

Inter-section Interaction in Hausa Proverbs: Aspects of Poetic Balance and Cohesion

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1. Introduction

This study, which is an expansion of my earlier analysis (2002), claims that sections of Hausa proverbs closely interact with each other through varied types of correspondence of identical linguistic elements across sections. The interaction eventually produces inter-section balance and/or cohesion. Linguistic characteristics such as ellipsis, inversion, and genitivation can also be considered within the context of ‘balance’ and ‘cohesion’. The notion of ‘interaction’ in this article is extended to include repetition among certain divisions within a single section, i.e. intra-section interaction. Theoretically,

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there are numerous ways in which inter-section interaction can be realised. In the following examples the double slash ‘//’ inserted between sections indicates that the number of syllables on either side of it is equal, whereas the single slash ‘/’ means that it is unequal and hence the sections concerned are incompletely balanced against each other.¹

- (1) 1. ‘quantitative’
- a. *Ido ba ya mutuwa // tozali ya tashe shi.* (7//7) - complete balance -
‘The eye cannot die, the antimony awakens it.’
- b. *Da ruwan ciki / kan ja na rijiya.* (4/5) - incomplete balance -
‘With the water of the stomach one can draw the water of the well.’
2. ‘quantitative’ + ‘phonological’
- a. *Giwa ba ta da cizō // hannun nan a ke tsorō.* (7//7)
‘Elephants do not bite, it is their trunk that people are afraid of.’
- b. *Mai-gado ya so kwana / mai-tabarma sai shi nade.* (7/8)
‘The owner of the bed wants to sleep, the man with the mat must roll it up.’
3. ‘quantitative’ + ‘syntactic’
- Ana ga doki // kana ga kura.* (5//5)
‘One sees a horse, but you see dust.’
4. ‘quantitative’ + ‘semantic’
- Rijiya ta bayar / guga ta hana.* (6/5)
‘The well gives, but bucket refuses.’
(*bayar* vs. *hana* ‘give’ vs. ‘refuse’)
5. ‘quantitative’ + ‘lexical’
- Sai da riga // kasa riga.* (4//4)
‘Selling a gown, lacking a gown.’

¹ I use the following abbreviations in the glosses: 1, 2, 3: 1st, 2nd, 3rd person; CONT: continuous; COP: copula; DO: direct object pronoun; FEM: feminine; FOC: focus; GEN: genitive linker; HABT: habitual; IND: independent pronoun; MASC: masculine; N: noun; NEG: negative marker; NP: nominal phrase; PERF: perfect; POSS: possessive pronoun; SG: singular.

6. ‘quantitative’ + ‘phonological (section-final)’ + ‘syntactic’
Allah ya gyara rimi // ceḏiya ta bar fushi. (7//7)
 ‘God repaired the silk-cotton tree and the fig-tree ceased being angry.’
7. ‘quantitative’ + ‘phonological (section-final)’ + ‘semantic’
An bai wa kura // jiran akuya. (5//5)
 ‘One gave the hyena a goat to take care of.’
 (*kura* vs. *akuya* ‘hyena’ vs. ‘goat’)
8. ‘quantitative’ + ‘phonological (section-initial)’ + ‘syntactic’ + ‘semantic’ + ‘lexical (section-final)’
A ḏauki kanwar baki // a ba awakin baki. (7//7)
 ‘Take the potash from the visitor and give it to the visitor’s goats.’
 (*ḏauki* vs. *ba* ‘take’ vs. ‘give’)
9. ‘quantitative’ + ‘phonological (section-final)’ + ‘syntactic’ + ‘semantic’ + ‘lexical (section-initial)’
Laifin babba rowa // laifin yaro kiwa. (6//6)
 ‘The fault of an adult is stinginess, the fault of a boy is refusal.’
 (*babba* vs. *yaro* ‘adult’ vs. ‘boy’)

Though none of these, except for ‘quantitative’, constitutes a single ruling tendency responsible for organisation, they deserve to attract one’s attention because they are observed with enough frequency to justify their position in the study of poetic features. A proverb may display only a single feature (e.g. ‘quantitative’) or a combination of two or more features. However it is clear that the interaction, taking a variety of forms, does exist in the overwhelming majority of Hausa proverbs. Irregular repetition between sections, which, being outside the scope of this current study, will be hinted at in passing, can also support this argument.

II. Quantitative Interaction

In Hausa proverbs quantitative division often coincides with grammatical division. The proverb *Ana ga doki, kana ga kura* ‘One sees a horse but you see dust’ can be divided into two halves with equal number of syllables: *Ana ga doki* (five syllables) and *kana ga kura* (five syllables). This division is congruous with the grammatical division: the two sections constitute independent clauses and are in a coordinate relationship with one another. Let us consider a simple sentence proverb then: *Tsoro na daji, kunya ta gida* ‘Fear in the forest, shame in the house’. Quantitatively this proverb can be divided into two halves: *Tsoro na daji* (five syllables) and *kunya ta gida* (five syllables). Also grammatically each of the two halves is identifiable and can stand parallel against the other. We use the term ‘completely balanced bipartite structure’ for these cases. (For the various ways in which the bipartite structure of Hausa proverbs is achieved, see Jang 1999.) This article will contain a substantial body of proverbs that are similarly exactly bipartite in their form. In the following examples we only find quantitative interaction and fail to see positional or symmetrical interaction.

- (2) a. *Halalin gun' dā // itacen gawo. (5//5)*
‘The lawful food of woodborer is the large thorny acacia tree.’
- b. *Zama da mai-zakanko // shi kan kawo dāndāna. (7//7)*
‘Staying with somebody with sugar brings a chance of tasting it.’
- c. *Makafo ya rasa ido // ya ce ido yana wari. (8//8)*
‘The blind man has no eyes, he says the eye smells.’
- d. *Da ka yi aiki da mai-jego // gara ka ci tuwo da ita. (9//9)*
‘Better to eat food with a nursing mother than to work with her.’
- e. *In giwa ta karye itace // zomo kuwa ya karye datsi. (9//9)*
‘If an elephant breaks a tree, a hare also breaks grass.’

However, the bisectional division according to quantity does not always

coincide with the bisectional division according to grammatical relationship. Consider the following proverb:

- (3) *Kome nisan dare, gari ya waye.*
'However long the night, morning will come.'

The above proverb sentence consists of two grammatical sections correlated to each other: a concession (*Kome nisan dare* 'However long the night') and a conclusion (*gari ya waye* 'morning will come'). The grammatical division here is incongruous with the quantitative division since the concession has six syllables whereas the conclusion has five. We also find cases where the second part contains more syllables than the first. It is quite often the case that a single slash (/) is inserted between sections, which means that the sections on either side of the slash are 'incompletely balanced' against each other:

- (4) a. *Ka tsare kanka / daga dukan kyashi.* (5/6)
'Protect yourself from all jealousy.'
b. *Gara roko / da sata.* (4/3)
'Rather begging than theft.'

III. Phonological Interaction

Phonological interaction means phonological correspondence, which, as a type of repetition, functions as a poetic device whereby certain aspects of regular or symmetrical occurrences of sounds or sound sequences embedded within the flow of language are foregrounded for aesthetic effect. An initial categorisation of phonological interaction is in terms of 'positional' vs. 'symmetrical'. For an interaction to be called 'positional', there must be, apart from identical elements repeated, patterns of regularity in the

organisation of sections as shown in 5, where the constant element /wa/ comes at the end of each section.

(5) *a mugun rawa / gara kin takawa.* (5/6)

‘Better refusing to get up than bad dancing.’

The significance of positional interaction lies in that the element of identity achieves inter-section cohesion whereas the combination of identity and regularity achieves inter-section balance. Cohesion can also work independently from balance. Symmetrical interaction and cohesion will be discussed in section 6.

(1) Positional Interaction 1 (section-initial interaction)

Though section-final interaction greatly exceeds section-initial interaction in the frequency of occurrence and displays many more interesting features, we will consider the latter first for the convenience of discussion. Three sub-types of section-initial interaction can be identified:

- (6) a. syllabic interaction
- b. consonant interaction
- c. lexical interaction

Syllabic interaction comes from the regular repetition of the same sequence of consonant-vowel in section-initial position. A most striking feature concerning this is that the repetition of impersonal pronouns often bring syllabic interaction. In 7, all examples of which are co-ordinate sentence proverbs, the same impersonal pronoun appears in both section-initial positions. Note that all Hausa words written with an initial vowel are pronounced with the glottal stop /ʔ/, though it is not marked conventionally.

- (7) a. *A sayar da rai // a samu girma.* (5//5)
 ‘Let one sell (his) soul and let one achieve greatness.’
- b. *A shekara ana azumi // a kurkure da tafarnuwa.* (9//9)
 ‘Let one spend a year fasting and let one rinse (his) mouth with garlic.’
- c. *A ki maras da // a zauna da wa?* (5//5)
 ‘Let one reject a person without a child, then with whom is one going to stay?’
- d. *A uyi maraya da rigar buzu / a gan shi da ta uarfè.* (10//7)
 ‘Let one refuse an orphan with a skin coat, one day one will see him in armor.’

In certain cases displaying syllabic interaction due to the repetition of /’a/, one is an impersonal pronoun and the other is a preposition:

- (8) a. *A rakumi / a kan yi amale.* (4/6)
 in camel / one HABT make strong.male.camel
 ‘In the family of camels, one gets a strong male camel.’
- b. *A bar kaza / a cikin gashinta.* (4/6)
 ‘Let one leave the hen in its feathers.’
- c. *A sabo da kama / a kan ci kasa.* (6/5)
 ‘Because of the roasting of the undried beans in an earth oven, one eats earth.’
- d. *A cikin bakar tukunya / a kan fitar da farin tuwo.* (8/9)
 ‘From a black pot one takes out white porridge.’

As for 8b, two varieties were recorded: *A bar kaza / cikin gashinta* (4/5) and *A bar kaza / a cikin gashinta* (4/6). The only difference between the two is that the latter contains the preposition (’)a ‘in’ in the second section whereas the former does not. A possible interpretation of this may be: in *A bar kaza / a cikin gashinta* (4/6), a phonological balance based on section-

initial interaction is foregrounded at the cost of quantitative balance, and vice versa in *A bar kaza / cikin gashinta* (4/5). As for 8c, it is the only case available, where the preposition (')*a* goes together with the adjunctive phrase *sabo da* 'because of'. It seems that its appearance closely relates to the intersection phonological interaction. In contrast to this is the absence of the preposition in 9.

(9) *Garin da babu dogo // gajere ma dogo ne.* (7//7)

'(In) the town where there is no tall man, a dwarf is a tall man.'

Here, the demand for the deletion of the preposition (')*a* is based on the same reasoning. Its absence before *Gari* 'town' achieves positional interaction: *Ga* // *ga*

Other monosyllabic items responsible for section-initial interaction are *da* 'hypothetical condition: if X then Y', *in* 'non-hypothetical condition: if, when', and *ga* 'here it is'. Some representative examples are given in 10 below.

(10) a. *Da gabaruwa tamani ne // da ba a bar wa majema ba.* (9//9)

'Had the large acacia tree been so expensive, one would not have left (the skin) to the tanner.'

b. *Da kunne ya ji / da jiki ya tsira.* (5/6)

'Had the ear heard bad news, the body would have escaped.'

c. *In ka kwana daki daya da karambani // in ba ka taɓa shi ba, ba zai taɓa ka ba.* (13//13)

'When you sleep together with a meddlesome person in the same room, if you do not touch him he will not touch you.'

d. *In ta yi ruwa rijiya / in ba ta yi ruwa ba shadda.* (8/9)

'If it produces water (it is) a well, if it doesn't produce water (it is) a pit latrine.'

