokò],²⁸ given the pronunciation of the English word, where the orthographic oo is pronounced [U], it would have been adopted in Hausa as something like [búukùu] and certainly NOT as bóokò (rhyming with English solo) with a phonetic [oo] in both syllables. By contrast, compare the Hausa loanword kúukùu ‘a cook’, which comes from the English word ‘cook’, or úulùu ‘wool, wool thread’, borrowed from English ‘wool’. Orthographic oo in English words tends to be borrowed into Hausa as [oo] only when pronounced that way in English. Here one can cite

such examples as hòotóo (< /fòotóo/) ‘photograph’, cf. Eng. ‘photo’, and hòolóo (< /fòolóo/) ‘polo’, from English ‘polo’.

(ii) The word *boko* with the ‘sham’ type meanings has a related morphological form marked by reduplication, short final vowels, and a set low-low-high-low tone pattern, namely bòokò-bóokò ‘deceptive, fraudulent’ (but without any of the western/secular connotations). This pattern is found in Hausa with various other words, e.g., gòorà-góorà ‘type of grass’ < góorà ‘bamboo’; kàusà-kàusà ‘a small plant with leaves like sandpaper’ < káus(h)í ‘coarseness’. (In this construction, if the basic noun ends in /i/, its reduplicated counterpart ends in /a/.) This reduplicated construction is unproductive and limited to a small set of words, many of which are now obsolete, thereby indicating that *boko* must be an old Hausa word with considerable ancestry in the language and not a recent loanword.

(iii) In the same vein, *boko* occurs with the word *biri* ‘monkey’ as part of a fixed compound *biri-boko* (lit. monkey-fraud). The exact meaning of this compound is hard to articulate, but Hausa speakers concur that it refers to something that appears to be important or reliable, but is not, something that looks good on the outside, but is bad on the inside, something that is empty or hollow, but with deception implied, something that is unreal, fake, deceptive, phony, i.e., a “smokescreen”. Bargery gives the following example (p. 117): “kada ka yi mini biri-boko” [lit. don’t you do to me *biri-boko*] which he translates as “Do not try to mislead, hoodwink me.” That *biri-boko* is found in Bargery’s dictionary, which although published in 1934 reflects the Hausa language as it existed a good decade before that, is a good indication that the compound is of considerable age in the language and hardly a recent creation dating from British colonial times.

(iv) If the original meaning of *boko* had been **book**, which then came to apply to western education and western schools and then by metaphorical semantic extension to things viewed as sham, inauthentic, or meaningless, one would have expected that the order of definitions in Bargery’s dictionary, which is the first recording of the word that we have come across so far, would reflect this. But the opposite is the case. Bargery (pp. 117-118) presents eleven definitions for *boko*. Eight of them, numbers 1 through 6, plus 8 plus 10, relate to the basic

sham/deception meaning. For example, his first definition reads, “(a) Doing anything to create impression that one is better off, or that thing is of better quality or larger in amount than is the case.... (b) Anything so treated.” Definition 7 gives *karatun boko* “any reading or education that is not connected with Islam” and definition 9 gives *makarantar boko* “any Government or Native Administration School...where reading, etc. in Roman characters is taught.” The only definition that is marked as being a borrowing from English is the last one, number 11, a one-word entry: “11. (Eng.) **Book**.” Interestingly definitions 8 and 10, which refer to western education and schools, are not marked as “Eng.” nor are they entered after the “**book**” definition, but rather follow upon the numerous sham/deceit entries.

(v) It is perhaps worth pointing out that *boko* in the sense of something western or secular tended not to be used as an independent noun, like English **book** (as is now often done), but was almost always used as a modifier. Typical examples include *karatun boko* ‘western education’ (lit. education of sham/unimportance) (as opposed to Koranic education, which was viewed as significant in the Hausa and Islamic religious context), *makarantar boko* ‘government school’ (lit. school of sham/unimportance), and *rubutun boko* ‘Hausa written in Roman script’ (as opposed to *rubutun ajami* ‘Hausa written in Arabic script’).

(vi) Finally, if one stopped to think about it, one should have realized that it would have been curious indeed for Hausa to have borrowed the English word **book** (in the form *boko*) and have it come to represent despised Western education. In the first place Hausa has long had its own word for book (*littafi*), which was borrowed at a very much earlier period from Arabic. This word was already well established and fully integrated in the language at a time considerably prior to the British takeover of northern Nigeria and the opening of colonial government schools in Kano at the beginning of the 20th century. Thus one finds *littafi* already included in J. F. Schön’s early vocabulary (1843) and his larger dictionary (1876).²⁹ Second, given the high respect traditionally accorded to writing and learning in Hausa culture and the importance of books (typically Arabic books) in Hausaland in the 19th century and perhaps earlier,³⁰ it is unlikely that *boko* would have become a pejorative term so fast, if at all, if its fundamental meaning had been ‘**book**’.