Section-initial syllabic interaction is not commonly observed in proverbs whose sections begin with different polysyllabic words. However, there is one form of interaction: the monosyllabic /mai-/ and /ma-/ are commonly attached to nouns to form the meaning of ‘the possessor of-’ or ‘the doer of-’, and in a fair number of proverbs, both sections are initiated by words containing one or other of these morphemes as a prefix:

- (11) a. *Mai-gado ya so kwana / mai-tabarma sai shi naɗe.* (7/8)
 ‘The owner of the bed wants to sleep, the man with the mat rolls it up.’
- b. *Masha ruwa // magirmi ne.* (4/4)
 ‘One who drinks water is one who grows.’
- c. *Mai-haƙoɾi ke sha’awar fure // mai-dasori ya duba da ido.*
 (10//10)
 ‘The man with teeth is looking for tobacco-blossoms, the toothless man only looks on.’
- d. *Manomu ku dena fariya / maganin ciyawa rani.* (9/8)
 ‘Farmers, stop showing off, the remedy for grass is the dry season.’

In addition to /ma(i)-/based one, the negative tense marker *ba* can also be involved in producing section-initial syllabic interaction. In the following examples either of the sections starts with it.

- (12) a. *Bakin da Allah ya tsaga // ba ya hana shi abinci.* (8//8)
 ‘The mouth that God cut, He won’t deprive of food.’
- b. *Ba na kunya shagiri // barantana mai-gemu.* (7//7)
 ‘(If) I am not ashamed of the light-whiskered one, how much less am I of the beard one.’

The second type of section-initial interaction is consonant interaction: the correspondence of the same consonant with the vowels immediately following differing from each other. For this type we may use the term

‘section-initial alliteration’. Consonant interaction, however, is far less frequent than any other type of interaction, though we can see that the glottal stop /ʔ/ plays an important role here. Plosive sounds, particularly the voiceless velar plosives /k/ and /k̥/ also seem to play a certain role. Consonant interaction based on the repetition of other sounds are very rarely found.

(13) a. (ʔ)*In bayan raƙumi ya yi kumburi* // (ʔ)*a bayan jaki a kan yi sakiya*. (11/11)

‘If the camel’s back swells the donkey’s back is lanced.’

b. (ʔ)*Abin da ruwan zafi ya dafa* / (ʔ)*in an haƙura, na sanyi ya dafa*. (10/11)

‘What hot water cooks, if one is patient, cold water can cook.’

c. *Masoyin mutum biyu* / *munafukin dāya ne*. (7//7)

‘A lover of two persons is a hypocrite to one person.’

d. *Kunne na gani* / *ƙaho ya yi nisa*. (5/6)

‘The hyena wants it, can the dog get it?’

In the last example above a shortened form of person-aspect-pronoun *na*, instead of its full form *yana* (3SG.MASC.CONT), appears. This makes the repetition of the sound [n] more immediate in the first section, giving a stronger cohesion to the section.

Section-initial interaction may occur on lexical level too. Lexical interaction tends to be combined with syntactic parallelism. In fact, they are so intimately related to each other that to discuss one in total isolation from the other can be misleading. Proverbs of [N + genitive linker + N] / [N + genitive linker + N]-structure are often characterised by lexical interaction:

(14) a. *Aure-n karuwa* / *aure-n wofi*. (5/4)

marriage - GEN prostitute, marriage-GEN emptiness

‘Marriage with a prostitute, a worthless marriage.’

b. *Bakin noma* // *bakin shuka*. (4//4)

‘The size of a farm, the size of the crop.’

c. *Gwargwaddon wahalarka // gwargwaddon samunka.* (7//7)

‘Great suffering, great success.’

d. *Ran gini // ran zane.* (3//3)

‘The day of building, the day of designing.’

In many of *ya fi* ‘lit. it exceeds’-based proverbs, the nominals on either side of the fulcrum *ya fi*, which are in subject-object relationship, exhibit an identical structural pattern, achieving syntactic parallelism. This often goes together with lexical interaction as seen in 15.

(15) a. *Dan mai-gona //ya fi// Dan mai-gayya.* (4//4)

‘The son of a farmer is greater than the son of a chief laborer.’

b. *Kwana bukka da kudi //ya fi// kwana soro ba wuri.* (7//7)

‘Sleeping in a grass hut with money is better than sleeping in a good house without money.’

Syntactic parallelism can be achieved by the repetition of some common lexemes such as *babu* (= *ba*) ‘there isn’t any’, ‘there aren’t any’, *ga* ‘here it is’, ‘there it is’, etc.:

(16) a. *Babu ciki // babu goyo.* (4//4)

‘No pregnancy, nothing carried on the back.’

b. *Babu maciji // babu sululu.* (5//5)

‘No snake, no slithering.’

In addition to these, there are still many other proverbs where lexical interaction is combined with syntactic parallelism as revealed in the following examples

(17) a. *Hana wani / hana kai.* (4/3)

‘Forbidding another, forbidding yourself.’

b. *Maganin so aure / maganin kiyayya rabuwa.* (6/9)

‘The answer to love is marriage, the answer to hatred is separation.’

c. *Karen da ke yawo // ya fi // karen da ke kwance.* (6//6)

‘The dog who is wandering around is better than the dog who is lying down.’

d. *Rana daya ta barawo // rana goma ta mai-abu.* (8//8)

‘One day for the thief, ten days for the man of possessions.’

(2) Positional Interaction 2 (section-final interaction)

Section-final interaction is functionally similar to section-initial interaction: both types contribute to consolidating the poetic stability of proverbs. Section-final interaction can be further categorised into three subtypes. Due to the nature of the syllabic structure of Hausa, consonant interaction is not observed here.

(18) a. Syllabic interaction

b. Vowel interaction

c. Lexical interaction

Section-final syllabic interaction occurs when an identical syllable appears at the end of both sections. Here grammatical elements also play an important role. We will see this in detail after considering normal syllabic interaction where the elements repeated have no grammatical functions but merely the last syllables of independent words:

(19) a. *Da mummunar rawa // gara kin takawa.* (6//6)

‘Better refusing to get up than bad dancing.’

b. *Gandun sarki // kosa aiki.* (4//4)

‘The chief’s estate, a bellyful of work.’

c. *Tuwon girma / miya tasa nama. (4/6)*

‘The food for the big man, its soup is made with meat.’

d. *Ina ruwan arziki da mugun gashi / sai ana tsiya kan yi fushi. (12/9)*

‘What has property to do with ‘low birth’, only poverty incurs anger.’

Section-final syllabic interaction may depend on grammatical factors. There are three sorts of factors typically involved here: the copula *ne* or *ce*, various types of pronouns, and the negative marker *ba*. First, in the following examples the copula *ne* or *ce* comes at the end of both sections.

(20) a. *Namiji ba daga wajen mace ba ne // amma mace daga wajen namiji ne. (12//12)*

‘Male is not from female but female is from male.’

b. *Gaskiya haske ce / karya walakanci ce. (6/7)*

‘Truth is light, lies are humiliation.’

c. *Horo ba kisa ba ne / gyaran hali ne. (7/5)*

‘Disciplining is not a killing but a repairing of character.’

d. *Kowa na Allah ne / amma damo na mai-gona ne. (6/9)*

‘Everybody is for God, but the monitor-lizard is for the farmer.’

However, each of the following proverbs has a copula at the end of only one section, and the last word of the other section is merely an independent noun whose final syllable or vowel is /-ne/, /-ce/, or /-e/.

(21) a. *Namiji barkono ne / ba shi da kankane. (7/6)*

‘Man is hot pepper, he is never small.’

b. *Kowa ya yi dare ne // baran ubanki ne. (6//6)*

‘Whoever arrives at night is the servant of your father.’

Hausa has various categories of pronouns: suffixed possessive pronouns, independent possessive pronouns, independent pronouns, direct object

pronouns, etc. These pronouns can appear at the end of both sections.

(22) a. *Allah yana taimakon bawansa* // *wanda ya taimaki dan uwansa*.
(10//10)

‘God helps his slave, one who helps his brothers.’

b. *Wanda ka tsoron muryarka* // *yana gurin mutuwaraka*. (8//8)

‘The one who will fear your voice wishes for your death.’

c. *Wanda ya so ku san shi* // *ku yi sanewa da shi*. (7//7)

‘The one who wants you to know him, you should also try to know him.’

d. *Gaskiya gaya naka* // *dukiya bai wa danka*. (7//7)

‘Tell the truth to your man, and give wealth to your child.’

Pronoun-based interaction can be achieved in terms of only a single occurrence of a pronoun. This happens when the last word of one section is an independent word whose final syllable is parallel to the pronoun at the end of the other:

(23) a. *Idan ka ga mai-arziki yana dɛngishi* / *matsiyaci ne ya karyashi*. (13//9)

if you see wealthy.man he.is limping, poor.man is he.did break him

‘If you see a wealthy man limping, it is a poor man who broke him (his leg).’

b. *Sandar da ke hannunka* // *da ita ka ke duka*. (7//7)

‘The stick in your hand, with it you can beat (something).’

Hausa negative constructions generally contain the negative marker *ba*. In sentences of negative perfect or future aspect it not only precedes the subject pronoun but also terminates the sentence: e.g. *ba su zo ba* ‘they didn’t (or haven’t) come’. It is also used to form types of non-verbal negative structures. In 24, the negative marker *ba* terminates both sections.

- (24)a. *Wanda bai bata da safe ba// don da yamma ba zai bata ba. (9//9)*
 ‘The one who does not have a quarrel in the morning will not have a quarrel in the afternoon.’
- b. *Ba za a jirayi girman wada ba// domin ba a yi shi don ya girma ba. (11//11)*
 ‘One cannot wait for the dwarf to grow because he was not made to grow.’

The second type of section-final interaction is vowel interaction, which is achieved by the appearance of an identical vowel at the end of both sections. Section-final vowel interaction greatly outnumbers any other type of phonological interaction whether it is ‘positional’ or ‘symmetrical’. Anyone familiar with Hausa written poetry influenced by Arabic tradition will expect phonological correspondence to mean syllabic rhyme. It is true that ‘in the study of Hausa poetry, the term ‘rhyme’ has so far been used almost exclusively to refer to the sound correspondence in the syllable at the end of lines or stanzas of a poem’ (Muhammad 1978: 6). However, the language of the proverb as an oral genre is not necessarily identical with the language of poetry. Hausa proverbs do not consist of lines or stanzas, but use sections of equal or nearly equal length for organisation, and insofar as inter-section vowel correspondence is frequently observed in the tradition, it deserves to call attention.

- (25) a. *Ba a gama gudu// da susar duwawu. (6//6)*
 ‘One cannot run scratching (his) buttocks.’
- b. *Ko kura ba ta da cizo// ba a gama ta da rago. (8//8)*
 ‘Though the hyena does not bite, one does not compare it with a ram.’
- c. *Mutum wanda ya yi daɗiɗi kai// wanda ya yi aiki na kwari. (9//9)*
 ‘A simple man is one who does good work.’
- d. *Wuta ta ci danye// bare kekasashe. (6//6)*
 ‘Fire burns the green bush, how much more so the dry.’

The above proverbs contain no example of /a/ vowel correspondence. Since there are hundreds of examples in which the vowel /a/ terminates both sections, let me list here only those that show a completely balanced bipartite structure.

- (26) a. *An bai wa kura // jiran akuya. (5//5)*
 ‘One gave the hyena a goat to take care of.’
 b. *Ba a mowa // sai da bora. (4//4)*
 ‘One does not have a favorite wife unless he has an unfavorite wife.’
 c. *Me kare goma // kan yi da kura? (5//5)*
 ‘What have ten dogs to do with the hyena?’
 d. *Idan ka ga mugu a rana // kada ka kawo shi inuwa. (9//9)*
 ‘If you see a wicked man under the scorching sun, don’t invite him under the shade.’