D. Conclusion

Hausa *boko* does not mean ‘book’ and it is not derived etymologically from the English word **book**. The phonetic and orthographic similarity between the two is purely coincidental. They are what the French call “faux amis” (“false friends”). The accidental similarity in spelling between the two words has no historical significance other than having served to lead us astray, where “us” includes political and social commentators with a modicum of knowledge about the Hausa language, as well as a host of well-regarded Hausa linguistic experts. We were all hoodwinked. Whereas the idea that *boko* came from **book** looked plausible from the outside, it was really shallow on the inside. In other words, we were all victims of *biri-boko* (‘monkey-fraud’)! Despite the many assertions regarding the etymology of Hausa *boko* reported above, the fact is that *boko* is a native Hausa word, originally meaning sham, fraud, inauthenticity, and such which came to represent western education and learning, and NOT a loanword coming from English **book**. Hopefully, this paper will have set the record straight and we can be done with this monkey business once and for all.

NOTES

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¹ In this paper, I shall write Hausa examples using standard orthography, in which tone and vowel length are not indicated, regardless of the transcription used by the cited authors themselves unless the discussion directly addresses phonological issues. Thus I shall use *boko* throughout rather than bóokòo or bókò.

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boko_alphabet (2013).

³ http://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/boko_haram.html (ca. 2011 or 2012).

⁴ Walker, Andrew, “What is Boko Haram?” <http://www.usip.org/publications/what-boko-haram> (June 2012).

⁵ The question of **book** aside, this literal translation is unacceptable. *Yan boko*, which should be /ʔyan boko/ with a glottalized [ʔy], is the plural of *ɗan boko* (masculine) and *ʔyar boko* (feminine) and thus should be ‘children’, not ‘child’, of the book. But even this is a poor, albeit commonly found, translation since the formative *ɗan/ʔyar/ʔyan*, although related to the words for child/children, doesn’t mean child/children, but rather ‘a person associated with, owning, or having characteristics of’ the noun that follows, e.g., *ɗan jarida* ‘newspaperman’ (lit. person (m.) of newspaper); *ʔyar kallo* ‘female spectator’ (lit. person (f.) of observing); *ʔyan kasa* ‘citizens’ (lit. people of the country).

⁶ Johnson, Gary H. Jr., “The Boko Haram phenomenon”, *The Victory Institute* <http://victoryinstitute.net/2012/09/04/the-boko-haram-phenomenon/> (September 4, 2012).