The frequency of /i/ vowel correspondence greatly exceeds that of other types, except for the case of /a/ correspondence:

- (27) a. *Mutuwa, tafi Bauci // inda a ke murnarki. (7//7)*
 ‘Death, go to the pagans where they are glad to see you.’
 b. *Dokin “da na sani” // ba ya zuwa yaki. (6//6)*
 ‘The horse of ‘had I known’ cannot go to the war.’
 c. *Na dauki kare don haushi // ya komo yana tunkuyi. (8//8)*
 ‘I kept a dog to bark and it turned and butted.’
 d. *In an ce ruwa ba ya maganin kishi // kada a sha shi kwana uku a gani. (12//12)*
 ‘If it is said that water is no remedy for thirst, let it not be drunk for three days, and one will see.’

The last type of section-final interaction is lexical correspondence. A fairly large number of proverbs show the repetition of the same word at the end of

both sections.

- (28) a. *Albarkacin wani // ya kan shafi wani. (6//6)*
'Someone's good fortune is someone else's misfortune.'
b. *Da kayan bawa // ke kama bawa. (5//5)*
'With slave-capturing equipment one captures slaves.'
c. *Ba ka da gashin wance / ka ce ka yi kitson wance. (7//8)*
'You don't have so-and-so's hair, you cannot have so-and-so's coiffure.'
d. *Sai da abin faɗa // a kan toni faɗa. (6//6)*
'One does not provoke a fight unless he has something to fight with.'

Section-final interaction can also be concurrent with syntactic parallelism. The following examples of parallel structure display section-final syllabic or vowel correspondence.

- (29) a. *Allah ya gyara rimi // ceɗya ta bar fushi. (7//7)*
'God repaired the silk-cotton tree, and the fig-tree ceased being angry.'
d. *Rashin arziƙi // rashin hankali. (5//5)*
'Lack of wealth, lack of sense.'
e. *Gaskiya gaya naka // dukiya bai wa danka. (7//7)*
'Tell truth to your man, and give wealth to your child.'
f. *Banza ta kashe wofi / dan koli ya kashe dillali. (7//9)*
'A scoundrel killed a waster, the trader killed the broker.'

The significance of syntactic parallelism is at its greatest when not only phonological interaction but also the element of semantic contrast is superimposed on it. A sense of the 'poetic' can be salient then: quantitative balance, phonological balance, syntactic balance combined with semantic contrast as illustrated in the following case.

- (30) Guri-n kaza ya cika // rumbu-n dawa ya zuba. (7//7)
 place-GEN hen 3SG.MASC.PERF be.filled.up, bin-GEN corn
 3SG.MASC.PERF be.emptied
 ‘The hen’s place is filled up, the corn-bin is emptied.’

However, the way in which phonological correspondence and semantic contrast are combined with syntactic parallelism is not always the same as in the above mentioned pattern. In 31a, the semantically contrasting words *kusa* ‘near’ and *nesa* ‘far’ come not at the final but at the initial position of each section. Hence, the contrasting pair does not overlap with the rhyming pair, i.e. *ruwa* ‘water’ and *kasuwa* ‘market’. Various instances of the superimposition of phonological correspondence and semantic contrast on syntactic parallelism can be observed in the following examples.

- (31) a. *Kusa da ruwa / nesa da kasuwa.* (5/6)
 ‘Near to the water, far from the market.’
 b. *Kumburi ga doki // sakiya ga jaki.* (6//6)
 ‘The swelling is with the horse, the puncturing is with the donkey.’
 c. *Laijin babba rowa // laijin yaro kiwa.* (6//6)
 ‘The fault of an adult is stinginess, the fault of a child is refusal.’
 d. *Babbar karuwa sarkin duniya / karamar karuwa shegiya.* (10/9)
 ‘A big prostitute is a king of the world, a small prostitute is a bastard.’

Syntactic parallelism and semantic contrast are so closely tied to each other that their combination may often involve more than a single set of contrasting terms. (Syntactic parallelism will be discussed in detail in section 4.)

- (32) a. *Mai-cin yaƙi kusa // mai-jin tsoro nesa.* (6//6)
 ‘The warrior is close, the coward is far off.’
 (*mai-cin yaƙi* vs. *mai-jin tsoro* ‘warrior’ vs. ‘coward’; *kusa* vs.

- nesa* ‘close’ vs. ‘far off’)
- b. *Kumburi a mowq̄ // sakiya a borq̄.* (6//6)
 ‘The swelling is with the favorite wife, the puncturing is with the less-favored wife.’
 (*kumburi* vs. *sakiya* ‘swelling’ vs. ‘puncturing’; *mowa* vs. *bora* ‘favorite wife’ vs. ‘less-favored wife’)
- c. *Tuwo na iyali // nama na mai-gida.* (6//6)
 ‘Staple food for the dependents, meat for the head of household.’
 (*tuwo* vs. *nama* ‘staple food’ vs. ‘meat’; *iyali* vs. *mai-gida* ‘dependents’ vs. ‘head of household’)
- d. *Bawan damuna // tajirin rani.* (5//5)
 ‘Slave in the rainy season, rich man in the dry season.’
 (*bawa* vs. *tajiri* ‘slave’ vs. ‘rich man’; *damuna* vs. *rani* ‘rainy season’ vs. ‘dry season’)

(3) Positional Interaction 3 (concurrence of section-initial and -final interaction)

Section-initial and -final interaction are but two types of the varied sorts of interaction. They are one of the means of drawing hearers’ attention to the form of the text, thus carrying out the ‘poetic function’ in Jakobson’s sense (Jakobson 1987: 145-79). Having discussed them separately, we now observe that they can be concurrently achieved.

- (33) a. *Ana ganin wuyan biri // a kan dāure shi a gindi.* (8//8)
 ‘One sees the neck of the monkey but he ties him up from his lower back.’
- b. *(‘)Abu wasa-wasa ya kai mu dare / (‘)an kama damo a tarkon kafe.* (11/10)
 ‘Like play like play’ took us to this night-fall, a land-monitor lizard was caught in a fixed trap.’

- c. *Banza girman kuka / bagaruwa ta fi ta.* (6/7)
 ‘Useless, the size of the baobab, the acacia tree is better.’
- d. *Mabugi kusa // mai-ceto nesa.* (5//5)
 ‘He who beats is close, he who saves is far away.’

In 33c, the first syllable of the first section is made up of consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) whereas that of the second consists of consonant-vowel (CV). In strict syllabic terms, they are not examples of exact repetition, nevertheless the salience of the initial consonant and vowel seems to produce a certain phonological interplay between sections. A similar case is noticed in 33b too. The word *bagaruwa* ‘acacia tree’ in 33c has another form of the same meaning: *gabaruruwa*. The choice between forms appears determined by alternative patterns:

- (34) a. *Banza girman kuka / bagaruwa ta fi ta.* (6/7)
 ‘Useless, the size of the baobab, the acacia tree is better.’
- b. *Rena girman kuka / gabaruwa ta fi ta.* (6/7)
 ‘Ignore the size of the baobab, the acacia tree is better.’

The second section in 34a takes *bagaruwa*, not *gabaruruwa*, and vice versa in 34b. Since the first syllable of 34a is /ban/ the appearance of *bagaruwa* achieves section-initial interaction. In 34b, however, the first syllable is /re/ and there is little demand for the occurrence of *bagaruwa*. It seems that there is more need for *gabaruruwa* for a certain phonological interplay between *girman* ‘size of’ in the first section and *gabaruruwa* in the second.

IV. Syntactic Interaction

In many examples of inter-section interaction given so far, the repetition of individual elements is accompanied by some degree of repetition of syntactic

structure. In fact, syntactic parallelism tends to be found in literatures all over the world; but as an organizing principle, a means in terms of which the text takes form, its distribution is relatively limited. However, seeing that cultures may differ in the extent to which it characterises verbal art, one may expect that cases of its extensive use are not rarely observed. It is reported that the Finnish *Kalevala* and the Ob-Ugrian poetry have well-established traditions of parallelism (Austerlitz 1958). More recently, Bright (1990) calls attention to the extensive use of parallelism in a particular body of American Indian literature, namely that in the Classical Nahuatl language. Though parallelism primarily means syntactic parallelism, phonological parallelism can also be found in some traditions. Fabb's discussion (1997: 148-9) (based on Williams 1953) on the *Cynghanedd* which 'is an explicit classification of line-internal sound-patterning established for Welsh poetry in the fourteenth century' reveals an interesting case. In Africa, its use is present in Efik tone riddles (Simmons 1958). Parallelism may also structure ordinary conversation as in Tojolabal (Brody 1986). Or it may express cultural thinking, 'a dualistic principle that is pervasive in Zinacateco culture' for instance (Bricker 1989: 378). Along with similar lines, Foster (1975, 1980) discusses 'parallelism in cultural expression' found in various Ancient Egyptian texts. On parallelism in African oral texts, one can refer to Schapera (1965), Rycroft and Ngcobo (1988), Anyidoho (1991), and Okpewho (1992). Fox (1988) surveys parallelism in oral literatures of the world. Recently, Fabb (1997) has provided a good illustration of parallelism with examples from a variety of different literary traditions around the world, quoting the original texts, fully translated and explained.

The examples thus far adduced in this article prove that syntactic parallelism is commonplace in Hausa proverbs. Since it is very clear that Hausa proverbs contain numerous examples of syntactic parallelism, this may lead one to undertake an independent study on the subject. In this regard the importance of Hill's contribution to this issue (Hill 1972) cannot be too much emphasised, though his dissertation treated many other interesting facets of

Hausa proverbs together. I will introduce here how the most typical types of parallel structure, apart from those introduced in the contexts of discussing section-initial and -final correspondence, are achieved. The significance of syntactic parallelism in Hausa proverbs lies in that it often operates as a frame for various sorts of positional interaction, as we have seen so far. Typical types of syntactic parallelism are as follows. Here, square brackets enclose sections and the single slash '/' within the sections means 'or'.

- (35) 1. [subject + complement] / [subject + complement]
 a. [N/NP + N/NP + (copula)] / [N/NP + N/NP + (copula)]
 b. [N/NP + *da* 'with' + N/NP] / [N/NP + *da* 'with' + N/NP]
 2. [N + genitive linker + N] / [N + genitive linker + N + (copula)]
 3. [X] /*ya fi* / [Y] 'lit. X exceeds Y'
 a. [N + genitive linker + N] /*ya fi* / [N + genitive linker + N]
 b. [N] /*ya fi* / [N]
 c. [N + *da* 'with' + N] /*ya fi* / [N + *da* 'with' + N]
 4. [X] /*maganin* / [Y] 'X is the remedy for Y'
 5. [*Da* X] / [*gara* Y] 'Better Y than X'

(1) [N/NP + N/NP + (copula)] / [N/NP + N/NP + (copula)]

Many Hausa proverbs comprise two copula-based co-ordinate clauses, where the copula is very often omitted. NP here normally takes the form of 'N + genitive linker + N'. Lexical repetition is in a high frequency in this type of parallelism.

- (36) a. Magani-n so aure / magani-n kiyayya rabuwa. (6/9)
 remedy-GEN love marriage, remedy-GEN hatred separation
 'The remedy for love is marriage, the remedy for hatred is separation.'
 b. Yaro ma(i)-n kaza / babba nama-n giwa. (5/6)

child oil-GEN chicken, big.man meat-GEN elephant
 ‘A child is chicken oil, a big man is elephant meat.’

(2) [N/NP + da ‘with’ + N/NP] / [N/NP + da ‘with’ + N/NP]

The structure of the continuous subject pronoun plus the preposition *da* ‘with’ followed by a noun (N) or nominal phrase (NP), whose literal meaning is ‘to be with N/NP’, is a common Hausa phrase to express the notion of ‘to have’ or ‘to be + predicate adjective’. A good number of Hausa proverbs consist of two co-ordinate clauses of [N/NP + *da* ‘with’ + N/NP]-structure, where the continuous subject pronoun is normally omitted before the preposition *da* ‘with’.

- (37) a. Karmami da nauyi-n dutse // allura da nauyi-n
 galma. (8//8)
 leaves.of.guinea-corn with heaviness-of stone, needle with
 heaviness-of big.hoe
 ‘The leaves of guinea-corn are heavy like stone, the needle is
 heavy like a big hoe.’
- b. Ci-n bashi da dadi / rana-r biya da wuya. (6/7)
 eating-of debt with pleasantness, day-of paying with difficulty
 ‘To collect a loan is pleasant, but the day of paying back is hard.’

(3) [N + genitive linker + N] / [N + genitive linker + N + (copula)]

The sections of the proverb *Mutuwar wani / tashin wani* (5/4) ‘Someone’s death (is) someone else’s arising’ can be viewed either as the subject and complement of a copula sentence with the copula deleted or simply as the appositional juxtaposition of two parallel nominal phrases. The absence of the copula in the second section juxtaposes the two sections against each

other, creating a certain syntactic equivalence across sections.²

- (38) a. *Haushi-n rago // cizo-n baki.* (4//4)
 annoyance-GEN lazy.person, biting-GEN mouth
 ‘The lazy man’s annoyance, (only) biting his mouth.’
- b. *Shaftaran ayyara // mai-wuyar bushewa.* (6//6)
 ‘The green firewood, one difficult to dry out.’
- c. *Halalin gun’ dā // itacen gawo.* (5//5)
 ‘The lawful food of woodborer, the large thorny acacia tree.’
- d. *Laiḡin kura // barnar garke.* (4//4)
 ‘The fault of the hyena, damaging the herds.’

However, the second section of the following examples does not take [N + genitive linker + N]- but [N + genitive linker + suffixed possessive pronoun]-structure.

- (39) a. *Harshe-n mutum / zaki-n-sa.* (3/4)
 tongue-GEN man, lion-GEN-3SG.MASC.POSS
 ‘A man’s tongue is his lion.’
- b. *Magani-n mace / miji-n-ta.* (5/3)
 remedy-GEN woman, husband-GEN-3SG.FEM.POSS
 ‘The remedy for a woman is her husband.’

(4) [X] /ya fi/ [Y] ‘lit. X exceeds Y’

In the majority of *ya fi* ‘lit. it exceeds’-based proverbs, the nominals on

² It is uncommon to find components alternative to [N + genitive linker + N]. Nonetheless, such cases are not entirely absent. Let me provide one example:

Daka niûa / mafarkin gwauro. (4/5)

‘Pounding (and) grinding is the dream of a widower.’

In this case two different verbal nouns are juxtaposed in the first section with no conjunction intervening between them. This juxtaposition of *Daka* and *niûa* makes the phonological interplay between them more immediate.

either side of the fulcrum, which are in subject-object relationship, demonstrate an identical structural pattern. In view of the fact that the meaning of *ya fi*-based proverbs is less ambiguous than that of many other proverbs that express their message in a roundabout way, those proverbs often say certain central concepts of Hausa societies. It may be that important cultural beliefs and values ought to be expressed as clearly as possible so that even the youngest child will be able to grasp them easily. Three subtypes are observed.

[N + genitive linker + N] /ya fi/ [N + genitive linker + N]: Here, the post-*ya fi* element sometimes displays [N + genitive linker + suffixed possessive pronoun]- instead of [N + genitive linker + N]-structure.

- (40) a. Rashi-n fada // ya fi// nema-n gafara. (4/5)
 lacking-GEN quarrel it.did exceed seeking-GEN forgiveness
 ‘Avoiding a quarrel is better than asking forgiveness.’
- b. Miji-n mace // ya fi// iyaye-n-ta. (4/4)
 husband-GEN woman it.did exceed parents-GEN-
 3SG.FEM.POSS
 ‘The husband of a woman is better than her parents.’
- c. *Rayayyen kare //ya fi// mataccen zaki.* (5/5)
 ‘A live dog is better than a dead lion.’
- d. *Dan mai-gona //ya fi// dan mai-gayya.* (4/4)
 ‘The son of a farmer is better than the son of a chief laborer.’

[N] /ya fi/ [N]: Single nouns can appear on both sides of the fulcrum, each representing the whole section. Section-final phonological interaction is not infrequently observed here.

- (41) a. Zuciya // ta fi// dukiya. (3/3)
 heart it.did exceed wealth

- ‘A sound heart is better than wealth.’
- b. *Dasasshe //ya fi// shukakke.* (3//3)
 ‘A cutting is better than a seedling.’
- c. *Riba //ta fi// uwa.* (2//2)
 ‘Profit is better than the original starting money.’
- d. *Mutunci //ya fi// dukiya.* (3//3)
 ‘Desency is better than wealth.’

[*N + da ‘with’ + N*] / *ya fi* / [*N + da ‘with’ + N*]: Here, the initial noun of the first section is often identical with that of the second section.

- (42) a. *Tsira da mutunci // ya fi // tsira da dukiya.* (6//6)
 escape with decency it.did exceed escape with wealth
 ‘A decent escape is better than a rich escape.’
- b. *Fita da sa’a /ta fi/ fita da dukiya.* (5//6)
 ‘Going out with good luck is better than going out with wealth.’
- c. *Sabo da yi /ya fi/ sabo da gani.* (4//5)
 ‘To be familiar with doing is better than to be familiar with seeing.’
- d. *Wuni da masoyi /ya fi/ shekara da maƙiyi.* (6//7)
 ‘One day with a lover is better than one year with an enemy.’

(5) [X] /maganin/ [Y] ‘X is the remedy for Y’ and [Da X] / [gara (or gwanda) Y] ‘Better Y than X’

Among the most conventional structures in Hausa proverbs are [X] /*maganin*/ [Y] ‘X is the remedy for Y’ and [*Da X*] / [*gara* (or *gwanda*) Y] ‘Better Y than X’. X and Y in both structures very often display an identical structural pattern as shown in 43 and 44.

- (43) a. *Haihuwa // maganin // mutuwa.* (3//3)
 birth remedy.of death

- ‘Birth is the remedy for death.’
- b. *Allah //maganin// kome.* (2//2)
 ‘God is the remedy for everything.’
- c. *Dukiya //maganin// kanƙanci.* (3//3)
 ‘Wealth is the remedy for humiliation.’
- d. *Ruwan daɗi //maganin// kishin ruwa.* (4//4)
 ‘Sweet water is the remedy for thirst.’
- (44) a. *Da mugun bashi // gara kin tayi.* (5//5)
 than badness.of debt better refusing.of making.offer
 ‘Better not to bid than a bad debt.’
- b. *Da zaman banza / gara aikin banza.* (5//6)
 ‘Better idly working than idly staying.’
- c. *Da shimfiɗa tabarma // gara shimfiɗa fuska.* (7//7)
 ‘Better spreading out your face than spreading out a mat.’
- d. *Da ka yi aiki da mai-jego // gara ka ci tuwo da ita.* (9//9)
 ‘Better to eat food with a nursing mother than to work with her.’

V. Structural Demand for Inter-section Interaction

Having accepted that Hausa proverbs are basically bipartite in form, it is necessary to mention the contribution of some syntactic characteristics to the realisation of various forms of inter-section interaction. Proverbs are the strategic names developed by a society to deal with the social relationships frequently occurring in that society. ‘Insofar as situations are typical and recurrent in a given social structure, people develop names for them and strategies for handling them’ (Burke 1967: 296). The strategies may be consolation, vengeance, admonition, exhortation, foretelling, instruction, or rhetorical effects. Hausa proverbs, also as strategic names for recurrent situations and as poetically crafted linguistic entities, are still widely used in

many contemporary societies within the cultural boundary. Proverbs as defined in this manner must be easy to retrieve from memory and, as a genre of oral literature, may have to draw hearers' attention to aesthetic parts of texts in actual contexts of utterance. It is quite natural to see that terseness of expression caused by various syntactic devices (i.e. ellipsis, inversion, genitivisation, etc) and poetic effects such as quantitative balance, phonological balance and cohesion, syntactic balance, and semantic contrast do closely interplay with one another. Clearly, certain aspects of syntax often reinforce the balance working between sections, as exemplified in 45. (The asterisk (*) used in this article does not necessarily indicate that phrases or sentences following it are ungrammatical, but it rather means that those phrases or sentences, lacking the characteristics of structured language and deviating from a fixity of expression, are not regarded as current Hausa proverbs, though they may also have a generality of reference.)

- (45) a. Kome lalacewa-r dūwawu / ya dāuki kunzugu. (9/6)
 whatever being.spoiled-GEN buttock(s), it.must carry loincloth
 'However spoiled the buttocks, they must wear a loincloth.'
- b. *Kome dūwawu yana lalacewa / ya dāuki kunzugu.
 whatever buttock(s) it.is being.spoiled, it.must carry loincloth
 'However spoiled the buttocks, they must wear a loincloth.'

Here, we can find a form of genitivisation in the first half of 45a. Genitivisation, one of the common kinds of structural characteristics of Hausa proverbs, involves, for example, the organisation of a text from [N1 + continuous subject pronoun + N2]- into [N2 + genitive linker + N1]- structure: i.e. from *dūwawu* (N1) *yana* (continuous subject pronoun) *lalacewa* (N2) into *lalacewar* (N2 + genitive linker /-r/) *dūwawu* (N1). One way of interpreting this structural change functionally is to suggest, apart from its role for terseness, that it produces inter-section phonological correspondence: -----u / -----u (9/6).

(1) Ellipsis

The most salient feature of Hausa proverbs is that they are elliptical in nature, which, as far as form is concerned, can be seen as one of the primary characteristics distinguishing them from other types of verbal art. Of all the stylistic effects created by ellipsis, two may be taken as particularly important. First, Hausa proverbs are very terse in expressing their messages and this terseness of expression is often due to ellipsis:

(46) *Karambanin akuya, gai da kura.*

‘(It was pure) meddlesomeness of the goat, (to think he could) greet the hyena (without disaster).’

One can see that many parts of the original message (the parenthesised parts of the English translation above) are elliptically treated in this proverb so that a hidden connotation may be produced. Hill (1972: 39) comments on this role of ellipsis:

‘Nearly every Hausa questioned about the meaning of the descriptive phrase responded in a way that may be summarised as follows: “We fold our speech in order to say as much as possible with as little as possible. Speech is more attractive when you do not know what is inside in it”.’

Second, ellipsis often interplays with ‘balance’. This aspect closely relates to the omission of some grammatical elements, one of which is the copula *ne* or *ce*. In effect, the way in which the copula is deleted is very consistent particularly in proverbs of short form. Among the various types of copula-based structure, the following four are typically noticed. Here we will only consider 47a, b and 47d together with some negative constructions since we have already seen 47c when discussing syntactic parallelism (see 38) and section-initial lexical interaction (see 14).

- (47) a. [N] / [N + genitive linker + N + (copula)]
 b. [N + genitive linker + N] / [N + copula]
 c. [N + genitive linker + N] / [N + genitive linker + N + (copula)]
 d. [N] / [N + copula]

[N] / [N + genitive linker + N + (copula)]: Here, the length (syllabic number) of the initial noun (the first section = subject part) is almost invariably shorter than that of the nominal phrase (the second section = complement part). A striking feature concerning this structure is that the complement part deletes the copula with great consistency: any syllabic increase will lengthen the part and causes less balanced bipartite structure:

- (48) a. Arziki / riga-r k̄aya. (3/4)
 wealth gown-GEN thorn
 ‘Prosperity is a coat of thorns.’
 b. Dare / rigar mugu. (2/4)
 ‘Night-time is the cloak of evil.’

Quantitative balance and phonological balance often have a mutual effect. On some occasions they may reinforce one another. But in other cases they may oppose one another. In the following examples the dropping of the complement-final copula achieves not only more balanced bipartite structure but section-final vowel interaction as well.

- (49) a. Ciki / jaka-r matsiyaci. (2/6)
 stomach bag-GEN destitute.person
 ‘The stomach is a destitute person’s bag.’
 b. Angulu / k̄azamin tsuntsu. (3/6)
 ‘The vulture is a dirty bird.’
 c. Madaki / uban dawaki. (3/5)
 ‘The stable groom is the father of horses.’

g. *Yabo / ganin ido*. (2/4)

‘Praise is seeing with the eye.’