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- ⁷ Ajibulu, Foluso, “On the trail of Boko Haram”, <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/07/on-the-trail-of-boko-haram/> (July 25, 2011).
- ⁸ <http://www.ajuju.net/cgi-bin/page.pl?b=anything&bn=2&m=4> (July 26, 2012).
- ⁹ http://atlasshrugs2000.typepad.com/atlas_shrugs/ (November 28, 2012).
- ¹⁰ Pham, J. Peter, “Boko Haram’s evolving threat”, *Africa Security Brief*, no. 20, <http://www.ndu.edu/press/lib/pdf/Africa-Security-Brief/ASB-20.pdf> (April, 2012).
- ¹¹ Nossiter, Adam, “Wielding fire, Islamists target Nigeria schools”, *New York Times* <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/26/world/africa/in-nigeria-boko-haram-targets-schools.html?pagewanted=all> (March 25, 2012).
- ¹² Adesoji, Abimbola, “The Boko Haram uprising and Islamic revivalism in Nigeria”, *Africa Spectrum* 45 (2): 95-108 (2010).
- ¹³ Thurston, Alex, “Boko Haram: What’s in a name?” *Sahel Blog*, <http://sahelblog.wordpress.com/2013/01/07/boko-haram-whats-in-a-name/> (January 7, 2013).
- ¹⁴ Newman, Paul, *A Hausa–English Dictionary*. New Haven: Yale University Press (2007).
- ¹⁵ Bargery, G. P., *A Hausa–English Dictionary and English–Hausa Vocabulary*. London: Oxford University Press (1934).
- ¹⁶ Abraham, R. C., and Mai Kano, *Dictionary of the Hausa Language*. London: Crown Agents for the Colonies (1949). Abraham’s dictionary is a cross between an (unauthorized) revised second edition of Bargery and an improved work that is different enough from Bargery to be considered a valuable new dictionary in its own right. For an analysis of the relationship between Bargery’s and Abraham’s dictionaries, see Newman, Roxana Ma, “Lexicographic method in R. C. Abraham’s *Hausa Dictionary*”, in *Papers in Honour of R. C. Abraham (1890-1963)*, ed. by Philip J. Jaggar, pp. 79-97. London: SOAS (1992).
- ¹⁷ See Newman, Paul, and Roxana Ma Newman, *Modern Hausa–English Dictionary: Sabon Kamus na Hausa zuwa Turanci*. Ibadan & Zaria: University Press (Nigeria) (1977); Herms, Irmtraud, *Wörterbuch Hausa–Deutsch*. Leipzig: VEB Verlag Enzyklopädie (1987); Garba, Calvin Y., *Kamus na Harshen Hausa* [Dictionary of the Hausa Language]. Ibadan: Evans Brothers (Nigeria) (1990); Awde, Nicholas, *Hausa–English English–Hausa Dictionary*. New York: Hippocrene Books (1996); *Kamusun Hausa na Jami’ar Bayero* [The Bayero University Hausa Dictionary]. Kano: Cibiyar Nazarin Harsunan Nijeriya [CSNL], Bayero University Kano (2006); Newman, Paul, *A Hausa–English Dictionary*. New Haven: Yale University Press (2007).
- ¹⁸ Lüpke, Friederike, and Philip J. Jaggar, “North and West African languages”, in *One Thousand Languages*, ed. by Peter K. Austin, pp. 60-85. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press (2008).
- ¹⁹ Skinner, Neil (trans. and ed.), *Alhaji Mahmudu Koki: Kano Malam*. Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press (1977).
- ²⁰ Skinner, Neil, *Hausa Comparative Dictionary*. (Westafrikanische Studien: Frankfurter Beiträge zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte, 11) Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe (1996).
- ²¹ Newman, Paul, *The Hausa Language: An Encyclopedic Reference Grammar*. New Haven: Yale University Press (2000).
- ²² Baldi, Sergio, *Manuale propedeutico di hausa con glossario e lessico concettuale di base* [Preparatory manual of Hausa with glossary and basic conceptual vocabulary]. Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, Dipartimento di Studi e Ricerche su Africa e Paesi Arabi (1989).

²³ Wolff, H. Ekkehard, "Standardization and varieties of written Hausa," in *Standardization of National Languages*, ed. by Utta von Gleich and Ekkehard Wolff, pp. 21-32. Hamburg: UNESCO-Institute for Education (1991).

²⁴ Wolff, H. Ekkehard, *Referenzgrammatik des Hausa*. (Hamburger Beiträge zur Afrikanistik, 2) Münster & Hamburg: Lit (1993).

²⁵ Jaggar, Philip J., *Hausa*. (London Oriental and African Language Library, 7) Amsterdam: John Benjamins (2001).

²⁶ Philips, John Edward, "Hausa in the twentieth century: An overview", *Sudanic Africa* 15: 55-84 (2004).

²⁷ Muhammad, Liman, *Hausa in the Modern World*. (Occasional Paper no. 8) Zaria: Department of Languages, Ahmadu Bello University (1968).

²⁸ In presenting Hausa words so as to show pronunciation, double vowels indicate long vowels; an acute accent indicates high tone, e.g., á; and a grave accent indicates low tone, e.g., à. With long vowels, the tone is only marked on the first of the double vowels, e.g. áa or àa.

²⁹ Schön, James Frederick, *Vocabulary of the Haussa Language. Phrases, and Specimens of Translations, to which are prefixed, the Grammatical Elements of the Haussa Language*. London: Church Missionary Society (1843); *Dictionary of the Hausa Language, with appendices of Hausa literature*. London: Church Missionary House (1876).

³⁰ See Last, Murray, "The book in the Sokoto Caliphate", in *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, ed. by Shamil Jeppie and Souleymane Bachir Diagne, pp. 135-164. Cape Town: HSRC Press in association with CODESRIA (2008). Note his interesting observation about the significance of books in West Africa, which would have included Hausaland (p. 138): "The market for books in pre-colonial West Africa was potentially huge among scholars. Books were often carried around the region on camel back by Tuareg merchants, similar to these men who traverse the desert on camel-back to trade their wares."