[*N* + *genitive linker* + *N*] / [*N* + *copula*]: In contrast to proverbs of [*N*] / [*N* + *genitive linker* + *N* + (*copula*)]-structure are those in which the nominal phrase is realised as subject instead of complement. Here the copula is normally retained in the second section.³

(50) a. *Biya-n bashi // ibada ne*. (4/4)

paying-GEN debt serving.God COP

‘Paying a debt is a way of serving God.’

b. *Cin dadɪ // sabo ne*. (3/3)

‘Enjoyment is familiarity.’

[*N*] / [*N* + *copula*]: Though the copula is always retained here and so we can expect to see no bipartite structure achieved by a mere juxtaposition of two nouns, there is a notable exception to this: in the following examples that contain only two nouns we notice section-initial and/or -final syllabic or vowel interaction.

(51) a. *Mahakurci* // *mawadaci*. (4/4)

³ However, there are some groups of proverbs which almost invariably delete the copula in the complement part. They are often initiated by certain lexemes:

a. *Amfanin kwari / harbi*. (5/2)

‘The value of bow and arrow is shooting.’

b. *Ɔibin ibada / bari*. (5/2)

‘The danger of a religious life is giving up.’

c. *Maganin tsoro / barci*. (6/3)

‘The remedy for fear is sleeping.’

d. *Ɔbokin kainuwa / bado*. (6/2)

‘The friend of water-lettuce is water-lily.’

There is another notable exception: where the complement part takes a /-wa/ verbal noun form, the copula is normally dropped as in the following example.

Laiɪn daidai / Karewa. (4/3)

‘Pleasure’s fault is ‘finishing’.’

- patient.man wealthy.man
 ‘The patient man is a wealthy man.’
- b. *Talauḅi // kanḅanḅi.* (3//3)
 ‘Poverty is humiliation.’
- c. *Jiki / magayi.* (2/3)
 ‘The body is the informer.’
- d. *Kararre // fararre.* (3//3)
 ‘The finished is the begun.’

[N/NP] / [ba + N + ba + (copula)]: In Hausa proverbs negation often occurs within the complement part and the copula is omitted here with enough frequency to prove that the structural demand towards the enhancement of quantitative balance is present not only in positive but in negative structures as well.

- (52) a. *Gani / ba ci ba.* (2/3)
 seeing NEG eating NEG
 ‘To see is not to eat.’
- b. *Kau da kara // ba aiki ba.* (4//4)
 ‘Removing a stalk of corn to another place is not working.’

[N] / [N/NP + [ba + N] + (copula)]: Negation may also take the form of adjunctive (i.e. *ba* ‘without’ + N), modifying the preceding nominal or nominal phrase in [N/NP + [ba + N] + (copula)]. The copula is invariably deleted within this common pattern of Hausa proverbs.

- (53) a. *Banza / hanci ba kafa.* (2/5)
 uselessness, nose without small.hole
 ‘Useless thing, a nose without a hole.’
- b. *Banza / rawa ba daḅi.* (2/5)
 ‘Useless thing, dancing without pleasantness.’

c. *Banza / farin ido ba gani.* (2/7)

‘Useless thing, a beautiful eye without seeing.’

d. *Banza / taron hausawa ba riba.* (2/8)

‘Useless thing, a gathering of Hausas without getting profit.’

[*N + [ba + N]*] / [*N + copula*]: In this structure, however, the subject- and complement-elements are reversed and the copula appears in the second section.

(54) a. *Gemu ba gaskiya / yaro ne.* (6/3)

beard without truth child COP

‘A beard without truth is a child.’

b. *Jari ba sarki / mushe ne.* (5/3)

‘A capital city without a king is carrion.’

Finally, the presence or absence of the copula often achieves phonological balance at the cost of quantitative balance as illustrated in the following examples.

(55) a. *Riga-r sarki / doki.* (4/2)

gown-GEN king horse

‘The gown of a king is a horse.’

b. *Wace / daraja-r namiji ce?* (2/7)

what / worth-GEN male COP

‘What is the worth of men?’

c. *Ai wane / kifin rijiya ne.* (3/6)

‘Mr. So-and-So’ is a fish in a well.’

d. *Fata nagari / lamiri.* (5/3)

‘A good expectation is ‘it’, i.e. well begun is half done.’

(2) Inversion

Inversion, the shifting of object, or copula, preposition, etc. from one place to the other frequently effects inter-section interaction. Inversion, like ellipsis, is an important linguistic characteristic in Hausa proverbs not only in the sense that it is widely observed but also in the sense that it contributes to both quantitative and phonological balance across sections. We will consider its significance with reference to quantitative balance first. An example of apparent interplay between inversion and quantitative balance is 56a, where the object clause *Abin da baki ya yanka* ‘What the mouth slaughtered’ was frontshifted to form the first half of the proverb:

- (56) a. *Abin da baki ya yanka / wuƙa ba ta yanka ba.* (8/7)
‘What the mouth slaughtered / the knife failed to slaughter.’
b. **Wuƙa / ba ta yanka abin da baki ya yanka ba.*
‘The knife / failed to slaughter what the mouth slaughtered.’
c. **Wuƙa ba ta yanka / abin da baki ya yanka ba.*
‘The knife failed to slaughter / what the mouth slaughtered.’

In looking at ways of grouping proverbs depending on grammatical relationship, Hill’s concept of binary opposition can still be widely applied even if it cannot cover all cases. Particularly, as far as simple and complex sentence proverbs (but not coordinate sentence proverbs) are concerned, it may also be usefully employed except for a few cases where, for instance, proverbs display [non-adjunctive] / [adjunctive]-structure. 56a is a current proverb sentence while 56b, c are not. It shows relatively well-balanced bipartite structure (8/7), though not completely balanced. Here one can ask whether it is possible to split 56a in a different way. Clearly, an alternative division can be either 56b or c. According to Hill’s concept of binary opposition (i.e. entry and explicator), we can identify two sections in 56b, that is to say, *wuƙa* as an entry and *ba ta yanka abin da baki ya yanka ba* as

an explicator. In Hausa proverbs various structural pressures are often involved in producing a more balanced bipartite structure and ‘more balanced’ here always presupposes ‘less balanced’, an example of which is 56b. In dividing sentences into two parts, whether they are of more balanced bipartite structure or of less balanced bipartite structure, the distinction between entry and explicator is one that seems a reasonably and quite consistently usable tool for this purpose. With regard to 56c, however, we do not normally recognise the bipartite structure of [subject + verbative] / [object]. Two reasons can be provided for this. First, in practice, we are liable to meet a difficulty in attempting to apply [subject + verbative] / [object]-division to proverbs. This is due to certain features of Hausa syntactic structure. Consider the following example:

- (57) a. Attajiri / yana dɪba-n dukiyarsa. (4/8)
 wealthy.person / 3SG.MASC.CONT scooping.up-GEN
 his.wealth
 ‘A rich man always scoops up his wealth.’
- b. *Attajiri yana dɪba-n / dukiyarsa.
 wealthy.person 3SG.MASC.CONT scooping.up-GEN/his.wealth
 ‘A rich man always scoops up his wealth.’

The verbal nouns of Grade II verbs require a genitive linker /-n/ or /-r/ when followed by a nominal or pronominal object in sentences of continuous aspect. In 57a we can see the genitive linker /-n/ between *yana dɪba* (person-aspect-pronoun *yana* plus verbal noun *dɪba*) and *dukiyarsa* (object). This grammatical connection between the verbative and object may oppose any attempt to disconnect it, an instance of which is 57b. Since proverb sentences of continuous aspect often contain Grade II verbs followed by object, it seems odd to set up [subject + verbative] / [object]-division. Secondly, as Jang (1999) discussed in his article, Hausa proverbs tend to realise their bipartite division as [subject] / [predicate] which is roughly equivalent to the

distinction between entry and explicator. It may follow from this that to set up [subject + verbative] / [object]-division appears to degrade a certain consistency of analysis.

Though we do not normally recognise [subject + verbative] / [object]-division, we do recognise [object] / [subject + verbative]-division. This is exactly the case in which the object in [subject + verbative] / [object]-structure is frontshifted. Again it must be emphasised that once the object comes at the beginning of the sentence it works as an entry. Examples in 58 show that an object pronoun very often recapitulates the original place of the frontshifted part if topicalised left-shifting allows strong pause potential between the two parts.

- (58) a. *Alkama bisa dutse // Allah kan ba ta ruwa.* (7//7)
 ‘Wheat among the rocks / God gives water to it.’
 **Allah / kan ba alkama bisa dutse ruwa.*
 ‘God / gives wheat among the rocks water.’
- b. *Sandar jefan kura / da rana kan dauko shi.* (6//7)
 ‘A stick thrown at a hyena / in the day one collects it.’
 **Da rana / kan dauko sandar jefan kura.*
 ‘In the day / one collects a stick thrown at a hyena.’
- c. *Daudar gora / ciki kan sha ta.* (4//5)
 ‘The dirt in a gourd / the stomach drinks it.’
- d. *Tabarmar kunya / da hauka kan nade ta.* (5//7)
 ‘The mat of shame / with shame one rolls it up.’

In certain cases characterised by the frontshifting of the object phrase as topic, its pronominal form can also be frontshifted, coming at the initial position of the second section as focus.

- (59) a. *Masanin mashigi // shi kada kan kama.* (6//6)
 ‘The one who knows the ford / (it is) he (that) the crocodile catches.’

- **Masanin mashigi / kada kan kama shi.*
 ‘The one who knows the ford / the crocodile catches him.’
 **Kada / kan kama masanin mashigi.*
 ‘The crocodile / catches the one who knows the ford.’
- b. *Kowa ya kira ruwa / shi ruwa kan doka. (7/6)*
 ‘Whoever calls the rain / (it is) he (that) the rain will beat.’
- c. *Abin da ka ki // shi kan amfana. (5/5)*
 ‘What you rejected / (it is) it (that) someone derives benefit from.’
- d. *Gwanin ruwa / shi ruwa kan ci. (4/5)*
 ‘The expert in the water / (it is) he (that) the water eats.’

A further interesting point relates to partial inversion. When the topic of a verbative consists of multi-elements connected by the genitive linker, only part of the object may be frontshifted. This partial inversion produces more balanced bipartite structure than does the total inversion.

- (60) a. *Rijiyar mai-hassada // wawa kan sha ruwanta. (7/7)*
 ‘The well of jealousy / the fool drinks its water.’
 **Ruwan rijiyar mai-hassada / wawa kan sha ta.*
 ‘The water of the well of jealousy / the fool drinks it.’
 **Wawa / kan sha ruwan rijiyar mai-hassada.*
 ‘The fool / drinks the water of the well of jealousy.’
- b. *Karen da ba shi da wutsiya / ba a sanin murnarsa. (9/7)*
 ‘A dog that has no tail / one doesn’t know his happiness.’
 **Murnar karen da ba shi da wutsiya / ba a saninta.*
 ‘The happiness of a dog that has no tail / one doesn’t know it.’
 **Ba a sanin / murnar karen da ba shi da wutsiya.*
 ‘One doesn’t know / the happiness of a dog that has no tail.’

In proverbs containing *abin da*- ‘the thing which-’ or *wanda*- ‘the one which-’-initiated relative clauses as an object, the relative clause is very often

frontshifted to form a separate section.

- (61) a. *Wanda ya roƙe ku // don Allah ku ba shi.* (6//6)
'The one who begs you / for God's name render charity to him.'
**Don Allah / ku ba wanda ya roƙe ku.*
'For God's name / render charity to the one who begs you.'
- b. *Wanda ya so Allah / Allah ya so shi.* (7/5)
'He who loves God / God loves him.'
- c. *Wanda ba ya sonka / rabu da shi.* (6/4)
'He who doesn't love you / keep away from him.'
- d. *Wanda ya ki gamuwa da Allah / Allah ya ki gamuwa da shi.* (10/9)
'He who refuses to meet God / God refuses to meet him.'

In addition to the object inversion, the nominal part following the preposition *da* 'with' can also be frontshifted as topic from a position where it has been frontshifted as focus. 62b shows a redundant appearance of the preposition *da* before the frontshifted clause *mudun da ka ke aunawa*. It seems that this achieves a section-initial syllabic correspondence.

- (62) a. *Sandar da ke hannunka // da ita ka ke duka.* (7//7)
'The stick in your hand / with it you can beat (something).'
**Da sandar da ke hannunka / ka ke duka.*
'With the stick in your hand / you can beat (something).'
**Kana duka / da sandar da ke hannunka.*
'You can beat (something) / with the stick in your hand.'
- b. *Da mudun da ka ke aunawa / da shi za a auna maka.* (9/8)
'With the bowl that you use to measure out for other people / with it one will measure out to you.'
**Da mudun da ka ke aunawa / za a auna maka.*
'With the bowl that you use to measure out for other people / one will measure out to you.'

**Za a auna maka / da mudun da ka ke aunawa.*

‘One will measure out to you / with the bowl that you use to measure out for other people.’

c. *Kwaron da ya jaraba da ganaye / da shi a kan dafa su.* (10/7)

‘An insect that is fascinated by leaves / with it one cooks the leaves.’

d. *Abin da ke hannun mutum / ba da shi ya ke aiki ba.* (8/8)

‘What is in man’s hands / it is not the case that with it he works.’

The nominal phrase or clause originally following the preposition *ga* ‘in’ comes at the initial position in 63. As regards this, the inversion almost invariably requires the ellipsis of the person-aspect-pronoun before *gare* which is another form of *ga*, normally used when followed by a pronoun object.

(63) a. *Fadān da ba ruwanka // daḍin gani gare shi.* (7/7)

‘The fight which is not your business / pleasantness to watch is in it.’

**Daḍin gani / yana ga fadān da ba ruwanka.*

‘Pleasantness to watch / is in the fight which is not your business.’

b. *Ruwa na sata // zaḳi gare shi.* (5/5)

‘Stolen water / sweetness is in it.’

**Zaḳi / yana ga ruwa na sata.*

‘Sweetness / is in stolen water.’

In certain of *ya fi*-based proverbs in which the two sections are not neatly balanced, the post-*ya fi* element is, at times, frontshifted so that the resulting shape may display an ordinary form of bipartite structure that is relatively well-balanced.

(64) a. *Gayyar maḳiya // Allah ya fi su.* (5/5)

‘A group of enemies / God is above them.’

**Allah /ya fi/ gayyar maḳiya.*

- ‘God /is above/ a group of enemies.’
- b. *Gudun da babu tsira / gara taƙama ta fi shi.* (7/8)
 ‘Running that doesn’t guarantee an escape / swaggering is better than it.’
 **Taƙama /ta fi/ gudun da babu tsira.*
 ‘Swaggering /is better than/ running that doesn’t guarantee an escape.’
- c. *Faɗan maƙiya // Allah ya fi su.* (5/5)
 ‘The fight of enemies / God is above them.’
- d. *Babban da ba shi da hankali / ai yaro ya fi shi.* (9/6)
 ‘An adult who has no sense / a child is better than him.’

64b shows the appearance of the adjunctive *gara* ‘it would be better to’. Though this is the only case available in which *gara* and *fi* ‘lit. to exceed’ occur at the same time in the same proverb, the redundant use of *gara* achieves section-initial interaction in this context: *Gudun da babu tsira / gara taûama ta fi shi*. In fact, one of the fascinating but equally annoying aspects that I frequently encountered in studying the poetics of Hausa proverbs is that a single proverb may exhibit an interesting feature that makes it distinct from ordinary speech or even from other proverbs, with no other similar examples found.

Finally the demand for quantitative balance may involve the inversion of the NP in [N + genitive linker + NP] / [N + copula]-structure. It is quite interesting to see that the inversion in 65b, c pertains not only to quantitative but to section-final phonological balance as well.

- (65) a. *Gobara daga kogi // magani nata Allah.* (7/7)
 conflagration from river / remedy its God
 ‘Conflagration from the river / its remedy is God.’
 **Magani-n gobara daga kogi / Allah ne.*
 remedy-GEN conflagration from river / God COP
 ‘The remedy for conflagration from the river / is God.’

- b. *Maras wuri / rabonka gani.* (4/5)
 ‘One who has no money / your share is (just) to see.’
 **Rabon maras wuri / gani ne.*
 ‘The share of one who has no money / is (just) to see.’
- c. *Tuwon girma / miya tasa nama.* (4/6)
 ‘The food for the big man / its soup is (made with) meat.’
 **Miyar tuwon girma / nama ne.*
 ‘The soup for the food for the big man / is (made with) meat.’

As revealed in 65b, c, inversion also has functions in producing phonological interaction. In texts which are not neatly structured in a quantitative sense, various syntactic devices such as ellipsis, inversion, etc. seem to work for other alternative choice, a typical case of which is phonological correspondence. Three types of inversion mostly engage in achieving this: object-shifting; prepositional- or adjunct-shifting; copula-shifting.

(66) phonological interaction in terms of object-shifting

- a. *Biyar bashi / daɗi gare shi.* (4/5)
 ‘Paying back a debt / pleasantness is in it.’
 **Daɗi / yana ga biyar bashi.*
 ‘Pleasantness / is in paying back a debt.’
- b. *Rai dangin goro // hutu ya ke so.* (5/5)
 ‘Life, the relative of a kola-nut / rest it wants.’
 **Rai dangin goro // yana son hutu.*
 ‘Life, the relative of a kola-nut / it wants rest.’
- c. *Bawa da baki / wuyar sayarwa gare shi.* (5/8)
 ‘A slave with a mouth / difficulty to sell is in him.’
- d. *Tafarkin bisa / sai tsuntsu ke binsa.* (5/6)
 ‘The road on high / only a bird follows it.’

(67) phonological interaction in terms of prepositional- or adjunct-shifting

- a. *Da rana ke awo / da dare sai a ci tuwo.* (6/8)
'By day one measures and buys (food) / at night one eats food.'
**Ana awo da rana / sai a ci tuwo da dare.*
'One measures and buys (food) by day / one eats food at night.'
- b. A *kī hutu ran biki / ran kwaḅa a so shi.* (7/6)
'Let one refuse resting on the ceremony day / on the day of mixing mud for building one wants it.'
*A *kī hutu ran biki / a so shi ran kwaḅa.*
'Let one refuse resting on the ceremony day / one wants it on the day of mixing mud for building.'
- c. *Murnar kare / ga wutsiya ta ke.* (4/6)
'The happiness of a dog / in the tail it is.'
- d. *Ruwan da ya isa kurmi / da faḁawa cikinsa an sani.* (8/10)
'The water that is deep enough to swim in / by falling into it one knows (it).'

(68) phonological interaction in terms of copula-shifting

- a. *Wofī kan masara // goyon ne farilla.* (6/6)
'As useless as the tuft of maize / the cob is the real thing.'
**Wofī kan masara / goyon farilla ne.*
'As useless as the tuft of maize / the cob is the real thing.'
- b. *Wauta / ita ce zarunta.* (2/6)
'Bravery / it is foolishness.'
**Wauta / ita zarunta ce.*
'Bravery / it is foolishness.'
- c. *Haḁuri ga mumini / shi ne sarkin yaḁi.* (7/6)
'The patience of a true believer / it is the king of war.'
- d. *Kowa ya kona rumbun wani // ya san inda toka ce kuḁi.* (9/9)

‘Whoever burns his grain storage bin / knows the place where ash is money.’

(3) Genitivisation

Genitivisation is another syntactic tool highly relevant for shortening of phrases but at the same time it can play a certain role for the enhancement of quantitative and/or phonological balance too. The most common type of Hausa proverbs in which genitivisation occurs are those containing concessive clauses, usually initiated by the lexeme *kome* ‘whatever’, ‘however’, ‘anything which’, as shown in 69a where the completely balanced bipartite structure would be impossible without the genitivisation of *gumba tana da daɗi* ‘the gumba is tasty’ into *daɗin gumba* ‘the taste of the gumba’. Each of the following examples shows the genitivisation of [N1 + continuous subject pronoun + *da* ‘with’ + N2]- into [N2 + genitive linker + N1]-structure.

- (69) a. *Kome mugu-n bawa // ya fi gida banza.* (6//6)
whatever wickedness-GEN slave, it.did exceed house empty
‘However wicked the slave, it is better than an empty house.’
**Kome bawa yana da mugu / ya fi gida banza.*
whatever slave 3SG.MASC.CONT with wickedness, it.did
exceed house empty
‘However wicked the slave, it is better than an empty house.’
- b. *Kome daɗin gumba // nakiya ta fi ta.* (6//6)
‘However tasty the sweet pounded millet, the food made of honey is better’.
- c. *Kome wayon amarya // a sha manta a tandu.* (7//7)
‘However clever the bride, she must drink her oil in the local vessel made of dressed hide.’
- d. *Kome zurfin ruwa // da yashi a ciki.* (6//6)
‘However deep the water, there is always sand at the bottom of it.’

In certain forms of genitivation-based structure, suffixed possessive pronouns are attached to the post-*da* ‘with’ element, producing section-final syllabic interaction. I will cite only one example here, some other examples of which will be provided soon in 72 (see 72b, c).

- (70) Kome wayo-n-ka // a zambace ka. (5//5)
 whatever cleverness-GEN-2SG.MASC.POSS, one.willcheat you
 ‘However clever you are, one will cheat you.’
 *Kome kana da wayo / a zambace ka.
 whatever 2SG.MASC.CONT with cleverness,one.willcheat you
 ‘However clever you are, one will cheat you.’

In other cases, the pre-genitivation structure does not take [N1 + continuous subject pronoun + *da* ‘with’ + N2], but takes [N1 + continuous subject pronoun + N2] in which N2 is a dynamic noun. The most common lexeme appearing as the N2 element in this structure is *lalacewa* ‘being spoiled’:

- (71) a. Kome lalacewa-r mutum // ba ya rasa rana tasa. (8//8)
 whatever being.spoiled-GEN man, not he.is lacking day his
 ‘However spoiled a man, he still has some special days for him.’
 *Kome mutum yana lalacewa / ba ya rasa rana tasa.
 whatever man 3SG.MASC.CONT being.spoiled, not he.is
 lacking day his
 ‘However spoiled a man, he still has some special days for him.’
 b. *Kome lalacewar masa /ta fi kashin shanu.* (8/6)
 ‘However spoiled the fried cake, it is better than the excrement of cattle.’
 c. *Kome lalacewar rai /ya fi mutuwa.* (7/5)
 ‘However spoiled the life, it is better than the death.’
 d. *Kome raman giya // ya fi kwando dāya.* (6//6)
 ‘However emaciated the elephant, it is heavier than a large basket.’

Genitivisation, like inversion, may have a significance for phonological interaction too. The following examples demonstrate this.

- (72) a. *Kome duhu-n dare / gari ya waye.* (6/5)
 whatever darkness-GEN night, day it.did dawn
 ‘However dark the night, the morning will come.’
 **Kome dare yana da duhu / gari ya waye*
 whatever night 3SG.MASC.CONT with darkness, day it.did dawn
 ‘However dark the night, the morning will come.’
- b. *Kome gwanintarka // gwani ne zai kas ka.* (6/6)
 ‘However expert you are, it is another expert who will kill you.’
- c. *Kome dabararka / wani ya fi ka.* (6/5)
 ‘However wise you are, someone is wiser than you.’
- d. *Kome tsananin yunwa // ba a miya da anza.* (7/7)
 ‘However severe the hunger, one cannot cook the soup with the leaves of the poisonous tree.’

VI. Symmetrical interaction and cohesion

The constant elements which we have so far seen are all positional in their occurrence. However, the constant element /za/ in 73a comes in the final position in one section and in the initial in another. We call this type of interaction ‘symmetrical’. By symmetrical interaction I mean cases in which the last element of the first section immediately appears in the initial position of the second section. Since the constant element in 73a takes the form of syllable, I term this - CV / CV - symmetry:

- (73) a. *Aikin banza // zanen baya.* (4/4)
 ‘Useless work, a cloth only behind.’
- b. *Kowa ya yi wuya // ya isa a yanka.* (6/6)

‘Any one with a neck can be butchered.’

c. *Annurin fuska / kaurin hanji.* (5/4)

‘A shining face, a full stomach.’

d. *Ranar bikin hanka // kaza baka sarki ce.* (7//7)

‘On the ceremony day of the pied crow, the black chicken is a king.’

We have already seen that section-final syllabic interaction can be based on the repetition of the negative marker *ba*. A parallel can be seen in symmetrical interaction too. In 74 the aspect in the first section is perfect whereas in the second it is continuous.

(74) a. Wufar da ba ta bar ciki ba / ba ta
the.knife that NEG 3SG.FEM.PERF leave stomach NEG,
NEG 3SG.FEM.CONT

barin bayanta. (9/7)

leaving.of its.back

‘The knife that did not leave the stomach will not leave the back.’

b. *Abin da bai zo don rai ba / ba ya yi wa rai kome.* (8/7)

‘What was not created for the soul cannot do anything for the soul.’

c. *Wanda bai gode ka dan ba // ba ya gode wa mai-yawa.* (8//8)

‘The one who did not thank for ‘a little’ will not thank for ‘much’.’

d. *Na shiga ban dauka ba / ba ta fidda barawo.* (7//7)

‘I entered but I did not take’ will not save a thief.’

In certain proverbs the multiple appearance of the negative marker results in both symmetrical and positional interaction. This normally happens when the second section has the marker as its final constituent.

(75) a. In ba ka ci tuwo da mutum ba / ba ka san
ifNEG 2SG.MASC.PERF eat food with man NEG, NEG
2SG.MASC.PERF know

- shan miyarsa ba. (10/8)
 drinking.of his.soup NEG
 ‘If you do not eat food with a man, you don’t know how much soup he eats.’
- b. *Mutum bai fi ka tsumma ba / ba zai kaɗã maka kwarkwata ba.* (8/10)
 ‘A man whose clothes is less ragged than yours can’t shake off lice onto you.’
- c. *Wanda bai aje ba / ba ya ɗauka ba.* (6/5)
 ‘Whoever does not set things aside can take nothing away.’
- d. *In ba ka yi wahala ba / ba za ka samu abubuwan duniya ba.* (8/13)
 ‘If you do not suffer, you will not get success.’

The second type of symmetrical interaction is –W/W– symmetry. Here the final word of the first section is identical with the initial word of the second section.

- (76) a. *Banza ka ratsa ruwa // ruwa bai ratsa ka ba.* (7//7)
 ‘Useless, you passed through the water, but the water did not pass through you.’
- b. *Da albarkar wani // wani ya kan tsira.* (6//6)
 ‘With someone’s blessing, someone else escapes.’
- c. *In gumba na son nono // nono ma na son gumba.* (7//7)
 ‘If pounded millet loves sour milk, sour milk also loves pounded millet.’
- d. *An kashe wuta // wuta ta farko.* (5//5)
 ‘One has extinguished the fire, the first fire.’

In 76c, the order of the lexical items in the first section is reversed in the second section, which reminds us of what traditional rhetoric calls chiasmus. Full chiasmus seem rare in Hausa tradition. Let me simply provide a few of the examples available.

- (77) a. *Kalwa ta san inna // inna ta san kalwa.* (6//6)
 ‘The seeds of the locust-bean tree know their mother, the mother knows its locust-bean seeds.’
- b. *Haihuwa maganin mutuwa // mutuwa maganin haihuwa.* (8//8)
 ‘Birth is the remedy for death, death is the remedy for birth.’
- c. *In nono yana da daɗi a gari // gari ma yana da daɗi a nono.* (11//11)
 ‘If sour milk is sweet to flour, flour is also sweet to sour milk.’

-W /W- symmetry often appears in [N1 + genitive linker + N2] / [N2 + copula]-structure containing such lexemes as *abokin* ‘the friend of’, *ɗan* ‘the son of’, *bokan* ‘the doctor of’, etc. as a N1-element. Even though most copula-based proverbs initiated by *aboki* ‘friend’ incline to drop the copula in the complement part (see footnote 3), there are some cases in which it is retained as in 78a, b. This presence of the copula brings a symmetrical distribution of the word *sarki* ‘king’, but its absence would cause an asymmetrical shape and the single word would represent the whole section.

- (78) a. *Abokin sarki // sarki ne.* (5/3)
 ‘The friend of a king is a king.’
- b. *Abokin ɓarawo / ɓarawo ne.* (6/4)
 ‘The friend of a thief is a thief.’
- c. *Ɗan bijimi // bijimi ne.* (4/4)
 ‘The son of a large bull is a large bull.’
- d. *Mugunyar dabara / dabara ne.* (6/4)
 ‘A bad plan is still a plan.’

Symmetrical interaction can be made more distant when the constant elements concerned are not immediately repeated, normally one or two syllables intervening between them. The term ‘incomplete symmetry’ is suggested for this since it cannot be regarded as symmetrical in the strict sense, though it seems to produce a certain degree of inter-section cohesion.

Incomplete symmetry usually involves the first element in the last word of the first section and the first element of the second section: --- S-/S- --- symmetry; or the last element of the first section and the last element in the initial word of the second section: --- -S/-S --- symmetry:

(79) --- S-/S- --- symmetry

a. *Kunne ya jiya // jiki ya tsira.* (5//5)

‘(If) the ear hears, the body will escape.’

b. *Abin ya zo mana // matukar tukewa.* (6//6)

‘What came to us reached to a point of ‘no-return’.’

c. *Aiki sai mai-warki / mai-wando sai wahala.* (6//7)

‘Working, only the one who wears a leather loincloth; the one who wears trousers, only trouble.’

d. *Masallacin kura // kare ba ya salla.* (6//6)

‘In the hyena’s mosque a dog cannot pray.’

(80) --- -S/-S --- symmetry

a. *Kowa ya ci albasa // bakisa zai yi wari.* (7//7)

‘Whoever eats onion, his mouth will smell.’

b. *Gaba mai-dafin zuma / amma sai gaban yarinya.* (7//8)

‘The front place is pleasant to stay but the front of a girl is better.’

c. *Afalu kan dabbobi / rakumi ka tsufa da karfi.* (8//9)

‘Good luck over other animals. Camel, you are old but still strong!’

d. *Jinjirin barkono // yaro ba ya tauna.* (6//6)

‘Baby pepper, a child cannot chew it.’

Central to the notion of symmetrical interaction is that it fulfils intersection cohesion so that the sections concerned can form a united whole. By cohesion I roughly mean the effect of pulling the sections together. In fact, looking at the proverb *Annurin fuska / kaurin hanji* (5/4) ‘A shining face, a full stomach’, we are reminded of two strings connected together by a knot

made at the extreme end of each. Some extended proverbs in which the final part of one sentence immediately comes at the initial position of the next may also illustrate this. In the following examples a single element of dialogue ‘extends its base, like the priamel of medieval Europe, as a means of creating a language chain’ (Hill 1972: 25).

(81) a. *Da arziki a garin wani gara a garinku; a garinku, ma, a ce, ‘a wajenku’; a wajenku, kuma, a ce, ‘a gidanku’; a gidanku, kuma a ce, ‘Kai ne mai-arziki’, ya hi kyau.*

‘Rather than wealth in the town of another better in yourall’s town; rather than in yourall’s town let one say “at youall’s place”; rather than in yourall’s place let one say “in yourall’s compound”; rather than in yourall’s compound, let one say “You’re a wealthy man”, that’s best.’

b. *Kome biya biya ne, domin hannu shi ke wa baki; baki shi ba da wuya; wuya shi ba da ciki; ciki shi ba da d̄iwa; d̄iwa ta ba da ƙasa; iyakar zaman duniya ke nan; wanda bai yi biya ba, wata rana sai shi ci ma wuya.*

‘Whatever is paying is paying, because the hand gives to the mouth; the mouth gives to the throat; the throat gives to the stomach; the stomach gives to the ass; the ass gives to the earth; this is the way the world works; whoever doesn’t pay, one day he’ll have trouble.’

Now, for further discussion of the role of symmetrical interaction, let us see the following formulas which set out the three typical types of occurrence of constant elements observed in Hausa proverbs:

(82) 1. positional interaction

a. section-initial correspondence [•···]/[•···]

b. section-final correspondence [···•]/[···•]

2. symmetrical interaction

a. symmetrical correspondence 1 [$\cdot \cdot \cdot \bullet$]/[$\bullet \cdot \cdot \cdot$]

Here, brackets enclose the sections and the symbol ‘•’ means a constant element. In positional interaction, we can find both the element of regularity and of identity. In contrast, symmetrical interaction shows only the element of identity. However, as for the formula [$\cdot \cdot \cdot \bullet$]/[$\bullet \cdot \cdot \cdot$], it does not represent all the types of symmetrical correspondence. Symmetrical correspondence can also be discussed in cases where the distribution of a constant element takes the following shape:

(83) symmetrical correspondence 2 [$\bullet \cdot \cdot \cdot$]/[$\cdot \cdot \cdot \bullet$]

- a. Ba domin tuwo / aka yi ciki ba. (5/6)
‘The stomach was not made for food.’
- b. Kada a yi baibaya / da ruwa a jika. (7/6)
‘Do not thatch the roof when the rain is soaking you.’
- c. Saran icce / da mutum bisa. (4/5)
‘Cutting down a tree with a man up it.’

However, native Hausa speakers’ response to this pattern of symmetry is not sensitive. The inversion (frontshifting) observed in 84a, b accounts for the immediate priority that [$\cdot \cdot \cdot \bullet$]/[$\bullet \cdot \cdot \cdot$] has in relation to [$\bullet \cdot \cdot \cdot$]/[$\cdot \cdot \cdot \bullet$]: the distance between the constant elements in 84a, b’ causes a lack of strong cohesion.

(84) a. Rashin farin wata // tauraro ke haske. (6//6)

- ‘In the absence of moonlight / the star shines.’
- a'. *Tauraro yana haske / a rashin farin wata.
‘The star shines / in the absence of moonlight.’
- b. Da albarkar wani // wani ya kan tsira. (6//6)
‘With someone’s blessing / someone else escapes.’
- b'. *Wani ya kan tsira / da albarkar wani.

‘Someone escapes / with someone else’s blessing.’

Theoretically, the extent to which cohesion works across sections varies as the distance between constant elements does. In two cases of section-final correspondence, for example, the cohesion in one may be stronger than the cohesion in the other. Compare 85a and 85b.

(85) a. *Babban arzikī // ga mai-hankalī.* (5//5)

‘Great wealth is always for the intelligent person.’

b. *Kowa ya kōnā rumbun wani // ya san inda toka ke kudī.* (9//9)

‘Whoever burns his grain storage bin knows the place where ash is money.’

In 85a, the identical section-final elements are four syllables distant from each other (*ga-mai-han-ka*) while in 85b eight syllables intervene between them (*ya-san-in-da-to-ka-ke-ku*). Hence, we say that the inter-section cohesion in 85a is stronger than that in 85b. It can be said, in a similar manner, that the cohesion in 86 is much stronger than the cohesion in 85a.

(86) *Talauci // kankanči.* (3//3)

‘Poverty is humiliation.’

Generally, phonological correspondence observed in proverbs that consist of only a single pair of words produces the strongest inter-section cohesion. We have already seen some examples of this in 51. However, two-word proverbs do not always display section-final correspondence: the following examples show section-initial interaction due to the repetition of the prefix /mai-/ ‘the doer of-’, ‘the possessor of-’.

(87) a. *Mai-hali // mai-sabo.* (3//3)

‘The man of character is the man of discipline.’

b. *Mai-lamuni / mai-biya.* (4/3)

‘One who goes surety is the one responsible for the payment.’

Insofar as cohesion depends on the repetition of a constant element, any type of repetition can be said to produce cohesion. In the proverb,

(88) *Son maso wani // koshin wahala.* (5//5)

‘Loving the one who loves somebody else is full of problems.’

the repetition of /wa/ is not positional. Clearly, the notion of balance cannot be properly applied to this case; nonetheless the repetition itself achieves a certain degree of inter-section cohesion due to the appearance of the same element across sections. To expand ‘cohesion’ in this way, we need to judge whether it can be taken as a useful concept that can be generally applied to the analysis of phonological aspects of Hausa proverbs. The preliminary answer is that it can be employed as a useful tool since numerous Hausa proverbs show a wide variety of irregular repetition. However, irregular repetition is beyond the scope of this current study because of its diversity and complexity but it is undoubtedly another source of fascinating problems.

VII. Intra-section Interaction and Nested Bi-partite Structure

The notion of interaction can be adapted to intra-section correspondence too. Hausa proverbs are at times characterised by additional kinds of regularity and identity which relate to the division of a section into words. The point is that the way in which balance and/or cohesion control over the text is only partial: it is confined only to a single section. In 89a, the occurrence of the constant element /ba/ in the first section is positional since

it comes in the initial syllabic position in both words. This positional correspondence achieves intra-section balance and cohesion across the two lexical items *Baƙiɓ* ‘black’ and *bajimi* ‘large bull’, consolidating the internal stability of the section. Not only do *Baƙiɓ* and *bajimi* constitute an identifiable syntactic unit, but they also fit with each other phonologically forming a very cohesive whole. Examples of intra-section positional interaction are not infrequently available.

- (89) a. *Baƙiɓ bajimi // lalata garka.* (5//5)
 ‘A black large bull spoiled a fenced plot of cotton.’
 b. *Farkon faɗa // nuna hannu.* (4//4)
 ‘The beginning of a fight is signalling with a hand.’
 c. *In sarki idanu // Aƙali tozali.* (6//6)
 ‘If the king is an eye, the judge is antimony.’
 d. *Rashin sani //ya fi// dare duhu.* (4//4)
 ‘Lack of knowledge is darker than night time.’

In 90, both sections are marked by intra-section positional interaction. It is of great interest to see that the section-final elements are also shared in 90b, c: *Fara fushi // kashe kuɗi* (4//4), *Ƙiɓ kamuwa // jin januwa* (4//4). Hence, these two examples exhibit both intra- and inter-section positional interaction. 90d reminds us of a sort of word-play.

- (90) a. *Doki ɗaya // gwanin gudu.* (4//4)
 ‘One horse is highly skilled in racing.’
 b. *Fara fushi // kashe kuɗi.* (4//4)
 ‘The beginning of anger is the spending of money.’
 c. *Ƙiɓ kamuwa // jin januwa.* (4//4)
 ‘To refuse to be caught is to undergo being pulled.’
 d. *Kada ka ƙaryata // kada ka kamanta.* (6//6)
 ‘Don’t mistrust (something), don’t exaggerate.’

In looking at ways of splitting Hausa proverbs into sections, we shall be particularly interested in seeing that certain proverbs may readily display three grammatical parts, two of which are closely parallel to each other, being of equal or roughly equal length as in the first section of 91a: *Da abin da za ka samu* ‘What you will get’, *da abin da zai same ka* ‘what will happen to you (lit. what will get you)’. An expansion on bipartite structure may be suggested: one (or the other) half of the section is expanded by inclusion of a close parallel clause to it. I term this ‘nested bipartite structure’, which is illustrated in 91b. Each of the examples given in 92 shows a nested bipartite structure within the first section, in which syntactic parallelism is prominent.

- (91) a. *Da abin da za ka samu, da abin da zai same ka / tun ran halittarka yake.* (16/8)
 ‘What you will get, what will happen to you, everything is predestined.’
- b. *Da abin da za ka samu // da abin da zai same ka / tun ran halittarka yake.* ((8/8)/8)
 ‘What you will get, what will happen to you, everything is predestined.’
- (92) a. *Yaro da hula // babba da hula / girman ’yan duniya.* ((5/5)/6)
 ‘A boy with a hat, a grown-up with a hat, the swelling up of today’s young men.’
- b. *Garinta nan // barinta nan / lallen garega.* ((4/4)/5)
 ‘Look at it here’, ‘leave it here’, it is a false henna.’
- c. *Da kukan kura / da facewar akuya / duka dāya ne.* ((5/7)/5)
 ‘The howl of the hyena, the killing of the goat, all the same thing.’
- d. *Ban ji ba / ban gani ba // ta raba ni da kowa.* ((3/4)/7)
 ‘I didn’t hear’, ‘I didn’t see’, it separates me from any one.’

Nested bipartite structure can be present in the second section too, this

being illustrated by the formula ‘F/S(P1/P2)’. Proverbs characterised by F/S(P1/P2)-structure are more widely observed than those of F(P1/P2)/S-structure exemplified in 92. They are grouped into two subtypes. First, some proverbs contain a contrasting element within nested bipartite structure: the two parts P1 and P2 within the second section in each of the following examples are semantically contrasted to each other, displaying syntactic parallelism at the same time, often combined with phonological correspondence too.

- (93) a. *Hanyar Gwanja / ga nisa // ga riba.* (4/(3//3))
 ‘The road to Gwanja: it is distant, it is paying.’
 b. *Akali / ga goran zuma // ga na maɗaɗi.* (3/(5//5))
 ‘A judge: here’s the honey gourd, here’s the mahogany gourd.’
 c. *Birnin rairai / da wuyar tayarwa // da saurin rushewa.* (4/(6//6))
 ‘Sand city: difficult to build, easy to collapse.’
 d. *Aikin gona / da wuya // da daɗi.* (4/(3//3))
 ‘Farm work: hard, but good.’

F/S(P1/P2)-structure may involve a double complementation, with P1 representing one complement and P2 the other. This is exactly the case in which two contrasting (or sometimes contradictory) statements (P1 and P2) are made on the same topic F (the first section). For example, the surface structure of 93d may echo a certain underlying structure which discloses a completely balanced bipartite structure as reflected in 94. It follows from this that proverbs of F/S(P1/P2)-structure can be basically transformed into those of normal bipartite structure consisting of two co-ordinate clauses.

- (94) *Aikin gona da wuya // aikin gona da daɗi.* (7//7)
 ‘Farm work is hard, farm work is good.’

In contrast to the examples in 93 are the following ones where P1 and P2

parallel each other not in the sense that they are in opposite relation, but rather in the sense that they consolidate each other semantically, providing similar information.

- (95) a. *Baƙiɓ jinin muzuzu / mai-kaza zagi / maras-kaza zagi.* (7/(5/6))
‘The wildcat’s bad luck: the one who has a fowl curses it, the one who has none curses it.’
- b. *Daduma mugun malami // ya yi yanka // ya yi fiɗa.* (8/(4/4))
‘A rapacious person is an evil teacher: he does the slaying, he does the skinning.’
- c. *Kunnen ruwan gawa // ban ji ba / ban gani ba.* (7/(3/4))
‘My ear is the hard bean which fails to become cooked: I didn’t hear it, I didn’t see it.’
- d. *Shan tabar kwaɗo / ga baki // ga hanci.* (5/(3/3))
‘Like smoking by a frog: here’s mouth, here’s nose.’

VIII. Concluding Remarks and Suggestions

Proverbs are still widely used in daily face-to-face communication in many contemporary African societies where orality plays a leading role in verbal art. This suggests that they must be regarded as an important aspect of language use. Once a proverb is uttered in an actual situation, it carries connotations of an external authority. This authority is the anonymous authority from the cultural past (Arewa and Dundes 1964: 70). So, proverbs, as a means of communication, oil the wheels of human interaction in day-to-day social contexts. By employing a proverb a speaker may be able to express his view regarding a certain situation while protecting the interpersonal relationship between him and the hearer.⁴ Almost all Hausa

⁴ According to Arewa and Dundes (1964: 73), proverbs are commonly used in Yoruba society with the purpose of avoiding tension and friction which might be caused

native speakers questioned in the course of research also supported this view. They all agree that to use proverbs instead of direct expression is good manners.

The various devices for creating poetic patterning so typically present in Hausa proverbs contribute to creating memorable ‘names’ which can be easily retrieved from memory. Such devices, each of which has its own aesthetic effect within its own relevant context, are far too many to be listed comprehensively in this article. Unlike the popular idea that the proverb are easy to tackle, it is, in reality, very hard to establish a single principle or a set of principles covering the overall pattern of proverbial texts. Anyone who has ever attempted to analyze, for example, metaphorical languages or formal structure of the proverb may fully be aware of the difficulty. It is in this very context that ‘inter-section interaction’ may be of significance: it can encompass a wide range of fragmented features and account for them in the single common logic of ‘balance’ and ‘cohesion’.

Finally, before closing this article, I would like to suggest that the notion of ‘inter-section interaction’ may also be readily extended to the study of semantic interplay between sections, though we have already seen some examples of this that are relatively simple. In fact, its applicability is immense since semantic interplay constitutes one of the three core layers beneath which the real virtuosity of Hausa proverbs is hidden, the other two being ‘imagery’ and ‘form’. Skinner (1988: 236) comments:

‘For a *Karin magana* (perhaps ‘folded speech’ says more than the

otherwise. Also Finnegan points out (1970: 411-412):

‘Though proverbs can occur in very many different kinds of contexts, they seem to be particularly important in situations where there is both conflict and, at the same time, some obligation that this conflict should not take on too open and personal a form. ... It can be seen how the veiled and metaphorical language of proverbs is particularly relevant in such contexts. Indeed, proverbs may also be specially suitable even in everyday situations of advice or instruction where the hidden tensions that are sometimes inherent in such relationships are controlled through the use of elliptical, proverbial speech.’

usual ‘proverb’) to have real virtuosity, the more marked and the less transparent semantically it is, the better. The more obscure, contradictory or superficially unbelievable, the more acceptable it will be, once the point is grasped. Like ‘the service of God is perfect freedom’ or Orwell’s pigs who exceeded the other animals in equality, KM are true in-jokes, separating the men (Hausas) from the boys (non-Hausas). One of the commoner ways to ‘fold speech’ or achieve this density is to break normal rules of lexical co-occurrence. The effect of this is, first, to shock; next, to make the listener think. At which point, hopefully, the underlying but deliberately veiled truth will emerge’.

However, it is not the case that to break normal rules is confined only to lexical incompatibility:

(96) a. *Wane maraya ne // ba maraya ba ne. (6//6)*

‘He is an orphan, but he is not an orphan.’

b. *Namiji ba daga wajen mace ba ne // amma mace daga wajen namiji ne. (12//12)*

‘Male is not from female but female is from male.’

In 96a, the meanings of both sections cannot be logically held at the same time, though the clauses are simply juxtaposed in a paratactic style. On the contrary, 96b contains no semantic contradiction across sections, but it rejects an ordinary idea or truth and replace it with a totally reversed one. Just like words are signs for referring to persons, things, or concepts, proverbs with ‘potential other reference’ are names for particular types of situations repeated time and again in a given society. And just like the former can be divided into segmental elements, so does the latter. Sections of Hausa proverbs often suggest their similarity to parts of compound words, from whose interaction single meanings emerge: e.g. ‘butter/flies’.

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Key words: Hausa, Proverbs, Oral Literature, Hausa Proverbs, Hausa Literature, African Proverbs, African Oral Literature, Oral Poetics, Ethnopoetics, Inter-section Interaction